

Introduction

1984 has arrived, but Orwell's glum prophecy has not been fulfilled. Some of us half-feared that, on the morning of January 1, we would wake with our seasonal hangovers to see Ingsoc posters on the walls, the helicopters of the Thought Police hovering, and our television sets looking at us. For thirty-five years a mere novel, an artifact meant primarily for diversion, has been scaring the pants off us all. Evidently the novel is a powerful literary form which is capable of reaching out into the real world and modifying it. It is a form which even the non-literary had better take seriously. This seems a good moment to look back upon what has been done in the novel over the past forty-five years.

Why not wait for the round fifty? Because it is more poetic to begin with the beginning of a world war and to end with the non-fulfilment of a nightmare. How far has the novel in English reflected the period accurately? How far has it opened our eyes to the future? How much entertainment has it given? In this prefatory note I must deal, as briefly as I can, with problems of definition and aesthetic assessment.

Before I ask what makes a good novel, I must ask what makes a novel at all. A novel, we know, is a work of fiction, but so is a short story, so is an anecdote or a blue comedian's joke. The shortest piece of science fiction ever written is: "That morning the sun rose in the west." But a true novel is an extended piece of fiction: length is clearly one of its parameters. You can expand a short story into a novella, a novella into a novel, but where is the dividing line? A novel can be as long as one thousand pages (expand that to more than three thousand: don't forget Proust) or as brief as a hundred. But if a hundred why not ninety? Why not fifty, forty? The only possible answer is a shrug. But wait -- the practical answer is provided by the publishers, printers and binders who process a manuscript into printed copy dressed in an overcoat. If a work of fiction can be bound in hard covers, its pages stitched and not stapled (as a pamphlet is), we had better accept that it is a novel.

This is a matter of convention only: it would be possible to publish a novel in the format of The Times. Indeed, I once had the notion of writing a fiction of a dying man who sees the unfolded Times on his bed and deliriously traces all his past life as though it were the content of that newspaper -- news items, editorials, crossword puzzle, everything. If I did not write that book it is because the novel is a commercial form that is not intended to lose money. Soon we may get our novels on floppy discs. Already I receive recorded readings of my novels intended for the blind. As, having begun my career as a kind of musician, I think of the novel as an auditory form, I am happy to listen to my work vibrating through the dark. But at this moment in history I have to accept, with everyone else, that a novel is a visual experience -- black marks on a white page, many of these bound into a thickish book with a stiff cloth cover and an illustrative dust-jacket. Its paperback version is a poor but necessary thing, a concession to the pocket, the sickly child of the original.

When we think of War and Peace or David Copperfield we see a fat spine with gold lettering, the guardian of a great potentiality (signs turned into sense), proudly upright on a shelf. BOOK can be taken as an acronym standing for Box of Organized Knowledge. The book called a novel

is a box from which characters and events are waiting to emerge at the raising of the lid. It is a solidity, a paperback is a ghost.

There are more novels published than the average reader can possibly realize. There are even more -- many more -- novels submitted to publishers and unpublished. When I first began to write fiction I had little idea of the competition I was facing. I began to see, physically, the spate of fiction in English when I started to review novels for the Yorkshire Post in 1960. I received by mail all the current fiction. I lived in an East Sussex village at the time, and the local post office had to take on extra staff to cope with the flood of book-parcels. I was paid little for my fortnightly reviews, but every other Monday I was able to stagger to the railway station with two big book-crammed suitcases and take the train to Charing Cross and then a taxi to L. Simmonds on Fleet Street, there to sell all my review copies (except the few I wished to keep) at half the retail price. The banknotes I received were new and crisp and undeclarable to the Inland Revenue. They paid for the groceries and the odd bottle of cognac. This was the real reward of reviewing.

