The Novel after 1945

POSTMODERNISM

postmodern architecture (Robert Venturi, Philip Johnson): hybrid mixture of styles, playfulness

postmodernity: Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

Brian McHale:
epistemological dominant (Modernism) vs. ontological dominant (postmodernism)

postmodernism in fiction

* experimentalism (continuation of the Modernist avant-garde)

* anti-mimeticism, randomness, serialization (vs. Modernist myth)

* self-reflexivity (vs. aesthetic illusion)

* metafiction (vs. extreme realism of Modernist novel)

* no plot, no character, no setting ...

* collage, juxtaposition

* pastiche, parody, intertextuality

* irony, playfulness

* skepticism

* political reinterpretation (feminism etc.)

Common techniques:

a. John Barth, “Title” (from *Lost in the Funhouse*):

   Oh God comma I abhor self-consciousness.

b. Chinese Box structure: *babushka*

c. narrator writing about impossibility of narration
The British Novel after World War II

Postmodernist Writers
A. radical postmodernists:
  Samuel Beckett
  Flann O’Brien, *At Swim-Two-Birds*
  Christine Brooke-Rose
  B. S. Johnson
  Gabriel Josipovici
  Alasdair Gray
  Iris Murdoch

USA
  surfiction/critifiction
  Raymond Federman
  John Barth
  Robert Coover
  Donald Barthelme
  Thomas Pynchon

B. muted postmodernism
  Anthony Burgess
  John Fowles
  Angela Carter
  Muriel Spark
  Doris Lessing
  Ian McEwan

Traditional ‘realist’ novelists
  Evelyn Waugh
  Angus Wilson
  Graham Greene
  Kingsley Amis
  William Golding
  Margaret Drabble
  Martin Amis
  Anita Brookner
  Penelope Lively

Post-realistic novel, new epic style; historiographical metafiction
  Paul Ackroyd
  D.H. Thomas
  John Banville
Julian Barnes  
A.S. Byatt, *Possession*  
Adam Thorpe, *Ulverton*  
Graham Swift,  
Lawrence Norfolk, *Lamprière’s Dictionary*  
Sarah Waters, *Affinity; Fingersmith*  
Iain Pears, *An Instance of the Fingerpost*

In the U.S.A. note particularly George Garrett and Richard Powers

**Regional fiction: Scottish, Irish**

James Kelman, Alasdair Gray (Scottish)  
John McGahern, Edna O’Brien, Sean O’Faolain, William Trevor, Roddy Doyle, Brian Moore (Irish)

**Jewish Novel in the UK**

Hilary Mantel  
Robert Nye  
Clive Sinclair  
Anita Brookner  
Gabriel Josipovici  
David Caute  
Eva Figes  
Elaine Feinstein  
Rosalind Belben

**Women’s Novel in the UK**

Angela Carter  
Jeanette Winterson  
Fay Weldon  
Michele Roberts  
Marina Warner

**Literature**

1. the documentary historical novel:


2. the realist historical novel

the main tradition of the historical novel continued. Fictional characters and fictionalized historical figures act before the canvas of history represented in historically more or less correct manner

Examples: Scott, *Waverley*; Tolstoy, *War and Peace*; Barry Unsworth, *Sacred Hunger*

3. the revisionist historical novel
provides counternarratives to traditional historiography and the traditional historical novel, which are centred on political events, men, the upper classes, etc. Hence, feminist rewritings of history, history “from below”, gay history, etc.

Iain Pears, *An Instance of the Fingerpost* (1998);
Adam Thorpe, *Ulverton* (1992)

4. the metahistorical novel

critically negotiates the conventions of history and the historical novel, exposes the strategies of ideological manipulation and exclusion of perspectives, exposes the unreliability of historians

Examples: the novels of Graham Swift, e.g. *Waterland* (1983)

5. historiographic metafiction

A more radical instance of (5) which especially exposes the fictionality of history-making

Examples: A.S. Byatt, *Possession* (1990);
**Intertextual Rewriting** (Fludernik)

1. continuation novels

   Emma Tennant, *Pemberley, or Pride and Prejudice Continued* (1993)

2. revisionist rewritings

   Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) rewrites *Jane Eyre*
   Angela Carter’s fairytales

3. metafictional rewritings