BLOOMSBURY

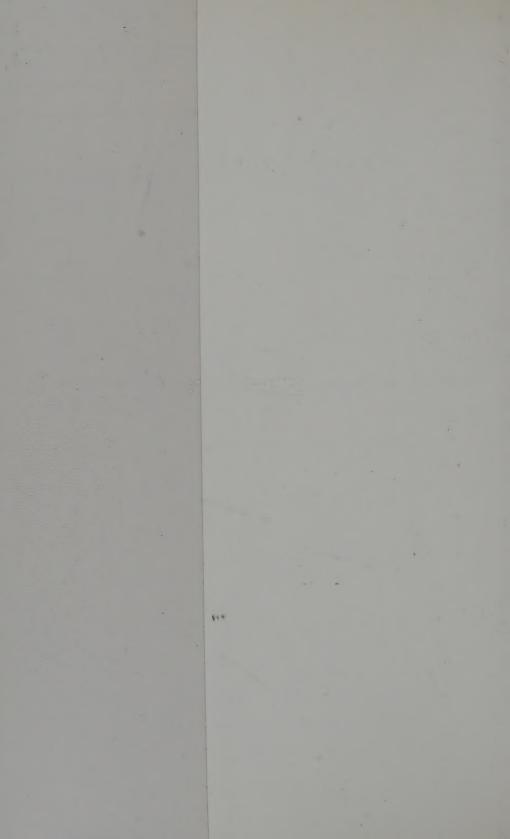
READING GUIDE

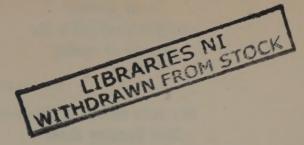
NEW SIXTH EDITION includes the BBC's Big Read

'The essential Michelin Guide to the wild, uncharted world of contemporary (and twentieth-century) writing.'

Robert McCrum, Observer

WHAT TO READ AND WHAT TO READ NEXT Edited by Nick Rennison





BLOOMSBURY GOOD READING GUIDE

This edition edited by Nick Rennison

Original Author Kenneth McLeish To my parents, who introduced me to the pleasure of reading

This sixth edition of the Good Reading Guide is edited by Nick Rennison.

The Good Reading Guide was conceived and written by the late Kenneth McLeish and published in four editions.

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Publishers.

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 38 Soho Square, London, W1D 3HB

www.bloomsbury.com

Bloomsbury's website offers booklovers the chance to participate in the literary life online. Its features include advice for reading groups, online reading courses, a research centre and a writers' area. Most books mentioned in the *Good Reading Guide*, where still in print, can be purchased through the online bookshop.

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Copyright © 1988, 1990, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2003 the estate of Kenneth McLeish

Additional text for this edition copyright © 2003 Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

A CIP entry for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0 7475 6245 8

10987654321

All papers used by Bloomsbury Publishing are natural, recyclable products made from wood grown in sustainable, well-managed forests. The manufacturing processes conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

Index by Hilary Bird
Typeset by Hewer Text Ltd, Edinburgh
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

CONTENTS

How to Use This Book		ix
Acknowledgements		xi
Introduction		xiii
The Big Read		xvii
Author Entries A–Z		1
Startpoints:		
Autobiography Biography Crime Historical Novels Letters and Diaries Poetry Science Fiction and Fantasy Thrillers Travel	37,620	15 31 67 142 174 223 250 280 286
Pathways:		
from David Copperfield from Lord of the Flies from I, Claudius from Catch-22 from Ulysses from The Trial from One Hundred Years of Solitude from Nineteen Eighty-four from Gormenghast from The Catcher in the Rye from War and Peace		78 118 122 133 158 161 195 217 220 246 283
Read on a Theme:		
Adolescence Africa All-engulfing Families All the World's a Stage Altered States (Chemical Fiction) Ancient Greece and Rome The Animal Kingdom Art for Whose Sake?		3 3 4 5 6 8 9

Assets	14
Australia	
Autobiographies and Memoirs (Ghosted!)	14
Battling with Life	25
Before the Novel	26
Before the Wedding	27
The Bible	29
	30
Black Britons	
Booze and Boozers	33
Canada	47
The Caribbean	48
Children	53
China and Hong Kong	54
	54
Cities: New World	
Cities: Old World	55
Classic Detection	57
Comedy Thrillers	59
Country Houses	64
Culture Clash	66
Cyber Fiction	66
	69
Dark Old Houses	
Deep South, USA	71
Depression and Psychiatry	74
Down to Earth	80
Dreaming Spires	83
Éccentric Families	87
	87
Echoes of Empire	88
Egypt	
The Elderly	89
Emotionally III-at-Ease	92
Fantasy Adventure	93
Fantasy Societies	93
The Film Business	97
Film of the Book, Book of the Film	98
Friends (?) and Neighbours	109
Future Societies	109
Gay/Lesbian Fiction	112
Good and Evil	117
Great (Classic) Detectives	124
Groves of Academe	126
High Adventure:	139
Higher (?) Education	139
Historical Adventure	144
The Human Comedy	148
India	150
Ireland	150
Israel	153
	155
Japan	
Journalism	157
Larger than Life	170
Latin America	171
London	179

Madness		189
Many Generations		194
The Middle Ages		199
Money		200
Music		206
New York		210
Nineteenth-century England		210
On the Edge of Sanity		214
Other Peoples, Other Times		216
Parents and Children		218
Perplexed by Life		221
Places		222
Police Procedural		225
Politics		225
		229
Private Eyes		
Prizewinners Prizewinners		229
Publish and Be Damned		231
Renaissance Europe		235
Revisiting One's Past		237
Rewriting History		237
The Rhythm of Nature		238
Roman Catholicism		242
Schools		248
Scotland		249
Sequels		253
Sex		254
Ships and the Sea		257
Shipwreck		257
Short Stories		257
The Sixties		261
Small-Town Life, USA		261
Something Nasty		265
South Africa		265
Spies and Double Agents		266
Teenagers		274
Terrorists/Freedom Fighters		274
Trains		284
Unlooked-for Friendships		292
Village and Countryside		296
Wales		299
		299
War: Behind the Lines		
War: Front Line		300
Weepies	m Ai n w \	302
The West (The Great American Fro	ntier)	306
The Wilderness		309
Young Adults		317
3		
Index		319

.

How to Use this Book

The Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide seeks to answer two main questions: 'Which book should I read?' and 'Which book should I read next?' The bulk of the text consists of articles on some 375 authors, describing the kind of books they wrote, listing titles and suggesting books (by the same authors and by others) which might make interesting follow-ups. Scattered through this guide are just over a hundred Read on a Theme menus of suggested reading. They are straightforward lists of about seven or eight books of a similar kind, ranging from Adolescence (p 3) to The West (The Great American Frontier) (p 306). There are also nine double-page features, Startpoints, each of which covers a particular category of reading, with a large number of suggestions and follow-ups. In alphabetical sequence, they are: Autobiography, Biography, Crime, Historical Novels, Letters and Diaries, Poetry, Science Fiction and Fantasy, Thrillers and Travel. There are also eleven Pathways, which take a very well-known novel and set off in different directions from this same starting point. Anyone who follows the suggestions in a Pathway, and the 'Read Ons' from those suggestions, will end up reading dozens of books, both obvious follow-ups and unexpected ones, but all related in some way to the original selection.

The text contains no literary criticism. I wanted to describe books, not to be clever at their expense. In particular, I tried to avoid ranking authors by 'literary merit', on assessments of whether their work is 'great' or 'light'. The length of each entry depends solely on how much needed to be said. If this had been a travel guide, New York might well have enjoyed more space than the commuter village up the line - but that would have had no bearing on where one might choose to live.

All books mentioned in the Good Reading Guide were written in English or are widely available in translation. I have tried to cover as wide a range of writers of English as possible, and have included authors from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa and the US, as well as the UK, Books originally written in a foreign language are listed by their English titles. Original titles follow in brackets where they may be familiar to readers or where they may be used from some English editions. Examples are Émile Zola. The Boozer (L'Assommoir) or André Gide, The Pastoral Symphony (La Symphonie pastorale).

In this sixth edition of the Good Reading Guide I have updated entries to include books (and alas, deaths) occurring since the last edition, and I have revised entries (some substantially), added new titles and menus and added nearly thirty authors new to the guide. To accommodate these changes I have, regretfully, excluded a small number of writers who appeared in earlier editions but whose popularity has waned significantly. I welcome ideas, comments and suggestions for any future editions. Please write to me, care of the publishers.

KEY TO THE SYMBOLS

- Other books by the same author
- ➤ Similar books by other authors
- > A book by an author who features in the Good Reading Guide

STOREGISTER STATES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cut-off date for inclusion in this sixth edition of the Good Reading Guide was June 2003. The final choice of books and authors, the comments and the text have been my responsibility. I take the blame. But many people have helped. This is the second edition of the Good Reading Guide in which the revisions and changes have not been made by the original author, the late Kenneth McLeish. However, much of the book remains, in essence, his work. Many of the entries he wrote for earlier editions were so concise, witty, informative and insightful that it seemed both presumptuous and unnecessary to change them. Susan Osborne has a knowledge of contemporary fiction second to none and the Read on a Theme menus have benefited enormously from her many suggestions. Steve Andrews is a walking encyclopedia of information and opinion about science fiction, and I am grateful for his advice and suggestions in a genre where I make no claims to expertise. Richard Shephard contributed many suggestions for Read Ons in American fiction and outlined the entries on half a dozen contemporary US novelists for me. Niamh Marnham proved inventive and imaginative in suggesting both new Read on a Theme menus and ways of improving existing ones. I am very grateful to all four of them and to the many other people who have, over the years, suggested new authors and books to me. To name Noel Murphy, Hugh Pemberton, Gordon Kerr, Travis Elborough, John Magrath, Kevin Chappell, Linda Pattenden, Peter French, Brian Grist, Lucinda Rennison and Paul Skinner is to mention only a few. To name more would be to run the risk of sounding like an Oscar-winning actor thanking his entire acquaintance for contributions to his career. But many others have done for me what this Good Reading Guide hopes to do for anybody who uses it – pointed me in the direction of rewarding and enjoyable novels which I would not otherwise have had the good fortune to read.

> Nick Rennison July 2003

INTRODUCTION

There are more books published each year than ever before. Walk into any large branch of the major book retailers and the shelves stretch into the distance, great vistas of fiction and non-fiction titles searching for a readership. The sight is stimulating to any lover of books but also daunting. How are the keenest of readers to choose from the vast numbers of books on offer? Like explorers in some vast, landmarkless new continent, they hardly know where to turn. The *Good Reading Guide* is an attempt to provide signposts and indicate pathways through the landscape.

Paradoxically, despite the fact that more titles appear than ever before, there are those who claim that books may be an endangered species. They are not under threat in the way they have been before. Books have regularly faced the wrath of cultural dictators in past centuries. The Nazis have been by no means the only burners of books. Ideologues of all kinds have seen books as potentially subversive and attempted to curb their influence. Yet books and literature have survived their attentions.

Today's threat to books, it is said, is twofold. Both wings of the attack come in the shape of technology. First, it may be that the printed page is set to go the way of the illuminated manuscript in the fifteenth century. The interactive CDs of the early 1990s were only the first harbingers of momentous changes in the ways in which words and information can be accessed. The extraordinary growth of the Internet has seen more and more texts available through one's PC. It is no longer necessary to go to a bookshop or a library to track down literature as different as a Shakespeare play and a novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs, a poem by Tennyson and a Sherlock Holmes short story. You can locate, if you wish, the work of the Church Fathers or Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, the Book of Mormon or Cervantes in Spanish in a matter of moments. They are all out there in the rapidly expanding realm of cyberspace. The way in which we read may well be changing. The latest generation of small book-sized computers enable you to read in an armchair, or sitting in bed, instead of bolt upright at a table. Today's children, brought up from infancy to use computers as tools for both learning and entertainment, may well find scrolling a handier way to move through a text than turning pages. So books themselves, as physical objects, may be about to change but this is not a cause for overmuch alarmist hand-wringing. They have changed before. If they change again, there will be those who cling to the old ways just as there were doubtless those in the late Middle Ages who swore by the handwritten manuscript and refused to countenance the new-fangled creations of Gutenberg and Caxton. Yet, for the majority who embrace the new technologies, the content will be the same. It will only be the form in which that content is presented that has changed.

The second way in which technology can be said to threaten the book in general, and the novel in particular, may seem more insidious. It is safe to assume that there will never come a time when we don't need and demand stories of some kind. There have been many attempts to define the essential qualities of *Homo sapiens* – man the tool-maker, man the hunter and so on. A better way might to be talk of man the storyteller. Every human culture that has ever existed has needed stories and narratives to help its members give meaning

and coherence to their lives. Books have been one effective way of presenting these stories but, Jeremiahs insist, the last hundred years have seen the development of others which have overtaken the printed word. We live in an age where 'fiction' means, mainly, films, TV soaps, drama series, sitcoms, computer games. These new media fulfil our inherent need for stories. Literary fiction, fiction in the written word, is a minority pleasure and will soon be as dead as a dodo.

So it is claimed. But it seems unlikely. There are many ways in which the stories we have always told ourselves give meaning to our lives. In mythology and religious texts, for example, they provide an explanation for our place and purpose in the world. Just as importantly, stories can engage the emotions and draw us out of the narrow sphere of self into an engagement with others. The usual way to 'live' our emotions, to release their potential, is by sharing them, by communication with other people. Each individual's emotional make-up is as unique – as personal – as a gene pattern, but we spend our whole lives trying to match them with others, and we draw strength and comfort both from the similarities we find and from the differences. Two of the most exciting activities of human life are finding occasions for such emotional dialogue, and pondering the results. We talk to parents, lovers, children, friends, strangers, in a constant attempt to find out their feelings, to measure our response to life against theirs. It is a form of growth, of education. The more we find in common with others, the more we learn about ourselves. Stories, and particularly the stories we read, form a parallel path to this understanding of ourselves and others. As long as this remains true, fiction in the form of written texts, however they are presented to us. seems safe.

The recent BBC poll for the Big Read proves the point. The response was enormous and the range of books in the list the BBC released in May 2003 (see page xvii) shows just how many different types of fiction continue to engage our attention. There are the classics (Dickens, Tolstoy, Jane Austen and, among twentieth-century writers, Orwell, Steinbeck and Scott Fitzgerald), which have proved themselves over many years and seem likely to occur in such polls for as long as pollsters continue to invite our suggestions for the world's greatest books. There are the books which exemplify that much-discussed crossover between adult and children's literature such as the Harry Potter books and the Philip Pullman trilogy. Like the children's classics (The Wind in the Willows and Alice in Wonderland) that also appear in the list, they win their place because of the ways in which they delight and enthrall us with the very basic power of narrative, of storytelling. And there are, happily, the one-off books which resist all the ebbs and flows of fashion and continue to find an audience. Who would have thought that a 1914 novel about the trials and tribulations of a group of painters and decorators in Edwardian England, the only fiction by an Irish socialist called Robert Noonan, would still inspire readers in the twenty-first century? Yet there sits Noonan's book, The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (published under his pseudonym Robert Tressell), alongside the Brontës, Salman Rushdie and Dostoevsky.

As Tressell's book shows, fiction is the ideal way to enter the emotional experience of a vast range of people, from all countries, all periods, all kinds of society. I know Dickens's London, R.K. Narayan's India, Peter Carey's Australia, the 'mean streets' walked by US private eyes, even the future dystopias of William Gibson, as well as I know my own neighbourhood – not because I've been there but because I recognize the way people feel in them and the way the authors distil those feelings into words. This is not cosy escapism, nor living one's

life 'vicariously'. It is an enlargement of the necessarily narrow horizons of our own small lives. The world of books is boundless, and is crammed with human beings of every profession, viewpoint, character, moral and ethical persuasion. It covers not only everything that has happened in 'real' human existence, but the infinite possibilities of the imagination. To anyone standing outside, this can seem bewildering. But, as any reader knows, once you start exploring, the experience becomes ever more addictive and enriching. The *Good Reading Guide* aims to offer as large a range of entry paths into undiscovered fictional worlds as possible.



THE BIG READ

This is the list of the UK's favourite 100 titles, as voted for in the BBC's nationwide poll:

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll Animal Farm by George Orwell Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer The BFG by Roald Dahl Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks Black Beauty by Anna Sewell Bleak House by Charles Dickens Brave New World by Aldous Huxley Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh Bridget Jones's Diary by Helen Fielding Captain Corelli's Mandolin by Louis de Bernières Catch 22 by Joseph Heller The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens The Clan of the Cave Bear by J.M. Auel Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons The Colour of Magic by Terry Pratchett The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky David Copperfield by Charles Dickens Double Act by Jacqueline Wilson Dune by Frank Herbert Emma by Jane Austen Far From the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy Girls in Love by Jacqueline Wilson The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy The Godfather by Mario Puzo Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell Good Omens by Terry Pratchett Goodnight Mister Tom by Michelle Magorian Gormenghast by Mervyn Peake The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck Great Expectations by Charles Dickens The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald Guards! Guards! by Terry Pratchett Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by J.K. Rowling Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by J.K. Rowling Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J.K. Rowling Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K. Rowling His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Holes by Louis Sachar

I Capture the Castle by Dodie Smith

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

Kane and Abel by Jeffrey Archer

Katherine by Anya Seton

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez

The Magic Faraway Tree by Enid Blyton

Magician by Raymond E. Feist

The Magus by John Fowles

Matilda by Roald Dahl

Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden

Middlemarch by George Eliot

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

Mort by Terry Pratchett

Night Watch by Terry Pratchett

Nineteen Eighty-four by George Orwell

Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

On the Road by Jack Kerouac

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

Perfume by Patrick Süskind

Persuasion by Jane Austen

The Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

The Princess Diaries by Meg Cabot

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell

Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Secret History by Donna Tartt

The Shell Seekers by Rosamunde Pilcher

The Stand by Stephen King

The Story of Tracy Beaker by Jacqueline Wilson

A Suitable Boy by Vikram Seth

Swallows and Amazons by Arthur Ransome

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

The Thorn Birds by Colleen McCullough

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

A Town Like Alice by Nevil Shute

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

The Twits by Roald Dahl

Ulysses by James Joyce

Vicky Angel by Jacqueline Wilson

War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy Watership Down by Richard Adams The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne The Woman in White by Wilkie Collins Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë





ACHEBE, Chinua (born 1930)

Nigerian novelist

Things Fall Apart (1958), Achebe's best-known novel, is a story of the people of Umuofia on the River Niger, and especially of Okonkwo, a rich and headstrong elder. Okonkwo wins respect among his people by a magnificent wrestling throw when he is 18, and keeps it by his hard work as a farmer, his love for the land. Then, by accident, he kills a relative, and is forced by custom to live out of the village for seven years. While he is away Christian missionaries come. They speak through interpreters, understand nothing of the people's beliefs and are followed by white commissioners whose laws destroy the society they were devised to 'civilize'. Achebe's points are blunt, and (for ex-colonialists) shamingly unanswerable. But his novel's main fascination is not political but social. Through his direct, uncomplicated scenes, reverberant as poetry, Achebe reveals his people's inner lives.

Achebe's other novels include No Longer at Ease, Arrow of God and Anthills of the Savannah.

READ ON

- A Man of the People (a satirical, bitter farce about what happens when white imperialists leave and black politicians set up a state on 'Western' lines).
- ▶ to *Things Fall Apart*: Amos Tutuola, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (making a denser, more Homeric use of Nigerian folk styles); ▷ Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*; ▷ I.B. Singer, *Satan in Goray*.
- ▶ to Achebe's later, and politically much more savage work: ▷ V.S. Naipaul, *A Bend in the River*; Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters*.

ACKROYD, Peter (born 1949)

British writer

Ackroyd is a biographer as well as a novelist – his *Dickens* is 1,200 pages long, sumptuously detailed, and acclaimed – and his fiction benefits from a researcher's eye for extraordinary and revealing detail about the past. Often, he blends a modern story with a historical one, and characters from the past move in and out of the contemporary narrative like ghosts. He sets many stories in London (he is the author of a 'biography' of the city), and superbly evokes its people and atmosphere, both today and in different periods of the past.

HAWKSMOOR (1985)

This remains the most exhilarating and adventurous of Ackroyd's explorations of a London in which past and present endlessly intertwine. A contemporary detective (the namesake of the seventeenth-century architect) is driven towards a mystical encounter with forces from the past through his investigations of a series of murders in London churches. Part of the narrative is written in a prose which demonstrates Ackroyd's chameleon-like ability to mimic the English of past centuries and its rhythms.

Ackroyd's other novels include Chatterton (about the eighteenth-century literary forger who committed suicide at the age of 18), The House of Doctor Dee (in which the central character inherits a Clerkenwell house once owned by the Elizabethan magus John Dee), Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem (blending the stories of the real Dan Leno, 'the funniest man in England' in nineteenth-century music hall, such literary figures as George Gissing and Karl Marx, and the mysterious serial killer of the 1890s nicknamed the Limehouse Golem), Milton in America, The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde, English Music and The Plato Papers. He has also written poetry, prize-winning biographies of T.S. Eliot and William Blake and, in addition to London: A Biography, Albion, a characteristically idiosyncratic investigation of the English imagination.

READ ON

- ▶ to Hawksmoor: David Liss, A Conspiracy of Paper; lain Pears, An Instance of the Fingerpost; > lain Sinclair, White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings.
- ▶ to Ackroyd's work in general: ▷ Michael Moorcock, *Mother London*; ▷ lain Sinclair, *Downriver*; ▷ Rose Tremain, *Restoration*; ▷ Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*.

ADAMS, Douglas (1952–2001)

British novelist

Adams began his career as a radio joke-writer, and also worked for the TV science fiction series *Doctor Who*. He made his name with a series of genial science fiction spoofs, beginning with *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979). In this, Earthman Arthur Dent, informed that his planet is about to be vapourized to make room for a hyperspace bypass, escapes by stowing away on an alien spacecraft. This is the beginning of a wild journey through time and space, in the course of which he meets the super-cool President of the Galaxy, Zaphod Beeblebrox, discusses the coastline of Norway with Slartibartfast (who won prizes for designing it), watches the apocalyptic floor-show in the Restaurant at the End of the Universe, and discovers the answer to the 'ultimate question about life, the universe and everything'. The other *Hitchhiker* books (self-contained sequels) are *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*; *Life, the Universe and Everything*; *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* and *Mostly Harmless*.

In 1987 Adams began a second series, this time starring Dirk Gently, an intergalactic private eye who has to cope not only with the usual quota of blondes and hoodlums, but with electronic monks, thinking horses, the spacetime continuum and an uneasy feeling that he is no more than a bystander in his

own bad dreams. The Gently books are *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* and *The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul*. In his later years Adams largely turned away from the printed page to concentrate on projects in other media but the *Hitchhiker* books remain as the most inspired of all science fiction spoofs.

READ ON

- ► science fiction spoofs in similarly lunatic vein: > Harry Harrison, *The Stainless Steel Rat*, Robert Asprin, *Phules Company*.
- ▶ fantasy spoofs: > Terry Pratchett, The Colour of Magic; Robert Asprin, Another Fine Myth; Robert Rankin, The Anti-Pope (and others in the Brentford series); Jasper Fforde, The Eyre Affair.

READ ON A THEME: ADOLESCENCE

Alain-Fournier, Le Grand Meaulnes

- □ Beryl Bainbridge, A Quiet Life
- Colette, The Ripening Seed
 Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career
 Jane Gardam, Bilgewater
 Lesley Glaister, Digging to Australia
 S.E. Hinton, That Was Then, This Is Now

See also: Children; Eccentric Families; Parents and Children; Schools; Teenagers

READ ON A THEME: AFRICA

- Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart Ronan Bennett, The Catastrophist Paul Bowles, The Sheltering Sky
- Nadine Gordimer, None To Accompany Me
- > Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible
- > V.S. Naipaul, In a Free State

ALLENDE, Isabel (born 1942)

Peruvian-born Chilean novelist

Allende's first novel, *The House of the Spirits* (1985), was a glowing family tapestry in the magic-realist manner of \triangleright Márquez's *One Hundred Years of*

Solitude, spanning five generations and thronged with larger-than-life characters and supernatural events. She followed this vein in *Eva Luna* (1989), which is particularly evocative of life on a decaying hacienda deep in the tropical bush. Her finest book, *Of Love and Shadows* (see below) adds politics to the magicrealist mixture, to devastating effect. *Paula* (1995) is a moving account of the death of Allende's daughter which opens out into the story of her own life and the political tragedies of Chile. *Aphrodite* (1998) is an unclassifiable celebration of food, sex and sensuality which reflects the same delight in the physical world that runs through all her fiction.

OF LOVE AND SHADOWS (1987)

Irene Beltrán, a journalist, and her photographer-lover Francisco Leal are investigating the disappearance of a disturbed, possibly saintly adolescent. In the jackbooted dictatorship in which they live, however, the child is not simply missing but 'disappeared', one of thousands snatched by the authorities who will never be seen again. Allende surrounds her main characters with a web of fantastic personal history in true magic-realist style. But the further the investigators thread their way through the sadism and ruthlessness of the labyrinthine fascist state, the more fact begins to swallow fairy tale. The investigators themselves begin to lose reality – their love affair becomes a swooning parody of romantic fiction – but what they discover grows more and more uncomfortably like real South American life, like nightmare fleshed.

Allende's other books include The Stories of Eva Luna, a set of long short stories which forms a pendant to Eva Luna, Daughter of Fortune, Portrait in Sepia (two novels which have the same setting and some of the same characters as The House of the Spirits) and City of the Beasts, a book aimed at young adults but with much to enthrall older ones too.

READ ON

- Eva Luna.
- ► Alejo Carpentier, *The Chase*; Stephen Dobyns, *The Two Deaths of Señora Puccini*; Oscar Hijuelos, *The Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien*; Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*. ▷ Mario Vargas Llosa, *Captain Pantoja and the Special Service* gives a more farcical view of Allende's terrifying, haunted world.

READ ON A THEME: ALL-ENGULFING FAMILIES

- Anita Brookner, Family and Friends
- > Angela Carter, The Magic Toyshop

- > François Mauriac, The Nest of Vipers
- Christina Stead, The Man Who Loved Children

See also: Eccentric Families; Many Generations

ALLINGHAM, Margery (1905-66)

British novelist

Allingham wrote 'crime fiction' only in the sense that each of her books contains the step-by-step solution of a crime, and that their hero, Albert Campion, is an amateur detective whose amiable manner conceals laser intelligence and ironclad moral integrity. But instead of confining Campion by the boundaries of the detective-story genre, Allingham put him in whatever kind of novel she felt like writing. Some of her books (*More Work for the Undertaker*; *The Beckoning Lady*) are wild, ▷ Wodehousian farce, others (*Sweet Danger*; *Traitor's Purse*) are ▷ Buchanish, ▷ Amblerish thrillers. Her best books are those of the 1940s and 1950s, and especially two set in an atmospheric, cobble-stones-and-alleyways London filled with low-life characters as vivid as any in ▷ Dickens: *The Tiger in the Smoke* (see below) and *Hide My Eyes*.

THE TIGER IN THE SMOKE (1952)

Like all Allingham's novels, this is not a conventional whodunit, although it contains plenty of mysteries that demand solutions. Jack Havoc, the 'tiger' of the title, escapes from jail and the hunt for this violent convict takes place in an eerie and fog-enshrouded London that Allingham brilliantly evokes. Campion and other characters familiar from Allingham's work loom in and out of the fog as the action moves inexorably towards a violent conclusion.

Allingham's other Campion books include Coroner's Pidgin, Police at the Funeral, Look to the Lady and the short-story collections Mr Campion and Others and Take Two at Bedtime. After Allingham's death, her husband P. Youngman Carter wrote two further Campion novels, one of which, Mr Campion's Farthing, is up to his wife's most sparkling standard.

READ ON

- Death of a Ghost (set in London's eccentric art community and involving what else? – forged paintings); Hide My Eyes.
- ► Michael Innes, *The Daffodil Affair*, Edmund Crispin, *The Case of the Gilded Fly*, H.R.F. Keating, *A Rush on the Ultimate*; ▷ P.D. James, *A Taste for Death*

READ ON A THEME: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE (books about theatre)

- ▷ Beryl Bainbridge, An Awfully Big Adventure Caryl Brahms and S.J. Simon, A Bullet in the Ballet
- > Angela Carter, Wise Children
- > Robertson Davies, Tempest-Tost
- □ Charles Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby (Nicholas's adventures with the Crummles)
- > Thomas Keneally, The Playmaker
- > J.B. Priestley, The Good Companions
- Mary Renault, The Mask of Apollo
- > Barry Unsworth, Morality Play

READ ON A THEME: ALTERED STATES (CHEMICAL FICTION)

M. Ageyev, *Novel with Cocaine*Nelson Algren, *The Man with the Golden Arm*

- ▶ Bret Easton Ellis, Glamorama Donald Goines, Dopefiend
- Jay McInerney, The Story of My Life
 Kevin Sampson, Powder
 Hubert Selby Jr, Requiem for a Dream
 Alexander Trocchi, Cain's Book
- > Irvine Welsh, Trainspotting

AMBLER. Eric (1909-98)

British novelist and screenwriter

Ambler worked in advertising, the film industry and the secret service before becoming a full-time novelist. The deadpan style of his thrillers lets him move easily from violence to farce, and he either sets his books in exotic places (the Levant, the Far East, tropical Africa), or else makes familiar European locations seem exotic as the scene of sinister and unlikely goings-on. His central characters are minor crooks, conmen, or innocent bystanders trapped by circumstances or curiosity into a chain of bizarre and dangerous events. His supporting casts are crammed with improbable, unsavoury specimens, very few of whom are quite what they seem to be. Films and TV series have made these kinds of thriller endlessly familiar, but Ambler was one of the first to write them, and he is still among the best. As John le Carré once said, he is 'the source on which we all draw'.

THE MASK OF DIMITRIOS (1939)

Although later thrillers continued to be successful (*The Light of Day*, for instance, published in 1962, was made into the movie *Topkapi*), Ambler's best and most characteristic thrillers belong to the low, dishonest decade of the 1930s. In *The Mask of Dimitrios* Charles Latimer, a bored writer, sets out to track down an elusive Levantine criminal and finds that his search for the truth about Dimitrios Makropolous leads him into dangerous territory. Propelled by chance and curiosity from his own comfortable world, Latimer is suddenly surrounded by endless deceits and random violence.

Ambler's other thrillers include Cause for Alarm, Epitaph for a Spy, Journey into Fear, Passage of Arms, The Schirmer Inheritance and To Catch a Spy. He also wrote thrillers (e.g. The Maras Affair; Charter to Danger) in collaboration with Charles Rodda, published under the name Eliot Reed. They are more straightforward, but no less gripping, than his solo books.

READ ON

▶ to The Mask of Dimitrios: ▷ Graham Greene, Stamboul Train, ▷ John le Carré, Single & Single. ▶ to Ambler's work in general: > Len Deighton. Horse Under Water. Lionel Davidson, The Night of Wenceslas: Richard Condon, The Manchurian Candidate.

AMIS, Kingsley (1922–95)

British writer of novels, poems and non-fiction

In the 1950s, when Amis's writing career began, British writers of all kinds - the 'angry young men' - had begun to rant in plays, films and novels about the unfairness, snobbishness and priggishness of life. Whingeing became an artistic form - and Amis's novels showed its funny side. The working-class hero of Lucky Jim (1954) tries to conform with his madrigal-singing, rightnewspaper-reading, wine-savouring university colleagues, and in the process shows them up for the pretentious fools they are. The central character of That Uncertain Feeling, a small-town librarian, thinks that devastating sexual charm will carry him to the pinnacle of local society; the results are farcical. The hero of Take a Girl Like You (1960) finds it hard to persuade anyone else in his circle that 'free love' and 'the swinging sixties' are the good things glossy magazines crack them up to be. In the 1960s and 1970s Amis's farcical fires burned low. He began to affect a ponderous, self-consciously right-wing fuddy-duddiness, and abandoned satire for books of other kinds (a ghost story, a James Bond spy story and several science fiction books). In the 1980s, however, he returned to the satirical muttering which he always did better than any of his imitators – and his later books (beginning with The Old Devils, see below) are among his funniest.

THE OLD DEVILS (1986)

A group of old men, acquaintances for over 40 years, meet daily in a Welsh bar to grumble. They are obsessed by failure, their own and the world's. They are especially vitriolic about other people's success – and their discomfort with the world is brought to a peak when one of their 'friends', a famous TV Welshman and an expert on a Dylan-Thomasish poet, comes to settle in the town.

The best of Amis's comic novels not mentioned above are One Fat Englishman, Ending Up. The Folks Who Live on the Hill and Difficulties With Girls (a 1988) sequel to Take a Girl Like You). The best of his serious novels are The Anti-Death League, about a top-secret army unit whose aim is to abolish death, and The Alteration, set in a fantasy contemporary Britain in which modern science and modern religion have never happened, so that we are still organizing our lives in medieval ways. His Memoirs are gleefully malicious pen portraits of two dozen former friends, devastatingly satirical or distasteful according to your mood.

READ ON

- Jake's Thing: Stanley and the Women; The Russian Girl.
- ▶ ▷ Malcolm Bradbury, *Eating People is Wrong*; ▷ A.N. Wilson, *Love Unknown*; Christopher Hope, Serenity House; > Tom Sharpe, Porterhouse Blue; > William Boyd, A Good Man in Africa; Howard Jacobson, Peeping Tom; William Cooper, Scenes from Provincial Life.

AMIS, Martin (born 1949)

British novelist

The novels of Amis *fils* are icily satirical, cold with rage at the physical and moral sleaziness of the human race. His characters' preoccupations are sex, drugs, money and success, and they are tormented by failure to win, or keep, all four. Ronald Firbank and ▷ F. Scott Fitzgerald found similar prancing emptiness in the 'gay young things' of the 1920s. Amis matches those writers' bilious wit and parades his dazzlingly inventive prose style in his pages but adds a pungent view of his own: that the entire generation born after the creation of nuclear weapons is maimed beyond cure, a race of psychotic moral mutants. Few contemporary writers treat such repulsive subject matter so dazzlingly. Amis's novels are compulsively nasty, superbly hard to like.

MONEY (1984)

This is the 'suicide note' of an obese, deranged and despairing film director, stumbling through a New York inferno of fast food, pornography, violence and moronic greed. He is a lunatic in a world that has gone mad; when he opens his mouth to scream, his voice is drowned in the megametropolitan carnival, the dance of death that is (for Amis, at least) contemporary America.

Amis's other novels are The Rachel Papers, Dead Babies, Other People, Success, Time's Arrow, The Information, Night Train and Yellow Dog. The Moronic Inferno is a bilious travelogue about the US, a marvellously raw, non-fiction counterpart to Money. Einstein's Monsters and Heavy Water contain short stories. Experience is a remarkable memoir, particularly affecting and moving (not words usually applied to Amis's work) in its portrait of his relationship with his father, Kingsley Amis. War Against Cliché is a collection from thirty years of literary journalism. Koba the Dread is a curious and not very successful work of non-fiction in which an appalled account of Stalin's career is mingled with Amis's ongoing debate with his late father.

READ ON

- London Fields (about a man in apocalypse-hurtling 1999 London trying to write a novel about a woman trying to arrange her murder by a slob of a man fantasizing about winning the world darts championship).
- ► Terence Blacker, Fixx; ▷ lain Banks, The Wasp Factory; Madison Smartt Bell, The Year of Silence; ▷ Saul Bellow, Mr Sammler's Planet; ▷ Jay McInerney, Model Behaviour; ▷ Will Self, My Įdea of Fun; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, Despair.

READ ON A THEME: ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

Greece:

Hilary Bailey, Cassandra, Princess of Troy

▶ William Golding, The Double Tongue
 Tom Holt, Olympiad
 Naomi Mitchison, The Corn King and the Spring Queen
 Steven Pressfield, Gates of Fire

- □ Gore Vidal, Creation

Rome:

Lindsey Davies, The Iron Hand of Mars

- ▶ Robert Graves, I, Claudius
 Allan Massie, Tiberius
 Steven Saylor, Roman Blood
- □ Thornton Wilder, The Ides of March David Wishart, Ovid

See also: The Bible; The Middle Ages; Other Peoples, Other Times; Renaissance Europe

READ ON A THEME: THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Richard Adams, Watership Down Aeron Clement. The Cold Moons

- Louis de Bernières, Red Dog Paul Gallico, The Snow Goose Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows
- ▷ Ernest Hemingway, Fiesta/The Sun Also Rises
 William Horwood, Duncton Wood

READ ON A THEME: ART FOR WHOSE SAKE?

(painters; fakers; patrons; art enthusiasts)

- Margery Allingham, Death of a Ghost
 Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth
 Tracy Chevalier, Girl with a Pearl Earring
 Michael Frayn, Headlong
 Lesley Glaister, Sheer Blue Bliss
- > Alan Hollinghurst, The Folding Star

ASIMOV, Isaac (1920-92)

US writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

Asimov published his first story at nineteen, and went on to write over 300 books, ranging from Bible guides and history textbooks to the science fiction novels and stories for which he is best known. Much of his most seminal science fiction work was written in the 1940s when he (and others) came under the editorial wing of

John W. Campbell, the pulp magazine man who virtually defined science fiction as Hollywood now depicts it. Strongly plotted and concentrating on ideas more than style, Asimov's novels and stories invite the reader to collaborate in the unfolding of concepts like the famous 'three laws of robotics'. Asimov's down-to-earth, logical thinking means that his works are often the stuff of real science – the 'three laws', for example, have been used as the basis of real-life robot programming.

THE FOUNDATION SAGA (1951-93)

The first three books, a self-contained trilogy, appeared in the 1950s; Asimov added the remaining volumes thirty years later. The Saga is 'space opera' (science fiction soap opera) on a huge scale, an account of political manoeuvrings among nations and civilizations of the far future. Hari Seldon, a professor of psychohistory (statistical and psychological prediction of the future) foresees a disastrous era of war in the galactic empire, and establishes two Foundations on the galaxy's edge, dedicated to safeguarding civilized knowledge until it is again required. The Saga describes the nature and work of each Foundation, their uniting to defeat external threat (from an alien intelligence, the Mule) and their subsequent internecine struggles. For, like all human constructs, they are themselves prey to emotion and irrationality, to a bias which can lead towards dark as well as light.

The Foundation novels are Foundation, Foundation and Empire and Second Foundation. Books in the continuation series are Prelude to Foundation, Foundation's Edge, Foundation and Earth and the posthumous Forward the Foundation. Asimov's other science fiction novels include Pebble in the Sky, The Stars Like Dust and The Currents of Space (all on themes related to the Foundation Saga).

READ ON

- Asimov's other major achievement is the robot sequence of books: I, Robot, The
 Rest of the Robots, The Caves of Steel, The Naked Sun and The Robots of Dawn.
 His story 'Nightfall' (from a collection of that title) has several times been voted
 the best science fiction short story ever written.
- ▶ to the Foundation Saga: ▷ Iain M. Banks, *Consider Phlebas* (and the other Culture novels); Gordon R. Dickson, *Tactics of Mistake* (and others in the Dorsai sequence); ▷ Robert Heinlein, *The Man Who Sold the Moon*; Peter F. Hamilton, *The Reality Dysfunction*.
- ▶ to The Caves of Steel/The Naked Sun: Alfred Bester, The Demolished Man; Larry Niven, The Long Arm of Gil Hamilton.
- ▶ other examples of Golden Age, John W. Campbell-inspired science fiction: Robert Heinlein, Methuselah's Children; A.E. Van Vogt, The Voyage of the Space Beagle.

ATKINSON, Kate (born 1951)

British novelist

Kate Atkinson writes family sagas but they are family sagas unlike any others to be found on the shelves of a library or bookshop. The narrative bounces back and forth between decades, the language and imagery are often poetical and allusive, boundaries between what is real and what is unreal blur. Eccentricity and

quirkiness intrude on ordinary lower-middle-class domesticity and the books are often very funny. Her first novel, Behind the Scenes at the Museum (1994), is the story of Ruby Lennox, growing up in the family home above a pet shop in York in the 1950s and 1960s. Her womanizing father and her disgruntled mother, dreaming of a Hollywood glamour that would have been preferable to Yorkshire home life, are strongly created characters, as are the other members of the family. Ruby reaches back into the past in search of explanations for family flaws and frailties and the narrative zigzags between the generations, from her greatgrandmother's affair with a French photographer to the unruly circumstances of her own life. The book was a great commercial and critical success, becoming both a bestseller and Whitbread Book of the Year. Kate Atkinson has since written two further novels, Human Croquet (1997), the extravagantly told story of a family whose glory days are in the past, and Emotionally Weird (2000), about a mother and daughter holed up in a decaying family home and telling one another stories of their own and others' lives. Not the End of the World (2002) is Atkinson's first collection of her short stories.

READ ON

- Human Croquet.
- ▶ ▷ Angela Carter, *Wise Children*; ▷ Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*;

ATWOOD, Margaret (born 1939)

Canadian writer of novels, short stories and poems

Atwood is a poet as well as a novelist, and her gifts of precise observation and exact description illuminate all her work. She is fascinated by the balance of power between person and person, and by the way our apparently coherent actions and sayings actually float on a sea of turbulent unseen emotion. Her books often follow the progress of relationships, or of one person's self-discovery. The heroine of Life Before Man, for example, is caught up in a sexual quadrilateral (one of whose members, her lover, has just committed suicide), and our interest is as much in seeing how she copes with her own chaotic feelings as in the progress of the affair itself. In Cat's Eye (1989) a middle-aged painter returns to Toronto, remembers her dismal childhood and adolescence there, and finally comes to terms with the bully who made her life miserable as a schoolchild and with that bully's appalling, manipulative mother. In The Blind Assassin (2000) an elderly woman attempts to understand the secret history of her family and to unravel the enigma of her sister's death many decades before. Many writers have tackled similar themes, but Atwood's books give a unique impression that each moment, each feeling, is being looked at through a microscope, as if the swirling, nagging 'real' world has been momentarily put aside for something more urgent which may just - her characters consistently put hope above experience - make sense of it.

THE HANDMAID'S TALE (1985)

This dazzling dystopian novel, at once Atwood's most savage book and a departure from her usual Canadian stamping grounds, is set in the twenty-first-century Republic of Gilead. In this benighted state, fundamentalist Christianity rules and the laws are those of Genesis. Women are chattels: they have no

identity, no privacy and no happiness except what men permit them. Offred, for example, is a Handmaid, and her life is devoted to one duty only: breeding. In Gilead public prayers and hangings are the norm; individuality – even looking openly into a man's face or reading a woman's magazine – is punished by mutilation, banishment or death. The book shows Offred's struggle to keep her sanity and her identity in such a situation, and her equivocal relationship with the feminist Underground which may be Gilead's only hope.

Atwood's other novels include Surfacing, The Edible Woman, Bodily Harm, The Robber Bride, Alias Grace and Oryx and Crake, in which she returns to the dystopian science fiction of The Handmaid's Tale. Dancing Girls, Wilderness Tips and Bluebeard's Egg contain short stories. The Journals of Susannah Moodie and True Stories are poetry collections, and her Selected Poems are also available. Good Bones is a collection of funny, feminist retellings of such fables as The Little Red Hen, Cinderella and Hamlet.

READ ON

- Alias Grace (an exploration of women's sexuality and social roles wrapped up in a gripping story of a nineteenth-century housemaid who may or may not have been a murderess).
- ▶ to The Handmaid's Tale: > George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four.
- ▶ to Surfacing: ▷ Angela Carter, Heroes and Villains; ▷ Carol Shields, The Stone Diaries.
- ▶ to Cat's Eye: ▷ Bernice Rubens, Our Father; Lynne Reid Banks, Children at the Gate; ▷ Alison Lurie, Imaginary Friends.
- ▶ to Atwood's work in general: ▷ Doris Lessing, *Martha Quest*; ▷ Nadine Gordimer, *A Sport of Nature*; ▷ Saul Bellow, *Herzog*.

AUSTEN, Jane (1775-1817)

British novelist

Austen loved the theatre, and the nearest equivalents to her novels, for pace and verve, are the social comedies of such writers as Sheridan or Goldsmith. The kind of novels popular at the time were epic panoramas (like those of, Sir Walter Scott), showing the human race strutting and swaggering amid stormy weather in vast, romantic landscapes. Austen preferred a narrower focus, concentrating on a handful of people busy about their own domestic concerns. Her books are about the bonds which draw families together and the ambitions and feelings (usually caused by grown-up children seeking marriage partners) which divide them. Her plots fall into 'acts', like plays, and her dialogue is as precise and witty as in any comedy of the time. But she offers a delight available to no playwright: that of the author's own voice, setting the scene, commenting on and shaping events. She is like a bright-eyed, sharp-tongued relative sitting in a corner of the room watching the rest of the family bustle.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (1813)

Genteel Mr and Mrs Bennet and their five grown-up daughters are thrown into confusion when two rich, marriageable young men come to live in the neighbourhood. The comedy of the story comes from Mrs Bennet's mother-hen-like attempts at matchmaking, and the way fate and the young people's own

inclinations make things turn out entirely differently from her plans. The more serious sections of the novel show the developing relationship between Elizabeth Bennet, the second daughter, and cold, proud Mr Darcy. Although secondary characters (henpecked Mr Bennet, snobbish Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Elizabeth's romantic younger sister Lydia, the dashing army officer Wickham and the toady Mr Collins) steal the limelight whenever they appear, the book hinges on half a dozen magnificent set-piece scenes between Elizabeth and Darcy, the two headstrong young people the reader longs to see realizing their love for one another and falling into one another's arms.

Austen's completed novels are: Northanger Abbey (a spoof of romantic melodrama, unlike any of her other books), Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma and Persuasion. She also left a number of unfinished works, including The Watsons (completed by Joan Aiken) and Sanditon (finished by Marie Dobbs).

READ ON

- Emma (about a young woman so eager to manage other people's lives that she fails, for a long time, to realize where her own true happiness lies); Mansfield Park (a darker comedy about a girl brought up by a rich, charming family who is at first dazzled by their easy brilliance, then comes to see that they are selfish and foolish, and finally, by unassuming persistence, wins through to the happiness we have hoped for her).
- ▶ to Pride and Prejudice: Emma Tennant, Pemberley (ripely romantic sequel, not terribly Austenish but fun for Elizabeth/Darcy lovers); > Mrs Gaskell, Wives and Daughters.
- ▶ to Mansfield Park: Joan Aiken, Mansfield Revisited the best of many attempts to use Austen's characters and equal Austen's style.
- ▶ to Austen's work in general: > William Thackeray, Vanity Fair, > E.M. Forster, A Room With a View, > Alison Lurie, Only Children, > Barbara Pym, Excellent Women; the short stories of > Anton Chekhov and > Katherine Mansfield.

AUSTER, Paul (born 1947)

US writer

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Auster travelled in Europe before enrolling at Columbia University. Following an exchange year spent in Paris, he returned to Columbia in 1968, writing journalism while student riots, anti-war demonstrations and the summer of love hangover raged around him. His first book, *Squeeze Play* (1982), was a pastiche of a crime novel. Curiously, the author's name was listed as Paul Benjamin, a name given to a character in the 1995 film *Smoke*, scripted by Auster. Auster's key work is *The New York Trilogy* (1987, although the individual books appeared separately in 1985 and 1986 as *City of Glass, Ghosts* and *The Locked Room*) and this was once again a sly deconstruction job on the detective novel. The trilogy is a more complex narrative than *Squeeze Play*, one in which reader, author and sleuth seem to exchange roles in a strange kind of freefor-all. In the first segment, Quinn, a writer of detective stories, is summoned by someone who wants to get hold of a character called Paul Auster. *Ghosts* sees a detective named Blue hired by White to tail Black and, again, identities seem elastic and fluid. The third volume has the narrator following a friend, the writer

Fanshawe, who has vanished, leaving behind not only his writing but also his wife and child. Before long, the mysterious Fanshawe is the one doing the following and the narrator the one being pursued.

Auster's other novels include In the Country of Last Things (in which a woman searches for her brother in a crumbling, post-apocalyptic city), The Music of Chance (in which a professional gambler drifts across America winning and losing at cards) Mr Vertigo, Moon Palace, Leviathan, The Invention of Solitude, Timbuktu and The Book of Illusions. The Art of Hunger consists of essays, largely on literary subjects. True Tales of American Life, edited by Auster, is a compelling selection of autobiographical accounts by 'ordinary' Americans.

READ ON

- The Invention of Solitude.
- ▶ Robert Coover, Ghost Town (undermines the Western genre just as Auster undermines the detective story); ▷ Don DeLillo, Running Dog; ▷ Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49; Michael Chabon, The Mysteries of Pittsburgh; Cameron McCabe, The Face on the Cutting Room Floor (very different in style and setting but also takes apart the conventions of the detective story to great effect).

READ ON A THEME: AUSTRALIA

- > Murray Bail, Eucalyptus
- > Peter Carey, True History of the Kelly Gang
- ▶ Bruce Chatwin, The Songlines
 David Foster, The Glade Within the Grove
- Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career Howard Jacobson, Redback
- > Thomas Keneally, Woman of the Inner Sea
- David Malouf, Remembering Babylon
- > H.H. Richardson, The Getting of Wisdom
- > Jane Rogers, Promised Lands
- Nevil Shute, A Town Like Alice
- > Patrick White, A Fringe of Leaves
- > Tim Winton, Cloudstreet

READ ON A THEME: AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS (GHOSTED!)

Margaret George, The Memoirs of Cleopatra

- > Robert Graves, I. Claudius

Jude Morgan, The King's Touch (Duke of Monmouth)

Robert Nye, The Voyage of the Destiny (Sir Walter Raleigh)

Augusto Roa Bastos, I, The Supreme (Francia, dictator of Paraguay)

STARTPOINTS

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Writing an autobiography gives you the chance to relive your own life - and to edit it to suit yourself. Although we readers may think that an autobiography allows us inside the writer's head, this is an illusion. We see only what we are allowed to see, and who is to tell how much is fiction, how much is fact? Often the better known the person, the less interesting the book. Generals' and politicians' memories tend to rehash old battles; showbiz autobiographies tend to revive old triumphs and pay off old scores. Some writers have made a speciality out of autobiography (see for example Angelou and Blishen below) and because their books concentrate on place and other people's characters as much as their own, they are often the most enjoyable of all.

> Amis, Martin, Experience (2000). Enfant terrible of English fiction has now reached middle age, and this reflective book, moving in its meditations on time and loss, is one of the results. Very candid, funny and revealing.

Angelou, Maya, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969). Singer, dancer and black rights activist tells scathing story of growing up in racist Southern US. Also: Gather Together in My Name; Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas; The Heart of a Woman; All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes.

Blishen, Edward, Roaring Boys (1955). First of Blishen's self-contained books of autobiography, each taking one aspect of his life. This one is about teaching in a tough slum school in the years after the Second World War. Also: A Cack-Handed War; Sorry, Dad; Shaky Relations; Donkey Work.

Brittain, Vera, Testament of Youth (1933). Upper-middle-class young woman becomes battlefield nurse in the first World War and finds her attitudes to herself and her society completely changed. A classic. Also: Testament of Friendship; Testament of Experience.

Chang, Jung, Wild Swans (1991). The author grew up in Mao's China, only escaping to study abroad after the Cultural Revolution. Through her own story and those of her mother and grandmother, she tells the unhappy story of China in the twentieth century.

Douglass, Frederick, Narrative of the Life of an American Slave (1845). Moving recollections of life as a slave in the pre-Civil War South by man who went on to become the first great African-American orator and leader.

Durrell, Gerald, My Family and Other Animals (1956). Idyllic childhood of young naturalist in 1930s Corfu. The animals are described with zestful seriousness: the humans (Including brother ▷ Lawrence) are like the cast of some eccentric farce. A classic. Also: Birds, Beasts and Relatives; Fillets of Place.

Feynman, Richard, Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman (1985). Endearing, entertaining and intellectually stretching memoir by Nobel Prize-winning physicist who added new realms of meaning to the word 'eccentric'.

Frame, Janet, An Autobiography (1990). Compendium of three books: *To the Island*, about growing up in rural New Zealand, *An Angel At My Table*, a scarring account of eight years in a mental hospital, and *The Envoy from Mirror City*, about trying to make a career as a writer, falling in love and finding happiness at last.

Gosse, Edmund, *Father and Son* (1907). Classic account of two generations clashing in the story of Gosse's relationship with his God-fearing, terrifying father and his attempts to fashion his own character.

Holroyd, Michael, Basil Street Blues (1999). Acclaimed biographer of Strachey and Shaw turns the spotlight on his own eccentric family in a richly enjoyable, very funny book.

Keenan, Bryan, *An Evil Cradling* (1992). Keenan turns his terrible experiences as a hostage in Beirut into a luminous, beautifully written account of suffering, friendship and forgiveness.

Levi, Primo, If This Is a Man (1987). Levi's unsparing memoir of life in Auschwitz forces us to contemplate both the depths and the heights of the human spirit.

McCourt, Frank, *Angela's Ashes* (1996). Compelling story of surviving, with humour and humanity intact, a childhood spent in poverty and deprivation in 1930s and 1940s Limerick. Sometimes harrowing, often very funny. 'Tis is a sequel continuing McCourt's story after he emigrated to New York as a young man.

Wolff, Tobias, *This Boy's Life* (1999). How to survive the perils and pleasures of a typical American adolescence when you're living in a very untypical (for the 1950s) family.

Also recommended: Andrea Ashworth, Once in a House on Fire; Diana Athill, Stet; Brendan Behan, Borstal Boy; ▷ Bruce Chatwin, What Am I Doing Here?; Alexandra Fuller, Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight ▷ Robert Graves, Goodbye to All That; Ben Hamper, Rivethead; Laurie Lee, As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, Speak, Memory; Lorna Sage, Bad Blood; Wole Soyinka, Ake; Peter Ustinov, Dear Me; Joan Wyndham, Love Lessons.



BAIL, Murray (born 1941)

Australian writer

In two books, Murray Bail proved himself to be a comic novelist of invention and originality, employing farce and absurdity as pinpricks to deflate the pretensions of his characters. *Homesickness* (1980) shows a group of unlikeable tourists and their pilgrimage around the world in search of, one assumes, the mind-broadening effects that travel supposedly brings. Instead what they get is an endless succession of featureless airports and soulless hotels. And visits to a sequence of bizarre museums – a Corrugated Iron museum, an Institute of Marriage where a slice of Queen Victoria's wedding cake is on display, a Museum of Legs. Bail's deadpan recounting of their travels adds to the sense of the tourists' alienation from any real experience of the places they visit. *Holden's Performance* (1987) is the story of an innocent abroad in Australia, an antipodean Candide who bulldozes his way through life, matter-of-factly observing the antics of the cast of rogues, eccentrics and weirdos that Bail assembles around him.

In 1998, after a long silence, Bail published a third novel, *Eucalyptus*, which has none of the comic absurdity of the first two. Instead, the book is an unusual love story and a fable about the power of storytelling, in which a farmer promises his daughter to anyone who can name all the species of eucalyptus tree on his land. Suitors come and go but the daughter is attracted only by a young man whom she encounters amid the trees and who tells her a succession of stories about distant lands and cities. A contemporary variant on a classic fairy-tale theme, *Eucalyptus* is told in a sensuous, detailed prose that gives substance to a novel that might otherwise have risked affectation and pretentiousness.

READ ON

- Camouflage (three short stories which encapsulate Bail's oblique take on life)
- Peter Carey, Oscar and Lucinda; David Malouf, The Conversations at Curlow Creek; Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities.

BAILEY, Paul (born 1937)

British novelist

Bailey's novels explore despair, paranoia and the redemptive promise of love in spare, bleak prose. At the Jerusalem (1967) is set in an old people's home; in A Distant Likeness (1973) obsession with the crime he is investigating triggers a policeman's delusion and madness. The hero of Gabriel's Lament (1986) is a middle-aged man, entirely dominated by his widower father, who finds release

only after the old man dies. *Sugar Cane* (1993) examines two lives: those of the venereologist Esther Potocki and the male prostitute 'Stephen'. *Kitty and Virgil* (1998) is a poignant, cleverly constructed and unusual love story which slowly unveils the relationship between Kitty Crozier, who works for a London publisher, and Virgil Florescu, a poet escaped from the Ceausecus' Romania.

READ ON

- Old Soldiers, Uncle Rudolf (a touching narrative of exile and belonging centred on a man recalling his 1930s boyhood in Romania and the sophisticated, operaloving uncle who brought him to England).
- ▶ David Cook, *Happy Endings*; ▷ John Updike, *The Poorhouse Fair*; ▷ Susan Hill, *The Bird of Night*; Tim Pears, *In a Land of Plenty.*

BAINBRIDGE, Beryl (born 1934)

British novelist

In British music-hall and stand-up comedy, there is a tradition of using flat, unemotional words to recount the disasters that happen to perfectly ordinary people, whose boring lives conceal passions and aspirations the speaker can only hint at. Bainbridge's short, dialogue-filled novels do the same thing in print. They are horror stories told like everyday gossip, and their downbeat wit and plain style are essential to the effect. *The Bottle-factory Outing* (1974) is about two women, pathologically jealous of one another, who share a flat and make plans for the seductions and other delights of a works outing – which turns out darkly different from anything either suspected. In *Another Part of the Wood* (1992) a group of friends bicker on a doomed joint holiday in a Welsh forest cottage. In several books, Bainbridge uses real historical characters, imagining for them the same kind of chance-ridden, often desperate lives as those of her invented people. *Young Adolf* (1978) sends Hitler to a tatty 1919 Liverpool boarding house filled with Bainbridge eccentrics. *The Birthday Boys* (1991) is a retelling, a chapter by each of the men involved, of Scott's disastrous 1910–12 Antarctic expedition.

MASTER GEORGIE (1998)

The best and bleakest of Bainbridge's historical fictions, this is the story of Liverpudlian surgeon and photographer George Hardy, who volunteers to take his medical skills to the war in the Crimea. Accompanied by an eccentric entourage of family and friends, including Myrtle, his adoring adoptive sister, and Dr Potter, his increasingly troubled brother-in-law, George flounders through the death and disease of the war in search of meanings that aren't there. Told in a series of narrative voices – including those of Myrtle and Dr Potter – this is a dark, laconic and moving story that long remains in the mind.

Bainbridge's other novels include A Quiet Life, Harriet Said, The Dressmaker, Sweet William, Injury Time, Watson's Apology and According to Queeney, another of Bainbridge's offbeat historical fictions in which Dr Johnson is seen through the often unforgiving eyes of the daughter of a woman with whom he is conducting an intense but platonic relationship.

READ ON

An Awfully Big Adventure (set in shabby provincial theatre in the bleak 1950s). Every
Man For Himself (Bainbridge's typically idiosyncratic take on the Titanic disaster).

► Paul Bailey, Sugar Cane; > Ian McEwan, The Cement Garden; Alice Thomas Ellis, The Inn at the Edge of the World: > Hilary Mantel, The Giant O'Brien

BAKER, Nicholson (born 1957)

US writer

The minutiae of life, the tiny details that form the background to most fiction, are brought into the foreground in the early novels of Nicholson Baker. Little happens in a conventional narrative sense but the reader's interest is held by Baker's playfulness with language, his odd, oblique observations and his digressions. In Room Temperature (1990) the novel's only action (if that is the right word) is the feeding of a baby. The Mezzanine (1988) centres on the short escalator journey of an office worker to the floor on which he works. This makes the books sound dull and they are anything but. They are short books and Baker crams them with the most extraordinary, offbeat information and speculation, often contained in elaborate footnotes in which the word count substantially outmatches that in the main text. What is the physics behind the breaking of shoelaces and why does one break and not the other? Are the hot-air blowers in public toilets really more sanitary than towels? Why and how do straws float in milk? These are the kinds of questions that exercise Baker's protagonists. They also lavish their verbal ingenuity on the praise of perforations and the design of Jiffy-Pop cartons. Some readers will find Baker's knowing ironies and reflections, his stream of consciousness for the designer-label generation deeply irritating. Others will be beguiled by his wit, the attention he gives to the everyday and the way books like The Mezzanine and Room Temperature reveal the idle, insignificant internal monologues and debates we all conduct as we go about our lives.

THE FERMATA (1994)

After his early novels, Baker gained a certain notoriety by turning his obsessive attention to sex. *Vox* (1992), explicitly detailed about the delights of telephone sex, was followed by *The Fermata*. This is the story of an office temp, Arno Strine, who has the ability to freeze time at the snap of his fingers. He uses this ability to explore erotic possibilities not otherwise available to him, undressing women at will, playing sexual practical jokes on those frozen. Attacked for misogyny by critics who seemed to mistake Baker's views for those of his fictional character, *The Fermata* is actually a witty and clever analysis of the whole idea of pornography and the pornographic gaze, showing a subtle awareness of the issues involved which escaped most of his critics.

Baker's other books (fiction and non-fiction) include *U* and *I*, *The Size of Thoughts, The Everlasting Story of Nory, Double Fold* and *A Box of Matches*, his most recent novel, in which he returns to the obsessive scrutiny of ephemera that characterized his first books.

- ▶ to The Fermata: > Will Self, Cock and Bull.
- ▶ Io Baker's other fiction: ▷ John Updike, Couples; ▷ Paul Auster, The New York Trilogy; Donald Antrim, The Hundred Brothers; Gilbert Sorrentino, Imaginative Qualities of Actual Things.

BALDWIN, James (1924–87)

US writer of novels, plays and non-fiction

In a series of non-fiction books (*Notes of a Native Son, The Fire Next Time, No Name in the Street*), Baldwin described the fury and despair of alienated US blacks, urging revolution as the only way to maintain racial identity in a hostile environment. His plays and novels tackle the same theme, but add two more, equally passionate: the way fundamentalist Christianity is a destructive force, and the quest for sexual identity in an amoral world. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) is a novel about a poor Harlem family torn apart by the pressures of born-again Christianity. *Another Country* (1962) shows people living lives of increasing desperation in a corrupt, all-engulfing and terrifying New York. *Giovanni's Room* (1956) is about an American in Paris, having to choose between his mistress and his (male) lover.

Baldwin's other novels are Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone, If Beale Street Could Talk and Evidence of Things Not Seen; his short stories are in Going to Meet the Man. His plays include The Amen Corner and Blues for Mr Charlie, and his other non-fiction books are Nobody Knows My Name, Nothing Personal (with photos by Richard Avedon) and A Rap on Race (with Margaret Mead).

READ ON

- ▶ Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (a rootless black American travels the US in search of identity, and finally as the book becomes increasingly surreal continues his quest in hell); Richard Wright, *Native Son* (first published in 1940, the story of a young black man driven to crime and murder by racism and deprivation); Chester Himes, *Cotton Comes to Harlem* and his other detective novels (set in a wildly vibrant and violent Harlem and, crime plots apart, are as unsparing as any of Baldwin's books); Maya Angelou's autobiographical sequence, beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (sunnier reactions to equally abrasive Southern US black experience).
- Books as bleak as Baldwin's about the conjunction of sex, violence and despair: Jean Genet, Querelle of Brest; John Rechy, The City of Night; John Edgar Wideman, A Glance Away.

BALLARD, J.G. (James Graham) (born 1930) British novelist

Ballard's pessimism about the human race, with our capacity for violence and destruction, reveals itself in novels which are usually designated science fiction but which stretch the limits of the genre almost to breaking point. Each of these novels takes an aspect of the way we treat the planet, and each other, and extends it towards catastrophe. In some books (e.g. *The Drowned World*, about the melting of the polar ice-caps) human actions trigger natural disaster. In others (e.g. *Concrete Island*, about a man trapped on a motorway island, and *High Rise*, about the effects on human nature of living in ever-higher tower-blocks) we laboriously reconstruct the world as a single, megalopolitan prison cell. *Crash*, which gained a new notoriety as a consequence of David Cronenberg's 1996 film version, delves into dark realms of the psyche in its examination of the sexual allure of car crashes and adds new realms of meaning to the word 'auto-eroticism'.

Apart from science fiction, Ballard is best known for *Empire of the Sun* (1984), a powerful autobiographical novel about a young teenager in a Second World War Japanese internment camp, and its sequel *The Kindness of Women* (1991), about the same boy as a young adult looking for love in post-war England. More recent novels, like *Cocaine Nights* (1996) and *Super-Cannes* (2000), straddle the gap between social analysis and social prediction in their depictions of sex and drugs-fuelled decadence. In *Cocaine Nights* the investigation of a fatal fire in an upmarket Spanish resort reveals violence and anarchy lurking beneath a civilized veneer. The apparently utopian business community in the south of France in *Super-Cannes*, 'an ideas laboratory for the new millennium', is the setting for unsettling mind-games and eventual violence.

Ballard's other books include The Four-Dimensional Nightmare, Hello America (about European explorers of the future rediscovering a long abandoned US) and The Atrocity Exhibition/Love and Napalm: Export USA, a tortured, surrealist meditation on politics, sex and automobile disasters. The Voices of Time, Myths of the Near Future, Low-flying Aircraft and the linked volume The Vermillion Sands are collections of short stories.

READ ON

- The Day of Creation (about a scientist trying to find water in drought-stricken
 Africa, who sees a new river appear miraculously, becomes obsessed with it, and
 travels up it to find its source and hopefully understand himself); Rushing to
 Paradise (about a post-apocalypse utopia run by a mad, fundamentalist feminist).
- ► ▷ William S. Burroughs, *The Soft Machine*; ▷ Will Self, *My Idea of Fun*; ▷ Philip K. Dick, *Valis*.

BALZAC, Honoré de (1799–1850)

French novelist

Photography was invented during Balzac's lifetime, and there was talk of using it to produce an encyclopedia of human types, catching each trade, profession and character in a suitable setting and at a particularly revealing moment. Balzac determined to do much the same thing in prose: to write a set of novels which would include people of every possible kind, described so minutely that the reader could envisage them as clearly as if they had been photographed. He called the project *The Human Comedy (La Comédie humaine)*, and although he died before completing it, it still runs to some 90 pieces of fiction – which can be read separately – and includes over 2,000 different characters.

OLD GORIOT (LE PÈRE GORIOT) (1834)

Goriot is a lonely old man obsessed by love for his two married daughters. He lives in a seedy Parisian boarding-house (whose contents and inhabitants Balzac meticulously describes), and gradually sells all his possessions, and even cuts down on food, to try to buy his daughters' love with presents. They treat him with a contempt he never notices – in fact everyone despises him except Rastignac, a student living in the same house. Goriot's death-bed scene, where he clutches Rastignac's hand thinking that his daughters have come to visit him at last, is one of Balzac's most moving passages, a deliberate evocation of King Lear's death in Shakespeare's play.

The best-known novels from The Human Comedy are César Birotteau (about a shopkeeper destroyed by ambition), Eugénie Grandet (a love story, one of Balzac's few books with a happy ending), and Cousin Bette (about a man whose obsessive philandering tears his family apart). Droll Tales (Contes drolatiques) is a set of farcical short stories, similar to those in Giovanni Boccaccio's Decameron or The Arabian Nights.

READ ON

- The Curé of Tours (a similarly detailed, and almost equally moving, study of desolate old age).
- ▶ to Balzac's power and emotional bleakness: ▷ Émile Zola, Nana; ▷ François Mauriac, The Woman of the Pharisees; Theodore Dreiser, An American Tragedy; ▷ Carson McCullers, The Ballad of the Sad Café; Hugh Walpole, The Old Ladies.
- ▶ to his vision of the 'ant-hill of human aspiration', the senseless, self-destructive bustle of affairs: ▷ Charles Dickens, Dombey and Son; George Gissing, New Grub Street.

BANKS, lain (born 1954)

British novelist

As 'lain Banks', Banks writes literary novels, each of them fuelled with dark, obsessive imaginings. His first novel, The Wasp Factory (1984), was a disturbing but compelling announcement of his themes. It is the story, in his own words, of Frank Cauldhame, a teenage killer, living with his father on a remote Scottish island where he practises bizarre sacrificial rituals to protect himself against perceived threats. Extremely graphic in its description of blood, death and violence, it is not a book for the easily queasy but creates its own imagined world with great power. The Bridge (1986) explores the fantasies of a man about to die after a car crash – and is set partly on a nightmarish Forth Bridge, partly in the hero's memories of his Scottish childhood, and partly in a mad sword-andsorcery fantasy adventure into which his fevered imagination projects him. Complicity (1993) is about the dilemma of a journalist accused of being a serial killer: will he take the blame, or defend himself by revealing the truth which is at present known to only two people, himself and his best friend, the real killer? The Business (1999) is a tale of corruption and conspiracy in a shadowy, centuriesold organization devoted to the making of money.

As 'lain M. Banks', Banks writes science fiction, filled with the same wild humour and bizarre imagination. The 'Culture novels tell of a future society in which technological advance has created super-beings of great longevity and almost limitless capacities. The advanced inhabitants of the Culture come into contact and often conflict with other less-developed societies throughout the galaxies. Banks's science fiction is basically space opera but with an intelligence and sophistication space opera doesn't usually possess.

- novels: Canal Dreams, Espedair Street, The Crow Road, Whit; science fiction: Use
 of Weapons, Consider Phlebas, The Player of Games, Excession, Inversions, Look
 to Windward.
- ▶ to Banks's literary novels: > lan McEwan, The Comfort of Strangers; > Martin

- Amis, *The Information*; Clive Barker, *The Damnation Game*; ▷ Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*.
- ► to his science fiction: Peter F. Hamilton, *The Reality Dysfunction*; Ken McLeod, *The Star Fraction*; Robert Sheckley, *The Alchemical Marriage of Alistair Crompton*.

BANVILLE, JOHN (born 1945)

Irish novelist

John Banville is one of the most inventive and intellectually exhilarating novelists of his generation. He uses his fiction to explore the intricate connections between past and present, our shifting and fluctuating sense of personal identity and the personalities of others, and the varying ways we interpret the world and create (or fail to create) our place in it. Banville published his first two novels. Long Lankin and Birchwood, in 1971 and 1973, and then embarked on a sequence of books focused on scientific geniuses of the past – a sequence sometimes known as The Revolutions Trilogy. Doctor Copernicus (1976) brings to life the Polish/German priest whose theories undermined medieval ideas about man's position in the universe. It was followed by Kepler (1981) and The Newton Letter (1982), a story largely set in contemporary Ireland but with a central character obsessed by writing a biography of Isaac Newton. All the books show Banville's ability to weave together a compelling narrative with intellectual speculation and playfulness. In the twenty years since The Revolutions Trilogy, Banville has continued to produce fiction which plays sophisticated games with its readers, often undermining or challenging our ideas about narratives and the reliability of narrators.

THE BOOK OF EVIDENCE (1989)

Freddie Montgomery, the narrator of *The Book of Evidence*, is a man of culture, intelligence and self-awareness. He is also a murderer. Returning to his native Ireland, he breaks into a house to steal a painting with which he has become obsessed and, in the course of the attempted robbery, he commits a brutal and unnecessary murder. The novel is Freddie's chilling dissection of his life and how it has led him to the killing. Half confession and half the self-conscious creation of a persona that may or may not reflect his inner self, Freddie's marshalling of the evidence in his case is another example of Banville's fascination with the unreliable narrator and with mysteries of human motivation.

Banville's other novels include Ghosts and Athena (two titles which link with The Book of Evidence to form a loose trilogy), Mefisto, The Untouchable, Eclipse and Shroud.

- The Untouchable (a fictional version of the story of the Cambridge spy Anthony Blunt)
- ▶ to The Revolutions Trilogy: ▷ Peter Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*; ▷ Malcolm Bradbury, *To the Hermitage*.
- ▶ to The Book of Evidence: > John Lanchester, The Debt to Pleasure; > Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita.
- ▶ to Banville's fiction in general: John McGahern, *That They May Face the Rising Sun*; > Graham Swift, *Ever After*; > W.G. Sebald, *The Emigrants.*

BARKER, PAT (born 1943)

British novelist

Barker's early novels told, in a no-nonsense, brisk way, about the lives of ordinary people, usually women, poor and in the North of England. In the 1990s she used the same blunt precision on a completely different subject, the experience of fighting men in the First World War, and produced the award-winning trilogy of Regeneration (1991). The Eve in the Door (1993) and The Ghost Road (1995). Mixing wholly fictional characters like the anti-heroic Billy Prior with real characters such as the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen and the psychiatrist William Rivers, Barker succeeded in re-imagining the First World War for a new generation of readers. These novels enter into the heads of young men forced to cause, endure and deal with horrors beyond imagining; in short, not the bravado but the waste of war. Our grandparents or great-grandparents brought back tales like these, and Owen turned them into lacerating poems; Barker's books strip away time and distance, giving voices to shadows and the inarticulate, so that you feel that this is exactly what it must have been like to live these nightmares. After completing her First World War trilogy Pat Barker returned to something like the territory of her earlier fiction with Another World (1998) and Border Crossing (2001), in which a child psychiatrist working in the north of England is drawn back into a terrible crime in the past. However, her most recent novel, Double Vision (2003), again takes war as its subject, in a story of a man struggling to come to terms with his experiences in 1990s Sarajevo.

READ ON

- Barker's earlier novels include Union Street (filmed as Stanley and Iris, with Robert de Niro and Jane Fonda) and the particularly fine Blow Your House Down.
- ▶ to the trilogy: Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front (renowned 1930s novel about German squaddies in the First World War); ▷ Sebastian Faulks, Birdsong; ▷ Norman Mailer, The Naked and the Dead (about bewildered young airmen in the Second World War).
- ▶ to Barker's work in general: ▷ Helen Dunmore, *With Your Crooked Heart*; ▷ Margaret Forster, *Mother Can You Hear Me?*; Jane Gardam, *Bilgewater*; Anne Fine, *Telling Liddy*.

BARNES, Julian (born 1946)

British novelist

Barnes worked as editorial assistant on the Oxford English Dictionary, and as a drama critic, before becoming a full-time writer in his early thirties. After two enjoyable but ordinary novels, *Metroland* and *Before She Met Me*, he hit form in 1984 with *Flaubert's Parrot*. This is a dazzlingly ironical book about a biographer of ▷ Flaubert so obsessed with his subject, so eager to investigate every piece of fluff on Flaubert's carpet or tea-stain on his crockery, that the quest utterly and ludicrously swallows his own identity. In 1986 Barnes followed this with a tour de force of an entirely different kind, *Staring at the Sun*. The heroine (who lives from the 1930s to the 2020s) is offered three main choices in her life, and after twice making the wrong decision (settling for the conventional) she uproots herself in old age, learns to fly and sets off to visit the Seven Wonders of the modern world. In the linked stories of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989), Barnes describes a

number of skin-of-the-teeth escapes for the human race, epic voyages from life-threatening reality to one mirage of the radiant future after another: Noah's Ark, the raft of the Medusa, a boatful of Jewish refugees, a film crew in the Amazon rain forest. The book also meditates on love – which, in Barnes's most ironical shift of all, may be the solution to the human dilemma, a solution all his characters are too self-obsessed to see. *Talking It Over* (1991) explores an adulterous affair from the point of view of each of the people involved. *Love, Etc* (2000) returns to the same three characters ten years after the events described in *Talking It Over. England, England* (1998) is a knowing, sophisticated and often very funny satire on ideas of Englishness. A megalomaniac tycoon creates a theme-park England on the Isle of Wight, filled with all those things deemed quintessentially English, and the fantasy land gradually supersedes the real England.

As well as novels under his own name, Barnes also writes private-eye thrillers as Dan Kavanagh. They include Duffy, Going to the Dogs and Putting the Boot In. Letters from London, 1990–95 is a collection of ruminant, witty journalism about post-Thatcher London and the chattering classes. Cross Channel is a collection of meaty short stories, Something to Declare a selection of essays which explore his delight in France and French culture.

READ ON

- ▶ to Flaubert's Parrot: > Vladimir Nabokov, Pale Fire; > A.S. Byatt, The Biographer's Tale.
- ▶ to Staring at the Sun: > Gabriel García Márquez, Love in the Time of Cholera.
- ▶ to A History of the World in 10½ Chapters: D Michéle Roberts, The Book of Mrs Noah.
- ▶ to Barnes's other works: ▷ Jonathan Coe, What a Carve Up!; ▷ Ian McEwan, Enduring Love; ▷ John Lanchester, The Debt to Pleasure.

READ ON A THEME: BATTLING WITH LIFE (people at odds with the society around them)

- > Peter Carey, Oscar and Lucinda
- > Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist
- > Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure
- Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Scarlet Letter
- > W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage
- > John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath

See also: Emotionally III-at-Ease; Perplexed by Life; Revisiting One's Past

BECKETT, Samuel (1906–89)

Irish writer

Novelist, poet and playwright, Beckett produced work both in French and English, issuing translations as he went along. Most of his novels, and his

best-known play *Waiting for Godot*, first appeared in French. As a young man he was \triangleright Joyce's secretary, and his work owes debts to the monologue which ends *Ulysses* and to the dream-narratives of *Finnegans Wake*. His subject is the futility of human existence, and his characters (the narrators of his books) are tramps, cripples and the insane. His works would be unendurably bleak – many readers find them so – if they were not lit with a fantastical, death-defying black humour and marked by an almost obsessive interest in the potential and limits of language.

Beckett's main novels are Murphy, Watt and the trilogy Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnameable. His plays include Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape and Happy Days. His poems are in Collected Poems in English and French. More Pricks than Kicks is a collection of early, Joycean short stories.

READ ON

▶ ▷ James Joyce, *Ulysses;* Julio Cortazar, *Hopscotch*; Georges Perec, *A Void*; B.S. Johnson, *House Mother Normal*.

BEERBOHM, Max (1876-1956)

British artist and writer

A caricaturist and satirist, Beerbohm published cartoons, parodies, essays and articles ridiculing literary and social figures of the day. His only novel, *Zuleika Dobson* (1911), is a send-up of the university-set romantic novels of the day. Beerbohm turns the genre's conventions on their heads. His Oxford undergraduates, whether gentlemen (world-weary and overbred) or scholars (weedy and obsessive), think of nothing but themselves, until Zuleika, the beautiful grand-daughter of the Warden of Judas College, sweeps into the university and every male in the place (even the statues on their pedestals) starts swooning for love of her.

READ ON

- Seven Men (short stories).
- ▶ Nancy Mitford, *Don't Tell Alfred*; ▷ Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*; Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (a darker view of similarly self-obsessed characters).

READ ON A THEME: BEFORE THE NOVEL

The novel as we know it was perfected in the eighteenth century. These books preceded it — but are novels in all but name.

Apuleius (second century), *The Golden Ass*John Bunyan (seventeenth century), *Pilgrim's Progress*Miguel de Cervantes (sixteenth century), *Don Quixote*Homer (c. ninth century BCE), *The Odyssey*Thomas Malory (fifteenth century), *Morte d'Arthur*Thomas Nashe (sixteenth century), *The Unfortunate Traveller*Petronius (first century), *Satyricon*

> François Rabelais (sixteenth century), Gargantua and Pantagruel

READ ON A THEME: BEFORE THE WEDDING

John Berger, *To the Wedding* Isabel Colegate, *Statues in a Garden*

- Carson McCullers, The Member of the Wedding David Nobbs, A Bit of a Do
- Carol Shields, The Republic of Love

BELLOW, Saul (born 1915)

US novelist and playwright

In Bellow's view, one of the most unexpected aspects of life in the modern world, and particularly in the post-Christian West, is that many people have lost all sense of psychological and philosophical identity. All Bellow's leading characters feel alienated from society. Some are content to suffer; others try to assert themselves, to invent an identity and live up to it − an attempt which is usually both bizarre and doomed. The hero of *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), trying to model himself on one of ▷ Hemingway's men of action, takes his girl-friend lizard-hunting in Mexico with a tame eagle, and is amazed when she leaves him. The hero of *Henderson the Rain King* (1959) goes on safari to darkest Africa, only to be taken prisoner by a remote people who think him a god-king and mark him for sacrifice. All of Bellow's fiction is written in a rich and expansive prose and the exuberance of his imagination, clear both in description and in the creation of character, adds life and energy to what is already philosophically intriguing.

HUMBOLDT'S GIFT (1975)

The book's hero, Charlie Citrine, is a wisecracking, streetwise failure. He is a writer whose inspiration has run out, a husband whose wife is divorcing him and whose mistress despises him, an educated man terrified of brainwork. Unexpectedly, a legacy from a dead friend, a drunken, bawdy poet, turns out to be not the worthless pile of paper everyone imagines but a scenario which forms the basis for a hugely successful film. Wealth is now added to Citrine's problems, and he is battened on by tax officials, accountants, salesmen and an unsuccessful crook who tries to extort from him first money and then friendship. As the novel proceeds, Citrine keeps nerving himself to make the decision – any decision – that will focus his life, and is hampered each time by ludicrous circumstances and by the contrast between his own inadequacy and the memory of his larger-than-life, dead friend.

Bellow's other full-length novels are Mr Sammler's Planet, Herzog, The Dean's December and More Die of Heartbreak. Publication of Ravelstein, a novel of mortality and friendship, in 2000 showed that old age had brought little diminution of Bellow's creative zest and imagination. Dangling Man, The Victim, Seize the Day, A Theft, The Bellarosa Connection and The Actual are mid-length novellas, and his short stories are collected in Mosby's Memoirs, Something to Remember Me By and Him With the Foot in His Mouth. It All Adds Up is a fat, juicy collection of non-fiction. He has also written plays and a fascinating political memoir about a visit to Israel, To Jerusalem and Back.

READ ON

- Herzog (about a panic-stricken intellectual who revisits the scenes of his past life
 trying to find clues to his psychological identity cue for a magnificent
 travelogue through the city of Chicago, Bellow's consistent inspiration and this
 book's other central 'character').
- ▶ to Bellow's theme of people searching for identity: ▷ Albert Camus, *The Fall (La Chute)*; ▷ William Golding, *The Paper Men*; Bernard Malamud, *A New Life*; ▷ Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*.
- ▶ to Bellow's work in general: ▷ Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*; Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep*; ▷ Mordecai Richler, *Barney's Version*.

BENNETT, Arnold (1867–1931)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Bennett worked as a journalist (he once edited *Woman's Own*), and then spent eight years in Paris, setting himself up as playwright, novelist and essayist. He was a workaholic, writing hundreds of thousands of words each year, and much of his output was potboiling. But his best novels and stories, set in the area he called 'the Five Towns' (Stoke-on-Trent and its surrounding conurbations), are masterpieces. They deal in a realistic way with the lives and aspirations of ordinary people (factory hands, shop assistants, housewives), but are full of disarming optimism and fantasy. Bennett's characters have ambitions; they travel, they read, they dream. Apart from the Five Towns novels his best-known works are two books originally written as magazine serials: *The Card* (about a bouncy young man whose japes outrage provincial society but who ends up as mayor) and *The Grand Babylon Hotel*, a set of linked stories about the guests and staff in a luxury hotel.

THE OLD WIVES' TALE (1908)

The lives of two sisters are contrasted: vivacious Sophia and steady Constance. Sophia feels constricted by life in the Five Towns, falls for a handsome wastrel and elopes with him to Paris, where he deserts her. Constance meanwhile marries a clerk in her father's shop, and settles to a life of bored domesticity. The novel charts the sisters' lives, and includes memorable scenes of the 1870 siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War. Its concluding section unites the sisters, now elderly, and shows, as their lives draw to a close, that those lives were all they had, that neither achieved anything or made any impact on the world.

The Five Towns novels are 'Ahna of the Five Towns, The Old Wives' Tale, Clayhanger, Hilda Lessways, These Twain and The Roll Call. Riceyman Steps, which tells the tragedy of a miserly secondhand bookseller in London's Clerkenwell, is grimmer and more > Zolaesque.

- Clayhanger; Riceyman Steps.
- ▶ D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*; ▷ H.G. Wells, *Ann Veronica*; Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*; ▷ W. Somerset Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*; ▷ J.B. Priestley, *Angel Pavement*; Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (a set of stories about a US small town whose people's feelings and lives echo those of Bennett's characters).

BENSON, E.F. (Edward Frederic) (1867–1940)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Benson came from one of the most illustrious of all Victorian families. His father was an Archbishop of Canterbury, one of his brothers was a high-ranking Cambridge don, another was a Roman Catholic monsignor and his sister was one of the first women to take a first at Oxford. As a young man, Benson was a dandy, a friend of Oscar Wilde - and published a scandalously homo-erotic novel about public-school life. He wrote over 120 books altogether, and is best remembered today for acid social comedies, and particularly for the Mapp and Lucia series, televised with enormous success in the mid-1980s. Their characters are well-to-do, middle-class Edwardians, whose chief interest in life is social one-upmanship. One's bridge party, one's garden, one's paintings or one's recipes must simply outclass everyone else's, and if there is the slightest risk of failure, devious means must be employed.

The Mapp and Lucia series consists of Queen Lucia. Miss Mapp, Lucia in London, Mapp and Lucia, Lucia's Progress and Trouble for Lucia, Benson's other comic novels, similar in themes and wit to the Lucia books, include the Dodo series and the (slightly) more serious Mrs Ames and Secret Lives.

READ ON

- Paying Guests (in which a spa town is the setting for the petty snobberies and bitchery Benson delighted in skewering)
- ▶ Tom Holt, Lucia in Wartime and Lucia Triumphant (sequels, as good as Benson at his best).
- ► comparable books of high social comedy, set in the 1930s–1950s; > P.G. Wodehouse. Life at Blandings; > Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies; Nancy Mitford, Love in a Cold Climate.

READ ON A THEME: THE BIBLE

Old Testament

Anita Diamant, The Red Tent Jenny Diski, Only Human

- > Robert Heinlein, Job
- > Joseph Heller, God Knows
- > Thomas Mann, Joseph and His Brothers
- > Jeanette Winterson, Boating for Beginners

New Testament

- > Anthony Burgess, The Kingdom of the Wicked
- Norman Mailer, The Gospel According to the Son George Moore, The Brook Kerith
- > Michèle Roberts. The Wild Girl Jose Saramago, The Gospel According to Jesus Christ Henryk Sienkiewycz, Quo Vadis?

See also: Ancient Greece and Rome; Other Peoples, Other Times

BINCHY, MAEVE (born 1940)

Irish novelist

Maeve Binchy is usually classified as a romance writer, but this classification can obscure her skill and versatility. Many romance writers appear to write the same novel over and over again. Every Maeve Binchy novel is different, although all demonstrate her humour and humanity. Whether writing about a family in a small Irish village (*The Glass Lake*), a Dublin woman who only becomes her true self when she spends time away from Dublin and her home (*Tara Road*) or two old friends whose friendship becomes something more as they struggle to achieve their ambition of running the best catering company in Dublin (*Scarlet Feather*), Binchy provides affectionate and compelling tapestries of ordinary people's lives and loves.

Maeve Binchy's other novels include Circle of Friends, Echoes, Evening Class, The Firefly Summer, Light a Penny Candle, Silver Wedding and Quentins. The Lilac Bus is a set of linked short stories about the passengers who travel regularly on a small country bus. Victoria Line, Central Line is a collection of short stories about passengers on the London Underground.

READ ON

- Echoes.
- ► Rosamunde Pilcher, *The Shell Seekers*; ▷ Edna O'Brien, *The Country Girls*; Patricia Scanlan, *Promises, Promises*; Clare Boylan, *Holy Pictures*; Cathy Kelly, *She's the One*; Marian Keyes, *Watermelon*.

READ ON A THEME: BLACK BRITONS

Diran Adebayo, *Some Kind of Black*Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*David Dabydeen, *The Intended*Bernardine Evaristo, *The Emperor's Babe*Jackie Kay, *Trumpet*

- Hanif Kureishi, The Buddha of Suburbia Andrea Levy, Never Far From Nowhere Samuel Selvon, The Lonely Londoners Meera Syal, Anita and Me
- Zadie Smith, White Teeth Stephen Thompson, Toy Soldiers

STARTPOINTS

BIOGRAPHY

Next to fiction, biography is the most popular of all forms of literature. More 'Lives' are written, bought and borrowed from libraries than at any other time in history; some people read nothing else. Some biographies (for example, Martin Gilbert's multi-volume *Churchill*) are works of documentary history, with every phrase checked and verified from first-hand accounts. Others set out to explain their subject, to puzzle out his or her psychological identity as well as narrating the life. Others again (the celeb biographies which enjoy their brief shelf-life) are chiefly for fans: memoirs or snapshots whose main purpose is to remind, not tell. The best biographies, perhaps, do all these jobs at once, so that you end up entertained as well as informed, enriched by what you read.

> Ackroyd, Peter, *The Life of Thomas More* (1998). Novelist and biographer of several great Londoners (Dickens, Blake) turns his attention to the man for all seasons and comes up with a novel but convincing portrait.

Boswell, James, The Life of Samuel Johnson, Ll.D (1791). Classic known by all but read by few. Wonderful, word-by-word accounts of Johnson's table talk, evocative scene-setting, full of personal affection for its subject. Like a window thrown open on eighteenth-century London.

Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce* **(1968)**. Magisterial interpretation of the life and work of Ireland's greatest novelist and exile.

Garrow, David J., Bearing the Cross (1987). Biography of Martin Luther King Jr: good on the man, outstanding on the political and social background, and blunt about the legend.

Hamilton, Nigel, Monty (1981–6). Three-volume account of the dazzling Second World War general who succumbed to megalomania and melancholy in later life, when peace left him with no role to play.

Holmes, Richard, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (1989) and *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (1998). Two vividly readable volumes which bring to life the pathos and achievement of Coleridge's struggle to subdue his addiction and fulfil the extraordinary promise of his youth.

Holroyd, Michael, Lytton Strachey (1968). Strachey was himself an innovative biographer (*Eminent Victorians*, 1918), but is also interesting as a member of the Bloomsbury Group, an extraordinarily self-obsessed collection of early twentieth-century British writers, artists, critics, autobiographers, biographers and diarists. Holroyd brilliantly untangles their relationships, while still managing to focus on Strachey.

Kershaw, Ian, *Hitler: Hubris 1889–1936* (1998) and *Hitler: Nemesis 1936–1945* (2000). After nearly fifty years Alan Bullock's biography of Hitler has finally been supplanted as the standard work by Kershaw's chilling, two-volume examination of the creation and career of a tyrant.

Lahr, John, *Prick Up Your Ears* (1978). The short life and violent death of legendary playwright Joe Orton evoked, together with his claustrophobic and eventually fatal relationship with Kenneth Halliwell.

Motion, Andrew, *Philip Larkin* (1993). Motion, himself a poet and a friend and colleague of Larkin, undertook the difficult task of a biography of an intensely private man and produced one of the best lives of a poet in years.

Pimlott, Ben, *The Queen* (1996). Most recent royal biographies have been exercises in prurience, banality or both – here's one of the few written with genuine intelligence and insight.

Tillyard, Stella, *Aristocrats* **(1994)**. Entertaining and successful multi-biography in which Tillyard recreates the upper-class eighteenth-century world of the four Lennox sisters.

Also recommended: Claire Tomalin, Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self; Antonia Fraser, Cromwell: Our Chief of Men; Vincent Cronin, Napoleon; Amanda Foreman, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; Robert Blake, Disraeli; Fawn Brodie, The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton; Patrick French, Younghusband; Gitta Sereny, Albert Speer; Dava Sobel, Longitude (John Harrison, chronometer-maker); Victoria Glendinning, Jonathan Swift; Denis Mack Smith, Mussolini; Bernard Crick, George Orwell: A Life.

BLINCOE. Nicholas (born 1966)

British novelist

Writing novels that veer wildly and entertainingly from black comedy to graphically described violence and action, Nicholas Blincoe has been one of the stars of a new wave of British crime fiction in the last ten years. Drawing on the traditions of American pulp and noir fiction rather than the (mostly) cosier conventions of the average British crime novel, he has written several books that bristle with sharp prose and snappy, streetwise dialogue. His first book, *Acid Casuals* (1995), the story of a transsexual's bloody return to her native Manchester and the drugs scene there, was followed by *Jello Salad* (1997), set in a Soho peopled almost exclusively by drug-fried addicts and homicidal maniacs. Fast-paced and imaginative, they treated even the most gruesome violence with black comic detachment. *The Dope Priest* (1999) saw Blincoe move his setting from Britain to the Middle East but continue to provide a cocktail of thrills, farce and drug-fuelled mayhem. *White Mice* (2002) is a bizarre love-story-cum-thriller set in the glitzy, febrile world of fashion.

READ ON

▶ James Hawes, White Merc with Fins; Jeremy Cameron, Vinnie Got Blown Away; Colin Bateman, Cycle of Violence; Charles Higson, King of the Ants.

BÖLL, Heinrich (1917–85)

German novelist and non-fiction writer

For decades after the Second World War and the 'economic miracle' which followed it, German novelists hovered over their country like doctors examining a particularly interesting patient. How could any nation be so outwardly flourishing and seem so dead inside? Böll, a Roman Catholic, linked the malaise of society with another kind of moral disintegration, the collapse of faith – but instead of preaching or hectoring he tried to alert his readers with bitter, savage satire. The Safety Net, for example, is about terrorism. The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum satirizes tabloid journalism and our obsession with 'news', in the story of a woman destroyed and driven to violence by the intrusions of the press. In Group Portrait with Lady (1971) Böll uses a documentary method to assemble a picture of both an ordinary individual and the teeming German society of which she is part. The book's style is brisk, witty and apparently uncontroversial, so that it is not until the end that we realize just what Böll is saying about Germany's moral plight.

Böll's other novels include And Where Were You, Adam?, Billiards at Half Past Nine and Women in a River Landscape. His short stories are in Absent Without Leave, Traveller, If You Come to Spa, Children are Civilians Too and The Casualty. What's To Become of the Boy? is a savage memoir of adolescence under the Nazis; Irish Journal describes his stay in Ireland in the 1960s, and his affection for the Celtic, Catholic culture he found there.

READ ON

- Billiards at Half-Past Nine (a panoramic view of German society in the fifty years
 during and after the Second World War, focused on a single family); The Clown (a
 bleak study of one person's attempt to retain dignity, moral integrity and religious
 faith in a society where such qualities are no longer valued).
- ➤ Robert Musil, Young Törless. Nathalie Sarraute, Portrait of an Unknown Man;

 > Saul Bellow, Mr Sammler's Planet;

 > Günter Grass, The Call of the Toad.

READ ON A THEME: BOOZE AND BOOZERS

Charles Bukowski, Tales of Ordinary Madness Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth

- □ Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory Patrick Hamilton, Hangover Square Charles Jackson, The Lost Weekend

BORGES, Jorge Luis (1899–1987)

Argentinian short story writer and poet

Until the 1950s Borges worked as a librarian and was an admired poet. He had to give up librarianship when he went blind, but he always claimed that the 'darkness of his eyes' enabled him to see better in his writings. In the 1950s his 'fictions' began to appear in English, and his reputation spread worldwide. A 'fiction' is a short prose piece, ranging in length from a paragraph to a half-dozen pages. Some are short stories, in the manner of ▷ Kipling, Chesterton or ▷ Kafka (whom Borges translated into Spanish). Others are tiny surrealist meditations, zen-like philosophical riddles or prose-poetry. A twentieth-century writer produces a version of *Don Quixote* for modern times − and it is identical, word for word, to the original. A man meets a mysterious stranger by a riverside, and finds that the stranger is himself. The library of the Tower of Babel is meticulously described. A man writes about the terrifying prison which traps him − and only at the end reveals its name: the world. *Labyrinths* (English edition 1962) is a generous anthology of Borges's work, and gives the flavour particularly of the 'fictions'.

Borges's stories and fictions are in A Universal History of Infamy, Fictions, The Aleph, Dreamings, The Book of Sand and Doctor Brodie's Report. His Selected Poems were published in English translation in 1972.

READ ON

- The Book of Imaginary Beings (descriptions of 120 fanciful creatures from the
 weirder recesses of the world's imagination: the chimera, the Cheshire cat, the
 chonchon, the lunar hare, the elephant that foretold Buddha's birth, the 36 lamed
 wufniks, Haokah the thunder-god, Youwakee the flying girl, and so on).
- ► Gabriel García Márquez, *Innocent Erendira*; G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*; Robert Coover, *Pricksongs and Descants*; ▷ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*.

BOWEN, Elizabeth (1899–1973)

Irish novelist and short story writer

Although Bowen's themes were emotional – loneliness, longing for love, lack of communication – she wrote in a brisk and faintly eccentric style (italicizing the most unlikely words, for example) which gives her stories an exhilarating feeling of detachment from the events and reactions they describe. She was especially skilful at evoking atmosphere in houses or locales – London streets and tube stations during the 1940s Blitz, for example (the setting of 'Mysterious Kor', possibly her finest short story), become places of eerie fantasy rather than reality. Her concern, despite her characters' craving to preserve the social niceties, was to show 'life with the lid off' – and this, coupled with the unpredictability of her writing style, constantly edges her plots from realism through dream to night-mare.

THE DEATH OF THE HEART (1938)

Portia, a naïve sixteen-year-old orphan (in a more modern book she might be twelve or thirteen) goes to live with her stuffy half-brother and his brittle, insecure

wife in fashionable 1930s London. Her innocence is in marked contrast to their world-weary sophistication, and they are as exasperated with her as she is with them. Then she falls in what she imagines to be love, and all parties are launched on an ever-bumpier emotional ride.

Bowen's other novels include The House in Paris, A World of Love and Eva Trout. Her short stories are published in Encounters, Ann Lee's, Joining Charles, The Cat Jumps and the second World War collections Look at All Those Roses and The Demon Lover. Bowen's Court is an idiosyncratic but compelling account of her Anglo-Irish family's history.

READ ON

- The Heat of the Day (in which a doomed love affair is conducted against the backdrop of Second World War London); Eva Trout.
- ▶ to Bowen's novels: ▷ Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove*; ▷ Angus Wilson, *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot*; ▷ Iris Murdoch, *The Sandcastle*.
- ▶ to Bowen's short stories: ▷ Elizabeth Taylor, *A Dedicated Man*; ▷ John Fowles, *The Ebony Tower*; ▷ William Trevor, *The Collected Stories*.

BOYD, William (born 1952)

British novelist and screenwriter

Boyd began his career as an Oxford don and a film critic. His early books were serious farces, in the manner of > Waugh's A Handful of Dust or Sword of Honour. He is particularly biting about ruling-class English idiocy, and the grotesquely inappropriate settings in which it flourishes. A Good Man in Africa (1981) detailed the last limp flourishes of colonialism through its portrait of Morgan Leafy, drunken and corrupt representative of Her Majesty's government in the imaginary African state of Kinjanja. An Ice Cream War (1982) was set in the forgotten African campaigns of the First World War. Stars and Bars (1984, later filmed with Daniel Day-Lewis), the most farcical of all, is about an English innocent seriously at a loss in the lunatic world of the arts in the US. In more recent novels Boyd has turned his attention to contemporary London and also returned to the fictional autobiography form he used so successfully in The New Confessions (see below). Armadillo (1998), half noirish thriller, half social satire, follows the story of an upwardly mobile insurance clams adjuster whose life rapidly becomes downwardly mobile when an apparently routine business appointment entangles him in deception and conspiracy. In Any Human Heart (2002) an ageing writer looks back on his life and the world in which it has been spent.

THE NEW CONFESSIONS (1987)

The 'autobiography' of John James Todd, from inept adolescence at a hearty Scottish school, through ludicrous and ghastly First World War experiences, to a roller coaster career as one of the founding geniuses of German silent cinema. Throughout his life, Todd is obsessed by making a nine-hour epic based on Rousseau's *Confessions*, and is frustrated at every turn: by the coming of sound, the rise of Hitler, the Second World War and McCarthyism. Farcical incidents, but none the less a substantial, sombre study of a man in thrall to his own glittering opinion of his past.

Boyd's other books include Brazzaville Beach, The Blue Afternoon, On the Yankee Station and The Destiny of Natalie 'X' and Other Stories (short stories) and Nat Tate: An American Artist, a short, spoof biography which gleefully highlights the idiocies and pretensions of the art world.

READ ON

- Brazzaville Beach; Any Human Heart
- ▶ to the early books: ▷ Anthony Powell, *What's Become of Waring?*; ▷ Malcolm Bradbury, *Stepping Westward*.
- ▶ to *The New Confessions*: Adam Thorpe, *Still*; ▷ Robertson Davies, *What's Bred in the Bone*: ▷ Len Deighton, *Close-Up*.
- ▶ to Armadillo: > Martin Amis, The Information.

BRADBURY, Malcolm (1932-2000)

British novelist and screenwriter

A university professor, Bradbury wrote sharp satires on academic life. The form and style of his first two novels were straightforward, but from *The History Man* onwards he began using experimental methods: fragmenting the plots into short scenes like those of TV plays, writing in the present tense, incorporating footnotes, commentaries and asides. The feeling is that each book is a game, meant to amuse the author as well as the reader – a feature which sets Bradbury apart from all other 'campus' novelists.

THE HISTORY MAN (1975)

The book – far funnier than the TV serial it inspired – is set in a brutalist British 'new' university, all bare concrete and graffiti. Its hero is an equally abrasive 'new' academic, the sociologist Howard Kirk. Kirk thinks that sociology is the only study relevant to the modern world, and that it should be a vehicle for radical change. He also believes in sleeping with as many female staff and students as he can entice to bed. He preaches left-wing politics in his seminars, humiliates anyone he suspects of right-wing opinions (for example students who wear ties and call him 'Sir'), organizes sit-ins and strikes, and strides happily through the destabilized, quivering society he creates all round him.

Bradbury's other novels are Eating People is Wrong, Stepping Westward, All Dressed Up and Nowhere To Go, Why Come to Slaka, Rates of Exchange, Doctor Criminale (journalist pursues mysterious philosopher through Europe) and To the Hermitage, in which a contemporary story of high-flying academics is intercut with a recreation of Enlightenment thinker Diderot's journey to the court of Catherine the Great. Cuts is a long short story, Mensonge a send-up of French litcrit pretentiousness and No, Not Bloomsbury a collection of essays, articles and reviews. Who Do You Think You Are? is a collection of short stories. He also wrote volumes of literary criticism and TV plays and adaptations of his own and other people's books, including novels by \triangleright Evelyn Waugh and \triangleright Tom Sharpe.

- Stepping Westward (about a naïve English lecturer on an exchange visit to a liberal western US campus).
- ▶ to *The History Man*: Mary McCarthy, *The Groves of Academe*; ▷ Vladimir

Nabokov, Pnin; Randall Jarrell, Pictures from an Institution; John Barth, The End of the Road

▶ to Stepping Westward: ▷ David Lodge, Changing Places ▷ Tom Sharpe, Wilt and its glorious, tasteless sequels, campus farce rather than comedy: entertainment for its own gross sake without a whiff of satire.

BRAGG, Melvyn (born 1939)

British writer

One of the best-known faces on arts TV for 30 years. Bragg has written some 20 novels, all meatily readable and all dealing with aspects of Englishness. Many are set in the Lake District, and explore themes of country life and the coming of industrialization in ways reminiscent of ⊳Thomas Hardy or ⊳D.H. Lawrence. recast in a more contemporary prose style. Typical titles are The Hired Man (1969), Josh Lawton (1972), Kingdom Come (1980) and The Maid of Buttermere (1987). A Time to Dance (1990), about a man's obsessive passion for a younger woman, became a scandalous success as a TV serial in 1992, principally because of what one critic called the 'bare-bottom count'. Crystal Rooms (1992) is a scathing portrait of the Thatcher London of the 1980s, complete with fat-cat politicians, Garrick Club mediafolk, orphans begging in the streets. cynical stockbrokers and corrupt police. Credo (1996) was a very different novel from any Bragg had previously written, but was the result of a long-cherished ambition to tell the story of the Christianization of the north of England in the seventh century. The result is one of the most satisfying historical novels of the last decade, rich in detail, character and conviction. In his two most recent novels. The Soldier's Return (1999) and A Son of War (2001) Bragg records the difficulties Sam Richardson has in adjusting to peacetime after service in the Second World War and his relationship with his growing son.

Bragg's other novels include Autumn Manoeuvres, The Silken Net, For Want of a Nail and Love and Glory. He has also written biographies of Richard Burton (Rich) and Laurence Olivier.

READ ON

- A Place in England.
- ▶ to Crystal Rooms: ▷ Martin Amis, London Fields; ▷ Jonathan Coe, What a Carve Up!
- ▶ to Bragg's Cumbria-set books: Stanley Middleton, *The Daysman*; David Storey, *Saville*; ▷ D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*.

BRINK, André (born 1935)

South African novelist

In the South Africa of the apartheid era it was impossible for an honest novelist to ignore the central tenet of crude racial injustice on which society was founded. All the country's finest novelists, from \triangleright Nadine Gordimer to \triangleright J.M. Coetzee, had to find their own fictional means to confront it. André Brink's novels have told very different stories in very different forms and voices. *An Instant in the Wind* is an historical novel of great poignancy, set in the

eighteenth century, in which the wife of an explorer and a black runaway slave are stranded in the South African wilderness and embark on a doomed love affair as they trek painfully back towards the Cape. An Act of Terror is a huge, intricately plotted story that borrows significantly from the thriller genre in its description of people caught up in a plot to assassinate the State President outside the gates of Cape Town Castle. In A Dry White Season an ordinary, decent man is drawn ever further into a quagmire of state corruption when he persists in the investigation of the death of a man he knew in police custody. All represent, in some ways, Brink's responses to the iniquities of apartheid. In the new South Africa Brink has continued to find interesting ways of exploring his country's past and present. In Imaginings of Sand South Africa is on the verge of its first democratic elections and an exile returns to the deathbed of her 103year-old grandmother. Through her grandmother and the stories she tells, both personal and national, the returned exile learns new truths about the oppressions and deceits of history. Stories and myths are at the heart of Devil's Valley (1998), an inspired mix of fantasy and realism in which Flip Lochner, a harddrinking newspaperman, stumbles across a bizarre Boer community which has spent 150 years in isolation from the outside world. In this, as in all his pre- and post-apartheid fiction, Brink shows an acute political intelligence allied to the imagination of a fine storyteller.

READ ON

- Looking on Darkness (a black actor faces execution for the murder of his white lover): The Rights of Silence
- ▶ ▷ J.M. Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country*; ▷ Nadine Gordimer, *The Late Bourgeois World*; Breyten Breytenbach, *A Season in Paradise*; Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

BRODKEY, Harold (1930–96)

US writer

One of the great vanishing acts in American letters, Brodkey, whose real name was Harold Weintraub, had his first collection of short fiction, First Love and Other Sorrows, published in 1957 to great acclaim. Brodkey announced that his next book would be a novel entitled A Party for Animals. Despite persistent rumours that this long-gestating work was on its way, it didn't actually arrive and the silence was broken only occasionally by the appearance of another story (often in the New Yorker) and, inevitably, more rumours. For years, tales about Brodkey circulated more frequently than tales by him. In 1985, when all but his most ardent fans had abandoned hopes of seeing a new Brodkey book, one actually appeared, a volume of stories entitled Women and Angels (1985). This was followed, in a rare burst of activity, by yet another collection, three years later. Brodkey's novel finally showed up in 1991, an autobiographical work called *The* Runaway Soul. Accorded respectful, if often bemused, reviews, the book could not help but disappoint a public who by now felt that Brodkey's talent lay not so much in writing a novel as in not writing one. After two further works, Profane Friendship, a tale of sexual obsession, and the harrowing and self-explanatory My Life, My Wife and Aids (1994), Brodkey died of an Aids-related illness, Probably his finest book is Stories in an Almost Classical Mode (1988), a collection of finely honed masterpieces. Curiously, given his inability, or perhaps reluctance, to

complete his novel, several of the stories are quite long ('Largely an Oral History of My Mother', at over 80 pages, is a novella, while 'The Abundant Dreamer', 'Angel', 'The Shooting Range', 'S.L.' and the title story are all between 40 and 50 pages), but each one is of a quality rarely found in modern fiction.

READ ON

- The Runaway Soul (different settings and different styles but similar themes of brilliant man's emergence from a troubled family into a threatening world).
- ▶ to the short stories: ▶ André Dubus, Selected Stories; ▷ John Cheever, The Collected Stories.
- ► Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*; Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep* (Roth is also the only US writer to suffer a longer case of writer's block than Brodkey he published nothing for nearly sixty years).

BRONTË, Charlotte (1816-55)

BRONTË, Emily (1818–48)

British novelists

Much has been made of the Brontës' claustrophobic life in the parsonage at Haworth in Yorkshire, and of the way they compensated for a restricted and stuffy daily routine by inventing wildly romantic stories. Their Haworth life was first described by a novelist (> Mrs Gaskell), and is as evocative as any fiction of the time. In some ways it colours our opinion of their work: for example, if the third sister, Anne, had not been a Brontë, few people would nowadays remember her novels, which are pale shadows of her sisters' books. But Charlotte and Emily need no biographical boosting. They were geniuses, with a (remarkably similar) fantastical imagination, a robust, melodramatic view of what a 'good story' ought to be, and a pre-Freudian understanding of the dark places of the soul. Their brooding landscapes and old, dark houses may have been drawn from life, but what they made of them was an original, elaborate and self-consistent world, as turbulent as dreams.

JANE EYRE (by Charlotte Brontë, 1847)

The plot is a romantic extravaganza about a poor governess who falls in love with her employer Mr Rochester, is prevented from marrying him by the dark secret which shadows him, and only finds happiness on the last page, after a sequence of melodramatic and unlikely coincidences. The book's power is in its counterpointing of real and psychological events. We read about storms, fires, wild-eyed creatures gibbering in attics and branches tapping at the windows – but what we are really being shown is the turmoil in Jane's own soul, the maturing of a personality. This emotional progress, magnificently described, unifies the book and transmutes even its silliest events to gold.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS (by Emily Brontë, 1847)

The story begins in the 1770s, when a rich Yorkshire landowner, Earnshaw, brings home a half-wild, sullen foundling he names Heathcliff. Heathcliff grows up alongside Earnshaw's own children, and falls in love with Cathy, the daughter. But he overhears her saying that she will never marry him because she is socially above him – and the rest of the novel deals with his elaborate revenge on her

whole family and the way the emotional poison is eventually neutralized. As in *Jane Eyre*, desolate moorland and lonely, rain-lashed houses are used as symbols of the passions in the characters' hearts. Heathcliff, in particular, is depicted as if he were a genuine 'child of nature', the offspring not of human beings but of the monstrous mating of darkness, stone and storm.

All three sisters wrote Wordsworthy, nature-haunted poetry. Emily's only completed novel was Wuthering Heights; Charlotte's were Jane Eyre, The Professor and Villette; Anne's were Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.

READ ON

- to Jane Evre: Wuthering Heights.
- to Wuthering Heights: Jane Eyre.
- ▶ to Jane Eyre: ▷ Daphne Du Maurier, Rebecca; ▷ Jean Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea (a prequel, the story of the first Mrs Rochester); ▷ Margaret Mitchell, Gone With the Wind; George Douglas Brown, The House With the Green Shutters.
- ▶ to Wuthering Heights: Lin Haire-Sargeant, Heathcliffe (romance sequel); R.D. Blackmore, Lorna Doone; ▷ Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles; ▷ Iris Murdoch, The Unicorn (about the turbulent passions of a more modern heroine).

BROOKNER, Anita (born 1928)

British novelist

As well as writing fiction, Brookner has worked as a lecturer and expert on fine art. Her novels are written in a stylish, witty, undemonstrative prose – one exactly suiting the characters of her people. They are middle-aged, upper-middle-class women (professors, librarians, novelists): well-off, well-tailored, well-organized and desperately lonely. Something has blighted their emotional lives, leaving them to order their comfortable, bleak existences as best they can, to fill their days. The books show us what brought them to their condition – usually the actions of others: husbands, parents or friends – and sometimes tell us how the problem is resolved. In 'well-made' stage and film dramas of the 1930s, women were always blinking back tears and bravely facing the future. Brookner's heroines, except that they have lost even the power to cry, try to do the same.

LOOK AT ME (1983)

Frances Hinton, librarian at a medical research institute, lives a disciplined, unvarying existence which she compares wistfully with what she imagines to be the exuberant, exciting lives of the research workers and others who use the library. She is 'taken up' by one of the most brilliant men, dazzling as a comet, and by his emotionally extrovert wife. She falls in love and imagines that she is loved in return. But what looks like being a sentimental education in fact teaches her only that all human beings are islands, and that unless we hoard our inner lives and treasure our privacy, we will lose even what peace of mind we have.

Brookner's other novels include A Start in Life, Providence, Hôtel du Lac, A Friend from England, Latecomers, Brief Lives, A Closed Eye, Incidents in the Rue Laugier, Falling Slowly, Undue Influence and The Rules of Engagement. The Bay of Angels (2001) reveals once again her unrivalled capacity to draw us into lives

that are often pinched and circumscribed but that have their own small dramas and epiphanies. Anita Brookner is an expert on eighteenth- and nineteenthcentury French art, and has published books about the painters Watteau, Greuze and David and Soundings, a collection of art history essays.

READ ON

- Hôtel du Lac; A Family Romance.
- ▶ Elizabeth Jane Howard, Something in Disguise; Edward Candy, Scene Changing;
- DA.S. Byatt, The Virgin in the Garden; Jenny Diski, Rainforest: Susan Fromberg Shaeffer. The Injured Party.

BUCHAN. John (1875-1940)

British novelist

John Buchan combined a literary career with a life in public service, culminating in a five-year period as governor-general of Canada. As befits the works of an imperial administrator, his many novels celebrate British pluck and derring-do. His thrillers play virtuoso variations on the same basic plot. A stiff-upper-lipped hero (often Richard Hannay) discovers a conspiracy to End Civilization As We Know It, and sets out single-handed, or with the help of a few trusted friends, to frustrate it. He is chased (often by the police as well as by the criminals), and wins through only by a combination of physical courage and absolute moral certainty. The pleasure of Buchan's novels is enhanced by the magnificently described wild countryside he sets them in (usually the Scottish highlands or the plains of southern Africa), and by their splendid gallery of minor characters, the shopkeepers, tramps, local bobbies and landladies who help his heroes, often at enormous (if shrugged-off) personal risk.

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS (1915).

Richard Hannay, returning from South Africa, is told by a chance American acquaintance of a plot to invade England. Soon afterwards the American is killed and Hannay is framed for his murder. To escape two manhunts, one by the conspirators and the other by the police, he takes to the hills, and only after 300 pages of breathtaking peril and hair's-breadth escapes does he succeed in saving his country and clearing his name.

Buchan's other thrillers include Huntingtower, John McNab and Witchwood (all set in Scotland), and the Hannay books Greenmantle, Mr Standfast, The Three Hostages and The Island of Sheep. He also wrote a number of lively historical novels including The Free Fishers, set at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, and The Blanket of the Dark, an ingenious narrative built round a rightful heir to the Tudor throne and a plot to assassinate Henry VIII.

- Greenmantle: Mr Standfast: Prester John (an African adventure as exciting and bizarre as anything by > H. Rider Haggard, whose She makes an excellent follow-up).
- Erskine Childers, The Riddle of the Sands; Geoffrey Household, Rogue Male.

BURGESS, Anthony (1917–93)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Originally a composer, Burgess began writing books in his mid-thirties, and poured out literary works of every kind, from introductions to \(\rightarrow Joyce \) (Here Comes Everybody/Re Joyce) to filmscripts, from opera libretti to book reviews. Above all he wrote several dozen novels, of a diversity few other twentieth-century writers have ever equalled. They range from fictionalized biographies of Shakespeare (Nothing Like the Sun) and the early Christian missionaries (The Kingdom of the Wicked) to farce (the four Enderby stories, of which Inside Mr Enderby is the first and Enderby's Dark Lady is the funniest), from experimental novels (The Napoleon Symphony, about Napoleon, borrows its form from Beethoven's Eroica Symphony) to semi-autobiographical stories about expatriate Britons in the Far East (The Malayan Trilogy). The literary demands of Burgess's books vary as widely as their contents: the way he finds a form and style to suit each new inspiration is one of the most brilliant features of his work.

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (1972)

In a grim future Britain, society is divided into the haves, who live in security-screened mansions in leafy countryside, and the have-nots, who swagger in gangs through the decaying cities, gorging themselves on violence. The book is narrated by the leader of one such gang, and is written in a private language, a mixture of standard English, cockney slang and Russian. (Burgess provides a glossary, but after a few pages the language is easy enough to follow, and its strangeness adds to the feeling of alienation which pervades the book.) The young man has committed a horrific crime, breaking into a house, beating up its owner and raping his wife, and the police are 'rehabilitating' him. His true 'crime', however, was not action but thought – he aspired to a way of life, of culture, from which his class and lack of money should have barred him – and Burgess leaves us wondering whether his 'cure' will work, since he is not a brute beast (as the authorities claim) but rather the individuality in human beings which society has chosen to repress.

Burgess's other novels include, among many others, a reflection on what he sees as the death throes of modern Western civilization, 1985, a gentler, > Priestleyish book about provincial English in the early twentieth century, The Piano Players; and A Dead Man in Deptford (an atmospheric novel about Christopher Marlowe – and Elizabethan theatre and espionage). Little Wilson and Big God and You've Had Your Time are autobiography, Mozart and the Wolf Gang is a 'celebration' for Mozart's bicentenary year, Urgent Copy and Homage to Qwert Yuiop are collections of reviews and literary articles and The Devil's Mode is a collection of short stories.

- •
- Earthly Powers (a blockbuster embracing every kind of twentieth-century 'evil', from homosexual betrayal to genocide, and the Church's reluctance or inability to stand aside from it).
- ▶ to *A Clockwork Orange*: > Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*; > Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*; > Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*.
- ▶ to Burgess's historical novels: ▷ Michèle Roberts, The Wild Girl; Patricia Finney, Firedrake's Eye.
- ▶ to The Malayan Trilogy: > Paul Theroux, Jungle Lovers.
- ▶ to the Enderby comedies: ▷ David Lodge, Small World; Peter De Vries, Reuben, Reuben.

BURROUGHS. WILLIAM S. (1914-97)

US novelist and writer

Norman Mailer, with characteristic extravagance, once said that William Burroughs was one of the few modern American writers who 'might, conceivably, be possessed of genius'. Certainly Burroughs's personal torments – his addictions, his accidental killing of his wife in a drunken game - were transformed in the creation of a body of work that is unlike any other in American literature. Burroughs himself firmly believed in the idea of possession, although he was more often likely to believe himself possessed by evil spirits rather than genius. With one or two exceptions (Junky, for instance, is a relatively straightforward account of heroin addiction) Burroughs's work defies the straitiackets of conventional forms. His books are not so much novels as weirdly visionary allegories of the 'outsider' battling against personal demons and the repressive forces of society. Burroughs's adoption of the famous 'cut-up' technique (in which he took texts by himself and others, cut them up into fragments and randomly re-pasted them together) results in books that are bizarre collages of words, images and metaphors. Combine the cut-up technique with Burroughs's magpie raiding of material from sources as diverse as Mayan culture, pop art, assorted conspiracy theories, the work of Wilhelm Reich and science fiction and the outcome is his own unique brand of literature. Burroughs's books are at once baffling, obscene, haunting, funny and liberating.

