

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

CHAPTER 1

Understanding Ackroyd 1

Childhood, Education, and Career 2

Identity 3

Writings 4

CHAPTER 2

Poetry 6

Notes for a New Culture 8

Journalism, Lectures, and Essays 11

CHAPTER 3

Dressing Up, Transvestism and Drag 15

Ezra Pound and His World 16

The Great Fire of London 17

The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde 25

CHAPTER 4

T. S. Eliot 32

Hawksmoor 37

Chatterton 45

CHAPTER 5

First Light 53

Dickens 60

English Music 66

CHAPTER 6

- The House of Doctor Dee* 74
The Trial of Elizabeth Cree 80
Blake 87

CHAPTER 7

- Milton in America* 95
The Life of Thomas More 101
The Plato Papers 108

CHAPTER 8

- London: The Biography* 115
Albion 122
The Clerkenwell Tales 128
Chaucer 135

CHAPTER 9

- The Lambs of London* 138
Turner 141
Shakespeare: The Biography 144

CHAPTER 10

- Ackroyd's Status as a Writer* 151
Monographs about Ackroyd 154
Ackroyd and His Contemporaries 157
Ackroyd and His Predecessors 161

CHAPTER 11

- Ackroyd as a Postmodern Writer* 169
Theories of Postmodernism 169
Hawksmoor and Chatterton as Postmodernist Fictions 172
Hawksmoor and Chatterton as Postmodernist Detective Fictions 177
London 181
Englishness 184
Last Words? 187

Notes 189

Bibliography 209

Index 215

About the Author 221

INDEX

Unless otherwise indicated, all titles in quotation marks or italics refer to Ackroyd's works.

Ackroyd, Graham, 2

Ackroyd, Peter: awards, 37, 152, 192n12, 200n21; as biographer, 11, 30, 33, 60–61, 64, 66, 151–52, 165–66; birth, 2; education, 2–3; family, 2; heart attack, 1, 187; homosexuality, 3–4, 153; as journalist, 11–12; lectures, 12–14, 102, 185, 189; Mellon Fellowship, Yale University, 3, 8, 10, 153; as novelist, 30, 105, 151–52, 167; as poet, 6–8, 167; publishing deals, 108, 154; as television presenter, 120, 187, 199n12, 200n25; as undergraduate, Cambridge University, 3, 6, 72; writing routine, 101

Albion, 5, 12, 51, 102, 122–28, 185, 186, 200n28; continuity of English culture in, 126–27; England and Europe in, 123–24; English sensibility in, 122–23; parody and plagiarism in, 124–25; “placism,” 127–28

“All the Time in the World,” 13

“Among School Children,” 7

“And the Children . . .,” 8

Anxiety of Influence, The (Bloom), 48

Ashbery, John, 7, 8, 10

autobiographical elements in writings, 67, 71, 117, 122, 138–39

Babbage, Charles, 86, 87, 116, 183

Banville, John, 173–74, 176

Barnes, Julian, 154, 158, 161, 166, 170, 179, 187

Barrett, Michael, 84

biography: Ackroyd's approach to, 11, 32, 35, 60, 62, 65–66, 87–88, 135, 145–48, 149; interanimated with fiction, 29–30, 60–61, 63–65, 106, 125–26, 164–66; and sexuality, 3. *See also specific titles*

Blake, 5, 11, 87–94, 106, 150, 157, 168, 196n29, 196n34; on antiromanticism, 90–91; on engraving techniques, 91; on kinship with Chatterton, 90–92; politics and radicalism in, 89; relation to previous biographies, 87–88; on temperament of Blake, 92–93

Blake, William, 2, 13, 65, 71, 72, 79, 87–94, 114, 118, 121, 123, 127, 128, 142, 144, 146, 147, 155, 157, 160, 162, 181, 184, 187, 196nn35–36; “The Blossom,” 92; *The Four Zoas*, 91; “Infant Joy,” 92; *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, 91, 92

