THE PALGRAVE GUIDE TO ENGLISH LITERATURE
AND ITS CONTEXTS, 1500–2000

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*The Palgrave Guide
to English Literature
and its Contexts,
1500–2000*

PETER WIDDOWSON

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This book is dedicated to Simon Dentith,
great friend, colleague and adviser-in-chief

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Introduction

Premises and Procedures

1 PREMISES

The fundamental premise on which this book rests is that literature – and indeed every other form of cultural production – exists within history and should be studied with its contexts and chronologies clearly in view. This is not to say that matters of form and interpretation are secondary, nor to preclude the practice of any of the multiple critical approaches currently available to us; it is merely to assume that historical knowledge is an essential tool in understanding the significance of any individual artefact, whether at the moment of its production or in the diverse process of its consumption thereafter.

The second premise – and one that accounts for the particular format of this book – is that historical knowledge of a kind useful to students of literature, if no other, is difficult to access in direct relation to specific movements, authors and texts and over long periods of time. Narrative histories, including literary histories, are normally extended prose accounts which often disturb historical chronology and disperse both contextual and literary data according to the sectionalisation which structures their narrative. Without a considerable degree of prior knowledge, a linear reading of a literary history for specific information about either text or context can be a time-consuming and frustrating business. The presentation here of literary writing in relation to its historical and cultural contexts by way of timeline tables proceeding chronologically from 1500 to the end of 1999 aims to provide sequences and correlations which are immediately perceptible and comprehensible. Every year of the 500 years between those two dates receives an individual entry across four major columns containing historical, cultural and literary information.

Eng. Lit.

A further premise underlying the volume might be flagged by substituting the familiar diminutive 'Eng. Lit.' in the book's title, thereby acknowledging that the authors and texts indicated in the two columns on the right of the timeline tables are by and large those which comprise the received canon of 'English Literature'. This delimited focus is based on two very basic practical considerations: one on the well-known dictum that 'literature is what gets taught', thus overtly directing the book's emphasis to the still normative curriculum in secondary and higher education in the UK and elsewhere in the world; the other on the recognition that if the tables were to include both the canon and all its diverse potential alternatives, the book would become

impossibly unwieldy (and never finished). However, attempts have been made to mitigate the predominance of the 'English Canon' by offering examples of literary works from other countries in the 'International Literature' sections of the 'Social and Cultural Contexts' columns, and where appropriate, by including British and Irish authors and works other than those found in conventional literary history in the 'Authors'/'Indicative Texts' columns (this is especially the case for the later decades of the 20th Century).

Historical Range

The period covered by the present volume, 1500–2000, takes as its starting-point the beginnings of the English Reformation and Renaissance and the gradual appearance of a recognisably modern English Literature (while regretting the sacrifice of earlier writing – especially the poetry of the Gawain Poet, Langland and Chaucer), and ends with the close of the 20th Century and the second millennium. Hence, and in relation to the notion above that 'literature is what gets taught', the five centuries represented here contain the vast proportion of literature currently studied in secondary and tertiary education.

Timelines

The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and its Contexts is designed, therefore, to be used as a comprehensive reference work for students and teachers of English Literature at all levels (although a less specialist use for it might be to prepare for Quiz Nights). Accuracy of dating has been striven for throughout, and as much contextual material included as seemed relevant and/or interesting without destroying the book's portability. It is divided into nine 'Period' chapters consisting of timeline tables in six columns (for more detail on the main columns' composition, see **Procedures** below). The first vertical column gives the commonly used term(s) for the period (e.g. 'Tudor', 'Jacobean', 'Restoration', 'Fin-de-Siècle', 'Modernist'); the second gives the individual year date (e.g. '1642'); and the four substantive ones are divided into 'International and Political Contexts', 'Social and Cultural Contexts', 'Authors' and 'Indicative Titles'.