THE NAKED LUNCH (1959)

More than forty years after it was written Burroughs's account of an addict's descent into a lurid hell of his own making and his own imaginings retains the power to shock and surprise the reader. The narrator Bill Lee travels his own via dolorosa from New York to Tangiers and into a hallucinatory fantasy world, the Interzone, where the forces of darkness and the forces of individual freedom do battle. The book has no conventional narrative form but is a surreal mélange of bitter satire, vividly described nightmares, weird characters (human, animal and insect), opinionated rants and jarringly juxtaposed fragments of text

Burroughs's other works include The Soft Machine, The Ticket That Exploded, Nova Express, The Wild Boys, The Last Words of Dutch Schultz, Cities of the Red Night, The Place of Dead Roads and The Western Lands.

READ ON

- The Wild Boys.
- ▶ ▷ J.G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*; Hubert Selby Jr, *Last Exit to Brooklyn*; Alexander Trocchi, Cain's Book.

BYATT, A.S. (Antonia Susan) (born 1936)

British novelist

Byatt was a university teacher for 20 years. Her work has many particularly 'academic' qualities: it is erudite, thoroughly researched and coolly authoritative. But it also springs surprises: she deals with intellectuals from the professional and upper middle classes, and shows how their conceits and self-control are undermined by passions and enthusiasms as hard to discipline as they are

unexpected. Shadow of a Sun (1964) and The Game (1967) are each about women who feel eclipsed by more successful relatives; a novelist father in the first book, a sister in the second. (Byatt's sister is > Margaret Drabble.) The Virgin in the Garden (1978) and its sequel Still Life (1985) are about two sisters balancing their passion for English literature and their belief that the truth about emotions and ideas is to be found in books, with their discovery that real life, real experience, has many surprises and even more to offer them. Babel Tower (1996) follows some of the characters from these two novels into the turbulent personal and political world of the early 1960s and the roman fleuve seemed to have reached a conclusion with a fourth book, A Whistling Woman, published in 2001. The Biographer's Tale (2000) revisits the relationship between literary scholars and the writers they study that was one of the subjects of Possession (see below). Phineas Nanson leaves the world of literary theory in pursuit of the facts about Scholes Destry Scholes who was himself the biographer of an eminent Victorian, Sir Elmer Boles. On his journey Phineas discovers not only that facts and fictions about a life can be difficult to disentangle but that his own sense of himself is subject to endless change and revision.

POSSESSION (1990)

In this Booker Prize-winning novel Byatt unravels the interlocking lives of two present-day literary researchers who are themselves tracking the lives of two interlocking Victorian poets. As the two academics discover that the nineteenth-century writers, Randolph Ash and Charlotte LaMotte, shared an illicit but all-consuming passion, they themselves stretch the emotional bonds they have placed upon their lives. This imaginative and engaging mixture of literary pastiche, detective story, romance and fairytale remains Byatt's most substantial, most rewarding book.

READ ON

- Angels and Insects (two linked short novels, set in Victorian England and splendid
 on the clash between claustrophobic etiquette and the thrusting intellectual
 excitement of the time). The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye (retellings of five
 fairytales), The Matisse Stories, Elementals (short stories).
- ► ▷ Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*; ▷ Iris Murdoch, *The Sea, The Sea*; Elizabeth Jane Howard, *Falling*; ▷ Carol Shields, *Mary Swann*.

...



CALVINO, Italo (1923–85)

Italian novelist and short story writer

Calvino's first works followed the grim neo-realist tradition of the late 1940s. treating contemporary subjects in an unsparing, documentary way. But in the 1950s he decided to change his style, to write (as he put it) the kind of stories he himself might want to read. These were fantastic, surrealist tales, drawing on medieval legend, fairy stories, science fiction and the work of such twentiethcentury experimental writers as ⊳Kafka and ⊳Borges. The style is lucid and poetic; the events, however bizarre their starting point, follow each other logically and persuasively; the overall effect is magical. In Cosmicomics huge spacebeings play marbles with sub-atomic particles and take tea with one another as decorously as any Italian bourgeois family. The people in The Castle of Crossed Destinies are struck magically dumb and have to tell each other stories using nothing but tarot cards. If On a Winter's Night a Traveller, a sequence of interacting chapters from novels that never quite transform themselves into conventional narratives, is a playful examination (half post-modernist metafiction, half old-fashioned shaggy dog story) of the pleasures of books and reading. In Invisible Cities Marco Polo invents fantasy cities to tickle the imagination of Kubla Khan, Calvino's wide-eved, bizarre fantasy has been imitated but never surpassed; he is one of the most entrancing writers of the twentieth century.

OUR ANCESTORS (1951-59)

This book contains a full-length novel (*The Baron in the Trees*) and two long stories. In *The Baron in the Trees* a boy abandons the ground for the treetops and – in one of Calvino's most sustained and lyrical *tours de force* – lives an entire, fulfilled life without ever coming down to earth. In 'The Cloven Viscount' a medieval knight is split in two on the battlefield – and each half goes on living independently, one good, one bad, deprived of the link which made them a whole human being and gave them moral identity. In 'The Non-Existent Knight' an empty suit of armour takes on its own identity, fighting, discussing tactics, brawling – and forever yearning after the reality of life, the psychological and emotional fullness which it/he can never know.

Calvino's neo-realist books are The Path to the Nest of Spiders (a novel) and Adam, One Afternoon (short stories). His fantasies are collected in T Zero, Cosmicomics, Invisible Cities, Our Ancestors, The Castle of Crossed Destinies, Mr Palomar and The Watcher and Other Stories. Under the Jaguar Sun (unfinished at his death) contains three stories on taste, hearing and smell, part of a projected set on the five senses. Numbers in the Dark is a posthumous collection of short

'fables', dialogues, essays and other gleanings from newspapers and magazines – an addict's treasure-hoard. Italian Folktales reworks traditional material in a similar, uniquely personal way.

READ ON

- Invisible Cities; Cosmicomics.
- ► Thomas Mann, *The Holy Sinner*; ▷ Jim Crace, *Continent*; Donald Barthelme, *Snow White.*
- ▶ Good short-story follow-ups: ▷ Jorge Luis Borges, Fictions; ▷ Angela Carter, The Bloody Chamber.

CAMUS, Albert (1913-60)

French novelist and non-fiction writer

Throughout his life, in newspaper articles, plays, essays and novels, Camus explored the position of what he called l'homme révolté, the rebel or misfit who feels out of tune with the spirit of the times. His characters recoil from the values of society. They believe that our innermost being is compromised by conformity, and that we can only liberate our true selves if we choose our own attitude to life, our day-to-day philosophy. Camus compared the human condition to that of Sisyphus in Greek myth, forever rolling a stone up a hill only to have it crash back down every time it reached the top - and said that the way to cope with this situation was to abandon ambition and concentrate on the here and now. But despite his uncompromising philosophy, his books are anything but difficult. His descriptions of sun-saturated Algeria (in The Outsider/L'Etranger), rainy Amsterdam (in The Fall/La Chute) or disease-ridden, rotting Oran (in The Plague/La Peste) are fast-moving and evocative and he shows the way inner desolation racks his heroes with such intensity that we sympathize with every instant of their predicament and long, like them, for them to break through into acceptance, into happiness.

THE PLAGUE (La Peste) (1947)

Plague ravages the Algerian town of Oran. Quarantined from the outside world, the citizens cope with their tragedy as best they can, either clinging to the outward forms of social life (petty city ordinances; the formalities of religion) or pathetically, helplessly suffering. (For Camus's original readers, the novel was an allegory of France under wartime Nazi occupation.) At the heart of the story are Dr Rieux (the storyteller) and a group of other intellectuals. Each has different feelings about death, and for each of them the plague is not only a daily reality, an external event which has to be endured, but a philosophical catalyst, forcing them to decide what they think about the world and their place in it.

As well as in novels, Camus set out his philosophy in two substantial essays, 'The Rebel' (L'Homme révolté) and 'The Myth of Sisyphus'. His plays are Caligula, Cross Purpose, The Just Assassins and State of Siege (a stage version of The Plague). Exile and the Kingdom is a collection of short stories. The First Man is a fascinating autobiographical sketch (childhood in Algiers), posthumously published.

READ ON

- The Fall.
- ➤ Saul Bellow, *The Victim*; > Hermann Hesse, *Rosshalde*; > William Golding, *The Spire*; Simone de Beauvoir, *The Mandarins*; Paul Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*; > Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*.

READ ON A THEME: CANADA

- ▶ Robertson Davies, The Salterton Trilogy
 Howard Engel, The Cooperman Variations
 Wayne Johnston, The Colony of Unrequited Dreams
 Margaret Laurence, A Jest of God
- > Brian Moore, Black Robe
- > Alice Munro, Friend of My Youth (short stories)
- > Mordecai Richler, Solomon Gursky Was Here
- □ Carol Shields, Larry's Party
 Jane Urguhart, Away

CAREY, Peter (born 1943)

Australian novelist

A common theme of Australian writers, from \triangleright Miles Franklin to \triangleright Patrick White to \triangleright Thomas Keneally, is the way discovering the vastness of the continent opens up psychological chasms in the souls of their leading characters. Carey follows this grand tradition, but instead of concentrating on Australian vistas, as most of these other writers do, he focuses on the inner torment and turmoil of his people, their precarious grasp on the condition of humanity. *Illywhacker* is the 'autobiography' of an outrageous boaster and liar, who has, it seems, personally supervised the entire history of white people in Australia. *Jack Maggs* (1997) skilfully mingles events copied from Dickens's life with a reworking of the plot of *Great Expectations* to create a new narrative that is both a powerful historical novel and a subtle examination of 'character' in life and in fiction. In *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2001) Carey returns to the nineteenth century to tackle the great Australian story, both 'true' and legendary, of the bushwhacker Ned Kelly. Told by the semi-literate Kelly himself, this is a dazzling recreation of the past.

OSCAR AND LUCINDA (1988)

Oscar Hopkins is a freak of nature: a clumsy, obstinate Anglican clergyman with a genius for gambling. Lucinda Leplastrier is an heiress who buys a glassworks in the hope that it will be her ticket to equality with men. Sadly, for this is the 1850s, both are constricted by the manners and bigotries of their time. They end up in Sydney, planning to transport a glass-and-steel church deep into the Outback – a gamble as ludicrous and as pointless as anything else in their anguished, unsatisfied lives. They think that they are taking on the whole continent of Australia; in fact their battles are chiefly against themselves.

Carey's other novels are Bliss, The Tax Inspector, The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith and My Life as a Fake. The Fat Man in History is a collection of short stories. The Big Bazoohley is a Roald Dahl-ish children's book.

READ ON

- My Life as a Fake (Carey tells of a poet who creates an alter ego that outruns its creator).
- ▶ to Oscar and Lucinda: Rupert Thomson, Air and Fire; ▷ Matthew Kneale, English Passengers.
- ▶ to True History of the Kelly Gang: David Malouf, The Conversations at Curlow Creek; Desmond Barry, The Chivalry of Crime (Jesse James not Ned Kelly, southern states of the US not Australia, but the same exploration of the dispossessed driven to crime).
- ▶ to Carey's fiction generally: ▷ Patrick White, Voss; ▷ Thomas Keneally, The Playmaker; ▷ Tim Winton, Dirt Music

READ ON A THEME: THE CARIBBEAN

Wilson Harris, *The Guyana Quartet*Jamaica Kincaid, *At the Bottom of the River*George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin*

- Dian Moore, No Other Life
- > V.S. Naipaul, A Way in the World
- Caryl Phillips, Cambridge

CARTER, Angela (1940–92)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Carter's inspiration included fairytales, Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, horror movies and the fantasies of such writers as ▷ Poe and ▷ Mary Shelley. Above all, she was concerned with female sexuality and with men's sexual predations on women. Her early books range from Gothic reworkings of fairytales (*The Bloody Chamber*) to such surrealist nightmares as *The Passion of New Eve* (see Read On). The novels begin with dream-images and spiral quickly into fantasy. In the opening chapter of *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), for example, fifteen-year-old Melanie walks in a garden at night in her mother's wedding dress – a common, if none too reassuring dream. Soon afterwards, however, Melanie's parents die, she is fostered by a mad toymaker-uncle, and the book climaxes when she is forced to re-enact the myth of Leda and the Swan with a life-sized puppet-swan. Later novels like *Nights at the Circus* (see below) and *Wise Children* (1991) give full rein to Carter's gifts for the baroquely imagined, the theatrical and the picaresque.

NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS (1984)

Walser, a reporter, is investigating the claims of Fevvers, a winged trapeze artist who may or may not be an angel disguised as a blowsy, turn-of-the-century circus artiste. The story begins with wide-eyed accounts of Fevvers' early life in a brothel, the object of strange and violent male lusts, and continues as she and Walser tour Russia with Colonel Kearney's magic, surreal circus. At first *Nights at the Circus* seems to be jollying up Carter's usual fascination for digging in the darker corners of society, and its gusto and wit continue to the end. But as the story proceeds, events become ever more sinister, and human endeavour is shown more and more to be a hopeless, grubby farce.

Carter's other novels are Shadow Dance, Several Perceptions, Heroes and Villains, Love, Wise Children and The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffman. The Sadeian Woman is non-fiction, a study of the social and sexual potential of women. Fireworks and American Ghosts and Old World Wonders collect short stories (among her most disturbing works), and Nothing Sacred and Expletives Deleted collect essays and journalism.

READ ON

- The Passion of New Eve. (In a near-future US where armies of blacks, feminists
 and pubescent children are waging guerrilla war, the young man Evelyn hides in
 the California desert, only to be kidnapped by devotees of the multi-breasted, allengulfing Earth Mother, who rapes him, castrates him and remakes him as a
 woman, Eve).
- ▶ to Carter's work in general: D.M. Thomas, *The White Hotel*; ▷ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*; ▷ Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*; ▷ Kate Atkinson, *Human Croquet*.

CARVER, Raymond (1939–88)

US writer

Once described as 'America's laureate of the dispossessed', Raymond Carver wrote about ordinary-seeming people in the drab rooms, fly-blown diners and dusty streets of boring middle America. Nothing is happening, the people are leading mundane lives – preparing to go out, feeding a neighbour's cat, watching a quarrel in a car park – and yet there is an air of hovering, inescapable disaster. Carver describes atmosphere in brief, poetic phrases; his dialogue is like snippets of real, overheard conversation, tantalizingly incomplete; the effect is unsettling and satisfying, all at once. His collections are *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please; What We Talk About When We Talk About Love; Where I'm Calling From; Cathedral* and *Elephant and Other Stories. Fires* and *No Heroics Please* contain poems, essays and other writings, as well as stories. Carver's poems, published in several volumes in his lifetime, are collected in one volume in *All of Us. Call If You Need Me* (2000) is a posthumous grab-bag of Carver material, including five stories never previously published, several that had never before been collected and all his non-fiction prose.

READ ON

▶ to contemporaries of Carver: Richard Ford, Rock Springs; Tobias Wolff, The Collected Stories; André Dubus, Finding a Girl in America. ▶ to classic short story writers whom Carver matches for intensity and precision: ▷ Anton Chekhov, Lady with a Lap Dog; > Katherine Mansfield, In a German Pension: William Maxwell, All the Days and Nights.

CATHER, Willa (1876–1947)

US novelist

Most of Cather's books are set in the south-western US, and are about settlers (often European immigrants) coming to terms with the wilderness. But there is no Hollywood melodrama: her interests are in the contrast between civilized feelings and the wild natural environment, in psychological growth and change. In two characteristic books. My Antonia and A Lost Lady, the central female characters (the ones who change) are described by men who have watched them, and loved them, from a distance since childhood - a device which allowed Cather the objective, emotional distance from her characters that she preferred. This objectivity, and the elegance of her style, are two of the most enjoyable features of her books. Her sentences seem placid and unhurried: every event, every description seems to be given the same measured treatment. But nothing is extraneous. Every phrase has emotional or philosophical resonance, and after a few pages the reader is drawn into the narrative, hypnotized by nuance.

DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP (1927)

Based on true events, and on diaries and letters by real people, this novel tells of two French Catholic missionaries to New Mexico in the second half of the nineteenth century. The book is partly about landscape, and contains magnificent descriptions of the desert. But it is mainly concerned with relationships: between the two priests, friends for many years, between the humans and their animals (who have to carry them on long, lonely desert journeys from one Christian settlement to another), and between the missionaries' ancient European culture and the stripped-to-essentials, 'primitive' habits of life and mind of their New Mexican flock. The book's title is not a promise of high drama. It refers to a Holbein painting, and suggested to Cather the feeling of frozen movement, of life arrested at the instant of recording, which she found in paintings and tried to recapture in her prose.

Two of Cather's novels, The Song of the Lark and Lucy Gayheart, are about young women torn between the claims of family life and an artistic, musical career, O Pioneers!, like My Antonía, is about foreign immigrants settling in the wilderness. The main character of The Riofessor's House is a successful academic who suddenly feels that he has failed, that lack of danger (emotional, intellectual or physical) has blighted his life. Other novels are One of Ours and My Mortal Enemy. Obscure Destinies is a collection of short stories.

- Shadows on the Rock (a similarly quiet book about the impact of the North American wilderness on Europeans, this time seventeenth-century settlers in Quebec).
- Sarah Orne Jewett, The Country of the Pointed Firs (Jewett was an American writer of the previous generation to whom Cather paid particular tribute); > Edith Wharton, Ethan Frome; William Maxwell, Time Will Darken It.

CHANDLER, Raymond (1888–1959)

US novelist

Born in the US, Chandler was brought to England as a boy and educated at Dulwich College (also the alma mater of > P.G. Wodehouse). After a false start in England as a poet and literary journalist and war service in France, Chandler returned to the US. He became a successful executive in the oil industry until a fondness for the bottle resulted in unemployment. Broke and out of work, Chandler began writing stories for pulp magazines like Black Mask, treating violence, prostitution and betraval in the cynical, hard-boiled style popular in films of the time. His ambition was to replace the kind of detective novels then fashionable (stories of bizarre crimes solved by wildly eccentric detectives, distantly modelled on Sherlock Holmes: see ▷ Christie and ▷ Savers) with books about realistic crimes, investigated in a plausible way by a detective who would be ordinary, with recognizable human hopes, fears and reactions. Philip Marlowe (Chandler's private-eye hero) is an honest, conscientious man who sweats, cowers and lusts just like anyone else. He narrates the stories himself, in the wisecracking, deadpan style - 'I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. I was calling on four million dollars.' - that has become the target of a thousand parodies in the decades since Chandler first perfected it. Emphasizing atmosphere and character even more than plot - 'the ideal mystery is one you would read if the end was missing,' he once remarked - Chandler's novels were among the first to alert more snobbish critics to the potential of genre fiction. They remain great works of American literature, as readable and enjoyable as when they were first published.

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY (1940)

Marlowe, as often, is drifting with nothing particular to do when he is picked up (literally, by the scruff of the neck) by a muscle-bound ex-convict called Moose Malloy, memorably described as 'about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food'. From this simple event, as ripples spread on a pond, the story grows to take in a priceless necklace, kidnapping, blackmail and murder – and at its heart, like the still centre of a whirlwind, Marlowe slouches from clue to clue, a martyr to his own curiosity, pushing open every door and investigating each alleyway even though he knows, from long experience, that painful or nasty surprises are all he will find.

Chandler's Marlowe novels are The Big Sleep, Farewell My Lovely, The High Window, The Lady in the Lake, The Little Sister, The Long Goodbye and Playback. Killer in the Rain is a collection of short stories. Poodle Springs, an unfinished Marlowe novel, was completed in 1990 by Robert B. Parker, whose own Spenser private eye novels provide the closest contemporary equivalents to Chandler's wisecracking style.

- The Big Sleep; The Lady in the Lake.
- ► Robert B. Parker, *Perchance to Dream* (sequel to *The Big Sleep*). ▷ Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*; Ross Macdonald, *The Drowning Pool*; John D. Macdonald, *The Deep Blue Goodbye*.

CHATWIN. Bruce (1940-89)

British novelist and travel writer

A journalist, Chatwin wrote precise, brisk prose – and it utterly belies the contents of his books. Neither fiction nor fact, they straddle the borders between dream and reality, reportage and philosophy. He was fascinated by nomads and the dispossessed, and inserted himself into his work as narrator, as rudderless and amazed as any of his characters. In Patagonia, ostensibly a travel book, is a magpie's nest of history, anecdote and self-revelation, set in a South America which seems to shimmer between fantasy and reality. On the Black Hill. ostensibly a novel, is a meditation on loneliness and the interaction between landscape and personality, set in the remote Welsh hills. Chatwin's masterpiece, The Songlines (1987), is a 'novel' about a white man, 'Bruce Chatwin', travelling in central Australia to investigate the Aboriginal songlines, the paths invisibly traced by the world's ancestors as they sang dream-reality into being. The book is raw with rage about both the whites ('caring people' and 'trash' alike) and the feckless, hopeless Aborigines, and most savage of all about its dogged, put-upon central character, a 1960s hippie floundering out of his depth and out of his time, lost in someone else's dream.

Chatwin's other novels are The Viceroy of Ouidah and Utz. What Am I Doing Here is a fascinating collection of his journalism.

READ ON

- The Viceroy of Ouidah (about a slave trader exporting 'black gold' from West Africa to Brazil).
- ► Keri Hulme, *The Bone People*; ▷ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Carlos Fuentes, *The Old Gringo*.

CHEEVER, John (1912-82)

US novelist and short story writer

Most of Cheever's stories appeared in the *New Yorker* between 1945 and 1975. The majority of his characters are prosperous New England commuters. They have beautiful houses in tidy neighbourhoods, their children go to good schools, and they can afford European holidays (often in Italy). But they are walking wounded: their emotions may be intact, but their hearts and consciences have been sliced away. They lacerate one another with sexual affairs, rows, pettyminded gossip and dispiriting; single-minded malice. The reason is that they believe that they are living in the American Dream – and by the day, by the minute, they find that it is a mirage. Cheever narrates their empty lives in sleek, ironic prose: his dialogue is particularly good at suggesting overtones of menace or longing in commonplace remarks.

The Stories of John Cheever collects all but a handful of Cheever's short works. Cheever's novels are The Wapshot Chronicle, The Wapshot Scandal, Bullet Park, Oh What A Paradise It Seems and Falconer (on an uncharacteristic subject: the rehabilitation of a murderer in a 'correctional facility').

READ ON

- Cheever's two Wapshot novels are set in the same world and among the same kind
 of bewildered characters as his stories. The Wapshot family, however, contains
 wonderful eccentrics, and the novels consequently spill into slapstick farce.
- ▶ to Cheever's novels: ▷ John Updike, The Centaur; Peter De Vries, The Tunnel of Love.
- ▶ to the stories: ▷ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories*; John O'Hara, *Collected Stories of John O'Hara*; Ann Beattie, *Perfect Recall.*

CHEKHOV, Anton (1860-1904)

Russian short story writer and playwright

Chekhov paid his way through medical school by writing short comic articles for magazines; in his mid-twenties he began publishing more elaborate pieces, and by the time he was forty (and turning from stories to plays) he was considered one of the finest of all Russian prose writers. Many of his stories are first-person monologues – he said that he was inspired by the sort of things people tell doctors during consultations, or penitents murmur at confession – and, like such monologues, they often reveal far more than the speaker intends. We hear symptoms, as it were, and from them diagnose a whole sick life. In other stories it is as if Chekhov were sitting beside us, drawing our attention to people moving about in the distance, and commenting in a quiet, compassionate way on their motives and feelings. Sympathetic detachment is the essence of his art: reading his stories (like watching his plays) is like looking through a window into other people's lives. The stories have been collected in a number of volumes, including *The Lady with a Lap Dog, The Fiancé and Other Stories*.

READ ON

- of Chekhov's plays, the nearest in mood to his stories are Uncle Vanya and The Seagull (Michael Frayn's translations are recommended).
- ▶ Ivan Turgenev, Sketches from a Hunter's Album; ▷ Guy de Maupassant, Selected Stories; ▷ Katherine Mansfield, In a German Pension; ▷ Raymond Carver, Where I'm Calling From (Carver was a great admirer of Chekhov).

READ ON A THEME: CHILDREN

- > William Golding, Lord of the Flies
- L.P. Hartley, Eustace and Hilda
 Richard Hughes, A High Wind in Jamaica
 Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird
 Shena Mackay, The Orchard on Fire
 Nancy Mitford, The Blessing

See also: Adolescence; Parents and Children; Teenagers

READ ON A THEME: CHINA AND HONG KONG

Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth* Jung Chang, *Wild Swans* James Clavell, *Taipan* Wei Hui, *Shanghai Baby*

▶ John Lanchester, Fragrant Harbour
 Timothy Mo, An Insular Possession
 Wang Shuo, Playing for Thrills
 Amy Tan, The Joy Luck Club (Chinese women's lives both in China and America)

CHRISTIE, Agatha (1890-1976)

British novelist

Ingenuity is the essence of Christie's detective stories. She confined herself largely to two detectives, pompous Poirot and elderly, inquisitive Miss Marple. Nowadays, as well as her plots, it is the period detail of her books which fascinates: her English villages, spa hotels, 1930s cruise ships and, above all, country houses are caught like flies in amber. She chronicles a vanished pre-Second World War, upper-middle-class Britain with an accuracy which is enhanced rather than diminished by the staginess of her characters and plots.

MURDER AT THE VICARAGE (1930)

This typical Miss Marple story is set in a picture-postcard English village riven by gossip and inhabited by as unlikely a collection of eccentrics as even Christie ever threw together. Everyone could be guilty of murder, and Miss Marple's investigation is so gently persistent, so self-effacingly efficient, that one trembles in case she ends up as victim rather than as sleuth.

Among the best known of Christie's eighty-three detective novels are The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Ten Little Niggers/Ten Little Indians/Then There Were None (frisson at the politically incorrect 'Niggers' in the original 1939 title caused subsequent changes), Murder on the Orient Express and The Crooked House. She also wrote stage plays (including The Mousetrap, still breaking all records for longest West End run), an excellent Second World War espionage thriller (N or M), and six romantic novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott.

READ ON

- to Murder at the Vicarage: A Murder is Announced.
- ▶ Patricia Wentworth, Miss Silver Intervenes; Dorothy Simpson, Wake the Dead;
- Ngaio Marsh, Overture to Death; Margery Allingham, The Crime at Black Dudley.

READ ON A THEME: CITIES: NEW WORLD

- Saul Bellow, Herzog (Chicago)

- Jay McInerney, Bright Lights, Big City (New York) Armistead Maupin, Tales of the City (San Francisco)
- Colm Tóibín, *The Story of the Night* (Buenos Aires)
- □ Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence (New York)
- > Tom Wolfe, The Bonfire of the Vanities (New York)

READ ON A THEME: CITIES: OLD WORLD

- Margery Allingham, The Tiger in the Smoke (London) Louis Aragon, Paris Peasant
- > Lawrence Durrell, The Alexandria Quartet
- > Mrs Gaskell, Mary Barton (Manchester)
- Victor Hugo, The Hunchback of Notre Dame Ivan Klima, My Golden Trades (Prague)
- > James Joyce, Dubliners
- > Christopher Isherwood, Goodbye to Berlin

CLANCY, Tom (born 1947)

US novelist

For a generation of thriller writers the Cold War, with its superpower confrontation and its elaborate, deadly games of espionage and counter-espionage, provided superb plot material and Tom Clancy's first few books successfully mined this rich vein. The Hunt for Red October (1984), the story of a desperate attempt by a Russian submarine to defect to the West, made good use of Cold War rivalries and allowed Clancy to deploy his own knowledge of naval history and technology. In this first book, he also demonstrated his gift for gripping narrative. Yet, in the years after his bestselling début, the potential in Cold War plots was clearly waning. The march of history was making them seem a little old-hat. Clancy saw this coming and, with a resourcefulness worthy of his ongoing character Jack Rvan, a CIA analyst who eventually becomes President, he turned his attention to other trouble spots of the world. Patriot Games (1987) pitches Ryan into the turbulent waters of Irish politics; Clear and Present Danger (1989) has him battling the drug barons of Colombia; The Sum of All Fears (1991) imagines a nightmare scenario in which a nuclear weapon falls into the hands of Middle Eastern terrorists. Much is always made of Clancy's obsession with minute and careful description of the weaponry, hardware and gadgetry that fill his pages and his clear division of the world into goodies (Americans) and baddies (very nearly everybody else) as if these explained the success of his techno-thrillers with a male readership worldwide. In fact, his readers respond to old-fashioned virtues of tight plotting and vivid characterization, mainstays of thriller writing since the days of

Buchan and Childers, and the most important ingredients in Clancy's novels.

Tom Clancy's other novels include Red Storm Rising, The Cardinal of the Kremlin, Without Remorse, Debt of Honour, Executive Orders, The Bear and

the Dragon and Red Rabbit. In recent years he has given his name and an undisclosed (probably small) level of creative input to a series of stories set in the worlds of the Internet and virtual reality (Net Force) and to a series about the exploits of a shadowy government organization (Op-Centre). He has also written non-fiction on his favourite topics of naval and military technology.

READ ON

- The Bear and the Dragon (President Jack Ryan spends 1000 pages battling a succession of international crises).
- ► Frederick Forsyth, *The Fist of God*; Clive Cussler, *Deep Six*; Harold Coyle, *God's Children*; Campbell Armstrong, *Jigsaw*; Stephen Leather, *The Double Tap*; Stephen Coonts, *Liberty*.

CLARKE, Arthur C. (Charles) (born 1917)

British writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

Apart from > Asimov, Clarke is the best 'real' scientist among real science fiction writers. His subject is space travel, and his 1940s and 1950s non-fiction books and articles predicted, in accurate detail, many things which have since happened, such as the invention of communications satellites, the first Moon landing and the development of laser space weaponry. He begins a fictional story with existing scientific fact or theory, and then extends it logically; even his wildest fantasies thus seem rooted in the possible. His main themes are the colonization from Earth of other planets and visits to Earth by explorers from distant galaxies. His stories bustle with the detail of space travel and setting up home in alien environments, and he is particularly interested in the psychological stress on people faced with the unknown and with the relationship between human beings and high technology. These ideas outweigh sometimes wooden character drawing and creaky plots.

RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA (1973)

Like Clarke's story 'The Sentinel', which was the basis for Kubrick's film 2001: A Space Odyssey, this novel is the story of man's contact with an enigmatic alien artefact. An enormous and seemingly abandoned spaceship drifts into our solar system. When humans explore Rama, they find their imaginations overwhelmed by its mystery and possible significance. The novel is a fine example of Clarke's capacity to evoke a sense of awe and to lead us to wonder about our own small place in the vastness of time and space.

A good story collection is The Nine Billion Names of God. Clarke's other novels include Childhood's End, A Fall of Moondust and Imperial Earth. Astounding Days is autobiography, excellent on why Clarke writes and how his career began.

- 2001: A Space Odyssey; 2010: Odyssey Two; 2061: Odyssey Three, 3001, Rama and The Garden of Rama (the last two written with Gentry Lee).
- ▶ to 2001: Algis Budrys, Rogue Moon; Robert Holdstock, Earthwind; Stanislaw Lem, Solaris.
- ▶ ▷ Jules Verne, *The First Men in the Moon*; ▷ H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*; Greg Bear, *Eon*; Larry Niven, *Ringworld*.

READ ON A THEME: CLASSIC DETECTION

Nicholas Blake, *The Beast Must Die*G.K. Chesterton, *The Innocence of Father Brown*Edmund Crispin, *Love Lies Bleeding*Michael Innes, *Death at the President's Lodging*

- > P.D. James, The Skull Beneath the Skin
- ▶ Ngaio Marsh, Surfeit of Lampreys Gladys Mitchell, Laurels are Poison
- Dorothy L. Sayers, Murder Must Advertise Patricia Wentworth, Latter End

See also: Great (Classic) Detectives; Police Procedural; Private Eyes

COE, Jonathan (born 1961)

British novelist

Jonathan Coe is one of the funniest and cleverest novelists of his generation and his fiction, although readily accessible and readable, plays ingeniously with the possibilities of the novel. His narratives move back and forth in time and space. They contain stories within stories and a multitude of perspectives which Coe weaves into sophisticated fictional tapestries. His books are in a long tradition of English comic fiction and make use of every device from scathing satire to downright slapstick but they are also, in the best sense of the word, experimental. He plays with readers' expectations of what a novel might be and uses every form of fictional device available to him to move his story forward. His most recent novel, The Rotters' Club, might, in précis, sound like a conventional enough account of the progress of four school friends through adolescence and growing pains in the 1970s. The book is achingly exact in its period detail. It is also strikingly original in the way Coe shifts the narrative duties from character to character, places diary entries, articles from the school newspaper and, in one section, a thirty-page, single-sentence monologue into his story without ever appearing to strain for effect or to indulge in fictional games to no purpose.

WHAT A CARVE UP! (1994)

Taking its name from a 1962 horror-comedy movie, *What a Carve Up!* is a deliciously unforgiving satire of the rampant materialism of the 1980s, focusing on one family – the spectacularly unlovely Winshaws. Different members of the clan – an arms dealers selling arms to Saddam Hussein, a banker with a finger in every financially fishy pie, a journalist with no moral scruples whatsoever – represent, individually and collectively, all that was wrong about the country in that low, dishonest decade. Reclusive novelist Michael Owen is commissioned to write a family biography and his growing conviction that the Winshaws have ruined his life persuades him to take his revenge upon them by acting out the film with which he is obsessed, murdering each member of the family in a way that makes the punishment fit the crime.

Coe's other novels are A Touch of Love, The Accidental Woman, The Dwarves of Death and The House of Sleep. He is also scheduled to publish a biography of the British experimental novelist of the 1960s, B.S. Johnson.

READ ON

- The House of Sleep.
- ▶ > William Boyd, *Armadillo*; > Tibor Fischer, *The Thought Gang*; John Preston, *Ghosting*; Geoff Nicholson, *The Errol Flynn Novel.*

COETZEE, J.M. (born 1940)

South African novelist

Only two writers have won the Booker Prize for Fiction twice. One is ▷ Peter Carey; the other is the South African novelist J.M. Coetzee. Since publishing his first fiction in 1974 Coetzee has produced a series of memorably bleak portraits of individual lives caught up in the political maelstrom of South Africa. His books are not comfortable reading - he is too honest and unillusioned to provide that but they are beautifully written, concise and elegant laments for lives shaped and often shattered by political events. Unlike many modern novelists, Coetzee is unafraid of allegory and his novels have some of the simple, unadorned power of parables. In The Life and Times of Michael K, an Everyman figure, the gardener amid a country torn apart by civil war. Setting off from the city to return with his mother to her rural birthplace, he suffers her death, imprisonment in a labour camp and the constant uncertainties of a land of anarchy and yet, at the end of the novel, he has still managed to survive. Age of Iron takes the form of a series of letters from an elderly South African woman, dying of cancer, to her daughter in America, A former classics professor, she is obliged to reassess her own life, the society in which she has lived and her own complicity in its evils.

DISGRACE (1999)

The central character of *Disgrace*, the second of Coetzee's novels to win the Booker, is David Lurie, a middle-aged university professor. Lurie has twice failed in marriage and he seduces his young female students with cynical regularity, while still proclaiming his faith in the 'romance' that fuelled the romantic poets he loves. After one particularly joyless sexual encounter – very nearly a rape – the student complains to the university authorities and Lurie, asked to apologise, instead resigns. Largely unrepentant, he goes to stay with his daughter on her farm in a remote part of South Africa. There he and his daughter, striving to come to some sense of accommodation with one another, are the victims of a brutal attack that changes them both. *Disgrace* is a daring novel – daring in creating an unsympathetic narrator, daring in its willingness to tackle sensitive issues of gender and race and daring in presenting an unflinchingly pessimistic view of the effect political change can have on personal relationships.

Coetzee's other novels include Dusklands (actually two novellas), In the Heart of the Country, Waiting for the Barbarians, Foe, The Master of Petersburg and Youth. Stranger Shores is a collection of essays, Boyhood a memoir of growing up in a small town in South Africa.

READ ON

- The Master of Petersburg (Coetzee moves out of South Africa and into nineteenthcentury Russia in this novel based on incidents in the life of > Dostoevsky).
- ► ▷ André Brink, *A Dry White Season*; Bessie Head, *A Question of Power*; Justin Cartwright, *White Lightning*.

COLETTE, (Sidonie Gabrielle) (1873–1954) French novelist

In the 1900s Colette's works were condemned as pornographic; in the 1970s she was claimed by the women's movement as one of the founders of feminism. The reason in each case is the same. Her themes are the awakening of sensual feelings in adolescence, the way in which young women first discover their sexual power, and the attempts by middle-aged people (of both sexes) to rejuvenate themselves by preying on innocence. Her stories are not explicitly sexual, but she writes in an impressionistic style in which sun, flowers, insects, animals and the textures of skin, grass and clothes blur into a kind of drowsy, erotic reverie, a counterpart to the awakening feelings of her characters. Adult experience is always just ahead — and every adult in Colette's books is a tragic figure, ineffectual or cynical. Youth, in the end, is the only worthwhile possession in life, and it is daily, hourly, squandered for experience. In *The Ripening Seed* (1923), for example, two adolescents, friends from childhood, feel a new tension within their relationship which is compounded by the seduction of the boy by an older woman.

The most substantial of Colette's works is the Claudine series of novels, about a young girl growing up in the early years of the 20th century. Another pair of books, Chéri and The Last of Chéri, is on a favourite theme, the corrupting effects of a young man's first sexual experience. Her other books, many based on her own experience and family, include Sido, My Apprenticeship and The Tendrils of the Vine. Her collected short stories were published in English in 1984.

READ ON

- A Lesson in Love (La Naissance du jour).
- ► Françoise Sagan, Bonjour Tristesse; Edna O'Brien, The Country Girls (and its sequels The Lonely Girls and the magnificent Girls in Their Married Bliss). David Garnett, Aspects of Love; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, Ada and André Gide, The Immoralist, though their purposes and plot development are very different, catch the same sensual and poetic mood as Colette. ▷ Carson McCullers, The Member of the Wedding is a harsher view of the awakening of a young girl to adult feelings.

READ ON A THEME: COMEDY THRILLERS

Eric Ambler, Passage of Arms
 Lawrence Block, The Burglar Who Thought He Was Bogart
 Christopher Brookmyre, One Fine Day in the Middle of the Night
 Richard Condon, Prizzi's Honour

Janet Evanovich, One for the Money Peter Guttridge. The Once and Future Con > Carl Hiaasen, Double Whammy Greg McDonald, Fletch Lawrence Sanders. McNally's Secret Donald Westlake, Don't Ask

COMPTON-BURNETT, Ivy (1884–1969)

British novelist

After a single false start (*Dolores*, an imitation of \triangleright George Eliot, later disowned), Compton-Burnett produced nineteen comic novels in a uniquely bizarre, uncompromising style. Each book is set in a large late Victorian or early Edwardian household, ruled by a tyrant (one of the parents or some elderly, inflexible relative). Isolated by wealth from the outside world, the family members – often grown-up, middle-aged children - bicker, snub and plot against one another. powerless and embittered. There are family secrets to be revealed - incest, murder, insanity – and no member of the household, neither family nor servants, is a 'normal', unwarped human being. The books are written largely in a selfconsciously artificial dialogue, which fails to mask the appalling human cruelties lurking beneath the surface. Compton-Burnett's detractors find her novels unreadable; her fans think them hilarious and utterly unlike the work of any other writer.

Compton-Burnett's novels are Pastors and Masters, Brothers and Sisters, Men. and Wives, More Women Than Men, A House and its Head, Daughters and Sons. A Family and a Fortune, Parents and Children, Elders and Betters, Manservant and Maidservant, Two Worlds and Their Ways, Darkness and Day, The Present and the Past, Mother and Son, A Father and His Fate, A Heritage and Its History. The Mighty and Their Fall, A God and His Gifts and The Last and the First.

READ ON

▶ The uniqueness of Compton-Burnett's style means that no other writers' works are truly similar. Stories of claustrophobic families, however, in artificial 'high styles' of their own and equally compulsive, are: Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (a book which influenced Compton-Burnett herself): > Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence; Jean Cocteau, The Children of the Game (Les Enfants terribles). Some of Compton-Burnett's dialogue 'style has parallels in works by Ronald Firbank such as Valmouth.

CONNELLY, Michael (born 1956)

US novelist

Michael Connelly is one of the very best of the newer breed of crime writers. Many of his books feature Hieronymus 'Harry' Bosch, a world-weary detective in the LAPD. A Vietnam veteran and former 'tunnel rat', Bosch has a personal history that's harsh, complex and fascinating. Working from the Hollywood division in a superbly realized Los Angeles, Bosch is a very good cop in that he solves crimes and puts the criminals away, but not so good in that he invariably faces suspension by his antagonistic, pen-pushing superiors. Bosch is a maverick who works to his own rules and code of honour rather than that of the system. Although maverick cops with drink problems and dysfunctional love lives are standard fare, Bosch is different. Connelly has succeeded in making him a sympathetic and compelling character, partly through his dry humour and partly because the reader knows, whatever the odds, that Bosch will be right – that he is the moral centre of the fiction and the authority he is always prepared to defy is self-serving. Connelly's first book, *The Black Echo*, was published in 1992 and won an Edgar Award. It was followed by four others and then the first non-Bosch book, *The Poet*, which became a bestseller. Two other novels without Bosch are *Blood Work*, which featured Terry McCaleb, a former FBI agent retired through ill-health, and *Void Moon*, a more light-hearted book set largely in Las Vegas and featuring a female thief called Cassie Black, an unlikely but likeable heroine.

The other Bosch books are The Black Ice, The Concrete Blonde, The Last Coyote, Trunk Music, Angels Flight, A Darkness More Than Night (in which Bosch is teamed with Connelly's other hero Terry McCaleb), City of Bones and Lost Light.

READ ON

➤ Robert Crais, LA Requiem; James Lee Burke, Black Cherry Blues; Dennis Lehane, Prayers for Rain; Jeffery Deaver, The Bone Collector; Jonathan Kellerman, Flesh and Blood.

CONRAD, Joseph (1857-1924)

Polish/British novelist

Born in Poland, Conrad ran away to sea at seventeen and ended up a captain in the merchant navy and a naturalized British subject. He retired from the sea after twenty years and spent the rest of his life as a writer. There was at the time (1890s–1910s) a strong tradition of sea-stories, using the dangers and tensions of long voyages and the wonders of the worlds sailors visited as metaphors for human life. Most of this writing was straightforward adventure, with little subtlety; Conrad used its conventions for deeper literary ends. He was interested in 'driven' individuals, people whose psychology or circumstances force them to extreme behaviour, and the sea-story form exactly suited this idea. His books often begin as 'yarns', set in exotic locations and among the mixed (and mixed-up) human types who crew ocean-going ships. But before long psychology takes over, and the plot loses its straightforwardness and becomes an exploration of compulsion, obsession and neurosis.

HEART OF DARKNESS (from YOUTH, 1902)

This 120-page story begins as a yarn: Marlow, a sea captain, tells of a journey he once made up the Congo river to bring down a stranded steamer. He became fascinated by stories of an ivory merchant, a white man called Kurtz who lived deep in the jungle and was said to have supernatural powers. Marlow set out to find Kurtz, and the journey took him deeper and deeper into the heart not only of the Dark Continent, but into the darkness of the human soul. (Francis Ford Coppola's 1970s film *Apocalypse Now* updated this story to the Vietnam War,

making points about US colonialism as savage as Conrad's denunciation of the ivory trade.)

Conrad's major novels are Lord Jim, The Nigger of the Narcissus, Nostromo, The Secret Agent and Under Western Eyes. His short story collections (an excellent introduction to his work) are Tales of Unrest, Youth, Typhoon, A Set of Six, 'Twixt Land and Sea, Within the Tides and Tales of Hearsay.

READ ON

- Typhoon (which deals with corruption and exploitation of a different kind, this
 time using as its metaphor a passenger steamer caught in a typhoon in the China
 Sea); The Secret Agent (about the conflict between innocence and corruption
 among a group of terrorists in 1900s London).
- ► Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Foretopman*; Graham Greene, *The Comedians*; B. Traven, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*; Paul Theroux, *The Mosquito Coast*; Robert Edric, *The Book of the Heathen* (a modern novelist examines Conradian themes in the Conradian setting of 1890s Belgian Congo).

COOKSON, Catherine (1906–98)

British novelist

Catherine Cookson, née Katie Ann McMullen, wrote warm-hearted romances about 'ordinary people' dealing with the 'ordinary' emotions of love and longing that affect us all. She set most of them in the north-east of England (Tyneside) where she was born, and showed how her characters coped with the harsh conditions of life in the area in the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. She grouped many of her novels in series, for example the Mary Ann books (beginning with A Grand Man) and the Mallen trilogy (The Mallen Girl, The Mallen Litter and The Mallen Streak). The heroine of Tilly Trotter, Tilly Trotter Wed and Tilly Trotter Widowed (a characteristic series, written in the 1960s) is a poor but spirited girl in 1930s County Durham who becomes the mistress of the owner of the 'big house', emigrates to America when he dies, and returns in middle age to find happiness at last in her beloved native country. Kate Hannigan's Daughter, published after her death, brought her remarkable career as perhaps the most popular British writer of her time to a fitting conclusion by being a sequel to Kate Hannigan, her very first novel, published more than fifty years earlier.

Cookson's other books include, among many others, The Invisible Cord, The Gambling Man, The Black Candle, The Harrogate Secret, The Tinker's Girl, The Obsession, The Thursday Friend and A House Divided. She also wrote as Catherine Marchant; titles include Heritage of Folly, The Fen Tiger, The Mists of Memory, Miss Martha Mary Crawford and The Slow Awakening.

READ ON

- The House of Women (unusually, a modern story).
- ► Tessa Barclay, Dayton and Daughter; Emma Blair, An Apple from Eden; Josephine Cox, Looking Back; Sheelagh Kelly, A Long Way from Heaven (and others set in Victorian York); Pamela Oldfield, All Our Tomorrows; Mary Jane Staples, Echoes of Yesterday (and others in the series about the Adams family of Walworth).

CORNWELL. Bernard (born 1944)

British novelist

Although he has published other series of historical fiction – most recently a trilogy set in the Hundred Years War - Bernard Cornwell remains best known for the Sharpe books, set in the Napoleonic Wars and tracing the rise from the ranks of Richard Sharpe. Cornwell's fiction has the old-fashioned virtues of writers like > C.S. Forester and > John Buchan. His historical research is impeccable but unobtrusive. His capacity to sustain a suspenseful and exciting narrative and his gift for vivid description of military action are admirable. And his hero, flawed but likeable, retains the reader's sympathies. We want to know what will happen next to Sharpe and how he will deal with it. Modern readers demand a racier package than the readers of Forester and Buchan did, and Cornwell is willing enough to supply it, but essentially he is the inheritor of their tradition and the best contemporary exponent of it.

The Sharpe books cover the years 1799 to 1821. In chronological order (although not the order in which Cornwell wrote and published them), they are: Sharpe's Tiger, Sharpe's Triumph, Sharpe's Fortress, Sharpe's Trafalgar, Sharpe's Prey, Sharpe's Rifles, Sharpe's Havoc, Sharpe's Eagle, Sharpe's Gold, Sharpe's Battle, Sharpe's Company, Sharpe's Sword, Sharpe's Enemy, Sharpe's Honour, Sharpe's Regiment, Sharpe's Siege, Sharpe's Revenge, Sharpe's Waterloo and Sharpe's Devil.

READ ON

- The Winter King (the first in a trilogy based on the Arthurian legends, the others being Enemy of God and Excalibur).
- ▶ ▷ Patrick O'Brian, *Master and Commander* (and the other Aubrey/Maturin books); C.S. Forester, Mr Midshipman Hornblower; Allan Mallinson, A Close Run Thing; Richard Howard, Bonaparte's Sons.

CORNWELL, Patricia (born 1952)

US writer

Each of Cornwell's Scarpetta thrillers begins with the discovery of a gruesomely mutilated body, which is then sent to Kay Scarpetta, Chief Medical Examiner of Richmond, Virginia. Scarpetta's post-mortem is the beginning of a spiral of serial killing, political machinations (she is not popular with corrupt official colleagues), personal involvement and nail-biting suspense. A favourite secondary character is her niece Lucy, a brilliant adolescent whose computer wizardry is equalled only · by her social awkwardness. Since 1991 and the publication of Post-Mortem, the first of the Scarpetta books, Cornwell's combination of clinical and forensic expertise with tight plotting has made her books unputdownable.

POINT OF ORIGIN (1998)

Grisly murder comes once again to Scarpetta's home town of Richmond and once again Scarpetta's past returns to dog her. A farmhouse in Virginia has been destroyed in a fire and the remains of a body found there reveal clear signs of brutal murder. Meanwhile Carrie Grethen, a killer who tangled with Scarpetta in The Body Farm, has escaped from a psychiatric hospital and is sending Kay cryptic messages threatening revenge.

READ ON

- The other Scarpetta novels (best read in sequence, though self-contained) are Post-Mortem, Body of Evidence, All That Remains, Cruel and Unusual, The Body Farm, From Potter's Field, Cause of Death, Unnatural Exposure, Black Notice and The Last Precinct. Hornet's Nest, Southern Cross and Isle of Dogs are non-Scarpetta novels. Patricia Cornwell's most recent book is a non-fiction work, Portrait of a Killer, in which she claims to have definitively identified the man who was Jack the Ripper.
- ▶ Jonathan Kellerman, Over The Edge; ▷ Carol O'Connell, Mallory's Oracle; Kathy Reichs, Déjà Dead; Lisa Scottoline, Mistaken Identity, Linda Fairstein, The Bone Vault.

READ ON A THEME: COUNTRY HOUSES

- > Helen Dunmore, A Spell in the Country
- ▷ E.M. Forster, Howards End Esther Freud, Gaglow Henry Green, Loving
- > Hermann Hesse, Rosshalde
- > Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited
- Eudora Welty, Delta Wedding
- > P.G. Wodehouse, Summer Lightning

See also: Dark Old Houses

COUPLAND, Douglas (born 1961)

Canadian novelist

Only a handful of writers get the chance to attach a lasting label to an entire generation. Gertrude Stein called the young people of the 1920s jazz era the 'Lost phrase 'Beat Generation' to describe his own group of boho drop-outs disillusioned with the materialism of 1950s America and instantly became, in the eyes of the media, the spokesman of youth. And Douglas Coupland, in calling his darkly ironic stories of three twentysomethings caught up in dead-end jobs in the service industry Generation X (1991), gave a name and a human face to a demographic trend. The dangers of naming a generation, as Kerouac cruelly and tragically found out, are that you never outgrow it; Coupland has recognized this and, in the twelve years since Generation X, he has extended the range of his writing and produced a number of very different books. In Microserfs (1995) he turned his comic eye on the enclosed world of Silicon Valley programmers, trapped in a kind of perpetual adolescence. Girlfriend in a Coma (1998) uses an imaginative conceit to illuminate the compromises and limitations that life imposes on a group of high-school friends. One of them, Karen, goes into a coma in 1979 and only re-emerges twenty years later. An adolescent in the body of a woman approaching middle age, she is suddenly witness to the changes two decades have made to her friends. Her Rip Van Winkle-like astonishment at hitech culture on the cusp of the millennium and her uniaded insights into the hollowness of the lives her friends are now leading are very well done. Less successful by far is the book's apocalyptic conclusion, but Girlfriend in a Coma is a clear sign of how much Coupland has matured as a writer since his generationdefining debut.

Douglas Coupland's other works of fiction are Shampoo Planet, Life After God, Polaroids from the Dead, Miss Wyoming, All Families Are Psychotic and Hey Nostradamus which, despite its jokey-sounding title, is a subtle account of the aftermath of a Columbine-like school massacre. He has also written City of Glass. a guide to Vancouver, the city where he lives and where much of his fiction is set.

READ ON

- Hev Nostradamus.
- ▶ ▷ William Gibson, Virtual Light; ▷ Jay McInerney, Story of My Life; Douglas Rushkoff, The Ecstasy Club; Dave Eggers, You Shall Know Our Velocity.

CRACE, Jim (born 1940)

British writer

The settings of Crace's early books (Arcadia, Continent) are almost familiar: the forests, mountains, seas, villages and cities of our own real world. But they seem half-glimpsed, recognizable and strange all at once, like reality seen in dream. There is no history. Past and present exist in the same moment, the realities of medieval life and those of today blurring into one another. He is a prose poet, selecting just the aspects of life he needs, and letting the unsaid do as much work as what is there. The Gift of Stones (1988) is a recreation, remarkable because so understated and undemonstrative, of a Stone Age village and its inhabitants. In Quarantine (1997) he used his spare and beautiful prose to create his own memorable version of the biblical story of Jesus's forty days in the wilderness. In Being Dead (1999) a middle-aged couple return to a beach where they first made love thirty years before and become the victims of a casual killer. Undiscovered, their bodies lie on the dunes and Crace charts, meticulously and dispassionately, their disintegration. In Crace's hands this is neither morbid nor voyeuristic but instead becomes a haunting and moving meditation on love. death and transience. It has been followed by The Devil's Larder (2001), a quirky collection of stories on the theme of man's relationship with food, and Six (2003) in which an actor recalls the circumstances and the love affair which accompanied the births of each of his children.

ARCADIA (1992)

In a skyscraper tower above the ancient fruit and vegetable market lives Victor, the eighty-year-old financier who began as a beggar in the streets below, and rose to be barrow-boy, stallholder, landlord and finally owner of all he surveys. From his eyrie above the stalls he plans change, plans to make a brave new world in the market - and only Rook, his impersonal personal assistant, and Anna, Rook's mistress, have any influence on what happens next. The book relates Victor's early life, tells what happens when he begins to remake his world, and shows us, in a blur of tiny details, a picture of society as bustling and as grotesque as one of Brueghel's or Bosch's crowded scenes.

READ ON

- Continent, The Gift of Stones, Signals of Distress.
- ▶ ▷ Italo Calvino, *The Baron in the Trees*; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada*; ▷ William Golding, *The Inheritors*; Andrew Miller, *Ingenious Pain*.

READ ON A THEME: CULTURE CLASH

- Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart
- E.M. Forster, A Passage to India
- □ Graham Greene, The Quiet American
- > Henry James, The Europeans
- Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible
- David Malouf, Remembering Babylon
 Joseph Olshan, A Warmer Season
 Meera Syal, Anita and Me
- > Evelyn Waugh, The Loved One

READ ON A THEME: CYBER FICTION

Pat Cadigan, *Tea From an Empty Cup* Richard Calder, *Malignos* Greg Egan, *Permutation City*

- Jeff Noon, Vurt
 Michael Marshall Smith, Only Forward
 Neal Stephenson, Snow Crash
 Bruce Sterling, Holy Fire
 Tricia Sullivan, Dreaming in Smoke
 Jack Womack, Going, Going, Gone

STARTPOINTS

CRIME

Crime fiction began in 1841 with Edgar Allan Poe's story The Murders in the Rue Morgue, and its popularity has never waned. Stories concentrate either on events leading up to the crime or on detection. Some crime-centred books are darkly psychological, exploring the mind of the criminal compelled towards the crime. Others are 'caper' novels, showing the detailed planning and execution of the crime and concentrating on the relationships of everyone involved. Many detection-centred books are procedural, following the investigation of a crime step by meticulous step. Others centre on the character of the detective (an eccentric genius; a dogged cop with a complicated private life; a private eve who is the guardian of morality and integrity in a corrupt world). In ninety-nine per cent of all crime fiction, from > Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles (1902) to the latest ▷ Sue Grafton or ▷ lan Rankin, the crime is murder. In the first heyday of crime fiction (the 1930s) people favoured 'snobbery with violence' (as in the books of Dorothy L. Savers) and 'locked room' mysteries (such as those of John Dickson Carr). Nowadays, in the second heyday, we prefer psychological thrillers (such as those of ▷ Barbara Vine), procedurals (often set in the past, or abroad) and private eye stories.

Block, Lawrence, The Burglar Who Thought He Was Bogart (1995). Block has written a cherishable series of books about the amiable, witty burglar-cumbookseller Bernie Rhodenbarr and this title, in which Bernie adopts the persona of Bogart, is one of the best.

Carr, John Dickson, *The Blind Barber* (1933). Classic tale of beautiful women, international playboys, priceless jewels, stolen films, diplomatic incidents and murder, set on a transatlantic liner. Wonderful sense of period; one of the most rollicking of all 'locked room' mysteries.

- Dexter, Colin, *The Jewel that was Ours* (1991). Opera-loving loner Morse and his assistant Lewis investigate murder among a group of Americans doing the Oxford Heritage Tour.
- Dibdin, Michael, *Dead Lagoon* (1994). Dibdin's policeman Aurelio Zen returns to his native Venice and finds himself anything but at home as he struggles to solve the disappearance of a wealthy American and to disentangle webs of deceit both personal and political.
- Description Number Names, *The Black Dahlia* (1987). The first in Ellroy's powerful LA Quartet, this fictionalized account of a famous sex murder from the 1940s reveals Ellroy's mastery of period, dialogue and characterization and his dark, obsessive imagination.

Evanovich, Janet, *One for the Money* (1994). Stephanie Plum swaps a job as lingerie buyer for a career in bounty hunting in the first of Evanovich's madcap mixtures of screwball comedy and post-feminism.

Harvey, John, *Lonely Hearts* (1989). Jazz-loving, Nottingham-based Inspector Resnick investigates the murders of two women unlucky enough to meet a serial killer through the personal columns, in fine example of British police procedural.

Hjorstberg, William, *Falling Angel* (1979). Cult classic, memorably filmed in 1987 as *Angel Heart* by Alan Parker, in which seedy, hard-boiled hero Harry Angel homes in on some terrible truths. Trespassing rewardingly on other fiction genres (horror, fantasy), this is a crime novel like no other.

Lovesey, Peter, A Case of Spirits (1975). Lovesey specializes in period detective stories. In this, nineteenth-century Sergeant Cribb investigates murder and spiritualism among the snobbish middle classes of suburban London.

Mitchell, Gladys, *Laurels are Poison* (1942). Classic eccentric-detective tale, in which Mrs Lestrange Bradley, witch-like psychologist and sleuth, investigates murder of the warden of an all-women teachers' training college.

Parker, Robert B., Looking for Rachel Wallace (1980). Hard-boiled private eye Spencer is hired to look after feminist writer on speaking tour. They hate each other on sight. Then Wallace is kidnapped, and Spencer has to find her.

Pelecanos, George, *Down by the River Where the Dead Men Go* (1998). Superboozer and P.I. Nick Stefanos awakes from a bender in a public park to find a body being dumped in the river nearby. In a novel filled with pop-culture references and 1980s hedonism, he pursues the killers.

Peters, Ellis, One Corpse Too Many (1979). Ellis Peters wrote a series about worldly-wise monk and herbalist Brother Cadfael in which cosy crime met the Middle Ages. TV has now given her books an even wider readership than before. This one, in which monks burying the dead from a battle find one more body than they bargained for, shows Cadfael at his most likeable.

▷ **Stout, Rex,** *Too Many Cooks* (1938). Classic story in which fat, woman-hating, orchid-growing genius Nero Wolfe and his legman Archie Goodwin investigate murder at a conference for master chefs at a West Virginia luxury hotel.

Also recommended: James Lee Burke, Cadillac Jukebox; Loren Estleman, The Hours of the Virgin; Dan Kavanagh (see ▷ Julian Barnes), Going to the Dogs; H.R.F. Keating, The Body in the Billiard Room; John Milne, Shadow Play; ▷ Walter Mosley, Devil in a Blue Dress; James Sallis, The Long-Legged Fly; Josephine Tey, The Daughter of Time; Scott Turow, Presumed Innocent; Charles Willeford, Miami Blues; Robert Wilson, A Small Crime in Lisbon; Margaret Yorke, No Medals for the Major.

See also: Allingham, Chandler, Christie, Classic Detection, Grafton, Great (Classic) Detectives, Hammett, Higgins (George V.), Highsmith, Marsh, Police Procedural, Private Eyes, Rendell, Simenon.

D

READ ON A THEME: DARK OLD HOUSES

- > Kate Atkinson, Human Croquet
- Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre
- Daphne Du Maurier, Rebecca Marcel Moring, In Babylon

See also: Country Houses

DAVIES, Robertson (1913–95)

Canadian novelist, journalist and playwright

The deceptively gentle, expansive tone of Davies's satires belies their extraordinary subject matter: it is as if ▷Jane Austen had reworked ▷Rabelais. Davies's books are comedies of manners, many set in small university towns riven with gossip and pretension. *Tempest-tost* (1951) is about an amateur production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* all but sabotaged by the unexpected, lacerating love of the middle-aged leading man for the girl who plays his daughter. *A Mixture of Frailties* (1958) describes the chain of bizarre events after a woman leaves money to educate a girl in the arts, unless and until the woman's son sizes a male heir. *The Deptford Trilogy* (1970–75) begins with the throwing of a stone-filled snowball, and spirals out to cover three twentieth-century lives, interlocking in a dazzling, bizarre mosaic, involving medieval (and modern) saints, big business, Houdini, Jungian analysis, touring freak-shows and a barnstorming company of travelling actors.

THE CORNISH TRILOGY (1982)

The books in this trilogy, about members of the wealthy, eccentric Cornish family, are *The Rebel Angels, What's Bred in the Bone* and *The Lyre of Orpheus*. Hovering over the events, as puppeteers loom over marionettes, are guardian angels, devils and spirits of medieval mischief; we humans are not alone. Alternate chapters of *The Rebel Angels* are told by Father Darcourt, a professor of biblical Greek at a small, Roman Catholic, Canadian university, and Maria Magdalene Theotoky, a research student. The university is a quiet place, dedicated to placid scholarship and barbed common-room gossip. But Ms

Theotoky is researching Rabelais, and the plot suddenly erupts with priceless manuscripts, bizarre lusts, devil worship, scatology, and a storm of passion and deceit against which no grove of academe could stand unbowed. What's Bred in the Bone is the life story of Francis Cornish, art expert, multi-millionaire, wartime spy and loner, whose search for himself, and for love, is hampered by his guardian devil Maimas. The Lyre of Orpheus tells of the recreation, in twentieth-century Canadian academe, of a lost Arthurian opera by the devil-inspired nineteenth-century romantic composer E.T.A. Hoffman. The style in all three books is urbane, placid narrative, but the contents are sown with mines. If ▷ Jane Austen rules the tone of Davies's early trilogies, in this one ▷ Rabelais keeps blowing raspberries.

The books in the Deptford trilogy are Fifth Business, The Manticore and World of Wonders. Davies's other novels include Murther and Walking Spirits, The Cunning Man and a third trilogy, in a similarly urbane and hilarious vein, set in a small Ontario university town: the Salterton Trilogy. The Diary of Samuel Marchbanks, The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks and Marchbanks' Almanac are collections of humorous journalism. Davies had a great passion for theatre and the stage. His own plays include A Jig for the Gipsy, Hunting Stuart and the political satire Question Time. Happy Alchemy is a posthumous collection of his engaging, erudite writings on theatre.

READ ON

- A Leaven of Malice.
- ▶ to *The Rebel Angels*: ▷ David Lodge, *Small World*; ▷ Anthony Burgess, *Enderby's Dark Ladv*.
- ▶ to What's Bred in the Bone: > Thomas Mann, The Confessions of Felix Krull.
- ▶ to The Lyre of Orpheus: Randall Jarrell, Pictures From an Institution; D.J. Enright, Academic Year.
- ▶ to Davies's work in general: > John Irving, A Prayer for Owen Meany.

DE BERNIÈRES, Louis (born 1954)

British novelist

Louis de Bernières spent some of his earlier career as a teacher in South America and his early novels are both set there and borrow many of the 'magic realist' Isabel Allende. The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts, Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord and The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman are the three volumes in a loosely connected trilogy which takes place in an imaginary South American republic where farce, violence and sexual passion intermingle. Resuscitated conquistadors walk again, girls are transformed into magical cats, black jaguars are domesticated through a love of chocolate in books which, if they sometimes seem rather self-conscious amalgams of all the best-known characteristics of South American fiction, are never less than enjoyable. De Bernières's major success (sales in the millions, a movie based on the book) came, however, with Captain Corelli's Mandolin - a novel that is very traditional in its virtues. It has strong characterization, a powerfully evoked setting and a story of pathos and drama that told of individual lives caught up by the larger forces of history. In the Second World War the Greek island of Cephalonia is occupied by an Italian force led by the amiable and civilized Captain Antonio Corelli. More interested in music and his mandolin than he is in potential military glory. Corelli is a gentlemanly invader and embarks on an intense love affair with the local doctor's daughter, Pelagia. Yet, as the war goes on, its horrors drawing ever closer to Cephalonia, the political and the personal become ever more difficult to disentangle and tragedy becomes inevitable. Since the triumph of Captain Corelli's Mandolin, de Bernières has published only Red Dog - a slight but charming 'biography' of an Australian outback sheepdog.

READ ON

- ▶ to the earlier novels: > Gabriel García Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude; > Isabel Allende, The House of the Spirits; Laura Esquivel, Like Water for Chocolate.
- ▶ to Captain Corelli's Mandolin: > Sebastian Faulks. Charlotte Grav: Eric Linklater. Private Angelo.

READ ON A THEME: DEEP SOUTH, USA

James Lee Burke, Cadillac Jukebox

- Ellen Gilchrist, Net of Jewels Joe R. Lansdale, The Bottoms Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird
- > Carson McCullers, The Ballad of the Sad Café
- > Margaret Mitchell, Gone With the Wind Flannery O'Connor, Wise Blood
- Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
- > Alice Walker, The Color Purple Rebecca Wells. Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood
- > Eudora Welty, Delta Wedding
- > Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel Richard Wright, Uncle Tom's Children

See also: Places; Small Town Life, USA

DEFOE. Daniel (1660–1731)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

'A journalist, Defoe wrote over 500 essays, poems, political satires and other works, including a history of England, a handbook of good manners and a guidebook to Britain. In his sixties he began writing what he called 'romances': books which purported to be the autobiographies of people who had led unusual or adventurous lives (pirates, whores, treasure hunters) but which were really fiction and among the earliest English novels. Apart from his characters' proneness to theological and philosophical reflection (eminently skippable), his books lack the ponderousness of later eighteenth-century fiction. His fast-moving, simple prose and his journalist's talent for description give his work a freshness which belies its age.

ROBINSON CRUSOE (1719)

The germ of this story came from the autobiography of a real-life sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who was marooned on a deserted island in 1704. As often in his works, Defoe was fascinated by the idea of the confrontation between civilization and barbarism, in this case by how a 'modern' European, filled with the knowledge and aspirations of the Age of Reason, might cope if all the trappings of civilization were stripped from him. Crusoe is allowed nothing but a few tools and other possessions saved from the shipwreck, and the resources of his own ingenuity. Later, after Crusoe has lived alone for 26 years, Defoe provides him with a companion, the 'savage' Friday, and so lets us see 'civilized' humanity through innocent, unsophisticated eyes.

Defoe's 'romances' include Moll Flanders (set in the eighteenth-century criminal underworld), The Life and Adventures of Mr Duncan Campbell (whose hero is a deaf-and-dumb conjurer), Captain Singleton (whose hero is a pirate), Memoirs of a Cavalier and Memoirs of Captain George Carleton (whose heroes are swashbuckling soldiers-of-fortune), and – more serious – A Journal of the Plague Year, a day-by-day, first-person account of life during the Great Plague of London in 1664–65.

READ ON

- The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.
- ▶ Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*; ▷ William Golding, *Pincher Martin*; *Rites of Passage*; ▷ Patrick White, *Voss*; Michel Tournier, *The Other Friday*, and Jane Gardam, *Crusoe's Daughter*, play fascinating games with *Robinson Crusoe's* themes and plot, Tournier by retelling the story from Friday's point of view, and Gardam by focusing on a reclusive girl fixated on *Robinson Crusoe* who makes it her chief emotional resource. C.S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet* is a similar novel of survival, set on the planet Mars, while J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* gives an alternative account of how *Robinson Crusoe* came to be written, and of the 'real' events which might have inspired it Friday and Crusoe are the sole survivors from a wrecked slave ship.

DEIGHTON, Len (born 1929)

British novelist

In the 1960s, fired by dislike of snobbish spy fantasies of the James Bond school, Deighton produced a series of books (beginning with *The Ipcress File*) showing spies as ordinary human beings, functionaries of a ridiculous and outdated bureaucracy in which requisitions for paper-clips could take precedence over analyses of the danger of nuclear war. He devised for them a documentary, 'dossier' technique, flooding the text with lists, letters, memoranda, meeting transcripts, diary entries and technical notes. Deighton went on to use this device in a series of devastatingly authentic-seeming novels on non-spy subjects. Although his material is fictional, it reads like fact, like the transcript of a TV documentary which shows us people's thoughts and feelings as meticulously as what they do and say.

BOMBER (1970)

In direct contrast to the stiff-upper-lip, jolly-good-show British war films of the 1950s, Deighton gives a blunt, detailed idea of what it was probably like to

prepare for and make an RAF bombing raid in 1943. In this documentary novel he is particularly interested in the tensions between service and civilian personnel, the class divisions between officers and other ranks and the bumbling and paper-chasing which contrasted with, and sometimes jeopardized, the bravery of actual combat.

Deighton's spy novels include Funeral in Berlin, Horse Under Water, Spy Story, Mamista, City of Gold and three trilogies: Berlin Game, Moscow Set, London Match; Spy Hook, Spy Line, Spy Sinker and Faith, Hope, Charity. Close-Up is a black satire on the film business. Only When I Larf is a comedy about confidence tricksters. Violent Ward is a sparky updating of the Marlowe, Lew Archer genre to 1990s L.A. His 'dossier' novels include SS-GB, a nightmarish vision of what might have happened if Britain had lost the Second World War and were now under Nazi rule.

READ ON

- ▶ to the spy stories: ▷ John le Carré, *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold*; Adam Hall, *The Quiller Memorandum*; Richard Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate*.
- ▶ to Bomber: Derek Robinson, Piece of Cake.
- ▶ to SS-GB: > Robert Harris, Fatherland.

DELILLO, Don (born 1936)

US writer

Born to Italian immigrants in New York City, DeLillo studied at Fordham University in the Bronx before working in advertising. His first novel, Americana, appeared in 1971, and set the mould for his later work, in that it satirized, with acute perceptiveness and a laconic wit, a particular strand of American culture – in this case, the television industry. Subsequent subjects have included football in Endzone (where, by drawing a parallel with this game and nuclear warfare, he examined the violence implicit in much US culture); the music business in Great Jones St and Running Dog; Wall Street finance (and terrorism) in Players; academia in White Noise. Libra is a brilliant meditation on the Kennedy assassination and Mao II investigates the heavy price of fame and media attention for a reclusive author. This last novel was reported to be inspired by a photograph of ▷ J.D. Salinger, probably the most notorious post-war literary recluse, and DeLillo himself has been something of a literary hermit - for some years, little was heard of him and it looked as if Mao II (1991) might be his last book, but it was followed in 1997 by Underworld, A huge, sprawling epic, this. like Libra, was an immensely imaginative speculation based on actual historical events. In *Underworld* it is the Cold War that comes under DeLillo's penetrating gaze, specifically, the first nuclear bomb exploded by the USSR in the 1950s. Recalling Endzone, with its sly, playful teaming of sport and mass destruction, the book commences, in a typically bravura opening, with a scene at a baseball game when a figure in the crowds catches a ball hit by the batter. From there DeLillo takes the reader on a journey, backwards and forwards through time, across five decades of American life and culture in a panoramic book peopled by hundreds of characters, both real and fictional.

DeLillo's other work includes Ratner's Star, The Names, The Body Artist and Cosmopolis.

READ ON

- ▶ to Libra: ▷ Norman Mailer, Oswald's Story.
- ▶ to Underworld: > Thomas Pynchon, Vineland; E.L. Doctorow, Ragtime.
- ▶ to DeLillo's fiction in general: David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*; Richard Powers, *The Gold Bug Variations*.

READ ON A THEME: DEPRESSION AND PSYCHIATRY

Lisa Alther, Other Women
Paul Bailey, Peter Smart's Confessions

- Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook* Wendy Perriam, *Fifty-minute Hour*
- ▶ H.H. Richardson, Maurice Guest

See also: Emotionally III at Ease; Madness; On the Edge of Sanity

DEXTER, Colin (born 1930)

British novelist

Since the days of Holmes and Watson there has been no surer ingredient of long-term success in detective fiction than an alliance between two apparently mismatched characters who are, in fact, devoted to one another. As the readers of his books – and the millions who have watched the TV films – know, Colin Dexter created just such an alliance in the partnership of Chief Inspector Morse and Detective Sergeant Lewis of the Oxford police. Morse is grumpy, intellectual, fond of booze, opera and crosswords, and a bachelor. Lewis is stolid, reliable, diligent but slightly unimaginative. Together they form a classic genius/sidekick duo. The third constant in the Morse books is Oxford. The city of dreaming spires provides the ideal setting for the complicated crimes Morse and Lewis investigate. However, plot, particularly in the early books, is not sacrificed to character and place. Dexter is a one-time national crossword champion and his narrative twists and turns have the ingenuity of the most cryptic of crossword clues.

The other full-length Morse novels are: Last Bus to Woodstock, Last Seen Wearing, The Silent World of Nicholas Quinn, Service of All the Dead, The Dead of Jericho, The Riddle of the Third Mile, The Secret of Annexe 3, The Wench is Dead, The Jewel That Was Ours, The Way Through the Woods, The Daughters of Cain, Death is Now My Neighbour and The Remorseful Day. Morse's Greatest Mystery is a collection of short stories, some about Morse, some not.

READ ON

- The Way Through the Woods.
- ► Reginald Hill, An Advancement of Learning; John Harvey, Easy Meat; R.D. Wingfield, A Touch of Frost (one of a series that shares with Dexter's books TV success and a grumpy central character); Veronica Stallwood, Oxford Exit.

DIBDIN, Michael (born 1947)

British novelist

Dibdin's early novels, including one in which the Victorian poet Robert Browning plays amateur detective in Florence, are enjoyable mixtures of authentic crime fiction and pastiche. His finest creation, however, and one of the most appealing protagonists in contemporary crime writing, is Aurelio Zen, Venetian investigator for the Criminalpol section of the Italian Ministry of the Interior. Zen, unlike the one-dimensional ciphers of so much detective fiction, is a rounded and convincing character. Struggling to maintain what moral integrity he can amid the labyrinthine bureaucracy and corruption of Italian society, he tries to unearth as much of the truth about the cases he is assigned as circumstances allow. Dibdin himself lived and worked in Italy for a number of years and the richness and unobtrusive detail of the Italian settings – Venice, Rome, the impoverished south – add to the pleasures of reading the novels. In addition to the Zen novels, Dibdin continues to write other books in which he cleverly manipulates the conventions of crime fiction to produce challenging and witty narratives.

CABAL (1992)

Cabal opens with startling suddenness as a man plummets to his death from the gallery in St Peter's, Rome while a priest is celebrating mass. The man is a gambler, playboy and prominent Catholic aristocrat and the initial assumption is that he committed suicide. Zen is brought in by the Vatican police force to rubber-stamp this verdict, but soon concludes that the case is not that simple. The dead man was involved in dubious financial skulduggery and, as murder begins to seem the likeliest option, potential witnesses join the ranks of the dead. Caught between the Vatican and his own superiors, Zen suspects far-reaching conspiracies and secret organizations ruthlessly intent on covering up their misdeeds.

The other Zen novels (each one self-contained) are Ratking, Vendetta, Dead Lagoon, Cosi Fan Tutti, A Long Finish, Blood Rain, And Then You Die and Medusa. Dibdin's other books include The Last Sherlock Holmes Story, Dark Spectre, Dirty Tricks, The Tryst and Thanksgiving.

READ ON

- Dirty Tricks.
- ▶ to the Zen novels: Donna Leon, *The Death of Faith* (one of another crime series with an Italian setting and central character); Iain Pears, *Giotto's Hand*; ▷ Ian Rankin, *The Hanging Garden*; ▷ Reginald Hill, *Bones and Silence*.
- ▶ to The Last Sherlock Holmes Story; Julian Symons, A Three-Pipe Problem; Jamyang Norbu, The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes.
- ▶ to non-Zen crime stories: Nicci French, Beneath the Skin; Barbara Vine, The House of Stairs (see > Ruth Rendell).

DICK, Philip K. (Kendred) (1928–82)

US novelist and short story writer

Dick used standard science fiction ideas – androids, alternative worlds, aliens – to write novels about the hinges between fantasy and reality, madness and sanity,

paranoia and true perception. For a time in the 1960s, thanks to books like *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1964), which deals with the effects of mindaltering drugs on our perception of reality and with the nature of that perception – he had a huge cult following and he continues to be much admired, often by readers who otherwise read little science fiction. His characters often teeter on the brink of insanity, struggling to understand the world in which they feel trapped. In one classic novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968; later filmed as *Bladerunner*), their dilemma is entirely real, as they are not human beings at all but androids aspiring to humanity. Science fiction fans make high claims for Dick, and he is certainly a master of the genre. But his metaphorical transformation of well-worn ideas, and his bizarre humour, make him a pleasure not only for addicts, but for readers who would not normally cross the road to read science fiction.

THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE (1962)

The rewriting of history is a standard idea in science fiction and, at first glance, *The Man in the High Castle* seems a standard example of the sub-genre of alternative history. The Axis powers have won the Second World War and the Japanese rule the US. Yet Dick's book soon reveals itself as far more complicated and subtle than a straightforward work of alternative history. It is an interlocking, intermeshing web of possible realities. Dick feeds the reader a heady cocktail of fascism, Taoism, the I Ching (which he used as an aid in plotting the book), individual schizophrenia and mass paranoia.

Dick's other novels include The Penultimate Truth, A Maze of Death, Eye in the Sky, Ubik, Martian Time-Slip, A Scanner Darkly (about how the dual life of a future-Earth narcotics agent causes him to lose hold of his own identity), and Time Out of Joint. Valis, about what happens when an ancient, extra-terrestrial satellite beams directly into the hero's brain the news that reality ended in AD74, is one of Dick's most challenging novels and draws on his own experiences of apparent contact with alien intelligences.

READ ON

- to The Man in the High Castle: The Crack in Space.
- to Valis: Radio Free Albemuth; The Transmigration of Timothy Archer.
- Other alternative history/science fiction: Norman Spinrad, The Iron Dream; Keith Roberts. Pavane.
- ▶ Drugs and altered perceptions: Brian Aldiss, Barefoot in the Head; > Jeff Noon, Vurt; K.W. Jeter, Dr Adder; > William S. Burroughs, The Ticket That Exploded.

DICKENS, Charles (1812-70)

British novelist

In his early twenties Dickens worked as a journalist, writing reports of law court proceedings and Parliamentary debates, and short essays on the life and manners of the time (later collected as *Sketches by Boz*). After the startling success of his first novel *Pickwick Papers*, when he was twenty-five, he was able to make writing a full-time career and continued to be the most popular of Victorian novelists until his death. He composed large parts of his novels in dialogue, and was proud of his gift for showing character through speech alone;

he also gave his minor characters (pot-boys, shop customers, carters, oystermen, toddlers) turns of speech or physical eccentricities to make them instantly memorable. These are theatrical techniques and Dickens was renowned for his love of the theatre. The vividness of his depiction of character is combined with a sustained commentary on human nature and society: Dickens consistently savaged the humbug and petty-mindedness of the very middle classes who bought his books, and said that human happiness comes not from law, religion, politics or social structures but from gratuitous, individual acts of kindness. In his later books, notably *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*, savagery predominated over sentimentality to an extent rivalled only by \triangleright Zola.

DAVID COPPERFIELD (1849-50)

Dickens's own favourite among his novels, this tells the story (in the first person, as if an autobiography) of a boy growing up: his unhappy childhood and adolescence, his first jobs and first love affair, and the way he finally transmutes his experience into fiction and becomes a writer. As often in Dickens's books, subsidiary characters seem to steal the show: the grim Murdstones, the optimistic Micawbers, salt-of-the-earth Peggotty, feckless Steerforth and, above all, the viperish hypocrite Uriah Heep. But the book's chief interest is the developing character of Copperfield himself. Apparently passive, at other people's mercy, he learns and grows by each experience, maturing before our eyes.

Dickens's novels, in order of publication, are Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, Martin Chuzzlewit, Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Hard Times, Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend and the unfinished The Mystery of Edwin Drood. His shorter works include A Christmas Carol, A Child's History of England and three collections of articles, Sketches by Boz, American Notes and The Uncommercial Traveller.

READ ON

- Nicholas Nickleby; Oliver Twist.
- ▶ to Dickens's fiction in general: ▷ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Pendennis*; ▷ H.G. Wells, *Kipps*; Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*; George Gissing, *The Nether World*.

DONALDSON, Stephen (born 1947)

US novelist

Donaldson's major work, the 2600–page Thomas Covenant series (1977–84), is adventure fantasy inspired by − and as good as − ▷ Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Thomas Covenant, a leper, is transported to a distant country in the grip of the evil Lord Foul. He finds that his wedding ring is a powerful magic talisman, but is at first reluctant to use it because he believes himself psychologically tainted by his illness − in fact he wonders if the land and its plight are not

PATHWAYS

CHARLES DICKENS

DAVID COPPERFIELD

(dark childhood, miserable adolescence and eventual happiness in nineteenth-century London)

LEARNING HOW TO BE GROWN UP

(adolescence as a quest, with adulthood as the glittering prize)

William Thackeray. Pendennis

W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The

Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister

André Gide, The Counterfeiters

Mordecai Richler, The Apprenticeship of

Duddy Kravitz Lisa Alther, Kinflicks

A DICKENS OF A LIFE: THE BLEAK SIDE

(the battle for existence fought – and lost)

Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

Anthony **Trollope**, *The Last Chronicle of Barset*

Daisel

Edith Wharton, The House of Mirth

J.B. Priestley, Angel Pavement

James Baldwin, Go tell It on the Mountain

THE CHEERFUL SIDE

(life may be a struggle, but it can still be fun)

Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry

H.G. Wells, The History of Mr Polly

Thomas Mann, The Confessions of Felix Krull,

Confidence Man

Angus **Wilson**, *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot* Saul **Bellow**, *The Adventures of Augie March* fantasies of his own sick mind. The novels chart his spiritual agonizing, his recruitment of a band of helpers and followers, and his epic battles against Lord Foul. As well as the Thomas Covenant books, Donaldson has written the two-volume *Mordant's Need* (*The Mirror of Her Dreams* and *A Man Rides Through*) and the science fiction *Gap* sequence of novels.

The Thomas Covenant books are Lord Foul's Bane, The Illearth War, The Power That Preserves, The Wounded Land, The One Tree, White Gold Wielder and the brief Gildenfire. The Gap sequence consists of The Real Story, Forbidden Knowledge, A Dark and Hungry God Arises, Chaos and Order and This Day All Gods Die. Daughter of Regals and Reave the Just are collections of short stories.

READ ON

▶ David Eddings, *Pawn of Prophecy* (first of the Belgariad quintet); Jack Vance, *Lyonesse*; R.A. MacAvoy, *Damiano*; Gene Wolfe, *The Book of the New Sun*.

DOSTOEVSKY, Fyodor (1821–81)

Russian novelist

Dostoevsky admired ▷ Balzac and ▷ Dickens, and set out to describe Russian characters and society in a similar way, creating atmosphere by a series of vivid evocations (verbal snapshots) of everything from people's skin and clothes to the texture of furniture or the gleam of rain on cobblestones. His characters are a gallery of 'types', particularly strong on the destitute, the suffering and the inadequate. He was fascinated by people driven to extreme behaviour by despair or lack of external moral guidance. Raskolnikov, the central character of Crime and Punishment, makes himself a moral outsider by committing murder. Myshkin in The Idiot is so tormented by the thought of his own inadequacy that he becomes the imbedile he thinks he is. Every member of the Karamazov family (in The Brothers Karamazov) is morally tainted, and only the youngest, a novice monk, is able to wrestle with his own evil nature and win. If Dostoevsky had been a twentieth-century writer his pessimistic view of human existence might have led him to surrealist black comedy (see > Kafka); as it was, the psychological intensity of his books is closer to stage tragedy (King Lear or Medea, say) than to prose fiction, and has a similar all-engulfing power.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT (1866)

Raskolnikov, a student driven to neurotic frenzy by his powerlessness to change the injustice of the world, decides to demonstrate the freedom of his soul by a single gratuitous act: murder. Instead of being liberated, however, he is enslaved by his own guilt-feelings, and the book describes, in a remorseless and clinical way, the disintegration of his personality. The part of his 'conscience' is embodied in Inspector Petrovich, who harries him like a Fury from ancient myth, goading and cajoling him to admit his guilt and so to purge his soul.

Dostoevsky's other books include Notes from the House of the Dead (based on his own prison-camp experiences: he was a political dissident), Winter Notes on Summer Experiences (a horrifying account of the degenerate Europe he found while visiting the London World Exhibition of 1862), and the novels Notes from Underground, The Gambler and The Possessed.

READ ON

- The Idiot; The Brothers Karamazov.
- ▶ ∨ Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*; ▷ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*; ▷ Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*; ▷ Albert Camus, *The Fall (La Chute)*; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Despair*.

READ ON A THEME: DOWN TO EARTH (the implacability of nature)

Stella Gibbons, Cold Comfort Farm

- ➤ Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders
 Robert Morgan, Gap Creek
 Tim Pears, In the Place of Fallen Leaves
- Paul Theroux, The Black House Mary Webb, Precious Bane
- > Fay Weldon, The Heart of the Country
- □ Edith Wharton, Ethan Frome

See also: The Rhythm of Nature

DOYLE. Arthur Conan (1859–1930)

British writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

As a doctor with very few patients, Doyle began writing to improve his income. His main interest was military history, and he regarded his historical novels (e.g. *The White Company*, the story of a band of fourteenth-century knights-errant, or the Brigadier Gerard books, set during the Napoleonic Wars) as his best work. His Sherlock Holmes stories were meant as potboilers, and throughout his life he claimed to be embarrassed by their success. Famously, he attempted to finish Holmes off by sending him over the Reichenbach Falls in the clutches of his deadliest enemy, the criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty, but public pressure forced him to resurrect the cerebral, eccentric detective. The Holmes stories were published by the *Strand* magazine in the UK and by *Harper's* in the US; these periodicals also serialized Doyle's Professor Challenger novels (beginning with *The Lost World*), about a flamboyant scientific genius and explorer, a blend of the heroes of \triangleright Jules Verne and \triangleright Rider Haggard.

THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK'HOLMES (1893)

In each of the eleven stories in this collection, Holmes is presented with a problem which seems insoluble – at least so far as his friend and chronicler Dr Watson can see – and solves it by a mixture of dazzling deductive reasoning and melodramatic adventure. Holmes is a master of disguise, an expert shot and boxer, a drug-taker, a neurotic introvert, a plausible liar who uses every trick to trap his suspects – and Doyle's style has a single-mindedness, an obsessiveness, which perfectly suits both Holmes's character and the mysteries he is set to solve.

Doyle's Holmes books are the novels A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, The Hound of the Baskervilles and The Valley of Fear, and the short-story collections

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The Return of Sherlock Holmes, His Last Bow and The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes. The Challenger books include The Poison Belt and The Land of Mist, and Doyle's historical novels, apart from those mentioned, include Micah Clarke (set during the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and its bloody aftermath).

READ ON

- The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes.
- ▶ to Holmes: Nicholas Meyer, *The Seven-per-cent Solution* (one of the most convincing of many Holmes stories by others); G.K. Chesterton, *The Father Brown Stories*; John Dickson Carr, *The Emperor's Snuff Box*; Arthur Morrison, *Martin Hewitt, Investigator*; August Derleth, *The Adventures of Solar Pons* (half-parody, half-homage in which a Holmes-like detective operates from rooms in Praed Street); Laurie King, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* (first in a wonderfully witty and convincing series of books in which an astute young woman is trained by the retired Holmes in the art of deduction).
- ▶ to the historical fiction: ▷ Alexandre Dumas, The Queen's Necklace;
 ▷ R.L. Stevenson, Kidnapped, Rafael Sabatini, Bellarion the Fortunate.

DOYLE, Roddy (born 1958)

Irish writer

The families in Doyle's early books (epitomized by the Rabittes of the Barrytown trilogy) are large, endlessly ambitious and totally useless. They live in Dublin, scraping a living on welfare (and by other less official activities), and are always dreaming of the big time. The Barrytown books consist of The Commitments (made into an exuberant film by Alan Parker), The Snapper and The Van. The 1993 Booker Prize-winning Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha is set in the same type of working-class area of Dublin's northside as the Barrytown books and tells of the growing pains of its ten-year-old protagonist from his perspective. With The Woman Who Walked Into Doors (see below) Doyle indicated an ambition to extend his fictional range and this has been confirmed by his most recent novel, A Star Called Henry (1999). This is the first of what is to be a trilogy re-examining the history of the Irish Republic through the eyes of Henry Smart. Born in the Dublin slums, Henry grows up quickly to play his part in the 1916 Easter Uprising (grittily and unromantically presented by Doyle) and to enter the violent politics of the civil war years as a hard and unillusioned fighter. Doyle has recently published his first work of non-fiction, Rory and Ita (2002), the story of his parents and the changing Ireland they have experienced.

THE WOMAN WHO WALKED INTO DOORS (1996)

Paula Spencer is looking back on seventeen years of marriage to a violent man. Her husband now dead (shot by police), she is an alcoholic consumed by self-hatred and the self-image imposed on her by the men in her life. Doyle provides unflinching insights into Paula's inner life and her struggles to regain dignity and self-worth. Often as funny as his earlier books (despite its stark subject matter) *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* is a remarkable feat of empathy and imagination.

READ ON

▶ Patrick McCabe, Breakfast on Pluto; Joseph O'Connor, Cowboys and Indians; Dermot Bolger, Father's Music; Jeff Torrington, Swing, Hammer, Swing (for a working-class Glasgow as exuberant as Doyle's working-class Dublin); Sebastian Barry, The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty.

DRABBLE, Margaret (born 1939)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

An admirer of ▷ George Eliot and ▷ Arnold Bennett, Drabble has updated their fictional ideas to the present day. Her books are crammed with the detail of everyday lives – fetching children from school, making gravy, taking intercity trains, washing tights – and are about 'ordinary' people: housewives, librarians, teachers, midwives. But Drabble, like Eliot and Bennett, is also interested in intellectual ideas, in describing the spirit of the times as well as their domestic detail. Her books centre on women's experience and tell us how middle-class girls of the late 1950s felt about their lives, how they went on in the 1960s to balance marriage, motherhood and careers, and how they coped in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s with teenage children and rocky marriages. Drabble's sister is ▷ A.S. Byatt.

THE RADIANT WAY (1987)

The lives of three women of similar age (late forties) and background (educated middle class) are contrasted, in a brilliantly evoked mid-1980s Britain. All were born in the north of England; Liz has moved south and made a career as a Harley Street psychiatrist; her sister has stayed at home to look after their senile mother; Alix and her husband, failing to make a success in London, are returning north to regenerate their lives. The characters' contrasting experiences, and their middleaged views of the way their younger ambitions have worked out, match the political and social feelings Drabble sees as typical of Britain in the 1980s, when the young adults of the flower-power generation are just beginning to feel that life has passed them by. Their stories are continued in two sequels, *A Natural Curiosity* and *The Gates of Ivory*.

Drabble's novels include The Garrick Year, The Millstone, Jerusalem the Golden, The Waterfall, A Summer Bird-Cage, The Realms of Gold, The Ice Age, The Witch of Exmoor, The Peppered Moth and The Seven Sisters. She has also written biographies of Wordsworth and Bennett and has acted as general editor of The Oxford Companion to English Literature.

READ ON

- The Garrick Year (a moving study, set in the 1960s, of a woman trying to manage both marriage, to a rising actor, and the claims of her own career); The Peppered Moth (four generations of a family, from a young woman in an early twentiethcentury mining village trying to escape to a more fulfilling world to a granddaughter who has still not quite reached it.)
- ► A.S. Byatt, The Virgin in the Garden; Penelope Mortimer, *The Pumpkin Eater*; Deborah Moggach, *Close to Home*; Margaret Atwood, *The Edible Woman*; Joan Didion, *A Book of Common Prayer*; Mary Flanagan, *Trust*.

► Earlier books foreshadowing Drabble's concerns: > George Eliot, Middlemarch: > Arnold Bennett, Hilda Lessways; > Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway.

READ ON A THEME: DREAMING SPIRES

(books set in Cambridge and Oxford universities)

- Max Beerbohm. Zuleika Dobson
- > Penelope Fitzgerald, The Gate of Angels
- > Barbara Pym. Crampton Hodnett Frederic Raphael, The Glittering Prizes Robert Robinson, Landscape with Dead Dons
- Dorothy L. Sayers, Gaudy Night J.I.M. Stewart, The Gaudy (and following four titles in the Staircase in Surrey series)
- > Tom Sharpe, Porterhouse Blue
- C.P. Snow, The Masters

See also: Groves of Academe; Higher (?) Education

DUMAS. Alexandre (1802–70)

French writer of novels, plays, short stories and non-fiction

In his twenties Dumas worked as a civil service clerk: it was not until he was twenty-nine that he was able to take up writing full-time. From then until his death, working with a team of assistants, he poured out over 250 plays, novels, essays, books on history, travel and cooking and no less than twenty-two volumes of memoirs. He was one of the most popular authors of his century, and the genre he specialized in, swashbuckling historical romance, has continued to enthrall many readers to the present day.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS (1844-5)

At the beginning of the seventeenth century d'Artagnan, a young country squire, goes to Paris to seek adventure. He makes friends with three of the King's musketeers (by the unusual method of challenging each of them to a duel on the same day) and the four become inseparable. D'Artagnan is accepted for royal service, and the musketeers throw themselves into the political intrigues centring on weak King Louis, his unhappy queen and her arch-enemies Cardinal Richelieu and the seductive, treacherous Milady. The story involves stolen jewels, masquerades, bluff and double bluff, and the musketeers gallop the length and breadth of France, duelling, drinking, wenching and making a thousand skin-of-the-teeth escapes. Although the book's style is old-fashioned, its breathless plot, its good humour and above all the wisecracking, bantering friendship between the four central characters, give it irresistible gusto. After a few dozen pages of acclimatization, it may prove hard to put it down.

Although Dumas was best known - and is now best remembered - for his Musketeers adventures, he wrote fine novels set in other periods, notably The Queen's Necklace and The Countess of Charny (both of which take place during the French Revolution) and The Count of Monte Cristo, about a man falsely imprisoned for helping the defeated Napoleon, who escapes, discovers hidden treasure and proceeds to hunt down the people who betrayed him.

READ ON

- Dumas continued the Musketeers' adventures in Twenty Years After, The Vicomte
 of Bragelonne and The Man in the Iron Mask.
- ▶ Old-fashioned swashbuckling stories: Rafael Sabatini, Captain Blood; Jeffery Farnol, The Broad Highway; Stanley J. Weyman, Gentleman of France; Baroness Orczy, The Scarlet Pimpernel.
- ▶ Today's versions of swash and buckle: ▷ George MacDonald Fraser, Flashman;
- ▷ Bernard Cornwell, Sharpe's Regiment, Allan Mallinson, The Nizam's Daughters, Bjorn Larsson, Long John Silver.

DU MAURIER, Daphne (1907-89)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Although Du Maurier wrote novels and stories of many kinds, she is best known for a series of atmospheric romances set in the English West Country (Cornwall, Devon and Somerset) and drawing on the moorland landscape and seafaring associations of the area. In her best-loved book, *Rebecca* (1938), a naive girl marries Max de Winter, an enigmatic young widower, and goes to be mistress of his large country house Manderley, only to find it haunted by the mystery of his first wife's death. Solving that mystery (against the wishes of the sinister housekeeper Mrs Danvers) is the only way to bring happiness to the young girl (who is unnamed) and peace to her tormented husband – and the search leads her into a psychological labyrinth as threatening as the corridors of the dark old house itself.

Du Maurier's romances include Jamaica Inn, My Cousin Rachel and Mary Anne. Her other novels include The King's General, The Parasites, The Glassblowers and The House on the Strand. The Birds and Other Stories includes the short story that was the basis for Hitchcock's classic film. Don't Look Now and Other Stories includes the novella/short story that inspired the 1973 movie directed by Nicolas Roeg. Daphne Du Maurier also wrote plays, biographies (of her family, Branwell Brontë and Francis Drake) and an autobiography, The Shaping of a Writer/Myself When Young.

READ ON

- Frenchman's Creek (piracy and romance in Restoration Cornwall).
- ➤ Susan Hill, Mrs de Winter (à sequel to Rebecca); Philippa Gregory, The Favoured Child; Barbara Erskine, House of Echoes; ▷ Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre; ▷ Susan Howatch, Penmarric.

DUNMORE, Helen (born 1952)

British poet, novelist and short story writer

Helen Dunmore's fiction explores, in prose of a strong, lyrical sensuousness that reflects her gifts as a poet, the seductive charms and potential betrayals of intense love affairs. Her characters often harbour dark secrets or transgressive

desires which threaten the stability of everyday life. Past events continue to echo in the present and to re-emerge, often to devastating effect. In Talking to the Dead (1996) Nina arrives at her sister's home to provide help after a difficult childbirth but is drawn into an affair with her brother-in-law. The relationship grows more obsessive, her sister retreats further into a private world and Nina finds disturbing memories of childhood and the death of a brother returning with new force. Set in Edwardian England, A Spell of Winter (1995) borrows elements of Gothic melodrama and the most sinister of fairytales in its story of a family that has been traumatized by the desertion of a mother. The father has been driven into an asylum and the two children, living in isolation in an eerily described country home, have found comfort in an incestuous relationship. With Your Crooked Heart (1999) adds dimension and depth to the cliché of the eternal triangle in its story of the stifling interrelationship of Louise with her husband Paul and his younger, charming, irresponsible brother. The settings of Dunmore's novels are various but all share the same sense of the enabling power and threatening danger of erotic love.

Helen Dunmore's other novels are Zennor in Darkness, Burning Bright, Your Blue-Eyed Boy, The Siege and Mourning Ruby. Love of Fat Men and Ice Cream are collections of short stories. She has also written several volumes of poetry and a number of books for children.

READ ON

- The Siege (a love affair set against the larger backdrop of the siege of Leningrad).
- ▶ Barbara Vine, *The House of Stairs* (see ▷ Ruth Rendell); Alison Fell, *Mer de Glace*; Linda Grant, *The Cast Iron Shore*; Nicci French, *Killing Me Softly*.

DUNNETT, Dorothy (born 1923)

British writer

Dunnett worked as a civil servant until the 1950s, and then began a double career as portrait painter and novelist. She is best known for two enormous historical sagas, swashbuckling romances set in the European High Renaissance, a time of intellectual explosions in religion, politics, the arts, war and business. Her Lymond books begin with Scottish border quarrels, and then spread out to England, France, Malta and beyond. The House of Niccolò series, centring on a handsome, mysterious Scots-Belgian merchant, travels all over Europe, the Mediterranean, and into Asia as far as the Towers of Trebizond. Dunnett's other books include *King Hereafter*, a novel about the historical Macbeth, king of Scotland.

The Lymond books, in order, are The Game of Kings, Queen's Play, The Disorderly Knights, Pawn in Frankincense, The Ringed Castle and Checkmate. The House of Niccolò books are Niccolò Rising, The Spring of the Ram, Race of Scorpions, Scales of Gold, The Unicorn Hunt, To Lie With Lions and Gemini.

READ ON

► Reay Tannahill, *The World, the Flesh and the Devil*; Sharon Penman, *The Sunne in Splendour* (a novel of Richard III); Nigel Tranter, *Macbeth the King*; Philippa Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*; Margaret George, *Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles.*

DURRELL, Lawrence (1912-90)

British writer of novels, poems and non-fiction

Durrell lived most of his life out of Britain: in Greece, Egypt and France. As well as fiction, he wrote poetry and half a dozen non-fiction books about Greek islands: they are among his most enjoyable work, allowing scope for the impressionistic descriptions of landscape and character and the ruminations on love and life which sometimes clog his novels. In his fiction, he used experimental forms, constantly varying each story's structure and standpoint; this sets up a dialogue between writer and reader, a feeling of collaboration, which is one of the most exhilarating aspects of his work.

THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET (1957-60)

Each book in the quartet, *Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive* and *Clea*, tells us part of the story: they give different viewpoints of the same events, and it is not until the end that every motive, every action, every twist of character becomes clear. The people are a group of friends and lovers, English, Greek and Egyptian, living in the turmoil of late-1930s Alexandria. At the centre is Darley, a teacher and would-be writer who observes events, partakes, but cannot explain. A main 'character' is the city of Alexandria itself. Durrell/Darley pretends to be giving accurate pictures of its souks, bars, palaces, brothels and crumbling embassies, but it is a dream city, a fantasy land where reality is subjective and events are only what you make of them.

As well as The Alexandria Quartet, his novels include The Black Book, The Dark Labyrinth/Cefalù and the five-novel Avignon quincunx: Monsieur, Livia, Constance, Sebastian and Quinx. Durrell's Collected Poems have also been published, while Antrobus Complete is a collection of satirical short stories about life in the diplomatic service. His island books include Prospero's Cell (about Corfu, also the subject of his brother Gerald's My Family and Other Animals), Reflections on a Marine Venus (about Rhodes) and Bitter Lemons (about Cyprus).

READ ON

- Tunc and Numquam (a pair of Siamese-twin novels) are similarly dream-like, setting bizarre events and characters in a blur of countries and climaxing magnificently, if unexpectedly, under the dome of St Paul's Cathedral in London.
- ▶ Olivia Manning's Balkan trilogy and Levant trilogy; ▷ John Fowles, *The Magus*; Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn*; Gerald Durrell, *My Family and Other Animals* (for glimpses of 'Larry' as a young man, sharply observed by his little brother).

E

READ ON A THEME: ECCENTRIC FAMILIES

- > Ivy Compton-Burnett, A House and Its Head

- > Vladimir Nabokov, Ada

See also: All-engulfing Families; Many Generations; Parents and Children

READ ON A THEME: ECHOES OF EMPIRE

Paul Scott, Staying On

- > Matthew Kneale, English Passengers
- ∨ V.S. Naipaul, The Enigma of Arrival Ruth Prawer Jhabuala, Heat and Dust

ECO, Umberto (born 1932)

Italian novelist

Before publishing his first novel in Italian in his late forties, Eco had carved out a substantial career for himself as an academic and was a well-known figure in the Italian intellectual and cultural world. Beginning as a medievalist with a particular interest in Thomas Aquinas, Eco moved into the emerging field of semiotics and became the first professor of the subject at one of Europe's oldest universities, Bologna. *The Name of the Rose* (see below) was an enormous success, selling millions of copies worldwide, and Eco was launched on a parallel career as a novelist. He has published only three further novels. *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989) is a huge, sprawling narrative which uses crackpot conspiracy theories, particularly about the Knights Templar, as the starting point for a story of murder, esoterica and the mysteries of belief and reality. In *The Island of The Day Before* (1995) a

seventeenth-century Italian nobleman is shipwrecked and finds refuge on another, apparently abandoned ship. As he explores the ship and begins to realize that he is not alone on it, Eco's tale opens out into another dazzling display of erudition and imagination. *Baudolino* (2002) is set at the time of the Fourth Crusade and is a characteristically wide-ranging mélange of fact, fable and invention centred on the eponymous narrator who sets off, ultimately, on a picaresque search for Prester John, the legendary Christian monarch said to reign in the Far East.

THE NAME OF THE ROSE (1983)

The framework of Eco's first novel is a murder mystery. A fourteenth-century monk, William of Baskerville, using methods of deduction which anticipate those of Sherlock Holmes, solves seven murders in the monastery he happens to be visiting. On this simple frame Eco weaves a wonderful tapestry of philosophy, intellectual jokes, extraordinary lore about monasticism, alchemy and religious belief. Although *The Name of the Rose* tweaks and stimulates the intellect, it is anything but hard to read – largely due to Eco's beautifully clear prose and to his affection for even the tiniest detail of medieval life.

READ ON

▶ Italo Calvino, *Our Ancestors*; ▷ Lawrence Norfolk, *The Pope's Rhinoceros*; ▷ *John Barth, The Sot-Weed Factor*; ▷ William Golding, *The Spire*; ▷ Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*; Richard Zimler, *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon*.

EDDINGS, David (born 1931)

US novelist

After one modern adventure story, *High Hunt*, Eddings concentrated on fantasy. His best-known work is the Belgariad quintet (1982–4), a > Tolkien-influenced saga of good and evil, magic and mysticism – but laced, unlike *The Lord of the Rings*, with a strong sense of the absurd. The books in the series are *Pawn of Prophecy, Queen of Sorcery, Magician's Gambit, Castle of Wizardry* and *Enchanter's Endgame*. A second series (the Mallorean quintet, beginning with *Guardians of the West*) tells further adventures of his hero Garion, who begins as a scullion, graduates to be sorcerer's apprentice and ends up as a fully fledged wizard.

READ ON

▶ Alan Dean Foster, *Spellsinger*; Piers Anthony, *A Spell for Chameleon*; T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*; ▷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*; ▷ Robert Jordan, *The Eye of the World* (ànd the other books in The Wheel of Time sequence).

READ ON A THEME: EGYPT

Ancient:

Paul Doherty, *The Mask of Ra*▷ H. Rider Haggard, *Queen of the Dawn*Christian Jacq, *Son of Light*

- Norman Mailer, Ancient Evenings

Modern:

- > Lawrence Durrell. Justine
- > Naguib Mahfouz, Palace Walk
- Dolivia Manning, The Danger Tree (and the two further titles in the Levant trilogy) Michael Pearce, The Mamur Zapt and the Spoils of Egypt Elizabeth Peters. Crocodile on the Sandbank Robert Solé, The Photographer's Wife Ahdaf Soueif. The Map of Love

READ ON A THEME. THE FIDERLY

- ⋉ingsley Amis, Ending Up
- > Honoré de Balzac. Old Goriot (Le Père Goriot)
- > Julian Barnes, Staring at the Sun Jenny Diski, Happily Ever After
- > Margaret Forster. Have the Men Had Enough?
- Christopher Hope, Serenity House Alan Isler. The Prince of West End Avenue
- > Muriel Spark, Memento Mori

ELIOT, George (1819–80)

British novelist

George Eliot was the pen-name of Marian Evans, a farm manager's daughter. She grew up in the stifling provincial pieties of middle-class Victorian England, but after her father's death became an atheist and freethinker, travelled abroad and set up home in London. She was at the heart of the liberal intellectual circles of her time: a supporter of Darwin and an admirer of >William Morris and other early socialists. A similar receptivity to new ideas and disdain for convention mark her novels. They deal with the kind of moral issues (such as whether a 'good life' can be lived without religion, or if sexual happiness is essential to a successful marriage) which were rarely discussed in polite Victorian company and were even less common in literature. At the same time her books teem with realistic detail of provincial society, minutely observed. The combination of exact documentation of behaviour and character with unashamed discussion of ideas normally left unspoken was a heady one: she was one of the most widely read authors of her day.

MIDDLEMARCH (1871-2)

Two people try to break free from the petty-minded boredom of the English provincial town of Middlemarch. Dorothea Brooke marries because of intellectual infatuation, only to find that her husband (an elderly scholar) is a domestic tyrant. Tertius Lydgate, a doctor struggling to introduce new medical ideas in a society which is deeply suspicious of them, marries for love, only to find that his wife's brainless following of fashion destroys his bank balance, his self-confidence and his social position.

Apart from Romola, set in fifteenth-century Florence, all Eliot's novels have nineteenth-century English locations and characters. Her first book, Scenes of Clerical Life, contains three mid-length stories; it and the short novel Silas Marner (about a free-thinking country weaver tormented for his beliefs and for a crime he did not commit) are the most accessible of all her works. Her full-length novels are Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Felix Holt, Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda.

READ ON

- The Mill on the Floss (about a brother and sister who are idyllically happy together as children, grow apart in adult life, and are finally, tragically reunited).
- ▶ Matching Eliot's concern for the individual stifled by society: ▷ Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary; > Mrs Gaskell, North and South; > Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure: Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil; > Arnold Bennett, Anna of the Five Towns.
- ▶ Twentieth-century books combining social observation with 'issues' in an Eliotish way, though their styles are entirely different: > Margaret Drabble, The Millstone; Winifred Holtby, South Riding.

ELLIS. Bret Easton (born 1964)

US novelist

Controversy has raged over Bret Easton Ellis's novels, particularly American Psycho (see below) and there are diametrically opposed views of the blank tones his narrators employ to describe even the most viscerally violent and disturbing events. Are we reading the work of a deadpan satirist, revealing the moral shallowness of the age, or that of a voyeuristic misogynist? Ellis's most severe critics underestimate the extent to which his style is consciously crafted and overestimate the extent to which writer and fictional narrator must be identified. From his first novel (Less Than Zero, published in 1985 when he was twenty-one) Ellis has shown his interest in people who are sleepwalking, morally and emotionally, through life and the narrator of American Psycho is a clear descendant of the spaced-out, over-indulged teenagers of that first book.

AMERICAN PSYCHO (1991)

Patrick Bateman is good-looking, intelligent and earns colossal sums of money working on Wall Street. His life, which he describes in careful detail, relentlessly namechecking the designer label clothing and accessories that help create the persona he presents to the world, appears to be an embodiment of the American Dream. Yet Bateman's inner life, and secret world, is one of appalling moral depravity. He mutilates and murders young women, acts which he describes with the same cool precision he applies to his wardrobe and toilette. American Psycho is a very disturbing book, graphic in its descriptions of violence and bodily dismemberment, and is not to be recommended to the squeamish or those in search of light reading. Ellis is not, however, writing violent pornography. His intent is to paint a portrait of moral nullity in the midst of material plenty, of a man who finds no meaning in life save conspicuous consumption and his own monstrous acts and desires. There is humour of the blackest kind in the disparity between Bateman as he appears to others and his terrible hidden world but, ultimately, this is a serious study of moral blankness.

Bret Easton Ellis's other books include The Rules of Attraction. Glamorama and The Informers.

READ ON

- ▶ to the fiction in general: > Jay McInerney, Bright Lights, Big City; > Douglas Coupland, Generation X; Chuck Palahniuk, Fight Club; Michel Houellebecq, Atomised.
- ▶ to American Psycho: Dennis Cooper, Frisk (another exploration of death, desire and sadism, not for the squeamish); Jason Starr, Cold Caller; Poppy Z. Brite, Exquisite Corpse (a horror novel about necrophiliac serial killers, even more extreme than American Psycho, but admired by some as a portrayal of contemporary decadence).

ELLROY, James (born 1948)

US novelist

Few crime writers have been more obviously driven to the genre by their own personal demons than James Ellroy. As his luridly readable autobiography My Dark Places makes clear, his was not an all-American, apple-pie upbringing. His mother was murdered when he was ten years old and his adolescence and early manhood were overshadowed by drink, drugs and sexual obsessions. (Breaking into women's apartments in order to sniff their underwear is but one of the confessions he makes in the book.) More than most writers, his writing has clearly been a lifeline to some kind of sanity and self-respect. His first few novels were straightforward hard-boiled cop thrillers, but The Black Dahlia was something else. Taking a famous unsolved murder of the 1940s - one with clear resonances with his own mother's killing - Ellroy created a dark and compelling narrative in which real-life individuals interacted with bruised and obsessed characters of his own creation. It was the beginning of his best and most intense work, the books collectively known as the LA Quartet, which comprise an extraordinary retelling of California's secret history seen through the eyes of its corrupt and cynical police officers. Marshalling dozens of characters and a tangled web of competing plots and sub-plots, Ellroy creates his own alternative history of the decades in which American dreams began to turn to nightmares. Recent novels have been even more ambitious, but there are signs that Ellroy is teetering perilously close to the edge of self-parody. His prose, which was always idiosyncratic, has become in, say, The Cold Six Thousand, a strange sort of telegraphese in which sentences rarely exceed half a dozen words and adjectives and adverbs are so ruthlessly excised that the reader falls upon any that still exist like a starving man coming upon an unexpected feast. Over 600 pages, this abbreviated style is very hard to take. Nothing, however, can make one forget the power of the LA Quartet, which remains one of the great achievements of modern hard-boiled writing.

The books that form the LA Quartet are The Black Dahlia, The Big Nowhere, LA Confidential and White Jazz. Ellroy's other novels are Brown's Requiem, Clandestine, Blood on the Moon, Because the Night, Suicide Hill, American Tabloid and The Cold Six Thousand. My Dark Places is an autobiography which chronicles his own years of seedy delinquency and his attempts to learn the truth about his mother's murder. Destination: Morgue is a collection of short pieces, mostly on true crime.

READ ON

- American Tabloid (ambitious attempt to use the crime genre to explore the dark side of American history in the run-up to the JFK assassination).
- ► Michael Connelly, *Blood Work*; James Lee Burke, *Cadillac Jukebox*; George Pelecanos, *King Suckerman*; Max Allan Collins, *Angel in Black* (for a less intense fictional take on the Black Dahlia case which obsesses Ellroy).
- ▶ to American Tabloid: > Don DeLillo, Libra.

READ ON A THEME: EMOTIONALLY ILL-AT-EASE

- ➢ Anita Brookner, Look at Me Anita Desai, Baumgartner's Bombay
- □ George Eliot, Middlemarch
- □ Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary
- E.M. Forster, *Howards End*Elizabeth Jolley, *Milk and Honey*
- Rosamond Lehmann, The Ballad and the Source Mary McCarthy, The Company She Keeps

264

> John Updike, Marry Me

See also: Battling with Life; Perplexed by Life



READ ON A THEME: FANTASY ADVENTURE

Terry Brooks, The Sword of Shannara (and subsequent Shannara books)

- > Stephen Donaldson, the Thomas Covenant series
- > Arthur Conan Doyle, The Lost World
- David Eddings, the Belgariad Quintet
- Raymond E. Feist, The Riftwar series Terry Goodkind, The Sword of Truth sequence J.V. Jones, The Baker's Boy (and its two sequels)
- > J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings
- > Jules Verne, Journey to the Centre of the Earth

See also: Fantasy Societies; High Adventure; Science Fiction and Fantasy

READ ON A THEME: FANTASY SOCIETIES

Michael Frayn, Sweet Dreams

- > Alasdair Gray, Lanark
- > Ursula Le Guin, The Earthsea Quartet
- > Anne McCaffrey, Dragonflight
- Mervyn Peake, The Gormenghast Trilogy
- > Robert Silverberg, Lord Valentine's Castle
- > Jonathan Swift. Gulliver's Travels

See also: Future Societies

FARRELL, J.G. (James Gordon) (1935-79)

British novelist

After three contemporary novels, including *The Lung* (1965, based on his own experience), about the onset of polio, Farrell took all his themes from history. *Troubles* (1970), set in Ireland after the First World War, is a barbed account of the Irish freedom struggle against the English, and draws uncomfortable parallels

with the present-day situation in Northern Ireland. The Siege of Krishnapur (1973), equally vitriolic and farcical − its tone is close at times to ▷ Heller's Catch-22− is set in 1850s India, during the so-called Mutiny. The Singapore Grip (1978) is a blockbuster about the Japanese capture of Malaya in the Second World War − for Farrell, the beginning of Britain's eclipse as a global power. Taken together, the three books are an indictment of Britain's attitude towards its empire: not so much thuggishness as boneheaded indifference, the unconcern of those who never imagine that others might resent their rule.

READ ON

- ▶ to Troubles: Liam O'Flaherty, The Informer; Bernard MacLaverty, Cal.
- ▶ to The Siege of Krishnapur: John Masters, Nightrunners of Bengal; Giles Foden, Ladysmith.
- ▶ to The Singapore Grip: ▷ J.G. Ballard, Empire of the Sun; Timothy Mo, An Insular Possession.

FAULKNER, William (1897-1962)

US novelist and short story writer

Faulkner's work deals obsessively with a single theme: the moral degeneracy of the US Deep South. His characters are the descendants of the cotton barons of the time before the Civil War, and of the slaves who worked for them. The whites live in crumbling mansions, dress in finery handed down from previous generations and bolster their sagging self-esteem with snobbery, racism and drink. The blacks either fawn, as if slavery had never been abolished, or seethe in decaying slums on the edge of town. The air itself seems tainted: despair, lust, introversion and murder clog people's minds. It is a society without hope or comfort, and Faulkner describes it in a series of moral horror stories, compulsive and merciless.

THE SOUND AND THE FURY (1929)

The novel's theme is how moral decadence overwhelms two generations of the white Compson family. We see a brother and sister, Caddy and Quentin, growing up as bright, happy adolescents, full of hope for the future, only to fall victims to the family taint and spiral into incest, nymphomania and suicide. One of their brothers, Jason, a morose bully, succeeds his father as head of the family and becomes a miser and a tyrant; their other brother Benjy has a mental age of two. In the second half of the book we see the corruption threatening to engulf Caddy's and Quentin's incestuous daughter, and her attempts to break free from the family curse. Large section's of the book are told as first-person narratives, by Caddy, Jason, Quentin and, eerily, the retarded Benjy – a *tour de force* of writing demanding concentration in the reader. A final strand of claustrophobia is added by the Compsons' negro servants: watching, always present, like the chorus of a particularly fraught Greek tragedy.

Faulkner's short stories are in two fat volumes, Collected Stories and Uncollected Stories. His main Southern novels, a series set in the imaginary Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, are Sartoris, Absalom, Absalom!, The Unvanquished and the trilogy The Hamlet, The Town and The Mansion. His other books include Intruder in the Dust, Light in August, The Reivers, Sanctuary and two books in experimental styles, As I Lay Dying and Requiem for a Nun.

READ ON

- Light in August (a woman searches for the father of her unborn child and a man struggles to assert his divided identity in a society riven by racism); Intruder in the Dust (an adolescent awakens to adult responsibilities as he strives to repay a debt to an elderly black man accused of murder).
- ► Good Deep South follow-ups: ▷ Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café*; William Styron, *Lie Down in Darkness*; Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Tennessee Williams, *Short Stories*.
- ► Good follow-ups on the theme of the degenerate, collapsing family: > Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks*; Giuseppe Tomaso di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*; > Ivy Compton-Burnett. *Mother and Son*.
- ► Good stylistic follow-ups: ▷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*; ▷ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*; ▷ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*.

FAULKS, Sebastian (born 1953)

British novelist

There are writers (nearly all men) who write with knowledge of, even enthusiasm for, war, the technology of warfare and the comradeship of men in battle. There are writers (mostly women) who are precisely observant of the subtlest nuances of the ebb and flow of romantic relationships. Other writers (men and women) are skilled at the evocation of place. Sebastian Faulks is an unusual writer in that he writes with equal power about love, war and landscape. His finest novel to date is <code>Birdsong</code> (see below). Before <code>Birdsong</code> Faulks had written two novels, <code>The Girl at the Lion d'Or</code> (an atmospheric story of a woman in a small French provincial town in the 1930s, still carrying the weight of the past on her shoulders) and <code>A Fool's Alphabet</code>. Since the resounding commercial and critical success of <code>Birdsong</code> he has published <code>Charlotte Gray</code> (about a young woman journeying into occupied France in the Second World War in search of her lover and involving herself in the work of the Resistance) and <code>On Green Dolphin Street</code> (2001), set in Kennedy-era Washington.