Bloom, Harold, 48, 72, 154, 162, 163

Borges, Jorge Luis, 77, 156, 161, 162, 171, 174, 177

Brief Lives series, 135, 141, 187

British Museum and Reading Room, 13, 32, 76, 77, 86–87, 90, 101, 116, 183

Browning, Robert, 35, 36, 62, 67, 161

Byatt, A. S., 159–60, 176

- Callow, Simon, 120
- Canterbury Tales, The* (Chaucer), 123, 133, 135, 136, 137
- Carter, Angela, 160, 161, 166
- Catholicism: and Ackroyd, 2, 101; and Eliot, 33, 34; and Englishness, 16, 102, 127, 155–56; vs. Puritanism, 95, 98, 99–100; and Shakespeare, 148; and spectacle, 98, 102, 105, 136; and the supernatural, 127, 174
- Chatterton*, 4, 10, 37, 45–52, 56, 118, 140, 154–55, 157, 158, 159, 160, 169, 172, 175–77, 178–80, 181–82, 185, 187, 192n12, 195n20; Eliot's influence on, 46–48; fakes and forgeries, 49–52; London in, 181–83; plagiarism, 47–49; plot of, 43–46; as postmodernist detective fiction, 178–80; as postmodernist fiction, 175–77; resurrection in, 47; time in, 45
- Chatterton, Thomas, 2, 45–52, 57, 64, 65, 72, 73, 79, 90, 116, 124–25, 127, 139, 140, 157, 162, 166, 168, 171, 175–77, 178–80, 180–87, 192n33
- Chaucer*, 5, 135–37
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, 36, 45, 46, 49, 89, 92, 117, 122, 123, 124, 133–37, 156, 162, 181
- "Christmas Story, A," 5, 189
- Clerkenwell, 75–79, 82, 128, 130, 132, 181, 194n3, 199n32
- Clerkenwell Tales, The*, 5, 128–35, 172, 201n31, 201n33, 201n37; Chaucerian allusions in, 133–35; language in, 131–32; notes in, 132–33; plot of, 128–30; setting in, 130–31; structure of, 133–34
- Cockney visionaries, 13, 75, 88–89, 96, 106, 111, 123, 142, 150, 154, 181, 184, 187
- Collection, The*, 12, 187, 190n22
- "Country Life," 7, 8
- Country Life*, 7
- critical reception, 7–8, 25, 44–45, 60, 63, 71–72, 93–94, 95, 108, 115, 151–87
- cross-dressing, 4, 40–41, 77, 81, 82, 87, 119. See also *Dressing Up, Transvestism and Drag*
- Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, 80, 155, 157, 182. See also *Trial of Elizabeth Cree, The*
- Darwin, Charles, 111
- Dee, John, 2, 28, 74–80, 116, 155, 171, 180, 194n5, 195n9
- Defoe, Daniel, 69, 72, 86, 88, 126, 162, 199n7
- De Quincey, Thomas, 28, 85, 86, 138, 140, 162
- Dickens, 3, 4, 21, 60–66, 67, 79, 106, 125, 149, 155, 157, 165–66, 168, 189n4; biographer-as-archaeologist, 61–62; Ellen Ternan, 62–63; interludes in, 63–65; London in, 61; "real" vs. "true" knowledge, 60, 65–66; relation between life and work, 60–61
- Dickens* (television series), 187
- Dickens, Charles, 2, 3, 4, 11, 13, 18–24, 35, 60–66, 68, 71, 72, 73, 86, 87, 88, 89, 111, 115, 117, 118, 124, 127, 135, 143, 149, 150, 151, 156, 161, 162–64, 165–66, 178, 180, 181, 184, 187, 188, 190n22, 208n78; *Barnaby Rudge*, 24, 118, 163; *Bleak House*, 178; *David Copperfield*, 66, 115; *Great Expectations*, 67, 68, 70; *Little Dorrit*, 18–24, 61, 64, 118, 146, 163, 193n14; *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 62; *The Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi*, 86; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 162; *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 163; *Our Mutual Friend*, 35, 65; *The Pickwick Papers*, 162
- Diversions of Purley and Other Poems, The*, 7, 189
- Dressing Up, Transvestism and Drag*, 4, 15–16, 87
- echoes: and "A Christmas Story," 5; and distortion, 19; and history, 24, 40–44, 109, 116–17, 121; and