The tables can be read diachronically (vertically) or synchronically (horizontally), so that while the former enables a sequential chronological history to be pursued, the latter allows a specific year to be singled out to overview the historical, cultural and literary events that occurred in it. In addition, each chapter has a short introductory paragraph outlining the concepts relevant to that period as well as headnote glosses on key terms and concepts preceding the tables themselves (glossed terms and concepts appear in bold the first time they are mentioned in a chapter). The use of an asterisk after key terms and concepts within the text indicates cross-reference to another gloss in that chapter or others. The glosses have two principal purposes: first, to offer succinct working definitions of terms commonly used in literary history which students may recognise but not be fully conversant with (e.g. 'Jacobean', 'Caroline', 'Interregnum', 'Restoration', 'Augustan', 'Regency', 'Georgian', 'Inter-War'); and second, to pull into view historical, cultural and literary 'narratives' from the detailed material in the timeline tables which

may be initially obscured by the detail but which can then be tracked back through the timelines. Examples might include 'Succession' crises for the British monarchy at various historical moments; the growth of Britain as a trading nation and the acquisition of Empire; the reasons for the independence struggle of the American colonies in becoming the USA; the shift from Neo-Classical values in the arts to those espoused by the Romantics; the progress of nationalist movements in 19th-Century Europe; the 'Irish Question' throughout 500 years of British history; the predominance of one genre over others in different literary periods; the rise to power of totalitarian regimes in inter-war Europe; the technological innovations of the later 20th Century, and the accelerating global concern about the environment and health. In effect, the headnote glosses and their extrapolated 'narratives' offer a condensed history of the period between 1500 and 2000, supported by the year-on-year detail in the timeline tables.

2 PROCEDURES

Periodicity

Periodicity is a key problem for any kind of history: ruling dynasties or monarchs' reigns do not fit neatly into decades or centuries (the Tudors give way to the Stuarts in 1603 – are the 1600s then 'Elizabethan' or 'Jacobean'?); political or artistic movements do not start and end in precise time-frames and will have different chronologies in different national locations (when does the Renaissance begin and end in Italy and in England?); descriptive labels distort by generalisation (why is the so-called 'last Augustan', Jane Austen, writing throughout the height of the 'Romantic' period?); even centuries seem not to have definite limits (why do some modern historians conceive of 'the long 18th Century', or see the end of the 19th Century as occurring in 1914?). The basic principle of the present book has been to organise periods in the timeline tables into groupings which seem to make sense in generally accepted historical periodisations (e.g. 1830–99: the 'Victorian Period'), while drawing attention in the chapter headnotes to the difficulties and anomalies incident upon this (e.g. that the 'Victorian Period' includes the reign of William IV and that Queen Victoria did not die until 1901). In addition, a descriptive label to the chapter grouping is added where the movement it alludes to retains common currency in literary history and the curriculum (e.g. the 'Augustan Period', the 'Modernist Period'), but a cautionary gloss on it is also included in the headnotes.

Dates

Great care has been taken to establish the correct date for events and texts, but this is by no means a straightforward process. One of the most disturbing features of compiling a book like the present one has been to discover how often, and how significantly, apparently authoritative reference books give different dates for the same event, author or text. This can be the result of a simple typo or error of transcription (e.g. 1803 for 1808, 1668 for 1686), but it is often more complex. For example, events will run across calendar years (December to January), and some

commentators will cite the start date and others the end date; some authorities will give the date of a piece of parliamentary legislation as that of the Bill introducing it, while others that of the Act as passed – which can also, of course, be in different years; publishers bringing out a book late one year will often give the following year as the date of publication, and literary historians will cite either depending on their source or inclination; the date given for plays from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods will vary from the (speculated) date of composition to the date of first performance to the date of printed publication – which can be many years apart; with literary works in other languages, the date of translation into English may be the one given rather than the date of original publication, especially if accompanying the English title. (Similar problems occur with the other arts: date of composition of a piece of music may be very different from the date of first performance; date of painting very different from date of exhibition; cited dates for films will vary on place of first release – e.g. whether in the USA or the UK.) While accepting that *The Palgrave Guide* will be as susceptible to error as any other reference book, its rule of thumb when faced with these difficulties has been to go for consistency (e.g. Acts of Parliament not Bills; date of first performance for plays unless otherwise indicated); to give dual dates (e.g. 1912–13) or to accept a majority verdict when it is genuinely uncertain which is the accepted date for an event or a text's publication; to take the publication date given in one of the British copyright libraries' catalogues as the final adjudicator in cases of unresolved dispute; and to use the device [c.] (*circa* = 'about', 'around this time') for all art-works of uncertain date, especially in earlier periods (e.g. 'c.1515' for a painting by Titian).