Every other Monday, seeing me trudge to the train with my loads, the villagers would say: "There he goes, leaving his wife again." In fact, this was one way of keeping my wife, and myself. When I opened my packages, it was clear that certain novels had to be reviewed whether I wished to review them or not. A new Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh – this was the known brand-name which would grant an expected satisfaction. But the unknown had to be considered as well, unless they were published by Mills and Boon or Alvin Redman. After all, both Greene and Waugh produced first novels. V.S. Naipaul's first novel went totally unreviewed. The reviewer has a responsibility at least to dip into everything he is sent, and this is a reflection of the responsibility of the literary editor who does the sending. It is dangerous to ignore anything that is not clearly an ill-written bodice-ripper for a half-literate audience; even a bestseller like Princess Daisy demands consideration so that one may discover what makes it a bestseller.

In my time I have read a lot of novels in the way of duty; I have read a great number for pleasure as well. I am, I think, qualified to compile a list like the one that awaits you a few pages ahead. The ninety-nine novels I have chosen I have chosen with some, though not with total, confidence. Reading pleasure has not been the sole criterion. I have concentrated mainly on works which have brought something new -- in technique or view of the world -- to the form. If there is a great deal of known excellence not represented here, that is because 99 is a comparatively low number. The reader can decide on his own hundredth. He may even choose one of my own novels. When I say that I have read a great number of novels for sheer pleasure, as opposed to cold-eyed professional assessment, I have to admit that some of these novels never stood a chance of being placed in my list.

I am an avid reader of Irving Wallace, Arthur Hailey, Frederick Forsyth, Ken Follett and other practitioners of well-wrought sensational fiction. The authors themselves do not expect considered reviews or academic theses, though, as I know, they are happy when they receive a kind word in a serious periodical. They do not pretend to be Henry James; they expect, unlike James, to make money out of a popular commodity. The fashioning of the commodity entails the jettisoning of certain elements which are essential to what is known as the serious or art novel -- prose which essays effects beyond the mere conveying of basic information, complex

psychology, narrative which is generated by the clash of character or of ideas. The popular novel of our day provides much technological information; it often depends on research more than insight; its clashes are physical; its character interest is minimal. Professor Leslie Fiedler, of the University of New York at Buffalo, recently published a book called *What Was Literature?*, in which he seems to say that the study of the art novel (Joyce, James, Edith Wharton, Dorothy Richardson, Musil, Mann) is an outmoded discipline; that there is something wrong with our approach to reading if we cannot accommodate the spy novel, the pornographic fantasy, the comic strip. I am inclined to agree with him and to justify my own pleasure in the kind of book that is not represented in my list by referring to a new set of subliterary criteria that has not yet been formulated. We have to judge *The Day of the Jackal* or *The Crash of '79* by standards which neglect the Jamesian desiderata and make judgements in terms of the author's capacity for fulfilling the known expectations of the reader. Is this climax managed well? Is this technical information given with clarity? Are these characters sufficiently uninteresting not to interfere with the movement of the plot? Is this a good read for an invalid with a short attention-span whose head is muzzy with medicine?

Professors of literature neglect certain works because they perform their declared function (to entertain) all too thoroughly. There is nothing to discuss, there are no symbols to dig out, no ambiguities to resolve. It often seems to me that literature departments in universities depend on a certain inefficiency of technique in the works they set for study. In *The Mill on the Floss* the final flood is somewhat cursorily presented. Good, this means that the flood is purely symbolic and Floss clearly means Fluss or flux: George Eliot studied German philosophy. *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are studied because they contain difficulties: a professor can spend his life on unknotting the problems that Joyce probably sardonically knotted for the professor's benefit. If *Ulysses* succeeds as a novel, it may well be in spite of the wilful obfuscations that gained the professor his doctorate.