- impersonation, 8, 26–27, 141; and intertextuality, 7, 17–18, 58–60, 69, 72, 97, 99–100; and morphic resonance, 72–73; and names, 19
- Eco, Umberto, 133, 152, 173, 177
- Eliot, T. S., 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 26, 27–28, 29, 32–37, 37–38, 46–48, 49, 56, 57, 62, 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 79–80, 87, 111, 112, 127, 132, 150, 151, 154, 155, 157, 162, 165, 166–67, 169, 181, 182, 187, 188, 192n18; “Ash Wednesday,” 47; “The Burial of the Dead,” 47, 80; “Death by Water,” 17; *The Family Reunion*, 47, 57, 157; *For Lancelot Andrewes*, 33; *Four Quartets*, 33, 34, 38, 167; *He Do the Police in Different Voices*, 35, 65; “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” 35, 46; *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, 11, 154; “Portrait of a Lady,” 35; “Preludes,” 35; *The Rock*, 35; *The Sacred Wood*, 27; *Sweeney Agonistes*, 35; “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” 73, 162; *The Waste Land*, 17, 20, 34, 35, 36, 38, 46, 47, 49, 65, 71, 79, 112, 132, 167, 192n13, 200n20; “What the Thunder Said,” 80
- English Music*, 4, 64, 66–73, 79, 118, 128, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 164, 185–86, 190n10; as bildungsroman, 66–67; clairvoyance in, 67–68; and Dickens, 66–67, 68, 70; morphic resonance and, 72–73; negative reviews of, 71–72; plot of, 68–71
- Englishness: and conservatism, 183–87; and culture, 9, 67, 69, 70, 72, 102, 185, 204n21; and heterogeneity, 13, 15, 117, 122–24, 127, 153, 183, 185; and tradition, 13, 66, 184–85, 200n20
- Englishness of English Art, The* (Pevsner), 13, 122
- “Englishness of English Literature, The,” 13, 102, 185
- “English Novel Now, The,” 10
- Ezra Pound and His World*, 4, 16–17
- fakes and forgeries, 45–46, 48, 49–52, 83–84, 124–25, 139–41, 175, 176, 182, 192n3, 193n17
- Fall of Troy, The*, 187
- First Light*, 4, 53–60, 61, 69, 71, 80, 116, 118, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 172, 174, 177, 181, 193n2, 193n7, 199n34; archaeology in, 53–56; Hardy’s influence on, 57–60; plot of, 53–54; science in, 53
- Fowles, John, 59, 151, 157, 158, 159–60, 161, 173, 178, 187, 204n21
- French Lieutenant’s Woman, The* (Fowles), 59, 159, 173, 187
- Freud, Sigmund, 66, 112, 159
- Gale, George, 11
- Galvin, George. *See* Leno, Dan
- Gibson, Jeremy, 4, 7–8, 121, 153, 154, 156–57, 165, 169, 189
- Giovannelli, Laura, 152, 154
- Gissing, George, 85–87, 183
- Gordon, Giles, 27
- Great Fire of London, The*, 2, 4, 17–25, 49, 54, 64, 118, 154, 156, 159, 162–64; characters in, 20–21; clairvoyance in, 22; climaxes of, 23–24; Dickens’s influence on, 18–20, 162–64; names in, 19; plot of, 19
- * Greenblatt, Stephen, 144–46, 150
- Hardy, Thomas, 54, 56, 57–60, 116, 128, 188
- Hawksmoor*, 4, 10, 37–45, 46, 50, 74, 75, 78, 80, 118, 154, 155, 156, 159, 160, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172–75, 176, 177–78, 182, 187, 192n12, 192n19, 201n32; and awards, 37; echoes between chapters, 40–44; Eliot’s influence on, 38; gothic elements in, 44, 172, 174, 182; merging of past and present in, 37; murders in, 38–40; as postmodernist detective fiction, 177–78; as postmodernist fiction, 172–75
- Hawksmoor*, Nicholas, 37, 74, 116, 155
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 98–99, 178