BIRDSONG (1993)

In 1910 a young Englishman, Stephen Wraysford, arrives in Amiens to stay with the Azaire family. Soon he is embarked upon an intense, convention-defying affair with Madame Azaire and, when it is discovered, the two leave together. The affair does not last and Stephen is left a cold and empty man by its failure, uncaring of what his future might be. History and politics decree that his future is to be the trenches of the Great War where he becomes an officer. Taking part in Ypres, the Somme and many of the major actions of the war, Stephen watches men die horribly all around him and discovers in himself a surprising, steely determination to survive. As the northern France he knew before the war becomes a quagmire and a slaughterhouse, his past relationship with Madame Azaire resurfaces in an unexpected and disturbing way. No précis of *Birdsong* can do justice to the power of Faulks's writing both in its evocation of the overwhelming love affair and in its descriptions of the claustrophobia and terror of the trenches and battle. Imagining the unimaginable, Faulks creates a remarkable novel of individuals trapped in the coils of history.

Sebastian Faulks has also written The Fatal Englishman, a non-fiction study of three talented and self-destructive men (Christopher Wood, Richard Hillary and Jeremy Wolfenden), whom Faulks sees as representative of their respective generations. He has also edited The Vintage Book of War Stories.

READ ON

- Charlotte Gray.
- ► Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (and its successors *The Eye in the Door* and *The Ghost Road*); ▷ Louis de Bernières, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*; ▷ Ian McEwan, *Atonement*; Andrew Greig, *That Summer*.

FEIST, Raymond E. (born 1945)

US novelist

Since Tolkien first launched the epic fantasy genre, there have been many writers who have trafficked in dwarves and elves, wise magicians and dragon lords. There have been many writers who have attempted to match his creation of a world-engulfing struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Most have created pale echoes of Middle Earth and their books have travelled down roads well travelled already. One of the few who can genuinely claim to have created a rich and powerfully imagined fantasy world is Raymond E. Feist. Feist's Riftwar Saga is an ongoing series in which there are three-dimensional characters who grow and develop rather than cardboard cutouts, complex plots that bypass the clichés of the genre and an adult rather than adolescent awareness of how the politics of alternative realities might work. Chronicling the conflicts between the two cultures of Midkemia (Middle Earth meets the Middle Ages) and Kelewan (a kind of samurai state supported by magic), the Riftwar Saga is fantasy on a grand scale. One of Feist's cleverest ploys in the books is to turn our expectations on their head by shifting our perspectives on the different cultures he has invented. In the original trilogy our sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the Midkemians and the Kelewan are a ruthless, alien enemy. In the Empire Trilogy (co-written with Janny Wurts) we see events from the viewpoint of the Kelewan and much that was inexplicable in their behaviour is given a context.

The original Riftwar Saga consists of three novels – Magician, Silverthorn and A Darkness at Sethanon. Feist's other books are largely grouped in trilogies and sequences, including the Empire Trilogy (Daughter of the Empire, Servant of the Empire, Mistress of the Empire), Legends of the Riftwar (Honoured Enemy, Murder in LaMut, Jimmy the Hand) and The Serpentwar Saga (Shadow of a Dark Queen, Rise of a Merchant Prince, Rage of a Demon King, Shards of a Broken Crown). Feist's most recent work is a sequence called The Conclave of Shadows (Talon of the Silver Hawk, King of Foxes published so far and others to come).

READ ON

▶ Nearly all the major works of modern fantasy writers are multi-volume sequences. The following are a few authors and the general titles of the series in which they have created worlds and landscapes to match those of Feist: ▷ David Eddings, The Belgariad books; ▷ Robert Jordan, The Wheel of Time series; Terry Brooks, The Shannara series; David Gemmell, Legend and the other books in the Drenai Sagas; Terry Goodkind, The Sword of Truth series.

FIELDING, Henry (1707–54)

British novelist and playwright

Fielding's first successes were with satirical stage comedies: they included Rape Upon Rape (a farce) and The Tragedy of Tom Thumb (a parody of melodramatic tragedy). But his plays were too political for the authorities, who closed them down. He qualified as a magistrate and set up the Bow Street Runners, ancestors of the modern police force. He continued to write, but now turned to prose fiction. announcing that he meant to write an English equivalent of Don Quixote. His books are comic life-stories, following charming young people in a series of escapades as they journey from country house to inn, from farmyard to theatre box, from law court to bedroom, gathering experience and outwitting would-be predators at every step. Fielding's novels are long and leisurely: it is as if he is taking a stroll through English society, high and low, and everything he sees or hears reminds him of an anecdote, genial, unhurried and preposterous.

TOM JONES (1749)

Tom Jones is a foundling brought up by kindly Squire Allworthy. He is a personable, amorous young man, and his immorality finally makes Allworthy send him into the world to seek his fortune. The novel tells Tom's adventures, in and out of bed, as he wanders through England enjoying life as it comes, torn by the thought of his true love Sophia Western, but still ready to be seduced by every pretty girl he meets. The story is told in short chapters, like extended anecdotes. and Fielding keeps breaking off to address the reader directly, telling jokes, pointing morals and commenting on the life and manners of the time.

Fielding's other novels are Joseph Andrews and Amelia. A Journey from This World to the Next and The Life and Death of Jonathan Wild the Great are short, savage satires: the second, for example, treats a notorious, real-life thief as if he were an epic hero. Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon is a fascinating travel diary about crossing the Bay of Biscay in a leaky, storm-tossed ship.

READ ON

- Joseph Andrews (a parody of the heroine-in-moral-danger novels of ▷ Samuel Richardson: the story of a young man so beautiful that every woman he meets longs to entice him into bed).
- ▶ Other picaresque adventures: Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote; ▷ Laurence Sterne. Tristram Shandy.
- ▶ Later books in a similarly relaxed, discursive vein: ▷ H.G. Wells, Kipps; ▷ Thomas Mann. Confessions of Felix Krull: > Saul Bellow. The Adventures of Augie March.

READ ON A THEME: THE FILM BUSINESS

Dirk Bogarde, West of Sunset Charles Bukowski, Hollywood

- > Len Deighton, Close-Up John Gregory Dunne, Playland
- > F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon
- > Elmore Leonard. Get Shorty Frederic Raphael, California Time Theodore Roszak. Flicker

Budd Schulberg, What Makes Sammy Run? Terry Southern, Blue Movie

Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust

READ ON A THEME: FILM OF THE BOOK, BOOK OF THE FILM

Peter Benchley, *Jaws* (filmed in 1975 by Steven Spielberg)
James M. Cain, *Double Indemnity* (filmed in 1944 by Billy Wilder)
Howard Fast, *Spartacus* (filmed in 1960 by Stanley Kubrick)

- C.S. Forester, *The African Queen* (filmed in 1951 by John Huston) Winston Groom, *Forrest Gump* (filmed in 1994 by Robert Zemeckis) Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs* (filmed in 1991 by Jonathan Demme)
- ▶ Patricia Highsmith, Strangers on a Train (filmed in 1951 by Alfred Hitchcock) Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (filmed in 1975 by Milos Forman)

FISCHER, Tibor (born 1959)

British novelist

Don't Read This Book If You're Stupid is the self-consciously defiant title of a collection of short stories published by Tibor Fischer in 2000. It is a health warning that could be attached to all of Fischer's books. He really doesn't like stupidity. Most of us get annoyed or mildly irritated by the petty, everyday stupidities of ordinary life. Fischer gets outraged. He has the 'savage indignation' of the great satirists and his books are scathing, witty indictments of our follies. The Thought Gang (1994) is a dazzling display of linguistic and intellectual fireworks which tells the unlikely story of an out-of-work philosopher joining forces with a one-armed robber in a crime spree through France. Peppered with epigrams, puns and stylistic inventions, it is one of the funniest and most imaginative novels of the last twenty years. The Collector Collector is a darker and more misanthropic book but almost equally original. Its 'narrator' is an ancient Sumerian bowl, a clay vessel somehow made sentient and marked by a uniformly poor view of the human clay that has possessed it over the centuries. The narrative alternates between stories from 4,000 years of human lust, greed and hypocrisy (as observed by the bowl) and a modern story of sexual and financial treacheries centred on the bowl's current owner. Voyage to the End of the Room (2003) tells the story of a computer graphics designer who has withdrawn into her South London flat, bringing the world into it through the media of satellite TV and the Internet, and yet still finds her past catching up with her.

- Under the Frog (Fischer's first novel, a black comedy about two members of a travelling basketball team in 1950s Hungary).
- ► ▷ Will Self, *Great Apes*; ▷ Jonathan Coe, *What a Carve Up!*; ▷ John Lanchester, *The Debt to Pleasure*; David Mitchell, *number9dream*

FITZGERALD, F. (Francis) Scott (1896–1940)

US novelist and short story writer

In the US of the 1920s the earnestness which had been needed to win the First World War was replaced by giddy exhilaration. Jazz, bootleg liquor, drugs and sex seemed to be not merely pleasures, but symbols of a new, liberated age – and the fact that that age was clearly doomed, that the dancing would end in tears, gave every party, every spending spree, an edge of extra excitement, as if people were roller-skating on the brink of the abyss. Rich, handsome, athletic and talented, Fitzgerald not only wrote about this doomed high society, but was one of its leaders. In the 1930s, when the inevitable reckoning came – the Great Depression was paralleled in Fitzgerald's life by his wife's madness and his own alcoholism and bankruptcy – his books not unnaturally turned sour and sad. But his 1920s stories and novels told the legend of the Jazz Age with such glittering force that it is easy, now, to believe that all Americans, and not just a few thousand sophisticates, lived like that.

THE GREAT GATSBY (1925)

In a millionaire community on Long Island, the enigmatic bachelor Gatsby gives huge all-night parties at his mansion, orgies of dancing, drugs and sex, the season's most fashionable events. His fascinated neighbour, the book's narrator Nick Carraway, makes friends with him and begins unravelling the secrets of his personality. Carraway's intervention triggers revelations about Gatsby's criminal past, and a love affair between Gatsby and the wife of a wealthy oaf, Tom Buchanan; these in turn lead to further tragedy. At the end of the book Carraway sits alone outside Gatsby's deserted house, reflecting on the emptiness of the lives he has just described.

Fitzgerald's 1920s novels include This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned and The Great Gatsby. Tender is the Night, bitterly autobiographical, describes the life of an alcoholic doctor and his insane wife on the French Riviera, and the unfinished The Last Tycoon is a satire on the Hollywood for which he wrote rubbish to earn money in his last desperate months of life. Tales of the Jazz Age and Taps at Reveille are collections of short stories.

READ ON

- The Beautiful and Damned (about the doomed marriage of two bright young things, leaders of Jazz Age society, a book displaying fierce irony for today's readers given what we know of the eventual decay in Fitzgerald's own marriage).
- ▶ ▷ Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies; ▷ Anthony Powell, Afternoon Men; Anita Loos, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes; Dawn Powell, A Time to be Born; ▷ Martin Amis, Success applies Fitzgerald's tone of hopeless, cynical black farce to a much later 'doomed' generation.

FITZGERALD, Penelope (1916–2000)

British writer

Fitzgerald published her first novel, *The Golden Child*, in 1977 when she was sixty-one, won the Booker Prize two years later with *Offshore*, and went on to publish seven more novels. Each is different in period, setting and characters,

but all have the same wry style, the same feeling that Fitzgerald is a detached but not uninvolved spectator of the miseries and follies of her people, and the same 'hint of the sublime' (in one reviewer's florid praise). She shares these qualities with \triangleright Jane Austen, and if Austen were writing today this is exactly the kind of barbed, wise prose she might produce. Two typical Fitzgerald books are *At Freddie's* (1982) set in a Covent Garden stage school for precocious brats in the 1960s, and *The Gate of Angels* (1990) about a young academic in a 1912 allmale college coming to terms with the torments of 'the mind-body problem' – that is, reconciling the Apollonian quest for truth with the Dionysian urge for emotional experience, not least of sex.

Fitzgerald's other novels include The Bookshop, Human Voices, The Beginning of Spring and The Blue Flower (a haunting recreation of life and love in the circle of the German Romantic poet Novalis). The Means of Escape is a collection of short stories. She also wrote prize-winning biographies: Edward Burne-Jones, The Knox Brothers (one of whom, E.V. Knox of Punch, was her father) and Charlotte Mew and her Friends.

READ ON

- Innocence (set in Italy after the Second World War; about the problems and difficulties of trying to make other people happy).
- ▶ Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself*; ▷ Rose Tremain, *Music & Silence*; ▷ Anne Tyler, *Morgan's Passing*; Salley Vickers, *Miss Garnet's Angel*; Jane Gardam, *God on the Rocks*; J.L. Carr, *A Month in the Country*

FLAUBERT, Gustave (1821–80)

French novelist

Many of Flaubert's contemporary writers – even such 'realists' as ▷ Balzac and ▷ Dickens – believed that 'fiction' involved larger-than-life characters, events or emotions. Flaubert's ambition, by contrast, was to hold up a mirror to ordinary people in humdrum situations, to take the boring events of commonplace lives and make them interesting. He also avoided heightened language, wit, irony and the other devices novelists used to enliven their narrative. He worked to make his prose evenly paced and unobtrusive, taking its tensions and climaxes from the flow of events themselves. In modern times, similar techniques have been used in 'fly-on-the-wall' TV documentaries, where a camera-crew records unscripted scenes from daily life – and if nothing else, these programmes have shown just how tempestuous and extraôrdinary everyday lives can be.

MADAME BOVARY (1857)

Emma, a romantic and foolish young woman, dreams of being swept away on clouds of ecstasy, either by a handsome lover or into the arms of the Church. She marries a small-town doctor and finds the routine of provincial life stifling and unfulfilling. She tries to bring excitement into her life by flirting, and is gradually trapped in pathetic and grubby love affairs, stealing from her husband to pay for her ever more eccentric whims. In the end, destroyed by her inability to live up to her own dreams, she kills herself – and everyone else's life goes on as if she had never existed.

Flaubert's novels of ordinary French life are Madame Bovary, Sentimental Education (L'Éducation sentimentale) and the unfinished Bouvard and Pécuchet. Salammbô applies the same techniques to a story of the Carthage of Hannibal's time, to bizarre effect, as if an archaeological treatise had been jumbled up with the script for a Hollywood epic film. The Temptation of St Anthony seeks to describe all the temptations, of flesh, spirit and will, which might assail a devout Roman Catholic; Three Stories contains 'A Simple Heart', one of the most moving of all Flaubert's works.

READ ON

- Sentimental Education (about a young man who tries, like Emma Bovary, To spice
 his boring life with grand passions, and fails. A secondary strand in the book is
 the political situation leading up to the 1848 revolution something as busy and
 sterile, in Flaubert's opinion, as his hero's attempts to find meaning in existence).
- ▶ Italo Svevo, *A Life*; ▷ Arnold Bennett, *Hilda Lessways*; ▷ Joseph Heller, *Something Happened*; ▷ Elizabeth Taylor, *A Wreath of Roses*; ▷ Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net.* ▷ R.K. Narayan, *The English Teacher*, though set in a society (provincial India) and a period (the 1950s) remote from *Madame Bovary*, and less than a quarter as long, magnificently matches Flaubert's insight into the way that the joys and sorrows of small lives, no less than large, can tear the heart.

FLEMING, Ian (1908–64)

British novelist

Fleming's James Bond books are like comic strips for adults: Bond is a superhero who saves the world from spectacularly nasty, psychopathic master-criminals. Bond wins through by a mixture of supreme physical prowess and a late-Edwardian one-upmanship somewhat bizarre in the 1960s setting. Adult tastes are catered for less by psychological insight or intellectual depth than by frequent sex scenes (Bond, as well as everything else, is a super-stud) and by laconic, hard-boiled wit. In everything but plot – over-the-top technology, larky dialogue, high-gloss violence – the Bond films give the exact flavour of Fleming's books.

The Bond novels include Goldfinger, Moonraker, Thunderball, From Russia With Love, Diamonds are Forever, Dr No, On Her Majesty's Secret Service, You Only Live Twice and The Man With the Golden Gun. Octopussy is a collection of short stories.

- From Russia With Love.
- ▶ In the 1960s, until ▷ Len Deighton and ▷ John le Carré took the spy story in a different direction, there were a million Bond imitations and spoofs, of which some of the jolliest are by John Gardner, Fleming's official successor as chronicler of Bond. (A good example of Gardner at his best is *Scorpius*.) Peter O'Donnell's *Modesty Blaise* all but out-Flemings Fleming, with the added zest that the super-sexed superspy is a woman.
- ▶ More recent follow-ups: ▷ Robert Ludlum, *The Matarese Circle*.

FOLLETT, Ken (born 1949)

British novelist

Most of Follett's novels are fast-action thrillers, many with industrial espionage or wartime themes. These include *The Bear Raid* (about stock market espionage), *Storm Island/Eye of the Needle* (a fight for survival on an uninhabited island during the Second World War), *The Key to Rebecca, The Man from St Petersburg* (Russian communist arrives in Britain with a murder mission) and *Code to Zero* (a man wakes with no memory of his earlier life and gradually becomes aware that his amnesia is mysteriously linked with American-Russian space rivalry). *The Pillars of the Earth* (1989) is an equally powerful saga of betrayal and derring-do, set in medieval times. *A Dangerous Fortune* (1993) is a fast-paced Victorian melodrama.

READ ON

- ▶ ▷ Jack Higgins, A Game for Heroes; ▷ Frederick Forsyth, The Fist of God;

FORD, Ford Madox (1873–1939)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Although Ford produced books of all kinds, from biographies to historical novels (*The Fifth Queen*, a Tudor trilogy), he is best remembered for *Parade's End* and *The Good Soldier*. *The Good Soldier* (1915) is a ▷ Jamesian story about two couples who meet in a German hotel and become emotionally and sexually entwined, with devastating results for both themselves and the innocent young ward of one of them. The four novels of *Parade's End* (1924–8) tell how a country landowner, a young man rooted in the social and moral attitudes of the past, is forced by experience (as an officer in the First World War and as a reluctant participant in the freer sexual atmosphere of the post-war years) to slough off the skin of Victorian morality and come to terms, a dozen years later than everyone else, with twentieth-century values.

READ ON

▶ Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians*; Isabel Colegate, *The Shooting Party*; ▷ C.P. Snow, *Strangers and Brothers*. ▷ Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World* (setting the 'coming-to-terms' theme in post-war Japan).

FORESTER, C.S. (Cecil Scott) (1899–1966)

British novelist

Forester is best known for his Hornblower novels, about a career officer in the British navy of Nelson's time. The books are rich in the detail of life on wooden fighting ships, and the historical background is meticulous. Forester, however, gives Hornblower twentieth-century sensibilities (he is, for example, sickened by floggings and horrified by the brutality of war) which both flesh him out as a character and draw the reader into the story. The Hornblower series has overshadowed Forester's other books, which include two superb novels set

during the Napoleonic Wars (*Death to the French*; *The Gun*), the psychological crime stories *Payment Deferred* and *Plain Murder*, and the comedy-thriller *The African Queen*, memorably filmed in the 1950s with Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart.

The core of the Hornblower series is a trilogy of books (The Happy Return, Flying Colours, Ship of the Line) often published together as Captain Horatio Hornblower. Other books in the series fill in details of Hornblower's career, tracing his adventures over a quarter of a century. Typical titles are Mr Midshipman Hornblower, Hornblower and the Atropos, Hornblower in the West Indies and Lord Hornblower.

READ ON

- The African Queen (about a prissy missionary and a rough-diamond ship's captain
 who take a leaky old boat full of dynamite down an African river in the First
 World War to blow up an enemy convoy and fall in love on the way).
- ▶ to the Hornblower books: ▷ Patrick O'Brian, the Jack Aubrey stories, beginning with *Master and Commander*; ▷ Bernard Cornwell, *Sharpe's Honour* (one of a series about an army officer at the time of the Peninsular War); Alexander Kent, *Richard Bolitho, Midshipman*; Richard Woodman, *The Eye of the Fleet.*

FORSTER, E.M. (Edward Morgan) (1879–1970) British novelist

All Forster's novels were written in the 1900s (though A Passage to India was not published until 1924), and all are concerned with the crippling emotional reticence he considered typical of the Edwardian age. (Many were filmed in the 1980s and 1990s, with huge success.) Outwardly extrovert and competent, the Edwardians (Forster thought) were afraid of intimacy. They replaced it with 'manners', and often even members of the same family, even husbands and wives. were inhibited from showing towards each other the kind of genuine feelings they revealed towards God, the flag or their pampered pets. Forster's plots all turn on the disastrous results of emotional inexperience, of people blundering about in each other's sensibilities. In Where Angels Fear to Tread an Edwardian family's inability to believe that an Italian can have true paternal feelings for his baby leads to a doomed expedition to Italy to kidnap the child. In Howards End a note from one friend to another, confessing love (in fact one snatched kiss in a garden) leads to a hurricane of emotional misunderstanding and disapproval which involves a dozen people and three generations. The central character in The Longest Journey tries to 'connect' emotionally with his newly discovered, no-good step-brother, and in the process destroys first his marriage and then himself. Forster, himself an emotional introvert (a self-deprecating homosexual), offers no solutions. But few writers have better described the problem: his intuition for emotional nuance and his compelling characterization (especially of women), give his books fascination despite their narrow focus.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA (1924)

Adela Quested leaves for India to get to know her fiancé Ronny before she marries him. Her openness of manner, and especially the way she treats Indians as equals, offends the stuffy British community. For her part, she is overwhelmed

by India, and her stupefaction leads her to a moment of mental confusion during which she accuses an Indian friend, Dr Aziz, of molesting her on a visit to the Malabar Caves. In court, oppressed by the certainty of the English that Aziz must be guilty, she reruns the events at Malabar in her mind, and suddenly recants. Her behaviour has, however, made apparent the unbridgeable gulf between Indians and English under the Raj, not to mention the lack of communication between 'free spirits' such as herself and her more hidebound contemporaries.

Forster's other fiction includes A Room with a View, Maurice (about a homosexual friendship; written in the 1910s but not published until the 1970s) and three collections of short stories, Celestial Omnibus, The Eternal Moment and The Life to Come.

READ ON

- A Room With a View (about the emotional awakening of a naïve English girl visiting Italy for the first time and realizing that there is a real world beyond Edwardian English convention).
- ▶ to A Passage to India: Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Heat and Dust; Paul Scott, The Raj Quartet; M.M. Kaye, The Far Pavilions.
- ▶ to Forster's work in general: ▷ Henry James, The Wings of the Dove; ▷ Marcel Proust, Within a Budding Grove (Part Two of Remembrance of Things Past); ▷ L.P. Hartley, The Go-Between.

FORSTER, Margaret (born 1938)

British novelist

The film of Forster's novel, *Georgy Girl* was one of the most characteristic British movies of the 1960s and the book was Forster's first major success. Its heroine (a perfectly ordinary girl desperate to sample the Swinging Sixties before they, or her own youth, disappeared) was a neat alternative to other, more bubble-headed, fictional heroines of the time. Forster is outstanding at showing slow change in people's characters: the coming of maturity, the growth of wisdom, processes of human warmth or misery. Many of her best-known novels (for example *Marital Rites, Private Papers* and *Mother Can You Hear Me?*, all published in the 1980s), are about people trapped in relationships, who find an escape not because of outside events, but through their developing awareness of their own potential. Her style is patient, meticulous and absorbing.

LADY'S MAID (1990)

Elizabeth Wilson, a shy country girl, goes to 1850s London to become lady's maid to Elizabeth Barrett, a brilliant intellect trapped in the body of a feeble invalid. We see, from Wilson's point of view, the development of their relationship, as Barrett is warmed by Wilson's understated robustness of character, and Wilson learns from Barrett that she herself is a person, with a brain and character worth consideration. Then Robert Browning courts and marries Barrett, and the relationship, the mutual dependency between mistress and maid (or is it by now friend and friend?) is forever changed.

Forster's other novels include The Travels of Maudie Tipstaff, Have the Men Had Enough, Mother's Boys, The Battle for Christabel, Shadow Baby, The Memory

Box and Diary of an Ordinary Woman. She has published two remarkable and revealing volumes about her own family and North of England background: Hidden Lives and Precious Lives. She has also written biographies of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, > Daphne Du Maurier, Bonnie Prince Charlie, eight 'pioneering women' (Significant Sisters), a selection of Good Wives? (the question mark in the title is important) and an 'autobiography' of > William Thackeray.

READ ON

- Private Papers; The Battle for Christabel.
- ▶ > Margaret Drabble, *The Garrick Year*; > Anne Tyler, *Morgan's Passing*; > Carol Shields, The Stone Diaries; Elizabeth Jollev, Miss Peabody's Inheritance: Nina Bawden, Afternoon of a Good Woman.

FORSYTH. Frederick (born 1938)

British novelist

Forsyth worked as a BBC reporter and a war correspondent, and his thrillers are as immediate and waffle-free as good news stories. They often include real people and events; only the hair-trigger tension of his plots makes actuality look tame. In The Odessa File (1972), for example, a journalist covering the hunt for a war criminal uncovers a Nazi arms-smuggling conspiracy to help Arab terrorists in Israel. The details are fiction, but the story is as fresh as this morning's news.

Forsyth's other novels are The Day of the Jackal, The Devil's Alternative, The Fourth Protocol, The Dogs of War, The Negotiator, The Fist of God and Icon. The Shepherd is a short novel; The Deceiver contains four linked stories: No Comebacks and The Veteran and other Stories are collections of short stories.

READ ON

► Gerald Seymour. The Heart of Danger (from another ex-news reporter) > Jack Higgins, The Eagle Has Landed; ▷ Anthony Price, Soldier No More; ▷ Robert Ludlum, The Holcroft Covenant, Jean-Christophe Grangé, The Flight of the Storks.

FOWLES, John (born 1926)

British novelist

Fowles worked as a teacher (of modern languages) until the success of The Collector (1963) made it possible for him to write full time. His main themes are obsession and delusion. The deranged hero of The Collector 'collects' a pretty girl as one might a butterfly. The heroes of Daniel Martin (1977) and Mantissa (1983) are authors deserted by the Muse, one a screenwriter corrupted by success, the other a novelist undergoing creative therapy at the hands (and other parts) of a seductive, feminist goddess. A Maggot (1985), set in the eighteenth century, reworks a real-life murder investigation to take in erotic obsession, witchcraft, religious mania and flying saucers. Fowles further blurs the boundary between truth and fiction by using experimental techniques. He shifts between past and present, makes authorial asides and comments, and gives us two, three or half a dozen alternative versions of the same events. As with ▷ Durrell, this experimentalism is coupled with ornate prose (sometimes in brilliant imitation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century styles); few modern bestselling writers offer such a packed experience.

THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN (1969)

The book's heart is a straightforward nineteenth-century story about the obsessive love between a rich man and an outcast, the 'French Lieutenant's woman' of the title. They meet in the seaside town of Lyme Regis; their affair scandalizes society; she runs away; he pursues her. Fowles's prose, likewise, is for much of the time straightforward and solid in the nineteenth-century manner. But he also plays games with the reader. He keeps interrupting the story to tell us things about Lyme Regis (home of Mary Anning the fossil collector), Darwin, Freudian psychology and the social customs of Victorian London. He claims that he has no idea what will happen next, that this is the characters' story, not his. He supplies alternative endings, so that we can choose our own. These devices give the book an unexpectedness in marked contrast to its sober nineteenth-century heart – it is as if someone reading us ▷ Eliot or ▷ Thackeray kept breaking off to perform conjuring tricks. The book was filmed in the 1980s, starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons, and with a mesmeric script by Harold Pinter.

Apart from novels, Fowles has published a story collection, The Ebony Tower, The Aristos, a set of philosophical meditations and Wormholes, a collection of non-fiction pieces.

READ ON

- The Magus (revised version recommended), about a man trying obsessively to find
 out if what he thinks he experiences is real or fantasy. Much of it involves magic
 and takes place on a mysterious Greek island or seems to, for our perception of
 'truth' and 'fiction' is as shifting as the character's.
- ▶ to *The French Lieutenant's Woman*: > John Barth, *The Sot-Weed Factor*; John Berger, *G*; > William Golding, *Rites of Passage*.
- ▶ to The Magus: ▷ Lawrence Durrell, The Dark Labyrinth/Cefalù; D.M. Thomas, The White Hotel.

FRANCIS, Dick (born 1920)

British novelist

Authenticity is a priceless commodity in crime fiction and thriller writing. Pick up any Dick Francis novel and it is immediately apparent that he knows the world of racing inside out and is familiar with the characters who people it. It is this authenticity (and his ability to fashion a tightly constructed plot) that has kept him a bestselling writer for nearly forty years. Francis was champion jockey in 1953/4 and was riding the Queen Mother's horse Devon Loch in the 1956 Grand National when it fell so mysteriously with victory in sight. In a later fall Francis was badly injured and forced to give up riding. He turned to journalism and, in 1962, published his first novel *Dead Cert*. Many others have followed, all of them providing that first-hand knowledge of the racing game which fans so much enjoy.

Dick Francis's many other novels include For Kicks, Blood Sport, Bonecrack, High Stakes, Reflex, Bolt, The Edge, Comeback, Wild Horses, Come to Grief, To the Hilt, 10lb Penalty, Second Wind, Shattered and Straight.

READ ON

- Bonecrack, Hot Money.
- ▶ John Francome, *Lifeline*; ▷ Stephen Dobyns, *Saratoga Fleshpot* (racing crime with a US setting); Richard Pitman, *Hunted*.

FRANKLIN, Miles (1879-1954)

Australian novelist

Miles Franklin was one of the names used by Stella Miles Franklin, who wrote optimistic tales of pioneer farming life in Australia in a cheerful, bustling style. As Miles Franklin she is best known for *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and its sequel *My Career Goes Bung* (1946) − the story of a breathlessly enthusiastic adolescent, Sybylla Melvyn, as she learns about life, the arts and love on outback farms and in the big city. Under a second pseudonym, Brent of Bin Bin, Franklin published lighter novels on the same lines, 'snapshots of ordinary life' modelled on the writings of ▷ Mark Twain. These include *Up the Country, Ten Creeks Run* and *Gentlemen at Gyang Gyang*. The editor Carmen Callil called her 'an unsophisticated genius', prone to 'ebullient outpourings'; the description is exact.

READ ON

► Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; Laura Ingalls Wilder, *The Little House on the Prairie*; ▷ Christina Stead, *For Love Alone* (another story of the emotional awakening of a young Australian woman but very different in style).

FRASER, George MacDonald (born 1925)

British writer

Fraser wrote the screenplays for the Richard Lester films *The Three Musketeers, The Four Musketeers, The Return of the Musketeers* and for the larky Bond film *Octopussy.* In literature, he had the brilliant idea of taking Flashman, the bully from the nineteenth-century boarding-school novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and recording his further adventures throughout a long life. In the original book he was just an adolescent thug; in Fraser's hands he becomes sexy, sly and, although an irredeemable coward and cad, an unlikely hero of the British empire. He progresses through the ranks of the British army, and plays his part in such events as the Indian Mutiny, the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Crimean War and Little Big Horn. There are a dozen books, all told in the voice of Flashman himself, and all are equally enjoyable. Typical is *Flashman and the Angel of the Lord* (1995), in which Flashman gets mixed up with the American anti-slavery campaign and its Harper's Ferry hero John Brown (the man whose soul, in the song, goes 'marchin' on').

The Flashman books are, in order of publication, Flashman, Royal Flash, Flash for Freedom, Flashman at the Charge, Flashman in the Great Game, Flashman's Lady, Flashman and the Redskins, Flashman and the Dragon, Flashman and the Mountain of Light, Flashman and the Angel of the Lord and Flashman and the Tiger.

READ ON

- The Candlemass Road (non-Flashman: a swashbuckling novel set on the banditridden Scots-English borders at the time of Mary Queen of Scots).
- ▶ ▷ Bernard Cornwell, *Sharpe's Honour;* Allan Mallinson, *A Close-Run Thing*; ▷ J.G. Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur*; Nicholas Griffin, *The Requiem Shark.*

FRAYN, Michael (born 1933)

British novelist and playwright

Michael Frayn began his career as a writer of urbanely satirical columns in various newspapers and his early novels, published in the 1960s and 70s, were in the same vein as his journalism - deft and amusing exposés of the foibles and follies of the time. A Fleet Street hack makes a bid for TV celebrity with disastrous consequences (Towards the End of the Morning): Heaven turns out to be rather like the blandest dreams of it entertained by Guardian-reading liberals (Sweet Dreams); an institution of 'automation research' examines the ways in which computers can take over repetitive human tasks like praying and compiling newspaper reports (The Tin Men). From the mid-1970s onwards, Frayn's creative energy went into writing for the theatre more than into fiction – Noises Off and Alphabetical Order are two of the classics of modern stage comedy that resulted – but, in the last few years, he has returned to the novel to great effect. Headlong and Spies (see below) are often as funny as the earlier fiction but they possess a depth of characterization and a melancholy irony that the satirical works didn't have (indeed didn't need). The two recent novels, particularly Headlong, have elements of the farce that is never far away in Frayn's view of the world but they are also subtle portraits of how our hopes and aspirations and beliefs so rarely coincide with reality.

SPIES (2002)

As an old man, Stephen Wheatley returns to the suburban streets of his wartime childhood. As he walks them he recalls a story in which the fantasy games he played during those years came into abrupt and painful contact with adult reality. Stephen and his closest friend pretended to believe that the friend's mother was a German spy, shadowing her about the streets, even reading her diary. Frayn's delicately and subtly written novel gradually tracks the boy Stephen's realization that his friend's mother does indeed have secrets to hide but they are not the ones he naïvely imagined.

Frayn's other fiction includes The Russian Interpreter, The Trick of It and A Landing on the Sun.

- Headlong (an art historian believes he has made the discovery of the century and sets out to try and exploit it).
- ▶ to the early novels: ▷ Anthony Burgess, Enderby's Dark Lady; ▷ Evelyn Waugh, The Loved One.
- ▶ to Spies: Mick Jackson, Five Boys
- ▶ to Headlong: Arturo Perez Reverte, The Flanders Panel; Lesley Glaister, Sheer Blue Bliss.

READ ON A THEME: FRIENDS (?) AND NEIGHBOURS

(gossip; bitchiness; one-upmanship)

- E.F. Benson, Mapp and Lucia
 Amanda Craig, A Vicious Circle
 Peter De Vries. The Mackerel Plaza
- Mrs Gaskell, Cranford Tama Janowitz, A Certain Age Sinclair Lewis, Main Street
- > Barbara Pym, A Glass of Blessings
- > John Updike, Couples

See also: The Human Comedy

READ ON A THEME: FUTURE SOCIETIES

- > lain M. Banks, Consider Phlebas
- > Angela Carter, The Passion of New Eve
- > Philip K. Dick, The Man in the High Castle
- > Robert Graves, Seven Days in New Crete
- > Aldous Huxley, Brave New World
- P.D. James, Children of Men
 Paul Johnston, Body Politic
 Walter M. Miller. A Canticle for Leibowitz
- > William Morris, News from Nowhere
- □ George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four
- > John Wyndham, The Chrysalids

See also: Fantasy Societies



GALSWORTHY, John (1867-1933)

British novelist and playwright

In the 1960s an adaptation of Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* was the most popular British TV series ever shown until then. It spawned a thousand imitations – series and books about rich families quarrelling over multi-million–pound businesses and living wretched private lives have become a genre in themselves. Some critics say that this is unfair to Galsworthy, who was regarded as a heavyweight writer in his day (of plays as well as novels). But although he intended his first Forsyte book (*The Man of Property*, 1906) as a serious novel, as soon as the Forsytes became popular he quite happily extended it into a saga, adding another dozen novels and short stories.

THE FORSYTE SAGA (1922)

This contains three novels and two short stories. Its subject is the way money-making and commercial endeavour atrophy the emotions. Three generations of Forsytes are morally tainted by their family's business success, in particular Soames and his unhappy wife Irene. Every boardroom victory is balanced by a bedroom defeat; children inherit not only wealth, but the poisoned character that goes with it. There is more than a whiff of Victorian moralizing about it all: in Galsworthy the bad always end unhappily (and so do the good). But unlike many later family-business sagas, his books offer three-dimensional characters, and he is particularly good at showing the ebb and flow of relationships between the sexes. *To Let*, the third volume of the saga, a Romeo and Juliet story with a devastating final twist, is a fine example of this and is one of Galsworthy's most satisfying books.

Apart from the Forsyte books (two trilogies – The Forsyte Saga; A Modern Comedy – and the short-story collections Four Forsyte Stories and On Forsyte Change), Galsworthy's novels include The Island Pharisee, Fraternity and the trilogy End of the Chapter, a saga about the Charwell family (cousins of the Forsytes).

- A Modern Comedy.
- ▶ Anthony Trollope, Can You Forgive Her? (and its sequels: the Palliser family saga); ▷ Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks (an equally withering account of the decline of a powerful mercantile family); ▷ C.P. Snow, The Conscience of the Rich (a moving study of the son of a family dynasty at odds with his parents).

GARLAND, Alex (born 1970)

British novelist

Even before Leonardo DiCaprio bestowed some of his superstar magic on The Beach (1996) by appearing in the movie version of it, Alex Garland's novel had become an iconic book for a certain generation of readers. The great achievement of Garland's novel is that it combines a dark and dramatic adventure story. thought-provoking ideas about our need to search out faraway utopias and contemporary concerns about the environmental impact of Western tourism in one highly readable package. And it possesses an instant appeal to all those many thousands of young people who, every year, set out on the backpacking trail to Asia. The central character of the novel, Richard, hears of an idvllic beach community near Thailand from a half-crazed Vietnam vet who later commits suicide. He and two others set off in search of the Beach but soon discover, when they eventually reach it, that they have brought a serpent to this particular Eden. Garland's very different second novel, The Tesseract (1998), more Sqraham Greene or Paul Theroux than Generation X, is an ingeniously constructed book in which three dark stories of life in contemporary Manila intermesh. In recent years Garland has shown more interest in film rather than the novel, 28 Days (2002) is a screenplay.

READ ON

▶ Esther Freud, *Hideous Kinky*; ▷ Douglas Coupland, *Generation X*; Simon Lewis, Go; William Sutcliffe, Are You Experienced?.

GASKELL, Mrs (Elizabeth Cleghorn) (1810-65) British novelist

For a century after her death, Gaskell was chiefly remembered for a biography of her friend > Charlotte Brontë, and for Cranford (1853), a gently malicious book about middle-class life in a provincial town. (It reads like a collaboration between > Austen and > Trollope, without being quite as good as either.) But she was actually a novelist of a far tougher kind. She was a friend of ▷ Dickens and ▷ Eliot, and shared their interest in social themes, particularly the way men treat women and the plight of the urban poor. She lived in Manchester, and wrote pungently about life among the 'dark Satanic mills' (as Blake had called them) which her southern readers had until then imagined were figments of the revolutionary imagination. Her novels were discussed in Parliament and led to social reform, a result that greatly pleased her. They survive today less as social documents than as powerful stories of people struggling against their environment or the indifference of others.

MARY BARTON (1848)

Mary's father is a mill-hand employed by the unfeeling Henry Carson. He is also a staunch fighter for workers' rights. When the mill-owners ignore their workers' requests for better treatment, the men decide to murder Carson as a warning to his class, and nominate Barton to fire the gun. Mary's beloved Jem Wilson is arrested for the crime, and Mary has to face the agony of proving his innocence by incriminating her father.

Gaskell's novels Ruth, Cousin Phyllis and Wives and Daughters concern the relationship between the sexes. Sylvia's Lovers, an unsmiling tale set in Whitby in the eighteenth-century, is about a man snatched by the press gang. North and South, like Mary Barton, is about class war, Lois the Witch, a long short story, is set during the Salem witch-hunts of the seventeenth century.

READ ON

- North and South (in which a southern minister goes to preach God's word in a northern mill town, and his wife and daughter become involved in the class struggle - a concern greatly complicated when the daughter falls in love with a mill-owner's son).
- ▶ ▷ Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*; ▷ Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*; ▷ Émile Zola, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, A Scots Quair (partly in dialect, but comprehensible) is a saga of three generations coping with harsh conditions on West Highland crofts and in industrial Glasgow during the 1920s General Strike.

READ ON A THEME: GAY/LESBIAN FICTION

- > James Baldwin, Giovanni's Room Djuna Barnes, Nightwood Emma Donoghue, Stir Fry Radclyffe Hall. The Well of Loneliness
- > Alan Hollinghurst, The Swimming Pool Library David Leavitt, The Lost Language of Cranes Adam Mars Jones, Monopolies of Loss
- Colm TóibÕn, The Story of the Night Edmund White, A Boy's Own Story Christopher Whyte, The Gay Decameron
- > Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

GIBSON, William (born 1948)

US novelist

In the history of science fiction there has been a handful of books which have redefined the genre for a new generation of readers. One of these is William Gibson's Neuromancer (1984). Gibson is often dubbed the father of cyberpunk but critics do not always agree on what a definition of cyberpunk might be. In truth, what Gibson did was what the best science fiction writers have always done. He took contemporary scientific and technological developments, seized upon potential implications and projected them imaginatively into the future. In the case of Neuromancer, and the books that followed it in a loosely connected trilogy, Count Zero and Mona Lisa Overdrive, it was computer technology and the newly developing Internet. In his books since the trilogy, Gibson has turned his attention to other subjects. In Idoru, with its emphasis on the blankness of media celebrity, and All Tomorrow's Parties he has shown another quality of the best science fiction writers. While ostensibly writing fantasies of the future, he is using the freedom the genre gives him to reflect, obliquely, the realities of modern society. His most recent novel, *Pattern Recognition* (2003), was heralded as his first foray into contemporary society but it is a measure of the way Gibson's earlier novels mirrored today as much as they predicted the future that its world seems seamlessly connected to the worlds created in his other fiction.

NEUROMANCER (1984)

The time is the mid-twenty-first century. Case, once a master hacker able to project his consciousness into cyberspace (a term Gibson invented), is now a low-life addict in the massive urban sprawl of Japan. He is given a chance to redeem himself when a group of shadowy corporate conspirators offers him the means to regain the buzz that travelling cyberspace provided. The plot of *Neuromancer* is clichéd enough, familiar from dozens of thrillers, but what give the book its strength are the enormous energy of Gibson's imaginative construction of the world in which his anti-hero operates and the originality of the language he uses. In prose that deftly combines streetwise slang and technovocabulary (often his own inventions) he describes a nightmarish future in which personal relationships have been irrevocably compromised by materialism and hope lies in release from the meat of the body into the exhilarating ether of cyberspace.

READ ON

- Idoru.
- ► Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*; ▷ Jeff Noon, *Vurt*; Neal Stephenson, *Snow Crash*; Bruce Sterling, *Heavy Weather*; Tricia Sullivan, *Someone to Watch Over Me.*

GIDE, André (1861–1951)

French novelist, poet and non-fiction writer

In Plato's dialogues, Socrates tries to reach the core of a philosophical argument by elimination: each wrong assumption, each false trail is considered and rejected until what is left is 'truth'. Gide admired Plato – his favourite among his own works was *Corydon*, a set of four Platonic dialogues discussing homosexuality – and he used Socrates's methods in his fiction. His heroes seek the truth about themselves, the core of their being, and they do it by considering and rejecting all religious, social, sexual and intellectual conventions. Sometimes a quest results in the happiness of self-knowledge, but often the young men – Gide was not over-interested in young women – find, when they reach the core of themselves, that there is nothing there at all. Many of Gide's contemporaries found his moral stripteases shocking and he was condemned as a pornographer; nowadays the most striking thing about his books is their spare, limpid style, which makes even more startling the things they say.

THE IMMORALIST (1902)

Michel, a young intellectual, nearly dies of tuberculosis, and his brush with death changes his character. He rejects his former convention-ridden life in favour of living each moment for itself, of doing exactly what he pleases. As his personality flowers, that of his beloved wife begins to wither, leaving him to agonize over whether his actions have led to psychic liberation or to a surrender to selfishness.

Gide's other fiction includes Strait is the Gate (La Porte étroite), The Vatican Cellars, Isabelle, The Pastoral Symphony (La Symphonie pastorale) and The Counterfeiters. His non-fiction works on similar themes include If It Die (Si le grain ne meurt), Et nunc manet in te/Madeleine and Journals.

READ ON

- Strait is the Gate; The Pastoral Symphony. The Vatican Cellars is a more
 extrovert romp involving murder, the kidnapping of the Pope and a frantic chase
 across Europe. The Counterfeiters is about a group of secondary schoolboys in
 Paris, their adolescent friendships and the adults who initiate them into grown-up
 life.
- ▶ to Gide's short, philosophical books: ▷ Hermann Hesse, Peter Camenzind; Joris-Karl Huysmans, Against Nature; Frederick Rolfe, The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole; ▷ Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza.
- ▶ to The Counterfeiters: ▷ Colette, A Lesson in Love; ▷ Marcel Proust, Cities of the Plain (Part Four of Remembrance of Things Past).
- ► More modern books on Gidean themes: ▷ Iris Murdoch, *The Flight From the Enchanter*; ▷ Ian McEwan, *The Comfort of Strangers*; ▷ Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming Pool Library*.

GOETHE, Johann Wolfgang von (1749–1832)

German writer of novels, poems, plays and non-fiction

As well as being a writer, Goethe was a politician, lawyer, theatre manager, philosopher and scientist. His genius expressed itself in restless intellectual energy: he never heard an idea without wanting to develop it. In his writing, he took the nearest convenient form – Shakespearean or Greek tragedy, letters, biography – and crammed it with philosophical and political reflections, discussions and suggestions. During his lifetime he was regarded as an innovator, forming European thought; with hindsight he seems rather to have caught ideas in the air – humanism, romanticism, political libertarianism – expanded them and given them wide circulation.

THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER (1774)

Werther is a melancholic artist out of tune with the times and with himself. Through a series of letters he tells the story of his growing, indeed obsessive, love for Lotte who is engaged to another man, Albert. All Werther's attempts to distract himself from the pain his love causes him prove ineffectual and eventually he kills himself with Albert's pistol. One of the earliest works to announce the arrival of the new spirit of romanticism, Goethe's book was astonishingly successful throughout Europe. Young men dressed like Werther and memorized long parts of the novel; copycat suicides were recorded.

Goethe is best-known for his poetry, and for such plays as Egmont, Iphigenia in Tauris, Götz von Berlichingen/Ironhand and Faust. Apart from The Sorrows of Young Werther, his novels are Wilhelm Meister and Elective Affinities.

READ ON

• Elective Affinities is a heartless, amoral book (anticipating > André Gide) about a married couple, each of whom has a love affair.

- ▶ to Wilhelm Meister: Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote > Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain.
- ▶ to Elective Affinities: > George Eliot, Daniel Deronda; > Christina Stead, The Man Who Loved Children.
- ▶ to The Sorrows of Young Werther: > Hermann Hesse, Gertrud.

GOGOL, Nikolai Vasilevich (1809-52)

Russian writer of novels, short stories and plays

The despair which seems to hover over much Russian fiction was replaced in Gogol by hilarity: he was a twentieth-century surrealist ahead of his time, a forerunner of \triangleright Kafka and lonesco. His best-known work, the stage farce *The Government Inspector*, is about a confidence trickster mistaken for a high official by a village of pompous fools. In one of his stories a nose takes on a malign, satirical life independent of its owner's will; in another a man saves for years to buy a new coat, only to be mugged and robbed the first time he wears it. Gogol's preferred form was the short story: he was terrified of writer's block. He struggled for a dozen years to finish his one long book, *Dead Souls*, and in 1852, convinced by a religious adviser that the second (unpublished) half of the book was 'sinful' and that if he went on writing he would go to hell, he burned the manuscript and fasted until he died.

DEAD SOULS (1842)

In nineteenth-century Russia landowners estimated their wealth not only by the land they owned, but also by the number of their serfs, or slaves. Chichikov, a confidence trickster, realizes that serfs who die between official censuses are not legally dead until the next census, and so still count as property. He travels the length and breadth of Russia, buying 'dead souls' from landowners, and becomes – on paper at least – one of the wealthiest men in the country. Gogol uses this simple story as the basis for a set of farcical character studies: he saw the book as a portrait gallery of contemporary Russia, and filled it with short, self-contained comic episodes. He also wrote, with ironical pointedness, that Chichikov's journey stands for the journey of every human being through life: we move on, never sure of what is coming next, relieved each time that whatever it was we did, we got away with it.

Gogol's most surreal short stories are 'Diary of a Madman', 'Nevski Prospekt', 'The Portrait', 'The Nose' and 'The Overcoat'. His collections Evenings on a Farm, Mirgorod and Arabesques are more farce than surrealism, short sketches about tongue-tied suitors, credulous peasants and feather-headed, pretty girls.

- ▶ Gogol's sinister brilliance is matched in the short stories of ▷ Franz Kafka, Saki and Roald Dahl; his gentler comic stories are like ▷ Anton Chekhov's.
- ▶ Good follow-ups to *Dead Souls*: Ivan Goncharov, *Oblomov* (about a man so alienated from the world that he decides to spend the rest of his life in bed);
 ▷ Franz Kafka, *America*;
 ▷ Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Svejk*; Bernard Malamud, *The Fixer*; Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*.

GOLDING, William (1911-93)

British novelist

Golding worked in the theatre and served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War. He worked as a schoolmaster until *Lord of the Flies* brought him international fame in 1954. The story of that book (about choirboys reverting to savagery after being marooned on a desert island) is typical of all his work: an exploration of the dark side of human nature. He believed that homo sapiens is corrupt, that we destroy more than we create, that we are devilish without redemption. But instead of baldly stating this philosophy, he dressed it in allegories of the most unusual and fantastical kind. He pictured the devil engulfing not only choirboys on an island, but also (in other novels) a drowning sailor, a tribe of Neanderthal people, the dean of a medieval cathedral, a boy growing up in 1960s Britain, and a group of eighteenth-century people sailing towards Australia. He evoked each of these situations with absolute conviction: few writers were better at suggesting the feel, taste, smell and sound of things, the texture of experience.

THE SPIRE (1964)

Inspired by a vision, Dean Jocelin commissions for his cathedral a 400-foot spire. (although the cathedral is unnamed, much of the background is drawn from the building of Salisbury Cathedral's spire, still the tallest in England.) Jocelin intends his spire as proof of human aspirations towards God; his enemies see it as a symbol of vanity, the devil's work. The master-builder points out that, as the cathedral's foundations are inadequate, the tower will bring the whole building crashing down. Jocelin overrides all objections, the work proceeds – Golding gives fascinating, vertigo-inducing detail of medieval building techniques – and the higher the spire rises the more people are destroyed. In the end the struggle between God and the devil takes over Jocelin's own self. In truly medieval manner, his brain and body become a battleground, and the issue moves from the tower to questions of his own moral integrity and saintliness.

Golding's other novels are Lord of the Flies, Pincher Martin, Free Fall, The Pyramid, Darkness Visible, a trilogy about an ill-assorted cargo of passengers on a voyage to Australia in the eighteenth century (Rites of Passage, Close Quarters and Fire Down Below, also collected in one volume as To the Ends of the Earth), The Paper Men and the unfinished The Double Tongue (fictional 'memoirs' of a sybil at ancient Delphi). The Scorpion God is a collection of three long stories, one based on his stage comedy The Brass Butterfly, about a crazy inventor trying to interest a decadent Roman ruler of Egypt in steam power.

- 110
- The Inheritors (a brilliantly imagined story of the coming of homo sapiens, seen from the standpoint of the gentle ape-people they exterminate).
- ▶ to *The Spire*: Peter Benson, *Odo's Hanging* (about the clash between Bishop Odo, commissioning a wall-hanging to commemorate the accession of William the Conqueror, and Tuvold, the genius-craftsman who wants to do things *his* way); ▷ Hermann Hesse, *Narziss and Goldmund* (which parallels both the good/evil theme and the medieval craft-background of *The Spire*); ▷ John Barth, *Giles Goat-boy*; ▷ Umberto Eco. *The Name of the Rose*.
- to Lord of the Flies: Marianne Wiggins, John Dollar, Richard Hughes, A High Wind in Jamaica.

▶ to the Australian trilogy: ▷ Barry Unsworth, Sacred Hunger, ▷ Thomas Keneally, The Playmaker.

READ ON A THEME: GOOD AND EVIL (the devil at large)

Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margharita

- > Stephen King, Carrie
- Doris Lessing, The Fifth Child Ira Levin, Rosemary's Baby
- > Ian McEwan, The Comfort of Strangers
- ▷ I.B. Singer, Satan in Goray
- > John Updike, The Witches of Eastwick
- > Fay Weldon, The Life and Loves of a She-Devil

See also: Something Nasty . . .

GORDIMER, Nadine (born 1923)

South African novelist and short story writer

Gordimer makes life in South Africa (and especially among the tormented liberal whites who are her main characters) an objective background for subjective choice. Her concerns are the diversity of human nature, and the way our moral and psychological personality is revealed in what we do. She also, magnificently, evokes the vastness and beauty of Africa. Like other South African writers (Alan Paton, Laurens van der Post, > André Brink) she gives the continent a kind of mystical identity; its indigenous inhabitants understand this completely, but it gives the incoming whites (who can only dimly perceive it) an unsettling sense of their own inadequacy, as if they are made second-class citizens not by other people's laws but by the very place they live in.

A SPORT OF NATURE (1987)

From adolescence rich, white Hillela is dominated by politics and sex, and combines the two: sex is a source of power, politics gives orgasmic satisfaction. She is attracted by, and attracts, powerful men of all professions and races – and progressively moves out of the orbit of whites to a leading position in the black revolutionary movement. The book ends with the success of the revolution, the establishment of majority rule – and with doubts sown in the reader's mind about Hillela herself. Has she really identified as wholly with the blacks as she hoped, or does she remain the 'sport of nature', or freak, of the book's title?

Gordimer's other novels are The Lying Days, A World of Strangers, Occasion for Loving, The Late Bourgeois World, A Guest of Honour, Burger's Daughter, The Conservationist, July's People, My Son's Story, None to Accompany Me, The House Gun and The Pickup. Her short story collections include Not For Publication, Livingstone's Companion, A Soldier's Embrace, Why Haven't You Written?, Jump and Loot. The Essential Gesture and Living in Hope and History contain sharp, thoughtful essays.

PATHWAYS

WILLIAM GOLDING

LORD OF THE FLIES

(choirboys lost on a desert island revert to Satanic evil, humanity's dark side)

THE DEVIL

(takes many forms, and can't be resisted - or can he?)

Fay Weldon, The Heart of England John Updike, The Witches of Eastwick James Blish, Black Easter

Robertson Davies, The Rebel Angels (first book of The Cornish Trilogy)

SURVIVING

(shipwreck or desertion, the door to new adventure)

Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels James Vance Marshall, Walkabout Jim Crace, Signals of Distress

EVIL AND CHILDREN

(childish innocence an ideal vessel for evil and sometimes, the children themselves are not so innocent)

Susan Hill, I'm the King of the Castle Stephen King, Carrie John Wyndham, The Midwich Cuckoos Henry James, The Turn of the Screw Richard Hughes, A High Wind in Jamaica

THE WILDERNESS

(surviving the most inhospitable areas on Earth)

Patrick White, Voss Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness Brian Moore, Black Robe Paul Theroux, The Mosquito Coast

READ ON

- The House Gun (a study of a liberal-minded but politically uncommitted couple forced into a confrontation with social violence when their son is accused of murder).
- ► André Brink, Rumours of Rain (about redneck Afrikaanerdom); > J.M. Coetzee, In the Heart of the Country. Alan Paton, Cry, the Beloved Country (a moving book about the harmony between ancient Zulu culture and the land, and the discord brought by invading whites; it is mirrored, from a different country and a different point of view, by > Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart).

GORKY, Maxim (1868-1936)

Russian writer of novels, short stories and plays

Gorky (a pseudonym meaning 'bitter') was left to fend for himself at the age of eight, and spent his childhood as a barge-hand, washer-up, thief, beggar, tramp and journalist. This 'apprenticeship', as he called it, affected the style and content of his writing. He saw himself as a colleague and heir of Dostoevsky and Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and aimed to write the same kind of panoramic, allegorical works as theirs. But whereas their world was that of landowners and the bourgeoisie, his was one of serfs, vagabonds, criminals and other members of what he called society's 'lower depths'. He despised the middle class, and wrote with contempt of their dependence on money, gentility and religion, the very forces that were destroying them. His preoccupations led him to friendship with Lenin, and to enthusiastic support for the 1917 revolution. Many of his post-1917 books are grandiose and propagandist, and his revolutionary sympathies have diminished his reputation in the West. But his early work places him squarely in the company of the great nine-teenth-century writers he admired.

Gorky is known for plays (such as The Lower Depths and Smug Citizens) as well as for prose fiction. His novels include Mother, Foma Gordeev, The Artamonov Affair, The Life of Klim Samgin and the post-revolutionary tetralogy Bystander, The Magnet, Other Fires and The Spectre. His short stories have been collected in single volume editions. His best-known work, in or out of Russia, is the autobiographical trilogy My Childhood, My Apprenticeship and My Universities.

- My Childhood (the first volume of Gorky's autobiography, a scalding account of his life as a young boy living with a tyrannical grandfather and storytelling grandmother and of his initiation into the terrifying world of adult labour and suffering).
- ► Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Gambler* (a harsh account of aristocratic folly and obsession in Tsarist Russia, the kind of decadence Gorky vociferously denounced); Jean Genet, *Querelle of Brest* (the story of a boy's brutal upbringing among criminals and gangsters in France between the two world wars).

GRAFTON, Sue (born 1940)

US writer

Ever since > Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski led the way in the early 1980s, female private eyes have been forging forward. One of the best is Kinsey Millhone, who stars in a series of books by Sue Grafton. Each title begins with a letter of the alphabet (*A is for Alibi*, 1986; *B is for Burglar*, 1987; *C is for Corpse*, 1988, and so on). Millhone is a splendid loner and the cases she undertakes are as marvellously tangled as any addict of the genre could demand. As one critic said, this is a series to kill for.

The other Millhone books so far published are D is for Deadbeat, E is for Evidence, F is for Fugitive, G is for Gumshoe, H is for Homicide, I is for Innocent, J is for Judgement, K is for Killer, L is for Lawless, M is for Malice, N is for Noose, O is for Outlaw, P is for Peril and Q is for Quarry.

READ ON

► Linda Barnes, *Snapshot*; ▷ Val McDermid, *Crack Down*; Karen Kijewski, *Katwalk*; ▷ Sara Paretsky, *Toxic Shock*; Janet Evanovich, *One for the Money*.

GRASS, Günter (born 1927)

German writer of novels, plays and non-fiction

In his twenties Grass worked as a graphic artist, stage designer and jazz musician; he took up writing full time only after his novel *The Tin Drum* was a bestseller, when he was thirty-two. Politics are the main subject of his books: he grapples with what has happened in Germany over the last half-century, and what is happening now. He uses a framework of absurdity, blending real events with wild black fantasy, collapsing history (so that time is like a well from which you draw not systematically but at random), and making his characters allegorical figures like the people in cartoons. The leading character in *The Tin Drum* (1959), for example, symbolizes the German people: a child who chooses to stop growing at the age of three, and who spends forty years banging a toy drum and giggling as the procession of Nazism and post-war reconstruction passes by. For Grass, the human condition is 'absurd': not only ridiculous but morally and philosophically out of focus. His books offer no solutions, but they point out the problems with enormous, malicious glee.

THE FLOUNDER (1977)

The wife and husband from a Grimm fairytale move through the entire history of the human race, popping up in this period or that, playing each role by the conventions of its time, and endlessly, affably arguing about gender dominance. They are aided or hindered by a talking fish from the same fairytale: it takes now her side, now his. Finally the fish is ordered to defend itself before a late twentieth-century feminist tribunal, and the whole male/female business is thrashed out in a hearing as preposterous as the trial in *Alice in Wonderland*. The fact that this book is about sexual rather than German politics makes it one of Grass's most accessible novels to non-German readers, and it is also wonderfully enlivened with puns, poems, satires and recipes.

Grass's other novels include the Danzig Trilogy (The Tin Drum, Cat and Mouse and Dog Years), From the Diary of a Snail, Cat and Mouse, The Meeting at Telgte, Headbirths, The Rat, The Call of the Toad and Crabwalk. My Century (1999), is a collection of linked stories, each one appropriate to a particular year of the twentieth century.

READ ON

- The Tin Drum is the most accessible of the Danzig novels, and although its theme (Nazism) gives it a harsher tone than The Flounder, it is equally hilarious and bizarre. Grass's most recent novel is Crabwalk. This story of a man trying to learn the truth about the 1945 sinking by a Soviet submarine of a ship full of German refugees shows him still struggling creatively with the legacy of his country's twentieth-century history.
- ▶ Other books similarly reinventing the human race, tossing all human knowledge and invention into a single fantastic melting pot: ▷ Thornton Wilder, The Eighth Day; ▷ Kurt Vonnegut, Galápagos; ▷ J.G. Ballard, The Unlimited Dream Company; ▷ Jeanette Winterson, The Passion.

GRAVES, Robert (1895–1985)

British novelist, poet and non-fiction writer

Graves's main interests were myth and poetry. He wrote a bestselling version of the Greek myths, a controversial account of the Bible stories as myth, and *The White Goddess* (1948–52), a study of poetic inspiration. Throughout his life he composed poetry (much of it autobiographical), and his love poems in particular are much admired. He claimed that his novels were potboilers, written to finance 'real' work, but their quality and craftsmanship belie this description. Most are historical, reimagining characters of the past – from the author of the *Odyssey* to Jesus – as people with markedly twentieth-century sensibilities, able to view the events of their own lives, as it were, with hindsight. His books are like psychological documentaries, as if we are looking directly into his characters' minds.

I, CLAUDIUS (1934)

This novel and its sequel *Claudius the God* purport to be the autobiography of the fourth Roman emperor. A spastic and an epileptic, he is regarded by everyone as a fool and ignored; he thus survives the myriad political and dynastic intrigues of the first fifty years of the Roman empire, the reigns of his three dangerous predecessors. He is finally made emperor himself, in a palace coup – and proceeds to rule with a blend of wisdom, guile and ruthlessness which he describes with fascinated relish. The story ends – typically for Graves – with a real document, an account by a Roman satirist of the 'Pumpkinification of Claudius', the arrival of the stammering, limping fool of an emperor in Olympus, home of the gods and of his own terrifying, deified relatives.

Graves's other novels include Count Belisarius (set in sixth-century Byzantium), Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth and Proceed, Sergeant Lamb (about the American War of Independence), Wife to Mr Milton (set in Puritan England, and written in a brilliant pastiche of seventeenth-century prose), Homer's Daughter (set in prehistoric Greece), and King Jesus (about the life and death of Christ). Seven Days in New Crete is an urbane future-fantasy, and Goodbye to All That is autobiography,

PATHWAYS

ROBERT GRAVES

I. CLAUDIUS

(the fourth Roman Emperor's 'memoirs' of his bloodthirsty contemporaneous forebears)

'MEMOIRS'

Joseph **Heller**, *God Knows* (King David of Israel)

Gore **Vidal**, *Creation* (Persian ambassador of sixth century BC)

Mary **Renault**, *The King Must Die* (King Theseus of Athens)

Marguerite **Yourcenar**, *Memoirs of Hadrian* Stephen **Marlowe**, *The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus*

Carlos **Fuentes**, *Terra Nostra* (Philip II of Spain)

ANCIENT ROME

Thornton **Wilder**, *The Ides of March*. John **Arden**, *Silence Among the Weapons* Peter **Vansittart**, *Three Six Seven* Anthony **Burgess**, *The Kingdom of the Wicked*

THE ANCIENT WORLD

Norman Mailer, Ancient Evenings (Egypt)
Joan Grant, Winged Pharaoh (Egypt)
Henry Treece, Medea (mythical Greece)
Peter Green, Alcibiades His Armour (Athens,
fifth century BC)
Hildà Doolittle ('H.D.'), Hedylus (Greece, third

Hildà **Doolittle** ('H.D.'), *Hedylus* (Greece, third century BC)

PEOPLE OF THE PAST

(powerful historical novels)

Helen **Waddell**, *Peter Abelard* Barry **Unsworth**, *Sacred Hunger* William **Golding**, *The Spire* Nicholas **Monsarrat**, *Running Proud* moving from a tormented account of Graves's time as an officer in the First World War to malicious glimpses of Oxford life and the literary London of the 1920s.

READ ON

- ▶ to I, Claudius: David Wishart, I, Virgil (about the Roman Civil War, Caesar's assassination, Antony and Cleopatra, the rise of Augustus a kind of prequel to I, Claudius); ▷ Robert Harris, Pompeii; ▷ Steven Saylor, Roman Blood; Naomi Mitchison, The Corn King and the Spring Queen; Allan Massie, Tiberius.
- ▶ Books of similar gusto, on non-classical subjects: Frederick Rolfe, *Hadrian the Seventh* (about a waspish inadequate who is elected Pope); Augusto Roa Bastos, *I, The Supreme* (the 'autobiography' of a deranged nineteenth-century Paraguayan dictator); ▷ Gore Vidal, *Kalki* (about an insane Vietnam veteran who imagines himself Kalki, the Hindu god whose coming will end the present cycle of human existence).

GRAY, Alasdair (born 1934)

British writer

Founding father of the renaissance of Scottish literature in the past two decades. Alasdair Gray has demonstrated his erudition, playful wit and skill as an illustrator and designer in a series of books that have ranged from gothic fantasy to dark eroticism. Gray loves all aspects of the writing, reading and making of books. His own are packed with allusion and parody, arcane snippets of literary knowledge. experiments with form and style. He jumps into the midst of his own fiction to offer justifications for the developments in it. He starts novels with 'Book 3', includes a 'Prologue' after a hundred pages and then moves on to 'Book 1'. He takes literary and sub-literary genres like science fiction and pornography and plays unexpected games with readers' expectations of what they will offer. Gray is involved closely with the design of his works and, like a modern version of a medieval illuminator, he scatters his illustrations through his text. Even errata slips provide food for Gray's comic imagination. 'This erratum slip has been placed in this book in error' reads one sandwiched between the pages of one of his books. Gray has published a number of excellent books in the last twenty years. Poor Things (1992), an imaginative Victorian pastiche which tells of the creation of a kind of female Frankenstein's monster in nineteenth-century Glasgow, deservedly won the Guardian Fiction Prize when it first appeared. A History Maker (1994), set in a twenty-third-century world where war has become an elaborate board game, is Gray's extremely idiosyncratic but enjoyable version of a science fiction novel. However, Alasdair Gray's major achievement, the book that gave a new confidence to Scottish literature, remains Lanark (1981). Moving between the two worlds of 1950s Glasgow, where Duncan Thaw struggles to find love and fulfil his artistic vision, and the strange city of Unthank where the dead Thaw is reincarnated as Lanark, the book is an imaginative tour de force, a place where fantasy and realism collide to startling effect.

- Poor Things.
- ▶ James Kelman, How Late It Was, How Late; Jeff Torrington, Swing, Hammer, Swing; Flann O'Brien, At Swim Two-Birds (for the same mixture of erudition and playfulness);

 Jorge Luis Borges's stories with very different settings but a similar love for the arcana and byways of literature.

READ ON A THEME: GREAT (CLASSIC) DETECTIVES

John Dickson Carr. Death Watch (Gideon Fell)

- > Agatha Christie, Murder on the Orient Express (Hercule Poirot)
- ▶ Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles (Sherlock Holmes) Michael Innes, Hamlet, Revenge! (Inspector Appleby)
- ▶ Ngaio Marsh, *Death and the Dancing Footman* (Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn)
- Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors* (Lord Peter Wimsey)
- ▶ Georges Simenon, Maigret and the Headless Corpse
- Rex Stout, Murder by the Book (Nero Wolfe)

see also: Classic Detection, Private Eyes

GREENE, Graham (1904-91)

British writer of novels, plays and non-fiction

In the 1930s Greene wrote several thrillers influenced by > Buchan and by action films of the time: they include Stamboul Train (set on the Orient Express). A Gun For Sale/This Gun For Hire (about the manhunt for a political assassin) and The Confidential Agent (about left-wing politics in a right-wing state). This period of his writing culminated in atmospheric film scripts, of which the best (later novelized) was The Third Man. But thrillers – and, later, comedies such as Our Man in Havana, Travels With My Aunt and Monsignor Quixote - always took second place, at least in Greene's own estimation, to his Catholic novels. These are all concerned with people tormented by their own moral failure and by the longing for God's forgiveness. The settings are often the tropics; the political situations are unstable; the heroes are second-rank functionaries despised by their superiors. Two novels, Brighton Rock (1938, about a petty criminal in 1930s Brighton) and The Human Factor (1978, about the minor-public-school lovalties and betrayals of the British intelligence services), set similar searches for grace in a soulless, down-at-heel Britain. Despite the Catholic overtones of these books. which non-believers may find unconvincing, Greene's plots are fascinating, and his evocation of character and place is marvellous.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER (1948)

Scobie, Captain of Police in a God-forsaken African colony during the Second World War, is a decent, honest man. His wife Louise, tormented by memories of their dead daughter and by her own isolation from the rest of the British community, begs him to send her away to South Africa – and because of a mixture of pity for her misery and anguish at his inability to make her happy, he breaks police rules and borrows money from a suspected diamond smuggler. From that lapse onwards, everything Scobie does ends in disaster, and there is nothing he can do but watch himself, appalled but helpless, as he plunges remorselessly towards damnation.

Greene's other novels include The End of the Affair, The Quiet American, A Burnt-out Case, The Comedians, The Honorary Consul, Doctor Fischer of Geneva and The Captain and the Enemy. His short stories (many of them 'comedies of the sexual life', as he called them) are collected in Twenty-one Stories, May We

Borrow Your Husband? and The Last Word. He also wrote travel books and plays and a fascinating book intended as a 'substitute for autobiography', A World of My Own, recounting his dreams.

READ ON

- The Power and the Glory (a lacerating story, set in Mexico during a left-wing revolution, about a drunken, self-hating priest who struggles against his own fear and the persecution of the revolutionaries to take God to the peasants).
- ▶ to other aspects of Greene's fictional world: > John le Carré, The Honourable Schoolboy; Patrick Hamilton, Hangover Square

GRISHAM, John (born 1955)

US writer

Before turning to fiction, Grisham practised law and he has become the most successful writer of the legal thriller genre in which lawyers play central roles and the intricacies of the law often provide the fuel for the plot. His first novel. A Time to Kill (1989), with its story of a lawyer defending a black father who has killed his daughter's rapists, had many of what would be later recognized as the classic ingredients of a Grisham plot. But it was with his second book, The Firm (1990), that Grisham really hit his stride and propelled himself into the bestseller ranks. The central character is a brilliant and ambitious young lawyer who joins a prominent law firm and gradually discovers that it is a front for the Mafia, working solely for the benefit of organized crime. The novel follows his attempts to break free of the dangerous web in which the firm has entangled him. Grisham cranks up the tension with great skill and the legal details are neatly dovetailed into a plot that twists and turns with satisfying suspense. For many of his fans this remains Grisham's best book but he has followed it with a number of other thrillers that are almost equally engrossing. In The Client (1992) a senator has been the victim of a Mafia hitman and a small boy, the only person who knows the identity of the killer. becomes the innocent centre of a legal battle. In The Brethren (1999) three judges, imprisoned for assorted crimes, concoct a blackmail plot which goes disastrously astray when they pick the wrong man to blackmail. A Painted House (2001) shows a desire to get away from the courtroom and is a nostalgic story of a boy growing up in the rural Midwest in the 1950s. His change of pace and style surprised many of his readers although he has since returned to the expertly crafted legal thrillers for which he will always be best known.

Grisham's other novels are The Partner, The Pelican Brief, The Runaway Jury, The Testament, The Rainmaker, The Street Lawyer, The Chamber, The Summons, Skipping Christmas *and* The King of Torts.

READ ON

- The Runaway Jury.
- Scott Turow, Presumed Innocent; James Patterson, Along Came a Spider; Michael Crichton, Rising Sun; Steve Martini, The Attorney.

READ ON A THEME: GROVES OF ACADEME

- ⋉ingsley Amis, Lucky Jim
- > A.S. Byatt, Possession
- □ David Lodge, Changing Places
 Mary McCarthy, The Groves of Academe
- Donna Tartt, The Secret History

See also: Dreaming Spires; Higher (?) Education

GUTERSON, David (born 1956)

US novelist

By combining elements of both courtroom drama and murder mystery with an evocative recreation of a particular community caught at a particular moment in its history, David Guterson produced one of the most satisfying bestsellers of the 1990s. Snow Falling on Cedars (1994) is set on an island off the north-west coast of America in the 1950s. A fisherman has been murdered on his boat and a man stands in the dock of the courtroom, accused of the murder. The man is Kabuo Miyamoto, a member of the large Japanese community on the island. Watching the proceedings is Ishmael Chambers, owner of the local newspaper, a lonely man whose only love has been for a woman who refused him and later became Miyamoto's wife. As the trial moves forward, with the inherent tension that courtroom dramas in fiction and film so often possess, the story also moves back in time to Chambers's failed love affair, to the war and the racial tensions it released on the island. Piece by piece, Guterson builds up his picture of an entire community, living precariously in a harsh landscape that the novel brilliantly evokes. And he does so while both maintaining the reader's interest in the whodunit elements of his plot and exploring a drama of clashing cultures and values. For any novelist it would be a major achievement. For a first novelist it is remarkable

Guterson has also written a collection of short stories, The Country Ahead of Us, the Country Behind and a second novel, East of the Mountains (about a terminally ill man who sets out on a journey into the mountains which becomes a journey into his own past).

READ ON

411

► Amy Tan, The Joy Luck Club; ▷ Annie Proulx, The Shipping News; Charles Frazier, Cold Mountain; Arthur Golden, Memoirs of a Geisha.



HAGGARD, H. (Henry) Rider (1856–1925)

British novelist

Haggard's novels are adventure fantasies set in wildly exotic locations: the geysers and glaciers of Iceland (*Erik Bright-eyes*), the South American jungle (*Montezuma's Daughter*) or – most commonly of all – Darkest Africa, a continent of the imagination as fabulous as the setting of Sinbad's adventures in *The Arabian Nights*. (Haggard knew what he was writing about: in his twenties he was a colonial administrator in the Transvaal.) In *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), Haggard's best-known book, Allan Quatermain leads a safari in search of the fabulous treasure beyond Africa's Solomon Mountains, a treasure which has already claimed a thousand lives. Desert heat, jungle, hostile warrior tribes and ice-caves in the mountains must all be faced, to say nothing of black magic, cannibalism and the guile and treachery of members of Quatermain's own party. Hokum? The best.

READ ON

- She; Allan Quatermain; Ayesha; The Return of She.

HAMMETT, Dashiell (1894–1961)

US writer of novels, short stories and screenplays

A former private detective, Hammett wrote stories and serials for pulp magazines, and later became a Hollywood scriptwriter. He perfected the private eye story, in which kidnappings, thefts and murders are investigated by laconic, wisecracking individuals who are always just on the side of the angels and just one step ahead of the police. His best-known detectives are Sam Spade (made famous by Humphrey Bogart), the urbane Nick Charles (star of William Powell's 'Thin Man' films) and the Continental Op. Hammett's novels are *The Dain Curse, Red Harvest, The Maltese Falcon, The Glass Key* and *The Thin Man*; his story collections include *The Continental Op* and *The Big Knockover and Other Stories*.

READ ON

► Raymond Chandler, *The Lady in the Lake*; James M. Cain, *Double Indemnity*; Ross Macdonald, *The Drowning Pool*; Jim Thompson, *The Killer Inside Me*.

HARDY, Thomas (1840-1928)

British novelist and poet

As a young man Hardy worked as an ecclesiastical architect, sketching and surveying country churches. This work intensified his love of the old ways of the countryside, patterns of life and customs which dated from feudal times. This is the background to his novels (which are all set in south-western England, the ancient kingdom of Wessex). He describes the minutiae of farming and village life with the exactness of a museum curator, and his characters' habits of mind are rooted in the ebb and flow of the seasons, in the unending cycle of tending for their animals and caring for the land. Life is unhurried but inexorable: Hardy's people are owned by their environment. They are also subject to a range of violent passions and emotions – Hardy thought of human beings as the playthings of destiny, struggling against the indifferent and inexplicable forces of nature and fate – and the placid continuum of existence is the setting for such irrational psychological forces as jealousy, intolerance and revenge. Hardy's bleakness and pessimism were much criticized, and in 1895 he gave up novels to concentrate on poetry.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD (1874)

The shepherd Gabriel Oak works for Bathsheba Everdene, and loves her. Bathsheba's head is turned by dashing Sergeant Troy, who marries her and then deserts her, letting her believe that he is dead. Bathsheba now agrees to marry Boldwood, a yeoman farmer, unimaginative and dull, who has secretly loved her for years. Then Troy comes back and claims his wife – provoking a crisis and the resolution of the uneasy relationship between Oak and Bathsheba which has simmered all this time.

Hardy's other novels include Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Return of the Native, The Trumpet Major, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. He wrote an epic drama set during the Napoleonic Wars, The Dynasts, and several books of poetry including Satires of Circumstance, Moments of Vision and Winter Words.

READ ON

- The Mayor of Casterbridge (Michael Henchard rises to become rich and respected but his past returns to bring him down); Tess of the D'Urbervilles.
- ▶ Books on similar themes, in a similar style: ▷ George Eliot, *Adam Bede*; ▷ Mrs Gaskell, *Ruth*; ▷ Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*; ▷ Melvyn Bragg, *The Hired Man*.
- ► Further away in period or manner or setting, but equally atmospheric: > John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; Sigrid Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter*; Halldor Laxness, *Independent People*.

HARRIS, Robert (born 1957)

British writer

In his fiction Robert Harris shows all the best qualities he honed as a fine political journalist. He is exact in description, his eye for the telling detail which illuminates a scene is acute and his prose is precise but relaxed. The result is that his books have a plausibility that is sustained even when the plot is based on imaginative

speculation. 'What if?', he asks and then provides an answer that convinces because it is rooted in everyday realities. Many writers, most of them working in the science fiction genre, have written alternative histories in which the Nazis won the Second World War. None has produced a portrait of what that alternative reality might have been like that matches the one Harris provides in *Fatherland* (1992). And he succeeds precisely because he rejects sweeping, generalized conjecture in favour of closely observed, mundane details. Within a short time we are immersed in Berlin 1964 as preparations begin to celebrate Hitler's seventy-fifth birthday. This is the day-to-day world of Kripo detective Xavier March and it rapidly becomes ours. The puzzling murder of a figure from the wartime past disturbs March's world. As he takes his investigation into territory his superiors would rather avoid, he edges towards truths about the Nazi world that we know but March doesn't.

Robert Harris's other novels are Enigma (set in the Second World War codebreaking centre at Bletchley), Archangel and Pompeii. He has also written several works of non-fiction including Selling Hitler, the very funny and scarcely credible story of the forged Hitler diaries of the 1980s.

READ ON

- Archangel (centres on the search for a missing archive of Stalin's papers).
- ► Len Deighton, SS-GB; ▷ Eric Ambler, The Mask of Dimitrios; ▷ Frederick Forsyth, The Odessa File; Philip Kerr, A Philosophical Investigation; Alan Furst, The World at Night.

HARRISON, Harry (born 1925)

US novelist and short story writer

Although Harrison has written serious science fiction (such as the fast-moving adventure series *Deathworld I, Deathworld II* and *Deathworld III*), he is best known for farce, and especially for his books about the Stainless Steel Rat. In a future where technology has made crime all but redundant, James Bolivar di Griz, the Stainless Steel Rat, is a spectacular exception to the rule. He sees himself as a public benefactor, keeping the police on their toes, giving employment to insurance clerks and bringing colour and excitement to TV newscasts. In the first book of the series, *The Stainless Steel Rat*, the galactic police decide that the only way to cope with him is to recruit him and send him to catch the lovely interplanetary criminal Angelina.

The Stainless Steel Rat books include The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge, The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World, The Stainless Steel Rat Wants You! and The Stainless Steel Rat for President. Harrison's other novels include Bill, the Galactic Hero, Planet of the Damned, Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers and the more serious Make Room, Make Room! and Mechanismo.

READ ON

Make Room! Make Room! (the basis for the film Soylent Green, this is set in a
dark future of overpopulation and food shortages and follows one day in the life of
an NYPD detective as he attempts to solve the mystery of a murder).

- ▶ to Harrison's comedies: ▷ Kurt Vonnegut, *The Sirens of Titan*; Robert Rankin, *The Sprouts of Brentford*; Robert Sheckley, *The Status Civilization*; John Sladek, *The Reproductive System*.
- ▶ to *Make Room, Make Room!*: > J.G. Ballard, *The Drought*, David Brin, *Earth*, John Brunner, *Stand on Zanzibar*.

HARTLEY, L.P. (Leslie Poles) (1895-1972)

British novelist and short story writer

An admirer of > Henry James and > E.M. Forster, Hartley wrote a dozen decorous, restrained novels about emotional deprivation and the way childhood experience shadows a person's whole existence. His best-known books are the Eustace and Hilda books (*The Shrimp and the Anemone, The Sixth Heaven* and *Eustace and Hilda*, 1944–7), about a brother and sister whose emotional interdependence, innocent-seeming when they are children, blights their later lives, and *The Go-Between* (1953). A boy on holiday during an idyllic Edwardian summer carries messages between two doomed lovers (the daughter of the 'big house' and a tenant farmer), and becomes emotionally crippled by the passions he senses but hardly understands.

READ ON

- The Hireling.
- ► Henry James, What Maisie Knew; ▷ Anita Brookner, Hôtel du Lac; ▷ Elizabeth Bowen, The Death of the Heart; Jane Gardam, A Long Way from Verona; Philip Larkin, Jill.

HAŠEK, Jaroslav (1883-1923)

Czech novelist and journalist

Hašek spent most of his youth as a dropout and a half-baked political activist (for which he was imprisoned for six months by the Russians as a spy). He served. reluctantly, in the First World War, was invalided out and returned to the journalistic career he had begun before the war. This career was as unpredictable as most other things in Hašek's boozy, disorganized life. He worked on an anarchist paper but was sacked for stealing the office bicycle. For a while he edited a magazine called Animal World but was again shown the door when it was discovered that he had been inventing animals about which to write. Hašek's masterpiece, the 700-page comic novel The Good Soldier Sveik, makes hilarious use of all his early experiences. Svejk is the town drunk, a dog-catcher, who is conscripted into the Austrian army as the lowliest of privates. A moon-faced. brainless lump, he obeys every fatuous order and follows every regulation to the letter. The book follows his farcical army career, during which he rises to the dizzy heights of chaplain's batman, takes part in the First World War and sees the first skirmishes of the Russian revolution. He understands nothing of what is going on: food, drink and staying out of trouble are all that interest him. Hašek uses Sveik's blankness like a mirror, showing up officers, politicians and bureaucrats for the fools they are.

All earlier English translations of The Good Soldier Svejk were outclassed by Cecil

Parrott's, written in the 1970s. Parrott also published a selection of Hašek's journalism and shorter works, The Red Commissar.

READ ON

- ► François Rabelais's *Gargantua* is the nearest match for Hašek's farcical gusto, and Von Grimmelshausen's *Simplex Simplicissimus* is about a Middle Ages precursor of Svejk.
- ▶ of more modern books: Eric Linklater *Private Angelo* (a genial satire on the Second World War); Thomas Berger *Reinhart in Love* (a similarly light-hearted novel about a Svejkish US 'little man'); ▷ Thomas Mann *The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* (about a confidence trickster travelling the spas and luxury hotels of Europe in the 1900s; though it lacks Hašek's devastating view of war and politics, it exactly parallels his wide-eyed, amiable style); ▷ Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (a hilarious black-farce take on all Hašek's themes).

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL (1804–64)

US novelist

A member of a long-established New England family, Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts. Salem was, of course, the town in which the notorious witch-trials of the seventeenth century had taken place and Hawthorne was a direct descendant of one of the judges in the trial. Much of his work is concerned with his heritage of New England Puritanism. Many of his novels and stories struggle to understand the combination of personal moral rectitude with ferocious and pitiless intolerance of others that characterized both his ancestors and many of his contemporaries. Hawthorne wrote and published fiction throughout his adult life but his greatest achievements belong to an extraordinary burst of creativity in the late 1840s and early 1850s, which saw the publication of *The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. Hawthorne's gifts can also be seen in many of his short stories, particularly 'Young Goodman Brown' (good and evil battling it out again in New England), 'The Maypole of Merry Mount' and 'Rappaccini's Daughter'.

THE SCARLET LETTER (1850)

This study of intolerance and humbug is set among the first Puritan settlers in the US. Hester Prynne has spent two years in Boston, waiting for her elderly husband to join her from England. In the meantime she has borne a love-child, Pearl, and the Puritans pillory her and brand her as an adulteress, making her wear the scarlet letter A embroidered on her clothes. Her husband arrives, discovers that her secret lover is a minister of the church, and mercilessly persecutes him for refusing to admit his guilt. Hester's husband and lover pursue their enmity to the end; they ignore Hester herself, who in the meantime lives an unobtrusive but truly Christian life helping the neighbours who once mistreated her.

READ ON

- The House of the Seven Gables (a similarly remorseless novel about a New England family cursed for generations because of their forebears' persecution of an innocent man for witchcraft); The Blithedale Romance (a satire, based on Hawthorne's own experience, about life in a Massachusetts utopian community).
- ightharpoonup Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudon* (about an outbreak of hysteria and

demonic possession in a sixteenth-century French village); > I.B. Singer, Satan in Gorav (set in a medieval community of Polish Jews harassed by pogroms and torn apart by the appearance of a false Messiah); > Edgar Allan Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination.

HEINLEIN. Robert (1907-88)

US novelist

Heinlein's 1930s and 1940s writings were a bridge between early science fiction (▷ Verne and ▷ Wells) and the present day. They are straightforward stories of space travel and the colonization of distant planets, and much of their detail has been overtaken by events. In the 1960s his novel Stranger in a Strange Land had a cult following, because it seemed to be advocating a mystical union of humankind brought about by flower power, free love and hallucinatory drugs. His 1970s and 1980s books range from the serious I Will Fear No Evil to the ironical farce Job, akin to the bleakly hilarious fantasies of ▷ Joseph Heller and Starship Troopers (1959), has been condemned as excessively right wing but there is no doubting Heinlein's imaginative range. His best-known books, the heart of his achievement, are a series of independent but linked novels about Lazarus Long, a man who has the ability to live forever, and who ends up as a kind of universal patriarch; everyone in existence is one of his descendants. Heinlein explores the personal and social problems of such a person, stirring in exotic and fascinating plot-ideas. In *Time Enough to Love* (1973), for example, Lazarus Long, bored with life and contemplating suicide, is distracted by being allowed to try the forbidden experience of time travel. He goes back to 1917, fights in the First World War, meets himself as a six-year-old and falls in love with his own mother. Other books including Lazarus Long are Methuselah's Children, The Number of the Beast and The Cat Who Walks Through Walls.

READ ON

• Job (a Bible-inspired story of a human being tormented by a practical-joking, malicious God and finally befriended by the devil).

11-

▶ ▷ Isaac Asimov, Foundation; Orson Scott Card, Ender's Game; Ray Bradbury, The Martian Chronicles; Larry Niven, Ringworld.

HELLER, Joseph (1923–1999)

US novelist

Throughout the 1950s, the escalation of the nuclear arms race produced in many people a feeling of desperate impotence. Faced with imminent apocalypse, the only possible option seemed to be hysterical, cynical laughter. By the early 1960s this mood was common in plays, comedians' routines, cartoons and satirical magazines, and Heller's first novel Catch-22 expressed it perfectly. On the surface a wild farce about airmen in the Second World War, it shows human beings as both trapped in a detestable destiny and paradoxically liberated, by the absence of hope or choice, to do exactly as they please, to turn reality into fantasy. Catch-22 was such an enormous critical and popular success that its shadow fell over the rest of Heller's career. As he once sardonically remarked.

PATHWAYS

JOSEPH HELLER

CATCH-22

(the lunacy of war, seen in a USAF base on a fantasy Mediterranean island during the Second World War)

THE CRAZINESS OF COMMAND

(you'll laugh till you die)

Richard Hooker, M*A*S*H Kurt Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse Five Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow Jaroslav Hašek, The Good Soldier Svejk (- and sometimes you won't even laugh) Herman Wouk, The Caine Mutiny Peter George, Red Alert

WAR KILLS OUR YOUNG MEN

(war at the sharp end: brutal, unglorious and pointless)

Mario Vargas Llosa, The City and the Dogs/ The Time of the Hero

Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front

Len Deighton, Bomber

Norman Mailer, The Naked and the Dead Neville Shute, Landfall

THE WORLD GONE MAD

(laugh or cry, we live in an insane asylum)

Andrew Sinclair, Gog Günter Grass, The Tin Drum Richard Condon, Mile High Jerzy Kosinski, Being There Terry Southern, Candy

'People say that, in the last thirty years, I haven't written a novel as good as *Catch-22*. True, but, then, nor has anyone else.' In fact, several of Heller's later novels are comic masterpieces in their own right.

CATCH-22 (1961)

A group of US bomber pilots is stationed on a Mediterranean island during the Second World War. Every time a man thinks he has flown his quota of bombing missions, high command doubles the number. There is no escape, and the reason is Catch-22: if you're sane enough to ask to be grounded because what you're doing is crazy, you're sane enough to fly. For all its bleak philosophy, Catch-22 is brilliantly funny, particularly in its deadpan reporting of the lunatic, gung-ho US top brass, of Milo Minderbinder's extension to infinity of the rules of free-market enterprise (profiteering on everything from eggs to his comrades' lives), and of such pitiful victims of destiny as Major Major Major Major, a man haunted by his name.

Heller's other novels are Something Happened, Good as Gold, God Knows, Picture This and Closing Time. No Laughing Matter is non-fiction, a blackly funny account of Heller's recovery from near-fatal illness. Now and Then is a memoir of growing up in Coney Island and of service in the US Air Force during the Second World War.

READ ON

- Closing Time is a sequel to Catch-22, in which Yossarian and his ex-comrades are facing old age, despair and death in the hell that is 1990s capitalist New York. Two other Heller novels centre on characters who are trapped. Something Happened shows a man in thrall to the routine and ordinariness of his life; in God Knows the Old Testament King David is shackled by knowledge of the world's whole future history, and by his relationship with a wisecracking, cynical and unhelpful God. ('Where does it say nice?' asks God. 'Where does it say I have to be nice?')
- ▶ ▷ Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Svejk*; ▷ Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*; ▷ John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*.

HEMINGWAY, Ernest (1898–1961)

US novelist and short story writer

Few great writers provoke such love/hate reactions as Hemingway: it seems impossible to read him without judging him. The reason is that although he wrote some of the most evocative, persuasive prose of the century – as direct and compelling as the best journalism – many people find his subject matter and philosophy of life repellent. He believed that creatures, including human beings, are at their noblest when fighting for survival, and his novels and stories are therefore about boxing, big-game hunting, deep-sea fishing, bullfighting and, above all, war. Hemingway himself realized that his macho philosophy belonged more to the Middle Ages than the twentieth century, and most of his books are tinged with failure. His heroes rarely succeed in 'proving' themselves, their wars are futile, the emphasis is on pain, despair and death. But the dream remains, and is Hemingway's own dream. He spent his leisure time in exactly the activities he describes – precise details of how to fight bulls, hunt big game, box or fish are

what he does best – and in 1961, feeling too old and sick to continue, he shot himself.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS (1929)

A US ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War is wounded and taken to hospital, where he falls in love with an English nurse. While he convalesces the couple are deliriously happy, but then he is commanded back to the front. She tells him that she is pregnant, and they decide that their only course is 'a farewell to arms', escaping from the war to neutral Switzerland.

Hemingway's other novels are The Torrents of Spring, The Sun Also Rises/ Fiesta (which includes a superb description of bull-running during the festival at Pamplona), Green Hills of Africa, To Have and Have Not, For Whom the Bell Tolls (set during the Spanish Civil War), Across the River and Into the Trees and The Old Man and the Sea. Several unrevised, unfinished books were published posthumously: most famous is Islands in the Stream, most recent is True at First Light. His short story collections include In Our Time, Men Without Women and Winner Take Nothing. Death in the Afternoon combines non-fiction descriptions of bullfighting with short stories on the same subject. A Moveable Feast is his memoir of happy days as a young, would-be writer in Paris in the early 1920s.

READ ON

- The Old Man and the Sea describes a duel to the death between the old Cuban fisherman Santiago and a gigantic marlin, the biggest fish he has ever tried to catch in his life. The book is short, and concentrates on Santiago, struggling not only with the marlin but his own failing powers, and kept going only by determination and a lifetime's skill.
- ► > Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*; > Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead*; > George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*; > Jack London, *The Sea-wolf*.

HENSHER, Philip (born 1965)

British novelist

Hensher's first three novels were malevolently witty, cleverly crafted comedies of modern mores, set in different parts of a seemingly corrupt and bankrupt Europe. Other Lulus (1994) juxtaposed a contemporary tale of love and betrayal involving an Austrian singer and her English musicologist husband with erudite speculations about the life of the composer Alban Berg and his opera Lulu, Kitchen Venom (1996) is the story of a distinguished parliamentary official whose secret life of afternoon sex with rent boys leads him into a maze of intrigue and death, all played out against the backdrop of the weird rites and rituals of Westminster. It won Hensher many admirers for its wit and sharpness but lost him his job as a clerk in the House of Commons. Pleasured (1998) is set in Berlin in the late 1980s and tells the story of two feckless drifters drawn into an unlikely plot to flood East Berlin with a supposedly liberating supply of Ecstasy tablets. The Mulberry Empire (2002) marked a radical change in direction in Hensher's fiction. This is a historical novel of great ambition and scope, set in England and Afghanistan in the 1830s. Hensher marshals a large cast of characters and many different plot-lines to

tell the story of a British officer and explorer, Alexander Burnes, caught up in an ill-fated attempt by the British to oust the Amir from government in Kabul and replace him with a régime more favourable to imperial expansion. The novel succeeds brilliantly in combining the epic sweep of some of the nineteenth-century novelists to which it pays knowing tribute (> Dickens and > Tolstoy among others) and a twenty-first-century irony about the pretensions of imperialism and European complacency.

READ ON

- ▶ to Hensher's first three novels: ▷ Allan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming Pool Library*; Neil Bartlett, *Ready to Catch Him Should He Fall*.
- ▶ to *The Mulberry Empire*: > J.G. Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur*; > Matthew Kneale, *English Passengers*.

HERBERT, Frank (1920–86)

US novelist

Herbert's work is dominated by the 2,000-page (6-novel) Dune series (1965–85), a science fiction epic whose scope and complexity dwarfs all rivals. Dune is a desert planet, inhabited by gigantic sand-worms which produce mélange, a substance which inhibits ageing and gives knowledge of the past and future. The saga (each of the novels is self-contained) tells how Paul Atreides inherits Dune, has to win it from his enemies and then colonize it. It describes the 'greening' of a planet where water is the most precious of all commodities, and recounts the wars between the Atreides family and other interests (especially the powerful Bene Gesserit sisterhood, which is dedicated to harnessing the pure power of thought and so dispensing with science and technology). The books are partly a swaggering multi-generation saga, the apotheosis of space-opera, and partly a detailed and moving account of the inter-relationship between the colonists and their planet.

The first Dune trilogy is Dune, Dune Messiah and Children of Dune; the second is God Emperor of Dune, Heretics of Dune and Chapterhouse of Dune. Herbert's many other books include The Dragon in the Sea, The Whipping Star, The Dosadi Experiment, The Green Brain and The Santaroga Barrier.

READ ON

- ▶ to Dune: Brian Aldiss, Helliconia Spring and its sequels; > Anne McCaffrey, Dragonflight; Robert Silverberg, Majipoor Chronicles; Jack Vance, Big Planet.
- ▶ to God Emperor of Dune: Alfred Bester, The Stars My Destination; Philip José Farmer, Jesus on Mars; Roger Zelazny, Lord of Light; Kim Stanley Robinson, A Memory of Whiteness.

HESSE, Hermann (1877–1962)

German/Swiss novelist and non-fiction writer

A poet and mystic, Hesse was influenced by Jung's ideas of the unconscious and the collective unconscious, and later by Buddhist philosophy. His most famous mystical novel, *The Glass Bead Game/Magister Ludi (Das Glasperlenspiel*), is

about a future utopia where all questions about life, morality and personality are covered by a monastic philosophical system centred on a zen-like game involving coloured beads and an abacus. Hesse's reputation for gentle, philosophical woolliness has obscured his true worth. His novels before The Glass Bead Game. are spare, moving accounts of how people in psychological turmoil reach peace with themselves, either through their own efforts or with the help of friends and loved ones. He is something of a special taste, but few writers' works so reward their devotees.

ROSSHALDE (1914)

Veraguth, a world-renowned painter, is suffering creative block. His marriage is breaking down, and he and his wife stay together out of love for Rosshalde, their beautiful country estate, and devotion to their young son, Pierre. Veraguth's problems seem beyond cure - until unexpected tragedy forces him to come to terms with himself, and so to find peace at last.

Hesse's major novels are Gertrud, Peter Camenzind, Under the Wheel/The Prodigy, Siddhartha (about Buddha), Steppenwolf, Narziss and Goldmund and The Glass Bead Game. He also published shorter, more mystical fiction (Knulp; Klingsor's Last Summer), poetry, short stories, essays and letters.

READ ON

- Gertrud (the story of a tragic love triangle between a girl and two young men who are close friends). Steppenwolf and Narziss and Goldmund are both about the divided self. In Steppenwolf a hopeless, middle-aged recluse is 'brought back' by the spiritual energy of three young people who may be dream-figures from his subconscious. In Narziss and Goldmund (set in medieval Europe) the conflict between flesh and spirit is symbolized by the two main characters, close friends, one carnal, one spiritual.
- ▶ to Rosshalde: > André Gide, The Pastoral Symphony (La Symphonie pastorale).
- ▶ In Hesse's work in general: > Heinrich Böll, *The Clown*; > Kazuo Ishiguro, *An* Artist of the Floating World: Knut Hamsun, Mysteries,

HIAASEN, Carl (born 1953)

US journalist and novelist

Carl Higgsen knows the world of which he writes with such black relish in his comedy thrillers. Born and raised in Florida, the setting for his books, he has worked as a journalist investigating the kinds of corruption and chicanery that provide the fuel on which his plots run. Hiaasen's novels have the suspense and mystery of the best crime fiction but it is safe to assume that what readers remember of them are the manic, comic energy, the grotesque villains (and, often, even more grotesque heroes) and the writer's ability to focus on one seemingly trivial incident, spinning out its consequences to logical but bizarre lengths. Only in a Hiaasen novel is a hit-man a seven-foot-tall Amish man. Only in a Hiaasen novel does a deranged bad guy spend the second half of the book with a dead dog's rotting head firmly embedded by the teeth in his forearm. And only a Hiaasen plot can begin with the theft of blue-tongued mango voles from the Kingdom of Thrills in Key Largo and escalate into an insane confrontation between environmentalists and a mobster-developer that results in the total destruction of the Kingdom. As P.J. O'Rourke once pointed out (correctly): 'Reading Hiaasen will do more to damage the Florida tourist trade than anything except an actual visit to Florida.'

TOURIST SEASON (1986)

A band of anti-tourist terrorists is on the loose in Florida, led by a rogue newspaperman appalled by the destruction of the state's natural beauty and resources. The head of Miami's Chamber of Commerce has been found dead with a toy rubber alligator lodged in his throat. More murders follow. Another reporter turned private eye is given the job of tracking down the terrorists, a job that soon turns into one of Hiaasen's characteristic excursions along the wilder highways and byways of the Sunshine State. And beneath the mayhem, violence and dark farce, the author's serious environmental concerns are apparent.

Hiaasen's other novels are Double Whammy, Skin Tight, Native Tongue, Strip Tease, Stormy Weather, Lucky You, Sick Puppy and Basket Case. He has also written three novels with William Montalbano (Powder Burns, Trap Line and A Death in China), less anarchic than his solo fiction.

READ ON

- · Sick Puppy.
- ► Lawrence Shames, Sunburn; Dave Barry, Big Trouble; Charles Willeford, The Shark-Infested Custard; Doug J. Swanson, Dreamboat; Charles Higson, King of the Ants (for an English version of Hiaasen's mix of grotesquerie, violence and comedy).

HIGGINS, George V. (1939–2000)

US writer

Working as a lawyer (including several years as assistant D.A. for Massachusetts) gave Higgins an insight not just into crime, but into the mind of criminals and those politicians and businessmen who do exactly as they please without ever actually turning crooked. His books use the crime-novel formula and are exciting reading, with superbly convincing dialogue and deadpan wit. But they also dissect and discuss the state of the US in the late twentieth century, with its problems of drugs, poverty, racism and moral bankruptcy. These are crime stories not just to pass the time but to make you think.

Higgins's novels include the though The Friends of Eddie Coyle, The Digger's Game and Defending Billy Ryan, and the self-standing books Cogan's Trade, The Outlaws, Impostors, Trust, Wonderful Years, Wonderful Years, A Change of Gravity and the last book completed before his death, At End of Day. The Sins of the Fathers is a collection of short stories.

READ ON

▶ John Gregory Dunne, *True Confessions*; ▷ Elmore Leonard, *City Primeval*; Richard Price, *Clockers*; K.C. Constantine, *The Man Who Liked Slow Tomatoes*.

HIGGINS, Jack (born 1929)

British novelist

Jack Higgins is one of the pseudonyms of Henry Patterson, who also writes thrillers as Martin Fallon, James Graham, Hugh Marlow and Harry Patterson. The Higgins books are pacy, violent and full of character. They include *The Last Place God Made, The Eagle Has Landed* (about a plot to assassinate Churchill during the Second World War), *The Dark Side of the Street, A Season in Hell* (ex-SAS officer takes revenge on drug barons who have killed two apparently harmless addicts), *The Violent Enemy, Day of Reckoning, Edge of Danger* and *Bad Company* (most recently published of a number of books featuring British intelligence agent and assassin Sean Dillon).

READ ON

- The Eagle Has Flown (sequel to The Eagle Has Landed); Thunder Point.
- ► Len Deighton, *Berlin Game*; Alexander Fullerton, *Regenesis*; Colin Forbes, *Terminal*; Gerald Seymour, *Kingfisher*; Andy McNab, *Crisis Four*.

READ ON A THEME: HIGH ADVENTURE (Boys' Own stories, past and present)

- > John Buchan, Huntingtower
- > Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers
- > Ken Follett, The Man From St Petersburg
- > H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon's Mines
- Anthony Hope, The Prisoner of Zenda Stephen Hunter, A Time to Hunt Rafael Sabatini, Captain Blood
- Wilbur Smith, Birds of Prey
 B. Traven, The Treasure of the Sierra Madre

See also: Historical Adventure; Spies and Double Agents; Terrorists/Freedom Fighters

READ ON A THEME: HIGHER (?) EDUCATION

- > Malcolm Bradbury, *The History Man*
- ▶ J.P. Donleavy, The Ginger Man Richard Gordon, Doctor in the House Howard Jacobson, Coming from Behind Randall Jarrell, Pictures From an Institution
- > Alison Lurie, The War Between the Tates
- > Tom Sharpe, Wilt

See also: Dreaming Spires; Groves of Academe

HIGHSMITH, Patricia (1921-95)

US novelist and short story writer

Except for *The People Who Knock on the Door* (1982, about the disintegration of an 'ordinary' US family whose father becomes a born-again Christian), Highsmith's books are chiefly psychological thrillers. They show the planning and commission of horribly convincing, 'everyday' crimes, and the way murder erodes the murderer's moral identity. Few writers screw tension so tight in such functional, unemotional prose. Highsmith's most chilling insight is how close the criminally insane can be to people just like ourselves.

RIPLEY'S GAME (1974)

Ripley, who appears in several Highsmith books, is a charming American psychopath who lives in France. In this book, out of boredom, he sets up circumstances to snare an entirely innocent man into committing murder. But the murder victim is a Mafia boss, and soon assassins begin to hunt down both Ripley and his dupe. The plot is exciting, but Highsmith's main concern is the comparison between Ripley's icy amorality and the conscience-racked flailings of the man he corrupts.

Other Ripley books are The Talented Mr Ripley, Ripley Under Ground, The Boy Who Followed Ripley and Ripley Under Water. Highsmith's other novels include Strangers on a Train, The Two Faces of January, The Storyteller/A Suspension of Mercy, The Tremor of Forgery, Edith's Diary, Found in the Street, Small G: a Summer Idyll and The Price of Salt/Carol. The Snailwatcher/Eleven, The Animallover's Book of Beastly Murder, The Black House, Mermaids on the Golf Course and Tales of Natural and Unnatural Catastrophes contain short stories.

READ ON

- The central character of The Glass Cell (a typical non-Ripley book) is a man released from prison after six years during which his character has been brutalized and his moral integrity destroyed. Tormented by the possibility of his wife's unfaithfulness, he sets out to discover the truth.
- ▶ Julian Symons, The Man Who Killed Himself; Barbara Vine (see ▷ Ruth Rendell), A Fatal Inversion; ▷ P.D. James, The Skull Beneath the Skin; ▷ Minette Walters, The Echo.

HILL, Reginald (born 1936)

British novelist

In his first novel, A Clubbable Woman (1970), Hill introduced the two characters who have been central to his books ever since – the aggressive, slobbish but shrewd Superintendent Dalziel and the eager, sensitive Inspector Pascoe. Each successive book has expanded our knowledge of the pair and shown Hill's increasingly confident use of humour, deft characterization and ingenious plotting to tell traditional crime stories in a contemporary setting. To many readers Reginald Hill is now the best crime writer in Britain.

ON BEULAH HEIGHT (1998)

During a hot summer a village re-emerges from the reservoir which had covered it fifteen years earlier. At the time the villagers were evacuated three girls were

missing and so too was the man suspected of abducting them. Now he seems to have returned, another girl is missing and Dalziel is obliged to face once again the most demanding and puzzling of cases from his past. Hill produces a crime story of satisfying complexity and depth which also manages, unpretentiously, to say something about the power of the past to haunt the present.

Hill's other books include An Advancement of Learning, A Fairly Dangerous Thing, A Very Good Hater, Bones and Silence, the cheekily named Another Death in Venice, the superbly comic Pictures of Perfection, Arms and the Women, Dialogues of the Dead and Death's Jest-Book. Hill has also written several novels about a Luton-based private investigator, Joe Sixsmith, and has published fiction under the pseudonyms Dick Morland, Patrick Ruell and Charles Underhill.

READ ON

► Val McDermid, A Place of Execution; > Colin Dexter, Death Is Now My Neighbour; > Ian Rankin, The Falls; Peter Robinson, In a Dry Season.

HILL, Susan (born 1942)

British writer

Apart from *Mrs de Winter* (a 1993 sequel to Du Maurier's *Rebecca*) and two 'classic' ghost stories, *The Woman in Black* and *The Mist in the Mirror*, all Hill's novels are about emotional relationships. Often, the relationship is predatory: one partner (spouse, friend, lover or acquaintance) can only survive by engulfing the other, and the process is agonizing and deliberate. The exceptions are *In the Springtime of the Year* (1974), in which a young woman devastated by the death of her husband is rescued from despair by the tranquil daily round of country life, and *Air and Angels* (1992), a moving story of the love in Edwardian times of a lonely, middle-aged bachelor for a fifteen-year-old girl.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE (1970)

Mr Hooper, a lonely widower, invites Mrs Kingshaw to be housekeeper of his large old mansion. He hopes that his ten-year-old son and her son will become friends. But the boy Hooper resents young Kingshaw's invasion of his psychological territory, and torments him. The psychopathic child, possessed by the devil, was a familiar figure in 1970s fiction (and in films made from it, such as the *Omen series*); Hill turns the same subject into art.

Hill's other novels include Strange Meeting, The Bird of Night and The Service of the Clouds. The Albatross is a novella and A Bit of Singing and Dancing contains short stories. The Magic Apple Tree and Family are autobiographical. She has also written radio plays and many children's books.

READ ON

- The Bird of Night (about a manic-depressive artist and the friend who tries to help him).
- ▶ to *I'm the King of the Castle*: ▷ Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*; ▷ John Wyndham, *Chocky*; ▷ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*.
- ▶ to In the Springtime of the Year: > Penelope Lively, Perfect Happiness.
- ▶ to Air and Angels: > Penelope Fitzgerald, The Gate of Angels.

STARTPOINTS

HISTORICAL NOVELS

For a writer, setting novels in the past is seductive. If you write about the present, readers know as much as you do - and judge you by what they know. But if you write about the past, you are often their main source of information. All you have to do is convince. Some writers stun their readers with research, showing every detail of clothes, food, manners and turns of phrase, and keeping strictly to such facts as are known. This kind of 'documentary' historical novel used to be more popular than any other, and there can be few great names or historical events which have not been used: the range is from Caesar's assassination (in ▷ Thornton Wilder's The Ides of March) to the domestic life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (in > Margaret Forster's Lady's Maid), from Columbus's career (in Stephen Marlowe's The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus) to Scott's last polar expedition (in ▷ Beryl Bainbridge's The Birthday Boys). The second kind of novel puts the 'great' aside, and concentrates on ordinary people's lives. These books are, so to speak, 'true' novels which are given extra depth and colour by their setting in the past, by the way they show recognizable relationships, family life, hopes and fears in a context of historical events. This kind of historical novel, nowadays more popular than the other, ranges from 'literary' books (such as > Barry Unsworth's Sacred Hunger, set on an eighteenth-century slave ship) to crime novels (Ellis Peters's Brother Cadfael series, set in twelfth-century Shrewsbury and Lindsey Davies's Falco novels, set in the Roman Empire of Vespasian, for example) and romances and family sagas such as Sheelagh Kelly's series set in the slums of Victorian York.

Carr, Caleb, *The Alienist* (1994). Pioneer psychiatrist (or alienist) teams up with unlikely group of social misfits to track down a serial killer in 1900 New York. Superbly researched and evocative book which combines for the reader the pleasures of historical and crime fiction.

Edric, Robert, *The Book of the Heathen* (2000). Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* revisited in a story set in a remote English trading station in the Belgian Congo where a white man is to be tried for the inexplicable killing of a black child.

Description Seventeenth Century, Wife to Mr Milton (1943). In Puritan London in the midseventeenth century, Mary Powell tells the story of her marriage to the poet and political secretary John Milton. Good on period detail, especially domestic; outstanding on the problems of being married to a morose, irascible genius who regards you not as a fellow human being but as a chattel.

McCullough, Colleen, *The First Man in Rome* (1990). In Republican Rome Marius and Sulla vie for political power in the first of a sequence of novels which bring the ancient world to life with a vividness rarely seen since the work of ⊳Mary Renault.

Miller, Andrew, Ingenious Pain (1997). In the eighteenth century James Dyer, a freak of nature who is impervious to pain, embarks on a journey through Europe that will finally introduce him to suffering and humanity.

- ▶ Moore, Brian, *Black Robe* (1985). In the mid-seventeenth century, a Jesuit missionary is captured by North American Indians.
- ▶ **Renault, Mary,** *The Mask of Apollo* (1966). Niko, a Greek actor of the fourth century BC, is used as a go-between by politicians trying to organize a political coup in Sicily. Complicated private life; fascinating theatre detail (Niko is a true luvvie); aromatic sense of sunny, blood-soaked ancient Greece.
- ➤ Rogers, Jane, Mr Wroe's Virgins (1992). Hell-fire preacher and prophet in 1820s Nottingham demands seven virgins to 'serve' him.
- **Edward Rutherfurd, London (1997).** Episodic but compelling, this book unfolds the history of England's capital through the lives of ordinary people down the centuries.
- ▶ **Seth, Vikram,** *A Suitable Boy* (1993). Panoramic story of four families in 1950s India, just after independence from Britain. High hopes; bitter politics; fascinating clash of cultures; tragic, comic family life.
- **Seton, Anya, Katherine** (1964). Sweepingly romantic story, set in fourteenth-century England, of the love affair between the powerful aristocrat John of Gaunt and his Flemish mistress, Katherine de Roet.
- **Shaara, Michael,** *The Killer Angels* (1974). Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the Battle of Gettysburg. Brings the reality of American Civil War battlefields home like no fiction since Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*.
- ▶ White, Patrick, A Fringe of Leaves (1976). In the 1840s, an Englishwoman returning home is shipwrecked on the Queensland coast and is rescued by Aborigines and the resulting culture clash makes her re-examine her entire life and values.
- ▶ Winterson, Jeanette, *The Passion* (1987). Surreal fantasy spinning off from the story of the peasant boy who became Napoleon's cook.
- **Richard Zimler,** *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* (1998). A renowned scholar is murdered during an anti-Jewish pogrom in early sixteenth-century Lisbon and his nephew devotes himself to finding the killer.

Also recommended: Ivo Andric, The Bridge Over the Drina; Thomas Berger, Little Big Man; ▷ Melvyn Bragg, Credo; ▷ Anthony Burgess, The Kingdom of the Wicked; Margaret Elphinstone, Voyageurs; Douglas Galbraith, The Rising Sun; ▷ Matthew Kneale, Sweet Thames; Ross Leckie, Hannibal; ▷ Hilary Mantel, The Giant O'Brien; Lawrence Norfolk, Lemprière's Dictionary; lain Pears, An Instance of the Fingerpost; William Watson, The Last of the Templars.

See also: Carey, Dunnett, Eco, Farrell, Fowles, Fraser, Keneally, Other Peoples, Other Times, Tolstoy, Tremain, Unsworth.

READ ON A THEME: HISTORICAL ADVENTURE

Peter Carter, The Black Lamp

- > Bernard Cornwell, Sharpe's Regiment
- > Alexandre Dumas, The Count of Monte Cristo
- C.S. Forester, Mr Midshipman Hornblower
- ◯ George MacDonald Fraser, Flashman
 Homer, Odyssey
 Bjorn Larsson, Long John Silver
 Alan Mallinson, The Nizam's Daughters
 Derek Robinson, Goshawk Squadron
- > R.L. Stevenson, Kidnapped

See also: High Adventure; Spies and Double Agents

HOBAN, Russell (born 1925)

US/British novelist

Hoban first made his name with children's books and with *Turtle Diary* (1976), a novel about two lonely people drawn together by their ambition to return the turtles from London Zoo to the sea. In the quarter of a century since *Turtle Diary*, Hoban has published a number of idiosyncratic and highly imaginative novels. Each one is different from his other works and all of them are largely unlike anything else being published in English. *Pilgermann* is told by a narrator who is, literally, a ghost writer, a phantasm of waves and particles, which remembers its time on earth – the eleventh century – but can also range in time through the centuries to the present day. In *Angelica's Grotto* an ageing art historian, trying to deal with the mutinies of his mind and body, finds himself drawn into new sexual territory by a pornographic website.

RIDDLEY WALKER (1980)

This is a future-fantasy, set in England generations after the nuclear holocaust. The society is primitive – making fire is still a problem, never mind organizing the rule of law – and the survivors are haunted by memories of the time before the bomb. Rags of old culture, technology and morality flap in their minds, as inexplicable and as powerful as myth. Their language, similarly – the one the book is written in – is shredded, reconstituted English: words coalesce, grammar has collapsed, new metaphors sprout like weeds. Although this style is difficult at first, it becomes perfectly comprehensible after a few pages, and before long the broken, patched-together words begin to seem like poetry, as Riddley, the storyteller, struggles to find ways to describe the pictures inside his mind.

READ ON

- The Lion of Boaz-Jachin and Jachin-Boaz, The Bat Tattoo.
- ▶ to Riddley Walker: Walter M. Miller Jr, A Canticle for Leibowitz; > Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange.
- ▶ to the imaginative realms of Hoban's fiction in general: ▷ William Golding, Pincher Martin; ▷ Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities.

HØEG. Peter (born 1957)

Danish novelist

The author biography on the English editions of Peter Høeg's books proclaims a more adventurous life than most desk-bound writers can claim. He has been, at different times, a dancer, an actor, a fencer, a sailor and a mountaineer. His fiction has shown a similar variety, an unwillingness to be pinned down by the restrictions of genre and the conventional pigeon-holes into which novelists are so regularly placed. Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow (see below) is a thriller of great intelligence and depth. Borderliners is the story of three emotionally troubled children, trapped inside the Danish care system, who attempt to escape an experimental school and its oppressive, time-regulated régime. Mixing realism and allegory, it manages to be both a moving and compelling story and an exploration of the cramping ways in which Time holds us all. The Woman and The Ape also takes the reader into the realms of fable and allegory but the story could hardly be more different, telling as it does of the unlikely but liberating love affair between the dipsomaniac wife of a zoologist and an ape called Erasmus, significantly more intelligent than the human characters.

MISS SMILLA'S FEELING FOR SNOW (1993)

A small boy has apparently fallen to his death from an apartment block in snowbound Copenhagen. The police are satisfied it is an accident but the boy's neighbour is Smilla Jesperson, half-Danish, half-Inuit, who has an uncanny ability to read the stories that tracks in the snow can tell. And the story the boy's tracks tell suggests murder. In pursuit of the truth about the death, Smilla is led into realms of corruption, double-dealing and death, and she is forced to board a ship heading into dark waters off the coast of her native Greenland. Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow is an exceptional book. It is a thriller of great pace and invention with all the precise interest in technical detail, the way things work, the mechanics of machinery that can be found in, say, > Frederick Forsyth. It has a central character of remarkable originality in Smilla. Self-sufficient and resourceful, a high-flying academic from an unusual family background who has become a sharp-tongued acerbic misfit in Copenhagen, she is an unforgettable heroine.

Peter Høeg has also written The History of Danish Dreams and a collection of stories. Tales of the Night, which all take place, in different parts of the world, on the same night in 1929.

READ ON

- The Woman and the Ape.
- ► Kirstin Ekman, *Blackwater*; ▷ David Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars*; Yann Martel. Life of Pi.

HOLLINGHURST, Alan (born 1954)

British writer

Hollinghurst, who worked for many years on the Times Literary Supplement, gained immediate acclaim as a novelist with the publication in 1988 of The Swimming-Pool Library. Centred on the relationship between a rich, cultured and

promiscuous aristo and an ageing gay roué, it was an unembarrassedly open and very funny exploration of gay life, sex and love in pre-AIDS Britain. Hollinghurst's most recent novel, *The Spell*, tells the story, half-farcical, half-sad, of the entangled sex lives of four very different men.

THE FOLDING STAR (1994)

Edward, ill-at-ease with himself, his life and his age (a prematurely middle-aged thirty-three), goes to teach English in an unnamed Belgian city, and falls in love with one of his pupils. Unable to declare his feelings or have them returned, he drifts in a kind of psychic no-man's-land, a fog of unsatisfactory relationships, one-night stands and desperate attempts to find and make some step that will end his confusion and define his life. At the same time, he is drawn into the world of a painter from the first half of the twentieth century, whose obsessive love for a young model seems to have mirrored Edward's feelings for his pupil and whose paintings echo the psychic swirl inside Edward's own head. A death occurs, and Edward goes briefly home to England – and to memories of an earlier, unsatisfying, love affair – before the novel moves to its bleak conclusion. *The Folding Star* makes bilious comedy out of the narrator's obsessions and his attempts to immerse himself in the Flemish gay scene. But long after you finish the book, Edward's predicament stays in the mind – and it is not homosexuality, not sexuality, but the emptiness created and endlessly renewed by the need for love.

