

FACT into Fiction

A discussion of recent fictionalised treatments of real-life figures and events

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A remarkable number of contemporary novelists have chosen to base their narratives on actual events and to include real-life, often historical figures as their protagonists. As I remarked in an earlier article (CL, Sept/Oct 2001, pp.12-16), this tendency has produced some very compelling and interesting work, such as **The siege** (2001) by Helen Dunmore and **Alias Grace** (1996) by Margaret Atwood. Fascinating as this approach to reality may be, however, one should be aware of dangers inherent in the form. In this regard, several prominent critics have remarked on the way 'faction', or fictionalised fact, can exonerate the writer from any real obligation to the truth, allowing his or her imagination to roam freely, altering or inventing events to suit their own purposes.

Bearing the possibility of distortion in mind, the best practitioners of this fictional genre often afford a useful introduction to areas which may have remained unknown to most contemporary readers. I could cite here Pat Barker's brilliant representation of WWI in her *Regeneration* trilogy or (referring to another article in CL, Nov/Dec 2003) the way in which obscure but talented women have been rediscovered for us by novelists. Good examples are Artemisia Gentileschi in **The passion of Artemisia** (2002) by Susan Vreeland or the insights into Frida Kahlo's life suggested by Meaghan Delahunt's **In the blue house**.

This article concentrates again on women

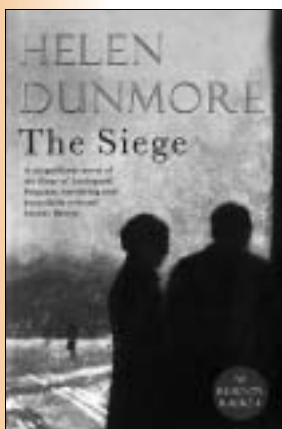
writers and makes no claim to comprehensiveness. The fiction discussed represents a personal selection of works published since late 2001, starting with **The woman who gave birth to rabbits** (2002) by the Irish writer and historian, Emma Donoghue. The extraordinary title of this collection of stories based on historical ephemera - or what Alex Clark refers to as 'out-takes from the margins of British history' - relates to an elaborate natal confidence trick. And the other pieces are no less esoteric, often inspired by a single historical detail or such obscure records as doctors' notes, local newspapers and ballads.

What the collection illustrates above all is not only the variety on which authors can draw, but the imaginative truth that a good writer can attain in this genre. To quote Alex Clark again (**Times Literary Supplement**, 7 June 2002), too often 'historically derived fiction... leads a novelist into florid overwriting and caricature, made more unconvincing by the overlay of a modern sensibility'. This danger is avoided by Donahue and most of the writers to be discussed, but is all too sensationally epitomised in **The fourth queen** (2003) by Debbie Taylor. Set in 1769, the narrative relates the true story of a young Scottish runaway who is sold into slavery and taken to the Marrakesh harem of Emperor Sidi Mohammed where she becomes his fourth wife. So far so factual, but Taylor resorts to every cliché and embellishment of cheap harem literature and falls headlong into the trap defined by Clark above.

Sensationalism of a different kind seems to dog accounts of Sylvia Plath's life which has become a veritable industry, at times based on unverifiable conjecture. **The ballad of Sylvia and Ted** (2001) by Emma Tennant is an example of wildly speculative writing (discussed in CL, Sept/Oct 2001, p.14). In **Wintering** (2003), however, Kate Moses avoids excess in her interpretation of the Hughes-Plath disintegrating marriage. Set in the wintry London of Plath's last weeks before her suicide on 11 February 1963, **Wintering** offers sympathetic, even lyrical, insights. Through short, perceptive chapters on each of the **Ariel** poems that Moses achieves is in itself poetic, while at the same time illuminating a troubled yet creative intellect.

Ovid, a poet from a much earlier era, has also recently received fictional treatment in **The love artist** (2002) by Jane Alison. Set in Rome towards the end of the reign of the Emperor Augustus, the novel describes Ovid's relationship with Julia, the Emperor's granddaughter, and ingeniously proposes an explanation for Ovid's mysterious banishment to Tomis on the Black Sea.