Selection

It will be immediately obvious on flicking through the book that the balance in terms of size of entry for individual years is markedly different from the earlier centuries to the later ones – and especially the second half of the 20th Century. This is inevitable, to state the obvious: literacy in the distant past was extremely limited; relatively few books and no newspapers or magazines were published until well into the 17th Century; there were no mass-communications media; historical records are patchy or non-existent; there is simply less that we know about to include. The problem is very different the nearer we come to the present day: there is so much potential material available that the question is: what goes in and what is left out, and on what principles for either? Leaving aside the simple fact that everyone will have a different view of what should or should not be included, the process of selection is probably the most fraught ideologically of all the problems that beset a project of the present kind – which will almost inevitably be seen as Anglo/Eurocentric, sexist, racist, elitist.

The book has tried hard to keep these anticipated charges at bay, but given the nature of the project – a historical guide to English Literature – there comes a point of resigned but realistic acceptance that inequities and imbalances will occur: that principles of selection will be subjective (what do I know enough about and think relevant?) and will vary depending on the period and the literary/cultural production thereof (e.g. an increased proliferation of women writers from the 18th Century onwards means that the gender balance of the timeline tables

changes; achievements in the visual arts from about 1870 to 1930 explains the prominence given to them in that period; film becomes a dominant art form in the mid-20th Century and thereby explains its enlarged presence; region and ethnicity become increasingly important factors in British literary writing in the later 20th Century and are therefore given more emphasis). However, the fundamental defence of selectivity and partiality must be: first, the book's length (theoretically, it could be literally encyclopaedic); and second, that the material it contains is cited as representative or 'indicative' rather than exhaustive. But even this becomes increasingly problematical with contemporary mass cultural forms like TV and pop music: just ask yourself how you would select 'indicative' examples of either for each of the past 50 years while keeping the book to a publishable length.

How to Use this Book

1 STRUCTURE

The fundamental premise of this book is that literature exists within history and should be studied with its chronologies and contexts clearly in view. It assumes that historical knowledge is an essential tool in understanding the significance of any literary text, whether at the moment of its production or during its consumption thereafter.

The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and its Contexts is designed to be used as a comprehensive reference work for students and teachers of English Literature at all levels (although a less specialist use for it might be to prepare for Quiz Nights). The period covered, 1500–1999, takes as its starting-point the English Reformation and Renaissance and the appearance of a recognisably modern English Literature, and ends with the close of the 20th Century and the second millennium. The authors and works presented in the timeline tables are mainly those of the received canon of English Literature. However, it also offers contextualising examples of literary works from other countries, and includes a wider range of British and Irish authors and works than those found in conventional literary history.

Each chapter focuses on a key period in English Literature and History and introduces and outlines key terms, concepts and developments during that period. Each chapter also includes a series of timelines showing political, social and cultural events for each year, alongside the key literary authors and works. The timelines can be read either vertically or horizontally, allowing you to follow a chronological history or to single out a specific year to overview the historical, cultural and literary events that occurred in it.

The chapters begin with a short **Introduction** providing an overview of the period. The second section – **Key Terms and Concepts** – provides a working definition of key terms commonly used in literary history which you may recognise but not fully understand; and second, to pull into view from the detailed material in the timeline tables historical and cultural ‘**narratives**’ which may be obscured by the detail but which can then be tracked back through the timelines (for example: ‘Succession’ crises for the British monarchy at various historical moments; the growth of Britain as a trading nation and the acquisition of Empire; the ‘Irish Question’ throughout 500 years of British history; the accelerating global concern about the environment in the later 20th Century). The **timelines** that follow provide an entry for each year from 1500–1999, with information on **International and Political Contexts, Social and Cultural Contexts, Authors and Literary Works**.