READ ON

- The Swimming-Pool Library.
- ► Edmund White, *A Boy's Own Story;* Neil Bartlett, *Mr Clive and Mr Page;* David Leavitt, *While England Sleeps*; ▷ Philip Hensher, *Kitchen Venom.*

HOPE, Anthony (1863–1933)

British novelist

In *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) Hope invented the 'Ruritanian' adventure story, a colourful escapist yarn set in some fantasy foreign kingdom. Rudolf Rassendyl, an upper-class Englishman on holiday in the middle European country of Ruritania, is astonished to find that he is an exact double of the king, and even more surprised when the king is kidnapped just before his coronation, and Rassendyl is asked to impersonate him. As the story proceeds, the kidnappers (the king's ambitious brother and his henchman Rupert of Hentzau, the finest swordsman in Ruritania) try to foil the coronation plans, and Rassendyl (who has meanwhile fallen in love with Flavia, the future queen) breaks into Zenda Castle to rescue the imprisoned king. The novel has been filmed a dozen times, and has inspired one of the cinema's favourite clichés: two men, one debonair, one saturnine, duelling up and down the steps of an ancient castle, slicing candles in half, parrying thrusts with three-legged stools and matching each rapier-thrust with a dazzling shaft of wit.

READ ON

- Rupert of Hentzau (the sequel).
- ▶ John Spurling, *After Zenda* (sequel); Rafael Sabatini, *Captain Blood*; ▷ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The White Company*; ▷ George MacDonald Fraser, *Royal Flash* (arch-cad Flashman finds himself in uncannily similar situation to Rudolf Rassendyll); P.C. Wren, *Beau Geste*.

HORNBY, Nick (born 1957)

British writer

No one in the last twenty years has been as successful as Nick Hornby at portraying the emotional confusions and immaturities of a certain kind of white middle-class male. His more severe critics may complain that Hornby restricts himself to a narrow field that he has, by now, fairly thoroughly ploughed, but his wit and insight into masculine failings and self-doubt are undeniable. Hornby's first book, Fever Pitch (1992), an autobiographical account of his obsession with football in general and Arsenal FC in particular, was a bestseller. It allowed a whole generation of white-collar football fans to emerge from the closet in which they had been hiding and proclaim from the rooftops their love of the beautiful game. His first two novels cover similar territory and do so in the same relaxed. easy and (often) very funny prose that marked Fever Pitch. High Fidelity (1995) has as its central character a thirtysomething record-store owner whose emotional life is a mess. Shying away from commitment, he hides his feelings behind relentless list-making ('my desert-island, all-time, top five most memorable splitups in chronological order') and a superbly organized record collection. The book is an engaging chronicle of his slow, unwilling progression to something halfway resembling adult emotions. About a Boy (1998) records the life of Will Lightman. clinging to cool in North London and living off royalties from a jingle his father wrote decades earlier. Pretending to single fatherhood as a means of ingratiating himself with desirable single mothers, Will meets Fiona and, more importantly, her son Marcus. The terminally unhip Marcus latches on to Will who finds himself, at first very unwillingly, cast in the role of the father figure that he has been play-acting. Two boys together (one twelve, the other thirty-six), Marcus and Will begin to learn about emotional competence.

READ ON

- How to Be Good (in his third novel Hornby takes the ambitious step of choosing to narrate the story in a woman's voice).
- ▶ Tony Parsons, Man and Boy; Tim Lott, White City Blue; Helen Fielding, Bridget Jones's Diary (for a similarly comic woman's viewpoint on thirtysomething relationship angst); Mike Gayle, My Legendary Girlfriend; William Sutcliffe, The Love Hexagon (twentysomethings having much the same relationship problems as Hornby's thirtysomethings).

HOWATCH. Susan (born 1940)

British novelist

Susan Howatch's earlier novels, all huge bestsellers, were family sagas filled with dramas and romances and stretching across generations. Penmarric (1971) followed the fortunes of a Cornish family from the nineteenth century through to the Second World War. Since the late 1980s her novels have been largely stories of spiritual upheaval and emotional crisis amongst Church of England clergy, often set in the fictional West Country town of Starbridge. This might seem unpromising material for enjoyable fiction but Howatch's gift for memorable characterization and her genuine interest in the religious temperament, demonstrated when she endowed a chair in theology at Cambridge University, combine to produce books as gripping as her earlier work. Glittering Images (1987), in which scandal and corruption bubble beneath respectable surfaces, is a good example of her

ecclesiastical fiction. Her most recent books have focused on a healing centre in a City of London church, the last two (*The High Flyer* and *The Heartbreaker*) looking at the tangled emotional and spiritual life of a powerful, female lawyer in the City, seeking integrity amid the pursuit of Mammon around her.

READ ON

- Glamorous Powers, Ultimate Risks (further volumes in the Church of England series).
- ▶ to the Penmarric novels: Winston Graham's Poldark novels.
- ▶ to the ecclesiastical fiction: ▷ Anthony Trollope, The Warden (the Church of England in a previous century); ▷ Joanna Trollope, The Rector's Wife.

HUGO, Victor (1802–85)

French novelist, poet and playwright

Although Hugo was principally a poet and dramatist, he is also remembered for his panoramic historical novels. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Notre Dame de Paris)* (1831), set in medieval times, is about the beautiful foundling Esmeralda, the men who try to seduce her, and the deformed Quasimodo, bell-ringer at Notre Dame cathedral, who loves her. The book's detail of Parisian low-life is matched in *Les Misérables* (1862) about a noble-hearted convict and the corrupt policeman who persecutes him. Hugo's novels are long and prone to philosophizing, but they make up for it by the energy of their plots, the melodramatic attraction of their characters – not for nothing is the Hunchback of Notre Dame a Hollywood favourite – and the extraordinary feeling they give that every event, every story, is just one glimpse of the teeming anthill of human life.

READ ON

- ▶ to The Hunchback of Notre Dame: Alessandro Manzoni, The Betrothed (I promessi sposi).
- ▶ to Les Misérables: Heinrich Mann, The Blue Angel/Small Town Tyrant.
- ▶ to *The Toilers of the Sea*: > Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*.
- ▶ to *Ninety-three*: ▷ Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *August*, 1914.
- ▶ to the more swaggering elements of Hugo's style: Lew Wallace, Ben-Hur; > Alexandre Dumas, The Man in the Iron Mask; Mika Waltari, Sinuhe the Egyptian.

READ ON A THEME: THE HUMAN COMEDY

- > Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice
- David Lodge, The British Museum is Falling Down

- ▶ Barbara Trapido, Brother of the More Famous Jack

See also: Dreaming Spires; Friends (?) and Neighbours; Groves of Academe; Higher (?) Education

HUXLEY, Aldous (1894-1963)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Huxley's early books were glittering satires on 1920s intellectual and upper-class life, accounts of preposterous conversations at country-house costume parties and in such unlikely meeting places as publishers' offices or the Egyptian Room at the British Museum. His characters are intelligent, creative, fascinating and empty; haunted by the pointlessness of existence, they pass their time flirting, gossiping, swapping philosophical ideas and planning trivial alarms and excursions. In the 1930s, beginning with *Brave New World*, he changed his approach. Instead of focusing his satire on a single section of British society, he turned on the human race at large and wrote a series of increasingly bitter books demolishing all our ambitions to make a better society by science, philosophy, religion, socialism or (in the late 1950s, at the germination stage of flower power) hallucinatory drugs. His books are a witty, cold dazzle of ideas; enjoyable as you read them, they leave an acid aftertaste.

BRAVE NEW WORLD (1932)

In a soulless future world, genetic engineering programmes people from birth for their status in society, and removes all aggressive or unproductive instincts. Individuality, creativity and personality are sacrificed in the causes of material prosperity, good health and freedom from anxiety. Only a small group of 'savages' – people like us – survives, in a community in New Mexico, and one of them escapes and is brought into the 'real world', with tragic results. As in all his novels, Huxley tells this tale soberly and without comment: the flatness of his prose brilliantly intensifies the horror of what he is saying. Nothing truly terrible happens – and that is the most terrifying thing of all.

In chronological order, Huxley's novels are Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves, Point Counter Point, Brave New World, Eyeless in Gaza, After Many a Summer, Time Must Have a Stop, Ape and Essence, The Genius and the Goddess and Island. Limbo, Mortal Coils, The Little Mexican, Two or Three Graces and Brief Candles are collections of short stories.

READ ON

- Ape and Essence (about a California-dwelling group of survivors from the nuclear holocaust, primitives visited by a horror-struck scientist from New Zealand).
- ▶ to Huxley's social satires: ▷ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Beautiful and Damned* (from the 1920s); ▷ Anthony Powell, *Venusberg* (from the 1930s); ▷ Martin Amis, *Money* (from the 1980s).
- ▶ to Ape and Essence: > Paul Theroux, O-Zone.
- ▶ to Huxley's later books: Frederick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, The Space Merchants;
 ▷ L.P. Hartley, Facial Justice;
 ▷ Michael Frayn, Sweet Dreams.

READ ON A THEME: INDIA

Amit Chaudhuri, A New World Anita Desai, The Village By the Sea

- > J.G. Farrell, The Siege of Krishnapur
- E.M. Forster, A Passage to India
 Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Heat and Dust

- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*Paul Scott, *The Raj Quartet*
- > Vikram Seth, A Suitable Boy

READ ON A THEME: IRELAND

Sebastian Barry, Annie Dunne

- ▶ Flann O'Brien, At Swim-Two-Birds James Plunkett, Strumpet City E. Somerville and Martin Ross, 'The Irish RM
- Colm Tóibín, The Blackwater Lightship

IRVING, John (born 1942)

US novelist

Irving's novels are surreal black comedies, except that nothing that happens in them is unbelievable. His tales may lose nothing in the telling, but they are always plausible. The hero of *The World According to Garp* (1978) is a writer whose

terror of death leads him to imagine appalling catastrophes for his loved ones – only to have even more, unimagined horrors actually occur. The family in *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1986) turns a derelict girls' school into a hotel (complete with dancing bear), and later, when business falls off, moves to Austria where the hotels are smaller, the bears are cleverer, and terrorists are threatening to take over the Vienna Opera. In the more recent *The Fourth Hand* (2001) a philandering journalist has his hand eaten by a lion live on TV and falls in love with the widow of the man whose hand is used by surgeons to replace his own. Irving, in his deadpan way, constantly implies – and who can deny it? – that there is nothing eccentric here, that he is recording the bizarreness of life itself.

THE CIDER HOUSE RULES (1985)

Homer Wells, brought up in a rural Maine orphanage and abortion clinic run by the saintly ether-addict Dr Larch, struggles against his destiny, which is to become a gynaecologist and take his mentor's place. He runs away, becomes the manager of a cider farm, falls in love with his best friend's wife and lives a life of confused obscurity – but he constantly feels the pull back to the clinic and to Melony, a homicidal feminist who hero-worships him and is waiting her chance to murder him.

Irving's other novels include The Water-Method Man, The 158-Pound Marriage and A Widow for One Year. The Imaginary Girlfriend is a very idiosyncratic memoir, centred on Irving's joint passions for writing and for wrestling.

READ ON

- A Prayer for Owen Meany (about the friendship of two boys, one of whom Owen
 Meany is a charming freak gifted with second sight and the ability to transform
 other people's lives). A Son of the Circus, dedicated 'to Salman', marries Irving's
 usual preoccupations to a Rushdiesque Indian setting, with results that bewilder
 some readers and make others claim it as his finest book so far.
- ▶ to *The Cider House Rules*: ▷ Robertson Davies, *What's Bred in the Bone*.
- ▶ to Irving's work in general: ▷ Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*; ▷ Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*; ▷ Don DeLillo, *White Noise*.

ISHERWOOD, Christopher (1904–86)

British/US writer of novels, screenplays and non-fiction

Isherwood was one of the Thirties generation of writers of which the most conspicuous member was W.H. Auden. In 1939, in company with Auden, he moved to the US and eventually settled in California where he worked as a teacher and Hollywood screenwriter. In the 1940s he became a follower of the Hindu mystic Swami Prabhavananda and several of his non-fiction works are on the subject of the Vedanta. His novels and stories are all based on personal experience. The best known (*Mr Norris Changes Trains/The Last of Mr Norris*, 1935; *Goodbye to Berlin*, 1939; *The Berlin Stories*, 1946) are set in 1930s Berlin, a seedy, decadent city haunted by the German defeat in the First World War and by the gathering power of Nazism. They are first-person stories, told by a naïve young language teacher amused, perplexed and vaguely terrified by the human tragi-comedy he reports. They have been filmed, made into a stage play (*I Am a Camera*) and a hit musical (*Cabaret*).

READ ON

- All the Conspirators, The Memorial.
- ▶ to the Berlin novels: Klaus Mann, Mephisto; Alexander Döblin, Berlin Alexanderplatz.
- ▶ to Isherwood's work in general: Armistead Maupin, *Tales of the City*; Edward Upward, *Journey to the Border*; David Leavitt, *While England Sleeps.*

ISHIGURO, Kazuo (born 1954)

Japanese/British novelist

Ishiguro was educated in England and writes in English. His first two books are gentle, poetic studies of the effects on present-day Japanese of earlier twentiethcentury events. The central character of A Pale View of Hills (1982), a middleaged woman living in England, is driven by her daughter's suicide to a prolonged reverie about her own childhood in Nagasaki, and her attempt to rebuild her life and her emotional relationships after the city's atomic destruction in 1945. Oni. the elderly protagonist of An Artist of the Floating World (1986), was a prominent propagandist for Japanese militarism in the 1930s; now, in his sixties, he has to come to terms with the collapse of his professional life, his ostracism by younger colleagues, and the way his own children's moral values, typical of the new Japan, seem to deny everything he ever believed in or affirmed. More recently Ishiguro's fiction has become more expansive, although it has remained no less ambiguous and enigmatic. The Unconsoled (1995) is a long, Kafkaesque account of the psychological disintegration of a famous concert pianist, When We Were Orphans (2000) tells the story of a famous detective from the 1930s who returns to Shanghai, where he grew up, in order to try and solve the mysteries surrounding his own parents. Playing cleverly with the conventions of mystery fiction, Ishiguro creates a book that is both a richly rewarding narrative and a subtle study of the way we all re-make our pasts.

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY (1989)

Ishiguro's Booker Prize-winning novel is a powerful study of emotional desiccation. Told in the first person by the humourless and pernickety English butler Stevens, it cleverly reveals the self-deceptions and moral cowardice of its narrator. Looking back on a life which has been busily self-important (his master was at the centre of dubious pro-appeasement negotiations in the late 1930s) Stevens cannot acknowledge that he has denied himself true human contact and the opportunity for emotional growth. His inability to deal with his attraction to the housekeeper Miss Kenton is only the most obvious example of personal failures which, somewhere beneath the cold formality of his prose, Stevens himself sadly, and movingly, half-recognizes.

READ ON

► R.K. Narayan, The English Teacher/Grateful to Life and Death.
Greene, The Quiet American;
Ian McEwan, Enduring Love;
John Lanchester,
Fragrant Harbour; Chang-Rae Lee, A Gesture Life.

READ ON A THEME: ISRAEL

Lynne Reid Banks, *Children at the Gate*Lionel Davidson, *A Long Way to Shiloh*Linda Grant, *When I Lived in Modern Times*David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*

- Philip Roth, Operation Shylock Leon Uris, Exodus
 A.B. Yehoshua, The Lover

J

JAMES, Henry (1843-1916)

US/British novelist and short story writer

As well as novels, James wrote plays, essays, travel books, literary criticism and a dozen volumes of short stories. In his fiction he returned again and again to the same theme: the conflict between decadence and innocence. James identified decadence with the 'old culture' of Europe, and innocence with the late nineteenth-century US; his books often depict visitors from one continent experiencing and coming to terms with the other. Because he was not religious – he was brought up as a rationalist – the moral struggle of his plots is usually less between overt good and evil than between different standards and manners. He also liked to tease out every strand of meaning in a situation, to explain and theorize about his characters' motives and the possible outcome of each choice they make. Untangling this, especially in his last three, most intricately stylized novels (*The Wings of the Dove, The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*), is one of the chief pleasures of his work.

THE WINGS OF THE DOVE (1902)

Kate Croy lives with her snobbish aunt, who plans to make a 'great' marriage for her. But Kate is secretly engaged to a penniless journalist, Merton Densher. Millie Theale, a young, rich American, visits Kate's aunt to be introduced to London society, and becomes Kate's friend. Millie is frail, and it is soon apparent that she is dying. She goes to Venice, where she welcomes all her friends in a decaying palazzo on the Grand Canal. Kate persuades Merton to try and comfort Millie's last months by pretending that he loves her. Kate hopes that Millie will then leave money to Merton which will enable them to marry. So everyone will be happy. But another of Millie's suitors, the unprincipled Lord Mark, tells Millie of Merton's and Kate's secret engagement — a revelation which brings tragedy to all three principal characters.

James's other novels include Daisy Miller, Portrait of a Lady, Washington Square, The Bostonians, The Spoils of Poynton and The Tragic Muse. Of his hundred short stories and novellas, the best known are The Turn of the Screw (about two children haunted by a sinister dead couple), The Real Thing and The Lesson of the Master.

READ ON

 Portrait of a Lady (about the moral and social consequences of a young American's decision to settle in England and Italy); The Ambassadors (a long, ironical novel about how Europe changes a group of Americans, young and middle-aged, rich and poor, friends and strangers). ▶ ▷ Marcel Proust, Swann's Way (Part One of Remembrance of Things Past): ▷ E.M. Forster, A Room with a View; > Edith Wharton, The Reef; > Muriel Spark. The Mandelbaum Gate; > Stendhal, Scarlet and Black; > Elizabeth Bowen, Eva Trout.

JAMES, P.D. (Phyllis Dorothy) (born 1920) British novelist

Although James is often described as the Queen of Crime, > Agatha Christie's heir, she is more like a cross between Sayers and Highsmith. The crimes in her books are brutal, are committed by deranged, psychopathic people, and are described in chilling, unblinking prose, as objective as a forensic report. Her principal detective, Adam Dalgliesh, is a poet and aesthete, combining brilliant detective instincts with a liberal conscience and a dandvish distaste for what he does. Although the books at first seem long and leisurely. James racks tension inexorably tighter until her dénouement: not a cosy Christieish explanation round the library fire, but a scene of pathological, cathartic violence.

A TASTE FOR DEATH (1986)

A lonely spinster, taking flowers to decorate her local church, finds the throat-cut corpses of a tramp, Harry Mack, and a prominent Tory MP, Sir Paul Berowne, Berowne has been the subject of recent slanderous accusations, and Dalgliesh's investigation must begin by deciding whether he was murdered or committed suicide after killing Mack. The story gradually sucks in various members of Berowne's large and mutually hostile family, his servants and his mistress. As well as showing us this, and describing the police work in exact, unhurried detail, the book also concerns itself with the lives and preoccupations of Dalgliesh's assistants, especially Inspector Kate Miskin, the newest member of the team.

James's other novels are Cover Her Face, A Mind to Murder, Death of an Expert Witness, Unnatural Causes, Shroud for a Nightingale, An Unsuitable Job For a Woman (which introduces James's female private investigator, Cordelia Gray), The Black Tower, Innocent Blood, The Skull Beneath the Skin, Original Sin, Devices and Desires. A Certain Justice, Death in Holy Orders and The Murder Room. Children of Men is set in England in 2021, when there are no children and there is therefore no future. Time To Be in Earnest is a memoir.

READ ON

▶ > Ngaio Marsh, Surfeit of Lampreys; > Margery Allingham, The Tiger in the Smoke: ⊳ Ruth Rendell, A Sleeping Life; ⊳ Colin Dexter, The Way Through the Woods.

READ ON A THEME: JAPAN

Alan Brown, Audrey Hepburn's Neck James Clavell, Shogun Shusako Endo, Silence Arthur Golden. Memoirs of a Geisha

> Kazuo Ishiguro, An Artist of the Floating World Yukio Mishima, Confessions of a Mask

JEROME, Jerome K. (Klapka) (1859–1927)

British novelist and journalist

Jerome, an actor, wrote humorous pieces while waiting to go on stage; after the success of *Three Men in a Boat* in 1889 he became a full-time writer. *Three Men in a Boat* is the story of a boating holiday on the Thames undertaken by three London clerks (to say nothing of the dog). The book's deadpan humour – what Jerome calls its 'hopeless and incurable veracity' – depends on magnifying life's small problems (such as opening a tin without a tin-opener, or being in the same house as a courting couple without embarrassing them) to epic proportions, and on losing no opportunity for reflections on life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the heroes' invincible conviction that middle-class Victorian young Britons, such as themselves, are the goal to which all human evolution has been progressing.

READ ON

- Three Men on the Bummel; My Life and Times (autobiography).
- ► George and Weedon Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody*; ▷ Max Beerbohm, *Zuleika Dobson*; W.E. Bowman, *The Ascent of Rum Doodle*; H.F. Ellis, *The Papers of A.J. Wentworth, BA*; ▷ P.G. Wodehouse, *The Luck of the Bodkins*.

JORDAN, Robert (born 1948)

US novelist

Few fantasy worlds have been constructed with the same craft and skill shown by Robert Jordan in his Wheel of Time novels. Fans can, and do, exchange thoughts on the Internet about the tiniest details of the alternative world he has created. The geography, peoples and mythology of RandLand, Jordan's setting for the books, have been carefully worked out. Yet the sequence never becomes bogged down in minutiae and has a sweeping, epic quality that matches, and sometimes surpasses, the best that other fantasy novelists supply. On the back of the kind of fundamental struggle between the forces of good and evil that a thousand fantasy writers have tackled, Jordan builds an intelligent and adult saga in which his central characters mature and develop from naïve children to wiser but worldweary protagonists. Fantasy fiction is often condemned, usually by those who have read little of it, as simple-minded and unsubtle. Jordan's monumental sequence of novels shows just how ambitious and rewarding the best work in the genre can be.

THE EYE OF THE WORLD (1990)

On a night of festival in his village, a woman claiming to be a magician wielding the One Power appears, a savage tribe of half-men, half-beasts attack the village

and the young Rand Al'Thor is propelled from his humdrum life into the quest that will shape his destiny in the first of the Wheel of Time novels. As Rand learns more of who he is and who he is to become, Jordan begins to unfold the rich world of his fantasy epic in which competing cultures struggle with one another and with the ancient, recurring forces of good and evil.

The other Wheel of Time novels are, in order, The Great Hunt, The Dragon Reborn, The Shadow Rising, The Fires of Heaven, Lord of Chaos, A Crown of Swords, The Path of Daggers, The Winter's Heart and Crossroads of Twilight.

READ ON

▶ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*; George R.R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (and other books in A Song of Fire and Ice sequence); Terry Goodkind, *Wizard's First Rule* (and other books in The Sword of Truth series); Terry Brooks, *Ilse Witch* (and other books in The Voyage of the Jerle Shannara series); Tad Williams, *Otherland*.

READ ON A THEME: JOURNALISM

Colin Bateman, Divorcing Jack

- > Jay McInerney, Model Behaviour
- > Evelyn Waugh, Scoop

JOYCE, James (1882-1941)

Irish novelist and short story writer

Although Joyce exiled himself from his native land as a young man, he never left the Ireland of his memory: his work is a ceaseless exploration of Irish scenery, education, history, religion, habits of thought and patterns of daily life. His early writings - the short stories in Dubliners (1914) and the novel A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1915), based on his own school and university life - are stylistically straightforward. They are also notable for precise evocation of sensation and atmosphere. By giving a mosaic of tiny impressions (the feel of wooden desks in a schoolroom, the taste of mud on a rugby field, the smell of gas lamps in student digs) Joyce builds up a detailed picture which is both factually and emotionally compelling. (>Proust used a similar idea in the childhood sections of Remembrance of Things Past.) In his two long novels, Ulysses (1922) and Finnegans Wake (1939). Joyce developed this mosaic structure further: Ulysses relates the events of a single day, Finnegans Wake a man's thoughts and dreams during a single night. Parts of these books are stream-of-consciousness monologues, a tumble of apparently unrelated sentences threading a path through the maze of one person's mind. Joyce often seems to be collapsing language itself: syntax splits apart; words blur into one another; each page is a

PATHWAYS

JAMES JOYCE

ULYSSES

(journey of self-discovery on a single Dublin day in 1904)

'JOYCEAN' NOVELS

(big, experimental, all-encompassing)

John Barth, Giles Goat-boy
Alexander Theroux, D'Arconville's Cat
Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children
Italo Svevo, The Confessions of Zeno
Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth
John Kennedy Toole, A Confederacy of
Dunces

Laurence **Sterne**, *Tristram Shandy*Anthony **Burgess**, *Earthly Powers*Robertson **Davies**. *What's Bred in the Bone*

CITIES

(where we live is what we are)

Saul Bellow, Humboldt's Gift (Chicago)
J.D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye (New York)

Lawrence **Durrell**, *The Alexandria Quartet* Eleanor **Dark**, *Waterway* (Sydney) James **Plunkett**, *Strumpet City* (Dublin)

IRELAND

Molly Keane, Good Behaviour
Roddy Doyle, The Snapper
William Trevor, Mrs Eckdorff in O'Neill's Hotel
J.P. Donleavy, The Ginger Man
Flann O'Brien, At Swim-Two-Birds

SELF-DISCOVERY

Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway
Marcel Proust, The Guermantes Way (Part
Three of Remembrance of Things Past)
Iris Murdoch, The Sandcastle
John Fowles, The Magus

kaleidoscope of puns, parodies, half-quotations, snatches of song and snippets from half a dozen languages. Some people find this style unreadable; for others it is endlessly rewarding, a mesmeric impression of the jumble of thought itself.

ULYSSES (1922)

The book follows two people, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, from dawn to midnight on a single day in Dublin in 1904. At one level what they do is ordinary: they shave, go to the privy, eat, drink, argue in bars, go to a funeral, borrow money, flirt with girls on a beach, visit Dublin's red-light area. But Joyce also shows us their thoughts, the fragmentary responses and impressions evoked by each real incident. The book ends with a 60–page 'interior monologue', the inconsequential, erotic reverie of Bloom's wife Molly as she lies beside him, drifting into sleep.

Joyce's works are Dubliners, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (based on an earlier, unfinished novel, Stephen Hero, which has also been published), Ulysses, Finnegans Wake, Chamber Music and Pomes Penyeach (poetry).

READ ON

➤ Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*; ▷ Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*; Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage* (a multi-volume work which provides a female stream of consciousness to match the very male version served up by Joyce); ▷ Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel.* Both Joyce's experimental writing and the whole concept of Irishness are spectacularly sent up in ▷ Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*.



KAFKA, Franz (1883–1924)

Czech novelist and short story writer

In the 1920s and 1930s people regarded Kafka as an unsmiling neurotic who depicted the human condition as a bureaucratic hell without explanation or compassion: 'Kafkaesque' was a synonym for 'nightmarish'. Kafka, by contrast, always regarded himself as a humorist, in the line of such surrealist East European jokers as >Gogol. Each of his novels and stories develops a single idea to ludicrous, logical-illogical extremes. In 'Metamorphosis' a man has to cope with the fact that he has turned into a gigantic beetle overnight. The prison-camp commander of 'In the Penal Colony' is so eager to show off a newly invented punishment machine that he turns it on himself. In 'The Burrow' a creature designs a defence system of underground tunnels so complex and so perfect that it becomes the whole meaning of existence: it engulfs its own creator. The central figure of The Trial (Der Prozess) is arrested one morning although he has done nothing wrong, spends the book trying to discover the charges against him, and is finally executed without explanation. It is easy to treat such tales as psychological or political allegories. But it is also possible to read them as jokes, grimly funny anecdotes invented just for the hell of it. Perhaps keeping his face straight was Kafka's best trick of all.

THE CASTLE (DER SCHLOSS) (1926)

An ordinary, unremarkable man, K, arrives in a strange town to take up the post of Land Surveyor. He finds that no one is expecting him, that the town and the castle which dominates it are a labyrinthine bureaucracy where everyone is responsible only for passing the buck to someone else, and each favour done, each door opened, leads only to more confusion. K's efforts to reach the heart of the mystery, to be given some official confirmation of his existence, are doomed, hilarious and have the logic not of reality but of a very bad dream indeed.

Kafka's novels are The Trial, The Castle and America. His short stories have been published in one-volume collected editions and in shorter collections such as Metamorphosis and Other Stories and The Great Wall of China and Other Short Works. Kafka's correspondence with the two women with whom he conducted complicated and soul-searching relationships gives fascinating insights into this most enigmatic of writers and has been published as Letters to Felice and Letters to Milena.

PATHWAYS

FRANZ KAFKA

THE TRIAL

(Josef K. is arrested and forced to fight – for his life – against charges which he is never told)

TRAPPED BY THE SYSTEM

(individuals caught like flies in the spiders' webs of circumstances they can't control)

Jaroslav Hašek, The Good Soldier Svejk Max Frisch, I'm Not Stiller Joseph Heller, Something Happened Alejo Carpentier, The Chase Saul Bellow, Mr Sammler's Planet

SOCIETY AS HELL

(humans invent a society, which then goes mad)

Alasdair **Gray**, *Lanark*Margaret **Atwood**, *The Handmaid's Tale*George **Turner**, *The Sea and Summer*Thomas **Pynchon**, *Gravity's Rainbow*Wyndham **Lewis**, *Childermass (Part One of The Human Age)*

INSIDE THE SKULL

(making nightmares for ourselves)

Jerzy Kosinski, The Devil Tree Italo Svevo, The Confessions of Zeno John Kennedy Toole, A Confederacy of Dunces

Milan **Kundera**, The Unbearable Lightness of Being

Paul Bailey, Peter Smart's Confessions

A MAD, MAD WORLD

(just because life is Kafkaesque, it doesn't have to be serious)

André Gide, The Vatican Cellars John Irving, The Hotel New Hampshire Richard Condon, The Final Addiction Tom Sharpe, Riotous Assembly

READ ON

- The Trial, America (the story of a naïve young German who goes to the US
 thinking that its streets are paved with gold, and goes on believing it despite
 being cheated and betrayed by everyone he meets).
- ▶ echoing Kafka's dark humour: > Joseph Heller, Catch-22; > Nathanael West, The Dream Life of Balso Snell; Joe Orton, Head to Toe.
- ▶ echoing the idea of a Kafkaesque, nightmare society: Rex Warner, The Aerodrome;
 ▷ Alasdair Gray, Lanark; ▷ George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four.

KAVANAGH, Dan: see BARNES, Julian

KENEALLY, Thomas (born 1935)

Australian novelist and playwright

Although Keneally has written books on many subjects, including the partly autobiographical Three Cheers for the Paraclete (1968), about a young Roman Catholic losing his faith, he is best-known for 'faction': powerful fictional treatments of the issues and personalities behind real events. His books are set at decisive moments in the history of peoples or continents, and Keneally gets under the skin of the participants, showing how great events happen for what are usually far smaller and more personal reasons (a quarrel; a cold in the head) than the awareness of grand political or strategic trends which historians would suggest. He is not, however, a 'historical' novelist, simply telling stories about the past. His concentration on issues gives his stories universal resonance: we are constantly shown the relevance of the events he describes to our present-day situation or attitudes. His books include The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (1971, about racial confrontation in nineteenth-century Australia), Confederates (1979, about Stonewall Jackson's campaigns in the American Civil War) and The Playmaker (1987). Of his recent work, Bettany's Book (2000), ranges confidently from rural New South Wales in the nineteenth century to the story of a modern woman working for a charity in war-ravaged Sudan, and The Office of Innocence (2002) is a story of murder and betrayal centred on a young priest in Sydney during the Second World War.

SCHINDLER'S ARK (1982)

Schindler is a bragging, boozing opportunist who makes a fortune in Poland during the Second World War German occupation, buying up the businesses of dispossessed Jews. We read about his black-market deals, his backslapping relationship with the authorities, his parties and his mistresses — and gradually discover that his lifestyle is a façade, that his true activity is saving thousands of Jews from the gas chambers. The novel is also known as *Schindler's List*, after the Steven Spielberg movie of the same name.

READ ON

 The Playmaker (in which convicts transported to eighteenth-century New South Wales, under the guidance of a confused, would-be liberal army lieutenant, rehearse and perform – of all things – Farquhar's Restoration comedy The Recruiting Officer).

- ► Sane Rogers, Promised Lands; Septem Carey, True History of the Kelly Gang;
 September Styron, Sophie's Choice.
- transcription of the state of t

KENNEDY, A.L. (born 1965)

British novelist and short story writer

Other, usually male, writers in the recent renaissance of Scottish fiction have achieved more attention and been more regularly in the media spotlight but none has as strong and individual a voice as A.L. Kennedy. She writes of outsiders and grotesques, people who find it difficult or even undesirable to connect with others, people who march to the beat of very different drums and she does so in an edgy, blackly comic language. In her early short stories, published in Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains and Now That You're Back, she had already found a distinctive voice. This has only become clearer, stronger and more confident in the novels that have followed. Everything You Need (1999) is a complex novel set largely on a small island which is a retreat for writers. The book centres on the developing relationship between Nathan Staples, a self-tormenting, self-obsessed middle-aged novelist and the young would-be writer Mary. Nathan knows Mary to be the daughter he has not seen since she was a small child. Mary does not know that the older mentor and teacher, for whom she has such ambivalent feelings, is her father. Through the relationship, Kennedy deals with difficult issues of love, pain and loss and the process of finding appropriate words to describe them.

SO I AM GLAD (1995)

So I Am Glad is a kind of bizarre, contemporary fairytale for grown-ups. Jennifer Wilson, the narrator, is a radio announcer whose unhappy upbringing has led her to close down communication with others. She has chosen isolation and she works hard to maintain it and to keep buried the emotions, 'moles' she calls them, which are at work under the surface. Into her life comes a strange roommate (is he fantasy or is he real?) who claims to be, and perhaps is, the ghost of Cyrano de Bergerac. The moles within Jennifer begin to stir and can no longer be ignored. A brief outline of So I Am Glad is sufficient to indicate the weirdness of Kennedy's imagination but can do little to demonstrate the power of the prose, its unique combination of grotesquerie, humour and poignancy. Only an actual reading of the book can do that.

A.L. Kennedy's other books are Original Bliss (short stories), Looking for the Possible Dance (novel), Indelible Acts (short stories) and the non-fiction On Bullfighting.

READ ON

- Original Bliss.
- **▶** to her novels: ▷ Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*; Janice Galloway, *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*; Alan Warner, *The Sopranos*.
- ▶ to her short stories: ▷ Ian McEwan, First Love, Last Rites; Laura Hird, Nail and other stories.

KEROUAC, Jack (1922-1969)

US novelist

Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, Kerouac was from a French-Canadian family and only learned English at primary school, a fact that must have contributed to the lifelong feeling of being an outsider that is so evident in his fiction. After a period in the US Merchant Marines and in the Navy Kerouac returned to Columbia University (which he had attended before his naval service) where he met a student named Allen Ginsberg, Ginsberg introduced him to a disparate group of like-minded spirits, united in little save an aversion to post-war America, and to the man who was to become his 'muse', Neal Cassady. On the Road (1957) is, and always will be, the archetypal Kerouac novel. This ground-breaking book was written (and rewritten) between 1948 and 1956. The story of Sal Paradise (Kerouac) and Dean Moriarty (Cassady) and their trans-coastal odysseys in an assortment of beat-up jalopies, fuelled on benzedrine, marijuana, wine and a hunger for kicks, is a tremendous, joy-filled paean to life and freedom amid the arid sterility of post-war America. A huge success, the book gave Kerouac the permanent label as leader of the 'Beat Generation'. Although it is generally agreed that he invented the term, playing on an association of 'beat', as in 'worn out', with a shortening of 'beatitude', it was a title he never wanted. He has been revered by generations of would-be hipsters ever since, but Kerouac may well have been not so much a rebel as a rather weak-willed misfit who remained the outsider he felt he was as a child. Yet, in On the Road and (fitfully) in other works. he created a self-mythology and a prose style that have been culturally influential for nearly fifty years.

Kerouac's other novels include Big Sur, Doctor Sax, The Subterraneans, Visions of Cody and Vanity of Duluoz. Lonesome Traveller is a collection of meditations and essays triggered by his travels; Satori in Paris is his account of a journey to France. Pomes All Sizes is a collection of his poetry.

READ ON

- The Dharma Bums (beats and bohemians in San Francisco waver between asceticism and excess).
- ► Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel* (fictionalized autobiographical odyssey from an earlier US generation); ▷ William Burroughs, *Junky*; John Clellon Holmes, *Go*; Herbert Huncke, *The Herbert Huncke Reader*.

KING, STEPHEN (born 1946)

US novelist

Stephen King is one of the most popular novelists in the world and there can be few people who have not encountered his work in some form, either on the printed page or in one of the innumerable film and TV adaptations of his books or in his increasing experiments in writing specifically for the web. He is categorized, by those who like to place writers in categories, as a horror writer but this label may well alienate some readers who would actually relish his fiction. King's strengths do not lie in the descriptions of blood, viscera and violence that characterize other horror writers (although his books are not for the squeamish or easily distressed). His great gift is for writing about ordinary, everyday fears and emotions in

extraordinary ways. His first great success, Carrie (1974), describes an adolescent girl, bullied and tormented at school, who discovers telekinetic powers which she turns on her tormentors. But the power of the book comes not so much from the supernatural trappings of the story but from the precision with which King describes small-town nastiness and from the way he taps into everybody's fear of being an outsider, not one of the gang. The pages of Bag of Bones (1998) are packed with gory ghosts and visitors from other worlds but the book is concerned with love lost and found, mourning and recovery from grief as much as with haunting and horror. In the mammoth, 1,000-pages plus It (1986) the small Maine town of Derry is terrorized by the return of a supernatural killer. Seven friends who, as teenagers, experienced the horror of the first murderous spree return to confront the renewed nightmare. King ruthlessly dissects small-town life and gives to Derry a realism that is undermined and compromised by the horror. Who knows what lurks beneath the surface of the ordinary? That is the question King repeatedly asks in his fiction and he has provided some gripping and wildly imaginative answers in his string of bestsellers.

King's other novels include Salem's Lot, The Shining, The Stand, Pet Sematary, Misery, The Tommyknockers, Dolores Claiborne, Rose Madder, Dreamcatcher and From a Buick 8. The Dark Tower is a series of five books (so far) which chronicles the adventures of the Gunslinger in a bleak world parallel to ours. The Green Mile is a six-part sequence of short novels, set on the death row of a penitentiary in the 1930s. Short story collections include Night Shift, Nightmares and Dreamscapes and Hearts in Atlantis. King has also written fiction under the pseudonym Richard Bachman and collaborated with fellow horror novelist Peter Straub on The Talisman and Black House. On Writing combines recollections of King's own development as a writer with practical advice to budding novelists.

READ ON

- Misery, Pet Sematary.
- ➤ Peter Straub, Ghost Story; James Herbert, Sepulchre; Dean Koontz, Darkness Comes; Clive Barker, The Damnation Game; Mark Z. Danielewski, House of Leaves (a dazzling combination of horror motifs and post-modern playfulness).

KINGSOLVER, Barbara (born 1955)

US novelist

Like the great nineteenth-century novelists, Barbara Kingsolver believes that fiction has a duty to engage with the real world. Her books are, in the best sense of the word, old-fashioned in that they grapple with political, social and moral issues. Where 'Victorian writers like ▷ Dickens, ▷ Eliot and Disraeli gave fictional form to debates about an England divided between the two nations of rich and poor, Kingsolver tackles contemporary concerns about colonialism, the rift between the developed and underdeveloped worlds and man's impact on the natural environment. And she does so in narratives that grip the reader with their imaginative depth and powerful characters. Her most ambitious book, *The Poisonwood Bible* (see below) is set in the Congo as it emerges from colonial rule. The setting for her other fiction is small-town rural America. In *The Bean Trees* (1988) Marietta Greer flees the small town in Kentucky in which she grew up, changes her name to Taylor and forges a new sense of family and identity with a small Cherokee child, abandoned to her care, and with

other outsiders and refugees from personal and political trauma. The story is continued in *Pigs in Heaven* (1993) in which the child becomes the focus of a legal battle between Taylor (her new mother), and the Native American community from which she comes. Kingsolver is alert to the moral complexities of the conflict and offers no easy solutions.

THE POISONWOOD BIBLE (1999)

The Poisonwood Bible is, by some way, Barbara Kingsolver's most ambitious novel to date. Nathan Price, a narrow-minded Christian evangelist, arrives with his family in the Belgian Congo to serve as a missionary to African people to whom his message means little. The year is 1959 and great changes are on hand in the country but the messianic Price is as blind to these as he is to the real needs of his family and the people he has volunteered to 'save'. The narrative moves inexorably towards personal tragedy set amid the wider tragedy of a new nation still in thrall to the forces of economic imperialism. The story is told in the very different voices of Price's wife and his four daughters — pouting would-be prom queen Rachel, Leah (at first her father's greatest supporter but soon his fiercest critic), her twin sister Adah who suffers from hemiplegia but has her own idiosyncratic perspective on events, and the five-year-old Ruth May. Acute in its psychological and political insight, rich in its evocation of a natural world indifferent to the cares and ambitions of individuals, *The Poisonwood Bible* is a very powerful and resonant novel.

Barbara Kingsolver's other books include Animal Dreams, Prodigal Summer, Homeland (a collection of short stories), High Tide in Tucson and Small Wonder (two volumes of essays and non-fiction writings).

READ ON

► Jane Smiley, A Thousand Acres; Louise Erdrich, Love Medicine; Alice Hoffman, Seventh Heaven; Ronan Bennett, The Catastrophist (another narrative set in Zaire; politically acute although very different from The Poisonwood Bible in its aims).

KIPLING, Rudyard (1865–1936)

British short story writer and poet

Kipling learned his craft working for English-language newspapers in India in the 1880s. He wrote reports, stories and poems about the British soldiers and administrators, their servants and the snake-charmers, fortune-tellers and other characters of the towns they lived in. Later, during the Boer War, he worked as a correspondent in South Africa, where he was a friend of Cecil Rhodes. In the circumstances, it would have been hard for him not to reflect the imperialist attitudes of his age, first sunny confidence and then the jingoistic panic which overtook it in late Victorian times. But he is a more rewarding writer than this suggests. His sympathies were always with subordinates - with private soldiers rather than generals, servants rather than employers, children rather than adults. He wrote well about all three: his stories for and about children, in particular, are magnificent. Something like half of each collection - most books contain both stories and poems - is nowadays hard to take, not least where he writes in babytalk (as in the Just-So Stories, O best-beloved) or uses funny spellings to evoke Cockney or Irish speech. But every archness is balanced by a gem of insight or sensitivity. In this, too, he was characteristic of his time.

KIM (1901)

This episodic novel is the story of a British orphan brought up as a beggar in Lahore, who becomes first the disciple of a wandering Buddhist monk and then an agent of the British secret service. He travels throughout India, and Kipling uses his adventures as a framework for descriptions of everyday scenes and characters, of 'such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world'.

Kipling's collections include Barrack-room Ballads, The Seven Seas and The Years Between (verse), Soldiers Three (stories), and the mixed prose-and-verse collections Many Inventions, Traffics and Discoveries, A Diversity of Creatures and Captains Courageous, and his children's books include the Just-So Stories, The Jungle Book, Puck of Pook's Hill and the public-school yarn Stalky and Co. Something of Myself is a guarded autobiography.

READ ON

- Plain Tales from the Hills, Debits and Credits.
- ▶ to Kipling's stories about children: ▷ Katherine Mansfield, Bliss and Other Stories.
- ▶ to his stories about colonial adults: Paul Scott, The Raj Quartet; many of
 ▷ W. Somerset Maugham's short stories, collected in several volumes, deal with the English at large in the empire. John Masters, Nightrunners of Bengal and
 ▷ J.G. Farrell, The Siege of Krishnapur, about the 1857 Indian 'Mutiny', match Kipling's insight into the heyday of the Raj.

KNEALE, Matthew (born 1960)

British novelist

Some of Britain's most gifted novelists turned to historical fiction in the 1990s and produced their finest works. Although he has published only two novels in the last ten years. Matthew Kneale has shown that his excursions into the past are fully as rewarding for the reader as those of, for example, > Rose Tremain, > Hilary Mantel or > Beryl Bainbridge. Sweet Thames (1992) is set in a superbly evoked early Victorian London and is probably the only novel ever written to have a sewage engineer as a hero. Joshua Jeavons (very loosely based on the real Victorian engineer, Sir Joseph Bazalgette) is a visionary who looks to a future London cleansed of the filth and shit and disease of its present – to what he calls 'the glory of a London unobstructed by effluent'. Working feverishly on his plans to transform the capital, Jeavons is swept into his own personal drama by the disappearance of his young wife. The book is crammed with the detail and the nitty gritty of nineteenth-century life (the mudlarks scavenging on the shore of the river, the prostitutes parading along Haymarket) but Kneale never becomes obsessed by the fruits of his research, never loses sight of a gripping, twisting plot that makes its way towards a surprising conclusion. English Passengers (2000) is an even more challenging and rewarding historical novel which weaves together many narrative voices to tell the story of an ill-fated voyage to Tasmania in the 1850s. The Reverend Geoffrey Wilson is a fundamentalist clergyman determined to trump pretentious scientists by discovering the Garden of Eden in the southern hemisphere and thus proving the literal truth of the Bible. Accompanying him on his quixotic mission is a surgeon out to gain evidence for his own contentious theory of man's origins and a shipload of Manx smugglers who have agreed to

transport the expedition to Tasmania for devious reasons of their own. Most ambitiously, Kneale allows some of the story to be told by a Tasmanian aboriginal called Peevay and his account is not one of Eden rediscovered but of the brutal destruction of his people and their culture.

Matthew Kneale's other novels are Whore Banquets/Mr Foreigner and Inside Rose's Kingdom.

READ ON

- ▶ to Sweet Thames: > Peter Ackroyd, Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem
- ▶ to English Passengers: ▷ Rose Tremain, The Colour; ▷ J.G. Farrell, The Singapore Grip; ▷ David Malouf, Remembering Babylon.

KUNDERA, Milan (born 1929)

Czech novelist

Kundera's fiction is a giddy mixture of philosophical speculation, erotic intrigue and a sense of the wounding power history and politics have over the individual. His early fiction, culminating in The Unbearable Lightness of Being (see below) is shaped by his experiences as a writer and intellectual in a Czechoslovakia under a communist. Moscow-directed regime. The Joke plays a number of games with the word of its title. Its narrator, Ludvik, is condemned by the state for a joke sent on a postcard to his girlfriend. Years later he plots his revenge on the man who brought him down by means of an elaborate seduction and practical joke. History itself, Ludvik speculates, may be playing jokes on us all. Kundera has lived in France for many years – indeed several of his recent books were first written in French – and the fiction he has published after the Velvet Revolution in his home country has largely moved away from the political particularity of his early novels. Immortality juxtaposes a modern love triangle in Paris (two sisters love the same man) with the affairs of Goethe. Into this mixture Kundera typically introduces a whole range of his witty, occasionally melancholy diversions into philosophy and speculation. In heaven Goethe and Hemingway debate the meaning and value of literary immortality; aphorisms about love, death and fame abound.

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING (1984)

Kundera's most characteristic novel is set in Prague at the time of the brief flowering of freedom in spring 1968. At its heart is the love affair and marriage between Tomas, a charming but incorrigible womanizer, and Tereza, a woman he meets when she is tending bar in a small town hotel. Tomas, a surgeon, is forced into exile and a menial job by the events of 1968 but continues his obsessive Don Juanism and his relationship with his mistress Sabina, herself entangled in another unhappy affair. The Unbearable Lightness of Being is at once an ironic story of the difficulties of sexual and romantic love and a novel of ideas, peppered with aphorisms, short digressions and meditations on the nature of human choice and the effects of mere chance and contingency on our plans and decisions.

Kundera's other novels include The Joke, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Life is Elsewhere, Immortality, Slowness, Identity and Ignorance. Laughable Loves is a collection of short stories, The Art of the Novel a statement of Kundera's belief in the transformative power of fiction.

READ ON

- Immortality.
- ► Ivan Klima, *My Golden Trades*; Josef Skvorecky, *The Engineer of Human Souls*;
 ▷ Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

KUREISHI, Hanif (born 1954)

British novelist and screenwriter

Kureishi first came to notice as a dramatist and screenplay writer (My Beautiful Laundrette, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid) and his fiction has many of the qualities of his writing for film. It is witty and direct and celebrates the delights of popular culture. And, like his screenplays, Kureishi's novels are traditional enough in their form but they often encompass material that isn't usually found in mainstream 'literary' fiction, Ideas about ethnic and sexual identity and ambiguity, about what it means to be caught between competing cultures are unpretentiously explored within lively, funny coming-of-age stories. Set in London in 1989 (the year the Berlin Wall came down, the year the fatwa was imposed on Salman Rushdie). The Black Album tells of the attempts by the hero Shahid to make sense of the varying influences he faces as a young English Asian. Arriving at a London community college. Shahid finds himself torn between the troublesome glamour of modernity, in the shape of his sexy lecturer Deedee Osgood, and the tempting certainties of conservative Islam as represented by the militant Muslim group led by the charismatic Riaz. Like Kureishi's other fiction, The Black Album is steeped in the ephemeral excitements of popular culture and is a generous celebration of hedonistic pleasure confronted by Puritanism of all kinds.

THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA (1990)

Karim is a teenager growing up in the suburbs in 1970s England, the son of an Indian father and an English mother. As well as the usual challenges adolescence imposes, he is also faced by those his family and his background provide. His father, after years of trying to be more English than the English, has chosen to become a New Age guru – the Buddha of the title – and leaves his wife for one of his glamorous admirers. Through his father's lover and her rock musician son, Karim is pitched into a new world of parties, drugs and bisexual opportunities. Moving with chameleon-like adaptability from one role to another, Karim searches for a more permanent sense of self and identity. Sexy, funny and sharply satirical in its mockery of many aspects of English society, *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a traditional English comedy of manners with very untraditional characters and settings.

Hanif Kureishi's other works of fiction are Intimacy and Gabriel's Gift (novels) and Love in A Blue Time, Midnight All Day and The Body and Other Stories (short story collections). Dreaming and Scheming is a collection of essays. He has also co-edited The Faber Book of Pop.

READ ON

► Meera Syal, *Anita and Me*; ▷ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*; Michael Bracewell, *The Crypto-Amnesia Club*; Martin Millar, *Lux the Poet*; Farrukh Dhondy, *Bombay Duck*; Romesh Gunesekera, *Sandglass*.

L

LANCHESTER, John (born 1962)

British novelist

Lanchester's first two novels were both major achievements and, in very different ways, remarkable exercises in style and storytelling. The Debt to Pleasure begins with the narrator's archly ironic statement, 'This is not a conventional cookbook.' What follows is not a conventional first novel. Constructed around a sequence of menus, the book begins as an apparent memoir of its narrator, gourmet and aesthete Tarquin Winot, centred on his love and knowledge of food and cooking. Self-consciously erudite and civilized, Tarquin seems, at first, a harmless food snob with a fondness for heavy irony, arcane information and baroquely extravagant language. As the book progresses, however, Lanchester slowly and subtly allows his narrator to reveal a monstrous egotism lurking beneath the surface. By the time we reach the last pages we know we are in the company of a man whose selfishness and self-obsession have led to terrible deeds. Lanchester's second novel, Mr Phillips, could hardly have a more different central character. Mr Phillips is an accountant, just made redundant, who has not yet had the courage to tell his wife of his dismissal. Setting out as if for work, he spends his day idly wandering London, musing on life and sex and death and the humdrum occurrences that have made up his own existence. Written in a deliberately flat prose that is the reverse of Tarquin Winot's verbal acrobatics, Mr Phillips risks being as dull as his nondescript hero must appear to passers-by. Lanchester's triumph is that he succeeds in making his commuter-everyman a touching and comic character, an embodiment of our own ordinary failures, compromises and small pleasures. Fragrant Harbour, Lanchester's third novel, unfolds the history of Hong Kong in the twentieth century through a number of interconnecting first-person narratives.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Debt to Pleasure*: ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*; Patrick Suskind, *Perfume*; Alain de Botton, *The Romantic Movement*; ▷ Tibor Fischer, *The Collector Collector*.
- ▶ to *Mr Phillips*: ▷ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (different in style and period but also the thoughts of an ordinary person at large in London).
- ▶ to Fragrant Harbour: Timothy Mo, An Insular Possession (Hong Kong's earlier history told in a distinctly more rambunctious style than Lanchester's).

READ ON A THEME: LARGER THAN LIFE

- > Anthony Burgess, Earthly Powers
- Peter Carey, Illywhacker

- > Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus
- Robertson Davies, What's Bred in the Bone
 Howard Jacobson, Redback
 Robert Nye, Falstaff
 Petronius, Satyricon
- > François Rabelais, Gargantua
- ▶ Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy

READ ON A THEME: LATIN AMERICA

- Isabel Allende, Of Love and Shadows
 Jorge Amado, The War of the Saints
 Machado de Assis, Epitaph of a Small Winner
- Louis de Bernières, The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts
 Alejo Carpentier, The Lost Steps
 Julio Cortazar, Hopscotch
 Carlos Fuentes, The Death of Artemio Cruz
- □ Gabriel García Márquez, The General in His Labyrinth
 Manuel Puig, Kiss of the Spider Woman
- Mario Vargas Llosa, The Feast of the Goat

LAWRENCE, D.H. (David Herbert) (1885–1930)

British writer of novels, short stories, plays and poems

For eighty years Lawrence's radicalism outraged as many people as it enthralled. He thought that every matter of concern to human beings, and moral and ethical issues in particular, could be settled by rational discussion, if people would only be honest about themselves. His novels deal with such matters as female emancipation, the class struggle, atheism, sexual liberation and pacifism — not explicitly but as part of an ongoing advocacy of nakedness, of people at their best when stripped of inhibition and convention. Lawrence regarded his plain speaking as a way of shedding light in dark corners, a return to the innocence of the Garden of Eden; his enemies thought it shocking. Nowadays, when his rawness seems less threatening, his books stand up not only for moral earnestness—they read at times like humourless, non-religious sermons—but for their acute presentation of people and society in turmoil, of attitudes to life which the Second World War and the nuclear age have made seem unimaginably remote.

SONS AND LOVERS (1913)

Paul Morel is the son of ill-matched parents, an ex-schoolteacher and an illiterate, alcoholic miner. Morel's mother is determined to help her son escape from the physical grind and intellectual atrophy of pit-village life and fulfil his ambition to be a painter. Her love for him is, however, a force for darkness not liberation. It inhibits both his self-discovery and his relationship with other people (especially the young farm girl Miriam, who encourages his artistic ambitions),

and it is only when he breaks free of his mother – a protracted, agonizing process, a second birth – that he is able to fulfil the destiny she has planned for him.

Lawrence's other novels include The Rainbow and its sequel Women in Love, Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover. He also published poems, travel books (Sea and Sardinia, Mornings in Mexico), plays, books on history and literature, and collections of short stories (England, My England; The Woman Who Rode Away).

READ ON

- The Rainbow.
- ▶ George Eliot, Middlemarch; ▷ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (especially close to Women in Love in its treatment of tensions between the sexes); David Storey, Radcliffe; ▷ Melvyn Bragg, The Maid of Buttermere; ▷ Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel; Henry Roth, Call It Sleep; and ▷ James Baldwin, Go Tell It on the Mountain all deal with Lawrentian themes in very different settings. Elaine Feinstein, Lady Chatterley's Confession is a sequel to and a more searching novel than Lady Chatterley's Lover.

LE CARRÉ, John (born 1931)

British novelist

For over a century, writers from > Verne to > Fleming depicted espionage as a swashbuckling, Robin Hood activity with clear rules, absolute moral standards and a penchant for flamboyance. But in the 1960s this view changed. The Cuban missile crisis all but led to world annihilation; the Berlin Wall was built; a series of well-publicized defections revealed that spies were secretive, unremarkable men, morally hesitant and trapped by their own profession. Betrayal, not derring-do, was their stock-in-trade; east, west, north, south, they were as indistinguishable as civil service clerks. This is the atmosphere of le Carré's books. His characters are not James Bonds, swaggering forth to smash conspiracies of global domination; in dark back streets and rainy woods they nibble away at one another's loyalties, hardly even certain of their own. It is a world of remorseless moral erosion, and le Carre chillingly shows how it functions for itself, inward-looking and self-perpetuating, with minimal relevance to real life. The end of the Cold War, which triggered creative collapse in lesser writers, led him to turn back to the other, > Greeneish, > Amblerish peaks of the genre, and to update them magnificently. In The Night Manager (1993) the focus is moral exhaustion, not in political life, but in late-twentieth-century society in general, and an international drugs-for-arms scandal in particular.

A PERFECT SPY (1986)

Magnus Pym, the best of all agents, has gone missing, and Jack Brotherhood is desperately trying to track him down. Pym is in fact holed up in a tatty English seaside resort, writing his memoirs, and trying to discover his lost integrity as a human being. As the memoirs near completion, the hunt closes in . . .

Le Carré's other spy books are The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, The Looking Glass War, A Small Town in Germany, Our Game, The Russia House, and the four Smiley books (Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, The Honourable Schoolboy,

Smiley's People and The Secret Pilgrim). His other books are the detective stories Call for the Dead and A Murder of Quality, The Naive and Sentimental Lover, The Little Drummer Girl, The Tailor of Panama, Single & Single and The Constant Gardener (a devastating fictional indictment of the activities of large pharmaceutical companies in Africa).

READ ON

- The Russia House, The Constant Gardener.
- ▶ to the spy stories: ▷ Eric Ambler, Judgement on Deltchev; ▷ Graham Greene, The Human Factor; ▷ Len Deighton, Berlin Game (and its follow-ups, Mexico Set and London Match).
- ▶ to The Naive and Sentimental Lover: > John Fowles, Daniel Martin.
- ▶ to The Little Drummer Girl: > Doris Lessing, The Good Terrorist.

LE GUIN, Ursula (born 1929)

US novelist

Le Guin made her name writing space opera (the League of All Worlds series), and the prize-winning Earthsea Quartet, originally aimed at children but one of the great works of twentieth-century fantasy writing. Le Guin uses alternativeworld fantasy to discuss social, ecological and political themes. Although many of her books are still technically science fiction, set in the future and on other planets, she also lets people from the past and the present break through into magical kingdoms whose values and customs are ironical variations on our own. This happens literally in Threshold (1980): a supermarket checkout operator crosses the freeway into a wood, finds himself in another realm with its own time and its own reality, and meets and falls in love with a girl, another escapee from reality. The hero of Malafrena (1980) becomes a revolutionary leader in an alternative world in which the political ferment of post-Napoleonic Europe is blended with the religious outlook of Germany in Luther's time and with osychological and ecological concerns of the late twentieth century. Always Coming Home (1985) is set among a pastoral tribe living peaceful, zen-like lives in a far-future California.

THE DISPOSSESSED (1974)

The Dispossessed, 'an ambiguous utopia' as its subtitle calls it, tells the story of the different societies founded by humans on the verdant planet Urras and its barren moon Anarres. Anarres's society is a peaceful anarchy whose inhabitants have no possessions, live without laws and do not use the words 'I', 'me' and 'mine'; Urras is a capitalist meritocracy. Shevek, a mathematical genius from Anarres, travels to Urras where he is fêted as a success but is alienated by the class-ridden society of the planet. His involvement with a revolution on Urras is the backdrop to his theoretical mathematics which will ultimately lead to the invention of the Ansible, a device that will allow instantaneous contact with other planets, no matter how distant. But will Shevek let the materialistic society of Urras control and exploit the potential of the Ansible?

Le Guin's other novels include Rocannon's World, Planet of Exile, City of Illusions, The Lathe of Heaven and The Left Hand of Darkness. The Wind's Twelve Quarters and Orsinian Tales are collections of short stories. The Earthsea Quartet

STARTPOINTS

IFTTERS AND DIARIES

Fewer people write letters and diaries than did so even twenty years ago but for centuries they were favourite forms of literature. Readers turned to them to find the writer's unguarded, private thoughts. Sometimes these were what they got intimate documents meant only for personal use. In other cases, they got ideas selected and polished with the full intention of publication. (Politicians' diaries and letters, with the notable exception of Alan Clark's Diaries, are seldom 'private' documents.) The books selected here therefore contain some of the grandest, as well as the most revealing, of all literature.

Boswell, James (1740-95), London Journal. In the eighteenth century Boswell arrives in London as a young man in search of women, wine and the celebrities of the day and records his adventures with endearing honesty. Self-reproach and vows to lead a better life are swiftly followed by further debauches.

Chesterfield, Lord (1694-1773), Letters to His Son (1774). Written to teach the young man the thoughts and manners of a gentleman. Politics, etiquette, religion, morals, the way of the world – each beautifully written letter is a glimpse into the eighteenth-century mind.

Clark, Alan (1928-99), Diaries (1993). Arch-cad of the Tory party reveals the gossip, bitchiness and backbiting of politics while also chronicling, with rueful, witty self-awareness, his own shortcomings and sexual escapades. Will be read long after most political memoirs have entered a decent oblivion.

Coward. Noël (1899–1973). Diaries. Coward demonstrates his talent to amuse. and his own inner doubts and self-questionings. The beautiful, the famous and the notorious of the twentieth century flit through its pages.

Crèvecoeur, St John de (1735-1813), Letters from an American Farmer (1782). Crèvecoeur, an English army officer, settled as a farmer in New York state, and wrote these letters describing American frontier life before the Revolution, A classic.

Davies, Russell (ed), The Diaries of Kenneth Williams (1993). In the Carry On films, on TV and on radio, Williams slipped into one outrageous character after another - and hated himself for doing so. In real life he was obsessive, lonely, bitchy and miserable. The broken-hearted clown is a showbiz cliché, but Williams's life gives it hypnotic, tragic power.

Frank, Anne (1929-45), The Diary of Anne Frank (1947). Frank's own heartrending account of how she and her family hid from the Nazis in an attic - and of what it's like to spend one's formative years in such circumstances.

Goncourt, Edmond de (1822–96) and Jules de (1830–70), *The Goncourt Journal* **(1887–96)**. The Goncourts were at the hub of the Paris chattering class – actors, painters, writers, politicians, society folk – in the so-called Belle Époque, and wrote these gossipy, malicious journals up each night.

Kilvert, Francis (1840–79), Kilvert's Diary (1938–40). Kilvert was a parson in rural Wales, and his *Diary* gives unsentimental pictures of country life 125 years ago.

Klemperer, Victor, Diaries 1933–1945. Astonishing and moving record of a Jew who survived the war, although still living in Germany throughout it.

Marchand, Leslie (ed), *Byron: Selected Letters and Journals.* Byron's character revealed in all its complexity in letters and journals that sometimes read as if they were written yesterday instead of in the early nineteenth century.

Pepys, Samuel (1633–1703), Diary (1825). Not written for publication – it was even in code – Pepys's *Diary* tells of life in Restoration London, and of its happy, hard-working (and hard-playing) author. Shortened version advised, at least for first sampling.

Plath, Sylvia (1932–63), *Letters Home.* A moving mixture of domestic incident and despairing soul-searching in the letters Plath wrote, largely to her mother. Knowledge of the future, which we have but she doesn't, adds to the poignancy.

▶ Waugh, Evelyn (1903–66), Letters. Waugh's bilious wit and jaundiced view of the world and the people in it emerge entertainingly in his letters.

Also recommended: ➤ Kingsley Amis, Letters; Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Letters, 1845–46; Fanny Burney, Diary; John Evelyn, The Diary of John Evelyn; James Joyce, Collected Letters; Joe Orton, Diaries; Pliny the Younger, Letters; Oscar Wilde, Letters; Dorothy Wordsworth, The Alfoxden and Grasmere Journals.

is A Wizard of Earthsea, The Tombs of Atuan, The Farthest Shore and Tehanu. The Other Wind is a recent addition to the Earthsea canon.

READ ON

- The Left Hand of Darkness.
- ▶ to The Dispossessed: > Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale.
- ▶ to Le Guin's work in general: Philip Pullman, His Dark Materials (a trilogy); > Anne McCaffrey, The Dragonriders of Pern; Patricia McKillip, Riddle-Master Trilogy.

LEHMANN, Rosamond (1901-90)

British novelist

The ideas behind Lehmann's novels were strengthened by reading Jung and by psychic research after her daughter's death in the 1950s. She believed that we are not alone, that each person is part of a greater whole: the experience and knowledge of all human beings who have ever existed. We can enter into that experience, make use of it, during the rites of passage from one stage of existence to another – birth, adolescence, marriage, death – when the subconscious is particularly receptive. Lehmann's heroines are people on the brink of self-discovery; they are either innocents or victims of life, and the novels describe, in a lucid way far removed from the exoticism and mysticism of their events, how self-knowledge is achieved and how it changes the heroine's life, for bad or good.

THE BALLAD AND THE SOURCE (1944)

Ten-year-old Rebecca, picking bluebells in the garden of the old house beside the churchyard, is invited inside by the owner, Mrs Jardine, who knew Rebecca's grandmother. She and Rebecca become friends and Rebecca listens enthralled to Mrs Jardine's tales of 'the old days' – and the more terrible the stories (they are accounts of passion, adultery, betrayal and hatred in Mrs Jardine's own young life), the more Rebecca is ensnared. Mrs Jardine is not so much like a witch casting a spell – though this is how Rebecca's alarmed mother sees her – as a sibyl from the remote past, revealing the true nature of human emotional existence.

Lehmann's other novels are Dusty Answer, Invitation to the Waltz and its sequel The Weather in the Streets, The Echoing Grove and A Sea-Grape Tree. The Gipsy's Baby collects short stories, and The Swan in the Evening is an autobiographical memoir centring on her reactions to her daughter's death.

READ ON

- In A Sea-Grape Tree (the sequel to The Ballad and the Source) Rebecca, now
 grown-up and betrayed by men exactly as Mrs Jardine had been, goes to a
 Caribbean island to sort out her life and is affected not only by the people she
 meets there but by spirit-visitors from her past, including Mrs Jardine herself.
- ▶ Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness*; ▷ Iris Murdoch, *The Philosopher's Pupil*; ▷ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*; ▷ Alison Lurie, *Imaginary Friends*; Jane Gardam, *Crusoe's Daughter*.

LEONARD, ELMORE (born 1925)

US novelist

In the last ten years Elmore Leonard has become one of Hollywood's favourite novelists and perhaps the hippest of all American crime writers. Quentin Tarantino's film *Jackie Brown* was based on Leonard's novel *Rum Punch*. One of the roles which returned John Travolta to star status was that of Chili Palmer, the movie-loving gangster in the film version of Leonard's *Get Shorty*. And literary critics love Leonard's books, too. Even Martin Amis, often a difficult reader to please, described *Get Shorty* as a masterpiece. Leonard's status as America's most widely admired crime writer has been hard won. He has been writing fiction since the 1950s. His earliest books were westerns (the 1967 Paul Newman film *Hombre* is based on a Leonard novel) but, when he turned to crime writing, he found a home for his finest gifts as a writer. Leonard writes the kind of dialogue that other writers would kill to achieve. His fast, funny stories – filled with low-life, weirdos and bad-assed villains – display a talent for expertly drawn action and a mastery of wisecracking and street-smart language that mark Leonard out as a king of crime writing.

Elmore Leonard's novels include The Big Bounce, City Primeval, Freaky Deaky, Glitz, Gold Coast, Killshot, La Brava, Out of Sight, Pronto, Split Images, Stick, Bandits and Tishomingo Blues. When the Women Come Out to Dance is a collection of short stories which is like a crash-course introduction to Leonard's fictional world.

READ ON

- Be Cool (Chili Palmer applies his particular talents to the music industry); Cuba
 Libre (not a crime novel but historical fiction set in Cuba as the Spanish-American
 War of 1898 is about to start).
- ► Carl Hiaasen, *Double Whammy*; Robert B. Parker, *Night Passage*; ▷ James Ellroy, *L.A. Confidential*; Richard Stark, *The Hunter*.

LESSING, Doris (born 1919)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

Lessing was brought up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), but her involvement in progressive politics made it an uncomfortable place to live, and she moved to London in 1949. In the same year she published her first novel, *The Grass is Singing*, about relationships between the races, and followed it in 1952 with the semi-autobiographical *Martha Quest*, the first in a five-book series (the other volumes, published over the following seventeen years, are *A Proper Marriage*, *A Ripple from the Storm, Landlocked* and *The Four-gated City*). The sequence took her heroine from girlhood to marriage in white Rhodesia, from political virginity to radical activism, from Africa to London, from youth to age. Martha becomes a feminist; she samples and rejects the 'Swinging Sixties'; she tries religion and mysticism; she watches, and reports on, the last hours of the human race as we writhe towards the apocalypse. The books are in a straightforward 'as-told-to' style: they have the power of documentary as much as fiction. Two other Lessing novels, *The Golden Notebook* (1962, about an unhappy writer coming to terms with herself as a person and with her place in a male-dominated society) and

Briefing for a Descent into Hell (1971, about nervous breakdown), have similar intensity. Lessing's (Jungian) psychological interests, and her fascination with Sufi mysticism, influence much of her other work, especially the five-volume sequence Canopus in Argus (1979–83), which uses a science fiction format to explore ideas not so much of outer as of inner space, the alternative realities inside the mind.

The Canopus in Argus novels are Shikasta; The Marriage Between Zones Three, Four and Five; The Sirian Experiments; The Making of the Representatives for Planet 8 and Documents Relating to the Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire. The more recent Mara and Dann is also a visionary fiction set in the future. Lessing's other novels include Memoirs of a Survivor, The Summer before the Dark, The Good Terrorist, Love, Again, The Fifth Child and its sequel Ben, in the World and The Sweetest Dream. The most generous selection of her short stories is To Room Nineteen and the two collections of African stories, This Was the Old Chief's Country and The Sun Between Their Feet are full of remarkable writing. African Laughter is an account of journeys to Zimbabwe in the 1980s.

READ ON

- ▶ to Canopus in Argus: Olaf Stapledon, Last and First Men.
- ▶ to Lessing's work in general: Margaret Laurence, A Jest of God;
 - ⊳ Patrick White, *The Solid Mandala*; ⊳ Margaret Drabble, *Jerusalem the Golden*;
 - Nadine Gordimer, July's People; Simone de Beauvoir, She Came to Stay;
 - > H.H. Richardson. The Fortunes of Richard Mahony.

LIVELY, Penelope (born 1933)

British writer

As well as for adults, Lively writes for children, and at least two of those books, *The Ghost of Thomas Kempe* and *A Stitch in Time*, are modern classics. Her adult novels share the same qualities – they are crisply written, strong on character and atmosphere, and have dazzlingly life-like dialogue. She is particularly good at evoking the emotional feel of a place and of its history, showing how these impinge on her characters. And the places and characters range widely, from the Oxfordshire village of *Judgement Day* (1980), wracked over fundraising for its historic (and slightly disreputable) church or the crumbling stately home of *Next to Nature, Art* (1982), whose owner is trying to revitalize it as an arts centre, to the terrorist-threatened, age-old African state of *Cleopatra's Sister* (1993). She works the convincing trick of lulling us by making us think the dilemmas and characters of her people are as familiar as our own – and then springing at least one major, sinister surprise.

MOON TIGER (1987)

Dying in hospital, Claudia Hampton reviews her whole past life, and in particular the wartime affair with a doomed young soldier in Egypt which both liberated her emotions and then (after his death) dried up her character even as it roused her to take up history, the profession at which she became so dauntingly successful.

Lively's other adult novels include The Road to Lichfield, According to Mark, Passing On and Heat Wave. Her short story collections include Pack of Cards and

Beyond the Blue Mountains. Her children's novels include The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy and Fanny and the Monsters. Oleander Jacaranda is a wonderfully evocative account of growing up in Egypt in the 1930s and 1940s and A House Unlocked a collection of memories awakened by the Somerset house in which her family have long lived.

READ ON

- The Photograph (Lively's most recent novel in which Glyn Peters' discovery of a photograph of his wife with another man heralds the unravelling of a marriage and the emergence of long-hidden truths).
- ▶ ▷ Anita Brookner. A Closed Eve. ▷ Susan Hill. In the Springtime of the Year: > Joanna Trollope, The Choir: Shena Mackay, The Artist's Widow.

LODGE, David (born 1935)

British novelist

In the 1960s Lodge wrote half a dozen tragi-comic novels about young people perplexed by the pull between their Catholic upbringing and the urge of the 'Swinging Sixties'; the funniest is The British Museum is Falling Down. In the 1970s he began to write campus comedies, many set in an imaginary Midlands university, Rummidge. These include Changing Places (in which an innocent Rummidge lecturer changes places for a year with brash, oversexed Maurice Zapp of Euphoria State University, USA), Small World (about a young man pursuing a beautiful girl at a succession of ludicrous academic conferences) and Nice Work (1988, in which an uptight feminist lecturer and a chauvinist captain of industry are set to 'shadow' each other for a year). Therapy (1995) combines satire on modern literary preoccupations (such as writing unperformable screenplays or being a TV pundit) with a bleak account of a middle-aged man discovering what existentialist angst is all about. Thinks (2000) records the developing relationship of a middle-aged novelist and a media don set in familiar Lodge territory.

Lodge's other novels include Ginger, You're Barmy, How Far Can You Go? and Paradise News. He has also written academic books, chiefly on the writing of fiction and on structuralism.

READ ON

- ▶ to the Sixties novels: ▷ Margaret Forster, Georgy Girl.
- ▶ to the campus comedies: > Malcolm Bradbury. The History Man: Howard Jacobson, Coming From Behind: Mary McCarthy, The Groves of Academe.

READ ON A THEME: LONDON

- > Peter Ackroyd, The House of Doctor Dee Jake Arnott, The Long Firm Alexander Baron, Low Life
- > Peter Carey, Jack Maggs Justin Cartwright, Look At It This Way Esther Freud. Peerless Flats

Anthony Frewin, London Blues
Patrick Hamilton, Hangover Square

- Hanif Kureishi, The Buddha of Suburbia Colin MacInnes, Absolute Beginners
- Michael Moorcock, Mother London
- > J.B. Priestley, Angel Pavement

LONDON, Jack (1879-1916)

US novelist, short story and non-fiction writer

In his teens London worked as a docker, a seal-hunter, an oyster pirate (stealing from other fishermen's oyster beds) and a customs officer; he also tramped across the US and took part in the Klondike Gold Rush. At nineteen he settled down to writing, aiming to produce 1000 words a day, and began turning out heman articles and short stories, heavy on adventure and light on character. His human beings (most of them fur-trappers, gold-miners or fishermen) take a two-fisted approach to life. Brutality rules, and survival is only guaranteed until someone stronger or brighter comes along. However blinkered London's view of life – he managed, at the same time, to be a fervent socialist and a fascist convinced that fair-haired, blue-eyed Aryans were the master-race – he wrote of it with breathtaking, blood-hammering effectiveness. His descriptions of fights, and of men battling against enormous natural hazards, set a model which many tough-guy writers have imitated, but none surpassed.

THE CALL OF THE WILD (1903)

Buck, a St Bernard dog, is stolen from his home in California and taken to the Klondike as a sledge-dog. He passes from owner to owner, each more brutal than the last, until he finds kindness at the hands of John Thornton. But Thornton is killed, Buck's last link with human beings is broken and he escapes to the wild and becomes the leader of a pack of wild dogs.

London's novels include Before Adam (about the prehistoric ancestors of homo sapiens), The Sea-wolf (a > Conradian account of the struggle between a brutal sea captain and the city couple he kidnaps) and The Iron Heel (a story of the future, recounting the struggle of a group of urban guerrillas to overthrow a dictatorship which has overrum Chicago). John Barleycorn is an autobiographical novel about a writer battling alcoholism. The People of the Abyss is a powerful study of East End London in the early years of the twentieth century, based on London's own experience of living briefly in the city.

READ ON

- White Fang (a mirror-image of The Call of the Wild: the story of a wild dog drawn to the human race, who is betrayed and ill-treated by every owner — the description of his life as a fighting-dog is particularly harrowing — until he ends up at last with a master he can trust).
- ▶ to The Call of the Wild: Richard Adams, The Plague Dogs; Romain Gary, White Dog; > Louis de Bernières, Red Dog.

LOWRY, Malcolm (1909-57)

British novelist

Lowry began drinking at Cambridge, and by the time he was twenty he was irretrievably addicted. He spent the rest of his life bumming across the world, in rehabilitation clinics, or in self-imposed isolation while he struggled to turn his experiences into fiction. He had published *Ultramarine* in 1933 soon after leaving Cambridge, but the only other novel published during his lifetime − it took him twenty years to write it − was *Under the Volcano* (1947). This tells of the last two days in the life of an alcoholic British consul in revolution-torn Mexico, and intertwines memory, dream and reality in the manner of ▷ Joyce's *Ulysses*. His posthumous novels are *Lunar Caustic*, set in a 'drying-out' clinic in New York, and *Dark As the Grave Wherein my Friend is Laid*, about a boozy, doom-ridden tour of Mexico. *Hear Us, O Lord, From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place* is a collection of shorter pieces.

READ ON

- ▶ ▷ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; ▷ F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*;

LUDLUM, Robert (1927–2001)

US novelist

Ludlum's thrillers (many based on real-life incidents) are suspenseful, toughtalking and racy: they include *The Scarlatti Inheritance, The Gemini Contenders, The Matarese Circle, The Osterman Weekend, The Parsifal Mosaic, Road to Gandolfo* (and its sequel *The Road to Omaha*), *The Icarus Agenda, The Cry of the Halidon*, and *The Apocalypse Watch. The Prometheus Deception* (2001), in which a retired American agent discovers unpleasant truths about the covert organization for which he worked and is forced by the CIA to emerge from retirement to investigate, is a good example of Ludlum delivering the kind of goods his many fans want. Ludlum also writes as Jonathan Ryder (*The Cry of the Halidon; The Rhineman Exchange*).

READ ON

- Trevayne, The Cry of the Halidon.
- ► Tom Clancy, Clear and Present Danger; > John Grisham, The Brethren; > Wilbur Smith, The Sunbird; Colin Forbes, Double Jeopardy.

LURIE, Alison (born 1926)

US novelist

The people in Lurie's novels are all terribly nice: well educated, well off, well dressed, liberal and compassionate. Their lives are like placid pools – and into

each of them Lurie drops the acid of discontent (usually something to do with sex) and invites us to smile as the water seethes. Her funniest books are set on university campuses: Love and Friendship (1962) is about two people trapped in an affair (and what everyone else thinks about it); The War Between the Tates shows the gradual collapse of a 'perfect' marriage under threat from a combination of adultery and student politics. The people of Imaginary Friends are participants in or investigators of a bizarre religious cult. The narrator of Only Children is a child who reports on the sexual imbroglios of the adults around her with a wide-eyed gravity which arises less from innocence than from a precocious understanding not only of what is going on but of the sort of butter-won't-melt-in-my-mouth cuteness adults expect from little girls.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1984)

Three Americans are visiting England: Vinnie, a 54-year-old professor, Fred, a hunky young academic, and Chuck, a middle-aged, none-too-bright businessman on a package tour. The novel shows Vinnie's attempts to bring into the two men's lives the same kind of decorous, unflustered order she herself enjoys – and the way her own values crumple under the strain of real emotion.

Lurie's other novels are Real People, Love and Friendship, Nowhere City (a serious book about a woman trying to cope with unfocused psychological panic), The Truth About Lorin Jones (about a woman writing the biography of a painter, whose life becomes totally entangled with the facts and emotions she is researching) and The Last Resort. Women and Ghosts is a collection of supernatural stories.

READ ON

- The War Between the Tates.
- ▶ Anita Brookner, *Look At Me*; ▷ Carol Shields, *Larry's Party*; ▷ Anne Tyler, *Ladder of Years*; Alice Thomas Ellis, *The Birds of the Air*; Gail Godwin, *The Good Husband*.



MACAULAY, Rose (1881-1958)

British novelist

In the 1920s Macaulay wrote deadpan satires (*Potterism, Crewe Train, Told By an Idiot*). In the 1930s she began to concentrate on the sympathetic side of her art, writing about people (young girls especially) who are racked by the need to choose between the life of the mind and that of the flesh: their intellectual or spiritual ambitions are ambushed by sexual infatuation. *They Were Defeated* (1932) is set in seventeenth-century Puritan England and tells the ultimately tragic story of a young woman torn between her first sexual affair and the heady religious and intellectual atmosphere of Cambridge. The Second World War, and a succession of private misfortunes, made Macaulay give up novel writing for a dozen years, but she returned triumphantly in her mid-seventies with *The World My Wilderness* (about a confused girl trying to discover her psychological identity after the Second World War) and a riotous, malicious romp about love (sacred and profane), *The Towers of Trebizond*.

Macaulay's other novels include (from the 1920s) Dangerous Ages, Orphan Island, Keeping Up Appearances and Staying with Relations, and (from the 1930s) I Would be Private and No Man's Wit. She also wrote poetry, essays on literature and religion, and a book combining travel, archaeology and autobiography, The Pleasure of Ruins.

READ ON

- The Towers of Trebizond.
- ▶ to the satires: Compton Mackenzie, *Vestal Fire*; Nancy Mitford, *Love in a Cold Climate*; ▷ Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*.
- ▶ to They Were Defeated: > Robert Graves, Wife to Mr Milton.
- ▶ to Macaulay's work in general: ▷ Willa Cather, The Song of the Lark;
 ▷ Elizabeth Bowen, The Death of the Heart; ▷ A.S. Byatt, The Virgin in the Garden; Elizabeth Jolley, The Sugar Mother.

McCAFFREY, Anne (born 1926)

US novelist

Although McCaffrey has written novels, romances, a thriller and books on music and cookery, she is best known for science fiction (often, such as in *The Crystal Singer*, with a musical background) and fantasy. Her most substantial work is the Pern sequence of novels. Pern is a distant, medieval world where the élite ride and telepathically control – or are controlled by – dragons; the dragons are the

only beings which can destroy Thread, a devastating space-virus which would otherwise engulf all other life. The series details the fragile balance of society on Pern, and in particular the symbiosis – by turns comic, tragic and movingly poetic – between humans and dragons on which all life depends.

The Pern books (self-contained but linked) include Dragonflight, Dragonquest, The White Dragon, Dragonsong, Dragonsinger, Dragondrums, Moreta, The Dolphins of Pern, The Renegades of Pern, The Masterharper of Pern and The Skies of Pern. McCaffrey's other science fiction books include The Ship Who Sang, Restoree, Dinosaur Planet, Damia, Damia's Children. She has also written the Catteni's equence which consists of Freedom's Landing, Freedom's Choice, Freedom's Challenge and Freedom's Ransom and the Talent series of To Ride Pegasus, Pegasus in Flight and Pegasus in Space.

READ ON

- The Crystal Singer, Restoree (about a girl who finds herself transported to an unknown body on another planet).
- ▶ Piers Anthony, *Vicinity Cluster*, ▷ Robert Heinlein, *Glory Road*; ▷ Ursula Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest*, Mercedes Lackey, *Take a Thief* and other books in the Valdemar series; Tom de Haan, *The Child of Good Fortune*.

McCARTHY, Cormac (born 1933)

US novelist

Cormac McCarthy's portrayal of America is on a canvas that's dark and stained with blood. Celebrated primarily for his acclaimed Border Trilogy, comprising All the Pretty Horses (1992), The Crossing (1994) and Cities of the Plain (1997), he has written five other novels, each one a powerful example of his stark and sombre vision. The Orchard Keeper (1965), a tale of rural Tennessee and the violence that pervades a small community, set the course for the rest of his oeuvre. His next two books, Outer Dark, a story of illegitimacy, infanticide and incest, and Child of God, with its central character, Lester Ballard, a serial killer and necrophiliac who secretes the corpses of his victims in a cave, continued to reveal McCarthy's obsession with the dark nightmares of American life. Suttree (1979) is a substantial and densely written book, which McCarthy worked at (on and off) for twenty years. Suttree abandons his middle-class life and family to live in a decaying houseboat on a stygian river and hang out with thieves, drunks and a whole gallery of grotesque outcasts. The torpor of his existence on the rancid river is punctuated by outbursts of appalling violence and a doomed, traumatic love affair. The book resembles some kind of black parody of > Steinbeck's Tortilla Flat. After being awarded the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 1981 (presiding over the judges was Saul Bellow who praised McCarthy's 'life-giving and death-dealing sentences'), he had time and freedom to concentrate on his next book. This was Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West (1985). which many consider his masterpiece. The American West is utterly divested of any kind of mythology or heroism and depicted as an inferno. The book's two central characters are 'the kid', an orphan with no name but 'a taste for mindless violence', and a figure known as 'the judge', a shrewd, cunning psychopath who is to this sun-scorched domain what \rightarrow Melville's Captain Ahab is to the endless ocean. The cheapness of life envisaged in this hellish world was noted by a critic

who calculated that, on average, there was a murder every fifth page. Although the Border Trilogy confirmed McCarthy's status commercially, *Blood Meridian* remains his key work, an extraordinary portrait of an apocalypse that destroys all, taking no prisoners save the reader, captured by McCarthy's rich and mesmeric prose.

READ ON

➤ William Faulkner, Light in August; > Herman Melville, Moby Dick; Flannery O'Connor; Wise Blood; Ron Hansen, Desperadoes; Daniel Woodrell, Woe to Live On.

McCULLERS, Carson (1917-53)

US novelist

Reading McCullers sometimes seems like visiting a freak-show: her characters are repulsive but fascinating, macabre misfits set down in America's Deep South. The hero of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) is a deaf-mute, distracted by his inability to communicate either his sensitivity or his generosity of spirit. The awkward, ugly heroine of *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951) runs a haven in the Georgia swamps for tramps, lunatics and other social misfits — and her world is shattered when she falls in love with a malign homosexual dwarf. *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941) describes boredom and sexual obsession among the wives in a wartime army camp. *Clock Without Hands* is about racism. Only in one book, *The Member of the Wedding*, does McCullers transcend her more nightmarish imaginings. Her heroine is a young adolescent in a household bustling with preparations for a wedding: fascinated but totally ignorant about what is going on, she feels as locked out of 'real' (i.e. adult) society as the freaks and emotional cripples of McCullers's other books.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Member of the Wedding*: ▷ Eudora Welty, *Delta Wedding*; Katherine Anne Porter, *The Leaning Tower* (short stories).
- ▶ to McCullers's books in general: Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*; ▷ William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust*; Elizabeth McCracken, *The Giant's House*.

McDERMID, Val (born 1955)

British novelist

Val McDermid has written some of the best British crime fiction of the last ten years and has produced three series of books as well as a number of non-series titles. In her early career as a crime writer she created one of Britain's first lesbian investigators in Lindsay Gordon, a journalist drawn (often reluctantly) into webs of deceit and murder. In *Report for Murder* (1987), for example (the first in the series), Lindsay, working on an assignment at a private girls' school, takes on the investigation of the murder of one of the school's most famous old girls when it seems that the police have the wrong person. This first book, as well as introducing Lindsay to her lover in books to come, also introduced the reader to Lindsay's character as it was further revealed over five more titles – independent, principled and often bloody-minded. In 1992 McDermid created her

second series character, Kate Brannigan, a Manchester-based private detective. The Brannigan books are very recognizably set in the real world of contemporary Manchester, with its big-city crimes, computer fraud and get-rich-quick schemes out to con the gullible. A good example is *Dead Beat* (1992), in which a friend of her rock journalist partner asks Kate to track down a missing songwriter, a trail which leads her into the seedier areas of several northern cities. In more recent years McDermid has published three novels, more complex in narrative and more willing to stretch the boundaries of the genre than either the Lindsay Gordon or Kate Brannigan books, which feature psychological profiler Tony Hill and his police colleague Carol Jordan.

The Lindsay Gordon novels are Report for Murder, Common Murder, Final Edition, Union Jack and Booked for Murder. The Kate Brannigan books are Dead Beat, Kick Back, Crackdown, Clean Break, Blue Genes and Star Struck. McDermid's novels featuring Tony Hill and Carol Jordan are The Mermaids Singing, The Wire in the Blood and The Last Temptation.

READ ON

- A Place of Execution (in the 1960s a schoolgirl disappears and a young detective is launched on an investigation that will shape his life).
- ▶ to the Lindsay Gordon novels: Mary Wings, *She Came Too Late*; Kate Forrest, *Sleeping Bones*; Manda Scott, *Hen's Teeth*.
- ▶ to the Kate Brannigan novels: Cath Staincliffe, Dead Wrong.
- ▶ to McDermid's other fiction: ▷ Ian Rankin, *The Black Book*; Peter Robinson, *In a Dry Season*; Jane Adams, *The Greenway*.

McEWAN, lan (born 1948)

British novelist and short story writer

McEwan began his career writing short stories and short novels in which, in precise and glacially cool prose, he led his readers towards hidden horrors and terrible revelations. What, for example, is the secret of The Cement Garden (1978), which only the children know? What unimaginable violence is to end the dream-like trip to Venice recounted in The Comfort of Strangers (1981)? Later novels are just as tense, but the characters are more sympathetic, the atmosphere is less claustrophobic and human warmth and humour leaven the pain. The Child in Time (1987) is a superb book about a young couple devastated when their baby is stolen. The Innocent (1990) combines Cold War thriller (1950s vintage), love story and psychological horror story. Black Dogs (1992) is about a man researching the life of his wife's parents ('borrowing them', so to speak, since his own parents died when he was young), and in particular trying to find out what was the horror (the Black Dogs of the title) they found on their honeymoon trip to France just after the Second World War. McEwan's more recent fiction has included a short but potent morality tale of love, death and deception (Amsterdam), and the story of a man whose comfortable middle-class life is arbitrarily disrupted by the obsessions and delusions of another man (Enduring Love). Atonement, his latest and much-acclaimed novel, is an extended drama in three acts. In the first it is 1935 and a teenage girl, Briony Tallis, fatefully misinterprets events around her with terrible results for a young man named Robbie Turner. The other two take place in 1940 and follow Robbie in the retreat to Dunkirk and Briony, striving to atone for her mistake and working as a probationary nurse in a Blitz-wracked London. A coda, set in 1999, in which Briony, now an old woman and a successful writer, looks back at her younger self, cleverly upturns our expectations and invites us to re-examine the 'atonement' she has presented to us.

McEwan's other books include First Love, Last Rites, In Between the Sheets (short stories) and the screenplay The Imitation Game (a psychological thriller about the code-breakers in Bletchley just after the Second World War). The Daydreamer is a children's/adult's fantasy about a middle-aged MP catapulted back in time to his 1950s, 'Just William'-style childhood.

READ ON

▶ ▷ Barbara Vine (see ▷ Ruth Rendell), *A Fatal Inversion*; David Cook, *Crying Out Loud*; ▷ Beryl Bainbridge, *A Quiet Life*; ▷ Graham Swift, *The Light of Day*; ▷ Martin Amis, *London Fields;* Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections*.

McGRATH, Patrick (born 1950)

British novelist

The word most frequently associated with the fiction of Patrick McGrath is 'grotesque'. Indeed one of his earlier novels, in which a cerebrally damaged lord of the manor watches in mute, enraged impotence as his new butler assumes control of his wife and home, was actually called *The Grotesque*. McGrath was born in London and lived near Broadmoor Mental Hospital where his father was the medical superintendent for many years, autobiographical facts that are often cited as the ultimate source of his grim and gothic sensibility. Certainly one of his best novels, *Asylum* (see below), the story of a forensic psychiatrist at a well-known psychiatric institution, was directly influenced by his father's experiences. Two more novels followed: *Spider* (1990) and *Dr Haggard's Disease* (1992), a tale of sexual obsession (a recurring theme in McGrath's work), set in the medical profession in a superbly evoked 1930s England, just before the outbreak of war. *Martha Peake* (2000), McGrath's latest novel, is historical fiction set in eighteenth-century London and America.

ASYLUM (1997)

Asylum once again dwells on sexual obsession, this time between the wife of a psychiatrist and one of her husband's patients. A beautiful and intelligent woman, Stella Raphael forms a destructive relationship with Edgar Stark, a mentally ill patient under the care of her husband Max; this is told by Peter Cleave, another psychiatrist, who knows the Raphaels well. McGrath is fond of using unreliable narrators, however, and Cleave, with his tale of Stella's terrible compulsion to love the decidedly dangerous Stark, is no exception.

READ ON

▶ Ian McEwan, The Cement Garden; Patrick McCabe, The Dead School; Bradford Morrow, Giovanni's Gift.

McINERNEY, Jay (born 1955)

US novelist

Like a latter-day version of his hero F. Scott Fitzgerald, McInerney exploded on to the American literary scene with his first novel, Bright Lights, Big City (1984), a slick, hilarious, semi-autobiographical tale of life in the Big Apple. The book's nameless narrator is fuelled by 'Bolivian marching powder', married to a beautiful model and just about holding down a cool job. Naturally, everything falls apart and McInerney chronicles the social and personal meltdown with detached wit and epigrammatic prose. The novel's success launched a 'bratpack' of similarly hip and cynical young novelists, including > Bret Easton Ellis, Tama Janowitz and Madison Smartt Bell. What distinguishes McInerney from his contemporaries is a solid gold wit that goes well beyond hip phrasemaking. Most of his other books have dealt with similar characters - Manhattanites in high jinks - and those that have attempted to break the mould have not been among his most successful. (Ransom (1986) is set around a group of expatriate young Americans in Japan and the backpack trail around India and Nepal, and McInerney, like his characters, seems far from home.) The Story of My Life (1988) returns to New York and the often very funny sex- and drug-filled social lives of another bunch of gilded youth - this time, women. Brightness Falls (1992) is an amusing and mostly effective satire on both the publishing world and the shark pool of high finance, low cunning and hostile takeover bids that is Wall Street. Model Behaviour (1998) explored, in a harder, more brittle manner, the same territory as the first novel.

McInerney's other books include The Last of the Savages, How It Ended (a collection of shorter fiction) and Bacchus and Me (a collection of magazine columns on wine)

READ ON

- Model Behaviour.
- ► Bret Easton Ellis, The Rules of Attraction; F.Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby; Tama Janowitz, Slaves of New York; Ted Heller, Slab Rat (blistering satire on glitzy New York magazine world by Joseph Heller's son); David Handler, The Man Who Would Be F. Scott Fitzgerald (an amusing crime novel set in the New York literary scene which namechecks McInerney and the rest of the 'bratpack').

MacLEAN, Alistair (1922-87)

Scots/Swiss novelist-

By the nature of their business, thriller writers tend to come and go, dating as fast as last year's news. Popular fiction all too rapidly becomes unpopular fiction. MacLean is one of the few thriller writers whose works have lasted. Most are set in wartime, and describe deeds of great daring or endurance. War, however, is merely the reason for the events: what counts in the stories is suspense, heroism and lantern-jawed grit. Typical stories are *The Guns of Navarone* (1957), about the rescue of 1200 British soldiers from a small Greek island under the noses of German guns in the Second World War, and *Ice Station Zebra* (1963), about a submarine sent to recover secret Cold War data from a Russian spy-satellite which has crashed and become trapped beneath the Arctic ice.

READ ON

- Breakheart Pass, Where Eagles Dare, Fear Is the Key.
- ▶ Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Cruel Sea*; Hammond Innes, *Maddon's Rock/Gale Warning*; ▷ Wilbur Smith, *Hungry Is the Sea*.

READ ON A THEME: MADNESS

- Susan Hill, The Bird of Night Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar
- > Jean Rhys, Good Morning, Midnight
- Evelyn Waugh, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold

See also: Depression and Psychiatry; On the Edge of Sanity

MAHFOUZ, Naguib (born 1912)

Egyptian novelist

Modern Arabic literature is little known in the West, and the loss is ours. Mahfouz is a Nobel prize-winning novelist, known worldwide for his *Cairo Trilogy* (1956–7). This is a panorama of life in the city during the first half of the twentieth century, and includes not only a family saga to rival ▷ Singer's *The Family Moskat* or ▷ Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*, but also atmospheric studies of slum life, political satire and an absorbing description of a society trying to struggle free from centuries of religious and social stagnation into the modern, rational, democratic age. Mahfouz's style is leisurely, but the trilogy's span is enormous and repays time taken to get into it. The individual volumes are *Palace Walk, Palace of Desire* and *Sugar Street*.

READ ON

- Children of the Alley, Midaq Alley, The Harafish.
- ► Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love*; Nawal el Sadaawi, *God Dies by the Nile*; Robert Solé, *Birds of Passage*.

MAILER, Norman (born 1923)

US writer

As well as novels, Mailer has published both non-fiction (such as *Oswald's Tale*, an epic search for the truth behind Lee Harvey Oswald and the Kennedy assassination) and 'faction', a blend of real events and fiction (for example, *The Executioner's Song*, 1979, an examination of the character and crimes of the

murderer Gary Gilmore). Most of his novels are set in the present day, and deal with a single theme: maleness. He regards violence and competitiveness as essential components of masculinity, related to sexual potency - and claims, further, that capitalist society will only succeed if it models itself on the aggressive, cocky male. The world being what it is, Mailer is often forced - like > Hemingway before him – to describe the failure of these macho fantasies, and because so many of his books are about the failure of the American Dream, despair gives his writing its stinging and continuing relevance. The Naked and the Dead (1948) is about the brutalization of a group of bewildered young airmen in the Second World War. In Why Are We in Vietnam? (1967), a savage Hemingway parody, a man takes his son on a bear-hunt as an eighteenthbirthday celebration, and this guintessential US manhood ritual is linked, in a devastating final paragraph, with the mindless, gung-ho crowing of the gookslaughtering US army in Vietnam, into which the boy will be drafted now that he is adult. An American Dream (1965), an equally pungent satire, shows a man at the end of his tether who commits murder and then tries to cudgel from his increasingly insane mind the reason why his country should have conditioned him to kill, why someone else's violent death should be the outcome of the American Dream.

ANCIENT EVENINGS (1983)

Pharaoh Rameses IX of Egypt, perplexed by his failure as a ruler, asks his minister Menenhetet to think back to a former existence as charioteer to the great warrior pharaoh Rameses II, and to explain the secrets of Rameses's success. Menenhetet's account is the bulk of the book, a dazzling description of a society dependent on belief in magic and on a (not unconnected) view of its own powers of rejuvenation, of constantly being able to deconstruct and reconstruct its past.

A good sampler of Mailer's work is Advertisements for Myself, an anthology of his early writings with a fascinating autobiographical commentary. His other novels include Barbary Shore, The Deer Park, the thriller Tough Guys Don't Dance, the blockbusting Harlot's Ghost, an epic about the CIA, and The Gospel According to the Son, a curiously mild take on the New Testament. The Spooky Art is a recent collection of the now octogenarian Mailer's essays on writing and being a writer.

READ ON

- ▶ to Mailer's contemporary fiction: ▷ Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls;
 ▷ Don DeLillo, Underworld; Henri de Montherlant, The Bullfighters; Robert Stone,
 Dog Soldiers; William Styron, The Long March.
- ▶ to Ancient Evenings: L.P. Myers, The Near and the Far; > Thomas Mann, Joseph and His Brothers.

MALOUF, David (born 1934)

Australian novelist and poet

Malouf has written novels set in a variety of historical and geographic settings (*An Imaginary Life*, for example, describes the exile of the Roman poet Ovid) but his most successful fiction explores, in prose of a rich and poetic range, the history of his native Australia. *Remembering Babylon* (1993) is set in Queensland in the nineteenth century and tells the story of Gemmy, who suddenly appears out of

the bush at the edge of a small white settlement. Gemmy is himself white but, after a shipwreck, he has spent sixteen years living with the Aborigines. All the white characters in the novel are alternately fascinated and appalled by Gemmy's ambiguous status, the position he holds poised between two, for them mutually exclusive, categories, white and black. Gemmy may be white but his years with the Aborigines have marked him. He hardly remembers any English and his sense of self and the natural world belong to his adopted people. As the novel progresses and Gemmy moves towards the realization that, to save himself, he must return once more to the bush, one can only admire the skill and subtlety with which Malouf unfolds his story. The Conversations at Curlow Creek (1996) is also set in the nineteenth century. The date is 1827 and the novel takes the shape of the night-long conversation between Carney, an Irish bushranger who is to be hanged in the morning, and Adair, the police officer who is overseeing the hanging. As they talk the narrative moves back and forth in time through their memories as the forces that have shaped them both become clearer and connections are established between the criminal and the man deputed to punish him.

David Malouf's other novels include Fly Away, Peter, The Great World, Child's Play, Harland's Half Acre and Johnno. Dream Stuff is a collection of short stories; 12 Edmonstone Street an idiosyncratic autobiography. Malouf has also published volumes of his poetry.

READ ON

- ▶ to An Imaginary Life: Christoph Ransmayr, The Last World.
- ▶ to the novels set in Australia's past: ▷ Thomas Keneally, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*; ▷ Patrick White, *Voss*; ▷ Peter Carey, *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

MANN, Thomas (1875-1955)

German novelist and non-fiction writer

Although Mann was not a political writer, the themes of his work reflect northern European politics of the last 100 years. His first great novel, Buddenbrooks (1901), shows the decline of a powerful German industrial family over three decades - and although it is superficially a Forsyte-like family saga, its strength comes from the persistent impression that the Buddenbrooks are characteristic of the decadent 'old Germany' as a whole. The hero of The Magic Mountain (1924) spends much of the book learning about Europe's moral, artistic and philosophical heritage - and then goes to fight in the First World War. In Joseph and His Brothers (1933-43), based on the Bible and written under the shadow of Nazism, Joseph, the figure symbolizing progress, is a plausible rogue, a Hitlerfigure, and his brothers, symbolizing barbarism, are as gullible as they are honest. The composer-hero of Doctor Faustus (1947) can unlock his creativity only by entering ever deeper into the morass of his own mind, and by accepting that to be 'ordinary' is to opt not for cultural calm but for chaos. The con-man central character of The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man (1954), Mann's only comic novel, preys on the expectations of those who still believe in the old rules of religion, society and politics.

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN (DER ZAUBERBERG) (1924)

Castorp, a rich, unimaginative young man, spends seven years in a Swiss tuberculosis sanatorium. The sanatorium is full of endlessly talkative intellectuals, who educate Castorp in music, philosophy, art and literature. The book shows him growing in both knowledge and moral stature, until at last he is cured both of tuberculosis and of the greater disease (in Mann's eyes) of ignorant complacency. As the novel ends, however, he strides out to fight in the First World War – and Mann invites us, in the light of hindsight, to ponder his probable fate and that of the European culture he has so laboriously acquired.

Mann's shorter works include Mario the Magician (about demonic possession), Death in Venice (about a writer galvanized by longing for a beautiful boy), Lotte in Weimar (a historical novel about the young >Goethe), and The Holy Sinner (a beautiful – and poker-faced, despite the ridiculousness of its events – retelling of a medieval religious legend involving incest, communion with angels and magical transformations).

READ ON

- Buddenbrooks; The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man.
- ▶ to *The Magic Mountain*: > Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*; Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*.
- ▶ to Buddenbrooks: ▷ I.B. Singer, The Family Moskat; ▷ Honoré de Balzac, Cousin Bette.
- ▶ to Joseph and His Brothers: > Gustave Flaubert, Salammbô.

MANNING, Olivia (1908-80)

British novelist

Manning is best known for the six-novel sequence, Fortunes of War (The Balkan Trilogy, 1960-65 and The Levant Trilogy, 1977-80, memorably filmed for TV with Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson). The central characters, Guy and Harriet Pringle, are English expatriates during the early years of the Second World War. They settle in Bucharest, where Guy teaches English; then, as the Axis powers advance, they move to Athens and from there to Cairo, where they 'hole up' during the desert campaign of 1942. Like the rest of Manning's characters, English, Middle Eastern or European, the Pringles dwell on the fringes, not at the centre, of great events; their lives are bounded by bread shortages, electricity cuts and squabbles over status. The civilization which bred them is collapsing, and they are themselves symbols of its decadence: they are effete and powerless, able only to run before events. None the less, Harriet's character does contain the seeds of change. When she marries Guy she is an unawakened personality, a genteel 1930s 'English rose'. Events draw from her emotional and intellectual strength she didn't know she possessed – and the effects are to alienate the rest of the stuffy British community and to put stress on her marriage to the honourable but unimaginative Guy. At first sight Manning seems to be offering no more than a series of artless anecdotes about the muddle and horror of life in exotic cities engulfed by war. It is not until the mosaic is complete that her underlying scheme becomes apparent: the description of a whole culture in a state of unwished-for, panic-stricken change.

The novels in The Balkan Trilogy are The Great Fortune, The Spoilt City and Friends and Heroes; those in The Levant Trilogy are The Danger Tree, The Battle Lost and Won and The Sum of Things. Manning's other novels include School for Love, The Doves of Venus and The Rain Forest. Growing Up and A Romantic Hero are collections of short stories.

READ ON

▶ Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Captains and the Kings*; Isabel Colegate, *The Shooting Party*; ▷ Evelyn Waugh, Sword of Honour trilogy (*Men at Arms, Officers and Gentlemen* and *Unconditional Surrender*).

MANSFIELD, Katherine (1888-1923)

New Zealand short story writer

Mansfield went to London at fourteen, and spent the rest of her life in Europe. When she wrote of New Zealand it was either with childhood nostalgia (for example in 'Prelude' and 'At the Bay') or with distaste for the lives its adults led in the outback ('Ole Underwood'; 'The Woman at the Store') or in dingily genteel suburbs ('Her First Ball'; 'How Pearl Button was Kidnapped'). She admired ▷ Chekhov's stories, and sought to write the same kind of innocent-seeming anecdotes distilling single moments of human folly or aspiration. Her characters are often shallow, silly and desperate people: an unemployable film extra ('Pictures'), a snobbish mother and her unmarried daughters ('The Garden-Party'), a hen-pecked singing teacher ('Mr Reginald Peacock's Day'), expatriates on the continent ('The Man Without a Temperament'; 'Je ne parle pas français'). She polished and refined her prose, often spending months on a single story—and the feeling of craftsmanship in her work, of slightly self-conscious artistry, greatly enhances the impression she seeks to give, that tragedies are not diminished because the lives they affect are small.

Mansfield's story collections are In a German Pension, Bliss, The Garden-Party and Other Stories, The Dove's Nest and Something Childish. Her Journals give fascinating glimpses both of her character and of the events and conversations which she drew on in her work.

READ ON

► Anton Chekhov, *The Lady With the Lap-Dog and Other Stories*; ▷ John Cheever, *Collected Stories*; Jean Stafford, *Collected Stories*; ▷ V.S. Pritchett, *Collected Stories*.

MANTEL, Hilary (born 1952)

British writer

Mantel is a varied writer. Her earlier novels, with the exception of *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* (1988), an account of women's lives in Saudi Arabia, are surrealist black farces. Her characters are obsessive, pathetic people trapped in situations which drive them over the edge of sanity and give them crazy, terrifying strength. What they do is grotesque and awful but we pity them. In *Vacant Possession* (1986) Muriel Axon, whose intelligence seems to have been

stunned by the terrible events of her childhood and adolescence, is released from a mental hospital. With devastating logic she sets to work to 'haunt' the places and people she remembers. More recently Mantel has turned to historical fiction, either in the relatively conventional form of *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992), a story of the leaders of the French Revolution, or in the shape of oblique, suggestive narratives such as *The Giant O'Brien* (1999). Her most recent book is an autobiographical mélange of fiction and non-fiction, *Giving Up the Ghost*, in which short stories drawn from her own childhood experience are followed by more overtly factual memories.

READ ON

- Fludd. The Giant O'Brien.
- ▶ ▷ Bernice Rubens, *Our Father*; ▷ Muriel Spark, *The Abbess of Crewe*, ▷ Beryl Bainbridge, *Master Georgie*; ▷ Kate Atkinson, *Emotionally Weird*; Alice Thomas Ellis. *The 27th Kingdom*.

READ ON A THEME: MANY GENERATIONS

- > Isabel Allende, The House of the Spirits
- > Kate Atkinson, Behind the Scenes at the Museum
- □ Gabriel García Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude
 □ Elizabeth Jane Howard, The Light Years
- Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks Tim Pears, In a Land of Plenty Rosamunde Pilcher, The Shell Seekers
- > I.B. Singer, The Family Moskat

See also: All-engulfing Families; Eccentric Families

MÁRQUEZ, Gabriel García (born 1928)

Colombian novelist and short story writer

In Márquez's invented South American town of Macondo, a place isolated from the outside world, magic realism rules; there is no distinction between magic and reality. At one level life is perfectly ordinary: people are born, grow up, work, cook, feud and gossip. But there is a second, irrational and surrealist plane to ordinary existence. The Macondans (unless they murder each other for reasons of politics, sex or family honour) live for 100, 150, 200 years. Although they are as innocent of 'real' knowledge as children - they think ice miraculous and they are amazed to hear that the world is round - they know the secrets of alchemy, converse with ghosts, remember Cortez or Drake as 'uncles'. Macondo is a rough-and-tumble Eden, a paradise where instinct rules and nothing is impossible - and Márquez spends his time either describing its enchantment or detailing the savage results when people from the outside world (jackbooted generals, con-men, lawyers, bishops) break through to 'civilize' it. For Márquez, Macondo stands for the whole of South America, and his stories are barbed political allegories. But he seldom lets this overwhelm the books. Instead of hectoring, he opens his eyes wide, puts his tongue in his cheek and tells us wonders.

PATHWAYS

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE

(many-generation saga of the Buendia family)

MANY GENERATIONS

Isabel **Allende**, *House of the Spirits* I.B. **Singer**, *The Family Moskat* **Michèle Roberts**, *Flesh and Blood* Thomas **Mann**, *Buddenbrooks*

PLACES

(locations so powerful, so engulfing, that they affect the characters almost like living things)

Paul Theroux, The Mosquito Coast
Patrick White, A Fringe of Leaves
V.S. Naipaul, A House for Mr Biswas
Robertson Davies, The Cornish Trilogy
(beginning with Rebel Angels)
Kurt Vonnegut, Galápagos

GROWN-UP FAIRY TALES

Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus Peter Carey, Oscar and Lucinda R.K. Narayan, The Maneater of Malgudi

SOUTH AMERICA

(in fiction, at least, the magic-realist continent to end them all)

Mario Vargas **Llosa**, *The Storyteller*Alejo **Carpentier**, *The Chase*Stephen **Dobyns**, *After Shocks/Near Escapes*Carlos **Fuentes**, *The Old Gringo*Augusto Roa **Bastos**, *I, The Supreme*

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE (1967)

As Colonel Aureliano Buendia faces the firing squad, the whole history of his family flashes before his eyes. They begin as poor peasants in a one-roomed hut on the edge of a swamp. They proliferate like tendrils on a vine: Aureliano himself has seventeen sons, all called Aureliano. The family members absorb knowledge, people and property until they and Macondo seem indissoluble. Finally, led by Aureliano senior, they defend the old, innocent values against invasion by a government which wants to impose the same laws in Macondo as everywhere else, and the dynasty disappears from reality, living on only in fantasy, as a memory of how human beings were before the whole world changed.

Márquez's other novels are No One Writes to the Colonel, In Evil Hour, Chronicle of a Death Foretold, The Autumn of the Patriarch (the stream-of-consciousness monologue of a dying dictator), Love in the Time of Cholera (a mesmeric love story spanning sixty years), The General in His Labyrinth (about the last days of Simón Bolívar) and Of Love and Other Demons (about an eighteenth-century priest and the 'mad' girl he falls in love with). His short story collections include Leaf-storm and Other Stories, Strange Pilgrims and Innocent Erendira and Other Stories. His non-fiction includes The Fragrance of Guavas (conversations with a fellow Colombian novelist), News of a Kidnapping (about the Colombian drugs wars and their effects on ordinary Colombians) and The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor.

READ ON

- Love in the Time of Cholera.
- ► Salman Rushdie, *Shame*; Carlos Fuentes, *Terra Nostra*; ► Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*; Machado de Assis, *Epitaph of a Small Winner* (nineteenth-century Brazilian novel which is the grandfather of all Latin American 'magic realism').

MARSH, Ngaio (1899-1982)

New Zealand novelist

Few writers used 'classic' detective-story ingredients as magnificently as Marsh. Her murder methods are ingenious and unexpected. Her locations are fascinating: backstage (and onstage) at theatres; during a village-hall concert; in the shearing shed of a sheep farm; at a top-level diplomatic reception. Her characters are exotic and her detection is scrupulously fair, with every clue appearing to the reader at the same time as to Alleyn, Marsh's urbane and hawk-eyed sleuth. Above all, her books move at a furious pace, fuelled by her effervescent glee at the follies of humankind. Typical examples are *Artists in Crime* (1938), in which a life-model meets an unfortunate end, *Enter a Murderer* (a 1935 novel about a blackmailing actor done to death on stage) and *A Man Lay Dead* (1934), about a weekend house party in which a murder game becomes all too real.

Marsh continued to publish until the early 1970s and her other books include Hand in Glove, Died in the Wool, Clutch of Constables, Vintage Murder, Spinsters in Jeopardy, Surfeit of Lampreys, Black as He's Painted and Death in Ecstasy. Black Beech and Honeydew is an autobiography, especially interesting on her childhood and her fascination with theatre.

READ ON

- Overture to Death, Surfeit of Lampreys.
- ▶ Margery Allingham, *The Beckoning Lady*; Caroline Graham, *The Killings at Badger's Drift*; Martha Grimes, *The Man With a Load of Mischief*; ▷ Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*.

MAUGHAM, W. (William) Somerset (1874–1965) British writer of novels, short stories and plays

A tireless traveller (especially in the Far East), Maugham wrote hundreds of short stories based on anecdotes he heard or scenes he observed en route. Many of them were later filmed: 'Rain', for example (about a missionary on a cruise-liner in Samoa struggling to reform a prostitute, and losing his own soul in the process), was made half a dozen times. Maugham's novels used true experience in a similar way, shaping it and drawing out its meaning but keeping close to real events. Liza of Lambeth (1897) is about a London slum girl tormented by her neighbours for conceiving a bastard child. Of Human Bondage (1915) is the story of an orphan, bullied at school because he has a club foot, who struggles to find happiness as an adult, is ravaged by love for a worthless woman, and settles at last to become a country doctor. The stockbroker hero of The Moon and Sixpence (1919) gives up career, wife and family to become a painter in the South Seas, as Gauguin did. Cakes and Ale (1930) is an acid satire about the 1930s London literary world; Maugham avoided libel suits only by claiming that every writer it pilloried was just another aspect of himself.

Maugham's other novels include The Trembling of a Leaf, The Casuarina Tree, The Razor's Edge and Catalina. His Complete Short Stories and Collected Plays (from 1907 to 1932 he wrote two dozen successful plays, mainly comedies) were published in the 1950s. A Writer's Notebook and The Summing Up give fascinating insights into the balance between his life and work.

READ ON

- ▶ to Liza of Lambeth: Arthur Morrison, A Child of the Jago.
- ▶ to Of Human Bondage: > C.P. Snow, Strangers and Brothers.
- ▶ to The Moon and Sixpence: Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth.
- ▶ to Cakes and Ale: ▷ Rose Macaulay, Crewe Train; ▷ J.B. Priestley, The Image Men.
- ▶ to the short stories: ▷ Guy de Maupassant, Boule de Suif; ▷ R.L. Stevenson, Island Nights' Entertainment; ▷ Rudyard Kipling, Wee Willie Winkie; ▷ Paul Theroux, World's End.

MAUPASSANT, Guy de (1850-93)

French writer

De Maupassant's stories – over 300, from two-page sketches to full-length novels – have a scalpel ability to cut through pretension, hope, emotion and pretence to the bones of human experience. His best-known work is the long short story *Boule de Suif* (1880). A group of people travelling across France in a stagecoach

includes Boule de Suif, a prostitute. The rest of the passengers despise her, but she gradually wins them over by her friendliness and humanity. Then the coach is held up by an army officer, who demands sex from her to let it continue. The other passengers beg her to agree – and when the journey continues, they reject her once more. The plot belongs to late nineteenth-century 'realism', but the way de Maupassant tells it, unsparingly, simply and apparently without inserting any authorial point of view, makes the story and the characters unforgettable.

READ ON

▶ The stories of ▷ Anton Chekhov, ▷ Gustave Flaubert and ▷ V.S. Pritchett.

MAURIAC, François (1885–1970)

French novelist

Mauriac's books, all set among rich families in the Bordeaux wine country at the start of the twentieth century, are based on Roman Catholic doctrines of guilt and repentance. They show people tormented by conscience (often quite justified: his characters include murderers, embezzlers, adulterers and family tyrants). Some are never challenged; others are outcasts, reviled by neighbours and relatives as unpleasant as they are themselves. A few repent, and the move from moral darkness to light irradiates their souls. The quest for redemption is, however, always left to the individual: no one is saved against his or her own will. Despite the religious starting point of Mauriac's books, they are anything but churchy: they are psychological case studies rather than religious tracts. Like ancient Greek tragedy, his work can seem remorselessly gloomy – and it has a similar hypnotic power.

Mauriac's novels include The Nest of Vipers (an old man's confession of how his bitterness over his wife's infidelity has blighted the family for decades) Thérèse Desqueyroux (a chilly investigation of the mind of a woman who has poisoned her husband), Genetrix, The Desert of Love and The Woman of the Pharisees (about religious bigotry, and the way the middle-aged resent the young).

READ ON

► Georges Bernanos, *The Diary of a Country Priest*; Carson McCullers, *Reflections in a Golden Eye*; Caraham Greene, *Brighton Rock*; Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*; Julien Green, *The Dark Journey*.

MELVILLE, Herman (1819-91)

US novelist

As a teenager, Melville educated himself by reading the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton and Sir Thomas Browne. He served at sea until he was twenty-three, and later worked as a customs officer. His books take their style from the grand literature he read, and their stories from his own seafaring adventures or from travellers' tales. Many of his novels are long, and read at times as if Genesis or Job had been revised to include whaling, smuggling, shipwreck and naval war. But their epic thought and style easily match the magnificence of the books which influenced him.

MOBY DICK (1851)

Moby Dick is a huge sperm whale, and the novel tells of Captain Ahab's obsessive attempts to hunt it down and kill it. Melville's whaling lore is extensive, his action scenes are breathtaking, and he gives an unforgettable picture of Ahab: lonely, driven, daunting as an Old Testament patriarch, a fitting adversary for the monster he has vowed to kill.

Melville's other novels include Typee and Omoo (based on his own experiences after being shipwrecked among cannibals in Polynesia), Redburn: His First Voyage, White-jacket, or The World in a Man-o'-War, the bitter satire The Confidence Man and Billy Budd, the story of an inarticulate young sailor who kills a sadistic petty officer. Two short works, of very different styles but both equally haunting, are Bartleby, the Scrivener, about a scrivener (copyist) who one day refuses to participate any longer in life, and Benito Cereno, a story centred on a mysterious slave ship.

READ ON

- ▶ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*; > Victor Hugo, *Toilers of the Sea*; > Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*.
- ▶ novels about dark obsessions of other kinds: ▷ Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus; ▷ Norman Mailer, An American Dream; ▷ John Fowles, The Collector.