A novel is primarily a presentation of human beings in action. The difference between the so-called art novel and the popular variety is perhaps that in the first the human beings are more important than the action and in the second it is the other way about. I believe that the primary substance I have considered in making my selection is human character. It is the Godlike task of the novelist to create human beings whom we accept as living creatures filled with complexities and armed with free will. This free will causes trouble for the novelist who sees himself as a kind of small God of the Calvinists, able to predict what is going to happen on the final page. No novelist who has created a credible personage can ever be quite sure what that personage will do. Create your characters, give them a time and place to exist in, and leave the plot to them; the imposing of action on them is very difficult, since action must spring out of the temperament with which you have endowed them. At best there will be a compromise between the narrative line you have dreamed up and the course of action preferred by the characters. Finally, though, it must seem that action is there to illustrate character; it is character that counts. The time and space which a fictional character inhabits ought to be exactly realized. This does not mean that an art novelist need, in the manner of the pop novelist, get all his details right. Frederick Forsyth would not dream of making Milan Airport (Linate) out of his skull, but Brian Moore, in his recent *Cold Heaven*, equips Nice Airport with a security check system which it does not possess. This is not a grave fault, since the rest of the Côte d'Azur is realized aromatically enough.

Many novelists rightly consider human probability more important than background exactitude. It often happens that a created background, like Graham Greene's West Africa in *The Heart of the Matter*, is more magical than the real thing. It is the spatio-temporal extension of character that is more important than public time and location -- the hair on the legs, the aching eye tooth, the phlegm in the voice. It is not enough for a novelist to fabricate a human soul: there must be a body as well, and an immediate space-time continuum for that body to rest or move in. The management of dialogue is important. There is a certain skill in making speech lifelike without its being a mere transcription from a tape recorder. Such a transcription never reads like fictional speech, which is artful and more economical than it appears.

One could forgive Denis Wheatley, who wrote well-researched novels of the occult, a good deal if only his characters sounded like people. There is too much, in the novels of Arthur Hailey and Irving Wallace, of the pouring out of information cribbed directly from an encyclopaedia as a substitute for real speech. The better novelists write with their ears. A good novel ought to have a shape. Pop novelists never fail to gather their strands of action into a climax: they are helped in this by the comparative inertness of their characters. The characters of an art novel resist the structure which their creators try to impose on them; they want to go their own way. They do not even want the book to come to an end and so they have, sometimes arbitrarily, as in E.M. Forster, to be killed off. A good novel contrives, nevertheless, somehow to trace a parabola. It is not merely a slice of life. It is life delicately moulded into a shape. A picture has a frame and a novel ends where it has to -- in some kind of resolution of thought or action which satisfies as the end of a symphony satisfies.

I now tread dangerous ground. A novel ought to leave in the reader's mind a sort of philosophical residue. A view of life has been indirectly propounded that seems new, even surprising. The novelist has not preached: the didactic has no place in good fiction. But he has clarified some aspect of private or public morality that was never so clear before. As novels are about the ways in which human beings behave, they tend to imply a judgement of behaviour, which means that the novel is what the symphony or painting or sculpture is not -- namely, a form steeped in morality.

The first English novels -- *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson -- were highly moral. We still cannot prevent a moral attitude from creeping into our purely aesthetic assessment of a book. Oscar Wilde, who said that to write immorally could only mean to write badly, nevertheless produced in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* a black-and-white morality novel which almost preaches a Sunday sermon. It is easy to escape the origins of the novel as amoral tract disguised as entertainment. Oscar Wilde's *Miss Prism* says of her own novel that the good end well and the bad end badly: "that is why it is called fiction."

To many readers of fiction, and not necessarily naive ones, there is profound dissatisfaction when the deeper morality is subverted. Leopold Bloom can masturbate without his nose dropping off, and Ann Veronica can break the sexual taboos, but very few fictional characters can kill -- except in revenge -- and get away with it. The strength of a novel, however, owes nothing to its confirmation of what conventional morality has already told us. Rather a novel will question convention and suggest to us that the making of moral judgements is difficult. This can be called the higher morality.

George Orwell, in his essay on Dickens, said that, with any author he found sympathetic, a portrait of the author seemed to rise from the page -- not necessarily like the author as he really was but more the author as he ought to be. Orwell saw Dickens as a bearded man with a high colour, angry but laughing with the generosity of a nineteenth-century liberal. The implication here is that the personality of the novelist is important to us -- the personality as revealed in his work and not in his private life (the private lives of many artists do not bear looking at). Some novelists, like Gustave Flaubert and James Joyce, have tried to obliterate themselves entirely from their fictions, seeking the anonymity of the divine creator, but they reveal themselves in style and imagery and cannot altogether hide their attitudes to their characters. It is clear that Joyce is on the side of Bloom, though he never intrudes to make a comment, as Thackeray and Dickens always did. The author is present with us on every page, sometimes, as with Somerset Maugham, as an idealised portrait ranking as a character -- rational, tolerant, travelled -- though more often as the man whose heavy breathing we can hear as he puts his words together.