2 SUBSTANTIVE TIMELINE COLUMNS

The general structure of the book’s chapters, headnote glosses and timeline tables has been outlined above. What follows here is a fuller indication of the nature of the four substantive columns and their contents.

NB: the first reference to any monarch, politician, author, artist, and so on indicates their nationality and gives their name in full as it is commonly used; thereafter, only a shortened version is used (e.g. George III, Cavour, de Staël, Picasso); a consistent use of abbreviations is also deployed throughout, and these can be found in a separate list which follows this introduction.

International and Political Contexts The sequencing of this column is normally as follows: first, British and Irish political events (including major social developments related to affairs of state); second, European events and movements which have some bearing on Britain; third, events and movements in the rest of the world which have international resonances or repercussions (the order of these varies, but once the USA comes into existence, events involving it tend to follow those in Europe, with the ‘old’ British Empire colonies coming next).

Social and Cultural Contexts Here ‘Social’ and ‘Cultural’ are interpreted in the broadest terms to include material from across the spectrum of social and cultural life. First come developments in British society and general culture, followed by those in other countries; second, works of theological, political, philosophical and historical significance in any language; third, an **Int. Lit.** (International Literature) section which includes examples of literary writing from other countries (note that works in other languages appear in their year of original publication, with the [usually later] date of English translation appended whenever possible); fourth, a **Music** section which includes developments in music and examples of compositions; fifth, an **Art** section which does the same for painting, sculpture, architecture, and so on (NB: the first reference to an artist’s work indicates which genre s/he normally works in – e.g. following their name, ‘[pnt]’, ‘[sculpt.]’, etc.; where a work is accessible to view in the UK, the relevant collection is indicated after the title – e.g. ‘[NG]’, ‘[Tate]’, etc. [see list of abbreviations below]). In the 20th Century, a sixth section is appended on **Film**, which gives the name of the director, country of origin (where it is other than the USA), title and principal actors. In addition, and where appropriate, there may be a **Lit. [Literary] Events** section indicating events in the general culture which are of literary interest, and a section entitled **Theory/Crit** (Theory and Criticism) which highlights significant contributions to the definition, analysis and study of literature (note that in the later part of the 20th Century – and especially from the 1960s onwards – this becomes a concise history of movements in contemporary cultural and critical theory and practice).

Authors This is linked across to the **Indicative Titles** column; see below. The first reference to British authors gives the full name by which they are best known, and their dates of birth and death (e.g. ‘1867–1908’; and birth date only for living authors – e.g. ‘b.1956’). Titles are included where they are a familiar part of the name or are often substituted for a forename (e.g. ‘Sir Walter Scott’, ‘[Mrs] Elizabeth Gaskell’, ‘Lord Byron’). Where an author is commonly known only by their surname and forename initials, that is all that is given (e.g. ‘G. K. Chesterton’; ‘L. P. Hartley’), but where they are known variously by initials or forenames both are given as follows: ‘G.[eorge] B.[ernard] Shaw’; ‘T.[homas] S.[tearns] Eliot’. After the first reference, only the surname is given, but where confusion may occur, an initial is also included (e.g. ‘H. Fielding’, ‘S. Fielding’; ‘P. B.

Shelley', 'M. Shelley'). In the later part of the 20th Century, the place of birth or origin is also cited where possible, either to indicate 'anomalies' (e.g. Sylvia Plath and Timberlake Wertenbaker, who are not strictly British but may reasonably be thought of as contributing centrally to British literary culture), or to establish the significance of region or ethnicity (e.g. originating in the Caribbean, Ulster, Eire, Scotland).