READ ON A THEME: THE MIDDLE AGES

- > Italo Calvino, Our Ancestors
- > Bernard Cornwell, Harlequin
- □ Umberto Eco, The Name of the Rose
 □ John Fuller, Flying to Nowhere
- > William Golding, The Spire
- > Victor Hugo, The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Notre Dame de Paris)
- ► Thomas Mann, The Holy Sinner
 Rosalind Miles, Guinevere: Queen of the Summer Country (first of an Arthurian trilogy)

Ellis Peters, A Morbid Taste for Bones

▶ Barry Unsworth, Morality Play Helen Waddell, Peter Abelard

See also: Other Peoples, Other Times; Renaissance Europe

MITCHELL, Margaret (1900-49)

US novelist

Gone with the Wind, Mitchell's only book (published in 1936; filmed three years later with Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh) was aptly described in its day as 'the greatest love story ever told'. In Atlanta, Georgia, at the outbreak of the 1860s American Civil War, Scarlett O'Hara falls in love with Ashley Wilkes, the foppish son of a neighbouring plantation owner. But he marries someone else, and she is heartbroken. She pours her love into her family's beautiful house and plantation,

Tara. But as the Civil War proceeds, the South loses, Atlanta is burned, and to keep Tara Scarlett is forced to marry other men, including the cynical, rakish Rhett Butler. All fails, Tara is plundered, the devastation of war mirrors the suffering in Scarlett's heart – and when she tells Rhett of her hopeless love for Ashley, Rhett leaves her (with a blunt 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn'). Now, too late, she realizes that he (Rhett) was the man she loved all the time.

READ ON

► Alexandra Ripley, Scarlett (authorized sequel, published in 1991) ▷ Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago; ▷ Daphne Du Maurier, Rebecca; Colleen McCullough, The Thorn Birds; M.M. Kaye, The Far Pavilions.

READ ON A THEME: MONEY

- ▶ Martin Amis, Money Po Bronson, Bombardiers Linda Davies. Into the Fire
- > John Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga
- Christina Stead, House of All Nations
- > Tom Wolfe, The Bonfire of the Vanities

MOORCOCK, Michael (born 1939)

British novelist

In the 1960s Moorcock edited the science fiction magazine New Worlds, pioneering and encouraging New Wave writing, which attempted to give science fiction a new social and political relevance to the time. Moorcock's own New Wave work is at its peak in his Jerry Cornelius books (including The English Assassin, The Final Programme), which are less straightforward novels than firework displays of ideas, magical mystery tours round one man's overheated brain. In later books Moorcock returned to a more sober style, still crammed with ideas but much easier to read. Many of his novels offer alternative versions of the present (Warlord of the Air, for example, imagines a twentieth century where the First World War never happened and the old nineteenth-century empires, British, Austrian, Russian and German, are still jockeying for power). Others (Gloriana, The Jewel in the Skull) are satires about societies which are dark and decadent perversions of our own. All of Moorcock's work, however, is interlinked at some level, a reflection of 'the multiverse' he has imagined, the interconnected, parallel universes through which his characters travel. Jerry Cornelius, Elric of Melnibone (doomed albino prince of a dying race in some of Moorcock's best sword-andsorcery titles), Corum, Hawkmoon, Von Bek and others are all avatars of the Eternal Champion, Moorcock's Hero With a Thousand Faces.

Many of Moorcock's novels are grouped in series: The Chronicles of the Black Sword, The High History of the Runestaff, The Chronicles of Castle Brass, The Books of Corum, The History of the Eternal Champion. Byzantium Endures, The Laughter of Carthage and Jerusalem Commands are three epic novels which follow the scheming Colonel Pyat through the story, real and imagined, of the twentieth century. Mother London and King of the City are non-science fiction novels, dazzling recreations of London lives past and present.

READ ON

- Behold the Man (time traveller arrives in Judaea at the time of Christ), The Dancers at the End of Time.
- ▶ to Mother London: > lain Sinclair, Downriver; Maureen Duffy, Capital.
- b to other New Wave SF writers: Brian Aldiss, Galaxies Like Grains of Sand;
 □ J.G. Ballard, The Terminal Beach.

MOORE, Brian (1921-99)

Irish/Canadian novelist

Moore's novels explore personal anguish and unease in a similar way to >Graham Greene's, though his characters are quite different. He is particularly good at describing feelings of rootlessness and sexual longing in lonely women (The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, The Great Victorian Collection, The Doctor's Wife, The Temptation of Eileen Hughes), and the torments of firm Roman Catholic believers in threatening situations (Catholics, I am Mary Dunne, Black Robe).

THE COLOUR OF BLOOD (1987)

Cardinal Bem, head of the Church in an unnamed eastern European communist state, survives an assassination attempt only to be taken into 'protective custody'. He must escape, to make a vital speech at a forthcoming religious celebration – and the book concerns his attempts to shed his physical identity in order to evade police checks, while maintaining the blazing religious and political certainty by which he has always lived his life.

Moore's other novels include Cold Heaven, The Feast of Lupercal, The Mangan Inheritance, An Answer from Limbo, No Other Life, Lies of Silence and The Statement. His final novel, The Magician's Wife, set in nineteenth-century French colonial Africa, where an illusionist uses his talents to demonstrate the supposed superiority of European power, shows Moore's ability to root political and religious ideas in absorbing narrative.

READ ON

- The Doctor's Wife.
- to *The Colour of Blood*: ▷ Saul Bellow, *The Dean's December*; Morris West, *The Clowns of God*; Arturo Perez-Reverte, *The Seville Communion*.
- ▶ to Moore's work in general: ▷ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*; ▷ William Trevor, *Death in Summer*; Ronan Bennett, *The Catastrophist*.

MORRIS, William (1834-96)

British craftsman and writer

At the end of his life Morris (Pre-Raphaelite artist, designer and socialist philosopher) turned to fiction, writing historical novels and two future-fantasies,

A Dream of John Ball (1888) and News From Nowhere (1891). News from Nowhere has the distinction of being one of the very few fantasies to predict a happy future for the human race. Its hero drifts off to sleep during a political meeting in the 1890s, and wakes up to find that he has been transported sixty years forward in time, and that every socialist dream has been fulfilled. The worker's paradise exists: war, fear, disease and poverty have been eradicated, along with money, prisons and politicians. Everyone is equal, and the harmony between human beings and their environment (the banks of the Thames) is as perfect as it was in Eden before the arrival of the Serpent. Morris's vision is poetic rather than sickly-sweet, and he writes without a twitch of irony. Whatever our hindsight-programmed cynicism a century later, News from Nowhere is still a fascinating and remarkable read.

Morris's other fantasies include The House of the Wolfings (influenced by Icelandic sagas and northern European legends such as Beowulf), The Wood Beyond the World and The Sundering Flood.

READ ON

- A Dream of John Ball.
- ▶ Robert Graves, Seven Days in New Crete; Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward (another late nineteenth-century utopia, anticipating a future society of peace and plenty); ▷ Michael Frayn, Sweet Dreams (a satire on exactly the kind of liberal-socialist paradise Morris describes but literal: Frayn's leading character is exploring Heaven itself).

MORRISON, Toni (born 1931)

US novelist

Morrison's books explore the experience of black people in the US, from slavery to the present day. She uses history, however, not as a main subject but as the backdrop to a sensitive and witty description of ordinary people's emotions and relationships. What happened to their ancestors, and to black people in general, only partly determines who they are today. Morrison's novels include *The Bluest Eye* (1970), about an ill-treated girl's escape from reality into the fantasy that she has blue eyes; *Song of Solomon* (1977), about a man's attempts to find meaning in his life by exploring the past history of his people; *Tar Baby* (1981), whose background is the tension between today's 'successful' black people (who may, some of them think, have achieved success by compromising their racial heritage) and the poorer (possibly purer) fellow-citizens from whom they now feel alienated; and *Jazz* (1992), set in 1920s Harlem. Her most recent novel, and the only one she has published since winning the Nobel Prize in 1993, is *Paradise*, an enigmatic account of racial and cultural tension centred on an all-black township in Oklahoma.

READ ON

- Beloved (set during the period of national reconstruction after the Civil War), Sula (about the friendship of two black women growing up in Ohio in the 1920s and 30s).
- ▶ ▷ Alice Walker, *Meridian*; Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; John Edgar Wideman, *Reuben*; ▷ James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*.

MORTIMER, John (born 1923)

British writer

Mortimer remains best known for the Rumpole series of books and TV comedies, about an eccentric, endearing lawyer who wins the cases no one else wants to touch. Mortimer's novels are affectionate comedies of manners which also concern serious subjects – British politics since 1945 in *Paradise Postponed* (1985); infidelity and possible murder in *Summer's Lease* (1988); new Labour joining hands with Thatcherism in *The Sound of Trumpets* (1998). But their lighthearted, jovial style sugars the taste of Mortimer's otherwise acid satire on the way the British upper middle class behaves and thinks.

Mortimer's plays include A Voyage Round My Father and The Judge. His Rumpole stories are collected in several volumes, each of which has 'Rumpole' in the title, such as Rumpole of the Bailey, Rumpole's Return, Rumpole for the Defence, Rumpole and the Angel of Death and Rumpole and the Primrose Path. His novels include Charade, Dunster and Felix in the Underworld. Clinging to the Wreckage is an engaging autobiography, The Summer of a Dormouse makes rueful reflections on growing old.

READ ON

- ▶ to the Rumpole stories: Cyril Hare, Tragedy at Law; Carter Dickson, The Men Who Explained Miracles.
- ► to Mortimer's novels: ▷ H.G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*; ▷ Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*; ▷ A.N. Wilson, *Love Unknown*.

MOSLEY, Walter (born 1952)

US novelist

Mosley, reportedly Bill Clinton's favourite author, has written a series of books featuring Ezekiel 'Easy' Rawlins, a black detective/fixer and his good friend, the entertaining, if psychopathically violent, Mouse. The first to be published was *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1990), filmed in 1995 with a Mosley screenplay and Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins. This debut was followed by *A Red Death* (1991), *White Butterfly* (1992), *Black Betty* (1994) and *Little Yellow Dog* (1996). In 1997, *Gone Fishin'*, a kind of prequel to the series originally written (and rejected by publishers) in 1988, finally appeared. It seemed to bring the series to a close but Mosley has returned to the character in a new novel, *Bad Boy Brawly Brown*, and a collection of short stories, *Six Easy Pieces*.

In 1995, Mosley also wrote the novel *RL's Dream*, the story of an old blues guitarist reminiscing about his meeting with Robert Johnson, king of the Delta blues singers, and a man notorious for having sold his soul to the Devil (presumably *sans* any kind of dress) in return for unrivalled musical talent and fame. In 1999, he attempted a foray into science fiction with *Blue Light*, a curious combination of mysticism and allegory that many of Mosley's fans found hard to interpret. Two books instigated a new series of stories featuring Socrates Fortlow, a tough, wise ex-con, trying to go straight and having a tricky time of it. *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned*, the first Socrates collection, appeared in 1998 and the sequel, *Walkin' the Dog,* in 2000. Mosley's most recent

protagonist is Fearless Jones, a black investigator in 1950s LA who has, so far, appeared in two books – Fearless Jones and Fear Itself.

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS (1990)

Although all the Easy Rawlins books are memorable, *Devil in a Blue Dress* remains the best. A racial inversion of Raymond Chandler's classic noir novel *Farewell, My Lovely,* Mosley's tale sees a white man going into a Negro bar and enlisting the aid of a black man (Rawlins) to help find a missing white woman. Where Mosley's general approach differs is in the setting of Watts, the black area of Los Angeles, and its ubiquitous, if casual, threat of racially directed violence. As he searches for a white woman with a fondness for black jazz clubs, and jazz players, Easy Rawlins enters new realms of racial tension and violence, finding himself forced to straddle two worlds in order to survive, and Mosley provides a new update on Chandler's mean streets, viewed from a black perspective.

READ ON

► Raymond Chandler, Farewell, My Lovely; Chester Himes, A Rage in Harlem; Gary Phillips, Bad Night Is Falling; Gar Anthony Haywood, Fear of the Dark; George Pelecanos, Hell to Pay; James Sallis, The Long-Legged Fly.

MUNRO, Alice (born 1931)

Canadian short story writer

Many of Munro's stories are set in the villages and small towns of British Columbia and Ontario, places she depicts as genteel, culturally negligible and bigoted, stagnant since the days of the Model-T Ford. Many of her characters are young people of spirit (usually women or girls), stretching the bounds of this environment. Although her themes are modern, her careful descriptions of the streets, houses, rooms and clothes of her people give the stories a strong nostalgic appeal. She is like one of the gentler Southern US writers (>Eudora Welty, say) transported north.

Munro's story collections include Lives of Girls and Women, Friends of My Youth, Open Streets, The Love of a Good Woman, The Progress of Love, Dance of the Happy Shades, Who Do You Think You Are?/The Beggar Maid (in which the stories are linked to form an episodic novel) and Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage, a title which seemed to encompass all the relationships which form the bases for Munro's delicate and subtle observations of human behaviour.

READ ON

► Eudora Welty, *The Golden Apples*; ▷ Katherine Mansfield, *Collected Stories*; ▷ Helen Dunmore, *Love of Fat Men*; ▷ Raymond Carver, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please*; William Maxwell, *All the Days and Nights: Collected Stories*.

MURAKAMI, Haruki (born 1949)

Japanese novelist

Murakami is, by a long way, the most popular contemporary Japanese novelist both in his own country and in the West. That he has become so popular in the

West is no surprise. Unlike some other Japanese novelists, he draws unashamedly on Western culture. One of his bestselling books, Norwegian Wood, takes its title from a Beatles song and he is clearly obsessed by 1950s and 60s pop music and by jazz; he has translated American writers like ▷ Raymond Carver and ▷ John Irving into Japanese: elements of American detective fiction, movies, science fiction and comic books are woven into the multi-coloured tapestries that are his novels. Murakami's characters are unmistakably Japanese but they are at home (insofar as any of them are at home anywhere) in the global village of American-dominated culture. Murakami's fiction can be bizarre and unpredictably surreal. A Wild Sheep Chase has as its hero a thirtysomething advertising man drawn into the guest for a sheep with the power to bestow immortality. It can also be touchingly precise in its evocation of longing for an elusive contentment and for lost love. In South of the Border, West of the Sun, the narrator, married with children, is haunted by the memory of two lost loves and by thoughts of what might have happened had his life taken different paths. Meeting again with one of the loves from his past rekindles his emotional commitment to her but, as the novel makes clear, time past cannot be regained.

THE WIND-UP BIRD CHRONICLE (1997)

Toru Okada, the hero of Murakami's long and digressive novel, is a man who has opted out of the rat race of Japanese society. Content to live on the income of his magazine editor wife, he spends his days reading, cooking and pottering about their flat. Yet, when first his cat and then his wife disappear, Okada is drawn into a mad odyssey through alternative Tokyo worlds peopled by strange characters who may be real or may be just figments of his imagination. A mysterious woman keeps calling him and demanding phone sex. A precocious teenage neighbour shows him a dried-up well which appears to be a gateway into another world. A veteran of the Second World War recounts his dreadful experiences during that war. The mundane realities of Okada's everyday life are transformed into surreal revelations of his own half-acknowledged desires and of the hidden secrets of Japanese society.

Murakami's other novels include Sputnik Sweetheart, After the Quake and Dance Dance Dance. Underground is a haunting non-fiction examination of the lives affected by the 1995 gas attack on the Tokyo underground.

READ ON

► Kobo Abe, *The Box Man*; Banana Yoshimoto, *Kitchen*; ▷ John Irving, *The Fourth Hand*; David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*; ▷ William Gibson, *Idoru*; Sujata Massey, *The Salaryman's Wife*.

MURDOCH, Iris (1919–99)

Irish/British novelist and philosopher

The subject of Murdoch's two dozen novels is personal politics: the ebb and flow of relationships, the way we manipulate others and are ourselves manipulated. The setting is the present day; the people are middle-class, professional, usually from the English home counties and they are all bizarre, possessed by a demon which blurs reality and dream into a single, mesmeric state. Seduction, mysticism and moral disintegration are favourite themes, and the innocent late

adolescent (whose effect on other people's lives is often devastating) is a standard character.

THE BELL (1958)

Should we live our lives by the conventions of society or moment by moment, defining ourselves by our changing moods and enthusiasms? This question perplexes every character in The Bell; all are waiting for a sudden inspiration or discovery which will define their existence, show them how they should behave. The setting is a lay community housed in a former convent, a refuge for an eccentric collection of inmates whose peace is disturbed by the arrival of two amoral 'innocents', Dora and Toby. The Bell was popular in the hippie 1960s. and still seems to catch the wide-eved, distracted mood of those times. But its story and characters are fascinating and its images (for example that of the naked, startlingly white-bodied Toby diving, like a fallen angel, into the murky convent lake to investigate a sunken bell) are as disturbing as they are unforgettable.

Murdoch's other novels include The Flight from the Enchanter, The Sandcastle, A Severed Head, The Red and the Green, The Time of the Angels, The Sea, the Sea, The Book and the Brotherhood, The Message to the Planet, The Green Knight and Jackson's Dilemma.

READ ON

- The Green Knight.
- ▶ ▷ A.S. Byatt, The Virgin in the Garden; Mary McCarthy, A Charmed Life: Alice Thomas Ellis, The 27th Kingdom; D.M. Thomas, Birthstone; Mary Flanagan, Trust: Irene Handl, The Sioux.

READ ON A THEME: MUSIC

- > Anthony Burgess, The Piano Players
- Willa Cather, The Song of the Lark
- > Hermann Hesse, Gertrud David Leavitt, The Page Turner Bernard MacLaverty, Grace Notes
- > Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus
- > H.H. Richardson, The Getting of Wisdom
- ∨ Vikram Seth, An Equal Music Joseph Skvorecky, Dvořák in Love

N

NABOKOV. Vladimir (1899–1977)

Russian/US novelist and short story writer

Nabokov wrote in Russian until 1940, when he settled in the US: thereafter, he worked in English, and also translated and revised his earlier works. He was fascinated by language, and his books are firework displays of wit, purple-prose descriptions, ironical asides and multi-lingual puns: for his admirers, style is a major pleasure of his work. Several of his novels take the form of teasing 'biographies', revealing as much about their dogged biographers as their subjects. The hero of *The Defence* (1929) is a chess champion, crippled emotionally both by his profession and by his feeling of identity with the whole Russian cultural tradition. The heroes of The Real Life of Sebastian Knight (1941) and Look at the Harlequins! (1974) play ironical games with their wouldbe biographers: the more they seem to reveal themselves, the more elusive they become. Pnin (1957) is a sad comedy about an accident-prone Russian professor at a US university, trying to keep the customs of the Old Country in a baffling new environment, Invitation to a Beheading (1935) and Bend Sinister (1947), Nabokov's most political books, are stories of oppression and nightmare in harsh totalitarian regimes. Despair (1934) is a dream-like psychological thriller about a man who hunts down and murders his double, only to find that he has destroyed himself. Humbert Humbert, the tragi-comic hero of Lolita (1955) is led by sexual infatuation for a twelve-year-old girl into a farcical kidnapping, a flight from the police through the motels and diners of grubby middle America, and finally to murder. The book's tone of obsessive erotic reverie is repeated in Ada (1969), about an incestuous love affair between two rich, spoiled people in a mysterious country midway between nineteenthcentury Russia and the 1930s US.

PALE FIRE (1962)

Few novels can ever have had such an original form: a 999-line poem with introduction and commentary. The poet is an exiled Eastern European king; the commentator is a fool who fantasizes that he is the real heir to the throne, and that he is writing under the shadow of an assassination plot. The effect is as if Anthony Hope had beefed up someone's PhD thesis: Pale Fire is funny, clever – and, despite its bizarre form, a delightfully easy read.

Nabokov's other novels include King, Queen, Knave, Glory, Camera Obscura/ Laughter in the Dark and The Gift. Nabokov's Dozen, Nabokov's Quartet, A Russian Beauty, Tyrants Destroyed and Details of a Sunset are short story collections. Speak, Memory is a poetic account of Nabokov's privileged, pre-Revolutionary childhood.

READ ON

- Pnin.
- ▶ to Nabokov's elegant, games-playing style: ▷ Muriel Spark, The Abbess of Crewe;
 ▷ John Barth, Giles Goat-boy; Frederic Raphael, California Time; ▷ Julian Barnes, Flaubert's Parrot.
- ▶ to his darker novels: ▷ Franz Kafka, The Trial; Jerzy Kosinski, The Painted Bird;
 ▷ Martin Amis, Success.
- ▶ to his short stories: Donald Barthelme, City Life.

NAIPAUL, V.S. (Vidiadhar Surajprasad) (born 1932) Trinidadian novelist and non-fiction writer

A Trinidadian Indian who settled in England in his early twenties, Naipaul identifies exclusively with none of these three communities, and has written about all of them. His early novels (culminating in A House for Mr Biswas) were gentle tragi-comedies, but from the late 1960s onwards his books grew darker. He wrote savage non-fiction about the West Indies, India, South America and the Middle East, a mixture of travel and harsh political and social analysis, and his novels dealt with totalitarian oppression and despair. In a Free State is about cultural alienation: its central characters are an Indian servant in Washington, a Trinidadian in racist London and two whites in a fanatical black-power Africa. Guerrillas is set in a Caribbean dictatorship, A Bend in the River in a 'new' African country, emerging from centuries of colonial exploitation into a corrupt, Orwellian state. For most of the 1980s Naipaul wrote no fiction, but in 1987 he published The Enigma of Arrival, synthesizing most of his earlier themes. Its hero, a Trinidadian writer living near Salisbury, reflects on the way his ambitions and his art have changed as he has grown older, on the nature of friendship, on the passing of 'old England' and, generally, on the breakdown of the former order of the world. The book's tone is sombre, mellow and rueful; it seems more like autobiography than fiction. It is a unique and moving work.

A HOUSE FOR MR BISWAS (1961)

Mr Biswas is a free spirit shackled by circumstance. He is a poor Hindu in Trinidad, an educated man among illiterates, a good-natured soul who irritates everyone. He marries into an enormous extended family, the Tulsis, and spends the next twenty years trying to avoid being engulfed by their lifestyle, which he finds vulgar and ridiculous. The conflict – critics see it as an allegory about the absorption of political or ethnic minorities – is chiefly expressed in comedy. Mr Biswas is desperate to escape from the Tulsis's rambling mansion, thronged with disapproving relatives; his ambition is to live decently with his family in a home of his own. Although he succeeds, the book ends ironically and tragically: his victory, the vindication of all he stands for, turns to ashes even as he savours it.

Naipaul's other novels include The Suffrage of Elvira, Mr Stone and the Knights Companion, The Mystic Masseur, The Mimic Men and Half a Life. His non-fiction books include The Middle Passage (on the West Indies and South America), An Area of Darkness and India: a Wounded Civilization (two studies, a decade apart, of Indian life and politics) and Among the Believers and Beyond Belief (two investigations into the Islamic cultures of the Far East). Miguel Street and A Flag

on the Island are collections of short stories. Letters Between a Father and a Son is the correspondence between Naipaul, studying at Oxford, and his father, working as a journalist in Trinidad and nursing his own literary ambitions. The correspondence is brought to a moving conclusion by the elder Naipaul's sudden death at the age of only forty-seven.

READ ON

- · A Way in the World.
- ▶ to the social comedies: Shiva Naipaul (V.S.'s brother), Fireflies; ▷ R.K. Narayan, Mr Sampath/The Printer of Malgudi; Amos Tutuola, The Palm-wine Drinkard; Timothy Mo, Sour-Sweet; Rohinton Mistry. Family Matters
- ▶ to Naipaul's political novels: Joseph Conrad, Nostromo; Christopher Hope, Black Swan.
- ▶ to The Enigma of Arrival: P.H. Newby, Leaning in the Wind.

NARAYAN, R.K. (Rasipuran Krishnaswami) (1907–2001) Indian novelist

Narayan's stories are set in the imaginary southern Indian town of Malgudi, or in the villages and farms of the nearby Mempi Hills. His characters are shopkeepers, peasant farmers, craftsmen, priests, money-lenders, teachers and housewives, and his theme is the way Hindu belief sustains them in the face of the bewildering or ridiculous events of daily life. Many of his books are comedies. In The Maneater of Malgudi (1961) a demented taxidermist works on a series of creatures of ever-increasing size until, to universal panic, he suggests killing and stuffing the town's sacred elephant. The narrator of A Tiger for Malgudi (1983) is a worldly-wise tiger who becomes a circus performer, a film star and a travelling guru. The Painter of Signs (1976) recounts the farcical relationship between Raman, an ambitious but under-employed sign-painter, and Daisy from the Family Planning Centre, a New Woman whose life is dedicated not to love affairs but to preventing over-population. Other books replace knockabout with gentler, more bittersweet scenes from the human comedy. The English Teacher/Grateful to Life and Death (1945) is a beautiful story about a husband coping with grief after the death of his beloved wife. In The Vendor of Sweets (1967) the sweet manufacturer Jagan is a devout Hindu who lives an austere, uncomplicated and self-sufficient life. This life is overturned when his wastrel son Mali arrives from Delhi with a non-Indian wife. moves into Jagan's house, and undertakes a scheme for enriching himself by marketing a machine for writing novels.

Narayan's other novels include Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts (which with The English Teacher form a trilogy), Mr Sampath/The Printer of Malgudi, The Financial Expert, The Guide and Waiting for the Mahatma. Under the Banyan Tree and Malgudi Days are short-story collections; Gods, Demons and Others is Narayan's retelling of stories from Hindu mythology; My Days is a placid autobiography.

READ ON

- The Financial Expert.
- ▶ Rabindranath Tagore, The Home and the World; Anita Desai, The Clear Light of

Day; S.N. Ghose, And Gazelles Leaping; > Kazuo Ishiguro, An Artist of the Floating World; Tove Jansson, The Summer Book; Giovanni Guareschi, The Little World of Don Camillo (short stories).

READ ON A THEME: NEW YORK

- Paul Auster, The New York Trilogy Kevin Baker, Dreamland
 E.L. Doctorow, Ragtime
- > Jay McInerney, Brightness Falls
- ➤ Toni Morrison, Jazz
 Henry Roth, Call It Sleep
 Damon Runyon, Guys and Dolls

READ ON A THEME: NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

- > Peter Carey, Jack Maggs
- Charles Dickens, Hard Times Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil, or the Two Nations
- > John Fowles, The French Lieutenant's Woman
- Mrs Gaskell, North and South
 George Gissing, The Nether World
 George and Weedon Grossmith, The Diary of a Nobody
- > Anthony Trollope, The Warden
- > Sarah Waters, Tipping the Velvet

NOON, Jeff (born 1958)

British novelist

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a lot of inventive and adventurous fiction was being produced in the science fiction genre. Little of it was being written in Britain. The US was where the action was, 'cyberpunk' was the buzz-word and writers like > William Gibson and Bruce Sterling were the leading innovators. Manchester, England seemed an unlikely setting for cutting-edge science fiction. Yet Jeff Noon's Vurt (1993) emerged from that unlikely setting as one of the most original science fiction books of the last twenty years. Cleverly mixing the narrative conventions of old-fashioned pulp fiction with up-to-the-minute ideas about virtual reality, Noon creates a surreal Manchester of the near future where the hallucinogenic drug of choice, vurt, carries its users into a variety of alternate realities. The narrator, Scribble, has lost his sister amid the labyrinthine byways of one of these alternate realities and he embarks on a quest to find her. Noon has followed up his début novel with a number of similar fictions (Pollen, Nympho-

mation, Needle in the Groove, Falling out of Cars and the stories in Pixel Juice all explore worlds where virtual technologies and drug cultures intermingle) but, in many ways, his most revealing novel since Vurt has been Automated Alice (1996). In interviews Noon has cited Lewis Carroll as a major influence and this updating of Alice's adventures places him in a tradition of English fantasy writers and lovers of surreal wordplay as well as within the science fiction genre.

READ ON

▶ Neal Stephenson, Snow Crash; > William Gibson, Idoru; Michael Marshall Smith, Only Forward; Tricia Sullivan, Someone to Watch Over Me.

NORFOLK, Lawrence (born 1963)

British novelist

Like an English version of > Umberto Eco, Lawrence Norfolk writes big, baggy novels that raid history, mythology and philosophy in search of stories to entertain and educate the reader. Lemprière's Dictionary (1991) took as its starting point the life of the classical scholar John Lemprière, author of an eighteenth-century dictionary of classical literature and the classical world. But Norfolk zigzagged back and forth through the centuries, using the dark and tangled family history of the Lemprières and the subjects of John's scholarship to introduce stories from Greek and Roman mythology, the founding of the East India Company, the siege of La Rochelle and the crime-ridden streets of Georgian London. No reader could feel short-changed by the book's ebullient concoction of corruption, conspiracy, piracy, assassinations and murders, mismatched love affairs and the misdeeds of the past returning to haunt later generations. It was an explosive debut and was followed by another sprawling monster of a book, The Pope's Rhinoceros (1996), which centred on sixteenth-century attempts to deliver a rhinoceros, an almost mythical beast at the time, to Pope Leo X. Again, this is just one of a whole gallery of interweaving stories about a Europe over which the shadow of the Reformation hangs. Norfolk's most recent book, In the Shape of a Boar, is shorter but, in many ways, more ambitious than his first two novels, in its linking of the mythological hunting of the Boar of Kalydon with an incident in Second World War Greece and its repercussions in the life of a Jewish poet.

READ ON

▶ Umberto Eco, *The Island of the Day Before*, ▷ Rose Tremain, *Music & Silence*, ⊳ lain Sinclair, *Downriver*; ⊳ Adam Thorpe, *Pieces of Light*; William T. Vollmann, Argall.



O'BRIAN, Patrick (1914-2000)

English novelist

O'Brian's Jack Aubrey novels, about an officer in the British Navy in Napoleonic times, chart his hero's progress up the ranks, and place him in great events and adventures of the time. The characters are three-dimensional (shown especially in the relationship between Aubrey and his friend, the ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin), the sailing and fighting are wonderfully described, the plots are exciting and the talk is multi-faceted, ironical and convincingly real. The novels, self-contained but adding up to one of the most impressive of all works of naval fiction, are *Master and Commander* (1970), *Post Captain* (1972), *HMS Surprise* (1973), *The Mauritius Command* (1977), *Desolation Island* (1978), *The Fortune of War* (1979), *The Surgeon's Mate* (1980) *The Ionian Mission* (1982), *Treason's Harbour* (1983), *The Far Side of the World* (1984), *The Reverse of the Medal* (1986), *The Letter of Marque* (1988), *The Thirteen Gun Salute* (1989), *The Nutmeg of Consolation* (1991), *Clarissa Oakes* (1992), *The Wine-Dark Sea* (1993), *The Commodore* (1994), *The Yellow Admiral* (1997), *The Hundred Days* (1998) and *Blue at the Mizzen* (1999).

READ ON

- The Golden Ocean and The Unknown Shore are sea stories that predate the Aubrey/Maturin novels; Collected Short Stories were largely written in the 1950s.
- ► C.S. Forester, Hornblower novels; Alexander Kent, Bolitho novels, beginning with *Richard Bolitho, Midshipman*.

O'BRIEN, Flann (1911–1966)

Irish novelist

Flann O'Brien was born Brian O'Nolan in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, and moved to Dublin where he studied at University College. In 1935, he joined the Irish civil service, remaining there until ill-health forced him to retire in 1953. Civil servants were then forbidden to publish under their own names and his first novel, the surreal classic, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, appeared under the name of Flann O'Brien in 1935. Praised by Samuel Beckett, James Joyce and Graham Greene (who had engineered its publication), the novel was a multi-faceted and highly comical analysis of both Irish culture and the art of fiction. His publisher rejected his second novel, *The Third Policeman*, causing O'Brien's literary career to stall and leaving him so disappointed that he claimed the manuscript had been lost. The book only appeared, posthumously, in 1967. That same year, his third novel, originally published in Gaelic as *An Béal Bocht*, finally appeared in English as

The Poor Mouth. Beginning in 1940, for over twenty-five years O'Brien wrote a daily column in the Irish Times using the byline Myles na Gopaleen. These hilarious pieces appeared under the banner Cruiskeen Lawn (The Brimming Jug), and selections appeared in various volumes, including The Best of Myles in 1968 and The Hair of the Dogma in 1977. After his debut was reissued in 1960, O'Brien published Hard Times in 1962 and The Dalkey Archive two years later. Following his untimely, if rather fitting, death on April Fool's Day, his reputation as a great Irish author was secure, but, despite James Joyce declaring of him 'That's a real writer, with the true comic spirit', O'Brien privately felt that he had failed in his literary endeavours. For once, he was wrong.

READ ON

► James Joyce, *Ulysses*; ⊃ Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*; B.S. Johnson, *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*.

O'CONNELL, Carol (born 1947)

US novelist

The maverick cop, unwilling to abide by the rules and customs that confine his colleagues, is one of the clichés of the police procedural genre and has been for many years. Over the last decade the figure of the female detective, unwilling to abide by the rules and customs imposed by a male-dominated world, has threatened also to become a rather stale and lazy piece of characterisation. Carol O'Connell's character Mallory is a maverick female detective in the New York police force and yet she is anything but a cliché. Mallory – she dislikes first names because they're too personal – is a genuinely unsettling and original creation. Chillingly obsessive about her job, exceptionally intelligent and self-contained, she is more comfortable with computers than people and harbours dark secrets in her past. The plots of O'Connell's novels are offbeat and subtly contrived but what really fuels the tension in her books, and what the reader remembers of them, is the enigmatic personality of her chief character.

MALLORY'S ORACLE (1994)

As a child Mallory was saved from a life of crime and deprivation on the streets of New York by the intervention of a police officer called Louis Merkovitz and his wife who took her into their home. Now, while investigating a serial killer who targets the elderly, Markovitz has himself been killed. Mallory enters the case determined as only she can be on unearthing the truth and avenging the death of her mentor. To do so she has to enter dangerous realms of both the city and her own psyche.

O'Connell's other Mallory books are The Man Who Lied to Women, Killing Critics, Flight of the Stone Angel, Shell Game and Crime School. Judas Child is a non-Mallory novel but equally gripping and intense in its account of a man's search for the truth about the killing of his sister.

READ ON

▶ Patricia Cornwell, *Post-Mortem*; ▷ Michael Connelly, *The Poet*; Kathy Reichs, *Bare Bones*; Jan Burke, *Good Night, Irene*.

OKRI, Ben (born 1959)

Nigerian novelist and poet

Okri lives in England and writes in English, but his work has a lilt and cadence learned from Yoruba folk stories and oral poetry. His best-known book is *The Famished Road* (1991), the story of a spirit born as a child to an ordinary family, who falls so in love with his human parents and with the marvellous mortal world that he chooses to remain with us, exploring and enjoying. The book's pleasures are partly the fun to be had from a mischievous little boy with supernatural powers let loose in a deeply traditional society, and partly the rediscovery, as it were through alien eyes, of the everyday wonders, mundane magic of our own existence and the world we live in.

Okri's other novels are Songs of Enchantment, Infinite Riches, Flowers and Shadows, The Landscapes Within, Astonishing the Gods, a poetic fable about a man's search for visibility and meaning in his life, and In Arcadia. Incidents at the Shrine and Stars of the New Curfew are short-story collections; An African Elegy contains poems; A Way to be Free is a collection of essays.

READ ON

- Songs of Enchantment, Infinite Riches (sequels to The Famished Road following the further adventures of the spirit-child Azaro in the mortal world).
- ► Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters*; Sembene Ousmane, *God's Bits of Wood*; ▷ Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

READ ON A THEME: ON THE EDGE OF SANITY

Djuna Barnes, Nightwood

- > Charlotte Brontë, Villette
- □ Graham Greene, Brighton Rock
- > Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf
- > Franz Kafka, The Trial
- > Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano
- > Vladimir Nabokov, Despair
- > R.K. Narayan, The English Teacher/Grateful to Life and Death
- > Barry Unsworth, Losing Nelson
- > Antonia White, Beyond the Glass

See also: Depression and Psychiatry: Madness

ONDAATJE, Michael (born 1943)

Sri Lankan/Canadian novelist and poet

A poet before he was a novelist, Michael Ondaatje writes prose that is as rich, dense and allusive as poetry. Narrative is the bare bones on which Ondaatje hangs his often haunting and beautiful language and imagery. His early novels were resolutely experimental in form. Two are about real historical characters. Coming Through Slaughter (1979) tells the life of the legendary cornet player

Buddy Bolden, allegedly the 'inventor' of New Orleans jazz, and does so in a mixture of poetry, prose, song lyrics and reminiscence. The Collected Works of Billy the Kid (1981) similarly presents a collage of poems, photographs and documentary evidence related to the life of, and, more significantly, the myth surrounding the teenage gunfighter. Both developed a certain cult status but were not major bestsellers. Only with The English Patient and the success of Anthony Minghella's film version of it has Ondaatie found the wide audience his fiction deserves.

THE ENGLISH PATIENT (1992)

As the Second World War drags towards its conclusion, a nurse and her patient, an Englishman burnt beyond recognition and swathed in bandages, are holed up in a villa near Florence after the retreat of the Germans. Two other damaged individuals, a Sikh bomb-disposal expert and a former criminal who has suffered torture, are now the villa's only other occupants. As the nurse and her two companions enter into complex relations of their own and speculate about the enigma of the English patient, he returns in his own mind to North Africa before the war and an intense but doomed love affair. Written in a prose that lingers on the details of the visible, tangible world and unfolding its story in a jigsaw of interlocking scenes, The English Patient is a hypnotic exploration of love, memory and desire.

READ ON

- Anil's Ghost (a searching tale of love and politics set in a Sri Lanka torn apart by civil war).
- ▶ Paul Bowles. The Sheltering Sky: > Gabriel García Márquez, Love in the Time of Cholera: Romesh Gunesekera, Heaven's Edge: Alessandro Baricco, Silk,

ORWELL, **George** (1903–50)

British writer

George Orwell was the pseudonym of Eric Blair. In his twenties he worked for the colonial police in Burma (an experience he later used in the novel Burmese Days). He returned to England disgusted with imperialism and determined never again to work for or support 'the system'. In fact, most of his work thereafter was literary: articles, essays and books taking a jaundiced view of British society and attitudes. Commissioned to report on the industrial north of England, he wrote The Road to Wigan Pier (1937), an indictment not only of unemployment and poverty but also of the failure of idealists, of all political parties, to find a cure. Down and Out in Paris and London (1933) is a description of the life of tramps and other derelicts; Homage to Catalonia (1938) is a withering account of the failure of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. During the 1930s Orwell published three ⊳Wellsian novels, about people dissatisfied with the constricting middle-class or lower-middleclass lives they led. It was not until 1945, when the Second World War seemed to have blown away forever the humbug and complacency which Orwell considered the worst of all British characteristics, that he published his first overtly political book, Animal Farm. In this Stalinist 'fairy story', pigs turn their farm into a workers' democracy in which 'all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others', and the rule of all quickly degenerates into the tyranny of the few. The success of *Animal Farm* encouraged Orwell to write an even more savage political fantasy, *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

Nineteen Eighty-four (1949)

In the totalitarian future, Winston Smith's job is to rewrite history, adding to or subtracting from the record people who are in or out of Party favour. He falls in love – a forbidden thing, because it arises from free will and not by order of the Party – and is betrayed to the Thought Police. He is tortured until he not only admits, but comes to believe, that the Party is right in everything: if it says that 2 + 2 = 5, then that is so. The book ends, chillingly, with the idea that Winston has won the victory over himself: he is happy because he has chosen, of his own free will, to have no choice.

Orwell's 1930s novels are A Clergyman's Daughter, Keep the Aspidistra Flying and Coming Up for Air. His essays, letters and journalism have been collected in four volumes in paperback.

READ ON

- ▶ to the novels of the 1930s: Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*; ▷ H.G. Wells: *The History of Mr Polly*.
- ▶ to the savage politics of *Nineteen Eighty-four*: Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*; ▷ Franz Kafka, *The Trial*; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Bend Sinister*.
- ► Future-fantasies of a similarly bleak kind: Yevgeni Zamyatin, *We*; ▷ Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*; ▷ Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (Burgess also wrote 1985, a right-wing riposte to *Nineteen Eighty-four*).
- ▶ Mario Vargas Llosa, The City and the Dogs/The Time of the Hero, set in a Peruvian military academy, is that rare thing, an Orwellian political allegory which is also funny.

READ ON A THEME: OTHER PEOPLES, OTHER TIMES

(historical novels set in remote or unusual times)

Jean M. Auel, *Clan of the Cave Bear* (prehistoric Europe)
Robert Edric, *The Book of the Heathen* (late nineteenth-century Belgian Congo)
Shusako Endo, *Silence* (seventeenth-century Japan)

- Gustave Flaubert, Salammbô (ancient Carthage)
- Norman Mailer, Ancient Evenings (ancient Egypt)
 Naomi Mitchison, Early in Orcadia (prehistoric Orkneys)
- Robert Silverberg, Gilgamesh the King (ancient Sumeria)
- Mario Vargas Llosa, The War of the End of the World (nineteenth-century Peru)

See also: Ancient Greece and Rome; The Bible

PATHWAYS

GEORGE ORWELL

Nineteen Eighty-four

(repression and oppression in grim totalitarian future)

BLEAK PROSPECTS

(nightmare scenarios for the future of human society)

George Turner, The Sea and Summer Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale Paul Theroux, O-Zone Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange

Russell Hoban, Riddley Walker Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451

THE GHASTLY PAST

(totalitarian, fundamentalist nightmares from 'real' history)

Nathaniel **Hawthorne**, *The Scarlet Letter*Maxim **Gorky**, *Foma Gordeev*Willa **Cather**, *Death Comes For the Archbishop*Graham **Greene**, *Brighton Rock*Alexandr **Solzhenitsyn**, *One Day in the Life of*Ivan Denisovich

INNER HELL

(the nightmare is inside us)

William Golding, Lord of the Flies
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness
Georges Simenon, The Murderer
Fay Weldon, Life and Loves of a She-Devil
Will Self, My Idea of Fun



READ ON A THEME: PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- > Hermann Hesse, Rosshalde
- D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers
 Shena Mackay, The Orchard on Fire
 Edna O'Brien, Time and Tide
 Dodie Smith, I Capture the Castle
- > Ivan Turgenev, Fathers and Sons
- > John Updike, The Centaur

See also: Adolescence; All-engulfing Families; Eccentric Families; Many Generations; Teenagers

PARETSKY, Sara (born 1947)

US novelist

Sara Paretsky was one of the first writers working in the hard-boiled tradition to create a convincing female central character who could support a series of novels. Her private eye, V.I. Warshawski, moves in a murky world of drugtrafficking, union corruption, medical fraud and lethal religious politics. Warshawski is a crack shot, a karate expert, and has an armoury of bruisingly unanswerable one-liners. She is also devastatingly beautiful, and combines contempt for masculine bravado with a willingness to go weak at the knees whenever a gorgeous hunk swims into view.

The Warshawski books are Indemnity Only, Deadlock, Killing Orders, Bitter Medicine, Blood Shot, Burn Marks, Guardian Angel, Tunnel Vision, Hard Time and Total Recall.

READ ON

- Ghost Country (a non-Warshawski novel of life on Chicago's meanest streets).
- ➤ Sue Grafton, *O is for Outlaw*; Marcia Muller, *Listen to the Silence*; Janet Dawson, *Witness to Evil*; Sarah Dunant, *Fatlands* (a British version of the female private detective story).

PASTERNAK, Boris (1890–1960)

Russian poet and novelist

In Russia Pasternak is remembered chiefly as a poet and translator (of ▷ Goethe and Shakespeare). Western readers know him for his 1957 novel Doctor Zhivago, and for the savage reaction of the Soviet authorities of the time, who banned the book and made Pasternak renounce his Nobel Prize. Doctor Zhiyago is about the doctor of the title and a teacher, Lara, caught up in the civil war which followed the 1917 Revolution. Although each is married to someone else and has a child, they fall in love - and the feverishness of their affair is increased by knowledge that neither it nor they will survive the war, since they come from a doomed class, the bourgeoisie. Horrified and powerless, they witness the brutality, class hatred and fury which precede the establishment of the USSR. Despite the reaction of the late-1950s authorities to all this, Pasternak was not really concerned with politics. He was more interested in the idea of people out of step with their time, star-crossed by destiny, and in the way Zhivago's and Lara's relationship was an emotional counterpart to the chaos and destruction all round them. The book ends with Zhivago's poems about Lara, like faded love-letters plucked from the rubble of the past.

READ ON

► Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*; ▷ Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*; ▷ Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*; ▷ Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*; ▷ Iris Murdoch, *The Red and the Green*.

PEAKE, Mervyn (1911–68)

British novelist and artist

Peake earned his living as an artist, drawing cartoons and grotesque, sombre illustrations to such books as *Treasure Island* and *The Hunting of the Snark*. He also made portraits of the main characters in his own novels: unsmilling freaks with distorted limbs and haunted eyes, violently cross-hatched as if with giant cobwebs. He admired \triangleright Poe and \triangleright Kafka, and his own work lopes gleefully – and hilariously – down the same dark passages of the imagination, peering into every corner and detailing the horrors that wait behind every moss-grown, rust-hinged door.

GORMENGHAST (1946-59)

The Gormenghast Trilogy *Titus Groan, Gormenghast* and *Titus Alone* takes place in a mist-shrouded, monstrous kingdom surrounding the crumbling Gothic castle of Gormenghast. Evil broods, ever undefined but waiting to pounce. Everyone, from Lord Sepulchrave himself to the physician Prunesquallor, from Nanny Slagg to the demented scullion Steerpike, lives every second of each day by a precise, bizarre ritual, as compulsive and pointless as the movements of the insane. *Titus Groan* describes the fearful consequences when Steerpike, to further his own dark ambitions, starts fomenting social revolution. *Gormenghast* is about the growing-up of Titus, 77th Earl of Groan: how he learns about his inheritance, uncovers the castle's secrets and begins to chafe against the rituals which choke its people's lives. In *Titus Alone* Titus breaks free of the castle and explores the country outside, an arrogant knight-errant on a terrifying, pointless quest.

PATHWAYS

MERVYN PEAKE

GORMENGHAST

(Titus Groan uncovers his destiny in a sinister castle-kingdom)

DARK IMAGININGS

(terror walks)

Denis Wheatley, The Ka of Gifford Hillary
James Herbert, The Magic Cottage
Bram Stoker, Dracula
Stephen King, Pet Sematary
Edgar Allan Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination

CASTLES AND OLD, DARK HOUSES

(- and the innocents who wander into them)

Angela Carter, The Magic Toyshop Henry James, The Turn of the Screw Daphne Du Maurier, Rebecca Susan Hill, The Woman in Black Michael Innes, Lament for a Maker

FANTASY SOCIETIES

(if you think this is the real world, beware)'

Ursula **Le Guin**, *Malafrena*Robert **Silverberg**, *Lord Valentine's Castle*Robert **Irwin**, *The Arabian Nightmare*'Jack **Vance**, *The Blue World*

DERANGED - MOI?

(the lunatics take over the asylum)

Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Patricia Highsmith, The Glass Cell Robert Silverberg, Tom O'Bedlam Gore Vidal, Kalki Peake's only other novel, Mr Pye, is a gentler story about a man on Sark in the Channel Islands who shows distressing signs of turning into an angel. Peake's Progress, an anthology of his poems, plays and drawings, is a splendid introduction to his work and includes an extra Gormenghast story, 'A Boy in Darkness'.

READ ON

▶ to Gormenghast: ▷ Mary Shelley, Frankenstein; ▷ Edgar Allan Poe, The Fall of the House of Usher, Stanislaw Lem, Memoirs Found in a Bathtub; ▷ Michael Moorcock, Gloriana.

READ ON A THEME: PERPLEXED BY LIFE

(people struggling to understand and control their destiny)

Pearl Abraham, The Romance Reader

- > Saul Bellow, Humboldt's Gift

- > Iris Murdoch, The Sandcastle
- > V.S. Naipaul, A House for Mr Biswas
- > Anne Tyler, The Ladder of Years
- > Angus Wilson, Anglo-Saxon Attitudes

See also: Battling with Life; Revisiting One's Past; Teenagers

PHILLIPS, Caryl (born 1958)

British novelist

Phillips was born on the island of St Kitts in the West Indies in 1958. He moved to Britain with his family when he was still a small child, but several of his novels are set in the Caribbean. These novels often feature characters who struggle directly with the dark legacy of colonialism and the crises of identity that it can engender. In A State of Independence (1986) Bertram Francis has spent twenty years in Britain and returns to St Kitts, expecting to feel 'at home' in a way that he has not done for a long time. In a narrative that is both shrewdly observant and delicately comic, Phillips charts Francis's homecoming to a place he no longer recognizes, caught as he is between two cultures. Cambridge (1991) deals overtly with slavery and its legacy. It uses two very different narrative voices - those of a nineteenth-century Englishwoman sent to visit her father's West Indies sugar plantation and of a gifted Christian slave, the eponymous Cambridge - to tell a chilling tale of an island society irredeemably tainted by the inhumanity on which it is built. Even when the setting of his fiction is not the Caribbean, as in The Nature of Blood (see below), and the plot is not overtly driven by post-colonial concerns, themes of displacement and alienation, of physical and psychological exile, haunt Phillips's work.

THE NATURE OF BLOOD (1997)

The central character in *The Nature of Blood* is Eva Stern, a young Jewish woman who first appears in the book as a traumatized survivor of the Nazi concentration camps which have claimed the lives of most of her family. Using Eva as the focus for his novel, Phillips then moves back and forth in time to encompass other narratives of the suffering inflicted by intolerance and the persistent human need to stigmatize 'otherness' and difference. One story is set in the Middle Ages and tells of hysterical anti-Semitism in a small Italian town, aroused by rumours that a Christian child has been ritually murdered. Another is Othello's own version of the events described in Shakespeare's play – although the narrator never explicitly identifies himself as the Moor of Venice. Phillips skilfully manipulates his varying narratives before bringing all the strands together in a surprising and compelling conclusion.

Phillips's other novels are The Final Passage, Higher Ground, Crossing the River and A Distant Shore. A New World Order is a collection of essays and The Atlantic Sound is an exploration of three places indelibly marked by their association with the slave trade.

READ ON

- Cambridge.
- ▶ V.S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*; Fred D'Aguiar, *Feeding the Ghosts*; David Dabydeen, *The Counting House*.

READ ON A THEME: PLACES

- □ Graham Greene, The Comedians (Haiti)
- ▶ Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (rural Wessex)
- > John Irving, The Cider House Rules (rural Maine)
- R.K. Narayan, *The Painter of Signs* (small-town India)
- □ Graham Swift, Waterland (Norfolk fenlands)

See also: Australia; Canada; Deep South, USA; Egypt; Ireland; Israel; Japan; Latin America; London; New York; Scotland; Small Town Life, USA; Village and Countryside; Wales; The Wilderness

POE, Edgar Allan (1809-49)

US short story writer and poet

Poe's miserable life is almost as well-known as his stories. He was an orphan whose foster-father hated him; he was thrown out of university, military college and half a dozen jobs because of the instability of his character; in order to earn a living he suppressed his real ambition (to be a poet) in favour of hack journalism and sensational fiction; he gambled, fornicated, and finally drank himself to death. He was like a man haunted by his own existence – and this is exactly the feeling in his macabre short stories, which are less about the supernatural than about people driven crazy by their own imagination. 'The Fall of the House of

STARTPOINTS

POETRY

Even if we choose only from English poetry, the range is enormous. There are a thousand poets, a million poems. We may prefer book-long epics (such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, recounting the Garden of Eden story of the Fall of Man), or short, lyric statements like the poems of Emily Dickinson or A.E. Housman. Our taste may be for ecstatic description and reflection (such as Shelley provides), gravely intellectual rumination (like that in Ezra Pound's or John Berryman's work) or joky nonsense (such as that of Ogden Nash or Pam Ayres). And because enjoying poetry depends so much on our mood and emotions, selecting what to read is more like choosing a piece of music to listen to than picking a novel or a travel book. For many people, browsing through anthologies is a good way to discover (or rediscover) poets: five minutes' work in the poetry section of the library, or reading the reviews of new poetry in a Sunday newspaper, can open Aladdin's Cave.

Auden, W.H. (1907–73). The personal and political explored in poetry of virtuoso technical ability, wit and intellectual range. It sometimes seems as if Auden could take any subject from the Spanish Civil War to the death of a lover and address it in any poetic form he chose.

Browning, Robert (1812–89). Browning's *Men and Women* (1855) provides lively verse 'snapshots' of grandees, artists, soldiers, monks, all telling us their stories in dramatic monologue. Easy-flowing, character-rich verse, full of quotable (and much quoted) lines and phrases.

Chaucer, Geoffrey (*c*1343–1400). The twenty-four tales in *The Canterbury Tales* (1387), purportedly told by pilgrims to Canterbury, are by turn, bawdy, wise, sad, chivalric and religious. In 'translation', fine; in Chaucer's own English, not impossible to understand – and wonderfully 'medieval' in flavour.

Donne, John (1572–1631). Religious poems; love lyrics. Highly personal reflections on the meaning of love (both sacred and profane), in beautiful Elizabethan English.

Duffy, Carol Ann (born 1955). Satirical, erotic, pessimistic, feminist poems on the tensions and evasions of modern life. Everyday details brought into sudden, startling focus, making you look again (and again) at what you thought you knew.

Eliot, T.S. (1888–1965). High-intellectual thought expressed in ravishing, simple images. *The Waste Land* (1922) is about psychological devastation and despair in a symbolic, ruined city. *Four Quartets* (1935–42) are meditations on how religious belief is possible for twentieth-century people. *Ash Wednesday* (1930) collects shorter, lyrical poems.

Frost, Robert (1874–1963). Lyric poems, with particularly fine descriptions of nature.

□ Graves, Robert (1895–1985). Lyric poems, including some magnificent love poetry.

Heaney, Seamus (born 1939). Richly pictorial poems about the countryside and human relations, especially good on the seasons and on old age.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley (1844–89). Religious lyrics, fizzing with ecstasy at the beauty of Creation. Exuberant, ever-surprising surge of language.

Hughes, Ted (1930–98). Comedians love to parody Hughes's doomy, Nature-redin-tooth-and-claw imagery, and his poetry is grim and dark. But few writers better describe the weather, animals, trees, rocks and water.

Keats, John (1795–1821). 'To a Nightingale'; 'On a Grecian Urn'; 'To Melancholy' and other odes – romantic, ecstatic rhapsody at its headiest. Some of the best-loved lines in the language.

Larkin, Philip (1922–85). Short, sharp poems about ordinary British life since the Second World War: sad, funny and merciless.

Masefield, John (1878–1967). Neat rhythms, simple language, obvious rhymes – and a no-nonsense way with ballad and narrative. English schoolchildren once learned him by heart more than any other poet, and although critics turn up their noses, his verse is still some of the easiest, and most haunting, of the twentieth century.

McGough, Roger (born 1937). One of the 'Liverpool Poets' who became famous at the same time as the Beatles. Stand-up poetry: sly jokes about the human condition, in which the rhythms and the rhymes, comedian's patter crossed with song lyrics, are half the fun.

Owen, Wilfred (1893–1918). Compassionate, horrifying First World War poetry, achingly memorable.

Plath, Sylvia (1932–63). Macabre imagery and ironic wit combine in Plath's poetry of despair and female alienation. Obsession with the tragic drama of her life and death have often obscured the emotional power and technical skill of her poetry

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord (1809–92). Victorian poetry, much of it inspired by Arthurian legend or by ancient Greece and Rome: sentimental, sometimes cringe-making, always eloquent.

Thomas, Dylan (1914–53). Great themes – love, Nature, ageing, death – in bardic, intoxicated language, a firework show of words.

Walcott, Derek (born 1930). Walcott examines, with immense intelligence and epic ambition, the tension between European culture and Afro-Caribbean culture and the difficulties of emerging from a colonial past with integrity and a genuine sense of self.

Whitman, Walt (1819–92). Hypnotic, free-rhythm poems on Nature, the Sublime and the Journey of Life. Grand thoughts; passionate language; a heady experience.

Wordsworth, William (1770–1850). Poems about Nature, the oddities of human life, memory ('emotion recollected in tranquillity'), in flowing, simple language: like diary jottings written up in verse.

Also recommended: John Clare, The Shepherd's Calendar (1827); Paul Farley, The Ice Age (2002); Robert Lowell, Poems, 1938–1949; Andrew Marvell, Poems (1681); Craig Raine, A Martian Sends a Postcard Home (1979); Don Paterson, God's Gift to Women; Christina Rossetti, Goblin Market and Other Poems (1862); William Shakespeare, Sonnets; W.B. Yeats, Collected Poems (1933).

Usher' and 'The Premature Burial' recount the terrifying results when people are accidentally entombed alive. The murderer in 'The Tell-tale Heart' buries his victim under the floorboards, only to be haunted by what he takes to be the thud of the dead man's heartbeat. The hero of 'The Pit and the Pendulum' is psychologically tortured by the Spanish Inquisition, first by fear of a swinging, ever-approaching blade and then by the way the walls of his cell move inwards to crush him. As well as stories of this kind, Poe occasionally wrote lighter mysteries. The best-known of all ('The Murders in the Rue Morgue'; 'The Mystery of Marie Roget') centre on an eccentric investigator who solves crimes by meticulous reconstruction according to the evidence: they are the first-ever detective stories.

Poe's stories are normally collected nowadays as Tales of Mystery and Imagination. His other writings include poetry ('The Bells'; 'The Raven') and vitriolic literary criticism, savaging such contemporaries as Longfellow.

READ ON

- ▶ to Poe's stories of the macabre: H.P. Lovecraft, The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Tales; M.R. James, Ghost Stories of an Antiquary; Roald Dahl, Switch Bitch; ▷ Stephen King, Nightmares and Dreamscapes; Richard Marsh, The Beetle.
- ▶ to the detective stories: ▷ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*; Edgar Wallace, *The Four Just Men*.

READ ON A THEME: POLICE PROCEDURAL

Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Victorian ancestor of the sub-genre) Freeman Wills Crofts, *Death of a Train*John Harvey, *Cold Light*Bill James, *Eton Crop*Quintin Jardine, *Skinner's Rules*Stuart M. Kaminsky, *Lieberman's Law*Ed McBain, *Killer's Choice*

READ ON A THEME: POLITICS

- Chinua Achebe, Anthills of the Savannah Jorge Amado, The Violent Land Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby Michael Dobbs, House of Cards Joe Klein, Primary Colours Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon
- ▶ George Orwell, Animal Farm
 Amos Oz, A Perfect Peace
 Howard Spring, Fame is the Spur
- C.P. Snow, The Corridors of Power
- □ Gore Vidal, Burr

POWELL, Anthony (1905–2000)

British novelist

In the 1930s Powell wrote half a dozen novels satirizing the intellectual and upper classes of the time. The optimistic, aimless young people of *Afternoon Men* drift from party to party, trying to summon up enough willpower to make something of themselves. *From a View to a Death/Mr Zouch: Superman* sets the arts and foxhunting at each other's throats. The hero of *What's Become of Waring?* has to find someone to write the biography of a bestselling travel writer who has disappeared in circumstances which grow more mysterious, and more unsavoury, by the minute. After the Second World War, during which he produced no fiction, Powell abandoned single books for a twelve-novel sequence, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, a satirical portrait of seventy years of English high society and establishment life.

A DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF TIME (1951-75)

The sequence follows its characters from Edwardian schooldays to nostalgic, worldly-wise old age. The narrator, Nick Jenkins, discreet as a civil servant, goes everywhere, knows everyone, and writes of his contemporaries (notably the ambition-racked Widmerpool) in elegant, ironic prose. The books move imperturbably from farce to seriousness, from knockabout to reverie. The first three novels, A Question of Upbringing, A Buyer's Market and The Acceptance World, concern the characters' schooldays, their Oxbridge careers and their entry into the glittering smart set of 1920s London. At Lady Molly's, Casanova's Chinese Restaurant and The Kindly Ones are about first jobs, marriages and the establishment of a network of sexual, social, financial and political alliances which will bind their lives. The Valley of Bones. The Soldier's Art and The Military Philosophers take the characters through two world wars, and Books Do Furnish a Room, Temporary Kings and Hearing Secret Harmonies show them coming to terms with post-war austerity, the white heat of the technological revolution and flower power, reflecting on the change not only in themselves but in every aspect of British establishment life since their schooldays fifty years before.

Powell's other 1930s novels are Venusberg and Agents and Patients. After finishing A Dance to the Music of Time he wrote an autobiography, To Keep the Ball Rolling, and two other (unrelated) novels, O, How the Wheel Becomes It and The Fisher King.

READ ON

- ▶ to Powell's 1930s books: ▷ Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies; Henry Green, Party Going; ▷ Rose Macaulay, Crewe Train.
- ▶ The mood of elegiac, upper-class malice characteristic of A Dance to the Music of Time is repeated in two other novel sequences ▷ Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things Past (À la Recherche du temps perdu) and Simon Raven, Alms for Oblivion. Henry Williamson's fifteen-volume Chronicles of Ancient Sunlight similarly takes its central character through many decades of his life, from late Victorian London to Devon in the 1950s but its atmosphere of intensity, tragedy and embittered nostalgia for lost happiness is worlds away from Powell's urbane irony. So, too, are Williamson's fascist political sympathies, which mar what is otherwise a striking sequence of novels.

POWYS. John Cowper (1872–1963)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

A university professor, Powys wrote books on Dostoevsky, Homer and Rabelais, dozens of articles, reviews and other non-fiction works, and a lively autobiography. His early novels (Ducdame, Rodmoor, Wolf Solent, all written before 1930) are sombre, > Hardvish stories about the farmers and fishermen of the English West Country. After he retired from teaching Powys wrote a series of completely different novels: long, mystical books influenced by Homer and the Old Testament and drawing on English legend and Dark Ages history. In A Glastonbury Romance modern inhabitants of the Glastonbury area (including worshippers and clergy at the Abbey) find their lives mysteriously affected by local legends of King Arthur and of the Holy Grail. In a similar way, Maiden Castle describes how unearthing the distant past - some of the characters are archaeologists working on a prehistoric site - disturbs the present.

READ ON

- Wevmouth Sands, Owen Glendower.
- ▶ to Powys's early novels: > Victor Hugo, Toilers of the Sea; > George Eliot, Silas Marner; > Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter.
- ▶ to the later fiction: > Peter Ackroyd, English Music; > Lawrence Durrell, The Dark Labyrinth/Cefalu, Lindsay Clarke, The Chymical Wedding, Charles Williams, War in Heaven. Two of Powys's brothers were also novelists and Mr Weston's Good Wine, a strangely compelling religious allegory by Theodore, and Love and Death, a fictionalized autobiography by Llewellyn, are both still worth reading.

PRATCHETT, Terry (born 1948)

British novelist

Pratchett writes lunatic, farcical fantasy. His books are set on Discworld, a vast disc perched on the backs of four huge elephants. Discworld is the home of a thousand thousand species of creature, from trolls and elves to mysterious beings of wood, water, air, light, mud not to mention Mafia heavies, bimbos, winos, film directors, Death, the Three Witches from Macbeth, trombone-playing cows, talking trees, pyramid builders, opera singers and wizards of every degree from Arch-chancellor Wayzygoose to Rincewind (B.mgc, failed). Each book is self-contained, but characters bob in and out like participants in some particularly demented carnival.

The Discworld novels are: The Colour of Magic (the first), The Light Fantastic. Equal Rites, Mort, Sourcery, Pyramids, Wyrd Sisters, Guards! Guards!, Moving Pictures, Reaper Man, Witches Abroad, Small Gods, Lords and Ladies, Men At Arms, Soul Music, Interesting Times, Maskerade, Feet of Clay, Hogfather, Jingo, The Last Continent, Carpe Jugulum, The Fifth Elephant, The Truth, The Thief of Time and Night Watch.

READ ON

Truckers, Diggers and Wings (a trilogy of children's/adult fantasy books about a group of 'nomes' who live under the floorboards of a department store); Good Omens (a spoof of the horror genre, co-written with Neil Gaiman).

► Robert Asprin, Myth series (start with Another Fine Myth). Tom Holt, Odds and Gods (not fantasy but a farce about the gods and heroes of 'real' myth); Jasper Fforde, The Eyre Affair and its two sequels; Robert Rankin, The Hollow Chocolate Bunnies of the Apocalypse.

PRIESTLEY, J.B. (John Boynton) (1894–1984) British novelist and playwright

As well as plays and non-fiction books, Priestley wrote over sixty novels. They range from amiable satire (*Low Notes on a High Level* (1956), sending up egghead BBC musicians) to sombre social realism (*Angel Pavement* (1936), about a sleepy 1930s business firm galvanized into new activity and then destroyed by a confidence trickster). His best-loved novel, *The Good Companions* (1929), tells of three people who escape from humdrum lives to join the Dinky Doos concert party in the 1920s. The novel follows the concert party's career in theatres and seaside resorts all over England, and ends with each of the main characters finding self-fulfilment in an entirely unexpected way. The book bulges with show-biz cliché – brave little troupers; lodging-house keepers with hearts of gold; leading ladies and their tantrums; cynical, hung-over leading men – and with warm-hearted nostalgia for the provincial England of the Good Old Days. It is an armchair of a novel, a book to wallow in – and if life was never really like that, so much the worse for life.

READ ON

- Lost Empires is Priestley's own, darker story of life in the music halls.
- ▶ to *The Good Companions*: ▷ Beryl Bainbridge, *An Awfully Big Adventure* (set in a 1950s repertory company in Liverpool).
- ▶ to Priestley's books in general: ▷ H.G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*; James Hilton, *Goodbye, Mr Chips*; Eric Linklater, *Poet's Pub*; ▷ George Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*; Patrick Hamiilton, *Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky*.

PRITCHETT, V.S. (Victor Sawdon) (1900–97) British writer

Although Pritchett wrote books of many kinds (biography, criticism, novels, travel), he is best known for his short stories. He writes of ordinary people, middle class, middle income, middle aged, falling in love, quarrelling, cheating one another, enjoying small triumphs and suffering small disasters with as much concentration and effort as if they were living War and Peace. In 'The Fall', for example, a seedy salesman at a conference, boasting that his glamorous filmstar brother taught him how to do stage falls, has his moment of glory, time and time again, as people buy him drinks to demonstrate his skill. In 'The Camberwell Beauty' an antique dealer tries to rescue a woman hoarded like a piece of prize porcelain by a rival. In 'The Lady from Guatemala' a self-obsessed editor falls ludicrously for a girl who pursues him on a lecture tour. Drabness and seedy dignity are favourite themes of British short-story writers; Pritchett writes of them with steely detachment, as if he has understanding, but absolutely no pity, for his characters' small lives.

Pritchett's Collected Stories were published in 1984. The best known of his individual collections are You Make Your Own Life, When My Girl Comes Home

and The Camberwell Beauty. His novels – a similar blend of tartness and wistfulness – include Nothing Like Leather, Dead Man Leading and Mr Beluncle. A Cab at the Door and Midnight Oil are autobiography.

READ ON

- ▶ to Pritchett's short stories: William Trevor, The Day We Got Drunk on Cake;
 Katherine Mansfield, The Garden-Party and Other Stories; Elizabeth Bowen,
 The Demon Lover.
- ▶ to his novels: > Angus Wilson, The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot; > Mary Wesley, Second Fiddle.

READ ON A THEME: PRIVATE EYES

Lawrence Block, A Dance at the Slaughterhouse (Matt Scudder)
James Lee Burke. Cadillac Jukebox (Dave Robicheaux)

- ▶ Raymond Chandler, Farewell, My Lovely (Philip Marlowe)
 Max Allan Collins, True Detective (Nate Heller)
 Howard Engel, Dead and Buried (Benny Cooperman)
 Loren D. Estleman, The Hours of the Virgin (Amos Walker)
- > Sue Grafton, G is for Gumshoe (Kinsey Millhone)
- Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (Sam Spade)
 Stuart Kaminsky, *Murder on the Yellow Brick Road* (Toby Peters)
 Ross Macdonald, *The Drowning Pool* (Lew Archer)
 John Milne, *Dead Birds* (Jimmy Jenner)
 Robert B. Parker, *Small Vices* (Spenser)

See also: Classic Detection: Great (Classic) Detectives

READ ON A THEME: PRIZEWINNERS

Suzanne Berne, A Crime in the Neighbourhood (Orange Prize 1999)
Michael Cunningham, The Hours (Pulitzer Prize 1999)
Jeffrey Eugenides, Middlesex (Pulitzer Prize 2003)
Keri Hulme, The Bone People (Booker Prize 1985)

- David Malouf, Remembering Babylon (International IMPAC Prize 1996)
 Ann Patchett, Bel Canto (Orange Prize 2002)
 Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things (Booker Prize, 1997)
- , > Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (Booker Prize 1981)

Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird (Pulitzer Prize 1961)

> Zadie Smith, White Teeth (Guardian Fiction Prize 2000)

Jeff Torrington, Swing, Hammer, Swing (Whitbread Book of the Year 1992)

PROULX, Annie (born 1935) US novelist and short story writer

Annie Proulx did not begin writing fiction until she was in her fifties but almost immediately her original (often dark) imagination, her evocative use of landscape

and setting, her quirky humour and arresting use of language brought her success. A collection of short stories, *Heart Songs* (1988), was followed by her first novel, *Postcards*, the tragic saga of an American farming family and one member of it, driven into exile by an act of violence. The narrative of harsh, bleak lives lived out against the backdrop of a succession of unforgiving landscapes is held together by the novel device of a sequence of postcards, carefully reproduced in the text, sent by and to the family. Her second novel, *The Shipping News* (see below) won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Since this success, Annie Proulx has published two further novels, *Accordion Crimes* (1996) and *That Old Ace in the Hole* (2002) and a collection of stories, *Close Range*, which includes a novella, 'Brokeback Mountain', telling the poignant story of two Wyoming ranchhands drawn into an intense sexual relationship. Their doomed struggle to accommodate their homosexual desire within a sense of self created by a macho culture is movingly portrayed.

THE SHIPPING NEWS (1993)

At the beginning of the novel Quoyle is an unsuccessful newspaperman in New York, still brooding on the humiliations of his marriage to a woman who first betrayed him and then was killed in an accident, leaving him with two small children. Accompanied by his young daughters and by a formidable maiden aunt, he returns to Newfoundland, his father's birthplace, and there he finds the fulfilment that eluded him in the city. He establishes himself at the local newspaper, finds himself drawn into the daily life of the community and emerges from the protective shell of loneliness to begin a new and rewarding relationship. More optimistic about human possibility than Proulx's other work ('And it may be that love sometimes occurs without pain or misery,' the book concludes) *The Shipping News* is saved from the banality that a mere outline of its plot might suggest by Proulx's wit, originality and skilful unravelling of events. Quoyle's transformation becomes an offbeat celebration of the potential people have for change.

READ ON

- Accordion Crimes (stories of immigrants to the US connected by possession of a button accordion).
- ► Carol Shields, *The Stone Diaries*; Jayne Anne Phillips, *Machine Dreams*; Joy Williams, *The Quick and the Dead*; Elizabeth McCracken, *The Giant's House*.

PROUST, Marcel (1871-1922)

French novelist

...

Proust's Remembrance of Things Past (À la Recherche du temps perdu) (1913–27; magnificently translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin) is in seven sections (Swann's Way, Within a Budding Grove, The Guermantes Way, Cities of the Plain, The Captive, The Fugitive, Time Regained). Each is as long as a normal novel and each can be read both on its own and as part of the whole huge tapestry. The book is a memoir, told in the first person by a narrator called Marcel, of a group of rich French socialites from the 1860s to the end of the First World War. It shows how they react to outside events – the Dreyfus case, women's emancipation, the First World War – and how, as the world moves on, their power and social position wane.

Above all, it shows them reacting to each other, to friends, acquaintances and servants: the book is full of love affairs, parties (at which gossip is hot about who is 'in' or 'out' and why), alliances and betravals. Through it all moves Marcel himself, good-natured, self-effacing, fascinated by beauty (both human and artistic: his accounts of music and literature are as deeply felt as those of people), and with a sharply ironical eye for social and sexual absurdity. Proust developed for the book a system of 'involuntary memory', in which each sensuous stimulus - the smell of lilac, the taste of cake dipped in tea – unlocks from the subconscious a stream of images of the past. Although this technique has structural importance in the novel – Proust believed that our present only makes sense when it is refracted through past experience – its chief effect for the reader is to provide pages of languorous, detailed descriptions, prose poems on everything from the feel of embroidery under the fingertips to garden sounds and scents on a summer evening. Proust likes to take his time: at one point Marcel spends nearly 100 pages wondering whether to get up or stay in bed. But only the length at which he works allows him scope for the sensuous, malicious decadence which is the main feature of his work.

Proust's other writings include a collection of short stories and literary parodies. The Pleasures and the Days (Les Plaisirs et les jours), and Jean Santeuil, a draft of part of Remembrance of Things Past.

READ ON

- pood parallels to the sensuous childhood evocations of the first part of Remembrance of Things Past: Alain-Fournier, Le Grand Meaulnes; > James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.
- becoming the hedonism and decadence of some of Proust's later sections: Joris-Karl Huysmans, Against Nature (À Rebours).
- ▶ good on 'the texture of experience': Dorothy Richardson, *Pilgrimage*; ▷ Virginia Woolf. The Waves: John Dos Passos. Manhattan Transfer.
- ▶ novel sequences of comparable grandeur: > Anthony Powell, A Dance to the Music of Time; Henry Williamson, The Flax of Dream.

READ ON A THEME: PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

(writers; publishers; agents; readers; fans)

- > Margery Allingham, Flowers for the Judge
- > Helen Dunmore, Zennor in Darkness
- > P.D. James. Original Sin
- '> Wyndham Lewis, The Apes of God
- > Anthony Powell, What's Become of Waring?
- > Philip Roth, Zuckerman Unbound Bernhard Schlink, The Reader
- > Tom Sharpe. The Great Pursuit
- > Carol Shields. Mary Swann

PUZO. Mario (1920-99)

US novelist and screenwriter

Puzo began his career as a writer of children's books, but in 1969 turned to adult fiction and had one of the biggest commercial successes in publishing history with The Godfather. The story concerns the New York Mafia family the Corleones. It centres on Don Vito Corleone's handover of authority to his son Michael - a gift akin to being made successor to Genghis Khan - and on the power struggle, both with outsiders and between members of the family, to which this leads. Presentday events are intercut with flashbacks to Don Vito's Sicilian childhood and his early days in the US. Puzo's detail of Mafia life is as exhaustive and compelling as a government research report. As be Carré does with spies, he seems to be spilling 'insider' secrets in every line, and his inventions (if they are inventions) are so plausible that it is hard to imagine how the real Mafia could be run in any other way. After the success of Coppola's movie version of The Godfather, Puzo turned to screenwriting (among other things, he co-wrote the first Superman film, a script to which > George MacDonald Fraser also contributed), and his later novels (Fools Die, The Sicilian and the posthumously published Omerta), though fast-moving and exciting, are like novelized movies, airport-bookstall fodder lacking the documentary earnestness which makes The Godfather so compulsive.

READ ON

▶ good Mafia follow-ups: ▷ John Grisham, The Client; Nick Tosches, Trinities; George Dawes Green, The Juror; Lawrence Shames, Sunburn (a comedy thriller about an ageing Mafia don who retires to Florida and causes consternation among his former associates when he begins to write his memoirs).

PYM, Barbara (1913-80)

British novelist

Only > Jane Austen and > Ivy Compton-Burnett wrote about worlds as restricted as Pym's – and she is regularly compared to both of them. Her books are high-Anglican high comedies; she is tart about the kind of pious middle-class ladies who regard giving sherry parties for the clergy as doing good works, and she is merciless to priests. Much of the charm of her books lies in their ornate, formal dialogue: her characters all speak with the same prissy, self-conscious elegance, like civil servants taught light conversation by Oscar Wilde.

A GLASS OF BLESSINGS (1958)

Wilmet Forsyth is rich, well-bred, happy and dim. She fills her mind with fantasies about the priests and parishioners at her local church, imagining that their lives are a whirl of hidden passions, ambitions and frustrations. She imagines herself in love with a handsome evening-class teacher, and assumes that he adores her too. As the book proceeds, every one of these assumptions is proved spectacularly, ludicrously mistaken.

Pym's other novels are Some Tame Gazelle, Excellent Women, Jane and Prudence, Less than Angels, Quartet in Autumn, The Sweet Dove Died, Crampton Hodnett *and* An Academic Question.

READ ON

- Quartet in Autumn.
- ▶ Ivy Compton-Burnett, *Pastors and Masters*; ▷ A.N. Wilson, *Kindly Light*; Alice Thomas Ellis, *The 27th Kingdom*; J.F. Powers, *Morte d'Urban*; ▷ Joanna Trollope, *The Choir*.

PYNCHON, Thomas (born 1937)

US novelist

Reading Pynchon's satires is like exploring a maze with an opinionated and eccentric guide. He leads us lovingly up every blind alley, breaks off to tell jokes, falls into reveries, ridicules everything and everyone, and refuses to say where he's going until he gets there. The Crying of Lot 49 (1967) begins with Oedipa Maas setting out to discover why she has been left a legacy by an ex-lover, and what it is; but it quickly develops into a crazy tour of hippie 1960s California, an exploration of drugs, bizarre sex, psychic sensitivity and absurd politics, centring on a group of oddball characters united in a secret society determined to subvert the US postal system. Gravity's Rainbow (1973) is a much darker fable, a savage anti-war satire set in a top-secret British centre for covert operations during the Second World War. In a mad world, where actions have long ceased to have any moral point, where nothing on principle is ever explained or justified, the characters spend their working hours alternately doing what they are told and trying to find out the reason for their existence, and pass their leisure hours in masochistic, joyless sex. On the basis of his short stories and The Crying of Lot 49. Pynchon is sometimes claimed as a comic writer. But although Gravity's Rainbow is satirical, its jokes are knives, and its farce makes us scream with despair, not joy.

Pynchon's first and most experimental novel was science fiction fantasy V (1963). His most recent novel is Mason & Dixon, a wild conflation of history and anachronism, loosely based on the two eighteenth-century surveyors who created the Mason—Dixon line. Mortality and Mercy in Vienna is a novella, and Low-lands is a collection of short stories.

READ ON

- Vineland.
- ► The satirical fury of *Gravity's Rainbow* is most nearly matched in: > Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*; William Gaddis, *J.R.* (about a deranged ten-year-old genius in a reform school who trades in stocks and shares and exploits other people's greed).
- ▶ Pynchon's more genial, loonier side is parallelled in: ▷ Mario Vargas Llosa, Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter; Terry Southern, The Magic Christian; ▷ Kurt Vonnegut, Breakfast of Champions; ▷ John Barth, The Sot-Weed Factor.



RABELAIS, François (c1494-1553)

French satirist

Renegade monk, doctor, scientist, philosopher and bon viveur - he led a crowded life - Rabelais began writing satire in his mid-thirties, and quickly acquired yet another scurrilous reputation. At heart his Gargantua (1534) and Pantagruel (1532-3) are simple fairytales: accounts of the birth and education of the giant Gargantua and of his son Pantagruel. But, in reality, he sends up every aspect of medieval knowledge and belief. The giants study philosophy, mathematics, theology and alchemy; they build an anti-monastery whose rules are not poverty, chastity and obedience but wealth, fornication and licence. Pantagruel's mentor is no dignified greybeard but the con-man Panurge, and the two of them go on a fantastic journey (through countries as fabulous as any of those visited by Sinbad or Gulliver) to find the answer to the question 'Whom shall Pantagruel marry?' Much of Gargantua's first half is taken up with a fierce battle between the giants and their neighbours, and in particular with the exploits of the roistering, apoplectic Friar John of the Funnels and Goblets, who is later rewarded by being made Abbot of the Monastery of Do As You Like. Rabelais described his books as a 'feast of mirth', and their intellectual satire is balanced by celebration of physical pleasure of every kind: not for nothing has the word 'rabelaisian' entered the dictionary. The original French, already engorged with puns, jokes, parodies and over-the-top lists of every kind, was inflated to nearly twice the length by the seventeenth-century translator Thomas Urguhart. His English is funnier, filthier and even more fantastical than Rabelais's French: Rabelais would have loved (and stolen back) every word of it.

READ ON

► Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*; ▷ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*; Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* (short stories); Anon, *A Thousand and One Nights/ The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*.

RANKIN, lan (born 1960)

British writer

So successful has lan Rankin been as a crime writer in the last decade that he has established a whole new sub-genre. According to one critic, Rankin, whose novels are set in Edinburgh, is 'the king of tartan *noir'*. Certainly he has been successful in portraying an image of Edinburgh very different from the traditional one. He shows the darker side of the city, the skull beneath the skin of the tourist façade. He takes us away from the Royal Mile and Prince's Street and into a bleak and gritty Edinburgh of junkie squats, gangland wars and corruption in high places. Our

guide through the mean streets of this other Edinburgh is the central character in most of Rankin's novels, Detective Inspector John Rebus. Rebus, although he owes something to crime fiction clichés of the lone-wolf investigator tormented by his own inner demons, is a genuinely original creation and has a complexity not often encountered in characters in 'genre' fiction. From the first novel, *Knots and Crosses* (1987), Rebus has been as interesting as the cases he investigates and, as the series has progressed, Rankin has developed the character with great skill. He has also shown increasing ambition in the subjects he covers. In *Dead Souls* (1999) the plot accommodates the human consequences of a paedophile scandal in a children's home, the return of a killer from the States to his native Scotland, Rebus's own return to his home town and the party-filled world of Edinburgh's *jeunesse dorée*. All the threads of the narrative are effortlessly woven into a satisfying whole. Rankin is not only one of the best contemporary crime novelists, he is also one of the best of modern Scottish novelists.

BLACK AND BLUE (1997)

Bible John was the name given by the media to a serial killer in the 1970s. He was never caught. Now a copycat killer is at work. Rebus, struggling with a drink problem and unsympathetic superiors, has been sidelined. But, as another investigation takes him from Glasgow ganglands to Aberdeen and an offshore oilrig, he is drawn into the web of intrigue and corruption that surrounds the search for the killer dubbed by the media (with characteristic inventiveness) Johnny Bible.

The other Rebus novels are Hide and Seek, Tooth and Nail, Strip Jack, The Black Book, Mortal Causes, Let It Bleed, Death Is Not the End, The Hanging Garden, Set in Darkness, The Falls, Resurrection Men and A Question of Blood. A Good Hanging and Beggars Banquet are collection of short stories, many featuring Rebus. Rankin has also written three novels (Witch Hunt, Bleeding Hearts and Cold Blood) under the pseudonym Jack Harvey.

READ ON

- The Hanging Garden.
- ► Reginald Hill, On Beulah Height; > Val McDermid, The Wire in the Blood; John Harvey, Cutting Edge; Quintin Jardine, Skinner's Rules (the first in a series of Edinburgh-set police procedurals); Denise Mina, Garnethill.

READ ON A THEME: RENAISSANCE EUROPE

- > John Banville, Kepler
- > Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers
- Dorothy Dunnett, Niccolò Rising
- □ Umberto Eco, The Island of the Day Before
 □ Carlos Fuentes, Terra Nostra
 □ David Madsen, Memoirs of a Gnostic Dwarf
 □ Stephen Marlowe, The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus
- ► Lawrence Norfolk, The Pope's Rhinoceros Irving Stone, The Agony and the Ecstasy
- > Rose Tremain, Music & Silence

See also: The Middle Ages

RENAULT, Mary (1905-83)

South African novelist

A South African by birth, Renault went to London in her twenties, and served as a nurse during the Second World War. In her thirties and forties she wrote several novels about hospital and wartime life, culminating in *The Charioteer*, the moving story of a homosexual serviceman. In the 1950s she began writing historical novels about ancient Greece. *The King Must Die* and *The Bull from the Sea* are based on the myth of King Theseus of Athens, who killed the Cretan Minotaur; *Fire From Heaven, The Persian Boy* and *Funeral Games* are about Alexander the Great. Like \triangleright Robert Graves, Renault treats people of the past as though they were psychologically just like us, so that even the most bizarre political or sexual behaviour seems both rational and credible.

THE KING MUST DIE (1958)

Every year the Cretans demand tribute from Athens: seven young men and seven young women have to learn bull-dancing and be sacrificed to the Minotaur. One year, Prince Theseus takes the place of one of the young men, and sails to Crete to take revenge.

Renault's other Greek books are The Last of the Wine, The Mask of Apollo and The Praise Singer.

READ ON

- The Bull from the Sea.
- ► Colleen McCullough, *The First Man in Rome*; ▷ Robert Graves, *I, Claudius*; Tom Holt, *The Walled Orchard*; ▷ Steven Saylor, *Roman Blood*; Naomi Mitchison, *The Corn King and the Spring Queen*; Steven Pressfield, *Last of the Amazons*.

RENDELL, Ruth (born 1930)

British novelist

Rendell's Chief Inspector Wexford novels are atmospheric murder mysteries in traditional style, set in the small towns and villages of the English Home Counties. Like \triangleright P.D. James, she spends much time developing the character of her detective, a liberal and cultured man appalled by the psychological pressures that drive people to crime. Those pressures are the subject of Rendell's other books (both under her own name and as Barbara Vine): grim stories of paranoia, obsession and inadequacy.

Rendell's Wexford books include From Doon With Death, Wolf to the Slaughter, A Guilty Thing Surprised, Some Lie and Some Die, Kissing the Gunner's Daughter, An Unkindness of Ravens, Simisola, Road Rage, Harm Done and The Babes in the Wood. Her psychological novels include The Face of Trespass, The Killing Doll, The Tree of Hands, Live Flesh, Talking to Strange Men, Going Wrong, The Crocodile Bird and A Sight for Sore Eyes. Means of Evil, The Fever Tree and The Copper Peacock are collections of short stories.

As Barbara Vine, Rendell has written A Dark-Adapted Eye, A Fatal Inversion, The House of Stairs, Gallowglass, King Solomon's Carpet, Asta's Book, No Night is

Too Long, The Brimstone Wedding, The Chimney-Sweeper's Boy, Grasshopper and The Blood Doctor.

READ ON

- ▶ to the Wexford books: ▷ P.D. James, Shroud for a Nightingale; R.D. Wingfield, Hard Frost; ▷ Reginald Hill, Exit Lines.
- ▶ to the psychological thrillers: ▷ Patricia Highsmith, The Glass Cell; ▷ Minette Walters, The Dark Room; Frances Fyfield, Undercurrents; Nicci French, Killing Me Softly.

READ ON A THEME: REVISITING ONE'S PAST

- Margaret Atwood, Surfacing
- > Anita Brookner, A Start in Life
- David Guterson, East of the Mountains
 Bernard MacLaverty, Grace Notes
- > Bernice Rubens, Our Father
- > Graham Swift, Waterland
- > Paul Theroux, Picture Palace
- > Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway

READ ON A THEME: REWRITING HISTORY

(what might have happened if . . .)

- ⋉ingsley Amis, The Alteration
 Martin Cruz Smith, The Indians Won
- > Len Deighton, SS-GB
- Philip K. Dick, The Man in the High Castle
 Stephen Fry, Making History
- > Robert Harris, Fatherland

RHYS, JEAN (1894-1979)

British novelist

All Rhys's novels and stories are about the same kind of person, the 'Jean Rhys woman'. She was once vivacious and attractive (an actress, perhaps, or a dancer) but she fell in love with some unsuitable man or men, was betrayed, and now lives alone, maudlin and mentally unhinged. In Rhys's first four novels (published in the 1920s and 1930s), the heroines are casualties of the Jazz Age, flappers crushed by life itself. In her last book, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), the central character is a victim of the way men think (or fail to think) of women: she is a young Caribbean heiress in the early 1800s, who marries an English

gentleman, Mr Rochester, and ends up as the demented creature hidden in the attics of Thornfield Hall in Jane Eyre.

GOOD MORNING, MIDNIGHT (1939)

Deserted by her husband after the death of their baby, Sasha would have drunk herself to death if a generous friend had not rescued her and paid for her to spend a fortnight in Paris. She 'arranges her little life', as she puts it: a cycle of solitary meals and drinks, barren conversations with strangers, drugged sleep in seedy hotel rooms. She is a damned soul, a husk – and then a gigolo, mistaking her for a rich woman, begins to court her, and she has to gather the rags of her sanity and try to take hold of her life once more.

Rhys's other novels are Quartet/Postures, After Leaving Mr Mackenzie and Voyage in the Dark. The Left Bank, Tigers are Better-looking and Sleep It Off, Lady are collections of short stories.

READ ON

- Wide Sargasso Sea.
- ▶ to Good Morning, Midnight: > Brian Moore, The Doctor's Wife: > Doris Lessing. The Golden Notebook; Mary McCarthy, The Company She Keeps; > Anita Brookner. Hôtel du Lac.
- ▶ to Wide Sargasso Sea: Lisa St Aubin de Terán, The Keepers of the House.

READ ON A THEME: THE RHYTHM OF NATURE

(people in tune with or in thrall to the land)

- > Pearl S. Buck. The Good Earth Neil M. Gunn, The Well at the World's End
- > Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd Christopher Hart, The Harvest
- Susan Hill, In the Springtime of the Year Halldor Laxness. Independent People Mikhail Sholokhov, Virgin Soil Upturned
- > Jane Smiley, A Thousand Acres
- > Adam Thorpe, Ulverton

See also: Down to Earth; Village and Countryside

RICHARDSON, Henry Handel (1870–1946)

Australian novelist

Henry Handel Richardson was the pseudonym of Ethel Robertson. She was born and educated in Australia, but went to Europe in her late teens and remained there, with one three-month break, for the rest of her life. Her best-known books, however (The Getting of Wisdom, 1910, and the Richard Mahony trilogy) are set in Australia and reflect her own or her parents' experience. She was interested in 'psychic outsiders', people who felt that heightened awareness or sensibilities set them apart from their fellows. The Getting of Wisdom is about a gifted, unhappy adolescent in a late nineteenth-century boarding school, who uses love of the arts as an escape from the oppressive narrowness of the régime. The battle against depressive illness is a major theme of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* (1915–1929). In this trilogy of novels (*Australia Felix, The Way Home, Ultima Thule*) Mahony, a British doctor, goes to Australia to make his fortune in the 1850s gold rush, marries and settles. His gold-prospecting fails, and he turns first to storekeeping and then back to medicine, before making a sudden fortune from shares he thought were worthless. Unable to cope with wealth, he dissipates his money, impoverishes his family and begins a long, anguished slide into depressive mania. His devoted wife takes a job as postmistress in a remote area, nursing her husband and bringing up her uncomprehending, sorrowing family. Although the trilogy is chiefly concerned with Mahony's complex character and his relationship with his family, it is also a compelling account of nineteenth-century Australian pioneer and outback life.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*: ▷ Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*;
 - > Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano.
- ▶ to The Getting of Wisdom: > Antonia White, Frost in May.

RICHARDSON, Samuel (1689-1761)

British novelist

A successful printer, Richardson was compiling a book of sample letters for all occasions when he had the idea of writing whole novels in letter-form. He produced three: *Pamela, Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*. They are enormously long (over a million words each), and readers even at the time complained of boredom. But the books were bestsellers – not, as Richardson imagined, because of their high moral tone, but because his sensational theme (the way some people are drawn irresistibly to debauch the innocent) guaranteed success.

CLARISSA, OR THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY (1748)

To escape from her parents, who have shut her in her room until she agrees to marry a man she loathes, the hapless Clarissa Harlowe elopes with Mr Lovelace, a rake. He tries every possible way to persuade her to sleep with him, and when she refuses he puts her into a brothel, drugs and rapes her. She goes into a decline and dies of shame. The story is told by means of letters from the main characters, to one another, to friends and acquaintances. One of Richardson's triumphs – which some critics claim justifies the book's inordinate length – is to reveal Lovelace's villainy only gradually, as Clarissa herself discovers it.

READ ON

- Pamela.
- ▶ Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, Les Liaisons dangereuses is another letter-novel about moral predation, but shorter, wittier and less sentimental. A young aristocrat in pre-Revolutionary France, bored by the restrictions of polite society, devotes herself to the cynical, ice-cool shedding of all moral restraint. This book apart, Richardson's work has been more pilloried than parallelled. ▷ Henry Fielding, for example, in Tom Jones, mocks Richardson's moral earnestness: far from shrinking from the pleasures of seduction, Tom lives for them.

RICHLER, Mordecai (1931-2001)

Canadian novelist

The heroes of Richler's vitriolic black satires are 'outsiders' (for example Jews in a gentile society), poor (they come from big-city slums) or inept (too guileless for their own good). They face a hostile world of crooks, cheats, extortionists, poseurs (often film makers or tycoons) and bullies. Like the hero of The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (1959), Richler's men often fight back, using the enemies' weapons and winning the battle at the expense of their own souls. The title character in The Incomparable Atuk (1963), an Eskimo poet who becomes a media celebrity in Toronto, adapts only too readily to the greed and scheming of city life. Richler's recent fiction has been even more scabrous, satirical and ambitious. In Solomon Gursky Was Here (1990) Moses Berger, Canadian writerof-all-trades, works as speech-writer and culture-vulture to the one-time bootlegger Bernard Gursky, now a prominent Montreal billionaire. Fascinated by Gursky's enigmatic brother Solomon (supposedly killed in a plane crash) Berger is launched on a quest that takes him on a typically Richlerian roister through the history of Canada, Jewishess and, above all, through the multiple personalities of the chameleon-like Solomon Gursky. Mixing over-the-top satire, bilious rants against the modern world and a melancholy awareness of age and decline, Barney's Version (1997) is built around the self-serving memoirs of Barney Panofsky ('the true story of my wasted life') and his hopelessly tangled relationships with his three wives.

Richler's other novels include A Choice of Enemies, Cocksure, St Urbain's Horseman and Joshua Then and Now. The Street is a memoir of his childhood in the backstreets of Montreal, a fascinating parallel to the opening chapters of The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz:* Jerome Weidman, *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*; ▷ Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March*.
- ▶ to Solomon Gursky Was Here and Barney's Version: > Joseph Heller, Closing Time; > Philip Roth, Sabbath's Theatre.

ROBERTS, Michèle (born 1949)

British poet and novelist

Michèle Roberts's novels combine a sensuous and poetic appreciation of the natural world with inventive imaginings and re-imaginings of history, religion, the relationships between men and women and those between mothers and daughters. *Daughters of the House* (1992) looks at several generations of women in an obsessively Catholic household in 1940s–50s provincial France. *Flesh and Blood* (1994) is an interlocking sequence of dark, magic-realist tales, spanning centuries, of the relationships between mothers and their daughters. *Impossible Saints* (1997) juxtaposes the fictional story of Saint Josephine with Roberts's retellings of the lives of genuine Catholic women saints to create a portrait of female sexuality, intelligence and imagination battling through the centuries against the constraints imposed on them. *Fair Exchange* (1999) takes episodes from the emotional lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Wordsworth and uses them as

the foundation stones for a narrative about ordinary lives caught up in the larger events of history. Roberts's most recent novel, *The Mistressclass* (2003), links a contemporary story of sibling rivalry and betrayal with the story of Charlotte Bronte's relationship with the Belgian teacher Constantin Heger.

THE BOOK OF MRS NOAH (1987)

This is a dazzling fantasy, set in the present day. A woman visiting Venice with her preoccupied husband fantasizes that she is Mrs Noah. The Ark is a vast library, a repository not only of creatures but of the entire knowledge and experience of the human race. She is its curator (or Arkivist), and her fellow voyagers are five Sibyls and a token male, the Gaffer, a bearded old party who once wrote a bestselling book (the Bible) and has now retired to a tax-heaven in the sky. Each Sibyl tells a story, and each story is about the way men have mistreated women down the centuries. Roberts channels feminist anger at male oppression into a witty and imaginative tour de force.

READ ON

- The Wild Girl (the gospel according to Mary Magdalene).
- ➤ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*. > Angela Carter, *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*; > Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*; > Margaret Forster, *The Memory Box*; Sara Maitland, *Three Times Table*.

ROGERS, Jane (born 1952)

British novelist

Jane Rogers's two best-known novels are both historical fiction. *Mr Wroe's Virgins* (1991), made into a memorable TV drama starring Jonathan Pryce, is the story of a charismatic fire-and-brimstone preacher in 1830s Lancashire who seizes upon a biblical text to persuade himself that he should live with seven virgins 'for comfort and succour'. Told in the very different voices of four of the virgins chosen from Mr Wroe's congregation, this is a novel that approaches the mysteries of faith and love with intelligence and humanity. *Promised Lands* (1995) interweaves the story of the First Fleet's journey to Australia and the largely uncomprehending responses of the men in it to a new land and new peoples with a modern story of a couple with very different ideas about the nature of their handicapped son. The modern and historical strands of the narrative occasionally seem inadequately connected, two novels struggling to emerge from one, but at its best *Promised Lands* uses both to consider ideas of innocence, idealism and the dangers of constructing stories to explain the lives of others.

Jane Rogers's other novels are Separate Tracks, Her Living Image, The Ice Is Singing and Island. She has also edited The Good Fiction Guide.

READ ON

- Island (a woman abandoned as a baby traces her mother with the intention of killing her).
- ▶ Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*; ▷ Thomas Keneally, *The Playmaker*; ▷ Hilary Mantel, *The Giant O'Brien*; ▷ Matthew Kneale, *English Passengers*.

READ ON A THEME: ROMAN CATHOLICISM

- ⋉ingsley Amis, The Alteration
 Georges Bernanos, Diary of a Country Priest
- > Anthony Burgess, Earthly Powers
- □ Graham Greene, Monsignor Quixote
- Thomas Keneally, Three Cheers for the Paraclete Patrick McCabe, The Dead School
- ▶ Brian Moore, Catholics J.F. Powers, Morte d'Urban Frederick Rolfe, Hadrian the Seventh

- > Antonia White, Frost in May

ROTH, Philip (born 1933)

US novelist

One of the wriest and wittiest of all contemporary US novelists, Roth writes of Jewish intellectuals, often authors or university teachers, discomfited by life. Their marriages fail; their parents behave like joke-book stereotypes (forever making chicken soup and simultaneously boasting about and deploring their sons' brains); sexual insatiability leads them from one farcical encounter to another; their career success attracts embarrassing fans and inhibits further work: their defences of self-mockery and irony wear ever thinner as they approach unwanted middle age. In what is still his best-known book, Portnoy's Complaint (1969), Roth treated this theme as farce, heavy with explicit sex and Jewish mother jokes. The majority of his novels are quieter, the tone more rueful, and he generalizes his theme and makes it symbolize the plight of all decent, conscience-stricken people in a world where barbarians make the running. His major 1980s work was a series of novels about a New York Jewish author, Nathan Zuckerman, who agonizes over his trade, writes an immensely successful (dirty) book, and is immediately harrassed by the way his fame both forces him to live the life of a celebrity, and makes him even more of an enigma to his family and friends. In the 1990s Roth produced a sequence of startling and jaundiced examinations of American dreams and nightmares, which have shown that he has lost none of his power and range as a writer. American Pastoral (1997), for example, is the story of Seymour 'Swede' Lvov, whose comfortable sense of himself and the America in which he lives is destroyed by events of the 1960s and by his own daughter's violent rejection of all he stands for. Roth has continued, into a new century, his unflinching chronicle of sexual politics and the deranging power of eroticism. The Dying Animal (2001) is the story of a sixty plus lecturer driven out of the comfortable and accepted terrain of his life by an obsessive relationship with a much younger student.

Roth's other books include Letting Go, The Great American Novel (which uses baseball as a farcical symbol for every red-blooded US tradition or way of thought), My Life as a Man and Our Gang (a > Swiftian satire about the Nixon

presidency). Goodbye Columbus consists of an early novella and five short stories. The Zuckerman books are: The Ghost Writer, Zuckerman Unbound, The Anatomy Lesson, The Prague Orgy and The Counterlife. The Facts: a Novelist's Autobiography, a fictionalized account of Roth's life, closes with a letter from 'Zuckerman' accusing Roth of living a fake life, of describing the truth of existence only when he invents fictional characters and incidents. Deception is a kind of pendant to this, a novel in dialogue about a novelist called Philip and his English lover. Patrimony: a True Story is a lacerating memoir of his father's decline and death, and of their relationship – in some ways the main inspiration for all Roth's work. Operation Shylock is a teasing, brilliant book, starting with a famous novelist called Philip Roth going to modern Israel (or its nightmare, Kafka-farce simulacrum), to track down an impostor called 'Philip Roth' and discover his true identity.

READ ON

- Sabbath's Theatre, The Human Stain
- ▶ Bernard Malamud, *Dubin's Lives*; ▷ Bernice Rubens, *Our Father*; ▷ Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*; ▷ John Fowles, *Daniel Martin*; ▷ John Updike, *Marry Me*.

RUBENS. Bernice (born 1927)

British novelist

Rubens's heroes and heroines are people at the point of breakdown: her novels chart the escalation of tension which took them there or the progress of their cure. Some of the books are bleak: in *The Elected Member/The Chosen People* (1969), for example, a man is driven mad by feeling that he is a scapegoat for the entire suffering of the Jewish people throughout history, and the story deals with his rehabilitation in a mental hospital. In other books, Rubens turns psychological pain to comedy, as if the only way to cope with the human condition were to treat it as God's black joke against the human race. God is even a character in *Our Father* (1987): he pops up in the Sahara, in the High Street, in the parlour; in bed with the heroine and her husband, constantly nagging her to make up her mind about herself — and his persistence leads her to rummage through childhood memories (where it becomes clear that she completely misunderstood her parents' emotional relationship) and to redefine her life.

Rubens's other novels include Madame Sousatzka, I Sent a Letter to my Love, The Ponsonby Post, Sunday Best, Brothers, A Five Year Sentence, Birds of Passage, Favours, Spring Sonata, Mother Russia, Yesterday in the Back Lane, Mr Wakefield's Crusade, Autobiopsy, The Waiting Game, Milwaukee and Nine Lives.

READ ON

- Birds of Passage, I, Dreyfus (in which a modern namesake of the Jewish officer wrongfully imprisoned in late nineteenth-century France suffers similarly).
- ▶ In The Elected Member: Paul Sayer, The Comforts of Madness.
- ▶ to Rubens's work in general: ▷ Paul Theroux, Picture Palace; ▷ Beryl Bainbridge, A Quiet Life; ▷ Rose Tremain, Sacred Country; Jane Gardam, The Flight of the Maidens.

RUSHDIE, Salman (born 1947)

Indian/British novelist and non-fiction writer

Rushdie's novels are magic realism: a mesmeric entwining of actuality and fantasy. Midnight's Children (1981) is the story of a rich Indian family over the past eighty years, and especially of Saleem, one of 1,001 children born at midnight on 15 August 1947, the moment of India's independence from Britain. Saleem's birth-time gives him extraordinary powers: he is, as Rushdie puts it, 'handcuffed' to India, able to let his mind float freely through its history and to share in the experience of anyone he chooses, from Gandhi or Nehru to the most insignificant beggar in the streets. In Saleem's experience (as relaved to us) time coalesces. 'real' politics blur with fantasy, a child's memories and magnifications are just as valid as newspaper accounts. The effect is to change reality to metaphor and Rushdie uses this to make several sharp political points. In 1993 Midnight's Children was voted the 'Booker of Bookers', for being the finest novel awarded the prize in the twenty-five years of the Booker competition. In Shame (1983) he goes still further. This novel is set in a dream country, Peccavistan ('Sinned' rather than Sind), whose geography and history are like Pakistan's seen in a distorting mirror. We witness a power struggle between members of the Harappa dynasty and their friends/rivals/enemies the Hyders. Interwoven with this is the story of Omar Khayyam Shakil, a bloated, brilliant physician, and his wife Sufiya Zinobia, a mental defective inhabited by a homicidal demon. The Satanic Verses (1988) dramatizes the conflict between good and evil in the persons of two actors, who fall out of an aeroplane and are transformed into the Angel Gibreel and Shaitan, the Devil. (The book violently offended fundamentalist Muslims, who took Gibreel's sardonic, ironic dreams about the prophet Mahound in the fantasy city Jahilia as blasphemy against their religion. Copies of *The Satanic Verses* were burned, and a fatwa was issued against Rushdie by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran – events whose surreal horror beggared anything in his fiction.) The Moor's Last Sigh (1995). written during his sentence of living death, is another hypnotic family saga, covering the lives of the Da Gama-Zogoiby dynasty, Portuguese-Indian pepper exporters in Bombay from the 1870s to the present. Since the lifting of the fatwa, Rushdie has published The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999), a novel which boldly mixes the mythologies of East and West with the modern iconography of rock in its story of two superstar musicians and their life and love across the decades, and Fury (2001), a darkly comic tale of a disenchanted exile arriving in New York and finding his demons still in pursuit.

Rushdie's other works include Grimus (an early, experimental novel), East, West (mischievous, ironic short stories), Haroun and the Sea of Stories (a mesmeric fable for children) and The Jaguar Smile (non-fiction; a politically savage look at the effect of US policies in Central America in general and Nicaragua in particular). Imaginary Homelands is a book of essays, chiefly on religion and literature, written during his enforced withdrawal from public life; Step Across This Line gathers together more of his non-fiction in a wide-ranging selection.

READ ON

- ▶ To Midnight's Children: > Vikram Seth, A Suitable Boy.
- ▶ To Shame: Augusto Roa Bastos, I, The Supreme; ▷ Günter Grass, The Tin Drum.
- ► To *The Satanic Verses*: > Angela Carter, *Nights at the Circus*; Lisa St Aubin de Terán, *Keepers of the House*.

S

SALINGER, J.D. (Jerome David) (born 1919) US novelist and short story writer

Salinger's only novel, The Catcher in the Rye (1951), is a rambling monologue by seventeen-year-old Holden Caulfield. He has run away from boarding school just before Christmas, and is spending a few days drifting in New York City while he decides whether to go home or not. He feels that his childhood is over and his innocence lost, but he detests the phoney, loveless grown-up world (symbolized by plastic Christmas baubles and seasonal fake goodwill). He thinks that to be adult is a form of surrender, but he can see no way to avoid it. He wanders the city, talking aimlessly to taxi-drivers, lodging-house keepers, bar-tenders, prostitutes and his own kid sister Phoebe, whom he tries to warn against growing up. Finally, inevitably, he capitulates – or perhaps escapes, since we learn that what we have just read is his 'confession' to the psychiatrist in a mental home. Salinger pursued the question of how to recover moral innocence in his only other publications, a series of short stories about the gifted, mentally unstable Glass family, 'Franny and Zooey', the most moving of the stories, shows Zooey Glass, an actor, talking his sister Franny out of a nervous breakdown. It is a performance of dazzling technical brilliance and full of loving kindness, but - and this is typical of Salinger's grim view of human moral endeavour - although it helps Franny momentarily, it contributes nothing whatever to the good of the world at large.

The Glass family stories are collected in Franny and Zooey, Nine Stories/For Esmé, with Love and Squalor and Raise High the Roofbeam, Carpenters.

READ ON

- ▶ to The Catcher in the Rye: > Carson McCullers, The Member of the Wedding;
 > John Updike, The Centaur; Truman Capote, Breakfast at Tiffany's; > Bret Easton Ellis, Less Than Zero (for a 1980s view of disenchanted preppy adolescence);
 S.E. Hinton, The Outsiders (adolescent angst recorded by a writer who was herself an adolescent when she wrote the book).
- ▶ to 'Franny and Zooey': Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*; > Susan Hill, *The Bird of Night*.

SARTRE, Jean-Paul (1905-80)

French novelist, poet and philosopher

The philosophy of existentialism, which Sartre developed in essays, plays, novels and monographs, says that Nothingness is the natural state of humanity: we exist, like animals, without ethics or morality. But unlike beasts we have the power to make choices, and these give moral status: they are a leap from

PATHWAYS

J.D. SALINGER

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

(a seventeen-year-old escapes stifling upbringing, on the run in New York at Christmas)

GROWING UP

(young adults coming to terms with their own needs and desires - and with the world at large)

Philip Roth, Portnoy's Complaint William Golding, The Pyramid Miles Franklin, My Brilliant Career Antonia White, Frost in May Angela Carter, The Magic Toyshop Günter Grass, Cat and Mouse

NEW YORK

(the city as a vast, all-engulfing landscape)

Jerome Weidman, Fourth Street East James Baldwin, Another Country Martin Amis, Money

FAMILIES

(relationships between the generations)

John Updike, The Centaur Anne Tyler, Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant Roddy Doyle, The Commitments

John Cheever, The Wapshot Chronicle François Mauriac, The Nest of Vipers

, USA

(seen - by adults as well as the young - as a kind of theme park in the borderland between reality and fantasy)

Budd Schulberg, What Makes Sammy Run? Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn John Irving, The Cider House Rules John Kennedy Toole, A Confederacy of Dunces Garrison Keillor, Lake Wobegon Days Patricia Highsmith, The People Who Knock on the Door Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita

Nothingness to Being. For some people, the choice is the leap of faith, and belief in God gives them moral status; for others the choice is to make no choice at all, to drift the way the world leads them without taking moral initiatives. For Sartre's characters, the leap into being involved taking responsibility, making moral decisions from which there was no turning back. His vast novel *The Roads to Freedom (Les Chemins de la liberté)* (1945–9; in three volumes, *The Age of Reason, The Reprieve* and *Iron in the Soul/Troubled Sleep*) tackles his theme exactly: the questions of what moral decisions to make and how to make them. It describes a group of young people trying to sort out their personal lives and at the same time to cope with the moral and intellectual challenges of fascism, communism, colonialism and the Second World War. Packed with intellectual, political and philosophical discussion and argument it is a complex read but few writings better give the intellectual 'feel' of the 1930s and 1940s.

Sartre's main philosophical monograph is Being and Nothingness. His plays include The Flies, The Victor/Men Without Shadows, Crime Passionel and Huis Clos/No Exit/In Camera. Nausea/The Diary of Antoine Roquentin is an autobiographical novel about a young intellectual in the 1920s and 1930s. Words is a memoir of his childhood spent within the stifling confines of a small French town and describes how his upbringing permanently marked his life and thought.

READ ON

- Nausea.
- ► Albert Camus, *The Plague (La Peste)*; Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*; Frederic Raphael, *Like Men Betrayed*.
- ▶ novels discussing similar personal dilemmas, but with different backgrounds and cultural conditions: ▷ Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace; ▷ Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier; ▷ Olivia Manning, The Levant Trilogy.

SAYERS, Dorothy L. (Leigh) (1893–1957)

British novelist

At various times, Sayers worked as an Oxford don, an advertising copywriter and a radio dramatist. She is best known, however, for a series of detective novels cruelly but accurately described (by the writer Colin Watson) as 'snobbery with violence'. The fascination of her books is not only in the solving of bizarre crimes in out-of-the-ordinary locations (an advertising agency; an Oxford women's college; an East Anglian belfry), but also in the character of her detective, the super-sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey. He is a languid, monocled aristocrat, whose foppish manner conceals the facts that he has a first-class Oxford degree, was in army intelligence during the First World War, collects rare books, plays the piano like Rubinstein, dances like Astaire and seems to have swallowed a substantial dictionary of quotations. He is aided and abetted by his manservant Bunter, a suave charmer adept at extracting confidences from the cooks, taxi-drivers, waitresses, barbers and vergers who would collapse in forelock-tugging silence if Wimsey himself ever deigned to speak to them. Several of the novels describe the unfolding relationship between Wimsey and the crime novelist Harriet Vane. Seldom have detective stories been so preposterous or so unputdownable.

The Wimsey/Vane romance is featured in Have His Carcase, Strong Poison, Gaudy Night and Busman's Honeymoon. Sayers's other Wimsey books – which

some admirers prefer to those involving Harriet Vane – include Murder Must Advertise, Clouds of Witness and The Nine Tailors.

READ ON

- Gaudy Night.
- ► Amanda Cross, *No Word from Winifred*; ▷ Michael Innes, *Hamlet, Revenge!*; Robert Robinson, *Landscape with Dead Dons*; ▷ P.D. James, *A Certain Justice*;

SAYLOR, Steven (born 1956)

US novelist

Very few of the many series of historical mysteries that have appeared over the last thirty years have the same unmistakeable authority as Steven Saylor's books set in the last decades of the Roman Republic. Where other writers have a rather stagey sense of their historical settings, Saylor's descriptions of the sights, smells and sounds of the crowded streets of Ancient Rome – based on wide-ranging research – carry immediate conviction. His central character, Gordianus the Finder ('the last honest man in Rome', as another character calls him) is a tough, unsentimental but sympathetic hero and we see him ageing and maturing as the series progresses and the dangerous politics of the period swirl around him, occasionally sweeping him up in conspiracy and murder. The real history of the dying days of the Roman Republic and the fictional narratives of Gordianus's casebook are brilliantly entwined.

ROMAN BLOOD (1991)

Based on a real case involving the Roman orator and politician Cicero, the first in the Gordianus series showed immediately Saylor's talent for blending real history with fictional mystery. The up-and-coming Cicero hires Gordianus to investigate the background to a murder case in which he is defending a man charged with killing his father. As Gordianus digs deeper, he finds that the case goes to the very heart of the political corruption and infighting in the Republic.

The other Gordianus the Finder books, best read in this order, are The House of the Vestals (short stories), Arms of Nemesis, Catilina's Riddle, The Venus Throw, A Murder on the Appian Way, Rubicon, Last Seen in Massilia and A Mist of Prophecies. A Twist at the End/Honour the Dead is a novel set in late nineteenth-century Texas with the short-story writer O. Henry as chief protagonist. Have You Seen Dawn? is a contemporary mystery, set in Texas.

READ ON

► Lindsey Davis, *The Iron Hand of Mars*; Ron Burns, *Roman Nights*; Joan O'Hagan, *A Roman Death*; Steven Pressfield, *Tides of War*; Valerio Massimo Manfredi, *Spartan*.

READ ON A THEME: SCHOOLS

- > Jonathan Coe, The Rotters Club
- Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*James Hilton, *Goodbye, Mr Chips*

Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown's Schooldays

- > James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
- > John le Carré, Call for the Dead
- > John Updike, The Centaur
- > Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall

See also: Adolescence

READ ON A THEME: SCOTLAND

George MacKay Brown, *Greenvoe* Lewis Grassic Gibbon, *A Scots Quair*

- ▷ Alasdair Gray, Lanark Neil M. Gunn, Morning Tide James Hogg, Confessions of a Justified Sinner James Kelman, How Late It Was, How Late
- > Walter Scott, The Heart of Midlothian
- > Irvine Welsh, Trainspotting

SCOTT, Sir Walter (1771–1832)

British novelist and poet

Scott began his career not with novels but with poems, in a style similar to Scottish folk ballads and the lyrics of Robert Burns. In 1814, piqued because his verse was outsold by Byron's, he turned instead to historical novels, and wrote twenty-nine in the next eighteen years. They are swaggering tales of love, bravery and intrigue, many of them centred on events from Scottish history and set in the brooding landscapes of the highlands and islands.

ROB ROY (1817)

In the 1710s, Osbaldistone and Rashleigh are rivals for the hand of Diana Vernon. Rashleigh embezzles money and frames Osbaldistone. Osbaldistone escapes to the highlands of Scotland, where he seeks help from Rob Roy, an outlaw who (like Robin Hood centuries before him) robs the rich to help the poor, rights wrongs and fights a usurping power (in his case, the English) on behalf of an exiled, true royal prince (James Stuart, the Old Pretender). Osbaldistone's quest to clear his name becomes inextricably bound up with the Jacobite Rebellion, and it is not until Rashleigh (who, not unexpectedly, supports the English and betrays Rob Roy to them) is killed that justice prevails and Osbaldistone and Diana at last find happiness.

STARTPOINTS

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

The origins of science fiction have been hotly debated (some experts take them. back to the ancient world) but it was the industrial revolution that led to the birth mass audience. They took advantage of public interest in the discoveries of 'real' science to write stories featuring such topics as space travel, invasions from other planets and the exploration of 'worlds that time forgot'. Ever since, SF authors have exploited every new scientific discovery and, more seriously, have used the genre to examine such ideas as 'green issues', fascism or the ethics of colonization. Some write about not physical space but the worlds of dreams and the imagination. Two kinds of SF have become separate genres: 'futureshock' books, projecting the problems of present-day society into the future, and space opera, about good-versus-evil battles on exotic planets. Space opera is similar to the fantasy literature which mushroomed after the success of > J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings (1954–5). The heroes of fantasy novels undertake magical quests – usually serious, but since the 1980s, in the hands of > Terry Pratchett and others, sometimes no-holds-barred farce.

- ➢ Asimov, Isaac, I, Robot (1950). Collection of linked future-detective stories in which the protagonists have to tackle crimes that may have been committed by robots.
- Description Descr

Bester, Alfred, *Tiger! Tiger! The Stars My Destination* (1956). High-energy story of revenge and transcendence told in a dazzling prose by a writer in love with the possibilities of language.

Card, Orson Scott, *Ender's Game* **(1985)**. The world is under threat from loath-some aliens and junior geniuses train in war games to combat it.

▶ Heinlein, Robert, Stranger in a Strange Land (1961). A new messiah is raised on Mars and his psychic powers lead him to the foundation of a new religion.

Holdstock, Robert, Mythago Wood (1984). A dark and particularly English fantasy in which mysterious Jungian archetypes haunt a Herefordshire forest.

Holt, Tom, Flying Dutch (1991). Brilliantly funny, tongue-in-cheek exploration of the story of the Flying Dutchman, doomed to an eternal life of loneliness on the seas unless he can find true love.

Miller Jr, Walter M., A Canticle for Leibowitz (1959). In a post-holocaust America scraps of pre-war knowledge are treasured and preserved by guardians who no longer understand what they signify in this intelligent exercise in imagining the unimaginable future.

- ▶ Moorcock, Michael, *Elric* (2001). Moorcock creates one of the great antiheroes of fantasy literature in Elric of Melnibone, the albino sorcerer and betrayer of his own, non-human race on an Earth only just coming under the domination of mankind.
- ▶ **Pratchett, Terry, Small Gods (1992).** This episode in Pratchett's hilarious and ever-increasing Discworld series tells of the Grand Inquisitor's secretary: a lad who never forgets anything, ever, and who has a unique and meaningful personal relationship with God (a very tiny turtle). All the Discworld books are self-contained; this is one of the funniest.
- **Priest, Christopher, The Glamour (1984).** An enigmatic love triangle becomes a disturbing search for identity, as the three central characters all possess (or believe they possess) an uncanny quality that sets them apart.

Russell, Mary Doria, *The Sparrow* (1996). A clash of cultures brilliantly and movingly explored in this story of a Jesuit-sponsored mission to a distant planet and the unsettling mysteries of otherness and difference encountered among its inhabitants.

Stephenson, Neal, Snow Crash (1992). Witty, complex tale of conspiracy theories fronted by a skateboarding pizza-delivery boy. The paranoia of *The X-Files* combined with irony and a grunge sensibility.

Vonnegut, Kurt, *The Sirens of Titan* (1959). Classic story of Niles Rumfoord, condemned by a scientific accident to live all moments of his life simultaneously and how, on a lunatic rollercoaster ride through the universe and time, he tries to shake off his condition.