- historiographic metafiction, 45, 154, 156, 164, 170, 173, 175, 180
- Hitchcock, Alfred, 80, 112
- Hogarth, William, 70, 116, 123, 144
- Home, Daniel Dunglas, 67, 193n17
- House of Doctor Dee, The*, 5, 10, 19, 74–80, 115, 118, 154, 155, 157, 159, 171, 172, 180, 187, 195n9; as horror tale, 172; John Dee in, 74–75; occultism in, 75–78, 80; plot of, 75–77; as postmodernist text, 171; resemblances to *Hawksmoor*, 74; self-reflexivity of, 74, 79; theme of homunculus, 78–79
- Hutcheon, Linda, 164, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175
- Illustrated London*, 120
- imitation, 26–27, 29, 34–35, 50, 59–60, 63, 66–67, 84, 109–10, 123–24, 141, 149, 162–64, 167–68
- impersonation, 4, 17, 22, 24, 27, 28, 34–35, 36, 56, 75, 149
- Incidents in My Life* (Home), 67
- Ireland, William Henry, 2, 50, 129, 138, 139–41, 146, 162, 175, 202n12
- "Island Sonata, The," 7
- Jameson, Fredric, 160, 169, 171–72, 185
- Joyce, James, 9, 16, 17, 25, 26, 36, 37, 115, 119, 156, 162, 166, 167–68, 169, 183, 188
- Kuhn, Brian, 3
- Lamb, Charles, 2, 138–41, 201n2, 201n5
- Lamb, Mary, 138–41, 202n9, 202n15
- Lambs of London, The*, 5, 138–41, 202n11; characters in, 138–40; London in, 138; plot of, 138; resemblances to *Chatterton*, 140; and Shakespeare, 140–41
- landscape of the imagination, 2, 61, 142, 148
- Last Testament of Oscar Wilde, The*, 4, 6, 13, 25–31, 37, 118, 154, 155, 156, 164, 172; as fiction and biography, 29–30, 164–65; identity in, 25–27, 28–30; impersonation in, 27–28; London in, 30–31
- Leno, Dan, 2, 4, 15, 56, 80–87, 116, 162, 195n14
- Life of Thomas More, The*, 5, 11, 94, 101–8, 130, 132, 135, 136, 144, 155, 157, 197n17, 198n19; acting in, 104–5; More's characterization in, 102–3; setting in, 105–6; structure of, 103–4; utopia in, 107–8
- London, 1, 2, 106, 115, 181–84, 188; and Blake, 88, 91, 114; as character, 152; and Chaucer, 136; city-as-human, 2, 31; critics on, 115–21; and Dickens, 22, 61, 124, 162–64; in eighteenth century, 173; and Eliot, 35, 36, 167; and Goossequill, 96–97; as labyrinth, 61, 121; and the Lambs, 138–39; in medieval period, 106, 128, 130–31; and More, 103, 104, 105, 106–7, 136; as mystical city, 78, 80, 88–89; in nineteenth century, 30–31, 51, 61, 86–87; in novels and biographies, 157, 181–84; in Regency period, 138–39; in seventeenth century, 38; and Shakespeare, 148, 150; in Tudor period, 105–6; and Turner, 142, 144; in twentieth century, 18, 112–13; as utopia, 107, 108, 111, 184; in Victorian period, 18, 30, 51, 81, 84, 86; walks around, 61, 88, 105–6, 116, 130, 200n25; as wasteland, 18, 22, 29–30, 36, 38, 79–80, 113–14; and Wilde, 30–31;
- London Lickpenny*, 7, 8
- "London Luminaries and Cockney Visionaries," 13, 189, 195n14
- "London Lykpenny" (anonymous), 106, 113, 116, 136, 198n20
- London: The Biography*, 1, 4, 5, 30, 31, 115–21, 128, 146, 150, 183, 187, 188, 201n40; acclaim for, 116; crime and punishment in, 118–19; diversity of capital, 117–18; genre of,