Indicative Titles This column is divided into three sections, always in the same order (except where one genre does not feature in a particular year): 'Poetry' (represented by **P:**), 'Prose and Fiction' (**Pr/F:**) and 'Drama' (**Dr:**), and gives the titles of works by authors in the preceding column. For poetry, prose and fiction, the year in which they were first published is the one cited (unless otherwise explained), but for plays, it is the year of first performance (unless otherwise indicated). Where it is not immediately apparent what the nature of the work cited may be, a brief explanatory comment is appended in square brackets thus: '[long narrative poem]'; '[historical romance]'; '[melodrama]'; '[misc. (for 'miscellaneous') essays]'; a work published after the author's death will have '[posthm. (for 'posthumous')]' after it; works which comprise, for example, a trilogy will have '[trilogy*]' after the first volume and the asterisk repeated after the succeeding volumes. A work whose date is uncertain will have '[c.]' preceding its title [see 'Dates' in **Procedures** above], and one which is published over a number of years will be located in the year of its first appearance (e.g. 1771), but its title will be preceded by '[-1776]'.

3 INDEX

The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and its Contexts, 1500–2000 contains two indexes in order to facilitate movement around the mass of information it contains. The first is an alphabetical list of all the British authors who appear in the **Authors** column, together with their dates and the year their work is first cited in the **Indicative Titles** column. This will enable the reader to find the first citation easily and then have a parameter within which to search for later works by the same author. The second index is an alphabetical list of the major period names, movements and concepts which appear in the headnote glosses to the chapters. Detailed contents lists, which may be used in conjunction with the second index, enable easy navigation to the locations of definitions to key terms and concepts.

Abbreviations Used Throughout

GENERAL

[>]	henceforward, continuing thereafter	edtn	edition
adaptn	adaptation	EEC/EU	European Economic Community/European Union
aka	also known as	engrv.	engrave (in art)
anthol.	anthology	esp.ly	especially
archit.	architecture/al	estabs/.d	establishes/ed
attrib.	attributed (to)	et al	and others (as in Smith et al [eds] . . .)
autobiog.	autobiography/ical	exhib.d	exhibited
b.	born; or (after number) billion	fnds/fnd.d	founds/founded
biog.	biography/ical	Gen.	General (as title: Gen. Eisenhower)
bk/s	book/books	gvnmt	government
b-s.	best-selling/er	HE	higher education
c.	<i>circa</i> ('about', 'around this time')	illstrs/illstr.d	illustrates/illustrated by
C	century (as in 18thC)	incls/incl.d	includes/included
CC	County Council	intros/intro.d	introduces/introduced
C. in C.	Commander in Chief	Lab.	Labour (political party)
C of E	Church of England	Lat.	Latin
Co.	company (as in East India Co.)	LCC	London County Council
Coll.	Collection (especially of art collections)	Lib.	Liberal (political party)
coll.	collection (of poems, stories, etc.)	litho.	lithograph
comp.	composes (usually in music)	L of Ns	League of Nations
Cons.	Conservative (political party)	<i>l.s.d.</i>	pounds, shillings and pence (old UK currency)
contemp.	contemporary	m.	marries/marriage; or (after number) million
conts/cont.d	continues/continued	misc.	miscellaneous
d.	dies/died	ms(s)	manuscript/manuscripts
discvs/.d	discovers/ed	mth/s	month/months
E.	East	N.	North
		nda	no date available
		NJ	New Jersey
		NY	New York

p.a.	per annum
pf.d	performed (usually first performance of play, symphony, etc.)
phil.	philosophy/ical
PM	Prime Minister
pnt	paint (in art)
posthm.	posthumous (usually of publication)
Pres.	President (as title: Pres. Kennedy)
prnt.d	printed
prog./s	programme/programmes
Pt	Part (as in 'Parts I + II')
pubs/pub.d	publishes/published
p.w.	per week
R.	River (as prefix to name: River Thames)
RC/ism	Roman Catholic/ism
re.	concerning, about
ref.	reference
rev.d	revised (as in 'rev.d edtn')
RN	Royal Navy
S.	South
sci. fi.	science fiction
sculpt.	to make a sculpture/a sculptor
Sec.	Secretary (as in 'Sec. of State')
ser.	series
SNP	Scottish Nationalist Party
sociol.	sociology/sociological
St	street
trans	translation
UC	University College
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<i>v.</i>	<i>vide</i> ('see' – as in 'cross-refer'); or <i>versus</i>
vol./vols	volume/volumes