Wolfe, Gene, *The Book of the New Sun* (1980–3). This classic four-book series uses fantasy form to explore ideas of the duality between good and evil, the nature of cruelty and the possibility of redemption. Severian, exiled to the mysterious, dying planet Urth, first explores, then exploits, then seeks to save it. Individual titles: *The Shadow of the Torturer, The Claw of the Conciliator, The Sword of the Lictor, The Citadel of the Autarch.*

Also recommended: Poul Anderson, The Broken Sword; Greg Bear, Blood Music; Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451; Samuel R. Delany, Nova; Philip José Farmer, A Feast Unknown; M. John Harrison, Viriconium Nights; ▷ Russell Hoban, Riddley Walker; Daniel Keyes, Flowers for Algernon; Stanislaw Lem, Solaris; Kim Stanley Robinson, Red Mars; Joanna Russ, The Female Man; Norman Spinrad, Bug Jack Barron; Sherri S. Tepper, Grass; Jack Womack, Elvissey.

See also: Atwood, Ballard, Clarke, Dick, Donaldson, Eddings, Fantasy Adventure, Fantasy Societies, Feist, Gibson, Harrison, Herbert, Jordan, Le Guin, Lessing, McCaffrey, Rewriting History, Wyndham.

Scott's other novels include Waverley, Guy Mannering, Old Mortality, The Heart of Midlothian, The Bride of Lammermoor, Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, The Fortunes of Nigel, Quentin Durward, Redgauntlet and Castle Dangerous.

READ ON

- Ivanhoe, The Heart of Midlothian.
- ► Harrison Ainsworth, *The Tower of London*; James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*; ▷ Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Notre Dame de Paris)*; ▷ Alexandre Dumas, *The Man in the Iron Mask*; Nigel Tranter, *Montrose: the Captain General*.

SEBALD. W.G. (1944-2001)

German novelist and non-fiction writer

The death of W.G. Sebald in a car crash in 2001 robbed contemporary European literature of one of its most distinctive and original writers. His books, which have been gradually building up the readership they deserve, transcend and defy the limitations of genre. Are they novels or travel writing or exercises in biography and autobiography? They have elements of all three – as well as dashes of philosophy and history thrown into the mixture – but who cares about pedantic definition when the books themselves are so enthralling? Originally written in German, and translated into English under the careful supervision of Sebald, who lived and taught in Britain for half his life, they examine the displacements and disillusions of twentieth-century history with scrupulous exactness and melancholy irony. The Emigrants uses accounts of Jewish émigrés lives in Manchester, Norfolk, Austria and America – complete with illustrative black and white photographs – as a way of exploring notions of homeland and exile, of what it means to have roots in a place and a culture which the forces of history tear up. Vertigo gives the reader a series of very different narratives – including the story of Kafka's journey to Italy in search of health and Sebald's own account of a return to his childhood home – which move circuitously around questions of memory and the past.

THE RINGS OF SATURN (1998)

The most readily accessible of Sebald's books, this seems initially to be the account of a walking tour the author made around Suffolk in 1992. However, in Sebald's work, little remains what it seems and *The Rings of Saturn*, as it progresses through digression and diversion, becomes a multi-faceted meditation on identity, individuality and landscape. Sebald's own experiences on his journey mingle with memories and stories evoked by the places and people he sees.

Sebald's other books include After Nature, On the Natural History of Destruction and Austerlitz. For Years Now is a collection of short pieces by Sebald, each one paired with an image by the artist Tess Jaray.

READ ON

- ▶ to The Emigrants: Thomas Bernhard, Extinction, Sandor Marai, Embers.
- ▶ to The Rings of Saturn and Vertigo: Claudio Magris, Danube.

SELF. Will (born 1961)

British writer

Since first coming to attention with his 1991 collection of short stories The Quantity Theory of Insanity, Will Self has successfully maintained an ambivalent profile in contemporary fiction. On the one hand he is the perennial bad boy and outsider, a former heroin addict who writes with brutal directness about sex. drugs and urban violence. On the other, he is the Oxford-educated, middle-class satirist once described by Martin Amis as 'thrillingly heartless, terrifyingly brainy'. Like most satirists, much of Self's anger and indignation is directed at the hypocrisies and corruptions of the city. His fiction is mostly set in London and, in Self's work, London is an almost hallucinatory city in which no one and nothing is to be trusted, not even the ongoing humanity of its inhabitants. In Great Apes (1997) the artist Simon Dykes wakes after a night of dissipation to find that the human city has slipped away from him while he slept. His girlfriend has become a chimpanzee and so too have the rest of the inhabitants of London. Self is very definitely not a writer for the squeamish or the easily offended but for those who like their fiction to be thrillingly heartless and terrifyingly brainy, he is an essential read.

MY IDEA OF FUN (1993)

Ian Wharton has – or fantasizes that he has – eidetic powers, the ability to see into people's lives and minds as easily as into their pockets. Seeking to understand and control these powers, he becomes in thrall to 'Mr Broadhurst', alias 'Samuel Northcliffe', alias 'the Fat Controller', who leads him a Mephistophelean dance of alchemy, sexual fantasy and sadistic violence in return for his soul. The novel recounts lan's twenty-year struggle to break free from the Fat Controller and his henchman Gyggle, a nightmare spiral through the underbelly of 1990s big-city Britain – or possibly through the drug-blasted synapses of his own imagination.

Self's other books include Cock and Bull, two interlinked novellas which explore and undermine traditional ideas about male and female sexuality, the novels How The Dead Live and Dorian (a contemporary reworking of Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray) and the short story collections Grey Area and Tough, Tough Toys for Tough, Tough Boys, Junk Mail and Feeding Frenzy are collections of his hard-hitting and witty journalism.

READ ON

- ▶ to Great Apes: John Collier, His Monkey Wife, > Peter Høeg, The Woman and the
- ▶ to My Idea of Fun: > William Burroughs, The Naked Lunch.
- ▶ to Self's work in general: ▷ Martin Amis, Dead Babies; ▷ Irvine Welsh, Marabou Stork Nightmares; Christopher Fowler, Spanky.

READ ON A THEME: SEQUELS

('what happened next' to characters from famous novels of the past)

Elaine Feinstein, Lady Chatterley's Confession (after Lady Chatterley's Lover)

 □ George MacDonald Fraser, Flashman (after Tom Brown's Schooldays) Lin Haire-Sargeant, Heathcliffe (after Wuthering Heights)

Susan Hill, Mrs de Winter (after Rebecca)
Nikos Kazantzakis, The Odyssey (after Homer's Odyssey)
Bjorn Larsson, Long John Silver (before and after Treasure Island)
Valerie Martin, Mary Reilly (after Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde)
Alexandra Ripley, Scarlett (after Gone With the Wind)
John Spurling, After Zenda (after The Prisoner of Zenda)
Emma Tennant, Pemberley and An Unequal Marriage (after Pride and Prejudice)
Angela Thirkell, High Rising (after Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels)

SETH, Vikram (born 1952)

Indian writer

Could two contemporary novels by the same author be more different in form and content than *The Golden Gate* and *A Suitable Boy? The Golden Gate* (1986) is a novel in verse, a sequence of nearly 700 sonnets telling of the loves and lives of a group of twentysomething professionals in California. *A Suitable Boy* (1993) is a huge 1500-page book which sets the stories of four families in newly independent India against the backdrop of the social and political changes that independence has brought. Yet both are the work of Vikram Seth. What links two such different books are Seth's easy wit, his readability and his acute eye for manners and mores both in 1980s California and in Nehru's new India. Seth's only other novel is *An Equal Music* (1998), in which a classical violinist struggles to revitalize a love he thought he'd lost and to find artistic fulfilment through his music.

Vikram Seth has also written several volumes of poetry, a book about his travels in Sinkiang and Tibet, From Heaven Lake and a collection of animal fables, Beastly Tales from Here and There.

READ ON

- ▶ to A Suitable Boy: > Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children and Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things (for two very different ways of treating post-independence India in fiction); Rohinton Mistry, A Fine Balance (another epic of Indian lives caught up in wider social change, this time set in the 1970s).
- ▶ to An Equal Music: Bernard MacLaverty, Grace Notes.

READ ON A THEME: SEX

- Nicholson Baker, Vox Georges Bataille, The Story of the Eye
- D.H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover
 Henry Miller, The Rosy Crucifixion Trilogy (Sexus, Plexus, Nexus)
 Anaïs Nin, Delta of Venus
 Pauline Reage, The Story of 0
 D.M. Thomas, The White Hotel

SHARPE, Tom (born 1928)

British novelist

If, as many foreigners maintain, British humour is obsessed with the functions of the lower body, then Sharpe is our comic Laureate. In each of his books he chooses a single target – polytechnic life, publishing, Cambridge University, the landed gentry – and demolishes it magnificently, comprehensively, by piling slapstick on crudity like a demented circus clown. Sharpe's heroes live in a state of unceasing, ungovernable panic, and are usually crippled by lust, forever tripping over their own erections. His old men are gluttonous, lecherous and senile, prone to perversion and prey to strokes and heart attacks; his matrons are whooping, whip-wielding Boadiceas, scything down every beddable male in sight. If your humorous fancy is for penises trapped in briar patches, condoms ballooning above Cambridge spires or maniacs burying sex-dolls in wet cement, Sharpe's books are for you.

RIOTOUS ASSEMBLY (1973)

Kommandant van Heerden, police chief of the sleepy South African town of Piemburg, wants a quiet life and an invitation to join the exclusive British Country Club. His assistant Verkramp wants van Heerden's job. Konstabel Els wants to keep on playing with his electrodes and fucking kaffirs. But Miss Hazelstone phones to say that she has just shot her black cook – and that it was not a 'garbage-disposal operation' but the result of a lovers' tiff. Van Heerden, thinking that she must be covering up for her brother the bishop, sets out on an investigation which spirals into an orgy of transvestism, voyeurism, bestiality and murder. The South African setting gives this book devastating point: given the situation, even Sharpe's most slapstick satirical excess seems a model of self-restraint.

Sharpe's other books include Wilt and its sequels The Wilt Alternative and Wilt on High; The Throwback; Porterhouse Blue and its sequel Grantchester Grind; Ancestral Vices, Vintage Stuff and The Midden.

READ ON

- Indecent Exposure: Blott on the Landscape.
- ► Colin Douglas, *The Houseman's Tale*; Thorne Smith, *The Bishop's Jaegers*; Howard Jacobson, *Peeping Tom*; J.P. Donleavy, *The Ginger Man*.

SHELLEY, Mary (1797–1851)

British novelist

After the death of her husband (the poet) in 1822, Shelley developed a literary career of her own, editing her husband's work, writing essays, journals and travel books, and publishing short stories and novels. Her best-known book is *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), about a man who tries to prove the superiority of scientific rationality to the supernatural by usurping God's function and creating life. Although, thanks to Hollywood, Frankenstein's monster has nudged his creator from centre-stage, even the worst Frankenstein films keep to one of Shelley's most fascinating ideas: that the monster is an innocent, as pure as Adam before the Fall, and that its ferocity is a response learned by contact with

'civilized' human beings. Shelley developed the theme of the contrast between innocence and the corruption of civilization in other books, most notably the future-fantasy *The Last Man* (1826), set in a world where all human beings but one have been destroyed by plague, and the survivor wanders among the monuments of the glorious past like a soul in Hell.

READ ON

- ► to The Last Man: ▷ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*; Bernard Malamud, *God's Grace*; David Markson, *Wittgenstein's Mistress*.

SHIELDS, Carol (1935-2003)

US/Canadian novelist and short story writer

In most of her novels Carol Shields wrote about very ordinary people who lead lives that might be considered narrow and restricting by outside observers. In The Stone Diaries (see below) Daisy Goodwill's life is a long one and it certainly has its dramas but she comes to feel that she has sleepwalked through it, entering a number of roles expected of women but never reaching down to her essential self. Larry in Larry's Party is not a man caught up in large-scale events or swept along by strong passions. Yet Shields had a gift for locating the extraordinary that lurks within apparently ordinary people. She could highlight an individuality that is not only hidden from other characters in the novel but may even be hidden from the person herself. In the short stories collected in volumes like Dressing Up for the Carnival and Various Miracles this sense of the mystery and worth of the individual is apparent. Her novels have been varied in subject matter but all have had at their core people working through the maze of life in search of an elusive sense of self at its heart. Mary Swann is the story of four very different people whose lives are linked by an obsessive interest in the work and life of a Canadian poet unrecognized before her violent death. Different facets of Mary Swann's character, satisfying to the various interpreters, are finally presented at a symposium on her work. The Republic of Love is the story of two people encumbered with the wreckage of several past relationships, embarking on yet another hopeful journey towards emotional fulfilment.

THE STONE DIARIES (1993)

The Stone Diaries is the story of an 'ordinary' woman's life from birth in rural Canada to her death in a Florida nursing home ninety years later. Daisy Goodwill Flett, as the chapter headings of the book (Birth, Childhood, Marriage, Love etc) ironically underline lives, in one sense, a conventional life as (in her son's words at her memorial service) 'wife, mother, citizen of our century'. In another sense her life is most unconventional, including elements that might not have looked out of place in a magic-realist novel. Her mother dies in childbirth without even realizing she is pregnant. A neighbour returns to his native Orkney Islands and lives to the age of 115, proud of his ability to recite Jane Eyre from memory. And the novel in which Daisy's life is told is far from being conventional. It mimics the form of a non-fiction biography with family tree, photographs of family members, excerpts from letters, journals, newspaper articles and so on. In a poignant, funny

and knowing narrative, Carol Shields carefully unfolds the extraordinary story of the ordinary 'wife, mother and citizen of the century'.

Carol Shields's other books include Happenstance, The Box Garden, Small Ceremonies, Unless and A Celibate Season (a collaboration with Blanche Howard). She also wrote a biography of ▷ Jane Austen.

READ ON

- Mary Swann.
- ▶ to the novels: ▷ Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*; ▷ Anne Tyler, *Breathing Lessons*; ▷ Jane Smiley, *Moo*; ▷ Anita Shreve, *The Pilot's Wife*.
- ▶ to the short stories: ▷ Alice Munro, Dance of the Happy Shades.

READ ON A THEME: SHIPS AND THE SEA

- > William Golding, Rites of Passage
- > Patrick O'Brian, Master and Commander
- > Barry Unsworth, Sacred Hunger
- □ Jules Verne, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea Herman Wouk, The Caine Mutiny

READ ON A THEME: SHIPWRECK

R.M. Ballantyne, The Coral Island

- Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe
- > William Golding, Pincher Martin
- > Muriel Spark, Robinson
- > Kurt Vonnegut, Galápagos
- ▶ Patrick White, A Fringe of Leaves
 Marianne Wiggins, John Dollar

READ ON A THEME: SHORT STORIES

- ▶ Helen Dunmore, Ice Cream Nathan Englander, For the Relief of Unbearable Urges Aleksander Hemon, The Question of Bruno
- > James Joyce, Dubliners
- Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis and Other Stories
 Garrison Keillor, Lake Wobegon Days
 Ring Lardner, Collected Short Stories

William Maxwell, All the Days and Nights: Collected Short Stories
Lorrie Moore, Birds of America
Saki, The Complete Stories
Helen Simpson, Four Bare Legs in a Bed

See also: Borges, Calvino, Carver, Chekhov, Doyle, Fitzgerald (F. Scott), Hemingway, Mansfield, Maugham, de Maupassant, Munro, Poe, Pritchett, Stevenson, Taylor, Trevor, Updike, Welty, Wilson (Angus), Wyndham

SHREVE, Anita (born 1946)

US novelist

Read a précis of the plot of any of Anita Shreve's novels and she sounds remarkably like a writer of soap opera stories and undemanding weepies. Begin to read one of the novels, rather than a précis of it, and her skill at depicting the nuances of troubled relationships, her expertise in navigating the treacherous waters of love and passion and her gift for creating memorable and multi-faceted characters are immediately apparent. Take her most recent novel, All He Ever Wanted, as an example. This is the story of a man who becomes obsessed by a woman he first sees as he flees from a hotel fire and the life with her which this chance meeting begins. Even the title suggests a romantic melodrama. Nothing could be further from the truth. All He Ever Wanted is a subtle and moving portrait of a man who mixes passion with cold possessiveness and a hauntingly exact depiction, over several decades, of a relationship far removed from the comforting clichés of romance. Like all of Shreve's novels it delivers far more than it says on the tin.

THE WEIGHT OF WATER (1997)

At the centre of *The Weight of Water* is a nineteenth-century murder in which two women living isolated lives on one of a group of islands off the coast of New Hampshire are brutally killed and a third is left to hide, terrified, from the unknown assailant. A modern magazine photographer journeys to the islands to produce a photo-essay on what has become a famous case. As she unearths new evidence about the murders, her own marriage is falling apart around her and her husband is becoming dangerously involved with one of their companions on the sailing trip to the islands. *The Weight of Water* shows how skilfully Shreve can take almost melodramatic plots and invest them with subtlety and insight.

Anita Shreve's other novels include Fortune's Rocks, Eden Close, Strange Fits of Passion, The Pilot's Wife, Sea Glass and Last Time They Met.

READ ON

- The Pilot's Wife (a newly bereaved wife discovers her husband's secret life).
- ► ▷ Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*; ▷ Carol Shields, *Mary Swann*; ▷ Anne Tyler, *Back When We Were Grown-ups*; Ann Patchett, *The Magican's Assistant*,

SIMENON, Georges (1903-89)

Belgian novelist

Simenon began work as a seaman, then as a journalist, and finally began writing in his twenties. He produced over 500 books, sometimes writing them in a week or less. In his most productive year as a hack writer of potboilers he produced no less than forty-four books. Simenon is best known for some 150 crime stories featuring the pipe-smoking, Calvados-drinking Commissaire Maigret of the Paris police. The books are short and spare: they concentrate on Maigret's investigations in bars, lodging houses and rain-soaked Paris streets, and on his casualseeming, fatherly conversations with suspects and witnesses. But Simenon is a far more substantial writer than this, and his relentless productivity, suggest. Many of his non-Maigret novels are compelling studies of people distracted by fear, obsession, despair or hate. Act of Passion (1947) is the confession of a madman who kills his lover to keep her pure, to prevent her being contaminated by the evil which he feels has corroded his own soul. The hero of The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By (1938), outwardly placid and controlled, is in fact so gnawed by the sense of his own inadequacy that he chooses murder as the best way to make his mark on the world. Ticket of Leave (1942) is about a woman who falls in love with a paroled murderer. All these books are written in a sinewy, unemotional style, as plain as a police report. Only in one novel, *Pedigree* (1948), does Simenon break out of his self-imposed limits. It is a 500-page account of a boy's growing-up in Belgium in the first fifteen years of this century, an evocation not only of trams, gaslight, cobble stones and teeming back-street life, but of an emerging personality. A fictionalized autobiography, it is one of Simenon's most unexpected and rewarding works.

READ ON

- ▶ to Pedigree: Jerome Weidman, Fourth Street East.
- ▶ to the Maigret books: Nicolas Freeling, *Love in Amsterdam*; Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, *The Laughing Policeman*; Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Quarry*.

SINCLAIR, lain (born 1943)

British writer

For the last twenty-five years, lain Sinclair has been conducting his own intense, idiosyncratic fictional study of the topography, history and inhabitants of his adopted city, London. His work does not often make easy reading. In Sinclair's imagination there are interconnections between the most disparate phenomena and the city is a network of links between people (past and present), buildings, sites of numinous significance, books, rituals and power structures. This, and his highly wrought, linguistically inventive prose, make demands on the reader but the rewards are considerable. Lud Heat (1975), influential on ▷ Peter Ackroyd's Hawksmoor, is a mixture of prose and poetry which centres on the London churches of the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. Sinclair's first novel White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings (1987) follows the antics of a group of seedy, unscrupulous book dealers as they try to track down arcane editions of Victorian novels and joins to this a sequence of meditations and revelations about the Whitechapel murders of Jack the Ripper. Sinclair's finest novel to date is Downriver (1991), as ambitious to encompass the possibilities of London as

Doyce's *Ulysses* is to memorialize Dublin. Built around twelve interlocking tales centred on the Thames and the life surrounding it, and incorporating characters from Victorian boatmen and visiting Aboriginal cricketers to Sixties gangsters and nuclear-waste train-drivers, *Downriver* is an extraordinary, ebullient celebration of the splendours and squalor of the city.

Sinclair's other novels are Radon Daughters and Landor's Tower. Lights Out for the Territory is a collection of essays, London Orbital an idiosyncratic account of walks around the M25. Rodinsky's Room (written in collaboration with the artist Rachel Lichtenstein) is an exploration of the Jewish East End focused on the mysterious disappearance of a reclusive scholar from his room above a synagogue in Princelet Street.

READ ON

- Landor's Tower (Sinclair deserts his usual setting of London in a story set entirely in the borderlands of England and Wales).
- ► Peter Ackroyd, *Hawksmoor*; ▷ Michael Moorcock, *Mother London*; Paul West, *The Women of Whitechapel*; Chris Petit, *Robinson*; Nicholas Royle, *The Matter of the Heart*; Maureen Duffy, *Capital*.

SINGER, I.B. (Isaac Bashevis) (1904–91) Polish/US novelist and short story writer

Singer wrote in Yiddish, and maintained that even when he translated his work himself, English diluted its force. His characters are either Middle European Jews - merchants, yeshiva-students, gravediggers, rabbis, drunks - from the ghettos and peasant villages of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, or (in several of his finest stories) present-day settlers in Israel or the US. They struggle to lead decent lives, uplifted or oppressed by the demands of orthodox Jewish belief and ritual. They are haunted by outside forces beyond their control: supernatural beings - several stories are narrated by dybbuks, ghosts and even the Devil himself - or mindless, vicious anti-Semitism. Satan in Goray (1955), The Magician of Lublin (1960) and The Slave (1962) are about dark forces, demonic evil breaking out in small, closed communities. In The Manor (1967), The Estate (1970) and Enemies, a Love Story (1972) the destructive forces are internal, as people's orthodox beliefs are challenged by love affairs, business deals, friendships and other such worldly claims. Shosha (1978) and its sequel Meshugah (published 1995) are about a Jewish writer seen first in pre-Holocaust Poland and then in 1950s literary New York.

THE FAMILY MOSKAT (1950)

This is a warm, multi-generation story about a large Jewish family in Warsaw – and Singer's finest novel. The focus is on the human relationships within the family, magnificently and movingly described; but the novel's edge comes from the constant intrusion of grim outside reality, the tormented history of Poland between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the Second World War Nazi storming of the Warsaw ghetto. Counterpoint between inner and outer reality, between public and private life, between flesh and spirit, makes this book not just another family saga but a statement about Jewish (and non-Jewish) humanity at large.

Singer's other novels include The Certificate. The Penitent, The King of the Fields and Shadows on the Hudson, posthumously published in book form although it had only appeared as a magazine serial in Singer's lifetime. Short story collections include Gimpel the Fool, The Spinoza of Market Street, A Friend of Kafka, A Crown of Feathers, Passions, Love and Exile and Old Love, Collected Stories is a fat anthology. In My Father's Court is a memoir of Singer's Warsaw days as the son of a rabbi, a theological student and a budding writer.

READ ON

- ▶ to the short stories: S.Y. Agnon. The Bridal Canopy: Isaac Babel. Odessa Tales:
- > Nikolai Gogol, Arabesques.
- ▶ to The Family Moskat: I.J. Singer (I.B.'s brother), The Brothers Ashkenazy.
- ▶ to Singer's other novels: Bernard Malamud, The Fixer; Nikos Kazantzakis, The Greek Passion; > Mario Vargas Llosa, The War of the End of the World; Jerzy Kosinski, The Painted Bird,

READ ON A THEME: THE SIXTIES

T. Coraghessan Boyle, Drop City Richard Brautigan, In Watermelon Sugar Richard Farina, Been Down So Long It looks Like Up to Me Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

> Thomas Pynchon. The Crying of Lot 49 Terry Southern, The Magic Christian

READ ON A THEME: SMALL TOWN LIFE, USA

Louisa May Alcott, Little Women Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio Russell Banks. Affliction

- > John Cheever. Bullet Park
- > John Irving, The Cider House Rules Garrison Keillor, Lake Wobegon Days William Maxwell, Time Will Darken It Larry McMurtry. The Last Picture Show Jayne Anne Phillips, Machine Dreams Dawn Powell, My Home Is Far Away Richard Russo, The Risk Pool

See also: Deep South, USA

SMILEY, Jane (born 1951)

US novelist

A story set in the Midwest that echoes the events described in King Lear (A Thousand Acres); a satire on the academic pretensions of a small college (Moo): a historical novel of immense ambition that takes place in the battleground between pro- and anti-slave factions that was Kansas in the 1850s (The

All-True Travels and Adventures of Lydie Newton) - Jane Smiley's fiction is immensely varied. Her novels have few common denominators beyond the subtlety of her intelligence and the supple flexibility of her prose, which she can adapt to whatever requirements her story demands. She has a particularly strong feeling for rural life, both its pleasures and its pitfalls. In A Thousand Acres the Lear-like character is a farmer and the inheritance he bestows on his two daughters is not a kingdom but a farm in lowa. The tragedy, which is as much that of the daughters as it is of the father, is played out against the ordinary, everyday details of farm life and is the stronger because of that. In The All-True Travels and Adventures of Lydie Newton the idealistic settlers of Kansas Territory find that they have to face not only the belligerence of their pro-slave neighbours but the intransigence of a land that is far from being the one of milk and honey that they imagined. The women of the book face the challenges more realistically than the men. (Smiley's fiction is full of strong women who get on with the daily tasks of life while the men have a tendency to make fine speeches and adopt noble postures.) Yet even the likeable and resourceful heroine Lydie is caught up in forces she cannot understand. Her husband is killed by pro-slavers and her attempt to make her own stand for his ideals (by helping in the escape of a slave) turns to tragedy. Jane Smiley is clear-sighted and unsentimental about both men and women and about the relationships between them, which is another of the qualities that make her one of America's most interesting contemporary novelists.

Jane Smiley's other novels include Horse Heaven, The Greenlanders (an epic set in medieval Greenland), Barn Blind, Duplicate Keys, At Paradise Gate, Ordinary Love and Good Faith. The Age of Grief is a collection of short stories.

READ ON

▷ Annie Proulx, Accordion Dreams; ▷ Barbara Kingsolver, The Bean Trees; ▷ Carol Shields, The Stone Diaries; Jane Hamilton, A Map of the World.

SMITH, Wilbur (born 1933) South African novelist

Smith's novels, set in southern Africa, are swaggering adventure yarns in the tradition of ▷ H. Rider Haggard. Their backgrounds are war, mining and jungle exploration; their heroes are free spirits, revelling in the lawlessness and vigour of frontier life. Shout At the Devil (1968) is typical: the story of lion-hunting, crocodile-wrestling, ivory-poaching Flynn O'Flynn whose Robin Hood humiliations of the sadistic German commissioner Fleischer take a serious turn when war is declared – this is 1914 – and he falls into a German trap.

Smith's other novels include A Falcon Flies, Men of Men, The Angels Weep, The Leopard Hunts in Darkness (the four Ballantyne books), A Time to Die, The Burning Shore, Birds of Prey, Monsoon and Blue Horizon. The Courtneys of Africa books (The Burning Shore, Power of the Sword and Rage) are about the lifelong feud of two half-brothers during the last turbulent century of South African affairs. River God is set in ancient Egypt and has been followed by two other books with a similar setting, The Seventh Scroll and Warlock.

READ ON

- A Time to Die (about Sean Courtney, a white safari guide who agrees to lead his
 rich US clients across the border into Mozambique, where the daughter is
 promptly kidnapped by guerrillas).
- ► > Hammond Innes, Campbell's Kingdom; > H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon's Mines; Bryce Courtenay, The Power of One.
- ▶ to the Egyptian novels: Christian Jacq, Ramses: The Son of the Light.

SMITH, Zadie (born 1976)

British novelist

Few first novelists gain the attention that Zadie Smith did with her début White Teeth (2000). For several months before and after its publication Smith and her book were omnipresent in the media. White Teeth went on to win very nearly every literary prize for which it was eligible. For once the hype and the hoopla were justified. The novel is an ambitious and generous story of different generations of two families in London which takes on, with confidence and humour, the question of what it means to be English in a postcolonial world. Archie Jones is a working-class Englishman who meets Samad labal, a Muslim, during the Second World War and begins a lifelong friendship with him. White Teeth traces the progress of that friendship through several decades, through marriage and parenthood and through the dramatically changing social landscape of post-war Britain. The story moves into the next generation with Irie (daughter of Archie and his Jamaican second wife) and the twins Millat and Magid (sons of Samad's arranged marriage). Packed with energy and inventiveness and alive with the details of London life, White Teeth moves back and forth through the decades to create a vivid portrait of cultures mixing and melding in the city. Smith followed this astonishing début with The Autograph Man (2002), the story of Alex-Li Tandem, a man who makes his money out of our never-ending modern hunger for a connection with celebrity. Alex buys, sells (and occasionally fakes) autographs. Haunted still, after many years, by the death of his father and obsessed by an obscure 1940s movie star whose autograph is legendarily hard to acquire, he sets off on a hectic odyssey that brings him face to face with his own fears and the perilous nature of fame.

READ ON

▶ Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*; Hari Kunzru, *The Impressionist*; ▷ Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*; Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*.

SNOW, C.P. (Charles Percy) (1905–80)

British novelist

Snow's main work is the novel-sequence *Strangers and Brothers* (1950–74). Though many characters recur, each book is self-contained. As the series proceeds, Lewis Eliot (the narrator of all eleven novels) rises from humble provincial beginnings to become a barrister, a civil servant and a senior government official. Snow's preoccupation was power: how people influence

each other, the working of committees and hierarchies, the morality of office. He coined the phrase 'the corridors of power' — and he offers unrivalled glimpses of the people who tramp those corridors, of real individuals behind the establishment façade. *The Masters*, one of the key books in the sequence, describes the alliances and compromises required to elect a new master for a Cambridge college. *The New Men*, about scientists working on the first atomic bomb, is a study of responsibility: should we use our skills for ends we feel are wrong? Snow's themes are large, but his books are blander and less agonized than this suggests. His characters — especially the imperturbable committeemen (never women) who keep things going and the mavericks who let feelings interfere with common sense — are fascinating, and his scenes of discussion and persuasion are brilliantly done: he keeps us on the edge of our seats about such apparently trivial matters as whether someone will end up saying 'yes' or 'no'.

The books in the sequence are Strangers and Brothers, The Light and the Dark, A Time of Hope, The Masters, The New Men, Homecomings, The Conscience of the Rich, The Affair, The Corridors of Power, The Sleep of Reason and Last Things. Snow's other novels include two thrillers, Death Under Sail and A Coat of Varnish, and The Search, a fascinating study of the excitement and passion of scientific research.

READ ON

► Anthony Trollope, Can You Forgive Her? (the first novel in the Palliser sequence); ▷ Angus Wilson, The Old Men at the Zoo; Pamela Hansford Johnson (Lady Snow), Error of Judgement; ▷ Gore Vidal, Washington, DC; Nevil Shute, No Highway.

SOLZHENITSYN, Alexandr (born 1918)

Russian novelist and non-fiction writer

Denounced for treason in 1945 (he was a Red Army soldier who criticized Stalin), Solzhenitsyn spent eight years in a labour camp where he developed stomach cancer, and after nine months in a cancer hospital was sent into internal exile. He turned this bitter experience into novels: the prison-camp books *Ohe Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1961) and *The First Circle* (1968), and *Cancer Ward* (1968), a story of patients in a Soviet hospital. Their publication outside the USSR made him one of the most famous of the 1960s Soviet dissidents. He was finally expelled from the USSR in 1974, for writing an exhaustive description of the location, history and methods of the Russian prison camp system, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1974–8). Few writers have ever surpassed him as a chronicler of human behaviour at its most nightmarish: his personal history authenticates every word he wrote.

Solzhenitsyn's only other fiction is the vast (and partially untranslated) Red Wheel sequence of which August 1914 and November 1916, about the stirrings of the Russian Revolution, are two volumes. Invisible Allies is a memoir and a tribute to those people who kept his work alive in Russia when to do so was to risk imprisonment.

READ ON

➤ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the House of the Dead*; Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*; ▷ Vladimir Nabokov, *Bend Sinister*; ▷ André Brink, *Looking on Darkness*; ▷ Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*; William Styron, *Sophie's Choice*.

READ ON A THEME: SOMETHING NASTY . . .

- ▶ Iain Banks, The Wasp Factory
 Roald Dahl, Kiss Kiss (short stories)
 Christopher Fowler, Soho Black
 Thomas Harris, The Silence of the Lambs
 James Herbert, Sepulchre
- > Stephen King. Pet Sematary

H.P. Lovecraft, The Call of Cthulhu and other Weird Tales

- > Ruth Rendell, Live Flesh
- > Anne Rice, Interview with the Vampire

See also: Good and Evil

READ ON A THEME: SOUTH AFRICA

- > André Brink, Imaginings of Sand
- > Nadine Gordimer, Burger's Daughter
- ▶ H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon's Mines
 Bessie Head, When Rain Clouds Gather
 Dan Jacobson, A Dance in the Sun
 Alan Paton, Cry, The Beloved Country
 Sol Plaatje, Mhudi (first novel in English by a black South African)
 Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm
- > Wilbur Smith, Rage

'SPARK, Muriel (born 1918)

British novelist

Spark made her name in the 1960s: her tart black comedies seemed just the antidote to the fey optimism of the time. Her books' deadpan world is a distorted mirror image of our own, a disconcerting blend of the bland and the bizarre. In *Memento Mori* old people are mysteriously telephoned and reminded that they are about to die. In *Robinson* a plane-load of ill-assorted people (among them the standard Spark heroine, a Catholic With Doubts) crashes on an island where laws and customs are hourly remade at the whim of the sole inhabitant. In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* an Edinburgh schoolmistress tries to brainwash her pupils

into being nice, non-conforming gels. *The Abbess of Crewe* reworks convent politics in terms of Watergate; the hero of *The Only Problem*, a scholar working on the Book of Job, finds its events parallelling those in his own life. Spark develops these ideas not in farce but in brisk, neat prose, as if they were the most matter-of-fact happenings in the world. The results are eccentric, unsettling and hilarious.

THE GIRLS OF SLENDER MEANS (1963)

A group of young ladies lives in a run-down London club for distressed gentlefolk. It is 1945, and there is rumoured to be an unexploded bomb in the garden. The girls are excited by the possibility of imminent destruction: they find it almost as thrilling as the thought of sex. They bustle about their busy, vapid lives: pining after film stars, writing (unanswered) letters to famous writers, bargaining for black-market clothing coupons. The book is an allegory about seedy-genteel, self-absorbed Britain under the threat of nuclear extinction; for all Spark's breezy humour, the novel is haunted by the questions of where we'll be and how we'll behave when the bomb goes up.

Spark's other novels include The Mandelbaum Gate (her most serious book, about a half-Jewish Catholic convert visiting Jerusalem at the height of Arab-Israeli tension), The Driver's Seat, The Ballad of Peckham Rye, A Far Cry from Kensington, Symposium, Loitering with Intent, Reality and Dreams and Aiding and Abetting. The Complete Short Stories gathers together all her previously published stories and some that have not appeared before. Curriculum Vitae is autobiography.

READ ON

- The Ballad of Peckham Rye, The Bachelors.
- ▶ Ronald Firbank, *The Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli*; ▷ Rose Macaulay, *The Towers of Trebizond*; Alice Thomas Ellis, *The 27th Kingdom*; Christopher Hope, *Serenity House*; ▷ Hilary Mantel, *An Experiment in Love*; Elizabeth Jolley, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*.

READ ON A THEME: SPIES AND DOUBLE AGENTS

- □ Eric Ambler, Epitaph for a Spy
 James Buchan, Heart's Journey in Winter
- > Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent
- ▷ Frederick Forsyth, The Fourth Protocol
 Alan Furst, The World at Night
- □ Graham Greene, The Honorary Consul
- > W. Somerset Maugham, Ashenden
- □ John le Carré, A Perfect Spy Gavin Lyall, Spy's Honour Anthony Price, The Labyrinth Makers

See also: High Adventure, War: Behind the Lines

STEAD, Christina (1902-83)

Australian novelist

Although Stead was born in Australia, she lived most of her life, and set many of her books, in Europe (especially Paris) and the US. She writes of these places, however, not as a native but as a visitor, in a detached, ironic tone. In *The Beauties and Furies*, a savage moral tale about adultery, a young wife runs off to 1930s Paris and has an affair with a handsome but ruthless sexual adventurer; in the end he drops her and goes in search of younger prey. *The Man Who Loved Children*, set in the US but based on Stead's own experience, is a story of stifling family life at the turn of the century, presided over by a monstrous, bullying father; the whole thing is seen through the eyes of his daughter, Louise, as she grows from terrified, adoring childhood to rebellious adolescence and adulthood.

Stead's other novels include For Love Alone, Dark Places of the Heart/Cotter's England, The People With the Dogs, Miss Herbert (The Suburban Wife) and the long, ironic 'romance' Letty Fox, Her Luck. The Salzburg Tales is a collection of macabre, satirical and bawdy short stories modelled on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Beauties and Furies*: > Jean Rhys, *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie*; Patrick Hamilton, *Hangover Square*; Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*.
- ► to *The Man Who Loved Children*: > Ivy Compton-Burnett, *A Family and a Fortune*; > Angela Carter, *The Magic Toyshop*.

STEINBECK, John (1902-68)

US novelist

Until Steinbeck settled to writing in 1935, he moved restlessly from one job to another: he was a journalist, a builder's labourer, a house painter, a fruit picker and the caretaker of a lakeside estate. This experience gave him first-hand knowledge of the dispossessed, the unemployed millions who suffered the brunt of the US Depression of the 1930s. Their lives are his subject, and he writes of them with ferocious, documentary intensity and in a style that seems exactly to catch their habits of both mind and speech. The ruggedness of his novels is often enhanced by themes borrowed from myth or the Old Testament. To A God Unknown (1933) is about an impoverished farmer who begins worshipping ancient gods and ends up sacrificing himself for rain. Tortilla Flat (1935) about 'wetbacks' (illegal Mexican immigrants to California) uses the story of Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot from British myth. East of Eden (1952) is based on the story of Cain and Abel. Though Steinbeck never thrusts such references down his readers' throats, they add to the grandeur and mystery which, together with documentary grittiness, are the overwhelming qualities of his work.

THE GRAPES OF WRATH (1938)

The once-fertile Oklahoma grain fields have been reduced to a dust-bowl by over-farming, and the Joad family are near starvation. Attracted by leaflets promising work in the fruit plantations of California, they load their belongings into a

battered old car and travel west. In California they find every plantation surrounded by destitute, desperate people: there are a thousand applicants for every job. The plantation owners pay starvation wages and sack anyone who objects; the workers try to force justice by strike action – and are beaten up by armed vigilantes. When Tom Joad, already on the run for murder, is caught up in the fight for justice and accidentally kills a man, it is time for Ma to gather the family together again and move on. There must be a place for them somewhere; there must be a Promised Land.

Steinbeck's shorter novels include Cannery Row, The Pearl and The Short Reign of Pippin IV. His short stories, usually about wetbacks, share-croppers and other victims of the US system, are in The Red Pony and The Long Valley. The Acts of King Arthur and his Noble Knights is a straightforward retelling of British myth; The Portable Steinbeck is a packed anthology.

READ ON

- Of Mice and Men (a tragedy about the friendship between two ill-matched farmworkers, Lennie – a simple-minded giant of a man – and the weedier, cleverer George).
- ► Erskine Caldwell, *God's Little Acre*; ▷ Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*; ▷ William Faulkner, *The Hamlet*; Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*; Frank Norris, *McTeague*; James T. Farrell, *Studs Lonigan*.

STENDHAL (1783-1842)

French novelist and non-fiction writer

Stendhal was a pseudonym used by the French diplomat Henri-Marie Beyle. As well as fiction (four novels; a dozen short stories) he published essays on art, literature and philosophy and several autobiographical books. Unlike most early nineteenth-century writers – even \triangleright Balzac and \triangleright Dickens – who concentrated on surface likenesses, painting word-pictures of events, people and places without introspection, Stendhal was chiefly interested in his characters' psychology. The main theme of his novels was the way outsiders, without breeding or position, must make their way in snobbish, tradition-stifled society by talent or personality alone. His books give the feeling that we are watching the evolution of that personality, that we are as intimate with his people's psychological development as if they were relatives or friends.

SCARLET AND BLACK (LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR) (1830)

The book is a character study of Julien Sorel, a carpenter's son who rises in the world by brains, sexual charm and ruthlessness. He becomes, first, tutor to the children of the local mayor, then the mayor's wife's lover, and finally secretary to an artistocratic diplomat whose daughter falls in love with him. In ten years he has travelled from humble origins to the verge of a dazzling marriage and a brilliant career. But then the mayor's wife writes a letter denouncing him as a cold-hearted adventurer, his society acquaintances reject him, and he returns to his native town to take revenge.

Stendhal's other completed novels are Armance, The Abbess of Castro and The Charterhouse of Parma. The Life of Henri Brûlard and Memoirs of an Egoist are

fictionalized autobiography. Love is a collection of reflections on the subject, prompted by the failure of one of Stendhal's many unrequited passions.

READ ON

- The Charterhouse of Parma (Set in Italy in the early nineteenth century, this is Stendhal's most perceptive account of the disorienting power of sexual passion and the harsh reality of politics).
- ▶ to Scarlet and Black: ▷ André Gide, Strait is the Gate (La Porte étroite); ▷ Nikolai Gogol, Dead Souls; ▷ George Eliot, Middlemarch; ▷ Honoré de Balzac, Lost Illusions.
- ▶ to The Charterhouse of Parma: > Umberto Eco, The Name of the Rose.

STERNE, Laurence (1713–68)

British novelist

Sterne was a Yorkshire clergyman and a lover of wine, good talk, travel and song. His only novel, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman (1760-7) is less a story than a gloriously rambling conversation. Tristram sets out to tell his life story (beginning with the moment of his conception, when his mother's mind is less on what she is doing than on whether his father has remembered to wind the clock). But everything he says reminds him of some anecdote or wise remark, so that he constantly interrupts himself. It takes 300 pages, for example, for him to get from his conception to the age of seven, and in the meantime we have had such digressions as a treatise on what the size and shape of people's noses tell us about their characters, an explanation of how the boy came to be called Tristram by mistake for Trismegistus (and what each name signifies), accounts of the Tristapaedia (the system devised for Tristram's education), the curse of Ernulphus of Rochester and the misfortunes of Lieutenant le Fever; we have also had the novel's preface (placed not at the beginning but as the peroration to Book III). and many musings on life, love and the pursuit of happiness by Tristram's father, Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim. The reader is constantly exhorted, nudged and questioned; there is even a blank page in case you have urgent thoughts of your own to add. We never know how Tristram's life turns out; instead, we are copiously informed about Uncle Toby's love affairs. Tristram's travels in France and the adventures of the King of Bohemia. Sterne himself called Tristram Shandy 'a civil, nonsensical, good-humoured book'; it is the most spectacular shaggy-dog story ever told.

Sterne's other writings include sermons and A Sentimental Journey, a discursive, half-fictionalized account of the towns and people he saw and the tales he heard during six months' travelling in France.

READ ON

► François Rabelais, *Gargantua*. Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*; ▷ John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*; ▷ Flann O'Brien, *At Swim-Two-Birds*; ▷ Saul Bellow, *Henderson the Rain King*.

STEVENSON, R.L. (Robert Louis) (1850-94)

British writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

Apart from the brief psychological thriller *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), about a man who uses drugs to change himself from kindly family doctor to deformed killer and back again, Stevenson's chief works are historical adventure stories. It is often assumed that these are books for children, but (except perhaps in *Treasure Island*, 1883) there is also plenty to interest adults: Stevenson's evocation of scenery (especially Scotland), the psychological complexity of his characters, and the feeling (which he shared with \triangleright Tolstoy) that each human life is part of a vast historical, moral and cultural continuum.

READ ON

- Kidnapped.
- ▶ to Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: ▷ H.G. Wells, The Invisible Man; Gaston Leroux, The Phantom of the Opera; James Hogg, Confessions of a Justified Sinner; James Robertson, The Fanatic.
- ▶ to the adventure stories: ▷ George MacDonald Fraser, *The Candlemass Road*; ▷ Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*; ▷ John Buchan, *Castle Gay*; ▷ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Valley of Fear*; J. Meade Falkner, *Moonfleet*; Bjorn Larsson, *Long John Silver*.

STOKER, Bram (1847–1912)

Irish writer

Forget all sendups and tawdry horror-film exploitation. *Dracula* (1897) is still one of the most blood-curdling novels ever written. The reader may begin by counting off the clichés – foggy cemeteries, vaults under the madhouse, the blazing crucifix, the bat-count climbing down the castle walls – but the sheer power of the story, its conviction and its exotic (and erotic) eeriness soon grip like tiny pointed teeth. Stoker was not a genius, but *Dracula* is a work of genius, the gothic novel (written in the form of diaries and letters to give added authenticity) to end them all.

READ ON

▷ Edgar Allan Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination; Sheridan Le Fanu, Carmilla; ▷ Stephen King, Salem's Lot; Anne Rice, Interview with the Vampire; Tom Holland, Supping with Panthers (contemporary pastiche/homage to the classic vampire story).

STOUT, Rex (1886-1975)

US novelist

Stout was one of the great US names of the Golden Age of detective fiction, writing some fifty novels of an unvarying high standard. His stories centre on a double act. Nero Wolfe is a woman-hating eccentric who lives in a large, old house with his cook, gardener, books, 10,000 orchids and a brain the size of a planet. His secretary, Archie Goodwin, does all the legwork and narrates the stories. Stout's plots are bizarre and complicated; the dialogue is sharp; the

relationship of Wolfe and Goodwin is endlessly intriguing. Good sample novels are Fer-de-Lance, Where There's a Will, The League of Frightened Men (Stout's own favourite) and Death of a Dude.

READ ON

► Robert Goldsborough, *The Last Coincidence* (one of many Nero Wolfe books by Goldsborough, who catches Stout's manner so well that he could be the master reincarnated); Lawrence Block, *The Topless Tulip Caper* (a spoof); Ellery Queen, *The Egyptian Cross Mystery*; H.R.F. Keating, *A Rush on the Ultimate*.

SVEVO, Italo (1861–1928)

Austrian/Italian novelist

Svevo was a businessman in Trieste; his firm made underwater paint. Despite encouragement from his friend > James Joyce, he never took his writing seriously until the last year of his life, when a French translation of The Confessions of Zeno (1922) brought him European fame. His books are ironical comedies. Their ineffective, bewildered heroes blunder about in society, looking for some point to their existence – and the chief irony is that they are genuinely the 'zeros' they think they are, their existence has no point at all. The Confessions of Zeno is the autobiography of a man who wants to give up smoking. He explains that his addiction is actually psychological, since every cigarette he smokes reminds him, in Proustian fashion, of some past experience, so that to give up smoking would be to surrender his own history. He writes of his Oedipal relationship with his father (whom he accidentally killed), of his prolonged, ludicrous courtship of the wrong woman, and of his treatment by a psychiatrist sicker than himself. The book is as dream-like and terrifying as ⊳ Kafka's novels indeed, Svevo exactly shared Kafka's vision of the world as an absurd, endless and sinister labyrinth.

Svevo's other novels are A Life, As A Man Grows Older and the shorter Tale of the Good Old Man and the Pretty Girl.

READ ON

► Franz Kafka, *The Castle*; ▷ Saul Bellow, *Herzog*; Alberto Moravia, *The Conformist*; Machado de Assis, *The Heritage of Quincas Borba*; William Cooper, *Scenes From Married Life*; ▷ William Boyd, *The New Confessions*; ▷ Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

SWIFT, Graham (born 1949)

British novelist

Swift's novels centre on apparently ordinary people – shopkeepers, housewives, clerks – under psychological stress. They have reached turning points in what have seemed boring, routine lives, and the novels show them mentally rerunning the past to find explanations for their feelings, either to themselves or to others. In *Waterland* (1983) the main character is an elderly history teacher, and the event he is remembering is the discovery, forty years before, of a boy's body in a drainage ditch in the English fens. In front of a bored, cheeky class, he begins

thinking aloud about the reasons for the boy's death – and his monologue ranges through the history of the remote, enclosed world of the fens, the story of several generations of his own family, and, not least, an account of the rivalry between his mentally subnormal brother Dick and Freddie Parr, the boy found drowned.

Swift's other novels are The Sweet Shop Owner, Shuttlecock, Out of This World, Last Orders, The Light of Day and Ever After, about a despairing man working himself away from suicide by researching the death of his father—and the events, further back in the past, which may have had a bearing on that. The Booker Prize-winning Last Orders tells a deceptively simple story of four ageing men on a journey to the coast where they plan to scatter the ashes of an old friend in the sea. The journey forces them all into reassessments of their own lives and relationships. Learning To Swim is a collection of short stories.

READ ON

- Out of This World (in which, in alternate monologues, the son and granddaughter
 of a First World War hero, an arms manufacturer, reflect on the way the old man's
 obsessive love for them has poisoned both their lives).
- ▶ Ian McEwan, *The Child in Time*; ▷ Julian Barnes, *Staring at the Sun*; Peter Benson, *The Levels*; ▷ Jane Rogers, *Promised Lands*.

SWIFT, Jonathan (1667–1745)

British/Irish satirist and journalist

Swift was a savage satirist, pouring out poems, articles and essays attacking the follies of his time. Gulliver's Travels (1726) differs from his other work only in that the edge of its satire is masked by fairytale - indeed, the satire and scatology are often edited out so that the book can be sold for children. Gulliver is a compulsive explorer, despite the moral humiliation he suffers after every landfall. In Lilliput the people (who are six inches high) regard him as an uncouth, unpredictable monster - particularly when he tells them some of the ideas and customs of his native England. In Brobdignag he becomes the pet of giants, and tries without success to convince them of the value of such civilized essentials as lawcourts. money and guns. He visits Laputa and Lagado, cloud-cuckoo-lands where science has ousted common sense; on the Island of Sorcerers he speaks to great thinkers of the past, and finds them in despair at what has become of the human race. Finally he is shipwrecked among the Houynhyms, horses equipped with reason who regard human beings as degenerate barbarians, and who fill him with such distaste for his own species that when he returns to England he can hardly bear the sight, sound or smell of his own family. Throughout the book, Gulliver doggedly preaches the glories of European 'civilization' (that is, the customs and belief of the Age of Enlightenment), and arouses only derision or disgust.

- ▶ Voltaire, Candide; Samuel Butler, Erewhon; ▷ Nathanael West, A Cool Million.
- ▶ to equally lacerating satires on aspects of late twentieth-century life: ▷ Michael Frayn, *A Very Private Life*; ▷ Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*; ▷ Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve.*



TARTT, Donna (born 1963)

US novelist

In 1992 Donna Tartt made one of the most successful débuts in American fiction. for decades with her novel The Secret History, triumphantly acclaimed by critics and reviewers as both a clever psychological thriller and a study in the progress of decadence and amorality within a small self-enclosed group of people. She then discovered that there are few tasks more daunting in literature - particularly in American literature, for some reason – than providing a successful encore to a remarkable debut. It was ten vears before she published her second novel The Little Friend. The Secret History tells the story of Richard Papen who arrives as a classics student at a prestigious New England college. His fellow students all appear sophisticated and worldly beyond their years and all are in some way in thrall to their mentor, Julian Morrow, Slowly Richard is drawn into the inner circle where he learns the secret that binds them together and that the group's interest in Dionysiac frenzy in Greek religion has gone beyond scholarly speculation. The Little Friend is set in the Deep South (Tartt comes from Mississippi) and again centres on a murder and its consequences. The heroine, Harriet Dusfresnes, is a twelve-year old girl in a small town whose short life has been haunted by the even shorter life of her brother. Robin Dusfresnes was found hanging from a tree when Harriet was a baby, the victim of a murderer who has never been caught. Harriet believes she knows who the murderer is – one of a bunch of unsavoury rednecks called the Ratliffes – and sets out to prove it. In doing so, she enters territory for which her fantasies about unearthing the truth have ill-prepared her. In both novels Tartt demonstrates a remarkable ability to create mood and atmosphere – the hothouse intellectualism of the New England college, the brooding Southern gothic of Harriet's home town - and to unravel a mystery about why things happened as they did. Although her plots occasionally descend into melodrama when she is aiming for tragedy, she has none the less written two of the most memorable American novels of the last few decades.

READ ON

- ▶ to *The Secret History*: Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*; Carol Goodman, *The Lake of Dead Languages*; Jody Shields, *The Fig Eater*.
- ▶ to *The Little Friend*: Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Joe R. Lansdale, *The Bottoms*; Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*.

TAYLOR, Elizabeth (1912-75)

British novelist and short story writer

A large part of Taylor's art consists of appearing to have no art at all: few authors have ever seemed so self-effacing in their work. As each novel or story begins, it is

as if a net curtain has been drawn aside to reveal ordinary people in a normal street. The setting is the outskirts of some large English town; the people are housewives, bus conductors, labourers, schoolchildren; there seems to be no drama. But as the story proceeds, an apparently unfussy chronicle of ordinary events and conversations builds up enormous psychological pressure, which Taylor then releases in a shocking or hilarious happening which opens wide speculation about whatever will happen when the book is closed. Her artistry – subtle, gentle and unsettling – is at its peak in short stories; her novels, thanks to larger casts, more varied settings and longer time schemes, tend more to wry social comedy than to the sinister.

THE DEVASTATING BOYS (1972)

The people in this story collection are typical Taylor characters: an elderly couple in the countryside who decide to offer a holiday to two black children from the city slums; a young West Indian, utterly alone in London on the eve of his birthday; an eleven-year-old child taking a bus home from a hateful piano lesson; a blue-rinsed widow with an orderly routine of life. Something unexpected happens to each of them, a psychological bombshell. They were as unremarkable as our neighbours—but after these stories, our neighbours will never seem the same again.

Dangerous Calm is an aptly titled selection from Taylor's short stories. Her novels include Angel, At Mrs Lippincote's, A View of the Harbour, The Wedding Group, Blaming, A Wreath of Roses, Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont and The Soul of Kindness.

READ ON

- Dangerous Calm; The Wedding Group.
- ▶ to the stories: ▷ V.S. Pritchett, The Camberwell Beauty and Other Stories;
- ▶ William Trevor, Angels at the Ritz; Mary Gordon, Temporary Shelter.
- ▶ to the novels: ▷ Susan Hill, *A Change for the Better*; ▷ Barbara Pym, *Excellent Women*; ▷ Angus Wilson, *Late Call*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest*.

READ ON A THEME: TEENAGERS

- > Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

See also: Adolescence; All-engulfing Families; Children; Young Adults

READ ON A THEME: TERRORISTS/FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Jerzy Andrzeyewski, Ashes and Diamonds

> Tom Clancy, Patriot Games

- > Joseph Conrad, Under Western Eyes
- > John le Carré, The Little Drummer Girl
- Doris Lessing, *The Good Terrorist*Primo Levi, *If Not Now, When?*Frederic Raphael, *Like Men Betrayed*

See also: Spies and Double Agents, War: Behind the Lines

THACKERAY, William Makepeace (1811–63)

British novelist and journalist

Until the success of *Vanity Fair*, when he was thirty-six, Thackeray earned his living as a journalist and cartoonist (especially for *Punch* magazine) and as a humorous lecturer. His first intention in his novels was to write 'satirical biographies', letting the reader discover the follies of the world at the same time as his naïve young heroes and heroines. But the characters took over, and his books now seem more genial and affectionate than barbed. He invented characters as grotesque as \triangleright Dickens's, caricatures of human viciousness or folly, but he wrote of them with a kind of disapproving sympathy, a fellow-feeling for their humanity, which Dickens lacks. Humbug, ambition and the seven deadly sins are Thackeray's subjects – and so are friendship, kindness and warm-heartedness. At a time when many English novels were more like sermons, clamorous for reform, he wrote moral comedies, showing us what fools we are.

VANITY FAIR (1847-8)

The book interweaves the lives of two friends, gentle Amelia and calculating, brilliant Becky Sharp. Becky is an impoverished orphan determined to make her fortune; Amelia believes in love, marriage and family life. Each of them marries; Amelia's husband has an affair with Becky, and dies at Waterloo with her name on his lips; Becky's husband finds her entertaining a rich, elderly admirer and abandons her. In the end, each girl gets what she longed for, but not in the way she hoped. Amelia, after ten years pining for her dead husband, is cruelly told by Becky of his infidelity, and turns for comfort to a kind man who has worshipped her from afar, and who now offers her marriage, a home and all the comforts of obscurity. Becky's son inherits his father's money and gives her an annuity on condition that she never speaks to him again; we see her at the end of the book, queening it in Bath, an idle, rich member of the society she has always aspired to join and whose values Thackeray sums up in the title of the book.

Thackeray's other books include Pendennis (the story of a selfish young man, spoilt by his mother, who goes to London to make his fortune as a writer) and its sequel The Newcomers, Henry Esmond and its sequel The Virginians, and Barry Lyndon.

READ ON

Pendennis.

THEROUX, Paul (born 1941)

US novelist and non-fiction writer

Some of Theroux's most enjoyable books are about travelling: The Great Railway Bazaar, The Old Patagonian Express, The Kingdom by the Sea, Riding the Iron Rooster, The Happy Isles of Oceania, The Pillars of Hercules and the recent Dark Star Safari. In all of them the narrator, the writer himself, feels detached, an observer of events rather than a participant – and the same is true of the people in Theroux's novels. They live abroad, often in the tropics; like the heroes of Straham Greene (the author Theroux most resembles) they feel uneasy both about the society they are in and about themselves; they fail to cope. The hero of Saint Jack (1973), a US pimp in Singapore, hopes to make a fortune providing rest and relaxation for his servicemen compatriots, but the pliability of his character makes him the prey for every con-man and shark in town. In The Mosquito Coast (1981) an ordinary US citizen, depressed by life, uproots his family and tries to make a new start in the Honduran jungle, with tragic, farcical results. Honolulu Hotel (2000) is an episodic novel set in a run-down hotel in Hawaii. The manager is an unsuccessful writer, battling with the personal demons that beset so many of Theroux's characters, who acts as witness to the tragi-comedies and mini-dramas that unfold in the seedy rooms of the hotel.

MY SECRET HISTORY (1989)

André Parent is an American writer, born at the time of the Second World War, randy for women and hot for every experience the world can offer. He teaches in Africa, writes novels and stories, makes a fortune from a travel book. He fulfils his adolescent ambition, 'to fuck the world', only to find that he has lost moral identity. The book is wry, funny, and no comfort to Americans, intellectuals, writers, the middle-aged, or indeed anyone else at all.

Theroux's other novels include Waldo, The Family Arsenal, Doctor Slaughter, Picture Palace, Chicago Loop, Millroy the Magician, an acid science fiction fantasy O-Zone, My Other Life (a kind of companion to My Secret History), Kowloon Tong and The Stranger at the Palazzo d'Oro. Sinning With Annie, The Consul's File and The London Embassy are collections of short stories. Fresh Air Fiends is a collection of travel essays; Sir Vidia's Shadow is a memoir of Theroux's thirty-year friendship (now ended) with \triangleright V.S. Naipaul, horribly compelling in its revelations of the insecurities and jealousies of the literary life.

READ ON

- ▶ to My Secret History: > John Fowles, Daniel Martin; > Graham Greene, The Honorary Consul.
- ▶ to Theroux's novels in general: P.H. Newby, *Leaning in the Wind*; Timothy Mo, *Sour-Sweet*; ▷ William Boyd, *Stars and Bars*.
- ▶ to the travel books: Jonathan Raban, Coasting; Colin Thubron, Behind the Wall;
 ▷ V.S. Naipaul, Among the Believers.

THORPE, Adam (born 1956)

British novelist and poet

Thorpe began his writing career as a poet and his novels show a poet's sensitivity to the subtleties and nuances of language but they are not the delicate miniatures

that many other poets create when they turn to fiction. Thorpe's novels are bold and ambitious – almost epic in scale. His first novel *Ulverton* (see below) is an attempt to invent an entire history for an imagined village. His second novel, *Still*, is the eve of the millennium confession of failed ex-pat British film director Ricky Thornby, for which Thorpe draws on every resource of the language to let Ricky tell his story. The result is an extraordinary 500-plus page mélange of voices from inside Ricky's head, those of ex-wives and lovers, long-dead relations and mentors and of the masters of the cinema whose work he has idolized but not matched. An exuberant stream-of-consciousness – dense, allusive and often very funny – spills across the pages. *Still* becomes Ricky's last and best work of art, premiered for the readers of the novel.

ULVERTON (1992)

In *Ulverton*, Thorpe imagines the West Country village which gives the book its title and then, in twelve very different narratives, peoples it with individuals from several centuries of its history. These narratives take different forms, from a seventeenth-century sermon through a dialect monologue delivered by a nineteenth-century farm labourer to the TV script for a documentary about a greedy, unimaginative property developer and his battle with conservationists. Each chapter works as an individual story but they weave together to form the longer story of Ulverton across three hundred years. The reader is shown the change and the continuity in one English community as it is shaped by time. *Ulverton* is a bravura performance, in which Thorpe recreates and re-imagines the voices of the past. It is a demanding, sometimes difficult read but a very rewarding one.

Adam Thorpe's other novels are Pieces of Light (partly set in Africa and partly in an Ulverton which has its own hearts of darkness), Nineteen Twenty One and No Telling. Shifts is a collection of short stories.

READ ON

► □ Graham Swift, *Waterland*; □ William Boyd, *The New Confessions*; □ Anthony Burgess, *Earthly Powers*.

TÓIBÍN, Colm (born 1955)

Irish writer

In three very different novels Colm Tóibín has used an unobtrusive, undemonstrative but highly effective prose style to tell stories about Irish people, both past and present, caught in emotional dilemmas and crises in their lives. *The Blackwater Lightship* (see below) is his most recent novel and, arguably, the one in which his economic, unflamboyant use of language is most movingly deployed. But his first two novels are also well worth reading. *The South* (1990) is set in 1950s and 1960s Spain. A young Irishwoman, an aspiring painter, arrives in Barcelona in flight from her family in Ireland. Her relationship with a Spanish painter, at odds with Franco's régime, moves towards a tragic conclusion. *The Heather Blazing* (1992) is the story of an Irish judge, reflecting on his own life, his family memories and the resonance of Irish history. In a fourth novel, *The Story of the Night* (1996) Tóibín produced a haunting and sensuous exploration of a young gay man in Falklands War-era Argentina, discovering his sexuality against the backdrop of a country in transition.

THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP (1999)

Declan O'Doherty is a young man dying of Aids. He asks to be taken to the isolated house by the sea where his grandmother lives and which he remembers from his childhood. Three generations of the women in his family – grandmother, mother and sister – join him there, as do two gay friends, who have known of his illness far longer than his family. Mutual antagonism and estrangement have characterized all the relationships between the women in the family and unresolved conflicts simmer beneath the surface, occasionally breaking out in harsh exchanges, as they all try to come to terms with Declan's illness and with one another. Tóibín is too intelligent and subtle a writer to offer easy resolutions to the essentially unresolvable realities his characters face and his prose is so spare and draws so little attention to itself that it is easy to miss just how controlled and well-crafted it really is. In the end, the restraint and understatement of Tóibín's narration, leaving space for the reader's own imagination to work, are what make this novel so moving.

Tóibín's non-fiction books include Bad Blood (travels along the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland), The Sign of the Cross (travels in Catholic Europe), Homage to Barcelona and Love in a Dark Time (essays on gay writers and gay creativity). He has also edited The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction.

READ ON

➤ Seamus Deane, *Reading in the Dark*; John McGahern, *Amongst Women*; David Leavitt, *The Page Turner*; ▷ John Banville, *Eclipse*; Niall Williams, *Four Letters of Love*; Dermot Bolger, *Father's Music*.

TOLKIEN, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel) (1892–1973) British novelist

In 1937 Tolkien, a teacher of Anglo-Saxon literature at Oxford University, published a children's book (*The Hobbit*), about a small furry-footed person who steals a dragon's hoard. Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit, and his quest was the prologue to an enormous adult saga in which elves, dwarves, wizards, ents, human beings and hobbits unite to destroy the power of evil (embodied by the Dark Lord Sauron and his minions the Ring-wraiths and the orcs). The three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*, published in the mid-1950s, started a vogue for supernatural fantasy-adventure which has spread worldwide and taken in films, quiz books and role-play games as well as fiction. Tolkien outstrips his imitators not so much because of his plot (which is a simple battle between good and bad, with the moral issues explicit on every page) as thanks to his teeming professorial imagination. He gave his made-up worlds complete systems of language, history, anthropology, geography and literature. Reading him is like exploring a library; his invention seems inexhaustible.

Although The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings are self-contained, Tolkien published several other volumes filling in chinks of their underlying history, explaining matters only sketched in the main narrative, and adding even more layers of linguistic, historical and anthropological fantasy. The chief books are The Silmarillion and Unfinished Tales. Lost Tales (three volumes) and The

History of Middle Earth (five volumes) contain notes and drafts, chiefly of interest to addicts. Farmer Giles of Ham and The Adventures of Tom Bombadil are short stories for children.

READ ON

> Stephen Donaldson, The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant: Piers Anthony, A Spell for Chameleon; ▷ David Eddings, The Belgariad Quintet: ▷ Raymond E. Feist, The Riftwar Saga; Bored of the Rings is a best-selling spoof first published in the 1960s and still going strong.

TOLSTOY, Leo Nikolaevich (1828-1910)

Russian novelist

In his sixties and beyond Tolstoy became famous as a kind of moral guru or secular saint: he preached the equal 'value' of all human beings, and suited actions to words by giving away his wealth, freeing his serfs and living an austere life in a cottage on the edge of his former estate. A similar view underlies his fiction. His ambition was to enter into the condition of each of his characters, to show the psychological complexity and diversity of the human race. His books are not tidily organized, with every event and emotion shaped to fit a central theme, but reflect the sprawl of life itself. The result was a psychological equivalent of Balzac's 'snapshots' in The Human Comedy (La Comédie Humaine). Whether Tolstov is showing us a coachman who comes and goes in half a page, or a major character who appears throughout a book, he invites us to feel full sympathy for that person, makes us flesh out his or her 'reality' in terms of our own.

WAR AND PEACE (1869)

The book begins with people at a St Petersburg party in 1805 discussing the political situation in France, where Napoleon has just been proclaimed emperor. Tolstoy then fills a hundred pages with seemingly random accounts of the lives and characters of a large group of relatives, friends, servants and dependants of three aristocrats, Andrey Bolkonsky, Pierre Bezuhov and Natasha Rostov. Gradually all these people become involved both with one another and with the gathering storm as Napoleon's armies sweep through Europe. The story culminates with the 1812 French invasion of Russia, Napoleon's defeat and his retreat from Moscow. The war touches the lives of all Tolstoy's people, and in particular resolves the triangle of affection between his central characters. The effects of war are the real subject of War and Peace. It contains 539 characters -• the range is from Napoleon to the girl who dresses Rostov's hair, from Bolkonsky to an eager young soldier sharpening his sword on the eve of battle - and Tolstoy shows how their individual nature and feelings are both essential to and validated by the vast tapestry of human affairs of which they are part.

Tolstoy's other novels include Anna Karenina (in which an adulterous and tragic love affair is used to focus a picture of the stifling, morally incompetent aristocratic Russian society of the 1860s), The Death of Ivan Illich, The Kreutzer Sonata, Master and Man and Resurrection, His autobiographical books include Childhood, Boyhood, Youth and A Confession.

STARTPOINTS

THRILLERS

Thrillers grew out of the adventure novels of the nineteenth century, such as > Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* or ⊳ H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines.

Rudyard Kipling's Kim (1901) and Erskine Childers' The Riddle of the Sands (1903) were among the first novels to add politics to adventure - a blend which has dominated thrillers ever since. The many wars of the twentieth century, in particular the (non-fighting) Cold War, gave thriller writers exciting backgrounds and ready-made 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. 'Their' chaps are out to use any trick, wile or murderous plot to control the world, and are thwarted only by the grit and pluck of 'our' chaps. In subtler thrillers (pioneered by

□ Graham Greene in his 1940s 'entertainments', and since the 1960s by □ John le Carré) writers dealt not in moral blacks and whites but in myriad shades of grey. During the Cold War anti-communist feeling in the West led to a mass of thrillers casting the former USSR as the villain and Soviet thrillers returned the compliment by blackening the West. But since the early 1990s thrillers of this kind have become as dead as dodos, and writers either set their stories in the past (for example in the Second World War), or find new enemies (such as terrorists, serial killers, organized crime or religious fundamentalists), and leave East-West politics alone.

- ▶ Ambler, Eric, *The Mask of Dimitrios* (1939). Classic. A writer on holiday in Turkey sees the body of a criminal in the morgue, and sets out, despite all attempts to stop him, to discover his story.
- ▷ Clancy, Tom, *The Sum of All Fears* (1991). In the near future, Palestinian terrorists get control of nuclear weapons.
- Deighton, Len, *City of Gold* (1992). In Cairo, during the 1942 Desert War, someone in Allied High Command is feeding Rommel military secrets, and must be stopped.

Easterman, Daniel, Name of the Beast (1992). In 1999 portents of the end of the world begin to appear in Egypt, then an archaeologist, examining a mummy in the Cairo Museum, finds links with the devilish, black-magic past.

Furst, Alan, *The World at Night* (1997). Film producer becomes involved in the dark and dangerous world of resistance to the Nazis in wartime France.

Described Series Described Describe

Harris, Thomas, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1990). Hannibal Lecter, the favourite film bogeyman of the 1990s, leads FBI agent Clarice Starling a merry dance as she tries to track down a serial killer.

➤ Higgins, Jack, Thunder Point (1993). Secret Second World War documents, found in a sunken U-boat in the Caribbean fifty years later, reveal a conspiracy to keep Nazism alive after the war and implicate many of those still in power in the 1990s.

Household, Geoffrey, *Rogue Male* (1939). Classic thriller about an agent who escapes from the Nazis and is forced to 'hole up', literally, like a fox in a burrow, while they hunt him.

Kerr, Philip, *A Philosophical Investigation* (1992). Detective in the not-so-distant future pits his wits against a serial killer with a fondness for Wittgenstein.

- De Carré, John, *The Quest for Karla* (1974–90). Classic quartet of Cold War, house-of-mirror novels, involving George Smiley's search not just for Soviet agents but also for traitors in his own service, the ironically named 'Circus'. Individual titles: *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, The Honourable Schoolboy, Smiley's People* and *The Secret Pilgrim*.
- Description Number Description Descriptio

Pattison, Eliot, *The Skull Mantra* (2000). Original and moving thriller in which a disgraced Chinese investigator is drawn into the mystery surrounding a headless corpse found on a Tibetan mountainside.

▶ **Smith, Wilbur,** *Elephant Song* **(1991)**. Action adventure in Zimbabwe, as filmmaker and anthropologist try to thwart a conspiracy involving ivory-poaching, international business interests and the projected elimination of an entire country and its people.

Also recommended: Richard Condon, The Manchurian Candidate; ▷ Michael Connelly, The Poet; ▷ Bernard Cornwell, Storm Child; Clive Cussler, Dragon; Jeffery Deaver, The Coffin Dancer; ▷ Ken Follett, Night Over Water; Colin Forbes, Cross of Fire; Jonathan Kellerman, Time Bomb; David Mason, Shadow Over Babylon; Richard North Patterson, The Outside Man; Piers Paul Read, On the Third Day.

See also: Buchan, Forsyth, Harris, High Adventure, MacLean, Spies and Double Agents, Terrorists/Freedom Fighters

READ ON

- Anna Karenina.
- ▶ to War and Peace: ▷ Émile Zola, The Downfall (Le Débâcle); ▷ I.B. Singer, The Family Moskat; ▷ Bernice Rubens, Mother Russia.
- ▶ to *Anna Karenina*: > Ivan Turgenev, *On the Eve*; > George Eliot, *Romola*; > Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*; > Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*.

TOOLE, John Kennedy (1937–69)

US novelist

A Confederacy of Dunces (1980), Toole's only novel, was published posthumously: it had collected so many rejection slips that he killed himself. It is a noholds-barred comic grumble against the twentieth-century world in general and the city of New Orleans in particular. Its anti-hero, Ignatius J. Reilly, is a narcissistic, hypochondriacal, towering genius who regards himself as too good for the world. He has successfully avoided working for thirty years, living in a foetid room in his mother's house and alternately masturbating, playing the lute and scribbling brilliant thoughts on a succession of supermarket notepads. At last his mother sends him out to find a job - with catastrophic results. Bored after one hour in a trouser factory, he sets about destabilizing staff-management relations; hired to sell hot-dogs, he eats his stock; in all innocence, he takes up with drug addicts, whores and corrupt police. If Ignatius were likeable (say, like Voltaire's Candide), the satire might seem more genial and sympathetic; but he is a revolting example of how, in Toole's view, there is no excuse for the clinical brilliance of the brain being shackled to such a bag of guts as the human body. A Confederacy of Dunces is witty, slapstick, ▷ Rabelaisian, Falstaffian – and offers the human species no reason at all for self-congratulation or for hope.

READ ON

- The Neon Bible (written at sixteen; not as good, but good enough),
- ▶ Robert Coover, *The Universal Baseball Association*; Frederick Rolfe, *Hadrian the Seventh*; ▷ Peter Carey, *Illywhacker*; B.S. Johnson, *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*; ▷ Martin Amis, *Money*; Michael Chabon, *Wonder Boys*; Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*.

TRAPIDO, Barbara (born 1942)

South African/British novelist

Trapido's novels begin quietly, establishing a handful of characters (usually young, usually middle-class) and a setting (school, university, big house in a quiet street). But then she springs surprises on her characters – a new arrival, unexpected love, a visitor from long ago – and watches them squirm. Her books turn Aga-saga to high comedy: her witty style, the characters' likeability and foolishness and the bubbly good humour and invention keep you reading to the end. Her novels are *Brother of the More Famous Jack* (1982), *Noah's Ark* (1986), *Temples of Delight* (1990), its sequel *Juggling* (1994; about the same characters twenty years on but just as delightfully confused) and *The Travelling Hornplayer* (1997).

PATHWAYS

LEO TOLSTOY

WAR AND PEACE

(tapestry of Russian life during the Napoleonic Wars)

TSARIST RUSSIA

Ivan Turgenev, Fathers and Sons Nikolai Gogol, Dead Souls

Fyodor **Dostoevsky**, *The Idiot* Maxim **Gorky**, *Foma Gordeev*

NAPOLEON AND THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

Anthony **Burgess**, *The Napoleon Symphony* Jeanette **Winterson**, *The Passion* C.S. **Forester**. *The Gun*

Bernard Cornwell. Sharpe's Regiment

ALL HUMAN LIFE IS HERE

(unpicking the detail of society)

Stendhal, *Scarlet and Black*, (Napoleonic France) William **Thackeray**, *Vanity Fair* (Napoleonic England) Miguel de **Cervantes**, *Don Quixote*

(Renaissance Spain)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister (eighteenth-century Europe)

Mark **Twain**, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (pre-Civil War Mississippi)

WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

Boris **Pasternak**, *Doctor Zhivago* (Russian Revolution)

Ernest **Hemingway**, *A Farewell to Arms* (First World War)

Olivia **Manning**, Fortunes of War (Second World War)

William **Styron**, *Sophie's Choice* (a memory of Nazi concentration camps)

Kazuo **Ishiguro**, *A Pale View of Hills* (a memory of Hiroshima)

READ ON

- Frankie & Stankie (Trapido's most recent novel marks a new direction in her
 writing as she draws on her own experiences of growing up in 1950s South Africa
 to create a memorable portrait of her heroine's life lived in the shadow of the
 politics of her country).
- ► > Mary Wesley, *The Vacillations of Poppy Carew;* > Anne Tyler, *Ladder of Years*; Elizabeth Jolley, *The Newspaper of Claremont Street*.
- ▶ to Frankie & Stankie: ▷ Nadine Gordimer, Burger's Daughter (for a darker version of a coming-of-age story set in South Africa).

READ ON A THEME: TRAINS

- > Agatha Christie, Murder on the Orient Express
- □ Graham Greene, Stamboul Train
- □ Jaroslav Hašek, The Good Soldier Svejk Bohumil Hrabal, Closely Observed Trains
- Patricia Highsmith, Strangers on a Train
- > John Masters, Bhowani Junction

TREMAIN, Rose (born 1943)

British writer

Early success as a radio writer taught Tremain the skill of showing people's emotions and attitudes in their own words, and without a wasted syllable. Her early novels (Letter to Sister Benedicta, The Swimming Pool Season) are outstanding at showing people developing emotionally, coming to understand and to change themselves. These are contemporary, but her richest work has been historical. Restoration (1989), is set in the England of Charles II and is told by Robert Merivel, an ambitious nonentity who is favoured by Charles, falls from grace by his own foolishness, and then gradually discovers, through suffering. the inner strength of his own character. The book's settings are Charles's court. Bidnold House in Norfolk (for Merivel, a kind of earthly paradise), New Bedlam lunatic asylum in Whittlesea, and a run-down house in Cheapside, London, in the months leading up to the Great Fire. Restoration engulfs the reader, its gusto never flags; but its underlying theme, how Merivel first damns and then redeems himself, and its beautiful ending, give it the depth and sadness characteristic of all Tremain's work. In Music & Silence (1999) Peter Claire, an English lutenist, travels to the court of the seventeenth-century king of Denmark, Christian IV. Christian, a charismatic man fallen into melancholy, depends on music to raise his fallen spirits. His wife hates music and longs only for the energetic attentions of her German lover. Claire, in flight from a love affair with an Italian-born Irish countess, is drawn to one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, herself an escapee from a dark family background. Told in a variety of voices, Music & Silence harmonizes them all into a powerful and sensuous narrative.

Tremain's other novels include The Cupboard, Sacred Country, The Way I Found Her and The Colour. Her short stories are collected in The Colonel's Daughter, The Garden of the Villa Mollini and (the particularly fine) Evangelista's Fan.

READ ON

- The Way I Found Her.
- ▶ to Restoration and Music & Silence: ▷ Robert Graves, Wife to Mr Milton;
 ▷ Jeanette Winterson, Sexing the Cherry; Tracy Chevalier, Girl With a Pearl Earring; ▷ Jane Rogers, Mr Wroe's Virgins.
- ▶ to Tremain's other books: ▷ Anita Brookner, *Lewis Percy*; Jane Gardam, *The Queen of the Tambourine*.

TREVOR, William (born 1928)

Irish writer

Trevor worked briefly as schoolteacher (history and art), sculptor and advertising copywriter before becoming a full-time writer in 1964. He is a leading author of short stories, many of which have been adapted for TV with outstanding success. He writes of sad, unfulfilled and remorselessly ordinary people, trapped by age, unattractiveness, miserable marriages or dead-end jobs and struggling to make sense of lives in seedy, rundown cities and out-of-season holiday resorts. The world is in a state of creeping, half-genteel decay – and only the glimmer of ambition in his people's minds, flaring sometimes into obsession, keeps them from surrender.

MRS ECKDORFF IN O'NEILL'S HOTEL (1969)

Mrs Eckdorff, a photo-journalist, comes to Dublin to investigate a rundown hotel which the barman on a cruise liner told her is being run as a brothel. No one wants to publish the story: she is photographing it for a book, and for her own satisfaction. As she intrudes ever more into the barren-seeming lives of the men and women connected with the hotel, trying to rouse them from lethargy and dispiritedness, she comes gradually to feel that the gulf she perceives is not in them, but in her own soul. Emptiness of spirit is the novel's theme, and its outcome is almost entirely the opposite of what Trevor cunningly leads us to suspect.

Trevor's short story collections include The Day We Got Drunk on Cake, Angels at the Ritz, After Rain and The Hill Bachelors. His novels include The Old Boys, Elizabeth Alone, The Children of Dynmouth, The Love Department, Other People's Worlds, The Silence in the Garden, Felicia's Journey and Death in Summer. A number of books (Fools of Fortune, The News from Ireland, Family Sins, his recent The Story of Lucy Gault) deal more specifically than his other work with the difficult effects of Irish history in the twentieth century on Irish individuals.

READ ON

• Two Lives (two short novels); Reading Turgenev (a woman is stirred into awareness of the world (and to passion) when a friend introduces her to the stories of Turgenev); My House in Umbria (Emily Dalehunty, an ex-prostitute now running a pensione in Chiantishire, takes up writing romantic fiction, exploring the nature of passion, sex and love in her own life as well as those of her characters); The Children of Dynmouth (about a disturbed teenager terrorizing a rundown seaside town).

STARTPOINTS

TRAVEL

Travel writing has a long history. Some 2,500 years ago Herodotus travelled widely in the Middle East and Egypt, researching his *History of the Persian War*, and wrote up the unexpected peoples and customs he encountered. Six centuries later Pausanias walked every kilometre of Greece, recording local legends and customs in a guidebook which, incredibly, can still be used today. Some 1,100 years later still, the Venetian Marco Polo produced, in *Travels* (1298), one of the first travel bestsellers, a wide-eyed account of the wonders of medieval Asia. Travel writing has flourished ever since. For the reader it has a double attraction: we hear about exotic places and people, and the writer takes all the strain. Nowadays, when so much of the world is documented, it is often this last feature, the personal spin each author puts on familiar experience, which gives a book life: personal grouchiness, comedy, fine descriptive prose, interesting reflections, or (in the best books of all) all four.

Bryson, Bill, *The Lost Continent* (1989). Hilarious musings on everything American, from popcorn to gridlock, pegged loosely to a narrative of perfectly ordinary tourist travel except that nothing, in Bryson's eyes, is ever ordinary.

Burton, Richard, A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca (1855). Burton, disguised as an Arab, was the first European to visit the holy places of Islam, and tells the tale as if he were writing an adventure novel.

Cherry-Garrard, Apsley, *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922). Classic account, using letters, diaries and the author's own polar experience, of Captain Scott's doomed explorations in the 1910s.

Dalrymple, William, *In Xanadu* (1989). Erudition and entertainment combined in Dalrymple's account of his undergraduate journey in the footsteps of Marco Polo.

Durrell, Gerald, *The Bafut Beagles* (1953). Funny account of animal-collecting in Africa, by the author of *My Family and Other Animals*. Also: *Three Singles to Adventure, A Zoo in My Luggage, The Whispering Land*.

Fermor, Patrick Leigh, A Time of Gifts (1977). An eighteen-year-old rebel sets out in 1933 to travel from the Hook of Holland to Istanbul on foot. Classic of the genre. Between the Woods and the Water (1987) is a sequel.

Heyerdahl, Thor, *The Kon-Tiki Expedition* (1948). Across the Pacific on a huge balsa-wood raft, to show that Polynesians may have been settlers from ancient South America.

Kingsley, Mary, Travels in West Africa (1897). Unflappable Victorian lady walks and rides through jungles, crosses rivers, climbs mountains, camps near hostile villages and savours every moment.

Moorhouse, Geoffrey, Om (1993). Well-known travel writer tours south India, looking for enlightenment. Fascinating places and people and a thoughtful account of the author's spiritual journey.

Naipaul, V.S., An Area of Darkness (1964). West Indian Hindu writer spends a year in India and writes dazzling, caustic account.

Newby, Eric, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958). Author and laconic friend go for walk in the Himalayas, in true Boy's-Own-Paper style. Very funny.

Raban, Jonathan, Passage to Juneau (1999). Raban sails from Seattle to Alaska, accompanied only by ghosts of his own past and of the men who made the journey before him.

> Sterne, Laurence, A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy (1768). By the author of *Tristram Shandy*.

➤ Theroux, Paul, The Old Patagonian Express (1979). Splendidly grumbly novelist specializes in horrendous train journeys. This one takes him from Boston, Massachusetts, all the way to Patagonia and back. A modern classic.

Thesiger, Wilfred, *Arabian Sands* **(1969)**. Across the Sahara with the Bedouin. One of the great travel books of the past fifty years.

Thubron, Colin, *Behind the Wall* (1987). Modern China, its landscape, its people and its uneasy links with a glorious past.

Also recommended: Robert Byron, The Road to Oxiana; Peter Fleming (brother to Ian), Brazilian Adventure; Heinrich Harrer, Seven Years in Tibet (mountain-climber trapped in pre-Chinese Tibet during World War II); Norman Lewis, Dragon Apparent; Rory Maclean, Stalin's Nose; Claudio Magris, Danube; Philip Marsden, The Spirit-Wrestlers; Peter Matthiessen, The Snow Leopard; Dervla Murphy, Full Tilt: Ireland to India on a Bicycle; P.J. O'Rourke, Holidays in Hell; Mary Russell, The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt (famous women travellers of the past); Jeremy Seal, A Fez of the Heart; Freya Stark, Riding to the Tigris; John Steinbeck, Travels With Charley.

- ▶ to Trevor's short stories: > Susan Hill, A Bit of Singing and Dancing;
 > V.S. Pritchett, The Camberwell Beauty;
 > John Cheever, The Collected Stories.
- ▶ to his novels: > John Banville, Eclipse > Angus Wilson, The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot; > Mary Wesley, A Dubious Legacy; > Anita Brookner, Look At Me.

TROLLOPE, Anthony (1815–82)

British novelist

Until Trollope was fifty-two he worked for the Post Office, travelling in Europe, the US, north Africa and all over the British Isles. He turned his foreign experience into travel books, and used his British observations in forty-seven novels, many of them written, in the fashion of the time, for serial publication in magazines. His style is genial and expansive, and his books deal with such characteristic Victorian themes as class, power, money and family authority. His favourite characters are the upper middle class of small towns and the surrounding estates. His plots involve the exercising of authority by the older generation and. by the young, all kinds of pranks, kicking over the traces, unsuitable love affairs and mockery of their elders' stuffiness. Trollope's best-loved novels are in two sixbook series, the Barsetshire books (1855-67), about intrigue and preferment in a cathedral city, and the Palliser books (1864-80), about politics on the wider stages of county and country. Each novel is self-contained, but recurring characters and cross-references between the books, added to Trollope's easy-going style, give the reader a marvellously comfortable sensation, as of settling down to hear about the latest scrapes of a group of well-loved friends.

BARCHESTER TOWERS (1857)

The second novel in the Barsetshire sequence is high comedy. Imperious Mrs Proudie, wife of the timid new Bishop of Barchester, brings the Reverend Obadiah Slope into the Palace to help dominate her husband and run the diocese. But Slope is a snake in the grass, determined to make a rich marriage for himself, to win preferment in the church, even to defy Mrs Proudie if that will advance his cause. Their power struggle is the heart of the book, a stately but furious minuet which soon sweeps up all Trollope's minor characters: rich, pretty Widow Bold, apoplectic Archdeacon Grantly, flirtatious Signora Vesey-Negroni, saintly Mr Harding, bewildered Parson Quiverful and his fourteen squalling brats.

The Barsetshire novels are The Warden, Barchester Towers, Doctor Thorne, Framley Parsonage, The Small House at Allington and The Last Chronicle of Barset. The Palliser novels are Can You Forgive Her?, Phineas Finn, The Eustace Diamonds, Phineas Redux, The Prime Minister and The Duke's Children. Trollope's other novels include The Bertrams, Orley Farm, The Belton Estate, The Way We Live Now and Mr Scarborough's Family.

- ▶ to the Barsetshire books: ▷ Joanna Trollope, Parson Harding's Daughter; Angela Thirkell, High Rising (first of a series set in Barsetshire and borrowing Trollope's characters); Elizabeth Goudge, Cathedral Close; ▷ Susan Howatch, Absolute Truth ▷ Barbara Pym, Crampton Hodnett.
- ▶ to the Palliser books: > John Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*; Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby*; > Christina Stead, *House of All Nations*.

TROLLOPE, Joanna (born 1943)

British novelist

In 1980 Trollope's *Parson Harding's Daughter*, a sequel to her forebear Anthony Trollope's *The Warden*, was garlanded as the Historical Novel of the Year. She has also written a modern 'Barsetshire chronicle': *The Choir* (1988), set among the musicians in a squabble-filled Anglican Cathedral close. But she is best known for a series of novels about the lives and problems of ordinary contemporary people. She is particularly good at describing the ebb and flow of relationships, between siblings, parents and children, husband and wives. Her evocations of 'village Britain' – especially the gossip and machinations under the serene soap-opera surface – are much admired.

A SPANISH LOVER (1993)

Lizzie, an Earth Mother with four lively children, an 'artistic' husband and a career to juggle, relies on the detached strength of her twin Frances – particularly at Christmas. But one year Frances announces that she is spending the holiday in Spain, and both women's lives start to unravel, until they learn to stand on their own feet without their sibling to support them.

Trollope's other novels include A Village Affair, A Passionate Man, The Rector's Wife, The Best of Friends, Next of Kin, Other People's Children, Marrying the Mistress and Girl from the South. She has also written period romances (as Caroline Harvey), and a non-fiction account of women in the British Empire, Britannia's Daughters.

READ ON

- The Men and the Girls.
- ► Margaret Forster, *The Battle for Christabel*; > Penelope Lively, *According to Mark*. Penelope Mortimer, *The Pumpkin Eater*; Joanne Harris, *Coastliners*; Elizabeth Jane Howard, *The Light Years* (and other books in the Cazalet Chronicle); Angela Lambert, *Love Among the Single Classes*.

TURGENEV, Ivan Sergeevich (1818-83)

Russian novelist and playwright

A rich man, Turgenev spent much of his life travelling in Europe, and was welcomed abroad as the leading Russian writer of his time. He was less popular in Russia itself. Although his limpid style (influenced by his friend \triangleright Flaubert) and his descriptions of nature were admired, his wistful satire, treating all human endeavour as equally absurd, won favour with neither conservatives nor radicals. His favourite characters are members of the leisured class, and his stories of disappointed ambition, failed love affairs and unfocused dissatisfaction anticipate not so much later revolutionary writings as the plays of \triangleright Chekhov.

FATHERS AND SONS (1861)

Arkady, a student, takes his friend Bazarov home to meet his father. The old man is impressed by Bazarov's vigorous character and outspoken views — which are that none of the old moral and social conventions have intrinsic validity, and that people must decide for themselves how to live their lives. (This attitude to life, nihilism, was

widespread among Russian intellectuals in the 1860s and 1870s.) The novel soon leaves politics to explore the effects of Bazarov's character on his own life. He falls in love, and disastrously misinterprets his beloved's wish for friendship as the proposal of a 'free' liaison; he visits his parents, who cannot reconcile their admiration for their son with bewilderment at his ideas; he quarrels with the traditionalist Pavel, Arkady's uncle, and fights an absurd duel with him; he nurses serfs during a typhus epidemic and becomes fatally infected. Although Bazarov always regarded his own existence as futile, after his death it becomes apparent that he has changed the lives and attitudes of every other person in the story.

Turgenev's novels include Rudin, A Nest of Gentlefolk, On the Eve, Smoke and Virgin Soil. A Hunter's Notes/A Sportsman's Sketches contains short stories and poetic descriptions of country scenes. A Month in the Country, a Chekhovian comedy, is his best-known play.

READ ON

- Torrents of Spring (the story of a man torn by love for two women, a beautiful girl and the wife of an old school friend).
- ► ▷ Gustave Flaubert, A Sentimental Education; George Moore, The Lake;
 - ▶ L.P. Hartley, The Go-Between; ▶ Willa Cather, The Professor's House:
 - > Anton Chekhov, The Lady With the Lapdog and Other Short Stories.

TWAIN. Mark (1835-1910)

US novelist and journalist

Mark Twain was the pseudonym of Samuel Clemens. A former steamboat captain on the Mississippi, soldier, goldminer and traveller, he wrote breezy, good-humoured accounts of his experiences, with an eye for quirky customs, manners and characters. His favourite form was the short story or comic, factual 'sketch' of half a dozen pages, and several of his books are collections of such pieces. He wrote three historical novels: Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (serious; the 'biography' of Joan by a former page and secretary), The Prince and the Pauper (about a beggar-boy changing places with King Edward VI of England, his exact double) and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (in which a man, transported back in time, startles Camelot with such 'magic' items as matches, a pocket watch and gunpowder). In Twain's best-loved books, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1886), he wove reminiscences of boyhood and of life on the Mississippi into an easy-going, fictional form. Tom Şawyer is about the scrapes, fancies and fears of boyhood. The heroes of Huckleberry Finn, a boy and a runaway slave, pole a raft down the Mississippi, beset by con-men, bounty-hunters and outraged citizens. and fall into slapstick adventures each time they land.

Twain's satires include Pudd'nhead Wilson and Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven (funny) and The Mysterious Stranger (serious). Tom Sawyer Abroad and Tom Sawyer Detective are novels, following Tom's adventures in adult life. Twain's short stories are collected in The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches and The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg. His books of travel and reminiscence include The Innocents Abroad, Roughing It, A Tramp Abroad and Life on the Mississippi.

READ ON

- ► to *Huckleberry Finn*: Alphonse Daudet, *Tartarin of Tarascon*; ▷ Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*; H.E. Bates, *The Darling Buds of May*.
- ▶ to Twain's travel books: ▷ Robert Louis Stevenson, Travels With a Donkey in the Cévennes (and its sibling, ▷ John Steinbeck, Travels With Charley); ▷ Laurence Sterne, A Sentimental Journey; Laurie Lee, As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning.

TYLER, Anne (born 1941)

US novelist

Tyler writes, in cool, stylish prose, of the anguish of people caught up in the pains of everyday emotional life. She is especially good on relationships: between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children. Her plots are as simple as those of any romantic novelist: people finding one another, drifting apart, coming together again. But the elegance of her writing, and the extraordinary life-likeness of her characters, take her into the literary company of ▷ Lurie or ▷ Updike, worlds away from most romance.

THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST (1985)

Ethan, the twelve-year-old son of Macon and Sarah Leary, is brutally murdered, and his death destroys his parents' marriage. The story centres on Macon, a writer of rueful travel books, as he struggles against the need to rebuild his life, and in particular against the possibility of finding happiness with Helen (a dog-trainer many years his junior). Just as emotional scar tissue begins to form, Sarah comes back into his life, reopening the wound and confronting him once more with the need for choice.

Tyler's other novels include The Clock Winder, Celestial Navigation, Searching For Caleb, Breathing Lessons, Saint Maybe, Earthly Possessions, Ladder of Years, A Patchwork Planet *and* Back When We Were Grown-ups.

- Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant.
- ► Alison Lurie, *The War Between the Tates*; ▷ Anita Shreve, *Strange Fits of Passion*; ▷ Carol Shields, *Larry's Party*; Alice Hoffman, *Turtle Moon*; Gail Godwin, *The Good Husband*.

U

READ ON A THEME: UNLOOKED-FOR FRIENDSHIPS

- > Helen Dunmore, Burning Bright
- Nick Hornby, About a Boy
- ▶ Barbara Kingsolver, The Bean Trees
 Elizabeth Knox, The Vintner's Luck
- Alison Lurie, Foreign Affairs
 William Maxwell, So Long, See You Tomorrow
 Joseph Olshan, A Warmer Season
- C.P. Snow, The Light and the Dark
- > Morris West, The World is Made of Glass

UNSWORTH, Barry (born 1930)

British novelist

Unlike, say, ⊳ Robert Graves, whose historical novels project on to people of ancient times the sensibilities and preoccupations of our own century. Unsworth gets under the skin of the past, showing us not merely long-ago manners and ways of behaviour but a whole philosophical and ethical outlook, sometimes as remote from today as if his characters came from other planets. His dozen novels include Pascali's Island, Stone Virgin, Sugar and Rum, Sacred Hunger (a blockbuster set on an eighteenth-century slave ship) and the spare, moving Morality Play (1995), whose leading character is a fourteenth-century priest who leaves his vocation because of boredom and takes up with a company of strolling actors - only to find that they are creating a play about a recent child-murder whose perpetrator may next turn on them themselves. Losing Nelson (1999) cleverly fuses past, present and the present's interpretation of the past in the story of a man obsessively researching a biography of Nelson. As he struggles to reconcile what he learns with what he wants to believe about the great naval hero. he slowly begins to lose his grip not only on his idea of Nelson but on his own sense of self.

- The Songs of the Kings (Unsworth's most recent novel tells a story of the Trojan War from a distinctly twenty-first-century perspective)
- ▶ to Sacred Hunger: David Dabydeen, A Harlot's Progress; Fred D'Aguiar, Feeding the Ghosts.
- ▶ ▷ William Golding, *The Spire, Rites of Passage*; ▷ Thomas Keneally, *The Playmaker*; ▷ Brian Moore, *Black Robe*; ▷ Rose Tremain, *Restoration*.

UPDIKE, John (born 1932)

US novelist and short story writer

Updike's short stories (most of them written for the New Yorker) are witty anecdotes about the snobberies and love affairs of ambitious Long Island couples, or single, brilliant jokes (for example treating bacteria under a microscope as if they were guests at a trendy cocktail party). Some of his novels are in a similarly glittering, heartless style. In Couples (1968) a small group of bored Connecticut commuters changes sex-partners as carelessly as if playing a party game. In The Witches of Eastwick (1984) three bored young widows set themselves up as a coven of amateur witches, only to become sexually ensnared by a devilishly charming man. The hero of A Month of Sundays (1975) is a 'progressive' clergyman tortured by lust. Updike's other novels are deeper, concentrating more on the underlying pain than on the ludicrous surface of his characters' lives. The Rabbit books (Rabbit. Run: Rabbit Redux: Rabbit is Rich: Rabbit at Rest. 1960-90) follow the life of an ex-school sports champion who finds emotional maturity and happiness almost impossible to grasp. The hero of Roger's Version (1986), a middle-aged professor, is thrown into moral turmoil by the possibility of devising a computer program to prove the existence of God. Updike's more recent novels have included Gertrude and Claudius, an ambitious and witty retelling of events familiar from Hamlet. Toward the End of Time, set in 2020, in which a typical Updikean man muses on his life, and Seek My Face, the story of an encounter between a grande dame of American art and a voung interviewer.

THE CENTAUR (1963)

George Caldwell, an eccentric, ineffective science teacher at Olinger High School in the 1950s, deflects his feelings of inadequacy by fantasizing that he is Chiron, the centaur who taught the heroes of Greek myth (which makes his headmaster Zeus and his colleagues Athene, Hephaestus and Hercules), and that he has terminal stomach cancer. The book describes three days in his life, during which he is forced to come to terms with himself and with his adolescent son Peter, who idolizes him. Myth-reminiscences start and end the book; its heart is more straightforward, a moving account of small-town life and of the inarticulate love between Peter and his perplexed, exasperating father.

Updike's other novels include The Poorhouse Fair, Of the Farm, The Coup, S, the savage black farce Memories of the Ford Administration and two made from stories about a neurotic writer: Bech, a Book and Bech is Back. Brazil is an unusual, and unusually rich, departure: a love story, retelling the myth of Tristan and Isolde and set in South America. His story collections include The Same Door, Pigeon Feathers, Museums and Women, The Music School, Trust Me, The Afterlife and Licks of Love (which also contains an intriguing coda to the Rabbit saga). Self-consciousness contains six autobiographical essays, fascinating background to his fiction. Hugging the Shore is a large collection of Updike's reviews and criticism.

READ ON

▶ Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer*; Arthur Laurents, *The Way We Were*; ▷ Anne Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*; Frederic Raphael, *Heaven and Earth*; ▷ Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After*; ▷ Brian Moore, *The Great Victorian Collection*; Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections*.



VARGAS LLOSA, Mario (born 1936)

Peruvian novelist

An admirer of Sabriel Garciá Márquez, Vargas Llosa uses magic realism to give an even more biting view of South American life and politics. *The City and the Dogsl The Time of the Hero* (1962) is a satire on fascism set in a gung-ho, brutal military academy. *The War of the End of the World* (1981) is about the oppression, by the authorities, of a nineteenth-century utopian community for derelicts and dropouts, deep in the magic wilderness. *The Storyteller* (1991) is set among a fast-disappearing tribe of Amazonian Indians, whose stories *are* their history – and, as the book progresses, their only real existence. *The Notebooks of Don Rigoberto* (1998) is an erotic fantasia in which the protagonist, recording his sexual longings and memories, draws himself and the reader into a world of uncertainty and transgression. *The Feast of the Goat* (2002) is a remarkable and unflinching analysis of despotism in the grotesque shape of Rafael Trujillo, the longtime dictator of the Dominican Republic. Few other writers can match Vargas Llosa for insights into the corruptions of power and few recent novels have turned real events of twentieth-century history into such compelling fiction.

AUNT JULIA AND THE SCRIPTWRITER (1977)

Mario, a student, works part-time for a decrepit radio station, and idolizes the extraordinary man who writes and stars in half a dozen daily soap operas. Mario's own life is complicated by his love affair with his aunt, Julia. The book alternately gives us extracts from the soap operas, as weird as dreams, and Mario's own farcical story, as romantic and over-the-top as any soap.

Vargas Llosa's other novels include The Green House, Who Killed Palomino Molero, The Time of the Hero and Death in the Andes. The Cubs is a collection of short stories. The Perpetual Orgy is a book-length musing about ▷ Flaubert's Madame Bovary, part literary criticism, part reconstruction, part anthology – it is magic realism and non-fiction, hand in hand. A Fish in the Water is the story of Llosa's own involvement in Peruvian politics, often as surreal as the events of his fiction.

- In Praise of the Stepmother.
- ► Louis de Bernières, *Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord*; ▷ Isabel Allende, *Eva Luna*; Augusto Roa Bastos, *I, the Supreme*, ▷ Gabriel García Márquez, *The General in his Labyrinth*.
- ▶ to The Perpetual Orgy: > Julian Barnes, Flaubert's Parrot.

VERNE, Jules (1828-1905)

French novelist

Verne began writing in the 1860s, the heyday of both exploration and popular science – and his inspiration was to mix the two. His stories mimic the memoirs of real-life explorers of the time, fabulous adventures narrated in sober, business-like prose – and, by stirring in scientific wonders impossible or unlikely at the time, he tips them into fantasy. His heroes are not tethered to the surface of the Earth: they tunnel towards its core (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*), live underwater (*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*) and ride rockets into space (*From the Earth to the Moon*; *Round the Moon*). Alternately with these 'scientific' adventure stories, Verne produced tales of more orthodox derring-do: *Michel Strogoff*, for example, is a gentleman-adventurer whose bravery saves Civilisation As We Know It; in *Round the World in Eighty Days* Phileas Fogg embarks on a crazy journey to win a bet. Modern science has outstripped most of Verne's inventions, but few later science fiction writers have bettered him for straight-down-the-line, thrill-in-every-paragraph adventure.

READ ON

► Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World*; ▷ H.G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon*; ▷ H. Rider Haggard, *She*; C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*; Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Pirates of Venus*; ▷ Kurt Vonnegut, *The Sirens of Titan*.

VIDAL, Gore (born 1925)

US novelist and non-fiction writer

Vidal made his name as a tart-tongued, witty commentator on 1960s and 1970s life, a favourite chat-show guest. Whatever the topic, from the rotation of crops to the horror of Nazi concentration camps, from zen to flower-arranging, he had something interesting to say. The same protean brilliance fills his novels. Whether their subject is homosexuality (*The City and the Pillar*, 1948/65), the excesses of the film industry (*Myra Breckinridge*, 1968) or US politics (the series *Burr, Lincoln, 1876, Washington DC, Empire, Hollywood: a Novel of The Twenties* and *The Golden Age* 1967–2000), they are original, stimulating and engrossing. This is particularly so in his historical novels, where he makes his alternative view of past events seem more attractive than reality itself. *Julian* is a study of the last pagan Roman emperor, who tried to stop the rush of Christianity in the name of (as Vidal sees it) the more humane, more generous Olympian religion. *Creation* is the memoirs of an imaginary Persian nobleman of the fifth century BC, who went as ambassador to India, China and Greece and knew Confucius, Buddha and Socrates.

Vidal's other novels include Williwaw, Myron, Kalki, Live from Golgotha, Messiah and Duluth. He has also written detective stories (including Death in the Fifth Position) under the name Edgar Box. A Thirsty Evil is a collection of short stories. Palimpsest is a malicious, gossipy memoir which occasionally surprises the reader by the poignancy of Vidal's recollections, particularly of his grandfather and of a lover killed in the Second World War. United States is a massive selection of Vidal's often brilliant essays, written in the decades from 1952 to 1992; The Last Empire collects more recent non-fiction in which Vidal rides his hobby horses with greater enthusiasm than the reader can usually feel.

READ ON

- Duluth.
- ▶ to Vidal's historical novels: Peter Green, *The Sword of Pleasure* (set in republican Rome); John Hersey, *The Wall* (about US missionaries in China); ▷ John Barth, *The Sot-Weed Factor* (set in Maryland in the time of the Pilgrim Fathers); ▷ Rose Tremain, *Restoration* (set in 1660s Britain).
- ▶ to Vidal's novels in general: ▷ Kingsley Amis, *The Alteration*; ▷ Patrick White, *The Twyborn Affair*; ▷ Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*.

READ ON A THEME: VILLAGE AND COUNTRYSIDE

- Bruce Chatwin, On the Black Hill Isabel Colegate, The Shooting Party Christopher Hart, The Harvest
- ∨ V.S. Naipaul, The Enigma of Arrival Tim Pears, In the Place of Fallen Leaves
- > Graham Swift, Waterland
- > Adam Thorpe, Ulverton

See also: The Rhythm of Nature; Small-Town Life, USA

VINE, Barbara: see RENDELL, Ruth

VONNEGUT, Kurt (born 1922)

US novelist

Science fiction ideas shape Vonnegut's novels and so do autobiography, political and social satire, loonish humour and a furious, nagging rage at the way the human race is pillaging the world. *Galápagos* (1985) begins at the moment of nuclear apocalypse (which is triggered by a bomber-pilot fantasizing that firing his missile is like having sex). A group of people, gathered in Ecuador for the 'Nature Cruise of the Century', find that their ship has become a Noah's Ark: they are the sole survivors of humankind. They land in the Galápagos Islands, equipped with no technology save a computer whose memory is stuffed with a thousand dead languages and a million quotations from the world's great literatures, and set about survival. At first they are hampered, as (Vonnegut claims) the human race has been handicapped throughout its existence, by the enormous size of their brains, attics of unnecessary thought. But Galápagos is the cradle of the evolutionary theory and that may be humanity's last hope.

Vonnegut's other novels are Player Piano, The Sirens of Titan, Mother Night, Cat's Cradle, God Bless You, Mr Rosewater, Slaughterhouse Five, Breakfast of Champions, Slapstick, Jailbird, Palm Sunday, Deadeye Dick and Hocus Pocus. Canary in a Cathouse, Welcome to the Monkeyhouse and Bagombo Snuff Box contain short stories.

- Cat's Cradle; The Sirens of Titan.
- ▶ Brian Aldiss, *The Primal Urge*. Frederick Pohl, *The Coming of the Quantum Cats*. Walter M. Miller Jr, A Canticle for Leibowitz; Richard Brautigan, In Watermelon Sugar.



WALKER, Alice (born 1944)

US novelist, poet and non-fiction writer

The background to Walker's books is the struggle for equal rights in the US over the past forty years, first by blacks and then by women. Radical politics are not, however, her main concern. She writes wittily, ironically, about the follies of human life, and she is as merciless towards her idealistic, college-educated activists as she is to their slobbish, mindless opponents. Meridian (1976), Walker's second novel, is the splendidly ironical study of a southern black activist, educated to be a 'lady' (in the 1920s white meaning of the term), who becomes a leader in the equal rights movements of the 1960s. When we see Meridian years later, all battles won, holed up in the small southern town of Chickokema, where apart from the coming of equality, nothing momentous has ever happened, she is totally confused about where all her energy, her driving force, has gone. Was this really what her life was for? The Color Purple (1986) uses a number of imaginative narrative devices to tell the story of Celie, a black woman in the segregated Deep South who has known nothing but abuse and exploitation until she meets Shug Avery, a female singer who offers her the chance of love and emotional support.

Walker's other novels are The Third Life of Grange Copeland, The Temple of My Familiar, Possessing the Secret of Joy (about African tribal women, and especially Tashi, facing a horrific initiation into adult life) and By the Light of My Father's Smile. In Love and Trouble, You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down and The Way Forward is With a Broken Heart are short story collections. She has also published poetry (Once; Revolutionary Petunias; Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful; Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning) and three books of essays: In Search of Our Mother's Garden, Living by the Word and Anything We Love Can Be Saved. The Same River Twice is autobiography.

- The Temple of My Familiar.
- ► To Walker's elegant, tart style: Mary McCarthy, *The Group*; ▷ Muriel Spark, *The Girls of Slender Means*.
- ► To her view of the bizarreness lurking inside perfectly ordinary-seeming human beings: > John Irving, *The World According to Garp*; Tove Jansson, *Sun City*.
- ▶ To her politics: Gayl Jones, *Corregidora*; Lisa Alther, *Kinflicks*; Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

READ ON A THEME: WALES

Trezza Azzopardi, *The Hiding Place*A.J. Cronin, *The Citadel*Emyr Humphreys, *Flesh and Blood*Richard Llewellyn, *How Green Was My Valley*Malcolm Pryce, *Aberystwyth Mon Amour*Kate Roberts, *Feet in Chains*John Williams, *Cardiff Dead*

WALTERS, Minette (born 1949)

British novelist

Like so many of the best contemporary writers of crime fiction (>Ruth Rendell, Frances Evfield, Andrew Taylor) Minette Walters produces books that are not so much 'whodunits' as 'whydunits'. Our interest is held not so much by the twists and turns of a convoluted, puzzle-like plot but by the way the narrative progressively reveals more and more about the psychology and hidden depths of her characters. This has been the case since her first novel The Ice House. about three women who may or may not have got away with murder ten years before the book opens, was published in 1992. Her second novel, The Sculptress (1993), introduced the kind of pairing of disparate characters that has recurred in later books. The obese, unloved Olive Martin, imprisoned for the apparent murders of her mother and sister, represents a terrible enigma, an affront almost, to the middle-class complacency of the woman intent on writing a book about her crimes. In her more recent novels Minette Walters has increasingly concentrated on stories which gradually unveil the hidden motivations of her characters. In The Shape of Snakes (2000) a teacher refuses to accept that the death of an alcoholic neighbour is an accident. For twenty years she obsessively amasses evidence to prove that murder took place. Narrated by the teacher and reproducing many of the documents that constitute her evidence, the book moves relentlessly towards the revelation of dark, unsettling and moving truths about its characters. Retaining its tension and mystery until its last page, it is the best example yet of Minette Walters's ambition to press forward into territory not usually occupied by writers of crime fiction.

Minette Walters's other novels are The Scold's Bridle, The Echo, The Breaker, The Dark Room, Acid Row *and* Fox Evil.

READ ON

- The Dark Room.
- ► Barbara Vine (see ▷ Ruth Rendall), *A Fatal Inversion*; Nicci French, *The Safe House*; ▷ Val McDermid, *Killing the Shadows*; Andrew Taylor, *The Barred Window*; Frances Fyfield, *Seeking Sanctuary*.

READ ON A THEME: WAR: BEHIND THE LINES

Noel Barber, A Woman of Cairo

Elizabeth Bowen, The Heat of the Day

- > Louis de Bernières, Captain Corelli's Mandolin
- > Sebastian Faulks, Charlotte Gray
- > Jaroslav Hăsek, The Good Soldier Svejk
- Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms
- > Thomas Keneally, Schindler's Ark
- ▶ Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace

See also: Terrorists/Freedom Fighters

READ ON A THEME: WAR: FRONT LINE

- ▶ Pat Barker, The Ghost Road
 Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage
- ▶ Len Deighton, Bomber
- > Sebastian Faulks, Birdsong
- > Joseph Heller, Catch-22
- > Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls
- > Alistair MacLean, The Guns of Navarone
- Norman Mailer, The Naked and the Dead
 Frederic Manning, Her Privates We (also known as The Middle Parts of Fortune)
 R.H. Mottram, The Spanish Farm Trilogy
 Bao Ninh, The Sorrow of War
 Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front

WATERS, Sarah (born 1966)

British novelist

A TV adaptation of Tipping the Velvet in 2002 brought new readers to Sarah Waters but she already had an appreciative audience for her lively fictional excursions into the lesbian sub-culture of Victorian Britain. Tipping the Velvet is the story of Nan Astley's voyage of self-discovery through a riotous demi-monde of music-hall entertainers, Sapphic aristos and cross-dressing gender benders, all brought to vivid life by Waters's exuberant prose. Nan begins as the respectable daughter of a restaurant owner but is propelled into new worlds by her encounter with Kitty Butler, a male impersonator treading the boards at the local music hall. In two fulfther novels Waters introduces the reader to some of those other Victorians that the history books don't always mention. For the heroine of Affinity, Margaret Prior, her coup de foudre takes place not in a music hall but in Millbank prison. She is visiting the prison as part of the duties of a socially concerned, middle-class spinster but is completely unprepared for the effect upon her of the beautiful spiritualist, Selina Dawes, imprisoned for fraud. Alternating between Margaret's journal and Selina's account of her life, Affinity chronicles the developing relationship between the two women. Waters's third novel, Fingersmith, shortlisted for the 2002 Booker, begins in the thieves' dens of 1860s Southwark and expands into an elaborate story of cross and double-cross centred on a suave con-man's attempt to use the heroine in a plot to defraud a

wealthy heiress. All three of Waters's novels take the themes and motifs of classic Victorian literature but put them to new uses in creating characters and settings that her nineteenth-century predecessors firmly excluded from their fiction. Much more than pastiche, her books are some of the most adventurous and enjoyable historical novels of the last few years.

READ ON

▶ ▷ Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus: Michel Faber, The Crimson Petal and the White; Sheri Holman, The Dress Lodger; Emma Donoghue, Slammerkin.

WAUGH, Evelyn (1903-66)

British novelist

Waugh's main work was a series of tart satires on 1930s attitudes and manners. His vacuous, amiable heroes stumble through life, unsurprised by anything that happens. By chance, they land in the centre of affairs (political, business and sexual) and their presence triggers a sequence of ever more ludicrous events. Innocence is their only saving grace: Waugh's views were that the world is silly but dangerous, and that those who think they understand it are the most vulnerable of all. He was particularly venomous about British high society, depicting the ruling class as a collection of alcohol-swilling Hooray Henries or Henriettas, whose chief pastimes are partying (if young) and interfering in public life (if old). That class apart, the range of his scorn was vast. Decline and Fall sends up (among other things) the English prep school system, Black Mischief mocks tyranny in an African state emerging from colonialism, Scoop satirizes gutter journalism and The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (1957) mercilessly details the hallucinations of an alcoholic author on a detestable ocean cruise. The Second World War trilogy Sword of Honour (1965) sets Waugh's foolish heroes in the context of truly dangerous, genuinely lunatic real events, and Brideshead Revisited (1945) is a more serious book still, the study of an aristocratic Catholic family collapsing under the weight of centuries of unconsidered privilege.

A HANDFUL OF DUST (1934)

The book begins with standard Waugh farce: a pin-headed society wife. Brenda Last, takes a lover to occupy her afternoons. But the effect on her husband Tony and son John is devastating, and the book moves quickly from farce to tragedy. Waugh never abandons the ridiculous - no one else would have placed his hero in impenetrable tropical jungle, the slave of a megalomaniac who makes him read Edwin Drood aloud - but he also writes with compassion for his characters, involving us in their loneliness as his more farcical novels never try to do.

Waugh's other novels are Vile Bodies, Put Out More Flags and The Loved One. His travel books include Remote People and Waugh in Abyssinia. His Diaries, Letters and his autobiography A Little Learning are a revealing blend of pity for himself and mercilessness to others. Like all his work, they are also very funny.

- Scoop.
- ▶ ▷ William Boyd, *A Good Man in Africa*; ▷ Anthony Powell, *Afternoon Men*; ▷ Anthony Burgess, The Complete Enderby, > Malcolm Bradbury, Eating People is

Wrong; > David Lodge, How Far Can You Go?; P.H. Newby, The Picnic at Sakkara; > John Updike, The Coup; Paul Micou, The Music Programme.

READ ON A THEME: WEEPIES

- Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre
- Louis de Bernières, Captain Corelli's Mandolin Jeannie Brewer, A Crack in Forever
- Daphne Du Maurier, Rebecca Nicholas Evans, The Horse Whisperer
- → Margaret Mitchell, Gone With the Wind
- Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago
 Erich Segal, Love Story
 Robert Waller, The Bridges of Madison County

WELDON, Fay (born 1933)

British novelist and screen-writer

A former advertising executive ('Go To Work On an Egg') and TV dramatist, Weldon writes novels in short, screenplay-like scenes full of dialogue: her books are like sinister sitcoms turned into prose. In the 1970s she was regarded as a leading feminist writer, and 'women's experience' is a major theme in all her books. Her heroines are ordinary people resisting the need to define themselves as someone else's wife, lover or mother, and missing the traditional cosiness such roles afford. Individuality can only be bought at the cost of psychic discomfort – and this is often intensified by the malice of others and by the hostility of the environment: witchcraft and the venomousness of nature regularly add spice to Weldon's plots. Her books are fast, funny and furious; but their underlying ideas are no joke at all.

PUFFBALL (1980)

Liffey, married to boring, ambitious Richard, longs to live in a country cottage; Richard wants a child. They strike a bargain, move to the wolds near Glastonbury and do their best to get Liffey pregnant. Almost at once the idyll turns to nightmare. The cottage has few facilities; there are no commuter trains to London; their neighbour is a child-beater and an amateur witch. As the baby grows in Liffey's womb and Richard, alone in London for five days a week, consoles himself, Mabs (the neighbour) tries every trick of witchcraft, from potions to pin-stuck wax models, to make Liffey abort her child. *Puffball* is a romantic novel for grown-up people – and the games Weldon plays with our longing for a happy ending give the plot some of its most devastating, satisfying twists.

Weldon's other novels include Down Among the Women, Female Friends, The President's Child, Little Sisters, Praxis, Watching Me Watching You, The Life and Loves of a She-Devil, The Shrapnel Academy, The Heart of the Country, The Fat Woman's Joke, Life Force, Splitting, Worst Fears, Big Women, Rhode Island Blues and The Bulgari Connection. A Hard Time to Be a Father and Nothing to

Wear and Nowhere to Hide are collections of short stories. Godless in Eden is a selection of essays, Auto da Fay an autobiography.

READ ON

- Darcy's Utopia.
- ► Margaret Atwood, *Life Before Man*; Marge Piercy, *The High Cost of Living*; Mary Gordon, *The Company of Women*; Penelope Mortimer, *Long Distance*; Alice Thomas Ellis, *Unexplained Laughter*; Maggie Gee, *Light Years*.

WELLS, H.G. (Herbert George) (1866–1946) British writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

Wells's early novels were science fantasies, imagining what it would be like if people could travel in time (The Time Machine, 1895) or space (The First Men in the Moon, 1901), or how the Earth might defend itself against extra-terrestrial attacks (The War of the Worlds, 1898). Like > Verne, Wells predicted many inventions and discoveries now taken for granted: in The War in the Air (1908) for example, he forecast fleets of warplanes and bombers in the days when the Wright brothers were still headline news. For all their scientific wonders, these novels are full of pessimism about society: wherever people go, they find barbarism, oppression and misery. The Island of Doctor Moreau (1896), about a mad scientist hybridizing humans and animals on a lonely island, brings the pessimism nearer home. Side by side with such morbid fantasies, Wells wrote a series of utterly different books. These are genial social comedies, about ordinary people (shop-assistants, clerks) who decide that the way to find happiness is to break out and 'make a go of things'. Sometimes (as in Ann Veronica, 1909, about a girl determined on emancipation despite the wishes of her family) Wells's message is polemical: but most of the books - Love and Mr Lewisham (1900). Kipps (1900), The History of Mr Polly (1910) - replace propaganda with an indulgent, enthusiastic view of human enterprise.