We have to like our author. It is hard to like Ms Marilyn French when she uses her fiction (as in *The Bleeding Heart*) to castrate innocent men; it is very hard indeed to like Harold Robbins, who evidently loves violence while pretending to hate it. It is not easy to love Judith Krantz, who, on the evidence of *Princess Daisy*, has never read a philosopher or heard Beethoven and imposes on her personages a like cultural nullity. It is hard to like an author who knows too much and shows off. We do not demand of an author that he be an intellectual (though my own temperament prefers Johnson's *Rasselas* to Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, something I can do little about), but we have a right to intelligence, a knowledge of the human soul, a certain decency -- quite apart from professional skill. Probably this imputation of decency is important: all the great novels have been about people trying to be kinder, more tolerant. Aldous Huxley concluded at the end of his hard-thinking life that all you could ask of people was that they try to be a little nicer.

This does not mean that authors have to be nice to their characters. Geoffrey Firm in *Under the Volcano* has a wretched time and ends by being killed and thrown like a dead dog down a ravine. But the way of tragedy is the way of arousing not only terror but pity. Some characters have to suffer to demonstrate the horror of life, but the author takes only a technical pleasure in delineating those sufferings. Novels are about the human condition, which is not easy, and how, if possible, to cope with it. The author is concerned about this, and he is concerned that you, the reader, be concerned.

As you start on my list, you will discover that few of these attributes seem to apply. After *Many a Summer* is bitter satire: where is the human concern? The concern seems negative: a desirable world for human beings defined in terms of what it is not. *Swim-Two-Birds* is little more than a game. Henry Green tries to make a kind of novelistic poem out of the surface of life. *Finnegans Wake* is a comic nightmare. Later you will find Ivy Compton-Burnett using most unrealistic language and showing an interest only in the structural consequences of sin. It is very hard indeed to devise universal parameters for the novel.

The novel, one supposes, is about human life, but the French anti-novel (which, of course, cannot figure here) appears to deny even that: certainly Nathalie Sarraute will not accept the traditional

view of the human personality as a unity. So do we end with some such definition as: a verbal construct in which invented human characters appear positively or negatively, act or do not act, speak or do not speak? I do not know. But I do know that we carry a scale of values whereby we know that Anna Karenina is a great novel and The Carpetbaggers an inferior one, and that our standards have something to do with the management of language and concern with the human personality. Sometimes the management of language will be so remarkable that we will be prepared to forgive the lack of human interest; sometimes character interest will condone verbal and structural incompetence. Judging a novel is a rule-of-thumb matter; we cannot appeal to any aesthetic tribunal which will lay down universal laws.

Anyway, all the novelists listed here have added something to our knowledge of the human condition (sleeping or waking), have managed language well, have clarified the motivations of action, and have sometimes expanded the bounds of imagination. And they entertain, or divert, which means to turn our faces away from the repetitive patterns of daily life and look at humanity and the world with a new interest and even joy. Though I have, with right modesty, excluded myself from my list, as a practising novelist I think I know my own aims, and I do not think these are very different from those of my colleagues in Britain, the Commonwealth and the United States. We want to entertain, surprise, and present the preoccupations of real human beings through invented ones.

I like to think of these novels, and all the other good ones that are not here, as products of a more or less common culture practised in the place called Anglophonia -- the world where English is spoken. But, having mentioned above the national distributions of this language, it is in order to regret that some English-speaking countries have to be represented more than others. New Zealand, alas, is not featured at all; Canada appears only twice and Australia only once; the output is shared mainly by the British Isles and the United States. This cannot be helped. I would be delighted to see the Nobel Prize for Literature go to Canada or New Zealand, as it has already gone to Australia, but such considerations of Commonwealth pride are probably unworthy. It is the work that counts. You have here, then, brief accounts of ninety-nine fine novels produced between 1939 and now. There are, however, slightly fewer than ninety-nine fine novelists.