W.	West
w/c.	watercolour
wk/s	week/s
wrtn	written
Xian	Christian
yr/s	year/years

NATIONAL DESCRIPTORS (AS ADJECTIVES)

Amer.	American
Aust.	Austrian
Austrl.	Australian
Belg.	Belgian
Chin.	Chinese
Dan.	Danish
Eng.	English
Fr.	French
Ger.	German
Grk	Greek
Ind.	Indian
Ir.	Irish
It.	Italian
Jap.	Japanese
Norw.	Norwegian
Pol.	Polish
Portug.	Portuguese
Pruss.	Prussian
Russ.	Russian
SA	South African (also for the state)
Scots	Scottish
Sp.	Spanish
Swed.	Swedish
Turk.	Turkish
US	United States

UK ART COLLECTIONS

Aberconway Coll.	Aberconway Collection, London	Hampton Court	Hampton Court Palace, Surrey
Aberdeen AG	Aberdeen City Art Gallery	Harewood House	. . . Yorkshire
Alfreton Hall	. . . Derbyshire	Helly Nahmad Gall.	Helly Nahmad Gallery, London
Apsley House	Wellington Collection, Apsley House, London	Hull AG	Hull City Art Gallery
Astor Coll.	Astor Collection, London	Hunterian	Hunterian Collection, University of Glasgow
Arts Council	. . . London	IWM	Imperial War Museum, London
Ashmolean	Ashmolean Museum, Oxford	Keble	Keble College, Oxford
BAG	Birmingham City Art Gallery	Kensington Palace	. . . London
Barber Inst.	Barber Institute, University of Birmingham	Kenwood	Kenwood House, London
Beit Coll.	Beit Collection, Russborough	Knole, Kent	Knole House, Kent (National Trust)
Blenheim	Blenheim Palace	Lady Lever AG	Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
BM	British Museum, London	Laing AG	Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Bradford AG	Bradford City Art Gallery	Leeds AG	Leeds City Art Gallery
British Council	. . . London	Lefevre Coll.	Lefevre Collection, London
Burrell Coll.	Burrell Collection, Glasgow	Londesborough Estates	. . . E. Riding of Yorkshire
Cadbury Coll.	Cadbury Collection, Birmingham	London Mus.	London Museum
Christ's Hosp.	Christ's Hospital, London	MAG	Manchester City Art Gallery
Clark Coll.	Clark Collection, London	Marlborough AG	Marlborough Art Gallery, London
Colston Coll.	. . . East Lothian	Meir Coll.	Meir Collection, London
Courtauld	Courtauld Institute, University of London	NAG	Nottingham City Art Gallery
Derby AG	Derby City Art Gallery	NG	National Gallery, London
Dewar Coll.	Dewar Collection, London	NMM	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London
Dulwich	Dulwich College, London	NMW	National Museum of Wales, Cardiff
Dunvegan Castle	. . . Isle of Skye	Norwich	Castle Museum, Norwich
Foundling Hosp.	Foundling Hospital, London	NPG	National Portrait Gllery, London
Glasgow AG	Glasgow City Art Gallery		
Guildhall	Guildhall Art Gallery, London		

Penrose Coll.	Penrose Collection, London	Southampton AG	Southampton City Art Gallery
Petworth RCA	Petworth House, Sussex Royal College of Art, London	Spencer Coll.	Spencer Collection, Althorpe
R. Coll. Surgeons	Royal College of Surgeons Collection, London	St Barts	St Bartholomew's Hospital, London
Rosebery Coll.	Rosebery Collection, Dalmeny	St Paul's	St Paul's Cathedral, London
Rothschild Coll.	Rothschild Collection, Cambridge	Sudeley	Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire
Royal Co. of Archers	Royal Company of Archers, Edinburgh	Syon House V&A	. . . Brentford, London Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Royal Coll.	Royal Collection (at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle)	Wallace Coll.	Wallace Collection, Hertford House, London
Royal Holloway	Royal Holloway College, Egham	Walker AG	Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
Saatchi Coll.	Saatchi Collection, London	Wrotham Park Zoological Soc.	. . . Kent Zoological Society, London
Sloane SNG	Sloane Museum, London National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh		