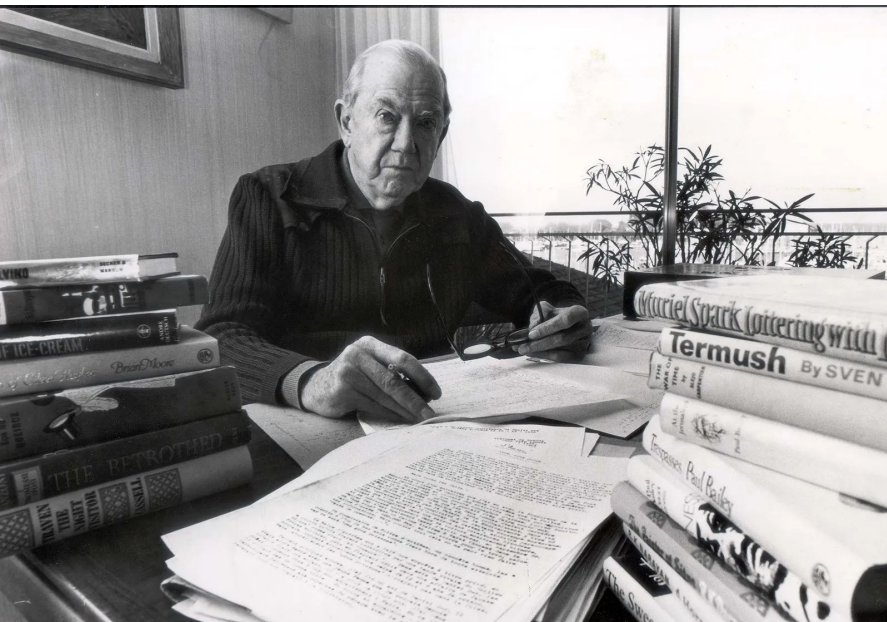


# **20th century fiction**

# Angry Young Men

- working class authors writing about working class people in the 1950's
- paralleled by The Movement in poetry; influenced by new developments in drama
- a new type of character: a young disillusioned intellectual who moves up socially by marrying an upper class woman
- “new wave” theater: John Osborne: *Look Back in Anger* (1956)
- fiction: Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim* (1954) - “campus novel”



## **Graham Greene**

*Brighton Rock* (1938)

*The Power and the Glory*  
(1940)

*The Heart of the Matter*  
(1948)

*The Quiet American* (1955)

*The Human Factor* (1978)



## **Doris Lessing**

*The Grass Is Singing* (1950)

*The Golden Notebook* (1962)

*Children of Violence* (5  
novels; 1952-1969)

*The Good Terrorist* (1985)

*The Fifth Child* (1988)

image: [dorislessing.org](http://dorislessing.org)

## ***The Fifth Child***

Just before Ben went to the local secondary modern school, the only school of course that would have him, there was a summer holiday, almost like those in the past. People had written each other, had rung: “Those poor people, let’s go there, at least for a week . . .” Poor David . . . always that, Harriet knew. Sometimes, rarely, poor Harriet. More often, irresponsible Harriet, selfish Harriet, crazy Harriet . . .

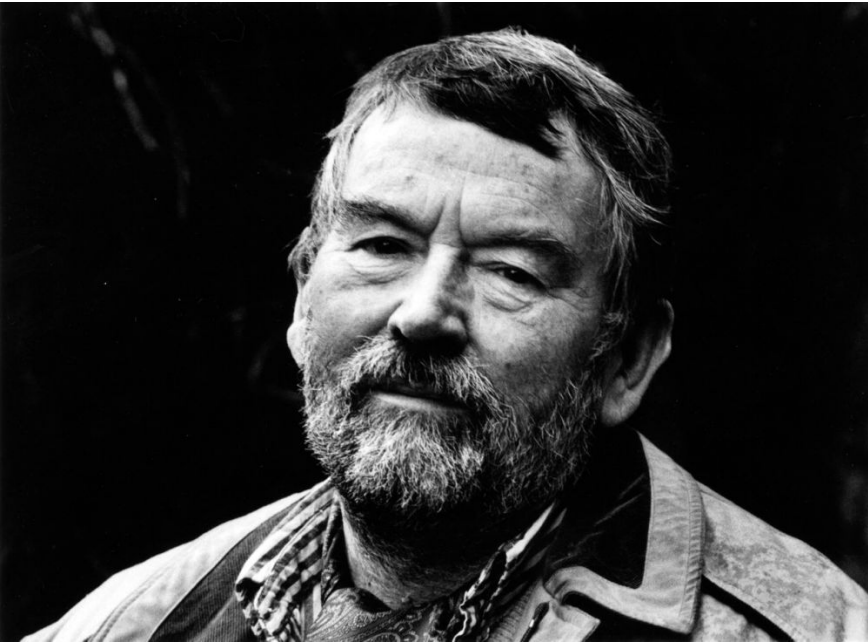
*Who had not let Ben be murdered*, she defended herself fiercely, in thought, never aloud. By everything they — the society they belonged to — stood for, believed in, she had had no alternative but to bring Ben back from that place [the mental institution]. But because she had, and saved him from murder, she had destroyed her family.

Had harmed her life . . . David's . . . Luke's, Helen's, Jane's . . . and Paul's. Paul, the worst.

Her thoughts circled in this groove.

David kept saying she should simply not have gone up there . . . but how could she *not* have gone, being Harriet? And if she had not, she believed David would have.

A scapegoat. She was the scapegoat — Harriet, destroyer of her family.



## **John Fowles**

*The Collector* (1963)

*The Magus* (1966)

*The French Lieutenant's  
Woman* (1969)

image: [theparisreview.org](http://theparisreview.org)

## ***The French Lieutenant's Woman***

*the novelist appears to cancel out the second ending*

It is a time-proven rule of the novelist's craft never to introduce any but very minor new characters at the end of a book. (...) I did not want to introduce him; but since he is the sort of man who cannot bear to be left out of the limelight, the kind of man who travels first class or not at all, for whom the first is the only pronoun, who in short has first things on the brain, and since I am the kind of man who refuses to intervene in nature (even the worst), he has got himself in—or, as he would put it, has got himself in *as he really is*. I shall not labour the implication that he was previously got in as he really wasn't, and is therefore not truly a new character at all; but rest assured that this personage is, in spite of appearances, a very minor figure—as minimal, in fact, as a gamma-ray particle.



(...) And now, as he negligently supports himself on the parapet, he squeezes the tip of his nose lightly between the knuckles of his beringed first and middle fingers. One has the impression he can hardly contain his amusement. He is staring back towards Mr Rossetti's house [where Charles and Sara just had a conversation leading toward their reunion]; and with an almost proprietary air, as if it is some new theatre he has just bought and is pretty confident he can fill. In this he has not changed: he very evidently regards the world as his to possess and use as he likes.

But now he straightens. This *flanerie* in Chelsea has been a pleasant interlude, but more important business awaits him. He takes out his watch—a Breguet—and selects a small key from a vast number of a second gold chain. He makes small adjustments to the time. It seems—though unusual in an instrument from the bench of

the greatest of watchmakers—that he was running a quarter of an hour fast. It is doubly strange, for there is no visible clock by which he could have discovered the error in his own timepiece. But the reason may be guessed. He is meanly providing himself with an excuse for being late at his next appointment. A certain kind of tycoon cannot bear to seem at fault over even the most trivial matters.

He beckons peremptorily with his cane towards an open landau that waits some hundred yards away. It trots smartly up to the kerb beside him. The footman springs down and opens the door. The impresario mounts, sits, leans expansively back against the crimson leather, dismisses the monogrammed rug the footman offers towards his legs. The footman catches the door to, bows, then rejoins his fellow-servant on the box. An instruction is called out,

the coachman touches his cockaded hat with his whip-handle.  
And the equipage draws briskly away.



## **Salman Rushdie**

*Midnight's Children* (1981)

*Shame* (1983)

*Satanic Verses* (1988)

image: [pen.org](https://www.pen.org)

## from *Shame*

*narrator comments on the topic of “shame”*

Not so long ago, in the East End of London, a Pakistani father murdered his only child, a daughter, because by making love to a white boy she had brought such dishonour upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain. The tragedy was intensified by the father’s enormous and obvious love for his butchered child, and by the beleaguered reluctance of his friends and relatives (all “Asians”, to use the confusing term of these trying days) to condemn his actions. Sorrowing, they told radio microphones and television cameras that they understood the man’s point of view, and went on supporting him even when it turned out that the girl had never actually “gone all the way” with her boyfriend. The story appalled me when I heard it, appalled me in a fairly obvious way.

I had recently become a father myself and was therefore newly capable of estimating how colossal a force would be required to make a man turn a knife-blade against his own flesh and blood. But even more appalling was my realization that, like the interviewed friends etc., I, too, found myself understanding the killer. The news did not seem alien to me. We who have grown up on a diet of honour and shame can still grasp what must seem unthinkable to peoples living in the aftermath of the death of God and of tragedy: that men will sacrifice their dearest love on the implacable altars of their pride. (And not only men. I have since heard of a case in which a woman committed the identical crime for identical reasons.) Between shame and shamelessness lies the axis upon which we turn; meteorological conditions at both these poles are of the most extreme, ferocious type. Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence.

## **from *Shame***

*ending: Sufiya Zinobia, the personification of shame, attacks Omar*

There were strange screams. He heard them rise to their peaks and then die with uncanny abruptness, and then he knew what was coming into the house, something that could freeze a shriek in the middle, something that petrified. Something that would not, this time, be sated before it reached him, or cheated, or escaped from; that had entered the night-streets of the city and would not be denied. Something coming up the stairs: he heard it roar.

He stood beside the bed and waited for her like a bridegroom on his wedding night, as she climbed towards him, roaring, like a fire driven by the wind. The door blew open. And he in the darkness, erect, watching the approaching glow, and then she was there,

on all fours, naked, coated in mud and blood and shit, with twigs sticking to her back and beetles in her hair. She saw him and shuddered; then she rose up on her hind legs with her forepaws outstretched and he had just enough time to say, “Well, wife, so here you are at last,” before her eyes forced him to look.

He struggled against their hypnotic power, their gravitational pull, but it was no use, his eyes lifted, until he was staring into the fiery yellow heart of her, and saw there, just for an instant, some flickering, some dimming of the flame in doubt, as though she had entertained for that tiny fragment of time the wild fantasy that she was indeed a bride entering the chamber of her beloved; but the furnace burned the doubts away, and as he stood before her, unable to move, her hands, his wife’s hands, reached out to him and closed.



His body was falling away from her, a headless drunk, and after that the Beast faded in her once again, she stood there blinking stupidly, unsteady on her feet, as if she didn't know that all the stories had to end together, that the fire was just gathering its strength, that on the day of reckoning the judges are not exempt from judgment, and that the power of the Beast of shame cannot be held for long within any one frame of flesh and blood, because it grows, it feeds and swells, until the vessel bursts.

And then the explosion comes, a shock-wave that demolishes the house, and after it the fireball of her burning, rolling outwards to the horizon like the sea, and last of all the cloud, which rises and spreads and hangs over the nothingness of the scene, until I can no longer see what is no longer there;

the silent cloud, in the shape of a giant, grey and headless man, a figure of dreams, a phantom with one arm lifted in a gesture of farewell.