Though most are featured once only, some appear twice, and Aldous Huxley three times. Some novels are romans fleuve or river novels in several volumes, but they are treated with little more ceremony than works of a hundred or so pages. The books are not arranged in order of merit but in order of date of publication. When more than one novel was published in the same year I have not observed a pedantic chronology involving month of publication: I have merely placed the authors in alphabetical order. The multi-volumed novels are dated according to the appearance of the first volume. If you disagree violently with some of my choices I shall be pleased. We arrive at values only through dialectic.

A.B.
Monaco

Sorted by author

- [Chinua Achebe](#) - [A Man of the People](#) - (1966)
- [Brian Aldiss](#) - [Life in the West](#) (1980)
- [Kingsley Amis](#) - [Lucky Jim](#) (1954)
- Kingsley Amis - [The Anti-Death League](#) (1966)
- [James Baldwin](#) - [Another Country](#) (1962)
- [J. G. Ballard](#) - [The Unlimited Dream Company](#) (1979)
- [John Barth](#) - [Giles Goat-Boy](#) (1966)
- [Saul Bellow](#) - [The Victim](#) (1947)
- Saul Bellow - [Humboldt's Gift](#) (1975)
- [Elizabeth Bowen](#) - [The Heat of the Day](#) (1949)
- [Malcolm Bradbury](#) - [The History Man](#) (1975)
- [John Braine](#) - [Room at the Top](#) (1957)
- [Joyce Cary](#) - [The Horse's Mouth](#) (1944)
- [Raymond Chandler](#) - [The Long Goodbye](#) (1953)
- [Ivy Compton-Burnett](#) - [The Mighty and Their Fall](#) (1961)
- [William Cooper](#) - [Scenes from Provincial Life](#) (1950)
- [Robertson Davies](#) - [The Rebel Angels](#) (1982)
- [Len Deighton](#) - [Bomber](#) (1970)
- [Lawrence Durrell](#) - [The Alexandria Quartet](#) (1957)
- [Ralph Ellison](#) - [Invisible Man](#) (1952)
- [William Faulkner](#) - [The Mansion](#) (1959)
- [Ian Fleming](#) - [Goldfinger](#) (1959)
- [John Fowles](#) - [The French Lieutenant's Woman](#) (1969)
- [Michael Frayn](#) - [Sweet Dreams](#) (1973)
- [William Golding](#) - [The Spire](#) (1964)
- [Nadine Gordimer](#) - [The Late Bourgeois World](#) (1966)
- [Alasdair Gray](#) - [Lanark](#) (1981)
- [Henry Green](#) - [Party Going](#) (1939)
- [Graham Greene](#) - [The Power and the Glory](#) (1940)
- Graham Greene - [The Heart of the Matter](#) (1948)
- [Wilson Harris](#) - [Heartland](#) (1964)
- [L. P. Hartley](#) - [Facial Justice](#) (1960)
- [Joseph Heller](#) - [Catch-22](#) (1961)
- [Ernest Hemingway](#) - [For Whom the Bell Tolls](#) (1940)
- Ernest Hemingway - [The Old Man and the Sea](#) (1952)
- [Russell Hoban](#) - [Riddley Walker](#) (1980)
- [Richard Hughes](#) - [The Fox in the Attic](#) (1961)
- [Aldous Huxley](#) - [After Many a Summer](#) (1939)
- Aldous Huxley - [Ape and Essence](#) (1948)
- Aldous Huxley - [Island](#) (1962)
- [Christopher Isherwood](#) - [A Single Man](#) (1964)
- [Pamela Hansford Johnson](#) - [An Error of Judgement](#) (1962)
- [Erica Jong](#) - [How to Save Your Own Life](#) (1977)
- [James Joyce](#) - [Finnegans Wake](#) (1939)