TONO-BUNGAY (1909)

George Ponderevo goes to live with his uncle Teddy. He helps Teddy market a marvellous new elixir, Tono-Bungay: it is the answer to the world's problems, the health, wealth and happiness of humankind in a bottle. The Tono-Bungay fortune swells by the minute – and then George discovers that the product is ninety-nine percent distilled water. The discovery presents George with unresolvable moral dilemmas of all kinds. Does it matter what Tono-Bungay is made of, if it does what it claims to do? Is Teddy a crook or does he genuinely believe he, is benefiting humankind? How can George bankrupt those he loves – and in the process destroy his own chances of a happy marriage and a prosperous home? He puts off the decision, and in the meantime continues his hobby: pioneer aviation. In the end, technology – the lighter-than-air-machine itself – comes to the rescue: a charming example of Wells's view that all moral and social dilemmas can be solved by science.

Wells's other science fantasies include When the Sleeper Wakes, The Food of the Gods and the story collections Tales of Space and Time and The Country of the Blind and Other Stories. His other novels include A Modern Utopia, The New Machiavelli and Mr Britling Sees It Through.

READ ON

- ▶ to Wells's science fiction: ▷ Jules Verne, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea; C.S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet; H.P. Lovecraft, The Shadow over Innsmouth; Brian Aldiss, Moreau's Other Island (Wells's nightmare vision transplanted to space).
- ▶ to his social comedies: ▷ Arnold Bennett, The Card; Hugh Walpole, Mr Perrin and Mr Traill; ▷ J.B. Priestley, The Good Companions.

WELSH, Irvine (born 1958)

British novelist

Revealing an Edinburgh at odds with the tourist image of tartan tweeness, Trainspotting (1993), Irvine Welsh's portrait of heroin users on bleak council estates, was a landmark in Scottish (and British) fiction and, through a successful film adaptation, became a cult book for a generation. Welsh adopts no easy tone of moral condemnation. Heroin is presented simply as an everyday part of the lives of his characters - source of pleasure as well as desolation - and even the most shocking descriptions of cheap sex, violence and the desperate urge to score are shot through with dark humour. Told in energetic, phonetically reproduced Scots language, awash both with obscenity and accidental poetry, Trainspotting is a black but utterly compelling narrative. Welsh followed the book with Marabou Stork Nightmares (1995), an ambitious attempt to fuse another story of blighted, violent lives with excursions into the fantasy world of its central character. Roy Strang lies in a coma in hospital. As his real past, as both victim and perpetrator of sexual violence, unfolds in his mind, so too does a surreal safari through a halfimagined, half-remembered Africa where Strang, re-cast as some kind of gentleman explorer, hunts the marabou stork. The book is not a complete success. The reality of Strang's past life carries more conviction than the stork hunt his imagination, in search of redemption from his demons, has conjured up. But Marabou Stork Nightmares shows Welsh to be a writer of much greater ambition. than Trainspotting alone might have suggested. Glue (2001), is once again set in the now-familiar Welsh terrain of Edinburgh slum estates and is again told in the now-familiar vernacular but, in carrying the story of four friends through three decades of their lives, he is once more attempting to stretch his range as a writer.

Welsh's other fictional works are Filth (a novel), Ecstasy (a collection of three novellas), The Acid House (short stories) and Porno (a return to the characters first seen in Trainspotting)...

READ ON

▶ James Kelman, A Chancer, Alan Warner, Morvern Callar, John King, The Football Factory, Laura Hird, Born Free.

WELTY, Eudora (1909–2001)

US novelist and short story writer

Unlike such writers as ▷ Faulkner or ▷ McCullers, who saw the southern United States as a kind of hell tenanted by freaks and degenerates, Welty treats them as

paradise. The countryside is lush; birds and animals teem; all nature is in harmony. Human beings are at the heart of the idvll - and Welty shows them as uncomprehending innocents. The 'Negroes' - she is writing about times long gone – are children of nature, at peace with their environment. The 'White Folks'. by contrast, feel edgy. They sense that they are corrupt, that their presence threatens Eden; but they have no idea why this should be so, and all they can do is live as they always have and hope that things will be all right, that nothing will change. The surface events in Welty's books are a mosaic of ordinariness parties, children's games, chance meetings in town or at the bathing station – but underlying them all is a sense of fragility, of impending loss. Her characters are living in a dream, comfortable and comforting, but it is only a dream, and already we, and they, sense the first chill of wakefulness.

DELTA WEDDING (1946)

In the 1920s, nine-year-old Laura travels to her uncle's plantation in the Mississippi delta, to help in preparations for her cousin's wedding. She revels in the eccentric, affectionate rough-and-tumble of cousins, great-aunts, visitors (and dozens of blacks, as friendly and unconsidered as household pets); she climbs trees, bakes cakes, guesses riddles, listens to gossip as the wedding dress is sewn. Welty also shows the preparations through the eyes of the bride's parents, the bride and groom themselves, and an assortment of servants, friends and neighbours. The wedding brings a whole community into focus - and we are shown, with persistent, gentle irony, that it is not just the bride and groom who must undergo a rite of passage, but the South itself.

Welty's other novels are The Robber Bridegroom, The Ponder Heart, The Optimist's Daughter and Losing Battles. Her short stories are collected in A Curtain of Green, The Wide Net, The Golden Apples and The Bride of Innisfallen. One Writer's Beginnings is a series of essays, originally lectures, that describe the people and places that shaped her development as a writer.

READ ON

- The Optimist's Daughter.
- ▶ Randall Jarrell. Pictures From an Institution: ▷ L.P. Hartley, The Go-Between:
- > Colette, The Ripening Seed; > Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited; Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men.

WESLEY, MARY (1912 - 2002)

British novelist

Wesley's first adult novel, Jumping the Queue, was published when she was seventy, and since then she has had runaway success. In several of her novels she writes of elegant elderly people, usually women, whose efficient outward lives depend on unsuspected and eccentric thoughts, rituals or long-held secrets. Her stories tell what happens when some chance event - often falling in love with a vounger person - brings eccentricity to the surface, rippling the apparently tranquil pool in ways which are bizarre, hilarious, often joyously sexy, and very, very sad. In others (The Camomile Lawn, for instance) she looks back at the Second World War, not for nostalgic purposes, but to examine, often astringently, the lives and loves of ordinary young people caught up in larger events.

NOT THAT SORT OF GIRL (1987)

Rose is sixty-nine, recently widowed, and hard as nails. For fifty years her 'ideal' marriage had been a polite fiction, sustained (for her) by an intermittent, passionate and secret love affair. Sex has been the calm centre of her existence, her reason for living – a matter usually of music-hall farce, but here treated seriously and sensitively, and no joke at all.

Wesley's other books include Harnessing Peacocks, The Vacillations of Poppy Carew, The Camomile Lawn, A Sensible Life, Second Fiddle and Part of the Furniture.

READ ON

- Jumping the Queue (about a middle-aged woman, a would-be suicide, who gives refuge to a charming murderer, and finds that his presence makes her life flower anew).
- ► Elizabeth Jolley, *Palomino*; ▷ Joanna Trollope, *A Village Affair*; Jenny Diski, *Happily Ever After*; Joanne Harris, *Five Quarters of the Orange*.

WEST, Nathanael (1906–40)

US novelist and screenwriter

West wrote rubbishy films for a living: their titles include *Rhythm in the Clouds, Born to be Wild* and *Hallelujah I'm a Bum.* To please himself, he wrote four satirical novels, dark black comedies a million miles from Hollywood. The hero of *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933) is a cynical newspaperman assigned to the agony column. He begins by despising the wretches who write for advice, but soon begins to pity them and finally leaves his desk to intervene in one case personally, with fatal but farcical results. In *The Day of the Locust* (1939) West used his experience of screenwriting to produce a mordant satirical portrait of the underside of the Hollywood dream factory. The bit players of the film business, the would-bes and never-weres, strut and shuffle through West's narrative which culminates in a terrifying riot at a movie premiere.

West's other novels are The Dream Life of Balso Snell and A Cool Million.

READ ON

▶ Joe Orton, *Head to Toe*; Budd Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*; ▷ Aldous Huxley, *After Many a Summer*; ▷ Mordecai Richler, *Cocksure*.

READ ON A THEME: THE WEST (THE GREAT AMERICAN FRONTIER)

Desmond Barry, The Chivalry of Crime
Thomas Berger, Little Big Man
Michael Blake, Marching to Valhalla (fictionalized version of Custer's career)
Pete Dexter, Deadwood
E.L. Doctorow, Welcome to Hard Times
Thomas Eidson, St Agnes' Stand
Zane Grey, Riders of the Purple Sage
Ron Hansen, Desperadoes

> Jane Smiley, The All-True Travels and Adventures of Lydie Newton

Larry McMurtry, Lonesome Dove

WHARTON, Edith (1862–1937)

US writer of novels, short stories and non-fiction

A society hostess, Wharton caused outrage by writing with ironical rage about the complacency and shallowness of her own class. (She later described high society as 'frivolous . . . able to acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys'.) In 1907 she moved to Europe and broadened her scope, writing two Hardyesque rural tragedies (*Ethan Frome, Summer*), several books set in Europe (including *The Reef*, which her friend >Henry James admired) and some atmospheric ghost stories. But she regularly returned to her favourite theme, the stifling conventions of 1870s–1920s New York high life – and it is on this that her reputation rests. Her enemies put her down as a clumsy imitator of James. But whereas he showed his characters' psychological innerness, she was interested in manners, in events. She also wrote shorter, wittier sentences, and crisper dialogue. Except that her subject matter is so sombre, she is more like Oscar Wilde than James.

THE HOUSE OF MIRTH (1905)

Lily Bart, a beautiful, sharp-witted girl, has been conditioned to luxury from birth. Unfortunately she is an orphan, living on a small allowance. She gambles at cards, loses, and because of her moral scruples (she refuses to pay off her debts by becoming the mistress of a wealthy creditor), she ends up poorer and more desperate than ever. Faced with the choice of marrying either a rich man she despises (not least because he is a Jew, something her WASPish upbringing has taught her to abhor) or the penniless man she loves, she chooses neither – and soon afterwards, as the result of scandalous accusations, loses her position in society. She moves into cheap lodgings and sinks into despair. She has achieved moral integrity, broken free of her upbringing, but in the process, because of that upbringing, she has destroyed herself.

Wharton's other novels include The Custom of the Country, The Age of Innocence, Old New York and The Reef. Her short stories, published originally in several volumes, have been collected in one volume. A Backward Glance is autobiography, interesting on her friendship with Henry James.

READ ON

- The Custom of the Country.
- ▶ Ellen Glasgow, Barren Ground; Louis Auchincloss, A World of Profit; ▷ George Eliot, Middlemarch; ▷ William Thackeray, Vanity Fair; ▷ Elizabeth Taylor, The Wedding Group; ▷ Mary Wesley, Not That Sort of Girl.

WHITE, Antonia (1899–1979)

British novelist

A journalist and translator (notably of ▷Colette), White is remembered for four deeply felt autobiographical novels. *Frost in May* (1933) is the story of a child at a grim convent boarding school. The nuns' mission is to 'break' each pupil like a horse – to tame her for Christ – and the book remorselessly charts the series of small emotional humiliations they inflict on the heroine, which have entirely the opposite effect from the one intended. In the later novels White's heroine works

as an actress (*The Lost Traveller*, 1950), tries to combine serious writing with work as a copywriter (*The Sugar House*, 1952), and finally (*Beyond the Glass*, 1954), in the course of a terrifying mental illness, exorcises the ghosts of Catholicism and her relationship with her father, the influences which have both defined and deformed her life.

White's other books include the short story collection Strangers, and The Hound and the Falcon, an account in letter form of her return to Catholicism.

READ ON

- ▶ to Frost in May: > James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; Jane Gardam, Bilgewater; > Thomas Keneally, Three Cheers for the Paraclete.
- ▶ to Beyond the Glass: Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar, Janet Frame, Faces in the Water.
- ▶ to White's work in general: ▷ Rosamond Lehmann, *Dusty Answer*; ▷ Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness*.

WHITE, Patrick (1912–90)

Australian novelist and playwright

White was interested in Nietzsche's idea of 'superbeings', people endowed with qualities or abilities which set them apart from the rest of the human race. But White's characters are cursed, not blessed, by difference: their chief attribute is a cantankerous individuality which makes it impossible for them to adjust to society or it to them. In some books (*Riders in the Chariot*, 1961, about anti-Semitism, or *The Vivisector*, 1970, about a convention-defying painter) the 'enemy' is the stifling gentility of lower-middle-class Sydney suburbanites. In others (*The Tree of Man*, 1956, about a young farmer in the 1900s, or *A Fringe of Leaves*, 1976, the battle is symbolic, against the wilderness itself. But wherever conflict takes place, it is of epic proportions: White's craggy prose puts him in the company of such past writers as ▷ Melville or ▷ Conrad, and in the twentieth century only ▷ Golding equals his blend of fast-paced storytelling and brooding philosophical allegory.

VOSS (1957)

In 1857, financed by a group of Sydney businessmen, a group of explorers sets out to cross Australia. The expedition is led by the German visionary Voss: physically awkward, ill-at-ease in towns and houses, speaking a tortured, poetic English which sounds as if he learned it by rote, phrase by painful phrase. The other members include an ex-convict and a dreamy Aboriginal boy, Jackie, torn between the white people's culture and his own. White balances reports of the expedition's struggle against the desert and to understand one another with accounts of the life of Laura Trevelyan, a young woman fascinated by Voss (at first as a larger-than-life character, an epic personality, and then as a vulnerable human being) as she waits in Sydney, like a medium hoping for spirit-messages, for news of him.

White's other novels are Happy Valley, The Living and the Dead, The Aunt's Story (a comedy about an indomitable spinster travelling alone), The Solid Mandala, The Eye of the Storm and The Twyborn Affair. The Burnt Ones and The Cockatoos are collections of short stories. Flaws in the Glass is an autobiography,

good on White's own battles against the wilderness (he was an outback farmer) and against convention (he was homosexual).

READ ON

- A Fringe of Leaves (about a woman shipwrecked in Queensland in the 1840s, who
 is captured by Aborigines and brought to terms not only with an alien culture but
 with her feelings about the 'civilization' she knew before).
- ▶ to Voss: ▷ William Golding, Darkness Visible; ▷ H.H. Richardson, The Fortunes of Richard Mahony; ▷ Peter Carey, Oscar and Lucinda; Paul Bowles, The Sheltering Sky; ▷ Joseph Conrad, The Nigger of the Narcissus.
- ▶ to *A Fringe of Leaves*: ▷ D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*; Katharine Susannah Prichard, *Coonardoo*; ▷ Jim Crace, *Signals of Distress*.
- ▶ to White's work in general: ▷ Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*; Joyce Cary, *The Horse's Mouth*; ▷ Elizabeth Taylor, *Blaming*.

WILDER, Thornton (1897–1975)

US novelist and playwright

Wilder is known for plays as well as novels: *The Matchmaker* (source of the musical *Hello, Dolly*), *Our Town, The Skin of Our Teeth* and many others. His works explore an idea he called 'simultaneity'. Time is not progressive but circular, our destinies move in cycles, and when people's cycles coincide (like the overlapping Olympic rings), that is the moment of simultaneity, of crisis, in all their lives. In his best-known novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), the moment of simultaneity is the collapse of a bridge in eighteenth-century Peru; the book tells the lives of each of the five people killed in the disaster, reaching a climax at the exact instant when the bridge falls in. *The Ides of March* (1948) is a historical novel which charts, in a series of imaginary letters, the converging destinies of a group of people in ancient Rome; it ends on the morning of the Ides of March, 44 BC, as Julius Caesar leaves for the senate house where (history tells us) he was due to be assassinated.

Wilder's other novels are The Cabala, The Woman of Andros, Heaven's My Destination, The Eighth Day and Theophilus North.

READ ON

- ▶ to The Ides of March: ▷ Marguerite Yourcenar, Memoirs of Hadrian; John Arden, Silence Among the Weapons; ▷ Mary Renault, The Last of the Wine; Hilda Doolittle ('H.D.'), Hedylus.
- , ▶ other books, of different periods and on different themes, but all concerned with our perception of time: ▷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*; ▷ Lawrence Durrell, *Tunc* and *Numquam*; ▷ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*.

READ ON A THEME: THE WILDERNESS

Andrea Barrett, The Voyage of the Narwhal

Charles Frazier. Cold Mountain

- > Brian Moore, Black Robe
- > Paul Theroux, The Mosquito Coast
- > Patrick White, Voss

WILSON, A.N. (Andrew Norman) (born 1950)

British novelist

Wilson's early books (*The Sweets of Pimlico*; *Unguarded Hours*) were comic novels in the style of \triangleright Evelyn Waugh, and just as funny. Then, in the mid-1980s, he began to write more serious books, tragi-comedies about the fears and despair of educated, upper-class people, usually women. Their sad hilarity, and a slightly donnish touch in the writing, are reminiscent of the books of \triangleright Barbara Pym.

LOVE UNKNOWN (1986)

Three women who shared a London flat in the 1960s have gone their separate ways in the twenty years since. One has flitted from man to man like a wind-up butterfly. Another inherited money and has lived a celibate life in Paris. The third has made an 'idyllic' marriage to the man they all once idolized. Now, as the novel begins, adultery is discovered and the three women's lives intersect once more, unstoppably and painfully.

Wilson's tragi-comedies include The Healing Art, Who Was Oswald Fish?, Wise Virgin, Gentlemen in England, the trilogy of Incline Our Hearts, A Bottle in the Smoke and Daughters of Albion and Dream Children. He has also written nonfiction: re-examinations of the life of Christ and St Paul, God's Funeral (about the secularization of Western society in the nineteenth century), The Victorians and biographies of Milton, ▷ Sir Walter Scott, ▷ Tolstoy, Belloc and, most recently, Iris Murdoch.

READ ON

- Dream Children.
- ▶ ▷ Barbara Pym, *A Glass of Blessings*; ▷ Bernice Rubens, *Our Father*; ▷ Muriel Spark, *The Girls of Slender Means*; ▷ Alison Lurie, *Foreign Affairs*.

WILSON, Angus (1913-91)

British novelist and short story writer

Wilson is a post-Second World War successor to the great Victorian novelists. His plots are expansive, his pages teem with characters and his style is pungently satirical. His middle-class heroes and heroines, often members of the professions, have large, quarrelsome families; adultery, homosexuality, shady dealing and the conflict between public and private duty shape their lives. The 'public' plot of *Hemlock and After* (1952) is about a novelist trying to establish a writers' centre in a large, old house; the 'private' plot concerns his anguish about his own homosexuality. *The Old Men at the Zoo* (1961) is a satire set in a future Britain threatened by a united Europe and defeated by its own penchant for replacing

action with committee rhetoric. The heroine of *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot* (1958), unexpectedly widowed, throws off the Home Counties mask and embarks on a raffish odyssey across the world, a quest to find herself. In *Late Call* (1964) another lower-middle-class matron, forced to live with her widowed, unloved son, has to come to terms with the soulless New Town he lives in, a reflection both of his own inner desolation and of the emotional wasteland between them where once was love. *Setting the World on Fire* (1980) is a study of the lives and relationships of two brothers, one a finicky lawyer, the other an experimental theatre director. As well as his novels, Wilson's short stories are much admired. They are sharp anecdotes of emotional ineptness, often involving the clash between middle-aged parents and their children or between ill-matched lovers.

ANGLO-SAXON ATTITUDES (1956)

Gerald Middleton is a rich, successful academic (a historian of Anglo-Saxon England). His personal life is a shambles: he lives apart from his wife, dislikes his children and grandchildren, squabbles with his colleagues and has lost touch with his friends. Faced with the need to accept or reject an important academic task, he begins to think again about the greatest, and oddest, archaeological discovery of his youth fifty years before: an obscene pagan statue in the tomb of a seventh-century Christian missionary. Was it a hoax – and if so, if this is yet another lie on which he has built his life, what can he do now to set things right?

Wilson's other novels are No Laughing Matter and As If By Magic. The Wrong Set, Such Darling Dodos and A Bit Off the Map are collections of short stories.

READ ON

- As If By Magic.
- ▶ to Wilson's novels: > Iris Murdoch, *The Sandcastle*; > Willa Cather, *The Professor's House*; Peter Taylor, *A Summons to Memphis*.
- ▶ to the short stories: > V.S. Pritchett, *The Camberwell Beauty*; Mary Gordon, *Temporary Shelter*.

WINTERSON, Jeanette (born 1959)

British novelist

Several of Winterson's early novels are tart, magic-realist fables which set characters with modern sensibilities in riotously chaotic historical settings: Noah's Ark (filled with grumbling women) in *Boating for Beginners*, the rank back-canals of Venice and the battlefields of Napoleonic France in *The Passion*, the mudflats and brothels of seventeenth-century London in *Sexing the Cherry*. Her more recent books have continued to use all the resources of myth, fairytale and language itself to construct ever more daring and demanding fictions. *The Powerbook* (2000) flits between Capri and Paris, London and cyberspace in a series of interlocking narratives that invite the active participation of the reader in creating its stories.

SEXING THE CHERRY (1989)

The place is London, in the grip of Puritans whose Christian fervour has no truck with compassion or even with simple truth. A giantess known as the Dog Woman

rescues an infant from the Thames, names him Jordan and brings him up until he is apprenticed to the naturalist John Tradescant and starts to travel the world in search of exotic plants. Jordan's dreams of far countries, and of a princess who exists beyond the grasp of gravity, are intertwined, page by page, with his mother's account of her brutal daily life, as fundamentalist to its violent principles as the Puritans she preys on are to theirs.

Winterson's other novels include Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit (about a young girl who escapes a harsh Plymouth Brethren upbringing by asserting her lesbian identity), Written on the Body (a bizarre love story in which the book we are reading is the body, and the body is the book), Art and Lies and Gut Symmetries. Art Objects is a collection of characteristically impassioned essays on writing and writers.

READ ON

- The Passion.
- ▶ Michèle Roberts, The Book of Mrs Noah; ▷ Angela Carter, The Magic Toyshop; ▷ Italo Calvino, 'The Cloven Viscount' (in Our Ancestors); ▷ Iain Sinclair, Radon Daughters.

WINTON, Tim (born 1960)

Australian novelist

Tim Winton is the most admired Australian novelist of his generation, twice short-listed for the Booker Prize, and it is not difficult to see why. He began publishing his fiction when he was in his early twenties (his award-winning first novel, *An Open Swimmer*, was published in 1981) and his books have grown in their ambition and scale ever since. Haunted by the landscape in which he grew up and fascinated by the complex interactions of families and family life, he has written a series of novels that explore Australian lives with an honesty and imagination that few other writers have matched. In *The Riders*, the first of his novels to be up for the Booker Prize, he mixes psychological suspense with a devastating love story in the account of a displaced Australian, unhappily ensconced in Ireland, who sets out to explain the mystery of his wife's disappearance. Powerful, lyrical and emotionally charged, *The Riders* shows clearly why Winton is so highly praised.

DIRT MUSIC (2001)

Set amid the wonderfully evoked landscape of the west coast of Australia, *Dirt Music* is a compelling story of a strange triangular relationship between the widowed owner of a lobster fishery, the woman he lives with and a poacher-cummusician in flight from the tragedies of his past. Half love story, half exercise in Australian gothic, the book provides memorable portraits of three people in thrall to their personal histories yet struggling to reinvent themselves.

Tim Winton's other novels are An Open Swimmer, Shallows, That Eye, the Sky, In the Winter Dark, Cloudstreet, The Riders *and* Blueback.

READ ON

 Cloudstreet (a generous and humane story of two contrasting families in Western Australia and the way their lives intertwine through the years). ► Murray Bail, Eucalyptus; Richard Flanagan, Death of a River Guide; Kate Grenville, The Idea of Perfection.

WODEHOUSE, P.G. (Pelham Grenville) (1881–1975) British novelist

In the 1920s and 1930s Wodehouse wrote Broadway shows, and he once described his novels as 'musical comedy without the music'. There are over a hundred of them, gloriously frivolous romps set in high society 1920s England or among dyspeptic US newspaper magnates and film tycoons. Wodehouse's gormless heroes are in love with 'pips' and 'peacherinos'. Before they can marry they must persuade dragon-like relatives (usually aunts) to give reluctant consent or to part with cash – and the persuasion often involves stealing valuable iewels (to earn undying gratitude when they are 'found' again), smuggling the girl into the house disguised (so that the radiance of her personality will charm all opposition) or blackmail (threatening to reveal embarrassing secrets of the relative's misspent youth). There are two main novel-series, the Jeeves books (in which Bertie Wooster consistently makes an ass of himself, usually by being the fall-guy in Jeeves's machiavellian schemes), and the Blandings books (in which Lord Emsworth's prize pig bulks large). Other books tell of the multifarious members of the Mulliner family and the Drones Club, of golfers, cricketers and incompetent crooks; in all of them the season is high summer, every cloud is lined with silver, and happy endings are distributed 'in heaping handfuls' (to quote Wodehouse's own immortal phrase).

LEAVE IT TO PSMITH (1923)

Before Eve Halliday will marry him, Freddie Threepwood needs £1000 to start a bookmaker's business. He goes to Blandings Castle to ask his father Lord Emsworth. But Lord Emsworth has no access to his own fortune: that route is guarded by Lady Constance Keeble and her sidekick the Efficient Baxter. The plot spirals to include poets who are not everything they seem, stolen jewels, a purloined pig – and above all the machinations of the endlessly, irritatingly goodhumoured Psmith.

Wodehouse's Blandings books include Galahad at Blandings, Heavy Weather, Pigs Have Wings and Uncle Fred in the Springtime. His Jeeves books include Joy in the Morning, Carry On, Jeeves, The Inimitable Jeeves, Jeeves in the Offing, Much Obliged, Jeeves, Right Ho, Jeeves, Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves and The Code of the Woosters. His other novels include Money in the Bank, Uncle Dynamite, The Luck of the Bodkins and Quick Service. The Man Upstairs, The Clicking of Cuthbert, Eggs and Crumpets and Meet Mr Mulliner are short-story collections, and Performing Flea is autobiography.

READ ON

- Summer Lightning.
- ▶ Ben Travers, Rookery Nook (novel version); Richard Gordon, Doctor in the House; Patrick Denis, Auntie Mame. The same kind of gormless farce, transplanted to California, updated to the 1980s and set among incompetent crooks and gangsters is in Donald E. Westlake's Dortmunder books, such as Bank Shot or Who Stole Sassi Manoon?

WOLFE. Thomas (1900–38)

US novelist

Wolfe's life's work was an incoherent, multi-million-word torrent of autobiographical prose, an attempt to make epic fiction of ordinary US life. His models were Normal Number Number > Number that suggests. He and his publishers organized some of the material into two long novels, telling the story of Eugene Gant, a young Carolina writer, from boyhood to first success. The first and most accessible book, Look Homeward, Angel (1929), tells of Eugene's childhood as the youngest member of a sprawling, bickering slum family, of his awakening to culture and of his heart-breaking realization that to 'follow art' he must abandon his family and everything it stands for and chop off his own roots. Of Time and the River (1935) continues the story, following Eugene through college and to Paris, charting his artistic friendships, his learning about sex and love, and his first attempts at writing. After Wolfe's death two other novels. The Web and the Rock and You Can't Go Home Again, were assembled from his manuscripts. They follow another writer, George Weber - an adult version of Eugene Gant - through marriage, divorce, disillusion with the US and hostility to European fascism in the 1930s.

READ ON

▶ John O'Hara, From the Terrace; > Lawrence Durrell, The Black Book; > H.H. Richardson, The Fortunes of Richard Mahony, James Jones, From Here to Eternity.

WOLFE, Tom (born 1931)

US journalist and novelist

The 1960s creator and practitioner of New Journalism (non-fiction writing that ignored traditional attempts at objectivity and impersonality in favour of an exuberant adoption of many of the techniques of fiction), Tom Wolfe had long hinted that he would one day turn his attention to the novel. When The Bonfire of the Vanities finally arrived in 1987 it fulfilled most of the expectations advance publicity had aroused. It is a big and bold novel, attempting to do for 1980s New York what Dickens had done for 1840s London - provide an all-encompassing vision of urban society from its richest citizens to the dwellers in its ghettos. Sherman McCoy is a wealthy Wall Street investment banker, one of the 'Masters' of the Universe', as Wolfe ironically calls him. His life seems an embodiment of the American Dream until, driving his Mercedes through the Bronx, he hits a black pedestrian. From that point dream turns rapidly to nightmare and Sherman is pitched into a world of politicians on the make, sleazy media hacks and the assorted lowlife caught up in a legal system that offers its own strange versions of 'justice'. Alive with satirical observation, peopled by a rich cast of over-the-top characters and narrated in the pyrotechnic language that Wolfe had perfected in his non-fiction, The Bonfire of the Vanities is a highly entertaining study of a status-mad society. It was another eleven years before Wolfe's second novel, A Man in Full, was published in 1998. After such a long wait this story of racial tensions and financial scams in Atlanta seemed something of a disappointment. Painted on the same large canvas as the first novel it none the less lacks the drive and frenetic energy that make The Bonfire of the Vanities one of the best and funniest American novels of the last three decades.

Wolfe's non-fiction books include The Right Stuff (the story of the early years of the American space programme), The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test (classic 1960s account of Ken Kesey, his Merry Pranksters and their bus ride across America), The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby and From Bauhaus to Our House. Hooking Up is a collection of essays that also includes a novella, 'Ambush at Fort Bragg'.

READ ON

- ▶ to the fiction: ▷ Don DeLillo, Underworld; ▷ John Irving, A Prayer for Owen Meany.
- ▶ to the non-fiction: Hunter S. Thompson, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas;

 ▷ Norman Mailer, The Executioner's Song.

WOOLF, Virginia (1882–1941)

British novelist and non-fiction writer

As well as novels, Woolf published two dozen non-fiction books: biographies (one of Flush, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's pet dog), diaries, essays on feminism and on literature. She was fascinated by psychology, and her nine novels set out to show, in prose, the workings of the subconscious mind. Instead of narrating strings of events she lets her characters run on in a streamof-consciousness style which gradually builds a clear picture of their personalities. She tells us the jumble of thoughts and memories in ordinary men and women, and she is particularly good at showing moments of radiant inner happiness. Mrs Dalloway (1925), the interior monologue of a middle-class woman preparing to give a dinner party, reveals her feelings about herself and her past as well as the urgent claims of the coming evening. In To the Lighthouse (1927) a group of adults and children is shown on a summer holiday - the trip to the lighthouse is a promised birthday treat for one of the children - and then in the same place ten years later, when the trip is finally made. Despite war and death in the intervening years, the influence of the dead mother is as strong as in her lifetime. The Waves (1931), Woolf's most complex book, traces six people's reactions to experiences from childhood to maturity, showing how apparently small 'real' past events continue to affect the personality as waves shape and reshape the shore.

Woolf's other novels are The Voyage Out, Night and Day, Jacob's Room, Orlando, The Years and Between the Acts. Haunted House and Mrs Dalloway's Party are collections of short stories.

READ ON

➤ Marcel Proust, Swann's Way (Part One of Remembrance of Things Past);

> Jean Rhys, Good Morning, Midnight; D.M. Thomas, The White Hotel; Dorothy Richardson, Pilgrimage; Anaïs Nin, Seduction of the Minotaur; > Margaret Atwood, Surfacing; Gertrude Stein, Three Lives; > Iris Murdoch, The Sea, The Sea; Michael Cunningham, The Hours (novel that pays homage to Mrs Dalloway while creating its own narrative voices in three interconnected stories).

WYNDHAM, John (1903-69)

British novelist and short story writer

John Wyndham was one of the pseudonyms of John Wyndham Lucas Beynon Harris, who wrote straightforward science fiction and thrillers under the names John Wyndham Parkes and Lucas Beynon. The John Wyndham novels are less science fiction than thrillers, set on Earth, with science fiction overtones: he called them 'logical fantasies'. In *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957) an alien race seeks to colonize Earth not by force of arms but by fertilizing women — and the story begins, in the quiet English countryside (a favourite Wyndham location) as the half-alien children approach puberty. In *Chocky* (1968) a small boy has an invisible confidant — not a figment of his imagination, but a being from outer space. *The Day of the Triffids* (1951) begins with two simultaneous disasters, the sudden blinding of almost all human beings and the growth of enormous, mobile, predatory plants; the novel concerns the hero's attempts to organize resistance and save the human race.

Wyndham's other novels include The Chrysalids, The Kraken Wakes and Trouble With Lichen. His short stories are collected in The Seeds of Time, Consider Her Ways and Web.

READ ON

▶ Bob Shaw, Night Walk; James Herbert, The Magic Cottage; ▷ H.G. Wells, The Time Machine.



READ ON A THEME: YOUNG ADULTS

Lisa Alther, Kinflicks

- > Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End
- > Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister
- Nadine Gordimer, A Sport of Nature
- ▶ Philip Roth, Goodbye, Columbus Charles Webb, The Graduate

See also: Emotionally III-At-Ease: Perplexed by Life: Teenagers

YOURCENAR, Marguerite (1903-88)

French writer

Yourcenar is best known for her novel *Memoirs of Hadrian* (1951), a study of the urbane, civilized man who ruled the Roman Empire in the second century AD. Unlike \triangleright Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*, which is chiefly the tale of an outrageous family power struggle, *Memoirs of Hadrian* is a philosophical autobiography, concerned not only with politics and conquest but with Hadrian's intellectual and emotional growth. It is a quiet, understated book, balancing Hadrian's descriptions of his search for tranquillity of soul with the torments and ecstasies of his passion for the beautiful boy Antinous.

Yourcenar's other novels include A Coin in Nine Hands, Alexis and The Abyss (in which a Flemish scholar wanders Renaissance Europe in search of 'knowledge untrammelled by doctrine').

READ ON

▶ Mary Renault, *The Mask of Apollo*; ▷ Gore Vidal, *Julian*; ▷ Thornton Wilder, *The Ides of March*.

ZOLA, Émile (1840–1902)

French novelist and non-fiction writer

Zola won scandalous fame at twenty-seven with his novel Thérèse Raquin, about a pair of lovers who murder the woman's husband. The book's financial success let him take up fiction full-time, and he began a twenty-novel series designed to show - in a scientific way, he claimed, as species are described - every aspect of late nineteenth-century French life. Although each novel is self-contained, their main characters are all members of the two families which give the series its name, The Rougons and the Macquarts. Zola's scheme echoed ⊳Balzac's in The Human Comedy (La Comedie Humaine), and like Balzac he was interested in exact description, what he called 'naturalism'. But his morbid and pessimistic nature led him to concentrate on the harsher aspects of human existence, so that his characters often seem less like real human beings than the people dragged into sermons to illustrate the effects of drink, lust or poverty. Outside France, Zola's best-known books are Germinal (1885, about conditions in the coalmines, and including a strike and a major accident), Earth (La Terre) (1887, about subsistence farming). The Belly of Paris (Le Ventre de Paris) (1873, about the food markets of the city), The Boozer (L'assommoir) (1871) and For Women's Delight (Pour le bonheur des dames) (1883, about the staff and customers of a department store).

NANA (1880)

The subject is sex. Nana's mother was a country girl who went to Paris to seek her fortune, became a laundress but was destroyed by drink – this is the story of *The Boozer*. Nana grows up as a street urchin, and later becomes an actress and singer. She is beautiful but corrupt, morally brutalized by her childhood. She sets out systematically to destroy men: Zola thinks of her first as one of the Sirens in myth, drawing men irresistibly to her by the beauty of her voice, and then as a spider, preying on them even as she mates with them. He pities neither Nana nor her victims: like his other novels, this panorama of big-city life is painted entirely in shades of black.

Other books in the series include The Human Beast (La Bête humaine) (about the gangs of navvies who built railroads), Money (set among financiers) and The Downfall (Le Débâcle) (a devastating picture of the 1870 Commune and siege of Paris, which Zola saw as a cleansing operation, ridding the city of the corruption which had led to the misery described in his other books). In his last years he finished the first three books of another series, The Four Gospels: their titles are Fertility, Work and Truth.

READ ON

- Thérèse Raquin.
- ► W. Somerset Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest*; Frank Norris, *The Pit*; Theodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*; John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; George Gissing, *New Grub Street*.

INDEX

Bold page numbers indicate main references

A A is for Alibi 120 Aaron's Rod 172 Abbess of Castro, The 268 Abbess of Crewe, The 194. 208, 242, 266 Abe. Kobo 205 Aberystwyth Mon Amour 299 About a Boy 147, 292 Abraham, Pearl 221 Absalom, Absalom! 71, 94 Absent Without Leave 33 Absolute Beginners 180 Absolute Truth 288 Abvss. The 317 Academic Question. An Academic Year 70 Acceptance World, The 226 Accidental Tourist, The 148. Accidental Woman, The 58 According to Mark 178, 289 According to Queeney 18 Accordion Crimes 230 Accordion Dreams 262 Achebe, Chinua 1, 3, 52, 66, 119, 225 Acid Casuals 32 Acid House, The 304 Acid Row 299 Ackroyd, Peter 1-2, 23, 31, 168, 179, 227, 259, 260 Across the River and Into the Trees 135 Act of Passion 259 Act of Terror, An 38 Acts of King Arthur and his Noble Knights, The 268 Actual, The 27 Ada 59, 66, 87, 207 Adam Bede 90, 128 Adam, One Afternoon 45 Adams, Douglas / xviii, 2-3 Adams, Jane 186 Adams, Richard xix, 9, 180 Adebayo, Diran 30 Advancement of Learning, An '74, 141 Adventures of Augie March, The 27, 39, 78, 97, 240

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The 71, 78, 246, 283, 290, 291 Adventures of Roderick Random, The 77 Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The 81, 225 Adventures of Solar Pons, The 81 Adventures of Tom Bombadil. The 279 Adventures of Tom Sawyer. The 53, 107, 290 Advertisements for Myself 190 Aerodrome, The 162 Affair, The 264 Affinity 300 Affliction 261 African Elegy, An 214 African Laughter 178 African Queen, The 98, 103 After Leaving Mr Mackenzie 238, 267 After Many a Summer 149. 306 After Nature 252 After Rain 285 After Shocks 195 After the Quake 205 After Zenda 146, 254 Afterlife. The 293 Afternoon Men 99, 226, 301 Afternoon of a Good Woman Against Nature 114, 231 Age of Grief, The 262 Age of Innocence, The 55, 60, 307 Age of Iron 58 Age of Reason, The 247 Agents and Patients 226 Ageyev, M. 6 Agnes Grey 40 Agnon, S.Y. 261 Agony and the Ecstasy, The 9, 235 Aiding and Abetting Aiken, Joan 13 Ainsworth, Harrison Air and Angels 141

Air and Fire 48 Ake 16 Alain-Fournier 3, 231 Albatross, The 141 Albert Speer 32 Albion 2 Alchemical Marriage of Alistair Crompton, The 23 Alchemist, The xvii, 4 Alcibiades His Armour 122 Alcott, Louisa May xviii, 261 Aldiss, Brian 76, 136, 201, 256, 297, 304 Aleph, The 34 Alexandria Quartet. The 55. 86, 158 Alexis 317 Alfoxden and Grasmere Journals, The 175 Algren, Nelson 6 Ali, Monica 30, 263 Alias Grace 12, 241, 258 Alice's Adventures in Wonderland xiv, xvii Alienist, The 142 All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go 36 All Families Are Psychotic 65 All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes 15 All He Ever Wanted 258 All of Us 49 All Our Tomorrows 62 All Quiet on the Western Front 24, 133, 300 All That Remains 64 All the Conspirators 152 All the Days and Nights 50, 204, 258 All the King's Men 305 All the Pretty Horses 184 All Tomorrow's Parties 112 All-True Travels and Adventures of Lydie Newton, The 261-2, 306 Allan Quartermain 127 Allende, Isabel 3-4, 70, 71, 171, 194, 195, 294 Allingham, Margery 5, 9, 54, 55, 155, 197, 231 Alms for Oblivion 226

Along Came a Spider 125 Alteration, The 7, 237, 242, 296 Alther, Lisa 74, 78, 298, 317 Always Coming Home 173 Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned 203 Amado, Jorge 171, 225 Ambassadors, The 154 Ambler, Eric 6-7, 59, 129, 173, 266, 280 Ambush at Fort Bragg 315 Amelia 97 Amen Corner, The 20 America 115, 160, 162 American Dream, An 190, 199 American Ghosts and Old World Wonders 49 American Notes 77 American Pastoral 28, 242 American Psycho 90, 91 American Tabloid 91, 92 American Tragedy, An 22, 318 Americana 73 Amis, Kingsley 7, 89, 126, 175, 237, 242, 296 Amis, Martin 8, 22-3, 36, 37, 99, 149, 177, 187, 200, 208, 246, 253, 282 Among the Believers 208. 276 Amongst Women 278 Amsterdam 186 Anatomy Lesson, The 243 Ancestral Vices 255 Ancient Evenings 88, 122, **190**, 216 And Gazelles Leaping 210 And Then You Die And Where Were You, Adam? 33 Anderson, Poul 251 Anderson, Sherwood 28, 261 Andric, Ivo 143 Andrzeyewski, Jerzy 274 Angel 274 Angel at my Table, An 16 Angel in Black 92 Angel Pavement 28, 78, 180, 228 Angela's Ashes 16 Angelica's Grotto 89, 144 Angelou, Maya 15, 20 Angels and Insects 44 Angels at the Ritz 274, 285 Angels Flight 61 Angels Weep, The 262

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes 44, 203, 221, 311 Anil's Ghost 215 Animal Dreams 166 Animal Farm xvii, 215–16, Animal-lover's Book of Beastly Murder, The 140 Anita and Me 30, 66, 169 35 Ann Lee's Ann Veronica 28, 303 Anna of the Five Towns 28, 90 Anna Karenina xvii, 219, 279, 282 Anne of Green Gables xvii Annie Dunne 150 Another Country 20, 246 Another Death in Venice 141 Another Fine Myth 3, 228 Another Part of the Wood 18 Another World 24 Answer from Limbo, An 201 Anthills of the Savannah Anthony, Piers 88, 184, 279 Anti-Death League, The Anti-Pope, The Antic Hav 149 Antrim, Donald 19 Antrobus Complete Anv Human Heart 35 Anything We Love Can Be Saved 298 Ape and Essence 149 Apes of God, The 231 Aphrodite 4 Apocalypse Watch. The 181 Apple from Eden, An 62 Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, The 55, 78, 240 Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister, The 78, 192, 283, 317 Apuleius 26 Arabesques 115, 261 Arabian Nightmare, The 220 Arabian Nights, The 22, 127, 234 Arabian Sands 287 Aragon, Louis 55 Arcadia 65 Archangel 129 Archer, Jeffrey « xviii Arden, John 122, 309 Are You Experienced? 111 Area of Darkness, An 208, Argall 211

Aristocrats 32 Aristos, The 106 Armadillo 35, 36, 58 Armance 268 Arms and the Woman 141 Arms of Nemesis 248 Armstrong, Campbell Arnott, Jake 179 Around the World in 80 Days 127 Arrow of God Art and Lies 312 Art Objects 312 Art of Hunger, The 14 Art of the Novel, The Artamonov Affair, The 119 Artemis Fowl xvii Artist of the Floating World, An 102, 137, 152, 155, Artists in Crime 196 Artist's Widow, The 9, 179 As A Man Grows Older 271 As I Lay Dying 94 As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning 16, As If By Magic 311 Ascent of Rum Doodle, The 156 Ash Wednesday 223 Ashenden 266 Ashes and Diamonds Ashworth, Andrea 16 Asimov, Isaac 9-10, 132, 250 Aspects of Love 59 Asprin, Robert 3, 228 Assis, Machado de 171, 196, 271 Asta's Book 236 Astonishing the Gods Astounding Days 56 Asylum 187 At End of Day 138 At Freddie's 100 At Lady Molly's 226 At Mrs Lippincote's 274 At Paradise Gate 262 At Swim-Two-Birds 123, 150, 158, 159, 212, 269 At the Bottom of the River 48 At the Jerusalem 17 Athena 23 Athill, Diana 16 Atkinson, Kate 10-11, 49, 69, 87, 194 Atlantic Sound, The 222 Atomised 91 Atonement 96, 186-7

Atrocity Exhibition, The 21, 43 Attorney, The 125 Atwood, Margaret 11-12. 28, 42, 47, 49, 53, 82, 109, 126, 161, 176, 217, 237, 241, 243, 257, 258, 303, Auchincloss, Louis Auden, W.H. 151, 223 Audrev Hepburn's Neck Auel, Jean M. xvii, 216 August, 1914 148, 264 Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter 233. 294 Auntie Mame 313 Aunt's Story. The 308 Austen, Jane xvii, xviii, 12-**13**, 69, 100, 111, 148, 232, 257, 275 Auster, Paul 13-14, 19, 210 Austerlitz 252 Australia Felix 239 Auto da Fay 303 Autobiopsv 243 Autograph Man, The 263 Automated Alice 211 Autumn Manoeuvres 37 Autumn of the Patriarch. The 196 Avignon quincunx 86 Away 47 Awfully Big Adventure, An 5, 18. 228 Ayesha 127 Ayres, Pam 223 Azzopardi, Trezza B

B is for Burglar 120 Babel, Isaac 261 Babel Tower 44 Babes in the Wood, The Bacchus and Me 188 Bachelor of Arts. The 209 Bachelors, The 266 Bachman, Richard 165 Back When We Were Grownups 258, 291 Backward Glance, A 307 Bad Blood 16, 278 Bad Boy Brawly Brown 203 Bad Company 139 Bad Night is Falling 204 Bafut Beagles, The 286 Bag of Bones 165 Bagombo Snuff Box 296 Bail, Murray 14, 17, 313 Bailey, Hilary 8

Bailey, Paul 17-18, 19, 74, 161 Bainbridge, Bervl 3, 5, 18-19, 100, 142, 167, 187, 194, 228, 243 Baker, Kevin 210 Baker, Nicholson 19, 254 Baker's Bov. The 93 Baldwin, James 20, 25, 78, 112, 172, 202, 246 Balkan Trilogy, The 86, 192-Ballad and the Source. The 92, 176 Ballad of Peckham Rye, The 183, 266, 296 Ballad of the Sad Café. The 22, 71, 95, 185 Ballantyne, R.M. Ballard, J.G. 6, 20-1, 43, 94, 121, 130, 201, 254 Balthazar 86 Balzac, Honoré de 21-2, 79, 89, 100, 192, 268, 269, 279, 310, 318 Bandits 177 Bank Shot 313 Banks, lain (lain M.) 8, 10, **22-3**. 109, 218, 250, 265 Banks, Lynne Reid 12, 153 Banks, Russell 261 Banville, John 23, 235, 278, 288 Barbary Shore 190 Barber, Noel 299 Barchester Towers 288 Barclay, Tessa 62 Bare Bones 213 Barefoot in the Head Baricco, Alessandro 215 Barker, Clive 23, 165 Barker, Pat 24, 96, 300 Barn Blind 262 Barnaby Rudge 77 Barnes, Djuna 112, 214, 267 Barnes, Julian 24-5, 89, 208, 272, 274, 294 Barnes, Linda 120 Barney's Version 28, 240 Baron, Alexander 179 Baron in the Trees, The 45, 66 Barrack-room Ballads 167 Barred Window, The 299 Barren Ground 307 Barrett, Andrea 309 Barrett, Elizabeth 175 Barry, Dave 138

Barry, Desmond 48, 306 Barry, Sebastian 82, 150 Barry Lyndon 275 Barth, John 37, 88, 106. 116, 158, 208, 233, 296 Barthelme, Donald 46, 208 Bartleby, the Scrivener 199 Bartlett, Neil 136, 146 Basil Street Blues 16 Basket Case 138 Bat Tattoo, The 144 Bataille, Georges 254 Bateman, Colin 33, 157 Bates, H.E. 87, 291 Battle for Christabel, The 4, 104, 105, 289 Battle Lost and Won, The Baudolino 88 Baumgartner's Bombay 92 Bawden, Nina 105 Bay of Angels, The 40-1 Be Cool 177 Beach, The 111 Bean Trees, The 165-6. 262, 292 Bear, Greg 56, 251 Bear and the Dragon, The 55-6 Bear Raid, The 102 Bearing the Cross 31 Beast Must Die, The 57 Beastly Tales from Here and There 254 Beau Geste 147 Beauties and Furies, The 267 Beautiful and Damned, The 99, 149 Beauvoir, Simone de 47, 178 Because the Night 91 Bech, a Book 293 Bech is Back 293 Beckett, Samuel 25-6, 213 Beckoning Lady, The 5, 197 Beekeeper's Apprentice, The 81 Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me 261 Beerbohm, Max 26, 83, 156 Beetle, The 225 Before Adam 180 Before She Met Me 24 Beggar Maid, The 204 Beggars Banquet 235 Beginning of Spring, The 100 Behan, Brendan 16

Behind the Scenes at the Museum 11, 194 Behind the Wall 276, 287 Behold the Man 201 Being and Nothingness 247 Being Dead 65 Being There 133 Bel Canto 229 Belgariad Quintet, The 93. 96. 279 Bell, Madison Smartt 8, 188 Bell. The 206 Bell Jar, The 189, 245, 308 Bellamy, Edward 202 Bellarion the Fortunate 81 Bellarosa Connection, The 27 Bellow, Saul 8, 12, 27-8, 33, 39, 47, 54, 78, 97, 158, 161, 201, 221, 240, 269, 271 Bells, The 225 Belly of Paris, The 318 Beloved 202 Belton Estate. The Ben-Hur 148 Ben, in the World 178 Benchley, Peter 98 Bend in the River, A 1, 208 Bend Sinister 207, 216, 265 Beneath the Skin 75 Benito Cereno 199 Bennett, Arnold 28, 82, 83, 90, 101, 112, 275, 304 Bennett, Ronan 3, 166, 201 Benson, E.F. 29, 109 Benson, Peter 116, 272 Berger, John 27, 106 Berger, Thomas 131, 143, 306 Berlin Alexanderplatz 152 Berlin Game 73, 139, 173 Berlin Stories, The 151 Bernanos, Georges 198, 242 Berne, Suzanne 229 Bernhard, Thomas 252 Berryman, John 223 Bertrams, The 288 Best of Friends, The 289 Best of Myles, The 213 10, 136, 250 Bester, Alfred Betrothed, The 148 Bettany's Book 162 Between the Acts 315 Between the Woods and the Water 286 Beyond Belief 208 Beyond the Blue Mountains 179

Beyond the Glass 214, 308 BFG. The xvii Bhowani Junction 284 Big Bazoohley, The 48 Big Bounce, The 177 Big Knockover and other Stories, The 127 Big Nowhere 91 Big Planet 136 Big Sleep, The 51 Big Sur 164 Big Trouble 138 Big Women 302 Bilgewater 3, 24, 308 Bill, the Galactic Hero 129 Billiards at Half Past Nine 33 Billy Budd, Foretopman 62, 199 Bilton 157 Binchy, Maeve 30, 150 Biographer's Tale, The 25, 44 Birchwood 23 Bird of Night, The 18, 141, 189, 245 Birds and Other Stories, The Birds, Beasts and Relatives 15 Birds of America 258 Birds of Passage 189, 243 Birds of Prey 139, 262 Birds of the Air, The 182 Birdsong xvii, 24, 95, 300 Birthday Boys, The 18, 142 Birthstone 206 Bishop's Jaegers, The 255 Bit of a Do, A 27 Bit of Singing and Dancing, A 141, 288 Bit Off the Map, A Biting the Sun 93 Bitter Lemons 86 Bitter Medicine 218 Black Album, The Black and Blue 235 Black as He's Painted 196 Black Beauty xvii Black Beech and Honeydew 196 Black Betty 203 Black Book, The 86, 181, 186, 235, 314 Black Box 153 Black Candle, The 62 Black Cherry Blues 61 Black Dahlia, The 67, 91 Black Dogs 186 Black Easter 118

Black Echo, The 61 Black House (King) 165 Black House, The (Highsmith) 140 Black House, The (Theroux) 80 Black Ice, The 61 Black Lamp, The 144 Black Mischief 301 Black Notice 64 Black Robe 47, 118, 143, 201, 292, 310 Black Swan 209 Black Tower. The 155 Blacker, Terence 8 Blackman, Marjorie (xviii Blackmore, R.D. 40 Blackwater 145 Blackwater Lightship, The 150, 277, 278 Blair, Emma 62 Blake, Michael 306 Blake, Nicholas 57 Blake, Robert 32 Blaming 274, 309 Blanket of the Dark, The 41 Bleak House xvii, 77 Bleeding Hearts 235 Blessing, The 53 Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt, The 287 Blincoe, Nicholas 32-3 Blind Assassin, The 11, 257 Blind Barber, The 67 Blish, James 118 Blishen, Edward 15 Bliss 48, 193 Bliss and Other Stories 167 Blithedale Romance, The 131 Bloch, Robert 69 Block, Lawrence 59, 67, 229, 271 Blood Doctor, The 237 Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West 184-5 Blood Music 251 Blood on the Moon 91 Blood Rain 75 Blood Red Rivers 139 Blood Shot 218 Blood Sport 107 Blood Work 61, 92 Bloody Chamber, The 46, 48 Blott on the Landscape 255 Blow Your House Down Blue Afternoon, The 36 Blue Angel, The 148 Blue at the Mizzen 212

Blue Flower, The 100 Blue Genes 186 Blue Horizon 262 Blue Light 203 Blue Movie 98 Blue World, The 220 Blueback 312 Bluebeard's Egg 12 Blues for Mr Charlie Bluest Eve. The 202 Blyton, Enid xviii Boating for Beginners 29, Boccaccio, Giovanni 22, 234 Bodily Harm 12 Body and Other Stories. The 169 Body Artist, The 73 Body Farm, The 63, 64 Body in the Billiard Room, The 68 Body of Evidence 64 Body Politic 109 Bogarde, Dirk 97 Bolger, Dermot 82, 278 Böll, Heinrich 33, 137, 157 Bolt 107 Bombardiers 200 Bombay Duck 169 Bomber 72-3, 133, 300 Bonaparte's Sons 63 Bone Collector, The 61 Bone People, The 52, 229 Bone Vault, The 64 Bonecrack 107 Bones and Silence 75, 141 Bonfire of the Vanities, The 55, 200, 314 Boniour Tristesse 59 Book and the Brotherhood, The 206 Book of Common Prayer, A Book of Evidence, The 23 Book of Illusions, The 14 Book of Imaginary Beings, The 34 Book of Laughter and Forgetting, The 168 Book of Mrs Noah, The 25. 241, 312 Book of Sand. The 34 Book of the Heathen, The 62, 142, 216 Book of the New Sun, The 79. 93. 251 Booked for Murder 186 Books Do Furnish a Room 226

Books of Corum, The 200 Bookshop, The 100 Boozer, The 318 Border Crossing 24 Borderliners 145 Bored of the Rings 279 Borges, Jorge Luis 34, 45. 46: 123 Born Free 304 Borstal Boy 16 Bostonians, The Boswell, James 31, 174 Bottle-factory Outing 18 Bottle in the Smoke, A 310 Bottoms, The 71, 273 Botton, Alain de 170 Boule de Suif 197-8 Bourne Identity, The 102 Bouvard and Pécuchet 101 Bowen, Elizabeth 34-5, 130, 155, 183, 193, 219, 229, 299 Bowen's Court 35 Bowering, Marilyn 47 Bowles, Paul 3, 47, 215, 309 Bowman, W.E. 156 Box, Edgar 295 Box Garden, The 257 Box Man, The 205 Box of Matches, A Boy Who Followed Ripley, The 140 Boyd, William 3, 7, 35-6, 58, 163, 271, 276, 277, 301 Boyhood 58, 279 Boylan, Clare 30 Boyle, T. Coraghessan Boy's Own Story, A 3, 112, 146 Bracewell, Michael Bradbury, Malcolm 7, 23, **36-7**, 139, 179, 301-2 Bradbury, Ray 132, 217, 251 Bragg, Melvyn 37, 128, 143, 172, 222 Brahms, Caryl Brautigan, Richard 261, 297 Brava, La 177 Brave New World xvii, 42, 109, 149, 216 Brazil 293 Brazilian Adventure 287 Brazzaville Beach 36 Breaker, The 299 Breakfast at Tiffany's 245 Breakfast of Champions 233, 296

Breakfast on Pluto 82 Breakheart Pass 189 Breathing Lessons 257, 291 Brethren, The 125, 181 Brewer, Jeannie 302 Breytenbach, Breyten Brick Lane 30, 263 Bridal Canopy, The 261 Bride of Innisfallen, The 305 Bride of Lammermoor, The Bride of Lowther Fell, The 189 Brideshead Revisited xvii. 64, 301, 305 Bridge, The 22 Bridge of San Luis Rev. The 309 Bridge Over the Drina. The 143 Bridges of Madison County. The 302 Bridget Jones's Diary xvii, 147 Brief Candles 149 Brief Lives 40 Briefing for a Descent into Hell 178 Briest, Effi 274 Bright Lights, Big City 55, 91, 188 Brightness Falls 188, 200, Brighton Rock 124, 198, 214, 217 Brimstone Wedding, The 237 Brin, David 130 Bring the Jubilee 237 Brink, André 37-8, 59, 117, 119, 265 Britannia's Daughters 289 Brite, Poppy Z. 91 British Museum is Falling Down. The 148, 179 Brittain, Vera 15 Broad Highway, The Brodie, Fawn 32 Brodkey, Harold 38-9 Broken Sword, The 251 Bronson, Po 200 Brontë, Anne 39-40 Brontë, Charlotte xviii, 39-40, 69, 84, 111, 112, 214, 302 Brontë, Emily xix, 39-40. Brook Kerith, The 29 Brookmyre, Christopher

Brookner, Anita 4, 40-1, 92, 130, 179, 182, 237, 238, 285, 288 Brooks, Terry 93, 96, 157 Brother of the More Famous 148, 282 Jack Brothers 243 Brothers and Sisters 60 Brothers Ashkenazy, The 261 Brothers Karamazov, The 79.80 Brown, Alan 155 Brown, George Douglas 40 Brown, George MacKay 249 Browning, Robert 175, 223 Brown's Requiem 91 Brunner, John 130 Bryson, Bill 286 Buchan, James 266 Buchan, John 41, 63, 124, 127, 139, 270 Buck, Pearl S. 54, 238 Buddenbrooks 95, 110, 191, 192, 194, 195 Buddha of Suburbia, The 30, 169, 180, 274 Budrys, Algis 56 Bug Jack Barron 251 33, 97 Bukowski, Charles Bulgakov, Mikhail 117 Bulgari Connection, The 302 Bull from the Sea, The Bullet in the Ballet, A 5 Bullet Park 52, 261 Bullfighters, The 190 Bunyan, John 26 Burger's Daughter 117, 265, Burgess, Anthony 29, 42, 70, 108, 122, 143, 144, 158, 170, 206, 216, 217, 242, 277, 283, 301 Burglar Who Thought He Was Bogart, The 59, 67 Burke, James Lee 61, 68, 71, 92, 229 Burke, Jan 213 Burmese Days 215 Burn Marks 218 Burnett, Frances Hodgson XVIII Burney, Fanny 175 Burning Bright 85, 292 Burning Shore, The 262 Burns, Ron 248 Burnt Ones, The 308 Burnt-out Case, A 124 Burr 225, 295 Burroughs, Edgar Rice 295

Burroughs, William S. 6, 21, 43, 76, 164, 253 Burton, Richard 286 Business, The 22 Busman's Honeymoon 247 Butler, Samuel 60, 218, 272 Buyer's Market, A 226 By the Light of My Father's Smile 298 Byatt, A.S. 25, 41, 43-4, 82, 126, 183, 206 Byron, Robert 287 Byron: Selected Letters and Journals 175 Bystander 119 Byzantium Endures 200-1 C is for Corpse 120 Cab at the Door, A 229 Cabal 75 Cabala, The 309 Cabot, Meg XVIII Cack-Handed War, A Cadigan, Pat 66 Cadillac Jukebox 68, 71, 92, 229 Cain, James M. 98, 127 Caine Mutiny, The 133, 257 Cain's Book 6, 43 Cairo Trilogy 189 Cakes and Ale Cal 94 Calder, Richard Caldwell, Erskine 268 California Time 97, 208 Caligula 46 Call for the Dead 173, 249 Call if You Need Me 49 Call It Sleep 28, 39, 172, 210 Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Tales, The 225, 265 Call of the Toad, The 33, 121 Call of the Wild, The 180 Calvino, Italo 17, 34, 45-6, 66, 88, 144, 199, 312 Camberwell Beauty and Other Stories, The 229, 274, 288, 311 Cambridge 48, 221, 222 Camera Obscura 207 Cameron, Jeremy 33 Camomile Lawn, The 305, 306 Camouflage 17 Campbell, John W. 10

Campbell's Kingdom

221, 247

Camus, Albert 28, 46-7, 80,

263

Can You Forgive Her? 110, 264, 288 Canal Dreams 22 Canary in a Cathouse 296 Cancer Ward 264 Candide 272 Candlemass Road, The 108, Candy 133 Candy, Edward 41 Cannery Row 268 Canopus in Argus 178 Canterbury Tales, The 223, 267 Canticle for Leibowitz, A 109, 144, 250, 251, 297 Capital 201, 260 Capote, Truman 245 Captain and the Enemy, The Captain Blood 84, 139, 146 Captain Corelli's Mandolin xvii, 70-1, 96, 300, 302 Captain Horatio Hornblower Captain Pantoja and the Special Service 4 Captain Singleton 72 Captains and the Kings, The 193 Captains Courageous 167 Captive, The 230 Card, Orson Scott 132, 250 Card. The 28, 275, 304 Cardiff Dead 299 Cardinal of the Kremlin, The Carey, Peter xiv, 14, 17, 25, **47-8**, 58, 163, 170, 179, 191, 195, 210, 282, 309 Carmilla 270 Carol 140 Carpe Jugulum 227 Carpentier, Alejo 4, 161, 171, 195 Carr, Caleb 142 100 Carr, J.L. Carr, John Dickson 67, 81, 124 Carrie 117, 118, 165 Carroll, Lewis xvii, 211 Carry On, Jeeves 313 Carter, Angela 4, 5, 11, 12, 46, **48-9**, 109, 171, 195, 220, 241, 244, 246, 267, 272, 301, 312 Carter, P. Youngman Carter, Peter 144 Cartwright, Justin 3, 59, 179

Carver, Raymond 49-50. 53, 204, 205 Cary, Joyce 9, 33, 158, 197, 309 Casanova's Chinese Restaurant 226 Case Book of Sherlock Holmes, The 81 Case of Spirits, A 68 Case of the Gilded Fly, The 5 Cassandra, Princess of Troy 8 Cast Iron Shore, The 85 Castle, The 160, 271 Castle Dangerous 252 Castle Gay 270 Castle of Crossed Destinies. The 45 Castle of Otranto. The 69 Castle of Wizardry 88 Casualty, The 33 Casuarina Tree, The 197 Cat and Mouse 121, 246 Cat Jumps, The 35 Cat Who Walks Through Walls 132 Catalina 197 Catastrophist, The 3, 166, Catch-22 xvii, 94, 131, 132-4, 162, 233, 300 Catcher in the Rye, The xvii, 158, 210, 245, **246**, 274 Cathedral 49 Cathedral Close 288 Cather, Willa **50**, 183, 206, 217, 290, 309, 311 Catholics 201, 242 Catilina's Riddle 248 Cat's Cradle 296, 297 Cat's Eye 11, 12, 53, 243 Cause for Alarm 6 Cause of Death 64 Caves of Steel, The 10 Cefalù 86, 106, 227 Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches. The 290 Celestial Navigation 291 Celestial Omnibus 104 Celibate Season, A 257 Cement Garden, The 19, 186, 187 Centaur, The 53, 218, 245, 246, 249, 293 Certain Age, A 109, 210 Certain Justice, A 155, 248 Certificate, The 261

Cervantes, Miguel de 26, 97, 115, 269, 283 César Birotteau 22 Chabon, Michael 14, 282 Chamber, The 125 Chamber Music 159 Chancer, A 304 Chandler, Raymond 51, 127, 204, 229 Chang, Jung 15, 54 Change for the Better, A 274 Change of Gravity, A 138 Changing Places 37, 126, 179 Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith. The 162, 191 Chaos and Order Chapterhouse of Dune 136 Charade 203 Charioteer, The 236 Charity 73 Charlie and the Chocolate Factory xvii Charlotte Gray 71, 95, 96, 300 Charlotte Mew and her Friends 100 Charmed Life, A 206 Charter to Danger 6 Charterhouse of Parma. The 268, 269 Chase, The 4, 161, 195 Chatterton 2 Chatwin, Bruce 14, 16, 52, 296 Chaucer, Geoffrey 223, 267 Chaudhuri, Amit 150 Checkmate 85 Cheever. John 39. 52-3. 148, 193, 246, 257, 261, Chekhov, Anton 13, 50, 53, 115, 193, 198, 289, 290 Chéri 59 Cherry-Garrard, Apsley 286 Chesterfield, Lord 174 Chesterton, G.K. 34, 57, 81 Chevalier, Tracy 9, 285 Chicago Loop 276 Child in Time, The 186, 272 Child of God 184 Child of Good Fortune, The 184 Child of the Jago, A 197 Childermass 161 Childers, Erskine 41, 280 Childhood 279 Childhood's End Children are Civilians Too 33

Children at the Gate 12, 153 Children of Dune 136 Children of Dynmouth. The Children of Men 109, 155 Children of the Allev 189 Children of the Game 60 Child's History of England, A 77 Child's Plav 191 Chimney-Sweeper's Boy, The 237 Chip-Chip Gatherers, The 48 Chivalry of Crime, The 48, 306 Chocky 141, 316 Choice of Enemies, A 240 Choir, The 179, 233, 289 Chosen People, The 243 Christie, Agatha 54, 124, 155, 284 Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry 213, 282 Christmas Carol, A xvii, 77 Chronicle of a Death Foretold 196 Chronicles of Ancient Sunlight 226 Chronicles of Castle Brass, The 200 Chronicles of the Black Sword. The 200 Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, The 279 Chrysalids, The 109, 316 Churchill 31 Chymical Wedding, The 227 Cider House Rules, The 151, 222, 246, 261 Circle of Friends 30 Citadel, The 299 Citadel of the Autarch, The 251 Cities of the Plain 114, 184, 230 Cities of the Red Night 43 City and the Dogs, The 133. 216, 294 City and the Pillar, The City Life 208 City of Bones 61 City of Glass 13, 65 City of Gold 73, 280 City of Illusions 173 City of Night, The 20 City of the Beasts 4 City Primeval 138, 177 Clan of the Cave Bear xvii, 216

Clancy, Tom **55–6**, 181, 274, 280 Clandestine 91 Clare, John 224 Clarissa 239 Clarissa Oakes 212 Clark, Alan 174 Clarke, Arthur C. 56 227 Clarke, Lindsay Claudius the God 121 Clavell, James 54, 155 Claw of the Conciliator, The Clayhanger 28, 112 Clea 86 Clean Break 186 Clear and Present Danger 55, 181 Clear Light of Day, The 209-Clement, Aaron 9 Cleopatra's Sister 178 Clergyman's Daughter, A Clicking of Cuthbert, The Client, The 125, 232 Clinging to the Wreckage Clock Winder, The 291 Clock Without Hands 185 Clockers 138 Clockwork Orange, A 42. 144, 216, 217 Close Quarters 116 Close Range 230 Close-Run Thing, A 63, 108 Close to Home 82 Close-up 36, 73, 97 Closed Eye, A 40, 179 Closely Observed Trains 284 Closing Time 134, 240 Clouds of Witness 248 Cloudstreet 14, 312 Cloven Viscount, The 45, Clown, The 33, 137 Clowns of God, The Clubbable Woman, A 140 Clutch of Constables 196 Coasting 276 Coastliners 289 Coat of Varnish, A 264 Cocaine Nights 6, 21 Cock and Bull 19, 253 Cockatoos, The 308 Cocksure 240, 306 Cocteau, Jean 60

Code of the Woosters, The Code to Zero 102 Coe, Jonathan 25, 37, 57-8, 98, 248 Coelho, Paulo xvii, 4 Coetzee, J.M. 37, 38, **58-9**, 72, 119, 265 Coffin Dancer, The 281 Cogan's Trade 138 Coin in Nine Hands, A Cold Blood 235 Cold Caller 91 Cold Comfort Farm xvii, 80 Cold Heaven 201 Cold Light 225 Cold Moons, The 9 Cold Mountain 126, 310 Cold Six Thousand, The 91 Colegate, Isabel 27, 102, 193, 296 Coleridge: Darker Reflections 31 Coleridge: Early Visions 31 Colette 3, 59, 114, 305, 307 Colfer, Eoin xvii Collected Works of Billy the Kid. The 215 Collector, The 105, 199 Collector Collector, The 98, 170 Collier, John 253 Collins, Max Allan 92, 229 Collins, Wilkie xix, 225 Colonel's Daughter, The 284 Colony of Unrequited Dreams, The 47 Color Purple, The 71, 298 Colour, The 168, 284 Colour of Blood, The 201 Colour of Magic, The xvii, 3, Come to Grief 107 Comeback 107 Comedians, The 62, 124, Comfort of Strangers, The 22, 114, 117, 186 Comforts of Madness, The 74, 243 Coming from Behind 139, 179 Coming of the Quantum Cats, The 297 Coming Through Slaughter 214-15 Coming Up for Air 216 Commitments, The 81, 246 Commodore, The 212

Common Murder 186 Company of Women. The 303 Company She Keeps, The 92, 238 Complete Enderby, The 301 Complicity 22 Compton-Burnett, Ivy 87, 95, 232, 267 Conclave of Shadows. The 96 Concrete Blonde, The 61 Concrete Island 20 Condon, Richard 7, 59, 73, 133, 161, 281 Confederacy of Dunces, A 134, 158, 161, 246, 269, 282 Confederates 162 Confession, A 279 Confessions of a Justified Sinner 249, 270 Confessions of a Mask 155 Confessions of Felix Krull. Confidence Man, The 70, 78, 97, 131, 191, 192 Confessions of Zeno, The 158, 161, 221, 271 Confidence Man, The 199 Confidential Agent, The 124 Conformist, The 27.1 Coningsby 225, 288 Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, A 290 Connelly, Michael 60-1, 92, 213, 281 Conrad, Joseph 61-2, 80, 118, 125, 142, 181, 199, 209, 217, 257, 266, 275, 308. 309 Conscience of the Rich, The 110, 264 Conservationist, The 117 Consider Her Ways 316 Consider Phlebas 10, 22, 109, 250 Conspiracy of Paper, A 2 Constance 86 Constant Gardener, The Constantine, K.C. 138 Consul's File, The Continent 46, 65, 66 Continental Op. The 127 Conversations at Curlow Creek, The 17, 48, 191 Cook, David 18, 187 Cookson, Catherine 62 Cool Million, A 272, 306 Coonardoo 309

Coonts, Stephen 56 Cooper, Dennis 91 Cooper, James Fenimore 252, 309 Cooper, William 7, 271 Cooperman Variations, The Coover, Robert 14, 34, 282 Copper Peacock, The 236 Coral Island, The 257 Corn King and the Spring Queen, The 8, 123, 236 Cornish Trilogy, The 69-70, 195 Cornwell, Bernard 63, 84. 103, 108, 144, 199, 281, 283 Cornwell, Patricia 63-4, 213 Coroner's Pidgin 5 Corrections, The 187, 293 298 Corregidora Corridors of Power, The 225, 26, 171 Cortazar, Julio Corydon 113 Cosi Fan Tutti 75 Cosmicomics 45 Cosmopolis 73 Cotter's England 267 Cotton Comes to Harlem 20 Count Belisarius 121 Count of Monte Cristo, The xvii, 84, 144 Count Zero 112 Counterfeiters, The 78, 114 Counterlife, The 243 Countess of Charny, The 83-4 Counting House; The 222 Country Ahead of Us. the Country Behind, The 126 Country Girls, The 30, 59, 150 Country of the Blind and Other Stories, The 303 Country of the Pointed Firs. The 50 Coup, The 293, 302 Coupland, Douglas 64-5, 91, 111 Couples 19, 109, 293 Courtenay, Bryce 263 Cousin Bette 22, 192 Cousin Phyllis 112 Cover Her Face 155 Coward, Noel 174 Cowbovs and Indians 82 Cox, Josephine 62 Coyle, Harold 56

Crabwalk 121 Crace, Jim 29, 46, 65-6, 118, 309 Crack in Forever, A 302 Crack in Space. The 76 Crackdown 120, 186 Craig, Amanda 109 Crais, Robert 61 Crampton Hodnett 83, 232, Crane, Stephen 133, 300 Cranford 109, 111 Crash 20, 254 Creation 8, 122, 295 Credo 37, 143 Crèvecoeur, St John de 174 Crewe Train 183, 197, 226 Crichton, Michael 125 Crick, Bernard 32 Crime and Punishment xvii. Crime at Black Dudley, The Crime in the Neighbourhood, A 229 Crime Passionel 247 Crime School 213 Crimson Petal and the White. The 301 Crisis Four 139 Crispin, Edmund Crocodile Bird, The 236 Crocodile on the Sandbank Crofts, Freeman Wills 225 Crome Yellow 149 Cromwell: Our Chief of Men 32 Cronin, A.J. 299 Cronin, Vincent 32 Crooked House, The 54 Cross, Amanda 248 Cross Channel 25 Cross of Fire 281 Cross Purpose 46 Crossing, The 184 Crossing the River 222 Crossroads of Twilight 157 Crow Road, The 22, 218 Crown of Feathers, A 261 Crown of Swords, A 157 Cruel and Unusual 64 Cruel Sea, The 189, 257 Crusoe's Daughter 72, 176 Cruz Smith, Martin 225, Cry of the Halidon, The 181 Cry, the Beloved Country 38, 119, 265

Crying of Lot 49. The 14. 151, 233, 261, 272 Crying Out Loud 187 Crypto-Amnesia Club, The 169 Crystal Frontier. The 66 Crystal Rooms 37 Crystal Singer, The 183, 184 Cuba Libre 177 Cubs. The 294 Cunning Man, The 70 Cunningham, Michael 229, 315 Cupboard, The 284 Curé of Tours, The 22 Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, The 221 Currents of Space, The 10 Curriculum Vitae 266 Curtain of Green, A 305 Cussler, Clive 56, 281 Custom of the Country, The 307 Cuts 36 Cutting Edge 235 Cycle of Violence 33 D is for Deadbeat 120 30, 222, Daffodil Affair, The 5 D'Aguiar, Fred 222, 292 Dahl, Roald xvii, xviii, 115, 225, 257, 265 Dain Curse, The Daisy Miller 154 Dalkey Archive, The 213 Damia 184 Damiano 79

Dabydeen, David Dalrymple, William 286 Damia's Children 184 Damnation Game, The 23. Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem 2, 168 Dance at the Slaughterhouse, A 229 Dance Dance 205 Dance in the Sun, A 265 Dance of the Happy Shades 204, 257 Dance to the Music of Time, **226**, 231 Dancers at the End of Time, The 201 Dancing Girls 12 Danger Tree, The 89, 193 Dangerous Ages 183

Day of the Jackal, The 105, Death of Artemio Cruz, The Dangerous Calm 274 171 Dangerous Fortune, A 102 98. Death of Faith. The Day of the Locust. The Dangling Man 27 Death of Ivan Illich, The 279 Daniel Deronda 90, 115 306 Death of the Heart, The Daniel Martin 105, 173, 243, Day of the Triffids, The **5**, 130, 183 Day We Got Drunk on Cake, Death to the French 103 Danielewski, Mark Z. 165 The 229, 285 Danube 252, 287 Davdreamer. The 187 Death Under Sail 264 Death Watch 124 D'Arconville's Cat 158 Daysman, The 37 Darcv's Utopia 303 Dayton and Daughter 62 Death's Jest-Book 141 de Bernières, Louis xvii, 9, Deathworld I 129 Dark, Eleanor 158 **70-1**, 96, 171, 180, 294, Deathworld II 129 Dark-Adapted Eye, A Deathworld III 129 Dark and Hungry God Arises. 300, 302 de Haan, Tom 184 Deaver, Jeffery 61, 281 A 79 Debits and Credits Dark as the Grave Wherein my De Vries, Peter 42, 53, 109 167 Friend is Laid 181 Dead and Buried 229 Debt of Honour 55 Dark Journey. The 198 Dead Babies 8, 253 Debt to Pleasure, The Dead Beat 186 25, 98, 170 Dark Labyrinth, The 86, 106. Dead Birds 229 Decameron 22, 234 Dark Places of the Heart 267 Dead Cert 106 Deceiver, The 105 Dark Room, The 237, 299 Dead Lagoon 67, 75 Deception 243 Dark Side of the Street, The Dead Man in Deptford, A 42 Decline and Fall 26, 249, 139 Dead Man Leading 229 301 Dark Spectre 75 Dead of Jericho, The 74 Dedicated Man, A 35 Dark Star Safari 276 Dead School, The 187, 242 Deep Blue Goodbye, The 51 Dead Souls 115, 235, 269, Dark Tower, The 165 Deep Six 56 Darkness and Day 60 283 Deer Park, The 190 Darkness at Noon 216, 225, Dead Wrong 186 Defence, The 207 247, 265 Deadeye Dick 296 Defending Billy Ryan 138 Darkness at Sethanon, A 96 Deadlock 218 Defoe, Daniel 71-2, 118, Darkness Comes 165 Deadwood 306 256, 257 Darkness More Than Night, Deane, Seamus 150, 278 Deighton, Len 7, 36, 72-3, A 61 97, 101, 129, 133, 139, Dean's December, The 27, Darkness Visible 116, 309 201 173, 237, 280, 300 Déjà Dead 64 Darling Buds of May, The Dear Me 16 87, 291 Death and the Dancing Delany, Samuel R. Daudet, Alphonse 291 Footman 124 DeLillo, Don 14, 73-4, 92, Daughter of Fortune 4 Death at the President's 151, 190, 315 Daughter of Regals 79 Lodging 57 Delta of Venus 254 Daughter of the Empire 96 Death Comes for the Delta Wedding 27, 64, 71, Daughter of the River 54 Archbishop 50, 217, 309 185, **305** . Daughter of Time, The 68 Death in China, A 138 DeMille, Nelson 102 Death in Ecstasy 196 Daughters and Sons 60 Demolished Man, The Daughters of Albion 310 Death in Holy Orders 155 Demon Lover, The 35, 229 Daughters of Cain, The 74 Death in Summer 201, 285 Denis, Patrick 313 Daughters of the House 240 Death in the Afternoon 135 Deptford Trilogy, The 69 David Copperfield xvii, 77, Death in the Andes 294 Dereleth, August 81 78 Death in the Fifth Position Desai, Anita 92, 150, 209 Davidson, Lionel 7, 153 Desert of Love, The 198 Davies, Linda 200 Death in Venice 192 Desire and Pursuit of the Davies, Lindsey 9, 142, Death Is Not the End Whole, The 114 248 Death Is Now My Neighbour Desolation Island 212 Davies, Robertson 5, 36, 47, 74. 141 Despair 8, 80, 207, 214 **69–70**, 118, 139, 151, 158, Death of a Dude Desperadoes 185, 306 171 Death of a Ghost 5, 9 Destination: Morgue 91 Davies, Russell 174 Death of a River Guide 313 Destiny of Natalie 'X' and Other Dawson, Janet 218 Death of a Train 225 Stories, The 36 Day of Creation, The 21 Death of an Expert Witness Details of a Sunset 207 Day of Reckoning 139 Devastating Boys, The 274

Devices and Desires 155 Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton 32 Devil in a Blue Dress 68. 203, 204 Devil Tree, The 161 Devil's Advocate. The 242 Devil's Alternative. The 105 Devil's Larder, The 65 Devil's Mode, The 42 Devils of Loudon, The 131-2 Devil's Valley 38 Dexter, Colin 67, 74, 141. Dexter, Pete 306 Dharma Bums, The 164 Dhondy, Farrukh 169 Dialogues of the Dead Diamant, Anita 29 Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories. The 53 Diamonds are Forever 101 Diaries of Kenneth Williams, The 174 Diary of a Country Priest, The 198, 242 Diary of a Nobody, The 156, 210 Diary of an Ordinary Woman Diary of Anne Frank, The 174 Diary of Antoine Roquentin, The 247 Diary of John Evelyn 175 Diary of Samuel Marchbanks. The 70 Diaz, Junot 257 Dibdin, Michael 67, 75 Dick, Philip K. 21, 75-6, 109, 113, 237 Dickens 1 Dickens, Charles xiv, xvii, xviii. 5, 22, 25, 76-7, 78, 79, 100, 111, 112, 136, 148, 165, 210, 248, 268, 275, 314 Dickinson, Emily 223 Dickson, Carter 203 Dickson, Gordon R. 10 Didion, Joan 82 Died in the Wool 196 Difficulties with Girls Diggers 227 Digger's Game, The 138 Digging to Australia 3, 4 Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant 246, 291, 293 Dinosaur Planet 184

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Don Quixote 26, 97, 115, Agency 3 Dirt Music 48, 312 Dirty Tricks 75 Disenchanted, The 33 Disgrace 58, 265 Diski, Jenny 29, 41, 89, 306 Disorderly Knights, The 85 Dispossessed, The 173, 176 Disraeli 32 Disraeli, Benjamin 90, 165, Distant Likeness, A 17 Distant Shore, A 222 Diversity of Creatures, A 167 Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood 71 Divorcing Jack 157 Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye, The 44 Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 76, 113 Dobbs, Michael 225 Döblin, Alexander 152 Dobyns, Stephen 4, 107, 195 Dr Adder 76 Doctor Brodie's Report Doctor Copernicus 23 Doctor Criminale 36 Doctor Faustus 191, 199, 206 Doctor Fischer of Geneva 124 Dr Haggard's Disease 187 Doctor in the House 139. Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde 254, 270 Dr No 101 Doctor Sax 164 Doctor Slaughter 276 Doctor Thorne 288 Doctor Zhivago 200, 219, 282, 283, 302 Doctorow, E.L. 74, 210, 306 Doctor's Wife, The 201, 201, 238 Documents Relating to the Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire 178 Dog Soldiers 190 Dog Years 121 Dogs of War, The 105 Doherty, Paul 88 Dolores 60 Dolores Claiborne 165 Dolphins of Pern, The 184 Dombey and Son 22, 77

269, 283 Donaldson, Stephen 77-9. 93, 279 Donkey Work 15 Donleavy, J.P. 139, 158, Donne, John 223 Donoghue, Emma 112, 301 Don't Ask 60 Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight 16 Don't Look Now and Other Stories 84 Don't Read This Book If You're Stupid 98 Don't Tell Alfred 26 Doolittle, Hilda 122, 309 Dope Priest, The 32 Dopefiend 6 Dorian 253 Dos Passos, John 231 Dosadi Experiment, The 136 Dostoevsky, Fyodor xvii, 79-80, 119, 181, 227, 265, 283 Double Act xvii Double Fold 19 Double Indemnity 98, 127 Double Jeopardy 181 Double Tap, The 56 Double Tongue, The 8, 116 Double Vision 24 Double Whammy 60, 138, Douglas, Colin 255 Douglass, Frederick 15 Dove's Nest, The 193 Doves of Venus, The 193 Down Among the Women 302 Down and Out in Paris and London 215 Down by the River Where the Dead Men Go 33, 68 Downfall, The 282, 318 Downriver 2, 180, 201, 211, 259-60 Doyle, Arthur Conan 67, 80-1, 93, 124, 146, 225, 270, Doyle, Roddy 27, 53, 81-2, 87, 150, 158, 246 Drabble, Margaret 44, 82-3, 90, 105, 178 Dracula 220, 256, 270 Dragon 281 Dragon Apparent 287 Dragon in the Sea, The

Dragon Reborn, The 157 Dragondrums 184 Dragonflight 93, 136, 184 Dragonquest 184 Dragonriders of Pern, The 176 Dragonsinger 184 Dragonsong 184 Dream Children 310 Dream Life of Balso Snell, The 162, 306 Dream of John Ball, A 202 Dream Stuff 191 Dreamboat 138 Dreamcatcher 165 Dreaming and Scheming 169 Dreaming in Smoke Dreamings 34 Dreamland 210 Dreiser, Theodore 22, 28, 198, 318 Drenai Sagas 96 Dress Lodger, The 301 Dressing Up for the Carnival Dressmaker, The 18 Driver's Seat, The 266 Droll Tales 22 Drop City 261 Drought, The 130 Drown 257 Drowned World, The 20 Drowning Pool, The 51, 127, Dry White Season, A 38, 59 Du Maurier, Daphne xviii, 40, 69, **84**, 105, 141, 200, 220, 302 Du Maurier, Gerald 256 Dubin's Lives 243 Dubious Legacy, A 288 Dubliners 55, 157, 159, Dubus, Andre 39, 49, Ducdame 227 Duel and other stories, The Duffv 25 Duffy, Carol Ann 223 Duffy, Maureen 201, 260 Duke's Children, The 288 Duluth 295, 296 Dumas, Alexandre xvii, 81, **83-4**, 139, 144, 148, 235, Dunant, Sarah 218 Duncton Wood 9 Dune xvii, 136

Dune Messiah 136 Dunmore, Helen 24, 64, 84-5, 204, 231, 257, 292 Dunne, John Gregory 97, 138 Dunnett, Dorothy 85, 235 Dunster 203 Duplicate Kevs 262 Durrell, Gerald 15, 86, 286 Durrell, Lawrence 55, 86 89, 105-6, 158, 181, 227, 309, 314 Dürrenmatt, Friedrich 259 Dusklands 58 Dusty Answer 176, 308 Dvořák in Love 206 Dwarves of Death, The 58 Dving Animal, The 242 Dynasts, The 128 E is for Evidence 120 Eagle Has Flown. The 139 Eagle Has Landed, The 105, 139 Early in Orcadia 216 Earth 130, 318 Earthly Possessions 291 Earthly Powers 42, 158, 170, 242, 277 Earthsea Quartet, The 93, 173-6 Earthwind 56 East of Eden 267 East of the Mountains 126, 237 East, West 244 Easterman, Daniel 280 Easy Meat 74 Eating People is Wrong 7, 36, 301-2 Ebony Tower, The 35, 106 Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli, The 266 Echo, The 140, 299 Echoes 30, 150 Echoes of Yesterday 62 Echoing Grove, The 176 Eclipse 23, 278, 288 Eco, Umberto 87-8, 116, 199, 211, 235, 269 Ecstasy 304 Ecstasy Club, The 65 Eddings, David 79, 88, 93, 96, 279 Eden Close 258 Edge, The 107 Edge of Danger 139 Edible Woman, The 12, 82

Edith's Diary 140 Edric, Robert 62, 142, 216 Edward Burne-Jones 100 Edwardians, The 102 Effi Briest 318 Egan, Greg 66 Eggers, Dave 65 Eggs and Crumpets 313 Egyptian Cross Mystery, The 271 Eidson, Thomas 306 Eight Months on Ghazzah Street 193 1876 295 Eighth Day, The 121, 309 Einstein's Monsters Ekman, Kirstin 145 Elders and Betters 60 Elected Member, The 243 Elective Affinities 114, 115 Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, The 315 44 Elementals Elephant and Other Stories 49 Elephant Song 281 Eleven 140 Eliot, George xviii, 60, 82, 83, 89-90, 92, 111, 115, 128, 165, 172, 227, 269, 282, 307 Eliot, T.S. 223 Elizabeth Alone 285 Ellis, Alice Thomas 19, 182, 194, 206, 233, 266, 303 Ellis, Bret Easton 6, 90-1, 188, 245 Ellis, H.F. 156 Ellison, Ralph 20, 159, 298 Ellmann, Richard 31 Ellroy, James 54, 67, **91–2**, Elphinstone, Margaret 143 Elric 251 Elvissev 251 Embers 252 Emigrants, The 23, 252 Emma xvii, 13, 275 Emotionally Weird 11, 194 Emperor's Babe, The 30 Emperor's Snuff Box, The 81 Empire 295 Empire of the Sun 21, 94 Empire Trilogy 96 Enchanter's Endgame 88 Encounters 35 End of the Affair, The 124 End of the Chapter 110

End of the Road, The 37 Enderby's Dark Lady 42, 70, Ender's Game 132, 250 Endgame 26 Ending Up 7, 89 Endo, Shusako 155, 216 Enduring Love 25, 152, 186 Endzone 73 Enemies, a Love Story 260 Enemy of God 63 Engel, Howard 47, 229 Engineer of Human Souls. The 169 England, England 25 England, My England 172 Englander, Nathan 257 English Assassin, The 200 English Music 2, 227 English Passengers 48, 87, 136, 167-8, 216, 241 English Patient, The 98, 215 English Teacher, The 101, 152, 209, 214 Enigma 129 Enigma of Arrival, The 87, 208, 209, 296 Enright, D.J. Enter a Murderer 196 Envoy from Mirror City, The 16 Eon 56 Epitaph for a Spy 6, 266 Epitaph of a Small Winner 171, 196 Equal Music, An 206, 254 Equal Rites 227 Erdrich, Louise 166 Erewhon 272 Erik Bright-eyes 127 Errol Flynn Novel, The 58 Error of Judgement 264 Erskine, Barbara 84 Espedair Street 22 Esquivel, Laura 71 Essential Gesture, The 117 Estate, The 260 Estleman, Loren D. 68, 229 Et nunc manet in te 114 Eternal Moment, The 104 Ethan Frome 50, 80, 128, 268, 307 Eton Crop 225 Eucalyptus 14, 17, 313 Eugenides, Jeffrey 229, 273 22 Eugénie Grandet Europeans, The 66 Eustace and Hilda 53, 130 Eustace Diamonds, The 288

Eva Luna 4, 294 Eva Trout 35, 155 Evangelista's Fan 284 Evanovich, Janet 60, 67, 120 Evans, Nicholas 302 Evaristo, Bernardine 30 Evelyn, John 175 Evening Class 30 Evenings on a Farm 115 Ever After 23, 272 Everlasting Story of Nory, The 19 Every Man for Himself 18, 100 Everything You Need 163 Evidence of Things Not Seen Evil Cradling, An 16 Excalibur 63 Excellent Women 13, 232, 274 Excession 22 Executioner's Song, The 189-90, 315 Executive Orders 55 Exile and the Kingdom 46 Exit Lines 237 Exodus 153 Expedition of Humphry Clinker, The 269 Experience 8, 15 Experiment in Love, An 266 Expletives Deleted 49 Exquisite Corpse 91 Extinction 252 Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven 290 Eye in the Door, The 24, 96 Eye in the Sky 76 Eve of the Fleet, The 103 Eye of the Needle 102 Eye of the Storm, The 308 Eye of the World, The 88, 156-7 Eveless in Gaza 114, 149 Eyre Affair, The 3, 228 F is for Fugitive 120 Faber, Michel 301 Face of Trespass, The 236 Face on the Cutting Room Floor, The 14

Faces in the Water

Facial Justice 149

Autobiography, The 243

Facts: a Novelist's

189, 308

Fahrenheit 451 217, 251 Fair Exchange 240-1 Fairly Dangerous Thing, A 141 Fairstein, Linda 64 Faith 73 Falcon Flies, A 127, 262 Falconer 52 Falkner, J. Meade 270 Fall, The 28, 46, 47, 80, 221 Fall of Moondust, A 56 Fall of the House of Usher, The 221 Falling 44 Falling Angel 68 Falling out of Cars 211 Falling Slowly 40 Fallon, Martin 139 Falls, The 141, 235 Falstaff 171 Fame is the Spur 225 Family 141 Family and a Fortune, A 267 Family and Friends 4 Family Arsenal, The 276 Family Matters 209 Family Moskat, The 189, 192, 194, 195, 260, 282 Family Sins 285 Famished Road, The 1, 3, 214 Fanatic, The 270 Fanny and the Monsters 179 Far Cry from Kensington, A 266 Far From the Madding Crowd xvii, 128, 238 Far Pavilions, The 104, 200 Far Side of the World, The Farewell, My Lovely 51, 204, 229 Farewell to Arms, A 135, 219, 283, 300 Farina, Richard 261 Farley, Paul 224 Farmer, Philip José 136, 251 Farmer Giles of Ham 279 Farnol, Jeffery 84 Farrell, J.G. 87, 93-4, 108, 136, 150, 167, 168 Farrell, James T. 268 Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, The Farthest Shore, The 176 Fast, Howard 98 Fat Man in History, The

Fat Woman's Joke, The 302

Fatal Englishman, The 96 Fatal Inversion, A 140, 187, 236, 299 Father and his Fate. A 60 Father and Son 16 Father Brown Stories, The 81 Fatherland 73, 129, 237 Fathers and Sons 218, 283, 289-90 Father's Music 82, 278 Fatlands 218 Faulkner, William 4, 71, 94-**5**, 185, 268, 304 Faulks, Sebastian xvii, 24, 71. 95-6. 300 Favoured Child, The 84 Favours 243 Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 315 Fear Is the Key 189 Fear Itself 204 Fear of Flying 221 Fear of the Dark Fearless Jones 204 Feast of Lupercal, The 201 Feast of the Goat, The 171. 294 Feast Unknown, The 251 Feeding Frenzy 253 Feeding the Ghosts 222, Feet in Chains 299 Feet of Clav 227 Feinstein, Elaine 172, 253 Feist, Raymond E. xviii, 93, 96, 279 Felicia's Journey 285 Felix Holt 90 Felix in the Underworld 203 Fell, Alison 85 Female Friends 302 Female Man, The 251 Fen Tiger, The 62 Fer-de-Lance 271 Fermata, The 19 Fermor, Patrick Leigh 286 Fertility 318 Fever Pitch 147 Fever Tree, The 236 Feynman, Richard 16 Fez of the Heart, A 287 Fforde, Jasper 3, 228 Fiancé and other stories, The Fictions 34, 46 Fielding, Helen xvii, 147 Fielding, Henry 72, 77, 97, 239, 291

Fiesta 9, 135 Fifth Business 70 Fifth Child, The 117, 178 Fifth Elephant, The 227 Fifth Queen, The 102 Fifty-minute Hour Fig Eater, The 273 Fight Club 91 Fillets of Plaice 15 Filth 304 Final Addiction, The 161 Final Edition 186 Final Passage, The 222 Final Programme, The 200. Financial Expert, The 209 Finding a Girl in America 49 Fine, Anne 4, 24 Fine Balance, A 150, 254 Fingersmith 300–1 Finnegans Wake 26, 157, 159 Finney, Patricia 42 Firbank, Ronald 8, 60, 266 Fire Down Below 116 Fire From Heaven 236 Fire Next Time, The Firedrake's Eye 42 Fireflies 209 Firefly Summer, The 30 Fires 49 Fires of Heaven, The 157 Fireworks 49 Firm, The 125 First Circle, The 264 First Love and Other Sorrows First Love, Last Rites 163, 187 First Man, The 46 First Man in Rome, The 142, First Men in the Moon, The 56, 295, 303 Fischer, Tibor 58, 98, 170 Fish in the Water, A 294 Fisher King, The 226 Fist of God, The 56, 102. 105 Fitzgerald, F. Scott xvii, 8, 53, 97, 99, 149, 181, 188 Fitzgerald, Penelope 83, 99-100, 141 Five Boys 108 Five Quarters of the Orange Five Year Sentence, A 243 Fixer, The 115, 261 Fixx 8

Flag on the Island, A 208-9 Flanagan, Mary 82, 206 Flanagan, Richard 313 Flanders Panel, The 9, 108 Flash for Freedom 107 Flashman 84, 107, 144, 253 Flashman and the Angel of the Lord 107 Flashman and the Dragon Flashman and the Mountain of Light 107 Flashman and the Redskins Flashman and the Tiger 107 Flashman at the Charge 107 Flashman in the Great Game Flashman's Lady 107 Flaubert, Gustave 90, 92, **100-1**, 192, 198, 216, 239, 282, 289, 290, 294 Flaubert's Parrot 24, 208, 294 Flaws in the Glass 308-9 Flax of Dream, The 231 Fleming, lan 101, 172 Fleming, Peter 287 Flesh and Blood 61, 195, 240, 299 Fletch 60 Flicker 97 Flies, The 247 Flight from the Enchanter. The 114, 206 Flight of the Maidens, The Flight of the Stone Angel 213 Flight of the Storks, The 105 Flounder, The 120, 121 Flowers and Shadows 214 Flowers for Algernon 251 Flowers for the Judge Fludd 194 Fly Away, Peter 191 Flying Colours 103 Flying Dutch 250 Flying to Nowhere 199 Foden, Giles 3, 94 Foe 58, 72 Folding Star, The 9, 146 Folks Who Live on the Hill, 7 The Follett, Ken xviii, 102, 139, 281 Foma Gordeev 119, 217, Fontane, Theodor 274, 318 Food of the Gods, The 303

Fool's Alphabet, A 95 Fools Die 232 Fools of Fortune 285 Football Factory, The 304 For Esmé, with Love and Squalor 245 For Kicks 107 For Love Alone 107, 267 For the Relief of Unbearable Urges 257 For Want of a Nail 37 For Whom the Bell Tolls 135, 190, 300 For Women's Delight 318 For Years Now 252 Forbes, Colin 139, 181, 281 Forbidden Knowledge 79 Ford, Ford Madox 102, 247, Ford. Richard 49 Foreign Affairs 182, 292, Foreman, Amanda Forester, C.S. 63, 98, 102-3, 144, 212, 283 Forrest, Kate 186 Forrest Gump 98 Forster, E.M. 13, 64, 66, 92, 103-4, 130, 150, 155 Forster, Margaret 4, 24, 89, **104-5**, 142, 179, 189, 218, 241, 289 Forsyte Saga, The 4, 110, 200, 288 Forsyth, Frederick 56, 102, **105**, 129, 139, 145, 266 Fortune of War, The 212 Fortunes of Nigel, The 252 Fortunes of Richard Mahony, The 178, 239, 309, 314 Fortunes of War 192, 283 Fortune's Rocks - 258 Forward the Foundation 10 Foster, Alan Dean 88 Foster, David 14 Foucault's Pendulum 87 Found in the Street 140 Foundation 10, 132 Foundation and Earth 10 Foundation and Empire 10 Foundation Saga, The 10 Foundation's Edge 10 Four Bare Legs in a Bed 258 Four-Dimensional Nightmare, The 21 Four Forsyte Stories 110 Four-gated City, The 177 Four Gospels, The 318 Four Just Men, The 225

Four Letters of Love 278 Four Quartets 223 Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien, The 4 Fourth Hand, The 151, 205 Fourth Protocol. The 105. 266 Fourth Street East 246, 259 Fowler, Christopher 253. Fowles, John xviii, 35, 86, **105-6**, 117, 128, 158, 173, 199, 210, 243, 276 Fox Evil 299 Fragrance of Guavas, The 196 Fragrant Harbour 54, 87, 152, 170 Frame, Janet 16, 189, 308 Framley Parsonage 288 Francis, Dick 106-7 Francome, John 107 Frank, Anne 174 Frankenstein 221 Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus 255-6 Frankenstein Unbound 256 Frankie & Stankie 284 Franklin, Miles 3, 14, 47, 107, 246 Franny and Zooey 74, 245 Franzen, Jonathan 187, 293 Fraser, Antonia 32 Fraser, George MacDonald 84, 107-8, 144, 146, 232, Fraternity 110 Frayn, Michael 9, 53, 93, 108, 149, 157, 202, 237, Frazier, Charles 126, 310 Freaky Deaky 177 Free Fall 116 Free Fishers. The 41 Freedom's Challenge 184 Freedom's Choice 184 Freedom's Landing 184 Freedom's Ransom 184 Freeling, Nicolas 259 French, Nicci 75, 85, 237, 299 French, Patrick 32 French Lieutenant's Woman. The 106, 128, 210 Frenchman's Creek 84 Fresh Air Fiends 276 Freud, Emma 53, 218 Freud, Esther 11, 64, 111, 179

Frewin, Anthony 180 Friend from England, A 40 Friend of Kafka, A 261 Friends and Heroes 193 Friends of Eddie Coyle, The 138 Friends of My Youth 47, 204 Fringe of Leaves, A 14, 143, 195, 257, 308, 309 Frisch, Max 161 Frisk 91 From a Buick 8 165 From a View to a Death From Bauhaus to Our House 315 From Doon with Death 236 From Heaven Lake 254 From Here to Eternity 314 From Potter's Field 64 From Russia With Love 101 From the Diary of a Snail 121 From the Earth to the Moon 295 From the Terrace 314 Frost, Robert 223 Frost in May 3, 239, 242, 246, 307, 308 Fruit of the Lemon Frv. Stephen 237 Fuentes, Carlos 52, 66, 122, 171, 195, 196, 235 Fugitive. The 230 Full Tilt: Ireland to India on a Bicvcle 287 Fuller, Alexandra 16 Fuller, John 199 Fullerton, Alexander 139 Funeral Games 236 Funeral in Berlin 73 Furst, Alan 129, 266, 280 Fury 244 Fyfield, Frances 237, 299 G 106 G is for Gumshoe 120, 229 Gabriel's Gift 169 Gabriel's Lament 17-18 Gaddis, William 233 Gaglow 11, 64 Galahad at Blandings 313

Galápagos 121, 195, 257, 296 Galaxies Like Grains of Sand Galbraith, Douglas 143 Gale Warning 189 Gallico, Paul 9, 257 Galloway, Janice 163, 189

Gallowglass 236 Galsworthy, John 4, 110, 200, 288 Gambler, The 79, 119 Gambling Man, The 62 Game, The 44 Game for Heroes, A Game of Kings, The Game of Thrones, A 93, 157 Gap 79 Gap Creek 80 Gardam, Jane 3, 24, 72, 100, 130, 176, 243, 285, 308 Garden of Rama, The 56 Garden of the Villa Mollini, The 284 Garden-Party and Other Stories, The 193, 229 Gardner, John 101 Gargantua 26, 131, 171, 234, 269 Garland, Alex 111 Garnethill 235 Garnett, David 59 Garrick Year, The 82, 105 Garrow, David J. 31 Gary, Romain 180 Gaskell, Mrs 13, 39, 55, 90, 109, 111-12, 128, 210 Gate of Angels, The 83, 100, 141 Gates of Fire 8 Gates of Ivory, The 82 Gather Together in My Name 15 Gaudy, The 83 Gaudy Night 83, 247, 248 Gay Decameron, The 112 Gayle, Mike 147 Gee, Maggie 303 Gemini 85 Gemini Contenders, The 181 Gemmell, David 96 General in His Labyrinth, The 171, 196, 294 Generation X 64, 91, 111 Genet, Jean 20, 119 Genetrix 198 Genius and the Goddess. The 149 Gentleman of France 84 Gentlemen at Gyang Gyang 107 Gentlemen in England 310 Gentlemen Prefer Blondes 99 George, Margaret 14, 85 George, Peter 133

George Orwell: A Life 32 Georgiana. Duchess of Devonshire 32 Georgy Girl 104, 179 Germinal 112, 318 Gertrud 115, 137, 206 Gertrude and Claudius 293 Gesture Life, A 152 Get Shorty 97, 177 Gettin' Merry Like Christmas 15 Getting of Wisdom, The 14. 206, 238-9, 249 Ghose, S.N. 210 Ghost Country 218 Ghost of Thomas Kempe, The 178 Ghost Road, The 24, 96, 300 Ghost Stories of an Antiquary 225 Ghost Story 165 Ghost Town 14 Ghost Writer, The 243, 293 Ghosting 58 Ghosts 13, 23 Giant O'Brien, The 19, 143, 194, 241 Giant's House, The 185, 230 Gibbon, Lewis Grassic 112, 249 Gibbons, Stella xvii, 80 Gibson, William xiv, 65, 66, 112-13, 205, 210, 211 Gide, André 59, 78, 113-14, 137, 161, 269 Gift, The 207 Gift of Stones, The 65, 66 Gilbert, Martin Gilchrist, Ellen Gildenfire 79 Giles Goat-boy 116, 158, 208 Gilgamesh the King 216 Gilman, Charlotte Perkins 189 Gimpel the Fool 261 Ginger Man, The 139, 158, Ginger, You're Barmy 179 Giotto's Hand 75 Giovanni's Gift 187 Giovanni's Room 20, 112 Gipsy's Baby, The 176 Girl at the Lion d'Or, The 95 Girl from the South 289 Girl with a Pearl Earring 9, 285 Girlfriend in a Coma 64-5 Girls in Love xvii

Girls in Their Married Bliss Girls of Slender Means, The **266**, 298, 310 Gissing, George 22, 77, 157, Giving Up the Ghost 194 Glade Within the Grove. The Glaister, Lesley 3, 4, 9, 87, 108, 189 Glamorama 6, 90 Glamorous Powers 148 Glamour, The 251 Glance Away, A 20 Glasgow, Ellen 307 Glass Bead Game, The 88, 136 - 7Glass Cell, The 140, 220, 237 Glass Key, The 127 Glass Lake, The 30 Glass of Blessings, A 109, 148, 232, 310 Glassblowers, The 84 Glastonbury Romance, A Glendinning, Victoria 32 Glittering Images 147-8 Glittering Prizes, The 83 Glitz 177 Gloriana 200, 221 Glory 207 Glory Road 184 Glue 304 Go 111, 164 Go-Between, The 104, 130, 290, 305 Go Tell it on the Mountain 20, 25, 78, 172 Goat's Song, A 150 Goblin Market and Other Poems 224 God and his Gifts, A God Bless You 296 God Dies by the Nile 189 God Emperor of Dune 136 God Knows 14, 29, 122, God of Small Things, The xvii, 150, 229, 254, 263 God on the Rocks 100 Godfather, The xvii, 98, 232 Godless in Eden 303 God's Bits of Wood 214 God's Children 56 Gods, Demons and Others God's Funeral 310

God's Gift to Women 224 God's Grace 256 God's Little Acre 268 Godshalk, C.S. 87 Godwin, Gail 182, 291 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 78, 114, 192, 283, 317 Gog 133 Gogol, Nikolai Vasilevich **115**, 160, 261, 269, 283 Goines, Donald 6 Going, Going, Gone 66 Going to Meet the Man 20 Going to the Dogs 25, 68 Going Wrong 236 Gold Bug Variations, The 74 Gold Coast 177 Golden, Arthur xviii, 126, Golden Age, The 295 Golden Apples, The 204, 305 Golden Ass, The 26 Golden Bowl, The 154 Golden Child, The 99 Golden Gate, The 254 Golden Notebook, The 74. 177, 238 Golden Ocean, The 212 Goldfinger 101 Golding, William xviii, 8, 28, 47, 53, 66, 72, 88, 106, **116-17**. **118**. 122, 141. 144, 199, 217, 246, 257, 292, 308, 309 Goldsborough, Robert 271 Goncharov, Ivan 115 Goncourt, Edmond and Jules de 175 Goncourt Journal, The 175 Gone Fishin' 203 Gone With the Wind xvii, 40, 71, 199-200, 219, 254, 302 Good as Gold 134 Good Behaviour 158 Good Bones 12 Good Companions, The 5, 228, 304 Good Earth, The 54, 238 Good Faith 262 Good Hanging, A 235 Good Husband, The 182, Good Man in Africa, A 3, 7,

Good Morning, Midnight 189, **238**, 315

Good Night, Irene 213 Good Omens xvii. 227 Good Soldier, The 102, 247 Good Soldier Sveik, The 115, 130-1, 133, 134, 161, 284, 300 Good Terrorist, The 173, 178, 275 Good Wives? 105 Goodbye, Columbus 243. Goodbye, Mr Chips 228, 248 Goodbye to All That 16, 121 Goodbye to Berlin 55, 151 Goodbye, Tsugumi 156 Goodkind, Terry 93, 96, 157 Goodman, Carol 273 Goodnight Mister Tom xvii Gordimer, Nadine 3, 12, 37, 38, **117-19**, 178, 265, 284, Gordon, Marv 274, 303, 311 Gordon, Richard 139, 313 Gorky, Maxim 119, 217, 283 Gorky Park 225 Gorman, Neil 227 Gormenghast xvii, 69, 93, 219, 220 Goshawk Squadron 144 Gospel According to Jesus Christ, The 29 Gospel According to the Son, The 29, 190 Gosse, Edmund 16 Goudge, Elizabeth 288 Government Inspector, The Grace Notes 206, 237, 254 Graduate. The 98, 317 Grafton, Sue 67, 120, 218, Graham, Caroline 197 Graham, James 139 Graham, Winston 148 Grahame, Kenneth xix, 9 Grand Babylon Hotel, The 28 Grand Man, A 62 Grand Meaulnes, Le 3, 231 Grangé, Jean-Christophe 105, 139 Grant, Joan 122 Grant, Linda 85, 153 Grantchester Grind 255 Grapes of Wrath, The xvii, 25, **267–8**, 318 Grass 251 Grass, Günter 33, 120-1, 133, 244, 246

Grass is Singing. The Grasshopper 237 Grateful to Life and Death 152, 209, 214 Graves, Robert 9, 14, 16, 109, 121-3, 142, 183, 202, 223, 236, 285, 292, 317 Gravity's Rainbow 95, 133, 161, 233, 265 Gray, Alasdair 23, 93, 123, 161, 162, 163, 249 Greant Hunt, The 157 Great American Novel, The 242 Great Apes 98, 253 Great Expectations xvii, 47, Great Fortune, The 193 Great Gatsby, The xvii, 99, Great Jones St 73 Great Pursuit. The 231 Great Railway Bazaar, The 276 Great Victorian Collection, The 201, 293 Great Wall of China and Other Short Stories, The 160 Great World, The 191 Greek Passion, The 261 Green, George Dawes Green, Henry 64, 226 Green, Julien 198 Green, Peter 122, 296 Green Brain, The 136 Green Hills of Africa, The Green House, The Green Knight, The Green Mile, The 165 Greene, Graham 6, 33, 62, 66, 111, **124–5**, 135, 152, 173, 198, 201, 214, 217, 222, 242, 266, 276, 280, 284 Greenlanders, The 216, 262 Greenmantle 41 Greenvoe 249 Greenway, The 186 Gregory, Philippa 84, 85 Greig, Andrew 96 Grenville, Kate 313 Grey, Zane 306 Grey Area 253 Griffin, Nicholas 108 Grimes, Martha 197 Grimmelshausen, H.J.C. von Grimus 244

Harrison, Harry 3, 129-30 Grisham, John 125, 181, 232, Hamilton, Nigel 31 Harrison, M. John 251 Hamilton, Patrick 33, 125, 280 Harrogate Secret, The 62 Groom, Winston 98 180, 228, 267 Harry Potter and the Chamber Hamilton, Peter F. 10, 23 Grossman, David 153 Grossmith, George and Hamlet, The 94, 268 of Secrets xvii Weedon 156, 210 Hamlet, Revenge! 124, 248 Harry Potter and the Goblet of Grotesque, The 187 Hammett, Dashiell 51, 127, Fire xvii Harry Potter and the Ground Beneath Her Feet, The 244, 263 Hamper, Ben 16 Philosopher's Stone xvii Group, The 298 Hamsun, Knut 137 Harry Potter and the Prisoner Hand in Glove 196 of Azkaban xvii Group Portrait with Lady 33 Groves of Academe, The 36, Handful of Dust, A 35, 301 Hart, Christopher 238, 296 Hartley, L.P. 53, 104, 130, 126, 179 Handl, Irene 206 149, 290, 305 Growing Up 193 Handler, David 188 Guardian Angel 218 Harvest, The 238, 296 Handmaid's Tale, The 11-Guardians of the West 88 **12**, 42, 49, 109, 161, 176, Harvey, Caroline 289 Guards! Guards! xvii, 227 217, 241 Harvey, Jack 235 Guareschi, Giovanni 210 Hanging Garden, The 75, Harvey, John 68, 74, 225, Guermantes Way, The 158, 230 Hangover Square 33, 125, Hašek, Jaroslav 115, 130-1, Guerrillas 208 180, 267 133, 134, 161, 284, 300 Guest of Honour, A 117 Hannibal 143 Hateship, Friendship, Guide, The 209 Hansen, Ron 185, 306 Courtship, Loveship, Guilty Thing Surprised, A Happenstance 257 Marriage 204 225, 236 Happily Ever After 89, 306 Haunted House 315 Guinevere: Queen of the Happy Alchemy 70 Have His Carcase 247 Summer Country 199 Happy Days 26 Have the Men Had Enough? Gulag Archipelago, The 264 Happy Endings 18 89. 104 Gulliver's Travels 93, 118, Happy Isles of Oceania, The Have You Seen Dawn? 248 234, 272 276 Hawes, James 33 Hawksmoor 2, 23, 259, 260 Gun, The 103, 283 Happy Return, The 103 Gun for Sale, A 124 Happy Valley 308 Hawthorne, Nathaniel 25, Gunesekera, Romesh 169, Harafish, The 189 80, **131-2**, 199, 217, 227 215 Hard Frost 237 Haywood, Gar Anthony 204 Head, Bessie 59, 265 Head to Toe 162, 306 Gunn, Neil M. 238, 249 Hard Time 218 Guns of Navarone. The 188. Hard Time to Be a Father. A 300 302 - 3Headbirths 121 Gut Symmetries 312 Hard Times 77, 112, 148, Headlong 9, 108 Guterson, David **126**, 145, Healing Art, The 310 237 Hardy, Tess xviii Healy, Dermot 150 Guttridge, Peter 60 Hardy, Thomas xvii, 25, 37, Heaney, Seamus 223 Guy Mannering 252 40, 80, 90, **128**, 172, 222, Hear Us, O Lord, From Heaven Guyana Quartet, The 48 238 Thy Dwelling Place 181 Guys and Dolls 210 Hare, Cyril 203 Hearing Secret Harmonies Harland's Half Acre 226 Hàrleauin 199 Heart is a Lonely Hunter, H is for Homicide 120 Harlot's Ghost 190 The 185 Haddon, Mark 221 Harlot's Progress, A 292 Heart of a Woman, The 15 Hadrian the Seventh 123, Harm Done 236 Heart of Danger, The 105 242, 282 Harnessing Peacocks 306 Heart of Darkness 61-2, Haggard, H. Rider 41, 80, Haroun and the Sea of 118, 142, 181, 217, 309 88, **127**, 139, 262, 263, Stories 214, 244 Heart of England, The 118 265, 280, 295 Harrer, Heinrich 287 Heart of Midlothian. The Hair of the Dogma, The 213 Harriet Said 18 249, 252, 270 Haire-Sargeant, Lin 40, 253 Harris, Joanne 289, 306 Heart of the Country, The 80, Half a Life 208 Harris, Robert 73, 123, 128-302 Hall, Adam 73 **9**. 237 Heart of the Matter, The 124 Hall, Radclyffe 112 Harris, Thomas 98, 265, 281 Heart Songs 230 Hamilton, Jane 262 Harris, Wilson 48 Heartbreaker, The 148

Hearts in Atlantis 165 Heart's Journey in Winter Heat and Dust 87, 104, 150 Heat of the Day. The 35. 193, 219, 299 178 Heat Wave Heathcliffe 40, 253 Heather Blazing, The 277 Heaven and Earth 293 Heaven's Edge 215 Heaven's My Destination 309 Heavy Water 8 Heavy Weather 113, 313 Hedylus 122, 309 Heinlein, Robert 10, 29. 132, 184, 250 Hell to Pay 204 Heller, Joseph xvii, 14, 29, 94. 101. 122. 131. **132-4**. 161, 162, 233, 240, 300 Heller, Ted 188 Helliconia Spring 136 Hello America 21 Hemingway, Ernest 9, 134-**5**, 181, 190, 219, 283, 300 Hemlock and After 293, 310 Hemon, Aleksander 257 Henderson the Rain King 27, 269 Henry Esmond 275 Hen's Teeth 186 Hensher, Philip 135-6, 146 Her Living Image 241 Her Privates We 300 Herbert, Frank xvii, 136 Herbert, James 165, 220, 265, 316 Herbert Huncke Reader, The 164 Here Comes Everybody 42 Heretics of Dune 136 Heritage and its History, A 60 Heritage of Folly 62 Heritage of Quincas Borba, The 271 Herodotus 286 Heroes and Villains 12, 49 Hersey, John 296 Herzog 12, 27, 28, 54, 271 Hesse, Hermann 47, 64, 88, 114, 115, 116, **136-7**, 206, 214, 218 Hey Nostradamus 65 Heyerdahl, Thor 286 Hiaasen, Carl 60, 137-8, 177

Hidden Lives 105 Hide and Seek 235 Hide My Eyes 5 Hideous Kinky 53, 111, 218 Hiding Place, The 299 Higgins, George V. 138 Higgins, Jack 102, 105, 139, High Cost of Living, The 303 High Fidelity 147 High Flyer, The High History of the Runestaff, The 200 High Hunt 88 High Rise 20 High Rising 254, 288 High Stakes 107 High Tide in Tucson 166 High Wind in Jamaica. A 53. 116, 118 High Window. The 51 Higher Ground 222 Highsmith, Patricia 98, 140, 155, 220, 237, 246, 284 Higson, Charles 33, 138 Hijuelos, Oscar 4 Hilda Lessways 28, 83, 101 Hill, Reginald 74, 75, 140-1, 235, 237 Hill, Susan 18, 84, 118, 141, 179, 189, 220, 238, 245, 254, 274, 288 Hill Bachelors, The 285 Hilton, James 228, 248 Him With the Foot in his Mouth 27 Himes, Chester 20, 204 Hinton, S.E. 3, 245, 274 Hird, Laura 163, 304 Hired Man, The 37, 128 Hireling, The 130 His Dark Materials xviii, 176 His Last Bow 81 His Monkey Wife History Maker, A History Man, The 36, 139, History of Danish Dreams. The 145 History of Middle Earth, The History of Mr Polly, The 78, 216, 303 History of the Eternal Champion, The 200 History of the Persian War 286 History of the World in 101/2 Chapters, A 24-5

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, The xviii, 2 Hitler: Hubris 1889-1936 Hitler: Nemesis 1936-1945 32 Hjorstberg, William 68 HMS Surprise 212 Hoban, Russell 42, 89, 109, 144, 217, 251, 297 Hobbit, The xviii, 278 Hocus Pocus 296 Høeg, Peter 145, 253 Hoffman, Alice 166, 291 Hogfather 227 Hogg, James 249, 270 Holcroft Covenant. The 105 Holden's Performance 17 Holdstock, Robert 56, 250 Holes xviii Holidays in Hell 287 Holland, Tom 270 Hollinghurst, Alan 9, 112, 114, 136, **145-6** Hollow Chocolate Bunnies of the Apocalypse 228 Hollywood 97 Hollywood: a Novel of the Twenties 295 Holman, Sheri 301 Holmes, John Clellon 164 Holmes, Richard 31 Holroyd, Michael 16, 31 Holt, Tom 8, 29, 228, 236, Holtby, Winifred 90 Holy Fire 66 Holy Pictures 30 Holy Sinner, The 46, 192, 199 Homage to Barcelona 278 Homage to Catalonia 135, Homage to Qwert Yuiop 42 Home and the World, The 209 Homecomings 264 Homeland 166 Homer 26, 144, 227, 254, 314 Homer's Daughter 121 Homesickness 17 Honolulu Hotel 276 Honorary Consul, The 124, 266, 276 Honour the Dead 248 Honour Thy Father 87 Honourable Schoolboy, The 125, 172, 281