- 120–21; related projects, 120; space and time in, 116–17
- Lud Heat* (Sinclair), 37, 155
- Macpherson, James, 50, 124, 125, 175, 196n36
- magic, 99, 118, 156, 173, 184, 194n5, 195n9, 196n35. *See also* occultism; possession
- Marx, Karl, 75, 85–87, 132, 159, 161, 183
- Massinger, Philip, 27–28
- McHale, Brian, 169, 171, 172, 178
- Meredith, George, 45, 46, 47, 51, 52, 155, 179
- Milton, John, 2, 28, 49, 88, 90, 95–101, 102, 114, 116, 118, 124, 127, 135, 157, 162, 184, 197n12
- Milton in America*, 5, 94, 95–101, 102, 118, 155, 157, 160, 172, 181, 187; as “alternative history,” 96, 197n4; biblical and classical allusions in, 97, 100; Hawthorne’s influence on, 98–100; Milton vs. Goosequill, 96–97; plot of, 95; resemblances to *Paradise Lost*, 100–101
- mimicry. *See* impersonation
- Moorcock, Michael, 2, 121, 181
- More, Thomas, 2, 101–8, 114, 119, 132, 135, 147, 150, 157, 162, 181, 184; *Responsio ad Lutherum*, 104; *Utopia*, 94, 101, 103, 107, 108, 111, 197n4
- morphic resonance, 72–73, 77, 90, 194n25
- music hall, 8, 15, 28, 30, 35, 53, 56, 81–82, 102, 112, 127, 180
- Nabokov, Vladimir, 11, 60, 66
- Newton, 187
- No, 4
- Notes for a New Culture*, 4, 8–11, 16, 66, 126, 154, 162, 167, 180, 185; English vs. American culture, 10–11; English vs. European culture, 9; as manifesto, 9–10, 11; subjectivity in, 11
- occultism, 4, 13, 37–39, 44, 57, 74–75, 78–80, 87, 89, 99, 128, 155, 173, 194n7, 195n10, 201n32. *See also* magic; possession
- Onega, Susana, 7, 8, 9, 19, 54, 56, 57, 80, 81, 152, 154–56, 159, 160, 165, 170, 173, 174–75, 180, 184, 189, 203n5
- “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” (De Quincey), 85–86
- Ouch*, 7, 8
- Outsiders*, 4
- pastiche, 17, 37, 45, 72, 127, 199n33
- Peter Ackroyd’s London* (television series), 115, 187, 199n12
- Peter Ackroyd’s *Voyages through Time* series, 187
- Pevsner, Nikolaus, 13, 15, 122, 124, 126–28, 185
- plagiarism, 27–29, 33, 48–49, 51, 124–25, 141, 149, 175
- Plato, 2, 98, 108–14, 184
- Plato Papers, The*, 5, 94, 108–14, 118, 157, 172, 181, 184, 198n30, 199n4; future setting of, 109; genre of, 108–9; and journey to underworld, 113–14; mistaken perceptions of past in, 111–12; and Plato, 109–10; research for, 108; as “ruin literature,” 112–13
- Poe, Edgar Allan, 8, 111, 178, 179
- possession, 22, 49, 72, 146–47, 168, 190n10, 193n17, 194n5. *See also* magic; occultism
- Pound, Ezra, 4, 9, 16–17, 26, 33, 37, 87, 118, 154–55, 162, 165, 166–67, 168
- Presence of the Past, The* (Sheldrake), 72
- prison: Camberwell, 83, 118; Fleet, 118; in *The Great Fire of London*, 19, 23–24, 54, 118, 163; London as, 61, 163; Manchester, 85; Marshalsea, 18–19, 22, 23–24, 64, 97, 118, 132; and More, 103; Newgate, 24, 118, 129, 163; prevalence of, 118–19; and the self, 18; Tower of London, 103;