- [Doris Lessing](#) - [The Golden Notebook](#) (1962)
- [David Lodge](#) - [How Far Can You Go?](#) (1980)
- [Malcolm Lowry](#) - [Under the Volcano](#) (1947)
- [Colin MacInnes](#) - [The London Novels](#) (1957)
- [Norman Mailer](#) - [The Naked and the Dead](#) (1948)
- Norman Mailer - [Ancient Evenings](#) (1983)
- [Bernard Malamud](#) - [The Assistant](#) (1957)
- Bernard Malamud - [Dubin's Lives](#) (1979)
- [Olivia Manning](#) - [The Balkan Trilogy](#) (1960)
- [W. Somerset Maugham](#) - [The Razor's Edge](#) (1944)
- [Mary McCarthy](#) - [The Groves of Academe](#) (1952)
- [Brian Moore](#) - [The Doctor's Wife](#) (1976)
- [Iris Murdoch](#) - [The Bell](#) (1958)
- [Vladimir Nabokov](#) - [Pale Fire](#) (1962)
- Vladimir Nabokov - [The Defense](#) (1964)
- [V. S. Naipaul](#) - [A Bend in the River](#) (1979)
- [R. K. Narayan](#) - [The Vendor of Sweets](#) (1967)
- [Robert Nye](#) - [Falstaff](#) (1976)
- [Flann O'Brien](#) - [At Swim-Two-Birds](#) (1939)
- [Flannery O'Connor](#) - [Wise Blood](#) (1952)
- [John O'Hara](#) - [The Lockwood Concern](#) (1965)
- [George Orwell](#) - [Nineteen Eighty-Four](#) (1949)
- [Mervyn Peake](#) - [Titus Groan](#) (1946)
- [Walker Percy](#) - [The Last Gentleman](#) (1966)
- [James Plunkett](#) - [Farewell Companions](#) (1977)
- [Anthony Powell](#) - [A Dance to the Music of Time](#) (1951)
- [J. B. Priestley](#) - [The Image Men](#) (1968)
- [Thomas Pynchon](#) - [Gravity's Rainbow](#) (1973)
- [Mordecai Richler](#) - [Cocksure](#) (1968)
- [Keith Roberts](#) - [Pavane](#) (1968)
- [Philip Roth](#) - [Portnoy's Complaint](#) (1969)
- [J. D. Salinger](#) - [The Catcher in the Rye](#) (1951)
- [William Sansom](#) - [The Body](#) (1949)
- [Budd Schulberg](#) - [The Disenchanted](#) (1950)
- [Paul Mark Scott](#) - [Staying On](#) (1977)
- [Nevil Shute](#) - [No Highway](#) (1948)
- [Alan Sillitoe](#) - [Saturday Night and Sunday Morning](#) (1958)
- [C. P. Snow](#) - [Strangers and Brothers](#) (1940)
- [Muriel Spark](#) - [The Girls of Slender Means](#) (1963)
- Muriel Spark - [The Mandelbaum Gate](#) (1965)
- [William Styron](#) - [Sophie's Choice](#) (1979)
- [Alexander Theroux](#) - [Darconville's Cat](#) (1981)
- [Paul Theroux](#) - [The Mosquito Coast](#) (1981)
- [John Kennedy Toole](#) - [A Confederacy of Dunces](#) (1980)
- [John Updike](#) - [The Coup](#) (1978)
- [Gore Vidal](#) - [Creation](#) (1981)

- [Rex Warner](#) - [The Aerodrome](#) (1941)
- [Evelyn Waugh](#) - [Brideshead Revisited](#) (1945)
- Evelyn Waugh - [Sword of Honor](#) (1952)
- [T. H. White](#) - [The Once and Future King](#) (1958)
- [Patrick White](#) - [Riders in the Chariot](#) (1961)
- [Henry Williamson](#) - [A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight](#) (1951)
- [Angus Wilson](#) - [The Old Men at the Zoo](#) (1961)
- Angus Wilson - [Late Call](#) (1964)
- [Herman Wouk](#) - [The Caine Mutiny](#) (1951)