Honoured Enemy 96 Hooker, Richard 133 Hooking Up 315 Hope 73 Hope, Anthony 139, 146 Hope, Christopher 7, 89, 209, 266 Hopkins, Gerard Manley 224 Hopscotch 26, 171 Hornblower and the Atropos Hornblower in the West Indies 103 Hornblower series 102, 103 Hornby, Nick 147, 292 Hornet's Nest 64 Horse Heaven 262 Horse Under Water 7, 73 Horse Whisperer, The Horse's Mouth, The 9, 33, 158, 197, 309 Horwood, William 9 Hot Money 107 Hôtel du Lac 41, 130, 238 Hotel New Hampshire, The 87, 151, 161 Houellebecg, Michel 91 Hound and the Falcon, The 308 Hound of the Baskervilles. The 67, 80, 124 Hours, The 229, 315 Hours of the Virgin, The 68, House and its Head, A 60. House Divided, A 62 House for Mr Biswas, A 189, 195, 208, 221 House Gun, The 117, 119 House in Paris, The 35 House Mother Normal 26 House of All Nations 200, 288 House of Cards 225 House of Doctor Dee, The 2, 179 House of Echoes 84 House of Leaves 165 House of Mirth, The 78, **307** House of Sleep, The 58 House of Stairs, The 75, 85, 236 House of the Seven Gables. The 131 House of the Spirits, The 3-4, 71, 194, 195 House of the Vestals, The 248

House of Women. The 62 House on the Strand. The 84 House Unlocked, A 179 House with the Green Shutters. The 40 Household, Geoffrey 41, 281 Houseman's Tale, The 255 Housman, A.E. 223 How Far Can You Go? 179. 302 How Green Was My Valley 299 How It Ended 188 How Late It Was, How Late 123, 249 How The Dead Live 253 How to Be Good 147 Howard, Blanche 257 Howard, Elizabeth Jane 41. 44, 194, 289 Howard, Richard 63 Howards End 64, 92, 103 Howatch, Susan 84, 147-8. 288 Hrabal, Bohumil 284 Hugging the Shore 293 Hughes, Richard 53, 116, 118 Hughes, Ted 224 Hughes, Thomas 249 Hugo, Victor 55, 78, 80, **148**, 199, 227, 252 Hui, Wei 54 Huis Clos 247 Hulme, Keri 52, 229 Human Age, The 161 Human Beast, The 318 Human Comedy, The 21, 22, 279, 318 Human Croquet 11, 49, 69, Human Factor, The 124, 173 Muman Stain, The 243 Human Voices 100 Humboldt's Gift 27, 158, 221 Humphreys, Emyr 299 Hunchback of Notre Dame. The 55, 148, 199, 252 Huncke, Herbert 164 Hundred Brothers, The 19 Hundred Days, The 212 Hungry Is The Sea 189 Hunt for Red October, The Hunted 107

House of the Wolfings, The

Hunter, Stephen 139
Hunter, The 177
Hunter's Notes, A 290
Huntingtower 41, 139
Hurston, Zora Neale 202
Hustler, The 98
Huxley, Aldous xvii, 42, 93, 109, 114, 131–2, 149, 216, 306
Huysmans, Joris-Karl 114, 231

I am Mary Dunne 201

I Can Get it For You

Wholesale 240

I Capture the Castle xviii, 218 I, Claudius 9, 14, 121, 122, 123, 236, 317 I, Dreyfus 243 I. Elizabeth 14 I is for Innocent 120 I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings 15, 20 I. Robot 10, 250 I Sent a Letter to my Love 243 I. The Supreme 14, 123. 195, 244, 294 I, Virgil 123 I Will Fear No Evil 132 I Would be Private Icarus Agenda, The 181 Ice Age, The (Drabble) 82, 224 Ice Age, The (Farley) 224 Ice Cream 85, 257 Ice-cream War, An 35, 163 Ice House, The 299 Ice is Singing, The 241 Ice Station Zebra 188 Icon 105 Idea of Perfection, The 313 Identity 168 Ides of March, The 9, 122, 142, 309, 317 Idiot, The 79, 80, 181, 283 Idoru 112, 113, 205 If Beale Street Could Talk 20, If It Die 114 If Not Now, When? 275 If On a Winter's Night a Traveller 45 If This is a Man 16 Ignorance 168 Illearth War, The 79 Illywhacker 47, 170, 282 Ilse Witch 157

I'm Not Stiller 161 I'm the King of the Castle 118, 141 Image Men. The 197 Imaginary Friends 12, 176, Imaginary Girlfriend, The 151 Imaginary Homelands 244 Imaginary Life, An 190, 191 Imaginative Qualities of Actual Things 19 Imaginings of Sand 38, Imitation Game, The 187 Immoralist, The 59, 113 Immortality 168, 169 Imperial Earth 56 Impossible Saints 240 Impostors 138 Impressionist, The 263 In a Dry Season 141, 186 In a Free State 3, 208 In a German Pension 50, 53, 193 In a Land of Plenty 18, 194 In Arcadia 214 In Babylon 69 In Between the Sheets 187 In Camera 247 In Evil Hour 196 In Love and Trouble 298 In My Father's Court 261 In Our Time 135 In Patagonia 52 In Praise of the Stepmother 294 In Search of Our Mother's Garden 298 In the Castle of Mv Skin 48 In the Country of Last Things In the Heart of the Country 38, 58, 119 In the Place of Fallen Leaves In the Shape of a Boar 211 In the Springtime of the Year 141, 179, 238 In the Winter Dark 312 In Watermelon Sugar 261, 297 In Xanadu 286 Incidents at the Shrine 214 Incidents in the Rue Laugier Incline Our Hearts 310 Incomparable Atuk, The 240

Indecent Exposure 255
Indelible Acts 163

Indemnity Only 218 Independent People 128. 238 India: a Wounded Civilization 208 Indians Won, The 237 Indigo 48 Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman, The 49, 241 Infinite Jest 74, 205 Infinite Riches 214 Information, The 8, 23, 36 Informer, The 94 Informers, The 90 Ingenious Pain 66, 142 Inheritors, The 66, 116 Inimitable Jeeves, The Injured Party, The 41 Injury Time 18 Inn at the Edge of the World, The 19 Innes, Hammond 189, 263 Innes, Michael 5, 57, 124, 220, 248 Innocence 100 Innocence of Father Brown. The 57 Innocent, The 186 Innocent Blood 155 Innocent Erendira and Other Stories 34, 196 Innocents Abroad. The Inside Mr Enderby 42 Inside Rose's Kingdom 168 Instance of the Fingerpost, An 2, 143 Instant in the Wind, An 37-8 Insular Possession, An 54. 87, 94, 170 Intended, The 30 Interesting Times 227 Interpreters, The 1, 214 Interview with the Vampire Intimacy 169 Into the Fire 200 Intruder in the Dust 94, 95, 185 Invention of Solitude, The 14 Inversions 22 Invisible Allies 264 Invisible Cities 17, 34, 45, 144 Invisible Cord, The 62 Invisible Man (Ellison) 20, Invisible Man, The (Wells) 159, 270

Invitation to a Beheading Invitation to the Waltz 176 Ionesco, Eugene 115 Ionian Mission, The 212 Ipcress File, The 72 Irish Fiction, The Penguin Book of 278 Irish Journal 33 Irish RM. The 150 Iron Dream, The 76, 237 Iron Hand of Mars, The 9, Iron Heel, The 180 Iron in the Soul 247 Irving, John xviii, 70, 87, 150-1, 161, 205, 222, 246, 261, 274, 298, 315 Irwin, Robert 220 Isabelle 114 Isherwood, Christopher 55, 151-2 Ishiguro, Kazuo 102, 137, **152**, 155, 210, 283 Island (Huxley) 93, 149 Island (Rogers) 241 Island Nights' Entertainment Island of Doctor Moreau, The 256, 303 Island of Sheep, The 41 Island of the Day Before, The 87-8, 211, 235 Island Pharisee, The 110 Islands in the Stream 135, 181 Isle of Dogs 64 Isler, Alan 89 It 165 It All Adds Up 27 Italian Folktales 46 Ivanhoe 252 J is for Judgement 120 Jack Maggs 47, 179, 210 Jackson, Charles 33 Jackson, Mick 108 Jackson's Dilemma 206 Jacob's Room 315 Jacobson, Dan 265 Jacobson, Howard 7, 14, 139, 171, 179, 255 Jacq, Christian 88, 263 Jaguar Smile, The 244

Jailbird 296

Jake's Thing

Jamaica Inn 84

James, Bill 225

Jordan, Robert 88, 93, 96, Kane and Abel xviii James. Henry 35, 66, 104, Kangaroo 172 118, 130, 141, **154-5**, 210, 156-7 Joseph and his Brothers 29, Kate Hannigan 62 220, 307 Kate Hannigan's Daughter James, M.R. 225 190, 191 James, P.D. 5, 57, 109, 140, Joseph Andrews Josh Lawton 37 **155**, 231, 236, 237, 248 Katherine xviii, 143 James Joyce 31 Joshua Then and Now 240 Katwalk 120 Jane and Prudence 232 Kavanagh, Dan 25, 68 Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon Jane Eyre xviii, 39, 40, 69, Kay, Jackie 30 84, 238, 256, 302 Journal of the Plague Year, A Kaye, M.M. 104, 200 Kazantzakis, Nikos 254, 261 Janowitz, Tama 109, 188, 72 Journals of Susannah Moodie. Keane, Molly 158 Jansson, Tove 210, 298 Keating, H.R.F. 5, 68, 271 The 12 Jardine, Quintin 225, 235 Journey from This World to the Keats, John 224 Jarrell, Randall 37, 70, 139, Next. A 97 Keenan, Bryan 16 Journey into Fear 6 305 Keep the Aspidistra Flying Journey to the Border 152 Jaws 98 216, 228 Jazz 202, 210 Journey to the Centre of the Keepers of the House 238, Earth 93, 295 Jean Santeuil 231 244 Joy in the Morning 313 Jeeves in the Offing 313 Keeping Up Appearances Jello Salad 32 Joy Luck Club, The 54, 126 183 Jerome, Jerome K. 156 Joyce, James xviii, 26, 42, Keillor, Garrison 246, 257, 55, 77, 95, 150, 157-9, Jerusalem Commands 200 - 1175, 181, 213, 231, 249, Kellerman, Jonathan 61, 64, Jerusalem the Golden 82, 257, 260, 271, 308, 309 281 J.R. 233 Kelly, Cathy 30 Jest of God, A 47, 178 Judas Child 213 Kelly, Sheelagh 62, 142 Jesus on Mars 136 Jude the Obscure 25, 90, Kelman, James 123, 249, Jeter, K.W. 76 128, 172, 222 304 Jewel in the Skull. The 200 Keneally, Thomas 5, 14, 47, Judgement Dav 178 Jewel that was Ours, The 67, Judgement on Deltchev 173 48, 117, **162-3**, 191, 241, 74 Juggling 282 242, 292, 300, 308 Jewett, Sarah Orne 50 Julian 295, 317 Kenilworth 252 July's People 117, 178 Jhabvala, Ruth Prawer 87. Kennedy, A.L. 163 104, 150 Jump 117 Kent. Alexander 103, 212 Jigsaw 56 Kepler 23, 235 Jumping the Queue 305, Jill 130 306 Kerouac, Jack xviii, 64, 164 Jimmy the Hand 96 Jungle, The 268 Kerr, Philip 129, 281 Jingo 227 Jungle Book 167 Kershaw, lan 32 Job 29, 132 Jungle Lovers 42 Kesey, Ken 98, 189, 220, John Barleycorn 180 Junk Mail 253 261 John Dollar 116, 257 Junky 6, 43, 164 Key to Rebecca, The 102 John McNab 41 Juror, The 232 Keyes, Daniel 251 Johnno 191 Just Assassins, The Keyes, Marian 30 Johnson, B.S. 26, 213, 282 Just-So Stories 166, 167 Kick Back 186 Johnson, Pamela Hansford *Distine* 86, 89 Kidnapped 81, 144, 249, 264 Johnston, Jennifer 193 Kijewski, Karen 120 Johnston, Paul 109 K is for Killer 120 Killer Angels, The 143 Johnston, Wayne 47 Ka of Gifford Hillary, The 220 Killer in the Rain 51 Joining Charles 35 Kafka, Franz 45, 58, 115, Killer Inside Me, The Joke, The 168 **160–2**, 208, 214, 216, 219, Killer's Choice 225 Jolley, Elizabeth 92, 105, 257, 271 Killing Critics 213 183, 266, 284, 306 Kalimantaan 87 Killing Doll, The 236 Jonathan Swift 32 Kalki 123, 220, 295 Killing Me Softly 85, 237 Jones, Gayl 298 Kaminsky, Stuart 225, 229 Killing Orders 218 Jones, J.V. 93 Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Killing the Shadows 299 Jones, James Flake Streamline Baby, 314 Killings at Badger's Drift, The Jong, Erica 221 The 315 197

Killshot 177 Kilvert, Francis 175 Kilvert's Diary 175 Kim 127, 150, 167, 222, 280 Kincaid, Jamaica 48 Kindly Light 233 Kindly Ones, The 226 Kindness of Women, The 21 Kinflicks 78, 298, 317 King, John 304 King, Laurie 81 King, Stephen xviii, 117. 118, 164-5, 220, 225, 265, King Hereafter 85 King Jesus 121 King Must Die, The 8, 122, 236 King of Foxes 96 King of the Ants 33, 138 King of the City 201 King of the Fields. The 261 King of Torts, The 125 King, Queen, Knave 207 King Solomon's Carpet 236 King Solomon's Mines 127. 139, 263, 265, 280 King Suckerman 92 Kingdom by the Sea, The 276 Kingdom Come 37 Kingdom of the Wicked, The 29, 42, 122, 143 Kingfisher 139 King's General, The 84 King's Touch, The 14 Kingsley, Mary 287 Kingsolver, Barbara 3, 66, 165-6, 262, 292 Kipling, Rudyard 127, 150, 166-7, 197, 222, 280 Kipps 77, 97, 303 Kiss and other stories, The 53 Kiss Kiss 257, 265 Kiss of the Spider Woman Kissing the Gunner's Daughter 236 Kitchen 205 Kitchen Venom 135, 146 Kitty and Virgil 18 Klein, Joe 225 Klemperer, Victor 175 Klima, Ivan 55, 169 Klingsor's Last Summer 137 Kneale, Matthew 48, 87, 136, 143, **167-8**, 216, 241

Knots and Crosses 235 Knox, Elizabeth 292 Knox Brothers, The 100 Knulp 137 Koba the Dread 8 Koestler, Arthur 216, 225, 247, 265 Kokoro 156 Kon-Tiki Exhibition. The 286 Koontz, Dean 165 Kornbluth, C.M. 149 Kosinski, Jerzy 133, 161, 208. 261 Kowloon Tong 54, 276 Kraken Wakes, The 316 Krapp's Last Tape 26 Kreutzer Sonata, The 279 Kristin Lavransdatter 128, 216 Kundera, Milan 161, 168-9 Kunzru, Hari 263 Kureishi, Hanif 30, 169, 180, 274 L is for Lawless 120 LA Confidential 54, 91. LA Requiem 61 Labyrinth Makers, The 266 Lackey, Mercedes 184 Laclos, Pierre Choderlos de 239 Ladder of Years 182, 221, 284, 291 Lady Chatterley's Confession 172, 253 Lady Chatterley's Lover 172, 253, 254 Lady in the Lake, The 127 Lady With the Lapdog and Other Short Stories, The 50, 53, 193, 290 Ladv's Maid 104, 142 Ladysmith 94 Lahr, John 32 Lake, The 290 Lake of Dead Languages, The 273 Lake Wobegon Days 246, 257, 261 Lament for a Maker 220 Lamming, George 48 Lampedusa, Giuseppe Tomaso di 95 Lanark 23, 93, 123, 161, 162, 163, 249 Lambert, Angela 289

Lanchester, John 23, 25, 54, 87, 98, 152, 170 Land of Mist, The 81 Landfall 133 Landing on the Sun. A 108 Landlocked 177 Landor's Tower 260 Landscape with Dead Dons 83. 248 Landscapes Within, The 214 Lansdale, Joe R. 71, 273 Lardner, Ring 257 Larkin, Philip 130, 224 Larry's Party 47, 182, 256, Larsson, Bjorn 84, 144, 254, Last and First Men 178 Last and the First, The 60 Last Bus to Woodstock Last Chronicle of Barset. The 78, 288 Last Coincidence, The 271 Last Continent, The 227 Last Coyote, The 61 Last Empire, The 295 Last Exit to Brooklyn 43, Last Kabbalist of Lisbon, The 88, 143 Last King of Scotland, The 3 Last Man, The 256 Last of Mr Norris, The Last of Chéri, The 59 Last of the Amazons 236 Last of the Mohicans, The 252, 309 Last of the Savages, The 188 Last of the Templars, The Last of the Wine, The 236, 309 Last Orders 272 Last Picture Show, The 261 Last Place God Made. The 139 Last Precinct, The 64 Last Resort, The 182 Last Seen in Massilia Last Seen Wearing 74 Last Sherlock Holmes Story, The 75 Last Temptation, The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde, The 2 Last Things 264 Last Time They Met 258 Last Tycoon, The 97, 99 Last Word, The 125

Last Words of Dutch Schultz, The 43 Last World, The 191 Late Bourgeois World, The 38, 117 Late Call 274, 311 Latecomers 40 Lathe of Heaven, The 173 Latter End 57 Laughable Loves 168 Laughing Policeman, The 225, 259 Laughter in the Dark 207 Laughter of Carthage, The 200-1 Laurels are Poison 57, 68 Laurence, Margaret 47, 178 Laurents, Arthur 293 Lawrence, D.H. 28, 37, 112, **171-2**, 218, 254, 309 Laxness, Halldor 128, 238 Le Carré, John 6, 73, 101, 125, 153, 172-3, 232, 249, 266, 275, 280, 281 Le Fanu, Sheridan 270 Le Guin, Ursula 93, 173-6, 184, 220 Leaf-storm and Other Stories League of Frightened Men, The 271 Leaning in the Wind 209, Leaning Tower, The 185 Learning To Swim 272 Leather, Stephen 56 Leave It to Psmith 313 Leaven of Malice, A 70 Leavitt, David 112, 146, 152, 206, 278 Leckie, Ross 143 Lee, Chang-Rae Lee, Gentry 56 Lee, Harper xviii, 53, 71, 95, 229, 273 Lee, Laurie 16, 291 Lee, Tanith 93 Left Bank, The 238 Left Hand of Darkness, The 173, 176 Legend 96 Legends of the Riftwar 96 Lehane, Dennis 61 Lehmann, Rosamond 48, 92, 176, 308 Lem, Stanislaw 56, 221, 251 Lemprière's Dictionary 143, 211 Leon, Donna 75

Leonard, Elmore 97, 138, 177 Leopard, The 95 Leopard Hunts in Darkness, The 262 Leroux, Gaston 270 Less than Angels 232 Less Than Zero 90, 245 Lessing, Doris 12, 74, 117, 173, 177-8, 238, 275 Lesson in Love, A 59, 114 Lesson of the Master, The 154 Let It Bleed 235 Letter of Marque. The 212 Letter to Sister Benedicta Letters Between a Father and a Son 209 Letters from an American Farmer 174 Letters from London, 1990-95 25 Letters Home 175 Letters to Felice 160 Letters to His Son 174 Letters to Milena 160 Letting Go 242 Letty Fox, Her Luck 267 Levant Trilogy, The 86, 89, 192-3, 247 Levels, The 272 Levi, Primo 16, 275 Leviathan 14 Levin, Ira 117 Levy, Andrea 30, 48 Lewis, C.S. xviii, 72, 295, Lewis, Norman 287 Lewis, Simon 111 Lewis, Sinclair 109 Lewis, Wyndham 9, 161, Lewis Percy 285 Liaisons dangereuses, Les 239 Liberty 56 Libra 73, 74, 92 Lichtenstein, Rachel 260 Licks of Love 293 Lie Down in Darkness 95 Lieberman's Law 225 Lies of Silence 201 Life, A 101, 271 Life After God 65 Life and Adventures of Mr Duncan Campbell, The 72 Life and Death of Jonathan Wild the Great, The 97

Life and Loves of a She-Devil. The 117, 217, 302 Life and Times of Michael K The 58 Life at Blandings Life Before Man 11, 303 Life Force 302 Life is Elsewhere 168 Life of Henri Brûlard, The 268-9 Life of Klim Samgin, The 119 Life of Pi 145 Life of Samuel Johnson, Ll.D., The 31 Life of Thomas More. The 31 Life on the Mississippi 290 Life, the Universe and Everything 2 Life to Come, The 104 Lifeline 107 Light a Penny Candle 30 Light and the Dark, The 264, Light Fantastic, The 227 Light in August 94, 95, 185 Light of Day, The 6, 187, 272 Light Years (Gee) 303 Light Years, The (Howard) 194, 289 Lights Out for the Territory Like Men Betrayed 247, 275 Like Water for Chocolate 71 Lilac Bus, The 30 Limbo 149 Lincoln 295 Linklater, Eric 71, 131, 228 Lion of Boaz-Jachin and Jachin-Boaz, The 144 Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The xviii Lion's Gamè, The 102 Liss, David 2 Listen to the Silence 218 Little Big Man 143, 306 Little Dorrit 77 Little Drummer Girl, The 153, 173, 275 Little Friend, The 273 Little House on the Prairie. The 107 Little Learning, A 301 Little Mexican, The 149 Little Sister, The 51 Little Sisters 302 Little Wilson and Big God 42 Little Women xviii, 261 Little World of Don Camillo, The 210

Little Yellow Dog 203 Live Flesh 236, 265 Live from Golgotha 295 Lively, Penelope 141, 178-Lives of Girls and Women 204 Livia 86 Living and the Dead. The 308 Living by the Word 298 Living in Hope and History Livingstone's Companion 117 Liza of Lambeth 197, 318 Llewellyn, Richard 299 Locked Room, The 13 Lodge, David 37, 42, 70, 126, 148, 179, 302 Loitering with Intent 266 Lolita 23, 170, 207, 246 London 143 London, Jack 9, 135, 180-1 London: A Biography 2 London Blues 180 London Embassy, The 276 London Fields 8, 37, 187 London Journal 174 London Match 73, 173 London Orbital 260 Lonely Girls, The 59 Lonely Hearts 68 Lonely Londoners, The 30 Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, The 201 Lonesome Dove 306 Lonesome Traveller 164 Long Arm of Gil Hamilton, The 10 Long Dark Teatime of the Soul, The 3 303 Long Distance Long Finish, A 75 Long Firm, The 179 Long Goodbye, The 51 Long John Silver 84, 144, 254, 270 Long Lankin 23 Long-Legged Fly, The 68, Long March, The 190 Long Valley, The 268 Long Way from Heaven, A 62 Long Way from Verona, A Long Way to Shiloh, A 153 Longest Journey, The Longitude 32

Look at All Those Roses 35 Look at it This Wav 179 Look at Me 40, 92, 182, 288 Look at the Harlequins! 207 Look Homeward, Angel 71. 159, 164, 172, 314 Look to the Lady 5 Look to Windward 22 Looking Back 62 Looking Backward 202 Looking for Rachel Wallace Looking for the Possible Dance 163 Looking Glass War, The 172 Looking on Darkness 38, Loos, Anita 99 Loot 117 Lord Foul's Bane 79 Lord Hornblower Lord Jim 62 Lord of Chaos 157 Lord of Light 136 Lord of the Flies xviii, 53. 116, 118, 141, 217 Lord of the Rings, The xviii, 77, 88, 93, 157, 250, 278 Lord Valentine's Castle 93, Lords and Ladies Lorna Doone 40 Losing Battles 305 Losing Nelson 214, 292 Lost Continent, The Lost Empires 228 Lost Honour of Katharina Blum, The 33, 157 Lost Illusions 269 Lost Lady, A 50 Lost Language of Cranes, The 112 Lost Light 61 Lost Steps, The 171 Lost Tales 278-9 Lost Traveller, The 308 Lost Weekend, The 33 Lost World, The 80, 93, 295 Lott, Tim 147 Lotte in Weimar 192 Love (Carter) 49 269 Love (Stendhal) Love, Again 178 Love Among the Single Classes 289 Love and Death 227 Love and Exile 261 Love and Friendship 182 Love and Glory 37

Love and Mr Lewisham 303 Love and Napalm: Export USA 21 Love Department, The 285 Love. Etc 25 Love Hexagon, The 147 Love in A Blue Time 169 Love in a Cold Climate 29. 183 Love in a Dark Time 278 Love in Amsterdam 259 Love in the Time of Cholera xviii, 25, 169, 196, 215, 271 Love Lessons 16 Love Lies Bleeding Love Medicine 166 Love of a Good Woman. The Love of Fat Men 85, 204 Love Story 302 Love Unknown 7, 203, 310 Lovecraft, H.P. 225, 265, 304 Loved One, The 66, 108, 301 Lovelace, Earl 48 Lover, The 153 Lovesey, Peter 68 Loving 64 Low-flying Aircraft 21 Low-lands 233 Low Life 179 Low Notes on a High Level Lowell, Robert 224 Lowry, Malcolm 33, 125. 159, 171, 181, 214, 239 Lucia in London 29 Lucia in Wartime 29 Lucia Triumphant 29 Lucia's Progress 29 Luck of the Bodkins, The 156, 313 Lucky Jim 7, 126 Lucky You 138 Lucy Gayheart 50 Lud Heat 259 Ludlum, Robert 101, 102, 105, 181, 281 Lunar Caustic 181 Lung, The 93 Lurie, Alison 12, 13, 139, 148, 176, 181-2, 291, 292, Lux the Poet ~169 Lyall, Gavin 266 Lying Days, The Lyonesse 79

McTeague 268

Lyre of Orpheus, The 69, 70 Madame Bovary 90, 92, 100, 101, 239, 282, 294 Lytton Strachev 31 Madame Sousatzka 243 M Maddon's Rock 189 Madeleine 114 M is for Malice 120 Macaulay, Rose 176, 183, Madsen, David 235 127, 229 197, 226, 266, 308 Maggot, A 105, 117 Mamista Magic Apple Tree, The 141 MacAvoy, R.A. Magic Christian, The 233, McBain, Ed 225 Macbeth the King 85 261 McCabe, Cameron Magic Cottage, The 220. 14 102, 139 McCabe, Patrick 82, 187, 242 Magic Faraway Tree, The McCaffrey, Anne 93. 136. XVIII 176, **183-4** Magic Mountain, The 115, McCarthy, Cormac 184-5 191, 192 McCarthy, Mary 36, 92, 126, Magic Toyshop, The 4, 48, 220, 246, 267, 312 179, 206, 238, 298 McCourt, Frank Magician xviii, 96 McCracken, Elizabeth Magician of Lublin, The 260 185. Magician's Assistant, The 258 McCullers, Carson 22, 27, 59, 71, 95, **185**, 198, 245, Magician's Gambit 88 Magician's Wife, The 201 Magister Ludi 136-7 McCullough, Colleen xviii, 142, 200, 236 Magnet, The 119 140 McDermid, Val 120, 141, Magorian, Michelle xvii 185-6, 235, 299 Magris, Claudio 252, 287 The 213 Macdonald, Greg 60 Magus, The xviii, 86, 106, McDonald, John D. 51 MacDonald, Ross 51, 127, Mahfouz, Naguib 89, 189 229 Maid of Buttermere, The 37, McEwan, lan 19, 22, 25, 96, 172, 222 114, 117, 152, 163, 186-7, Maiden Castle 227 The 10 Maigret and the Headless McGahern, John 23, 150, Corpse 124 The 34 Mailer, Norman 24, 29, 43, McGinley, Patrick 150 74, 88, 122, 133, 135, 189-McGough, Roger 224 90, 199, 216, 300, 315 McGrath, Patrick 187 Main Street 109 230, 261 Maitland, Sara 241 Machine Dreams McInerney, Jay 6, 8, 55, 65, Majipoor Chronicles 136 91, 157, 188, 200, 210 Make Room, Make Room! McInnes, Colin 180 129 The 6 Mackay, Shena 9, 53, 179, Making History 237 218 Making of the Representatives The 101 Mackenzie, Compton 183 Yfor Planet 8. The 178 Mackerel Plaza, The 109 Malafrena 173, 220 McKillip, Patricia 176 Malamud, Bernard 28, 115, MacLaverty, Bernard 94, 243, 256, 261 7, 73, 281 206, 237, 254 Malayan Trilogy, The 42 MacLean, Alistair 188-9, Malgudi Days 209 The 75 300 Malignos 66 Maclean, Rory 287 Mallen Girl, The 62 McLeod, Ken 23 Mallen Litter, The 62 266 McMurtry, Larry 261, 306 Mallen Streak, The 62 Mallinson, Allan 63, 84, 108, McNab, Andy 195, 209 McNally's Secret 60 144 Manfredi, Valerio Massimo

Mallory's Oracle 64, 213

248

Malone Dies 26 Malory, Thomas 26 Malouf, David 14, 17, 48, 66, 168, **190-1**, 229 Maltese Falcon, The 51, 73 Mamur Zapt and the Spoils of Egypt, The 89 Man and Boy 147 Man from St Petersburg, The Man in Full, A 314 Man in the High Castle, The 76, 109, 237 Man in the Iron Mask, The 84, 148, 252 Man Lay Dead, A 196 Man of Property, The 110 Man of the People, A Man Rides Through, A 79 Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg, The 290 Man Upstairs, The 313 Man Who Killed Himself, The Man Who Lied to Women, Man Who Liked Slow Tomatoes, The 138 Man Who Loved Children. The 4, 115, 267, 309 Man Who Sold the Moon, Man Who Was Thursday, Man Who Watched the Trains Go By, The 259 Man Who Would Be F. Scott Fitzgerald, The 188 Man With a Load of Mischief, The 197 Man with the Golden Arm, Man With the Golden Gun. Man Without Qualities, The Manchurian Candidate, The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes, Mandarins, The 47 Mandelbaum Gate, The 155, Maneater of Malgudi, The

Mangan Inheritance. The Manhattan Transfer 231 Mann, Heinrich 148 Mann, Klaus 152 Mann, Thomas 29, 46, 70, 78, 95, 97, 110, 115, 131, 190, 191-2, 194, 195, 199, 206 Manning, Frederic 300 Manning, Olivia 86, 89, 192-3, 247, 283 Manor, The 260 Manservant and Maidservant 60 Mansfield, Katherine 13, 50, 53, 167, 193, 204, 229 Mansfield Park 13 Mansfield Revisited Mansion, The 94 Mantel, Hilary 19, 143, 167. 193-4, 237, 241, 266 Manticore, The 70 Mantissa 105 Many Inventions 167 Manzoni, Alessandro 148 Mao II 73 Map of Love, The 89, 189 Map of the World, A 262 Mapp and Lucia 29, 109 Mara and Dann 178 Marabou Stork Nightmares 253, 304 Marai, Sandor 252 Maras Affair, The 6 Marchand, Leslie 175 Marchant, Catherine 62 Marchbanks' Almanac Marching to Valhalla 306 Mario the Magician 192 Marital Rites 104 Markson, David - 256 Marlow, Hugh 139 Marlowe, Stephen 14, 122, 142, 235 Márquez, Gabriel García xviii, 3-4, 25, 34, 70, 71, 169, 171, **194-6**, 215, 271, 294 Marriage Between Zones Three, Four and Five, The Marry Me 92, 243 Marrying the Mistress 289 Mars Jones, Adam 112 Marsden, Philip 287 Marsh, Ngaio 54, 57, 124, 155, 196-7 Marsh, Richard 225

Marshall, James Vance 118 Maugham, W. Somerset 9, Marshall Smith, Michael 66. 211 Martel, Yann 145 Martha Peake 187 Martha Quest 12, 177 Martian Chronicles, The Martian Sends a Postcard Home, A 224 Martian Time-Slip Martin, Amis 15 Martin, Andrew 157 Martin, George R.R. 93, 157 Martin, Valerie 254 Martin Chuzzlewit 77 Martin Hewitt, Investigator Martini, Steve 125 Marvell, Andrew 224 Mary Anne 84 Mary Barton 55, 111, 112 Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles 85 Mary Reilly 254 Mary Swann 44, 231, 256, 257, 258 Masai Dreaming Masefield, John M*A*S*H 133 Mask of Apollo, The 5, 143, 236, 317 Mask of Dimitrios, The 6, 129, 280 Mask of Ra, The 88 Maskerade Mason, David 281 Mason & Dixon 233 Massey, Sujata 205 Massie, Allan 9, 123 Master and Commander 63, Master and Man 279 Master and Margharita, The 117 Master Georgie 18, 194 Master of Petersburg, The 58, 59 Masterharper of Pern, The 184 Masters, John 94, 167, 284 Masters, The 83, 264 Matarese Circle, The 101, Matchmaker, The 309 Matilda xviii Matisse Stories, The Matter of the Heart, The 260 Matthiessen, Peter 287

25, 28, 77, 78, 167, 197, 266, 318 Maupassant, Guy de 53, 197-8 Maupin, Armistead 55, 148. 152 Mauriac, François 4, 22, 198, 246 Maurice 104 Maurice Guest 74 Mauritius Command, The Maxwell, William 50, 204, 258, 261, 292 May We Borrow Your Husband? 124-5 Mayor of Casterbridge, The 128 Maze of Death, A 76 Mead, Margaret 20 Means of Escape, The 100 Means of Evil 236 Mechanismo 129 Medea 122 Medusa 75 Meet Mr Mulliner 313 Meeting at Telgte, The 121 Mefisto 23 Melville, Herman 62, 185, **198-9**, 257, 308 Member of the Wedding, The 27, 59, 185, 245 Memento Mori 89, 265 Memoirs Found in a Bathtub Memoirs of a Cavalier 72 Memoirs of a Geisha xviii, 126, 155 Memoirs of a Gnostic Dwarf Memoirs of a Survivor 178 Memoirs of an Egoist 268-9 Memoirs of Captain George Carleton 72 Memoirs of Christopher Columbus, The 14, 122, 142, 235 Memoirs of Cleopatra, The Memoirs of Elizabeth Frankenstein, The 256 Memoirs of Hadrian 9, 122, 309, 317 Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, The 80 Memorial, The 152 Memories of the Ford Administration 293

Miles, Rosalind 14, 199 Mr Scarborough's Family Memory Box, The 104-5, 288 Military Philosophers, The Mr Standfast 41 226 Memory of Whiteness, A 136 Mr Stone and the Knights Men and the Girls, The 289 Milk and Honey 92 Mill on the Floss, The 90 Companion 208 Men and Wives 60 Mr Vertigo 14 Millar, Martin 169 Men and Women 223 Mr Wakefield's Crusade Men at Arms 193, 227 Miller, Andrew 66, 142 Mr Weston's Good Wine 227 Men of Men 262 Miller, Henry 86, 254 Mr Wroe's Virgins 143, 241, Men Who Explained Miracles, Miller, Walter M. Jr 109, 144, 285 The 203 250, 251, 297 Millroy the Magician 276 Men Without Shadows 247 Mr Zouch: Superman 226 Mrs Ames 29 Millstone, The 82, 90 Men Without Women 135 Mrs Dalloway 83, 158, 170, Mensonge 36 Milne, A.A. xix 176, 237, 315 Milne, John 68, 229 Mephisto 152 Mer de Glace 85 Milton, John 223, 310 Mrs Dalloway's Party 315 Mrs De Winter 84, 141, 254 Milton in America 2 Meridian 202, 298 Mrs Eckdorff in O'Neill's Mermaids on the Golf Course Milwaukee 243 Mimic Men, The 208, 222 Hotel 158, 285 Mina, Denise 235 Mistress of the Empire 96 Mermaids Singing, The 186 Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont Meshugah 260 Mind to Murder, A 155 Mirgorod 115 Message to the Planet, The Mistressclass, The 241 206 Mirror of her Dreams, The 79 Misérables, Les 78, 80, 148 Mistry, Rohinton 150, 209, Messiah 295 Misery 165 254 Metamorphosis and Other Mishima, Yukio 155 Mists of Memory, The 62 Stories 160, 257 Mitchell, David 98 Methuselah's Children 10, Miss Garnet's Angel 100 132 Miss Herbert (The Suburban Mitchell, Gladys 57, 68 Wife) 267 Mitchell, Margaret xvii, 40, Metroland 24, 274 Mexico Set 173 Miss Lonelyhearts 306 71, **199–200**, 219, 302 Meyer, Nicholas 81 Miss Martha Mary Crawford Mitchison, Naomi 8, 123, Mezzanine, The 19 62 216, 236 Mhudi 265 Miss Peabody's Inheritance Mitford, Nancy 26, 29, 53, Miami Blues 68 105, 266 87, 183 Micah Clarke 81 Miss Silver Intervenes 54 Mixture of Frailties, A 69 Michel Strogoff 295 Miss Smilla's Feeling for Mo; Timothy 54, 87, 94, Micou, Paul 302 Snow 145 170, 209, 276 Microserfs 64 Miss Wyoming 65 Moby Dick 185, 199, 257 Midag Alley 189 Mist in the Mirror, The 141 Model Behaviour 8, 157, Mist of Prophecies. A Midden, The 255 Middle Age of Mrs Eliot, The Mistaken Identity 64 Modern Comedy, A 110 35, 78, 229, 288, 311 Mr Beluncle 229 Modern Utopia, A 303 Middle Parts of Fortune, The Mr Britling Sees It Through Modesty Blaise 101 300 303 Moggach, Deborah 82 Middle Passage, The 208 Mr Campion and Others 5 Moll Flanders 72 Middlemarch xviii, 83, 89, Mr Campion's Farthing 5 Molloy 26 90, 92, 172, 269, 307 Mona Lisa Overdrive 112 Mr. Clive and Mr Page 146 Middlepost 265 Mr Foreigner 168 Money 8, 149, 200, 246, Middlesex 229 Mr Midshipman Hornblower 282, 318 Middleton, Stanley 37 63, 103, 144 Money in the Bank Midnight All Day 169 Mr Norris Changes Trains Monopolies of Loss 112 Midnight Oil 229 151 Monsarrat, Nicolas Midnight's Children [xviii, Mr Palomar 45 189, 257 150, 151, 158, 229, 244, Mr Perrin and Mr Trail 304 Monsieur 86 254 Mr Phillips 170 Monsignor Quixote 124, 242 Midwich Cuckoos, The 118, Mr Pve 221 Monsoon 262 Mr Rosewater 296 Montalbano, William 138 Mr Sammler's Planet 8, 27, Mighty and their Fall, The 60 Montezuma's Daughter 127 Miguel Street 208 Montgomery, L.M. xvii Mile High 133 Mr Sampath 209 Month in the Country, A 100

122.

Month of Sundays, A 293 Mosby's Memoirs 27 Montherlant, Henri de 190 Moscow Set 73 Montrose: the Captain Mosley, Walter 68, 203-4 General 252 Mosquito Coast. The 62. Monty 31 118, 195, 276, 310 Mussolini 32 Moo 257, 261 Mostly Harmless Mv Antonía 50 Moon and Sixpence, The Mother 119 9, 197 Mother and Son 60, 95 Moon Palace 14 Mother Can You Hear Me? 107, 246 Moon Tiger 178 24, 104 Moonfleet 270 Mother London 2, 180, 201, My Century 121 Moonraker 101 260 Moorcock, Michael 2, 180, Mother Night 296 200-1, 221, 237, 251, 260, Mother Russia 243, 282 My Days 209 Mother's Boys 104 Moore, Brian 47, 48, 118, Motion, Andrew 32 143. 201. 238. 242. 292. Mottram, R.H. 300 293. 310 Mountolive 86 Moore, George 29, 290 Mourning Ruby 85 Moore, Lorrie 258 Moveable Feast, A 135 Moore, Ward 237 Moviegoer, The 282 Moorhouse, Geoffrey 287 Moving Pictures 227 253 Moor's Last Sigh, The 244 Mozart and the Wolf Gang 42 Morality Play 5, 199, 292 Much Obliged, Jeeves 313 Moravia, Alberto 271 Mulberry Empire, The 135-6 Morbid Taste for Bones, A Muller, Marcia 218 199 Munro, Alice 47, 204, 257 Mordant's Need 79 Murakami, Haruki 156, More Die of Heartbreak 27 204-5 More Pricks than Kicks Murasaki Shikibu 156 26 More Women than Men 60 Murder at the Vicarage 54 More Work for the Murder by the Book 124 Murder in LaMut 96 Undertaker 5 Moreau's Other Island 304 Murder is Announced, A 54 Moreta 184 Murder Must Advertise 57, Myers, L.P. 190 Morgan, Jude 14 Morgan, Robert 80 Murder of Quality, A 173 Myron 295 Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Morgan's Passing 100, 105 Morning Marcel 69
Morning Tide 249 The 54 Mysteries 137 Murder on the Appian Way, Mornings in Mexico 172 A 248 14 Murder on the Orient Moronic Inferno, The 8 Express 54, 124, 284 Morris, William 89, 109, 290 201-2 Murder on the Yellow Brick Road 229 Morrison, Arthur 81, 197 Murder Room, The 155 Morrison, Toni 48, 202, 210 Murderer, The 217 Morrow, Bradford 187 Morse's Greatest Mystery 74 Murders in the Rue Morgue. Mythago Wood 250 The 67 Myths of the Near Future 21 Mort xviii, 227 Mortal Causes 235 Murdoch, Iris 35, 40, 44, 101, 114, 158, 176, **205-6**, Mortal Coils 149 Mortality and Mercy in 219, 221, 310, 311, 315 Murphy 26, 213 N or M 54 Vienna 233 Murphy, Dervla 287 Morte d'Arthur 26 Morte d'Urban 233, 242 Murther and Walking Spirits 70 Mortimer, John 203 Mortimer, Penelope 82, 289, Museums and Women 293 265 Music & Silence 100, 206, Morvern Callar 249, 304 211, 235, 284, 285

Music of Chance, The 14 Music Programme. The Music School, The 293 Musil, Robert 33, 192 My Apprenticeship 59, 119 My Brilliant Career 3, 14, My Career Goes Bung 107 My Childhood 119 My Cousin Rachel 84 My Dark Places 91 Mv Family and Other Animals 15, 86, 286 My Golden Trades 55, 169 My Home Is Far Away 261 My House in Umbria 285 My Idea of Fun 8, 21, 217, My Legendary Girlfriend 147 My Life and Times 156 My Life as a Fake 48 My Life as a Man 242 My Life in the Bush of Ghosts My Life, My Wife and Aids 38 My Mortal Enemy 50 My Other Life 276 My Secret History 276 My Son's Story 117 Mv Universities 119 Myra Breckinridge 295 Myself When Young 84 Mysteries of Pittsburgh, The Mysterious Stranger, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, The Mystic Masseur, The 208 Myth of Sisyphus, The 46

N is for Noose 120 Nabokov, Vladimir 8, 16, 23, 25, 36-7, 59, 66, 80, 87, 170, 207-8, 214, 216, 246, Nabokov's Dozen 207 Nabokov's Quartet 207

Nail and other stories 163 Naipaul, Shiva 48, 209 Naipaul, V.S. 1, 3, 48, 87, 189, 195, **208-9**, 221, 222, 276, 287, 296 Naive and Sentimental Lover. The 173 Naked and the Dead, The 24, 133, 135, 190, 300 Naked Lunch, The 43, 253 Naked Sun, The 10 Name of the Beast 280 Name of the Rose, The 87, **88**, 116, 199, 269 Names, The 73 Nana 22, 25, 318 Napoleon 32 Napoleon Symphony, The 42, 283 Narayan, R.K. xiv, 101, 150, 152, 195, **209–10**, 214, Narrative of the Life of an American Slave 15 Narziss and Goldmund 116, 137 Nash, Ogden 223 Nashe, Thomas 26 Nat Tate: An American Artist 36 Native Son 20 Native Tongue 138 Natural Curiosity, A 82 Nature of Blood, The 221, 222 Nausea 47, 247 Near and the Far, The Near Escapes 195 Negotiator, The 105 Neon Bible, The 282 Nest of Gentlefolk, A 290 Nest of Vipers, The 4, 198, 246 Net Force 56 Net of Jewels 71 Nether World, The 77, 210 Neuromancer 66, 112, 113 Never Far From Nowhere New Confessions, The 35, 36, 271, 277 New Grub Street 22, 157, 318 New Life, A 28 New Machiavelli, The 303 New Men, The 264 New World, A 150 New World Order, A 222

New York Trilogy, The 13, 19, 210 Newby, Eric 287 Newby, P.H. 209, 276, 302 Newcomers, The 275 News from Ireland, The 285 News from Nowhere 109. News of a Kidnapping 196 Newspaper of Claremont Street, The 284 Newton Letter, The 23 Next of Kin 289 Next to Nature, Art 178 Nexus 254 Niccolò Rising 85, 235 Nice Work 179 Nicholas Nickleby 5, 77, 248 Nicholson, Geoff 58 Nigger of the Narcissus, The 62, 199, 257, 309 Night and Day 315 Night Geometry and the Garscadden Trains 163 172 Night Manager, The Night of Wenceslas, The 7 Night Over Water 281 Night Passage 177 Night Shift 165 Night Train 8 Night Walk 316 Night Watch xviii, 227 Nightfall 10 Nightmares and Dreamscapes 165, 225 Nightrunners of Bengal 94, Nights at the Circus 48, 49, 171, 195, 244, 301 Nightwood 112, 214, 267 Nin, Anaïs 254, 315 Nine Billion Names of God. The 56 Nine Lives 243 Nine Stories 245 Mine Tailors, The 124, 248 Nineteen Eighty-four xviii, 109, 162, **216**, **217** 1985 42, 216 Nineteen Twenty One 277 Ninety-three 148 Ninh, Bao 300 Niven, Larry 10, 56, 132 Nizam's Daughters, The 84, 144 No Comebacks 105 No Exit 247 No Fond Return of Love 275

No Heroics Please 49 No Highway 264 No Laughing Matter 134, 311 No Longer at Ease 1 No Man's Wit 183 No Medals for the Major 68 No Name in the Street 20 No Night is Too Long 236-7 No. Not Bloomsbury 36 No One Writes to the Colonel 196 No Other Life 48, 201 No Telling 277 No Word from Winifred 248 Noah's Ark 282 Nobbs, David 27 Nobody Knows My Name 20 Non-Existent Knight, The None to Accompany Me 117 Noon, Jeff 66, 76, 113, 210-75 Norbu, Jamyang Norfolk, Lawrence 88, 143, **211**, 235 Norris, Frank 268, 318 North and South 90, 112, Northanger Abbey 13, 69 Norwegian Wood 205 Nostromo 62, 125, 209 Not for Publication Not That Sort of Girl 306, 307 Not the End of the World 11 Notebooks of Don Rigoberto, The 294 Notes from the House of the Dead 79, 265 Notes from Underground 79 Notes of a Native Son 20 Nothing Like Leather 229 Nothing Like the Sun 42 Nothing Personal 20 Nothing Sacred 49 Nothing to Wear and Nowhere to Hide 302-3 Noughts and Crosses xviii Nova 251 Nova Express 43 Novel with Cocaine November 1916 264 Now and Then 134 Now That You're Back 163 Nowhere City 182 Number of the Beast, The 132 number9dream 98

Numbers in the Dark 45-6 Old Curiosity Shop, The 77 One Hundred Years of Numquam . 86, 309 Old Devils, The Solitude xviii, 3-4, 71, Old Goriot 21, 89 Nutmeg of Consolation, The 194, 195, 196 212 Old Gringo, The 52, 195 One of Ours 50 Nye, Robert 14, 171 Old Ladies, The 22 One Tree, The 79 Old Love 261 Nymphomation 210-11 One Writer's Beginnings 305 Old Man and the Sea, The Only Children 13, 182 135, 181 Only Forward 66, 211 O. How the Wheel Becomes Old Men at the Zoo, The Only Human 29 It 226 264, 310-11 Only Problem. The O is for Outlaw 120, 218 Old Mortality 252 Only When I Larf 73 O Pioneers! 50 Old New York 307 Op-Centre 56 O-Zone 149, 217, 276 Old Patagonian Express. The Open Streets 204 Open Swimmer, An 312 Oblomov 115 276, 287 O'Brian, Patrick 63, 103, Old Soldiers 18 Operation Shylock 153, 243 Old Wives' Tale, The Optimist's Daughter, The 212, 257 28 O'Brien, Edna 30, 59, 150, Oldfield, Pamela 62 218 Oleander Jacaranda 179 Oranges Are Not the Only O'Brien, Flann 33, 123, Fruit 112, 274, 312 Oliver Twist 25, 77 150, 158, 159, **212-13**, Olshan, Joseph 66, 292 Orchard Keeper, The 184 Olympiad 8 Orchard on Fire, The 53, Obscure Destinies 50 Om 287 218 Omerta 232 Obsession, The 62 Orczy, Baroness 84 Occasion for Loving 117 Omoo 199 Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, The On Beulah Height 140-1, O'Connell, Carol 64, 213 189. 301 O'Connor, Flannery 71, 185, Ordinary Love 262 Original Bliss 163 273 On Bullfighting 163 O'Connor, Joseph 82 On Forsyte Change 110 Original Sin 155, 231 Orlando 241, 315 Octopussy 101 On Green Dolphin Street Odds and Gods 228 95 Orley Farm 288 Odes 224 On Her Majesty's Secret O'Rourke, P.J. 287 Odessa File, The 105, Service 101 Orphan Island 183 129 On the Black Hill 52, 296 Orsinian Tales 173 Odessa Tales 261 On the Eve 282, 290 Orton, Joe 162, 175, 306 On the Natural History of Orwell, George xvii, xviii, 12, O'Donnell, Peter 101 Odo's Hanging 116 Destruction 252 109, 135, 162, 215-16, 217, 225, 228 Odvssev (Homer) 26, 144 On the Road xviii, 164 On the Third Day 281 Oryx and Crake 12 Odyssey, The (Kazantzakis) 254 On the Yankee Station 36 Oscar and Lucinda 17, 25, 47, 48, 195, 309 Oe. Kenzaburo 156 On Writing 165 Of Human Bondage 25, 28, Once and Future Con, The Osterman Weekend, The 77, 78, 197 60 181 Once and Future King, The Oswald's Story 74 Of Love and Other Demons Oswald's Tale 189 Of Love and Shadows 4, 171 Once in a House on Fire 16 Other Boleyn Girl, The 85 Of Mice and Men 268 Ondaatje, Michael 98, 214-Other Fires 119 Of the Farm 293 Other Friday, The 72 Of Time and the River 314 One Corpse Too Many 68 Other Lulus 135 Office of Innocence, The One Day in the Life of Ivan Other Paths to Glory 102 162 Denisovich 217, 264 Other People 8 Officers and Gentlemen 193 One Fat Englishman Other People's Children 289 One Fine Day in the Middle of Other People's Worlds Offshore 99 O'Flaherty, Liam the Night 59 Other Women Oh What A Paradise it Seems One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Otherland 157 Nest 98, 189, 220, 261 Our Ancestors 45, 88, 199, One for the Money 60, 67, O'Hagan, Joan 248 12, 194, 237, O'Hara, John 53, 314 120 Our Father Okri, Ben 1, 3, 214 158-Pound Marriage, The 243, 310 Old Boys, The 285 151 Our Game 172

Paradise Lost 223

Parasites, The 84

Paris Peasant 55

Paretsky, Sara

Paradise News 179

Paradise Postponed 203

Parents and Children 60

120, **218**

Peeping Tom 7, 255 Our Gang 242-3 Parker, Robert B. 51, 68, Peerless Flats 179 Our Man in Havana 124 177, 229 Pegasus in Flight 184 Our Mutual Friend 77 Parsifal Mosaic, The 181 Our Town 309 Parson Harding's Daughter Pegasus in Space Ousmane, Senbene 214 288, 289 Pelecanos, George 33, 68, Out of Sight 177 Parsons, Tony 147 92, 204 Part of the Furniture 306 Pelican Brief, The 125, 280 Out of the Silent Planet 304 Partner. The 125 Pemberlev 13, 254 Pendennis 77, 78, 157, 210, Party Going 226 Out of This World 272 Outer Dark 184 Pascali's Island 292 Penguin Book of Irish Fiction, Outlaws, The 138 Passage of Arms 6, 59 The 278 Outside Man, The 281 Passage to India, A 66, 103-Penitent, The 261 Outsider, The 46 4, 150 Passage to Juneau 287 Penman, Sharon 85 Outsiders, The 245, 274 Penmarric 84, 147 Over The Edge 64 Passing On 178 Overture to Death 54, 197 Passion, The 121, 143, 283, Penultimate Truth, The 76 Ovid 9 311, 312 People of the Abyss, The Passion of New Eve, The 48, Owen, Wilfred 224 180 Owen Glendower 227 49, 109, 272 People Who Knock on the Oxford Exit 74 Passionate Man, A 289, 296 Door, The 140, 246 Oz, Amos 153, 225 Passions 261 People With the Dogs, The Pasternak, Boris 200, 219, 267 282, 283, 302 Peppered Moth, The 82 Pepys, Samuel 175 P is for Peril 120 Pastoral Symphony, The Pack of Cards 178 114, 137 Perchance to Dream 51 Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha 53, Pastors and Masters 60, 233 Percy, Walker 282 Patchett, Ann 229, 258 Perec, Georges 26 Page Turner, The 206, 278 Patchwork Planet, A Perez-Reverte, Arturo 9, Painted Bird, The 208, Paterson, Don 224 108, 201 261 Path of Daggers, The 157 Perfect Happiness 141 Painted House, A 125 Path to the Nest of Spiders, Perfect Peace, A 225 Painter of Signs, The 209, The 45 Perfect Spy, A 172, 266 Paton, Alan 38, 117, 119, Performing Flea 313 Pair of Blue Eyes, A 128 Perfume xviii, 170 Palace of Desire 189 Patrimony: a True Story 243 Permutation City 66 Palace Walk 89, 189 Patriot Games 55, 274 Perpetual Orgy, The 294 Palahniuk, Chuck 91 Pattern Recognition 113 Perriam, Wendy 74 Pale Fire 25, 207 Patterson, Harry 139 Persian Boy, The 236 Pale View of Hills, A 152, Patterson, James 125 Personal Narrative of a 283 Patterson, Richard North Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah Palimpsest 295 281 and Mecca, A 286 Palm Sunday 296 Pattison, Eliot 281 Personal Recollections of Joan Palm-wine Drinkard, The Paula 4 of Arc 290 Pausanias 286 Persuasion xviii, 13 Palomino 306 Pavane 76, 237 Pet Sematary 165, 220, Pamela 239 Pawn in Frankincense 85 Pantagruel 26, 234 Pawn of Prophecy, The 79, Peter Abelard 122, 199 Paper Men, The 28, 116 Peter Camenzind 114, 137 Papers of A.J. Wentworth, BA, Paying Guests 29 Peter Smart's Confessions The 156 Payment Deferred 103 74, 161 Parade's End 102, 317 Peake, Mervyn vvii, 69, 93, Peters, Elizabeth 89 Paradise 202 Peters, Ellis 68, 142, 199 Petit, Chris 260 219-21

Peake's Progress

Pearl, The 268

Pedigree 259

Pears, lain

Pearce, Michael 89

Pebble in the Sky 10

221

2, 75, 143

Pears, Tim 18, 80, 194, 296

Petronius 26, 171

Philip Larkin 32

Phillips, Gary

270

Phantom of the Opera, The

Phillips, Caryl 48, 221-2

204

Phillips, Jayne Anne 230, Philosopher's Pupil, The 176 Philosophical Investigation, A 129, 281 Phineas Finn 288 Phineas Redux 288 Photograph, The 179 Photographer's Wife, The 89 Phules Company 3 Piano Players, The 42, 206 Pickup, The 117 Pickwick Papers 76, 77 Picnic at Sakkara, The 302 Picture of Dorian Gray, The 26 Picture Palace 237, 243, 276 Picture This 134 Pictures from an Institution 37, 70, 139, 305 Pictures of Perfection 141 Piece of Cake 73 Pieces of Light 211, 277 Piemburg Revisited 255 Piercy, Marge 303 Pigeon Feathers 293 Pigs Have Wings 313 Pigs in Heaven 166 Pilcher, Rosamunde xviii, 30, 194 Pilgermann 144 Pilgrimage 159, 231, 315 Pilgrim's Progress 26 Pillars of Hercules, The 276 Pillars of the Earth, The xviii, Pilot's Wife, The 257, 258 Pimlott, Ben 32 Pincher Martin 72, 116, 144, 257 Pirates of Venus 295 Pit, The 318 Pitman, Richard Pixel Juice 211 Plaatje, Sol Place in England, A Place of Dead Roads, The 43 Place of Execution, A 141, Place of Greater Safety, A 194 Plague, The 46, 247 Plague Dogs, The 180 Plain Murder Plain Tales from the Hills 167 Planet of Exile 173

Planet of the Damned 129 Plath, Sylvia 175, 189, 224, 245, 308 Plato Papers, The 2 Playback 51 Player of Games. The Player Piano Players 73 Playing for Thrills 54 Playland 97 Playmaker, The 5, 48, 117, 162, 241, 292 Pleasure of Ruins. The 183 Pleasured 135 Pleasures and the Days, The Plexus 254 Pliny the Younger 175 Plumed Serpent, The 172, Plunkett, James 150, 158 Pnin 37, 207, 208 Poe. Edgar Allan 48, 67. 132, 219, 220, 221, 222-5, Poet, The 61, 213, 281 Poet's Pub 228 Pohl, Frederick 149, 297 Point Counter Point 149 Point of Origin B3 Poison Belt, The 81 Poisonwood Bible, The 3, 66, 165, 166 Polaroids from the Dead 65 Police at the Funeral 5 Pollen 210 Polo, Marco Pomes All Sizes Pomes Penyeach Pompeii 123, 129 Ponder Heart, The 275, 305 Ponsonby Post, The 243 Poodle Springs Poor Mouth, The 33, 213 Poor Things Poorhouse Fair, The 18, 293 Pope's Rhinoceros, The Porno 304 Portable Steinbeck, The 268 Porter, Katherine Anne Porterhouse Blue 7, 83, 255 Portnov's Complaint 134, 242, 246 Portrait in Sepia 4 Portrait of a Killer 64 Portrait of a Lady 154 Portrait of an Unknown Man

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, A 77, 150, 157, 159, 231, 249, 308 Poseidon Adventure, The 257 Possessed. The Possessing the Secret of Joy 298 Possession 44, 126 Post Captain 212 Post-Mortem 63, 64, 213 Postcards 230 Postures 238 Potterism 183 Pound, Ezra Powder 6 Powder Burns 138 Powell, Anthony 36, 99, 149, 226, 231, 301 Powell, Dawn 99, 261 Power and the Glory, The 33, 125, 135, 201 Power of One, The 263 Power of the Sword 262 Power That Preserves, The 79 Powerbook, The 311 Powers, J.F. 233, 242 Powers, Richard 74 Powys, John Cowper 227 Powys, Llewellyn 227 Powys, Theodore 227 Prague Orgy, The 243 Praise Singer, The 236 Pratchett, Terry xvii, xviii, 3, **227–8**, 250, 251 Praxis 302 Prayer for Owen Meany, A xviii, 70, 151, 274, 315 Prayers for Rain 61 Precious Bane 80 Precious Lives 105 Prelude to Foundation 10 Present and the Past, The 60 President's Child, The Pressfield, Steven 8, 236, 248 Prester John 41, 127 Preston, John 58 Presumed Innocent 68, Price, Anthony 266 Price, Richard 138 Price of Salt, The 140 Prichard, Katharine Susannah 309 Prick Up Your Ears 32 Pricksongs and Descants 34

Putting the Boot In 25 Radcliffe 172 Pride and Prejudice xviii, Radiant Way, The 82 **12-13**. 148. 254 Puzo, Mario xvii, 98, 232 Pvm, Barbara 13, 83, 109, Radio Free Albemuth 63 Priest, Christopher 251 Priestley, J.B. 5, 28, 78, 180. 148, **232–3**, 274, 275, 288, Radon Daughters 260, 312 197, 228, 304 310 Rage 262, 265 Rage in Harlem, A Primal Urge, The 297 Pynchon, Thomas 14, 74, 95, 133, 151, 161, 233, Rage of a Demon King 96 Primary Colours 225 Prime Minister, The 288 261, 265, 272 Ragged Trousered Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. Pyramid, The 116, 246 Philanthropists, The xiv, The 265-6 Pyramids 227 xviii, 216 Prince and the Pauper, The Ragtime 74, 210 a Rain Forest. The Prince of West End Avenue, Q is for Quarry 120 Rainbow, The 28, 172 Raine, Craig 224 The 89 Quantity Theory of Insanity, Rainforest 41 Princess Diaries, The xviii The 253 Printer of Malgudi, The 209 Quarantine 29, 65 Rainmaker, The 125 Quarry, The 259 Prisoner of Zenda, The 139, Raise High the Roofbeam, 146, 254 Quartet 238 Carpenters 245 Pritchett, V.S. 193, 198, Quartet in Autumn 232, 233 Raj Quartet, The 104, 150, 228-9, 274, 288, 311 Queen, Ellery 271 167 Queen, The 32 Private Angelo 71, 131 Rama 56 Private Papers 104, 105, Queen of the Dawn 88 Ramses: The Son of Light 218 Queen Lucia 29 Private Parts of Women, The Queen of Sorcery 88 Rankin, lan 67, 75, 141, Queen of the Tambourine, 186, 234-5 The 285 Rankin, Robert 3, 130, 228 Prizzi's Honour 59 Proceed, Sergeant Lamb Queen's Necklace, The 81, Ransmayr, Christoph 191 121 83-4 Ransom 188 Prodigal Summer 166 Queen's Play 85 Ransome, Arthur 7 xviii Prodigy, The 137 Quentin Durward 252 Rap on Race, A 20 Profane Friendship 38 Quentins 30 Rape upon Rape 97 Professor, The 40 Querelle of Brest 20, 119 Raphael, Frederic 83, 97, Professor's House, The 50. Quest for Karla, The 281 208, 247, 275, 293 290, 311 Question of Blood, A 235 Rat. The 121 Progress of Love, The 204 Question of Bruno, The 257 Rates of Exchange 36 Prometheus Deception, The Question of Power, A 59 Ratking 75 181 Question of Upbringing, A Ratner's Star 73 Promised Lands 14, 163. 226 Ravelstein 27 216, 241, 272, 310 Quick and the Dead, The Raven, Simon 226 Promises, Promises 30 230 Raven. The 225 Pronto 177 Quick Service 313 Razor's Edge, The 197 Proper Marriage, A 177 Quiet American, The 66, Re Joyce 42 Prospero's Cell 86 124, 152 Read, Piers Paul 281 Proulx, Annie 126, 229-30, Quiet Life, A 3, 18, 187, 243 Reader, The 231 Quiller Memorandum, The Reading in the Dark 150, 73 Quinx Proust, Marcel 53, 104, 114, 155, 157, 158, 226, **230–1**, 86 Reading Turgenev 285 315, 317 Quo Vadis? 29 Ready to Catch Him Should Providence 40 He Fall 136 Pryce, Malcolm 299 Reage, Pauline 254 Psycho 69 Raban, Jonathan 276, 287 Real Life of Sebastian Knight. Puck of Pook's Hill 167 Rabbit at Rest 293 The 207 Puddn'head Wilson 290 Rabbit is Rich 293 Real People 148, 182 Puffball 302 Rabbit Redux 293 Real Story, The 79 Puig, Manuel 171 Rabbit, Run 293 Real Thing, The 154 Pullman, Philip xviii, 176 Rabelais, François 26, 131, Reality and Dreams 266 Pumpkin Eater, The 82, 289 171, 227, 234, 269 Reality Dysfunction, The 10, Pursuit of Love, The 87 Race of Scorpions 85 Put Out More Flags 301 Rachel Papers, The 8 Realms of Gold, The

204

Reaper Man 227 Reave the Just 79 Rebecca xviii, 40, 69, 84, 141, 200, 220, 254, 302 Rebel, The 46 Rebel Angels, The 69-70, 118, 139, 195 Rechy, John 20 Rector's Wife, The 148, 289 Red Alert 133 Red and the Green. The 206, 219 Red Badge of Courage, The 133, 300 Red Commissar, The 131 Red Death, A 203 Red Dog 9, 71, 180 Red Harvest 127 Red Mars 251 Red Pony, The 268 Red Rabbit 56 Red Storm Rising Red Tent, The 29 Redback 14, 171 Redburn: His First Voyage 199 Redgauntlet 252 Reed, Eliot 6 Reef, The 155, 307 Reflections in a Golden Eye 185, 198 Reflections on a Marine Venus 86 Reflex 107 Regeneration 24, 96 Regenesis 139 Reichs, Kathy 64, 213 Reinhart in Love 131 Reivers, The 94 Remains of the Day, The 152 24. Remarque, Erich Maria 133, 300 Remembering Babylon 66, 168, 190-1, 229 Remembrance of Things Past 53, 104, 114, 155, 157, 158, 226, 230–1, 315, 317 Remorseful Day, The Remote People 301 Renault, Mary 5, 8, 122, 143, 236, 309, 317 Rendell, Ruth 155, 225, **236–7**, 248, 265, 266, 299 Rendezvous with Rama 56 Renegades of Pern, The 184 Report for Murder 185, 186 Reprieve, The 247

Reproductive System. The 130 Republic of Love, The 27, 256 Requiem for a Dream Requiem for a Nun 94 Requiem Shark, The 108 Rest of the Robots. The 10 Restaurant at the End of the Universe, The 2 Restoration 2, 284, 285, 292, 296 Restoree 184 Resurrection 279 Resurrection Men 235 Return of She, The 127 Return of Sherlock Holmes, The 81 Return of the Native, The 128 Reuben 202 Reuben, Reuben 42 Reverse of the Medal, The Revolutions Trilogy, The 23 Rhineman Exchange, The Rhode Island Blues 302 Rhys, Jean 40, 48, 189, **237-8**, 267, 315 Rice, Anne 265, 270 Riceyman Steps 28 Richard Bolitho, Midshipman 103, 212 Richardson, Dorothy 159, Richardson, Henry Handel 14, 74, 178, 206, **238-9**, 249, 309, 314 Richardson, Samuel 97, 239 Richler, Mordecai 55, 78, 240, 306 Riddle-Master Trilogy 176 Riddle of the Sands, The 41, Riddle of the Third Mile, The Riddley Walker 42, 109, 144, 217, 251, 297 Riders, The 312 Riders in the Chariot 308 Riders of the Purple Sage 306 Riding the Iron Rooster. The Riding to the Tigris 287 Riftwar series, The 93, 279 Right Ho, Jeeves 313 Right Stuff, The 315

Rights of Silence. The 38 Ringed Castle, The 85 Rings of Saturn, The Ringworld 56, 132 Riotous Assembly 161, 255, Ripening Seed, The 3, 59, Ripley, Alexandra 200, 254 Riplev Under Ground 140 Ripley Under Water 140 Ripley's Game 140 Ripple from the Storm, A 177 Rise of a Merchant Prince 96 Rising Sun (Crichton) 125 Rising Sun, The (Galbraith) Risk Pool, The 261 Rites of Passage 72, 106, 116, 257, 292 River God 88, 262 Rivethead 16 RL's Dream 203 Roa Bastos, Augusto 14, 123, 195, 244, 294 Road Rage 236 Road to Gandolfo 181 Road to Lichfield, The 178 Road to Omaha. The 181. 281 Road to Oxiana, The 287 Road to Wigan Pier, The 215 Roads to Freedom, The Roaring Boys 15 Rob Rov 249 Robber Bride, The 12, 126 Robber Bridegroom, The 305 Roberts, Kate 299 Roberts, Keith 76, 237 Roberts, Michèle 25, 29, 42, 143, 195, **240-1**, 312 Robertson, James Robinson 257, 260, 265 Robinson, Derek 73, 144 Robinson, Kim Stanley 136, Robinson, Peter 141, 186 Robinson, Robert 83, 248 Robinson Crusoe 72, 118, 256, 257 Robots of Dawn 10 Rocannon's World 173 Rock Springs 49 Rodda, Charles 6 Rodinsky's Room 260 Rodmoor 227

Rogers, Jane 14, 143, 163, 216, 241, 272, 285, 310 Roger's Version 293 Rogue Male 41, 281 Rogue Moon 56 Rolfe, Frederick 114, 123, 242, 282 Roll Call, The 28 Roman Blood 9, 123, 236, 248 Roman Death, A 248 Roman Nights 248 Romance Reader, The 221 Romantic Hero, A 193 Romantic Movement, The 170 Romola 90, 282 Rookery Nook 313 Room Temperature 19 Room With a View, A 13, 104, 155 Rorv and Ita 81 Rose Madder 165 Rosemary's Baby 117 Ross, Martin 150 Rossetti, Christina 224 Rosshalde 47, 64, 137, 218 Rosy Crucifixion Trilogy, The Roszak, Theodore 97, 256 Roth, Henry 28, 39, 172, Roth, Philip 28, 134, 153, 231, 240, **242–3**, 246, 293. 317 Rotters Club, The 57, 248 Roughing It 290 Round the Moon 295 Round the World in Eighty Days 295 Rowling, J.K. xvii Roy, Arundhati xvii, 150, 229, 254, 263 Royal Flash 107, 146 Royle, Nicholas 260 Rubens, Bernice 12, 194, 237, 243, 282, 310 Rubicon 248 Rudin 290 Rules of Attraction, The 90, Rules of Engagement, The 40 Rum Punch 177 Rumours of Rain 119 Rumpole and the Angel of Death 203 Rumpole and the Primrose Path 203

Rumpole for the Defence Rumpole of the Bailey 203 Rumpole's Return 203 Runaway Jury, The 125 Runaway Soul. The 38, 39 Running Dog 14, 73 Running Proud 122 Runyon, Damon 210 Rupert of Hentzau 146 Rush on the Ultimate, A 271 Rushdie, Salman xviii, 150, 151, 158, 196, 214, 229, 244, 254, 263, 309 Rushing to Paradise 21 Rushkoff, Douglas 65 Russ, Joanna 251 Russell, Mary 287 Russell, Mary Doria 251 Russia House, The 172, 173 Russian Beauty, A 207 Russian Girl, The 7 Russian Interpreter, The 108 Russo, Richard 261 Ruth 112, 128 Rutherfurd, Edward 143 Ryder, Jonathan 181 S 293 Sabatini, Rafael 81, 84, 139, 146 Sabbath's Theatre 240, 243 Sachar, Louis xviii Sackville-West, Vita 102 Sacred Country 243, 284 Sacred Hunger 117, 122, 142, 257, 292 Sadaawi, Nawal el 189 Sadeian Woman, The Safe House, The 299 Safety Net, The 33 Sagan, Françoise 59 Sage, Lorna 16 St Agnes' Stand 306 St Aubin de Terán, Lisa 238, 244 Saint Jack 276

Saint Maybe 291

Saki 115, 258

St Urbain's Horseman 240

Salammbô 101, 192, 216

Salinger, J.D. xvii, 73, 74,

158, 210, **245**, **246**, 274

Salterton Trilogy, The 47, 70

205

Salaryman's Wife, The

Salem's Lot 165, 270

Sallis, James 68, 204

Salzburg Tales, The 267 Same Door, The 293 Same River Twice, The 298 Sampson, Kevin 6 Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self 32 Sanctuary 94 Sandcastle, The 35, 158, 206, 221, 311 Sanders, Lawrence 60 Sandglass 169 Sanditon 13 Santaroga Barrier, The 136 Saramago, Jose 29 Saratoga Fleshpot 107 Sarraute, Nathalie 33 Sartoris 94 Sartre, Jean-Paul 47, 245-6 Satan in Goray 1, 117, 132, Satanic Verses, The 244. 309 Satori in Paris 164 Satyricon 26, 171 Saville 37 Sayer, Paul 74, 243 Sayers, Dorothy L. 57, 67, 83, 124, 155, 197, **247-8** Saylor, Steven 9, 123, 236, 248 Scales of Gold 85 Scanlan, Patricia 30 Scanner Darkly, A 76 Scarlatti Inheritance, The 181 Scarlet and Black 155, 268, 269, 283 Scarlet Feather 30 Scarlet Letter, The 25, 80, 131, 199, 217, 227 Scarlet Pimpernel, The Scarlett 200, 254 Scene Changing 41 Scenes of Clerical Life 90 Scenes from Married Life Scenes from Provincial Life Schindler's Ark 162, 300 Schirmer Inheritance, The 6 Schlink, Bernhard 231 School for Love 193 265 Schreiner, Olive Schulberg, Budd 33, 98, 246, 306 Scold's Bridle, The Scoop 3, 157, 301 Scorpion God, The 116 Scorpius 101 Scots Quair, A 112, 249 Scott, Manda 186

Scott, Paul 87, 104, 150, 167 Scott. Sir Walter 249-52. 270, 310 Scottoline, Lisa 64 Sculptress, The 299 Sea and Sardinia 172 Sea and Summer, The 161, Sea Glass 258 Sea-Grape Tree, A 48, 176 Sea, The Sea, The 44, 206. 315 Sea-wolf, The 135, 180 Seagull, The 53 Seal, Jeremy 287 Search, The 264 Searching for Caleb 291 Season in Hell, A 139 Season in Paradise, A 38 Season of Anomie, The 3 Sebald, W.G. 23, 252 Sebastian 86 Second Fiddle 229, 306 Second Foundation 10 Second Wind 107 Secret Agent, The 62, 266 Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, aged 1334, The 274 Secret Garden, The xviii Secret History, The xviii, 126, 273 Secret Lives 29 Secret of Annexe 3, The 74 Secret Pilgrim, The 173, 281 Seduction of the Minotaur Seeds of Time. The 316 Seek My Face 293 Seeking Sanctuary 299 Segal, Erich 302 Seize the Day 27 Selby, Hubert Jr 6, 43, 210 Self, Will 8, 19, 21, 98, 217, 253 Selling Hitler 129 Selvon, Samuel 30 Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord 70, 294 Sense and Sensibility Sensible Life, A 306 Sentimental Education, A 101, 290 Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy, A 269, 287, 291 Separate Tracks 241 Sepulchre 165, 265 Serenity House 7, 89, 266

Sereny, Gitta 32 Sergeant Lamb of the Ninth Serpentwar Saga, The 96 Servant of the Empire 96 Service of All the Dead 74 Service of the Clouds, The 141 Set in Darkness 235 Set of Six. A 62 Seth, Vikram xviii, 143, 150, 206, 244, 254 Seton, Anya xviii, 143 Setting the World on Fire 311 Seven Days in New Crete 109, 121, 202 Seven Men 26 Seven-per-cent Solution. The 81 Seven Seas. The 167 Seven Sisters, The 82 Seven Years in Tibet 287 Seventh Heaven 166 Seventh Scroll, The Several Perceptions 49 Severed Head, A 206 Seville Communion, The 201 Sewell, Anna XVII Sexing the Cherry 2, 49, 285, 311-12 Sexus 254 Seymour, Gerald 105, 139 Shaara, Michael 143 Shadow Baby 104 Shadow Dance 49 Shadow of a Dark Queen 96 Shadow of a Sun 44 Shadow of the Torturer, The Shadow over Babylon 281 Shadow over Innsmouth. The 304 Shadow Play 68 Shadow Rising, The 157 Shadows on the Hudson 261 Shadows on the Rock 50 Shaeffer, Susan Fromberg Shakespeare, William 224, Shaky Relations Shallows 312 Shame 196, 244 Shames, Lawrence 138, 232 Shampoo Planet 65 Shanghai Baby Shannara series, The 96 Shape of Snakes, The Shaping of a Writer, The 84

Shards of a Broken Crown Shark-infested Custard, The 138 Sharpe, Tom 7, 36, 37, 83, 139, 161, 231, **255**, 265 Sharpe's Battle 63 Sharpe's Company 63 Sharpe's Devil 63 Sharpe's Eagle 63 Sharpe's Enemy 63 Sharpe's Fortress 63 Sharpe's Gold 63 Sharpe's Havoc 63 Sharpe's Honour 63, 103, 108 Sharpe's Prev 63 Sharpe's Regiment 63, 84, 144, 283 Sharpe's Revenge Sharpe's Rifles 63 Sharpe's Siege Sharpe's Sword 63 Sharpe's Tiger 63 Sharpe's Trafalgar Sharpe's Triumph Sharpe's Waterloo 63 Shattered 107 Shaw, Bob 316 She 41, 127, 295 She Came to Stay 178 She Came Too Late Sheckley, Robert 23, 130 Sheer Blue Bliss 9, 108 Shell Game 213 Shell Seekers, The xviii, 30, 194 Shelley, Mary 48, 221, 255-Shelley, Percy Bysshe 223 Sheltering Sky, The 3, 47, 215, 309 Shepherd, The 105 Shepherd's Calendar, The Sher, Anthony 265 She's The One 30 Shields, Carol 12, 27, 44. 47, 105, 182, 230, 231, **256-7**, 258, 262, 291 Shields, Jody 273 Shifts 277 Shikasta 178 Shining, The 165 Ship of the Line 103 Ship Who Sang, The Shipping News, The 126, 230 Shirley 112

Shogun 155 Sholokhov, Mikhail 238 Shooting Party, The 102, 193, 296 Short Reign of Pippin IV, The Short Walk in the Hindu Kush. A 287 Shosha 260 Shout at the Devil 262 Shrapnel Academy, The 302 Shreve, Anita 257, 258, 291 Shrimp and the Anemone, The 130 Shroud 23 Shroud for a Nightingale 155, 237 Shuo, Wang 54 Shute, Nevil xviii, 14, 133, 264 Shuttlecock Sicilian, The 232 Sick Puppy 138 Siddhartha 137 Sido 59 Siege, The 85 Siege of Krishnapur, The 94, 108, 136, 150, 167 Sienkiewycz, Henryk 29 Sight for Sore Eyes, A Sign of Four, The 80 Sign of the Cross, The Signals of Distress 66, 118, Significant Sisters 105 Silas Marner 90, 227 Silence 155, 216 Silence Among the Weapons 122, 309 Silence in the Garden, The Silence of the Lambs, The 98, 265, 281 156 Silent Cry, The Silent World of Nicholas Quinn, The 74 215 Silk Silken Net, The 37 Silmarillion, The 278 Silver Wedding 30 Silverberg, Robert 93, 136, 216, 220 Silverthorn 96 Simenon, Georges 124, 217, 259 Simisola 236 Simon, S.J. 5 Simplex Simplicissimus 131 Simpson, Dorothy 54

Simpson, Helen 258 Sinclair, Andrew 133 Sinclair, lain 2, 180, 201, 211, 259-60, 312 Sinclair, Upton 268 Singapore Grip, The 87, 94, Singer, I.J. 261 Singer, Isaac Bashevis 117, 132, 189, 192, 194, 195, 260-1, 282 Singin' and Swingin' 15 Single & Single 6, 173 Sinning With Annie 276 Sins of the Fathers, The 138 Sinuhe the Egyptian 88, 148 Sioux, The 206 Sir Charles Grandison Sir Vidia's Shadow 276 Sirens of Titan, The 251, 295, 296, 297 Sirian Experiments, The 178 Sister Carrie 28, 198 Six 65 Six Easy Pieces 203 Sixth Heaven, The 130 Size of Thoughts, The 19 Sjöwall, Maj 225, 259 Sketches by Boz 76, 77 Sketches from a Hunter's Album 53 Skies of Pern, The 184 Skin of Our Teeth, The 309 Skin Tight 138 Skinner's Rules 225, 235 Skipping Christmas 125 Skull Beneath the Skin, The 57, 140, 155 Skull Mantra, The 281 Skvorecky, Joseph 169, 206 Sky, The 312 Slab Rat 188 Sladek, John 130 Slammerkin 301 Slanstick 296 Slaughterhouse Five 133, 296 Slave, The 260 Slaves of New York 188 Sleep it off, Lady 238 Sleep of Reason, The 264 Sleeping Bones 186 Sleeping Life, A 155 Slow Awakening, The 62 Slowness 168 Small Ceremonies 257 Small Crime in Lisbon, A 68 Small G: a Summer Idyll 140

Small Gods 227, 251 Small House at Allington, The 288 Small Town in Germany, A 172 Small Town Tyrant 148 Small Vices 229 Small Wonder 166 Small World 42, 70, 179 Smiley, Jane 166, 216, 238, 257, 261-2, 306 Smiley's People 173, 281 Smith. Dennis Mack Smith, Dodie xviii, 218 Smith, Thorne 255 Smith, Wilbur 88, 127, 139, 181, 189, **262–3**, 265, 281 Smith, Zadie 11, 30, 169, 229. 263 Smoke 290 Smollett, Tobias 77, 269 Snailwatcher, The 140 Snapper, The 27, 81, 158 120 Snapshot Snow, C.P. 83, 102, 110, 197, 225, **263-4**, 292 Snow Crash 66, 113, 211, Snow Falling on Cedars 126, 145 Snow Goose, The 9 Snow Leopard, The 287 Snow White 46 So I Am Glad 163 So Long and Thanks for All the Fish 2 So Long, See You Tomorrow Sobel, Dava 32 Soft Machine, The 21, 43 Soho Black 265 Solaris 56, 251 Soldier No More 105 Soldier's Art, The 226 Soldier's Embrace, A 117 Soldier's Return, The 37 Soldiers Three 167 Solé, Robert 89, 189 Solid Mandala, The 178, 308 Solomon Gursky Was Here 47, 240 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr 148, 217, **264-5** Some Kind of Black 30 Some Lie and Some Die 236. 248 Some Tame Gazelle 232 Someone to Watch Over Me 113, 211

Somerville, E. 150 Something Childish 193 Something Happened 101, 134, 161 Something in Disguise 41 Something of Myself 167 Something to Remember Me By 27 Son of Light 88 Son of the Circus, A 151 Son of War, A 37 Song of Solomon 202 Song of the Lark, The 50, 183, 206 Songlines, The 14, 52 Songs of Enchantment 214 Songs of the Kings, The 292 Sons and Lovers 37, 112, 171-2, 218 Sophie's Choice 163, 265, Sopranos, The 163, 274 Sorrentino, Gilbert 19 Sorrow of War, The 300 Sorrows of Young Werther, The 114, 115 Sorry, Dad 15 Soseki, Natsume 156 Sot-Weed Factor, The 88, 106, 233, 296 Soueif, Ahdaf 89, 189 Soul Music 227 Soul of Kindness. The 274 Sound and the Fury, The 4, Sound of Trumpets. The 203 Sour-Sweet 209, 276 Sourcery 227 South, The 277 South of the Border, West of the Sun 205 South Riding 90 Southern, Terry 98, 133, 233, 261 Southern Cross 64 Soyinka, Wole 1, 3, 16, 214 Space Merchants, The 149 Spanish Farm Trilogy, The 300 Spanish Lover, A 289 Spanky 253 Spark, Muriel 89, 155, 183, 194, 208, 242, 257, **265-6**, 296, 298, 310 Sparrow, The 251 Spartacus 98 Spartan 248 Speak, Memory 16, 207 Spectre, The 119

Spell. The 146 Spell for Chameleon, A 88. 279 Spell in the Country, A 64 Spell of Winter, A 85 Spellsinger 88 Spider 187 Spies 108, 237 Spinoza of Market Street, The 261 Spinrad, Norman 76, 237, Spinsters in Jeopardy 196 Spire, The 47, 88, 116, 122, 199, 292 Spirit-Wrestlers, The 287 Split Images 177 Splitting 302 Spoils of Poynton, The 154 Spoilt City, The 193 Spooky Art, The 190 Sport of Nature, A 12, 117, Sportsman's Sketches, A 290 Spring, Howard 225 Spring of the Ram, The 85 Spring Sonata 243 Sprouts of Brentford, The 130 Spurling, John 146, 254 Sputnik Sweetheart 205 Spy Hook 73 Spy Line 73 Spy Sinker 73 Spy Story 73 Spy Who Came in from the Cold, The 73, 172 Spy's Honour 266 Squeeze Play 13 SS-GB 73, 129, 237 Stafford, Jean 193 Staincliffe, Cath 186 Stainless Steel Rat, The 3, 129 Stainless Steel Rat for President, The 129 Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World, The 129 Stainless Steel Rat Wants You!. The 129 Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge, The 129 Stalin's Nose 287 Stalky and Co 167 Stallwood, Veronica 74 Stamboul Train 6, 124, 284 Stand, The xviii, 165 Stand on Zanzibar 130

Stanley and the Women 7 Stapledon, Olaf 178 Staples, Mary Jane 62 Star Called Henry, A 81 Star Fraction, The 23 Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers 129 Star Struck 186 Staring at the Sun 24, 89, Stark, Freya 287 Stark, Richard 177 Starr, Jason 91 Stars and Bars 35, 276 Stars Like Dust, The 10 Stars My Destination, The 136, 250 Stars of the New Curfew 214 Starship Troopers 132 Start in Life, A 40, 237 State of Independence, A State of Siege 46 Statement, The 201 Statues in a Garden 27 Status Civilization, The 130 Staying On 87 Staying with Relations 183 Stead, Christina 4, 107, 115, 200, **267**, 288, 309 Stein, Gertrude 315 Steinbeck, John xvii, xviii, 25, 184, **267-8**, 287, 291, 318 Stendhal 155, 268-9, 283 Step Across This Line 244 Stephen Hero 159 Stephenson, Neal 66, 113, 211, 251 Steppenwolf 137, 214 Stepping Westward 36, 37 Sterling, Bruce 66, 113, Sterne, Laurence 97, 158, 171, 234, **269**, 287, 291 Stet 16 Stevenson, Robert Louis xviii, 81, 144, 197, 249, **270**, 291 Stewart, J.I.M. 83 Stick 177 Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves 313 Still 36, 277 Still Life 44 Stir Fry 112 Stitch in Time, A 178 Stoker, Bram 220, 256, 270 Stone, Irving 9, 235 Stone, Robert 190

Stone Diaries. The 12, 105, 230, 256-7, 262 Stone Virgin 292 Storey, David 37, 172 Stories in an Almost Classical Mode 38-9 Stories of Eva Luna, The 4 Storm Child 281 Storm Island 102 Stormy Weather 138 Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor, The 196 Story of an African Farm, The 265 Story of Lucy Gault, The 285 Story of My Life, The 6, 65, 188 Story of O, The 254 Story of the Eye, The 254 Story of the Night, The 55, 112, 277 Story of Tracy Beaker, The XVIII Storyteller, The 140, 195, 196, 294 Stout, Rex 68, 124, 270-1 Straight 107 Strait is the Gate 114, 269 Strange Fits of Passion 258, Strange Meeting 141 Strange Pilgrims 196 Stranger at the Palazzo d'Oro, The 276 Stranger in a Strange Land Stranger Shores 58 Strangers 308 Strangers and Brothers 102, 197, 263-4 Strangers on a Train 98, 140, 284 Straub, Peter 165 Street, The 240 Street Lawyer, The 125 Strip Jack 235 Strip Tease 138 Strong Poison 247 Strumpet City 150, 158 Studs Lonigan 268 Study in Scarlet, A 80 Styron, William 95, 163, 190, 265, 283 Subterraneans, The 164 Success 8, 99, 208 Such Darling Dodos 311 Suffrage of Elvira, The 208 Sugar and Rum 292 Sugar Cane 18, 19

Sugar House, The 308 Sugar Mother, The 183 Sugar Street 189 Suicide Hill 91 Suitable Boy, A xviii, 143, 150, 244, 254 Sula 202 Sullivan, Tricia 66, 113, Sum of All Fears, The 55, 280 Sum of Things, The 193 Summer 307 Summer before the Dark. The 178 Summer Bird-Cage, A 82 Summer Book, The 210 Summer Lightning 64, 313 Summer of a Dormouse, The Summer's Lease 203 Summing Up, The 197 Summons, The 125 Summons to Memphis, A Sun Also Rises, The 9, 135 Sun Between Their Feet, The 178 Sun City 298 Sunbird. The 181 Sunburn 138, 232 Sunday Best 243 Sundering Flood, The 202 Sunne in Splendour, The 85 Super-Cannes 21 Supping with Panthers 270 Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman 16 Surfacing 12, 28, 47, 237, Surfeit of Lampreys 57, 155, 196, 197 Surgeon's Mate, The 212 Suskind, Patrick xviii, 170 Suspension of Mercy, A 140 Sutcliffe, William 111, 147 Suttree 184 Svevo, Italo 101, 158, 161, 221, 271 Swallows and Amazons xviii Swami and Friends 209 Swan in the Evening, The 176 Swann, Susan 249 Swann's Way 53, 155, 230, Swanson, Doug J. 138

Sweet Danger 5

Sweet Dove Died, The

Sweet Dreams 93, 108, 149, Sweet Shop Owner, The 272 Sweet Thames 143, 167, 168 Sweet William 18 Sweetest Dream, The 178 Sweets of Pimlico, The 310 Swift, Graham 23, 187, 222, 237, 271-2, 277, 296 Swift, Jonathan 93, 118, 234. 272 Swimming Pool Library, The 112, 114, 136, 145-6 Swimming Pool Season, The Swing, Hammer, Swing 82, 123, 229, 249 Switch Bitch 225 Sword of Honour 35, 193, 301 Sword of Pleasure. The Sword of Shannara, The 93 Sword of the Lictor, The 251 Sword of Truth series, The 93, 96 Syal, Meera 30, 66, 169 Sybil, or the Two Nations 90, Sylvia's Lovers 112 Symons, Julian 75, 140 Symposium 266 Т T Zero 45 Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks, The 70 Tactics of Mistake 10 Tagore, Rabindranath Tailor of Panama, The 173 Taipan 54 Take a Girl Like You Take a Thief 184 Take Two at Bedtime 5 Tale of Genji, The 156 Tale of the Good Old Man and the Pretty Girl 271 Tale of Two Cities, A xviii, 77 Talented Mr Ripley, The 140 Tales of Hearsay 62

Tales of Mystery and

Catastrophes 140

33

Tales of the City 55, 148,

Tales of Ordinary Madness

Imagination 132, 220,

Tales of Natural and Unnatural

Tales of Space and Time 303 Tales of the Jazz Age 99 Tales of the Night 145 Tales of Unrest 62 Talisman, The 165 Talking It Over 25 Talking to Strange Men 236. 266 Talking to the Dead 85 Talon of the Silver Hawk 96 Tan, Amy 54, 126 Tannahill, Reay 85 Taps at Reveille 99 Tar Baby 48, 202 Tara Road 30 Tarka the Otter 9 Tarr 9 Tartarin of Tarascon 291 Tartt, Donna xviii, 126, 273 Taste for Death, A 5, 155 Tax Inspector, The 48 Taylor, Andrew 299 Taylor, Elizabeth 35, 101, 273-4, 307, 309 Taylor, Peter 311 Tea from an Empty Cup 66 Tehanu 176 Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone 20 Telling Liddy 4, 24 Tempest-Tost 5, 69 Temple of My Familiar, The 298 Temples of Delight 282 Temporary Kings 226 Temporary Shelter 274, 311 Temptation of Eileen Hughes, The 201 Temptation of St Anthony, St 101 Ten Creeks Run 107 Ten Little Indians 54 Ten Little Niggers 54 10lb Penalty 107 Tenant of Wildfell Hall, The Tender is the Night 99, 181 Tendrils of the Vine, The 59 Tennant, Emma: 13, 254 Tennyson, Alfred, Lord 224 Tepper, Sherri S. 251 Terminal 139 Terminal Beach, The 201 Terra Nostra 122, 196, 235 Tess of the d'Urbervilles xviii, 40, 128 Tesseract, The 111 Testament, The 125 Testament of Experience 15

Testament of Friendship 15 Testament of Youth 15 Tevis, Walter 98 Tev. Josephine 68 Thackeray, William Makepeace 13, 77, 78, 105, 148, 157, 210, 275, 283, 307 Thanksgiving 75 That Eye 312 That Hideous Strength That Old Ace in the Hole 230 That Summer 96 That They May Face the Rising Sun 23, 150 That Uncertain Feeling 7 That Was Then. This Is Now Theft, A 27 Their Eyes Were Watching God 202 Then There Were None 54 Theophilus North 309 Therapy 179 Thérèse Desqueyroux 198 Thérèse Raquin 318 Theroux, Alexander 158 Theroux, Paul 42, 54, 62, 80, 111, 118, 149, 195, 197, 217, 237, 243, 276, 287, 310 These Twain 28 Thesiger, Wilfred 287 They Came from SW19 180 They Were Defeated 183 Thief of Time, The 227 Thin Man, The 127 Things Fall Apart 1, 3, 52, 66, 119 Thinks 179 Third Life of Grange Copeland, The 298 Third Man, The 124 Third Policeman, The 212 Thirkell, Angela 254, 288 Thirsty Evil, A 295 Thirteen Gun Salute, The 212 Thirty-Nine Steps, The 41 This Boy's Life 16 This Day All Gods Die This Gun for Hire 124 This Side of Paradise 99 This Was the Old Chief's Country 178 Thomas, D.M. 49, 106, 206, 254, 315 Thomas, Dylan 224 Thomas Covenant series 93

Thompson, Hunter S. 315 Thompson, Jim 127 Thompson, Stephen Thomson, Rupert 48 Thorn Birds, The xviii, 200 Thorpe, Adam 36, 211, 238, 276-7. 296 Those Barren Leaves 149 Thought Gang, The 58, 98 Thousand Acres, A 166, 238, 261, 262 Thousand and One Nights, A Three Cheers for the Paraclete 162, 242, 308 Three Hostages, The 41 Three Lives 315 Three Men in a Boat 156 Three Men on the Bummel 156 Three Musketeers, The 83, 139, 235 Three-Pipe Problem, A 75 Three Singles to Adventure 286 Three Six Seven 122 Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, The 76 Three Stories 101 3001 56 Three Times Table 241 Threshold 173 Throwback, The 255 Thubron, Colin 276, 287 Thunder Point 139, 281 Thunderball 101 Thursday Friend, The 62 Tiberius 9, 123 Ticket of Leave 259 Ticket That Exploded, The 43, 76 Tides of War 248 Tiger for Malgudi, A 209 Tiger in the Smoke. The 5. 55, 155 Tiger! Tiger! 250 Tigers are Better-Looking Tilly Trotter 62 Tilly Trotter Wed 62 Tilly Trotter Widowed Tillyard, Stella 32 Timbuktu 14 Time and Tide 218 Time Bomb 281 Time Enough to Love 132 Time Machine, The 93, 303, Time Must Have a Stop 149 Time of Gifts, A 286 Time of Hope, A 264 Time of the Angels, The 206 Time of the Hero, The 133, 216, 294 Time Out of Joint 76 Time Regained 230 Time to be Born, A 99 Time to Be in Earnest 155 Time to Dance, A 37 Time to Die, A 262, 263 Time to Hunt, A 139 Time to Kill, A 125 Time Will Darken It 50, 261 Time's Arrow 8 Tin Drum, The 120, 121, 133, 244 Tin Men. The 108 Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy 172, 281 Tinker's Girl, The 62 Tipping the Velvet 210, 300 'Tis . 16 Tishomingo Blues 177 Titus Alone 219 Titus Groan 219 To A God Unknown 267 To Catch a Spy 6 To Have and Have Not 135. 181 To Jerusalem and Back 27 To Keep the Ball Rolling 226 To Kill a Mockingbird , xviii, 53, 71, 95, 229, 273 To Let 110 To Lie With Lions 85 To Ride Pegasus 184 To Room Nineteen 178 To the Ends of the Earth 116 To the Hermitage 23, 36 To the Hilt 107 To the Island 16 To the Lighthouse 87, 95. 315 To the Wedding 27 Tóibín, Colm 55, 112, 150, 277-8 Toilers of the Sea, The 148, 199, 227 Told by an Idiot 183 Tolkien, J.R.R. - xviii, 77, 88, 93, 96, 157, 250, **278-9** Tolstoy, Leo xix, xvii, 119, 136, 219, 247, 270, 279-**82**, **283**, 300, 310 Tom Brown's Schooldays 107, 249, 253 Tom Jones 72, 77, 97, 239,

Tom O'Bedlam 220 Tom Sawyer Abroad 290 Tom Sawyer Detective 290 Tomalin, Claire 32 Tombs of Atuan, The 176 Tommvknockers. The Tono-Bungay 148, 203, 228, 275, 303 Too Many Cooks 68 Toole, John Kennedy 158, 161, 246, 269, 282 Tooth and Nail 235 Topless Tulip Caper, The 271 Torrents of Spring, The (Hemingway) 135 Torrents of Spring (Turgenev) 290 Torrington, Jeff 82, 123, 229, 249 Tortilla Curtain, The 25 Tortilla Flat 184, 267 Tosches, Nick 232 Total Recall 218 Touch of Frost, A 74 Touch of Love, A 58 Tough Guys Don't Dance 190 Tough, Tough Toys for Tough, Tough Boys 253 Tourist Season 138 Tournier, Michel 72 Toward the End of Time 293 Towards the End of the Morning 108, 157 Tower of London, The 252 Towers of Trebizond, The 183, 266 Town, The 94 Town Like Alice, A xviii, 14 Townsend, Sue 274 Toxic Shock 120 Tov Soldiers 30 Traffics and Discoveries 167 Tragedy at Law 203 Tragedy of Tom Thumb, The 97 Tragic Muse, The 154 Trainspotting 6, 249, 304 Traitor's Purse 5 Tramp Abroad, A 290 Transmigration of Timothy Archer, The 76 Tranter, Nigel 85, 252 Trap Line 138 Trapido, Barbara 148, **282**– Traveller, If you Come to Spa

Travelling Hornplayer, The Travels in West Africa 287 Travels of Maudie Tipstaff, The 104 Travels With a Donkey in the Cévennes 291 Travels with Charley 287, 291 Travels With My Aunt 124 Traven, B. 62, 125, 139 Travers, Ben 313 Treason's Harbour Treasure Island xviii, 254, Treasure of the Sierra Madre. The 62, 125, 139 Tree of Hands, The 236 Tree of Man. The 308 Treece, Henry 122 Tremain, Rose 2, 3, 100, 167, 168, 206, 211, 235, 243, **284-5**, 292, 296 Trembling of a Leaf, The 197 Tremor of Forgery, The 140 Tressell, Robert xiv, xviii, 216 Trevayne 181 Trevor, William 35, 158, 201, 229, 274, 285-8 Trial, The 160, 161, 162, 208, 214, 216 Trick Is to Keep Breathing, The 163, 189 Trick of It, The 108 Trick of the Ga Bolga, The 150 Trilby 256 Trilogy 13–14 Trinities 232 Tristram Shandy 97, 158, 171, 234, 269 Trocchi, Alexander 6, 43 Trollope, Anthony 78, 110, 111, 148, 210, 254, 264, **288**, 289 Trollope, Joanna 148, 179. 233, 288, **289**, 296, 306 Tropic of Capricorn 86 Trouble for Lucia 29 Trouble With Lichen 316 Troubled Sleep 247 Troubles 93-4, 150 Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman, The 70 Truckers 227 True at First Light 135 True Confessions 138 True Detective 229 True History of the Kelly Gang 14, 47, 48, 163, 191

True Stories 12 True Tales of American Life 14 Trumpet 30 Trumpet Major, The 128 Trunk Music 61 Trust 82, 138, 206 Trust Me 293 Truth (Zola) 318 Truth, The (Pratchett) 227 Truth About Lorin Jones, The 182 Tryst, The 75 Tunc 86, 309 Tunnel of Love, The Tunnel Vision 218 Turgeney, Ivan Sergeevich 53, 218, 282, 283, 289-Turn of the Screw, The 118, 141, 154, 220 Turner, George 161, 217 Turow, Scott 68, 125 Turtle Diary 144 Turtle Moon 291 Tutuola, Amos 1, 209 Twain, Mark 53, 71, 78, 107, 246, 283, 290-1 12 Edmonstone Street 191 Twenty-one Stories 124 27th Kingdom, The 194, 206, 233, 266 28 Days 111 Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea 257, 280, 295, 304 Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky 228 Twenty Years After 84 Twist at the End. A 248 Twits. The xviii 'Twixt Land and Sea 62 Two Deaths of Señora Puccini. The 4 Two Faces of January, The 140 Two Lives 285 Two or Three Graces 149 2001: A Space Odyssey 2010: Odyssey Two 56 2061: Odyssey Three 56 Two Worlds and their Ways Twyborn Affair, The 296, 308 Tyler, Anne 100, 105, 148, 182, 221, 246, 257, 258, 284, 291, 293 Typee 199

Typhoon 62, 181 Tyrants Destroyed 207 U and 1 19 Ubik 76 Ultima Thule 239 Ultimate Risks 148 Ultramine 181 Ulverton 238, 277, 296 Ulysses xviii, 26, 95, 157-9, 181, 213, 260, 309 Unbearable Lightness of Being, The 161, 168 Uncle Dynamite 313 Uncle Fred in the Springtime 313 Uncle Rudolf 18 Uncle Tom's Children 71 Uncle Vanya 53 Uncollected Stories 94 Uncommercial Traveller, The 77 Unconditional Surrender 193 Unconsoled, The 152 Under the Banyan Tree 209 Under the Frog 98 Under the Greenwood Tree 128 Under the Jaguar Sun 45 Under the Net 101 Under the Volcano 33. 125, 159, 171, 181, 214, Under the Wheel 137 Under Western Eyes 62, 80, Undercurrents 237 Underground 205 Underworld 73, 74, 190, Undset, Sigrid 128, 216 Undue Influence 40 Unequal Marriage, An Unexplained Laughter 303 Unfinished Tales 278 Unfortunate Traveller, The Unguarded Hours Unicorn, The 40 Unicorn Hunt, The 85 Union Jack 186 Union Street 24 United States 295 Universal Baseball Association, The 282 Universal History of Infamy, A 34

Unkindness of Ravens, An 236 Unknown Shore, The 212 Unless 257 Unlimited Dream Company, The 121 Unnameable, The 26 Unnatural Causes 155 Unnatural Exposure 64 Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club. The 197 Unsuitable Job for a Woman, An 155 Unsworth, Barry 5, 117, 122, 142, 199, 214, 257, 292 Untouchable, The 23 Unusual Life of Tristan Smith. The 48 Unvanguished, The 94 Up the Country 107 Updike, John 18, 19, 53, 92, 109, 117, 118, 218, 243, 245, 246, 249, 291, 293, 302 Upward, Edward 152 Urgent Copy 42 Uris, Leon 153 Urquhart, Jane 47 Use of Weapons 22 Ustinov, Peter 16 Utz 52 V 233 Vacant Possession 193-4, Vacillations of Poppy Carew, The 284, 306 Valis 21, 76 Valley of Bones, The 226 Valley of Fear, The 80, Valmouth 60 Van, The 81, 87, 150 Van der Post, Laurens 117 Van Vogt, A.E. Vance, Jack 79, 136, 220 Vanity Fair 13, 148, 275, 283, 307 Vanity of Duluoz 164 Vansittart, Peter 122 Vargas Llosa, Mario 4, 133, 171, 195, 196, 216, 233, 261, 294 Various Miracles 256 Vatican Cellars, The 114, Vendetta 75

Vendor of Sweets, The 150, Venus Throw. The 248 Venusberg 149, 226 Vermilion Sands, The Verne, Jules 56, 80, 93, 127, 172, 250, 257, 280, 295, 304 Vertigo 252 Very Good Hater, A 141 Very Private Life, A 272 Vestal Fire 183 Veteran and other Stories, The 105 Viceroy of Ouidah, The Vicinity Cluster 184 Vicious Circle, A 109 Vickers, Sally 100 Vicky Angel xviii Vicomte of Bragelonne, The Victim, The 27, 47 Victor, The 247 Victoria Line, Central Line 30 Victorians, The 310 Vidal, Gore 8, 122, 123, 220, 225, 264, 295-6, 317 View of the Harbour, A 274 Vile Bodies 29, 99, 226, 301 Village Affair, A 289, 306 Village By the Sea, The 150 Villette 40, 214 Vine, Barbara 67, 75, 85, 140, 187, 236, 299 Vineland 74, 233 Vinnie Got Blown Away 33 Vintage Book of War Stories, The 96 Vintage Murder 196 Vintage Stuff 255 Vintner's Luck, The 292 Violent Enemy, The 139 Violent Land, The 225 Violent Ward 73 Virgin in the Garden, The 41, 44, 82, 183, 206 Virgin Soil 290 Virgin Soil Upturned Virgin Suicides, The Virginians, The 275 Viriconium Nights 251 Virtual Light 65 Visible Worlds 47 Visions of Cody 164 Vivisector, The 308 Voices of Time, The Void, A 26 Void Moon 61 Vollmann, William T. 211

Voltaire 272 Vonnegut, Kurt 121, 130, 132, 133, 195, 233, 251, 257, 295, 296-7 Voss 48, 72, 118, 191, 308, 309, 310 Vox 19, 254 Voyage in the Dark 238 Voyage of the Destiny, The 14 Voyage of the Narwhal, The Voyage of the Space Beagle, The 10 Voyage Out, The 315 Voyage to the End of the Room 98 Voyageurs 143 Vurt 66, 76, 113, 210 W Waddell, Helen 122, 199

Wahlöö, Per 225, 259
Waiting for Godot 26
Waiting for the Barbarians 58
Waiting for the Mahatma 209
Waiting Game, The 243
Wake the Dead 54
Walcott, Derek 224
Waldo 276
Walkabout 118
Walker, Alice 71, 202, 298
Walkin' the Dog 203–4
Wall, The 296
Wallace, David Foster 74, 205
Wallace, Edgar 225
Wallace, Lew 148

Wallace, Edgar 225
Wallace, Lew 148
Walled Orchard, The 236
Waller, Robert 302
Walpole, Horace 69
Walpole, Hugh 22, 304
Waltari, Mika 88, 148
Walters, Minette 140, 237, 299

Wapshot Chronicle, The 52, 148, 246 Wapshot Scandal, The 52 War Against Cliché 8 War and Peace xix, 247, 279, 282, 283, 300

War Between the Tates, The 139, 182, 291 War in Heaven 227 War in the Air, The 303 War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts, The 70,

171

War of the End of the World. The 216, 261, 294 War of the Saints, The 171 War of the Worlds. The 56. 303 Warden, The 148, 210, 288, 289 Warlock 262 Warlord of the Air 200, Warmer Season, A 66, 292 Warner, Alan 163, 249, 274, 304 Warner, Marina 48 Warner, Rex 162 Warren, Robert Penn 305 Washington DC 264, 295 Washington Square 154, Wasp Factory, The 8, 22, 265 Waste Land, The 223 Watcher and Other Stories. The 45 Watching Me Watching You 302 Water-Method Man, The 151 Waterfall, The 82 Waterland 222, 237, 271-2, 277, 296 Watermelon 30 Waters, Sarah 210, 300-1 Watership Down xix, 9 Waterway 158 Watson, William 143 Watsons, The 13 Watson's Apology 18 Watt 26 Waugh, Evelyn xvii, 3, 26, 29, 35, 36, 64, 66, 99, 108, 157, 175, 189, 193, 226, 249, **301-2**, 305, 310 Waugh in Abyssinia 301 Waverley 252 Waves, The 231, 315 Way Forward Is With a Broken Heart, The 298 Way Home, The 239

Way I Found Her, The 3, 284, 285 Way in the World, A 48, 209 Way of All Flesh, The 60, 218 Way Through the Woods, The 74, 155 Way to be Free, A 214

Way We Live Now, The 288 Way We Were, The 293 We 216

Who Do You Think You Are?

Weather in the Streets. The Boy? 33 176 Web 316 Web and the Rock. The 314 Webb, Charles 98, 317 93.96 Webb, Mary 80 Wedding Group, The 274. 307 Wee Willie Winkie 197 Weidman, Jerome 240, 246. Weight of Water, The 258 Welcome to Hard Times 306 Welcome to the Monkeyhouse 296 Weldon, Fay 80, 117, 118, 217. 302-3 103 Well at The World's End, The Well of Loneliness, The 112 Wells, H.G. 28, 56, 77, 78, 93, 97, 148, 203, 216, 228, 250, 256, 270, 275, 295, 303-4, 316 Wells, Rebecca 71 Welsh, Irvine 6, 249, 253, 304 Welty, Eudora 27, 64, 71, 185, 204, 275, **304-5** Whit 22 Wench is Dead. The 74 Wentworth, Patricia 54, 57 Wesley, Mary 229, 284, 288, 305-6, 307 West, Morris 201, 242, 292 West, Nathanael 98, 162, 272, 306 West, Paul 260 West of Sunset 97 Western Lands, The 43 Westlake, Donald E. 60, 313 Westmacott, Mary 54 Weyman, Stanley J. 84 146 Weymouth Sands 227 Wharton, Edith 50, 55, 60, 78, 80, 128, 155, 268, 307 What a Carve Up! 25, 37, 57, 254, 315 What Am I Doing Here? 16, What Maisie Knew 130 What Makes Sammy Run? 98. 246. 306 What We Talk About When We Talk About Love 49 White Mice What's Become of Waring? 36, 226, 231 White Teeth 229, 263 What's Bred in the Bone 36. 69, 70, 151, 158, 171 Whitman, Walt 224

What's to Become of the Wheatley, Denis 220 Wheel of Time series, The When I Lived in Modern Times 153 When My Girl Comes Home When Rain Clouds Gather When the Sleeper Wakes 303 When the Women Come Out to Dance 177 When We Were Orphans 152 Where Angels Fear to Tread Where Eagles Dare 189 Where I'm Calling From 49, Where There's a Will 271 Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty, The 82 While England Sleeps 146. Whipping Star, The 136 Whispering Land, The 286 Whistling Woman, A 44 White, Antonia 3, 214, 239, 242, 246, 307-8 White, Edmund 3, 112, 146 White, Patrick 14, 47, 48, 72, 118, 143, 178, 191, 195, 257, 296, **308-9**, 310 White, T.H. 88 White Butterfly 203 White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings 2, 259 White City Blue 147 White Company, The 80, White Dog 180 White Dragon, The 184 White Fang 9, 180 White Goddess. The 121 White Gold Wielder White Hotel, The 49, 106, White-jacket, or The World in a Man-o'-War 199 White Jazz 91 White Lightning White Merc with Fins 33 White Noise 73, 151 11, 30, 169,

36, 204 Who Killed Palomino Molero 294 Who Stole Sassi Manoon? Who Was Oswald Fish? Whore Banquets 168 Why Are We in Vietnam? 190 Why Come to Slaka 36 Why Haven't You Written? 117 Whyte, Christopher 112 Wide Net, The 305 Wide Sargasso Sea 40, 48. 237-8 Wideman, John Edgar 20, Widow for One Year, A 151 Wife to Mr Milton 121, 142, 183, 285 Wiggins, Marianne 116, 257 Wild Boys, The 43 Wild Girl, The 29, 42, 143, 241 Wild Horses 107 Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, The 179 Wild Sheep Chase, A 205 Wild Swans 15, 54 Wilde, Oscar 26, 175 Wilder, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Thornton 9, 121. 122, 142, 309, 317 Wilderness Tips 12 Wilhelm Meister 114, 115 Will You Please be Quiet, Please 49, 204 Willeford, Charles 68, 138 Williams, Charles Williams, John 299 Williams, Joy 230 Williams, Niall 278 Williams, Nigel 180 Williams, Tad 157 Williams, Tennessee Williamson, Henry 9, 226, Williwaw 295 Wilson, A.N. 7, 203, 233, 310 Wilson, Angus 35, 44, 78, 203, 221, 229, 264, 274, 288, 293, 310-11 Wilson, Jacqueline xvii, xviii Wilson, Robert 68 Wilt 37, 139, 255

Wilt Alternative, The

Wilt on High 255

255

Wind in the Willows, The xiv, Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, The 156, 205 Wind's Twelve Quarters, The 173 Wine-Dark Sea, The 212 Wine of Astonishment, The 48 Winesburg, Ohio 28, 261 Winged Pharaoh 122 Wingfield, R.D. 74, 237 Wings 227 Wings, Mary 186 Wings of the Dove, The 35, 104, 154 Winner Take Nothing 135 Winnie the Pooh xix Winter King, The 63 Winter Notes on Summer Experiences 79 Winter's Heart, The 157 Winterson, Jeanette 49, 112, 121, 143, 274, 283, 285, 311-12 Winton, Tim 14, 48, 312-13 Wire in the Blood, The 186, Wise Blood 71, 185, 273 Wise Children 5, 11, 48, 49 Wise Virgin 310 Wishart, David 9, 123 Witch Hunt 235 Witch of Exmoor, The Witches Abroad 227 Witches of Eastwick, The 117, 118, 293 Witchwood 41 With Your Crooked Heart 24, Within a Budding Grove 104, 230, 317 Within the Tides 62 Without Remorse 55 Witness to Evil 218 Wittgenstein's Mistress 256 Wives and Daughters 13, 112 Wives of Bath, The 249 Wizard of Earthsea, A 176 Wizard's First Rule 157 Wodehouse, P.G. 29, 51, 64, 156, 313 Woe to Live On 185 Wolf Solent 227 Wolf to the Slaughter 236 Wolfe, Gene 79, 93, 251 Wolfe, Thomas 71, 159, 164, 172, 314 Wolfe, Tom 55, 200, 314-15 Wolff, Tobias 16, 49

Womack, Jack 66, 251 Woman and the Ape, The 145, 253 Woman in Black, The 141, Woman in White, The xix, 225 Woman of Andros, The Woman of Cairo, A 299 Woman of the Inner Sea 14 Woman of the Pharisees, The 22, 198 Woman Who Rode Away, The 172 Woman Who Walked Into Doors, The 81 Women and Angels 38 Women and Ghosts 182 Women in a River Landscape 33 Women in Love 172 Women of Whitechapel, The 260 Wonder Boys 282 Wonderful Years, Wonderful Years 138 Wood Beyond the World, The 202 Woodlanders, The 80, 128 Woodman, Richard 103 Woodrell, Daniel 185 Woolf, Virginia 83, 87, 95, 158, 170, 176, 231, 237, 241. 315 Word for World is Forest, The 184 Words 247 Wordsworth, Dorothy 175 Wordsworth, William 224 Work 318 World According to Garp, The 150-1, 298 World at Night, The 129, 266, 280 World is Made of Glass 292 World My Wilderness, The 176, 183, 308 World of Love, A 35 World of My Own, A 125 World of Profit, A 307 World of Strangers, A 117 World of Wonders 70 World, the Flesh and the Devil, The 85 World's End 197 Wormholes 106 Worst Fears 302 Worst Journey in the World, The 286 Wouk, Herman 133, 257

Wounded Land, The 79
Wreath of Roses, A 101, 274
Wren, P.C. 146
Wright, Richard 20, 71
Writer's Notebook, The 197
Written on the Body 312
Wrong Set, The 311
Wurts, Janny 96
Wuthering Heights xix, 39, 40, 222, 253
Wyndham, Joan 16
Wyndham, John 109, 118, 141, 316
Wyrd Sisters 227

Year of Silence, The Years, The 315 Years Between, The 167 Yeats, W.B. 224 Yehoshua, A.B. 153 Yellow Admiral, The 212 Yellow Dog 8 Yellow Wallpaper, The 189 Yellow Wind, The 153 Yesterday in the Back Lane 243 Ying, Hong 54 Yorke, Margaret 68 Yoshimoto, Banana 156, 205 You Can't Go Home Again 314 You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down 298 You Make Your Own Life 228 You Only Live Twice 101 You Shall Know Our Velocity Young Adolf 18 Young Törless 33 Younghusband 32 Your Blue-Eyed Boy 85

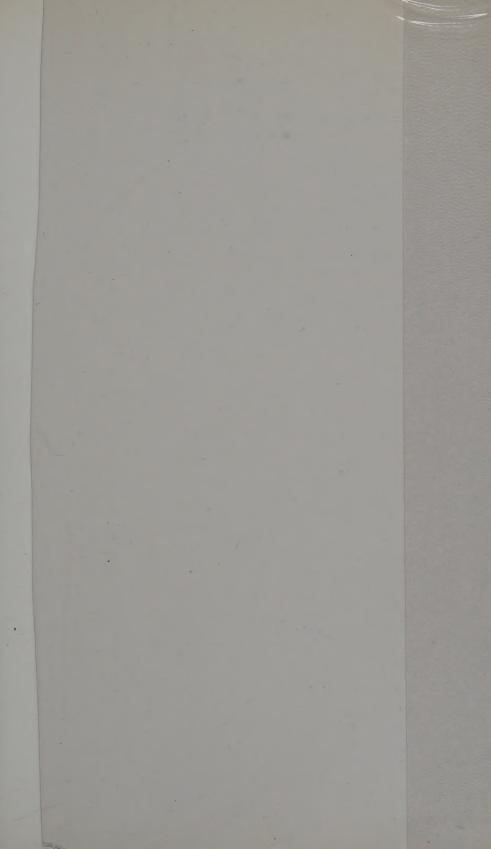
Zamyatin, Yevgeni 216
Zelazny, Roger 136
Zennor in Darkness 85, 231
Zimler, Richard 88, 143
Zola, Émile 22, 25, 77, 112, 282, 318
Zoo in My Luggage, A 286
Zuckerman Unbound 231, 243
Zuleika Dobson 26, 83, 156

Yourcenar, Marguerite 9,

You've Had Your Time 42

122, 309, 317

Youth 58, 62, 279



Deciding what to read next when you've finished an unputdownable novel can be a daunting task. The *Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide*, featuring hundreds of authors and thousands of titles, will help you to navigate your way through not only the many novels published each year but also through the wealth of previously published literature. It includes:

- around 350 Author Summaries of style, influences, settings, themes and important works
- a Read On section for each author that directs readers to similar books by other authors which they may enjoy. For example, Iain Banks is cross-referenced to writers as diverse as Martin Amis, Clive Barker and Alasdair Gray; Carol Shields's novels to books by Margaret Atwood, Anne Tyler, Anita Shreve and Jane Smiley; and Zadie Smith's White Teeth to work by other, exciting young British novelists like Monica Ali and Hari Kunzru
- Pathways for a number of very well-known books (*Ulysses, Nineteen Eighty-four, The Catcher in the Rye* and others) which branch out to dozens of further suggested reads
- Startpoints for the main genres (Crime, Science Fiction, Thrillers, Travel Writing and more) which provide introductory reading lists of some of the most popular and enjoyable titles invaluable for those new to a genre
- more than 100 Read on a Theme menus which range from Adolescence and Africa to War and Weepies by way of New York, Sequels and The Sixties

• The Big Read – the complete list of the UK's favourite 100 books, as voted for in the BBC poll

Fully revised and updated for this sixth edition, the **Bloomsbu** Guide offers thousands of answers to the question, 'What shale

NICK RENNISON has worked as a bookseller, editor and frepublications include *The Blue Plaque Guide to London* (Su on Poets (with Michael Schmidt, Carcanet 1997) and the Reading Guide to Crime Fiction (2003)