prison (*continued*)

and Wilde, 25–26; Wormwood

Scrubs, 2, 21, 23, 119

Prynne, J. H., 6, 10

Romantics, The (television series), 187

Shakespeare, William, 13, 48, 49, 88, 119, 122, 123, 124, 138, 139–41, 144–50, 157, 162, 174, 180, 181; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 192n13; *As You Like It*, 145; *Hamlet*, 13, 96, 141, 144, 145, 202n16; *Henry V*, 145; *Julius Caesar*, 145; *The Merchant of Venice*, 145; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 141; *The Taming of the Shrew*, 148; *A Winter's Tale*, 141

Shakespeare: The Biography, 5, 144–50; Ackroyd's approach toward, 146–47; assessment of, 149–50; compared with other recent biographies, 144–45; emptiness of subject in, 147–48; imitation of Shakespeare in, 149; plagiarism in, 149

Shapiro, James, 144–46, 150

Sheldrake, Rupert, 72–73, 77

Sinclair, Iain, 2, 37, 93, 121, 155, 181, 183, 191n9, 208n61

Sterne, Laurence, 70, 124, 126, 156

Stratford, Kevin, 6

Süskind, Patrick, 131

Swift, Graham, 152, 158, 161, 163, 170

territorial imperative, 24, 59, 66, 69, 81, 116, 120, 122, 127–28, 149, 182, 200n26. *See also* names of individual places

theatricality, 13, 49, 66, 81, 102, 103, 105, 119, 120, 150, 162, 185, 186

"There Are So Many . . .," 8

time: as central theme, 4, 45, 53, 54, 75, 188, 199n5; cyclical nature of, 36–37, 38, 42, 43, 46, 57, 74, 117, 121; merging of present and past, 72–73, 87, 117, 121, 162, 171–72,

173, 182, 183; representation of history, 96, 125, 156, 158–60, 166, 167, 170, 173, 175, 187, 203n18; transcendence of, 13–14, 44, 47, 56, 58, 71, 76, 77, 78, 101, 155, 180, 184

transvestism. *See* cross-dressing; *Dressing Up, Transvestism and Drag*

Trial of Elizabeth Cree, The, 5, 78, 80–87, 155, 172, 195n22; British Museum and Reading Room in, 86–87; golem in, 81; and Maybrick trial, 83–84; murders in, 84–86; music hall in, 81–82; plot of, 81–82. *See also* *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*

T. S. Eliot, 3, 4, 11, 32–37, 66, 149, 168; Eliot as "outsider," 33; problems with Eliot's estate, 32, 35; Eliot's despair, 34; conversion to Anglicanism, 34–35; imitation of Eliot in, 35

Turner, 5, 141–44

Turner, J. M. W., 13, 70, 89, 141–44

Ulysses (Joyce), 17, 36, 37, 115, 119, 167, 168, 183

ventriloquism. *See* impersonation

Vortigern (Ireland), 138, 140, 201n4

Walker, Graham, 6

Whiteside, Audrey, 2

Wilde, Oscar, 2, 4, 6, 13, 25–31, 33, 36, 37, 41, 50, 51, 52, 57, 64, 65, 72, 86, 116, 118, 151, 154, 155, 156, 162, 164, 166, 168, 171; *De Profundis*, 164; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 29; *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 31, 52, 191n20; "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," 192n33

Winterson, Jeanette, 160, 161

Wolfreys, Julian, 4, 7–8, 121, 153, 154, 156–57, 165, 182, 189

Wordsworth, William, 7, 45, 86, 90–91, 117, 125

Wright, Thomas, 12, 108