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- 1939 - [Henry Green](#) - [Party Going](#) (1939)
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- 1962 - [Vladimir Nabokov](#) - [Pale Fire](#) (1962)
- 1963 - [Muriel Spark](#) - [The Girls of Slender Means](#) (1963)
- 1964 - [William Golding](#) - [The Spire](#) (1964)
- 1964 - [Wilson Harris](#) - [Heartland](#) (1964)
- 1964 - [Christopher Isherwood](#) - [A Single Man](#) (1964)
- 1964 - [Vladimir Nabokov](#) - [The Defense](#) (1964)
- 1964 - [Angus Wilson](#) - [Late Call](#) (1964)
- 1965 - [John O'Hara](#) - [The Lockwood Concern](#) (1965)
- 1965 - [Muriel Spark](#) - [The Mandelbaum Gate](#) (1965)
- 1966 - [Chinua Achebe](#) - [A Man of the People](#) (1966)
- 1966 - [Kingsley Amis](#) - [The Anti-Death League](#) (1966)
- 1966 - [John Barth](#) - [Giles Goat-Boy](#) (1966)
- 1966 - [Nadine Gordimer](#) - [The Late Bourgeois World](#) (1966)
- 1966 - [Walker Percy](#) - [The Last Gentleman](#) (1966)

- 1967 - [R. K. Narayan](#) - [The Vendor of Sweets](#) (1967)
- 1968 - [J. B. Priestley](#) - [The Image Men](#) (1968)
- 1968 - [Mordecai Richler](#) - [Cocksure](#) (1968)
- 1968 - [Keith Roberts](#) - [Pavane](#) (1968)
- 1969 - [John Fowles](#) - [The French Lieutenant's Woman](#) (1969)
- 1969 - [Philip Roth](#) - [Portnoy's Complaint](#) (1969)

1970s

- 1970 - [Len Deighton](#) - [Bomber](#) (1970)
- 1973 - [Michael Frayn](#) - [Sweet Dreams](#) (1973)
- 1973 - [Thomas Pynchon](#) - [Gravity's Rainbow](#) (1973)
- 1975 - [Saul Bellow](#) - [Humboldt's Gift](#) (1975)
- 1975 - [Malcolm Bradbury](#) - [The History Man](#) (1975)
- 1976 - [Robert Nye](#) - [Falstaff](#) (1976)
- 1977 - [Erica Jong](#) - [How to Save Your Own Life](#) (1977)
- 1977 - [James Plunkett](#) - [Farewell Companions](#) (1977)
- 1977 - [Paul Mark Scott](#) - [Staying On](#) (1977)
- 1978 - [John Updike](#) - [The Coup](#) (1978)
- 1979 - [J. G. Ballard](#) - [The Unlimited Dream Company](#) (1979)
- 1979 - [Bernard Malamud](#) - [Dubin's Lives](#) (1979)
- 1979 - [Brian Moore](#) - [The Doctor's Wife](#) (1976)
- 1979 - [V. S. Naipaul](#) - [A Bend in the River](#) (1979)
- 1979 - [William Styron](#) - [Sophie's Choice](#) (1979)

1980s

- 1980 - [Brian Aldiss](#) - [Life in the West](#) (1980)
- 1980 - [Russell Hoban](#) - [Riddley Walker](#) (1980)
- 1980 - [David Lodge](#) - [How Far Can You Go?](#) (1980)
- 1980 - [John Kennedy Toole](#) - [A Confederacy of Dunces](#) (1980)
- 1981 - [Alasdair Gray](#) - [Lanark](#) (1981)
- 1981 - [Alexander Theroux](#) - [Darconville's Cat](#) (1981)
- 1981 - [Paul Theroux](#) - [The Mosquito Coast](#) (1981)
- 1981 - [Gore Vidal](#) - [Creation](#) (1981)
- 1982 - [Robertson Davies](#) - [The Rebel Angels](#) (1982)
- 1983 - [Norman Mailer](#) - [Ancient Evenings](#) (1983)