



# **Nation and Novel: The English Novel from Its Origins to the Present Day**

*Patrick Parrinder*

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# Nation and Novel: The English Novel from Its Origins to the Present Day

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What is "English" about the English novel, and how has the idea of the English nation been shaped by the writers of fiction? How do the novel's profound differences from poetry and drama affect its representation of national consciousness? *Nation and Novel* sets out to answer these questions by tracing English prose fiction from its late medieval origins through its stories of rogues and criminals, family rebellions and suffering heroines, to the present-day novels of immigration. Major novelists from Daniel Defoe to the late twentieth century have drawn on national history and mythology in novels which have pitted Cavalier against Puritan, Tory against Whig, region against nation, and domesticity against empire. The novel is deeply concerned with the fate of the nation, but almost always at variance with official and ruling-class perspectives on English society. Patrick Parrinder's groundbreaking new literary history outlines the English novel's distinctive, sometimes paradoxical, and often subversive view of national character and identity. This sophisticated yet accessible assessment of the relationship between fiction and nation will set the agenda for future research and debate.

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