The book of salt (2003) by Monique Truong gives an unusual slant to yet another poet, Gertrude Stein, and her companion, Alice B Toklas. Included in a cookbook by Toklas is a chapter on the various cooks she and Stein engaged to cook



for them in France. Taking this chapter as her starting point, debut novelist Truong invents her protagonist, Binh, who is an amalgam of all the Vietnamese cooks the two women employed. Gay and full of yearning, Binh affords a new and unexpected angle from which to view the frequently-described Stein-Toklas ménage. Though tedious at times with its insistence on culinary imagery, **The book of salt** has some sharp observations, not least Stein's refusal ever to reverse her car, but always driving forwards 'until she can turn the automobile round, a 360-degree arc of obstinacy'.

For all her unsubstantiated claims about Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, Emma Tennant proposes a more cogent (though not entirely convincing) theory about the friendship of Henry James and the nineteenth-century popular novelist Constance Fenimore Woolson. **Felony** (2002) is partly inspired by James's novella, **The Aspern Papers**, which was in turn based on an actual attempt to acquire valuable Shelley manuscripts from the elderly Claire Clairmont, step-sister to Shelley's wife, Mary.

This part of **Felony** is well told, but Tennant is on thinner ice in her assumptions about James's attitude to and treatment of Woolson. Tennant believes that the vulnerable Woolson was misled into imagining that the great man was about to propose to her and that his behaviour was cruel and cavalier. In the preface to **Felony** the author acknowledges her debt to Lyndall Gordon's **A private life of Henry James** (1998), but Gordon is too scholarly and cautious a writer to advance unprovable reasons for attributing Woolson's suicide in Venice to Henry James's behaviour.

Someone else who has found the life of Henry James a rich area for fictional interpretation is the Irish writer Colm Tóibín. As Francis King has remarked, whereas Leon Edel's five-volume life of Henry James can be likened to a symphony, Tóibín's novel, **The master** (2004), 'can best be described as a series of brilliant études based on themes derived from [Edel]' (**Literary Review**, March 2004). Where Tóibín and Tennant overlap, though not necessarily in agreement, is in episodes involving Constance Fenimore Woolson.

Among other literary figures to receive 'factional' treatment is Dr Samuel Johnson in **According to Queeney** (2001) in which Beryl Bainbridge observes the great man through the perspective of Mrs Hester Thrale's neglected oldest daughter. The Thrales invited the ailing Johnson to join their household in 1764, an arrangement which was to last for many years and which cemented the close friendship between Hester and her literary guest.

This is the fifth book by Beryl Bainbridge to be short-listed for the Booker prize and one which was certainly worthy of the prize. However, winning was not to be, despite the vitality and flare of Bainbridge's recreation of the Thrale family and Johnson's numerous friends and admirers, including Garrick, Goldsmith, Fanny Burney and Reynolds.

Proust is the focus of another debut novelist, Kate Taylor.

Madame Proust and the Kosher Kitchen (2003) is an unconventional novel which peers into the rather dull mind of Marcel's mother and her anxiety over his well-being. The novel makes a chronological jump of 50 years when the kitchen of the title belongs to Sarah and, after another huge jump, to Marie. The Dreyfus case and the Holocaust are grafted on to Taylor's narrative which is ultimately not very satisfactory. The same is true of Katie Roiphe's musings on Charles Dodgson in **Still she haunts me** (2001). Sub-titled *A novel of Lewis Carroll and Alice Liddell*, the text is not without interest, although the emphasis given by Roiphe to paedophile tendencies has been discredited by such authorities as Karoline Leach, **In the shadow of the dreamchild**, and Morton N Cohen. In his 1995 biography, **Lewis Carroll**, Cohen demonstrates conclusively that Dodgson was an honourable, gentle and religious man who loved innocence and wished above all to see it preserved.

While the literary world offers ample scope for fictionalisation, an even more fertile area is opened up by royalty, court rivalries and aristocratic intrigue. Testimony to the popularity of this mode, if any were needed, is **Katherine** by Anya Seton which has never been out of print since its first publication in 1954. The eponymous heroine is Katherine de Roet who was mistress to John of Gaunt (later his wife) and was to become the great-grandmother of Richard III.

The historical novel, **The time before you die** (2002), by Lucy Beckett examines Mary Tudor's reign (1553-1558). In her effort to unite England under the banner of Catholicism, Mary rejected the break with Rome made by her father, Henry VIII. A scholar and theologian with a sizeable quantity of royal blood in his veins - Reginald Pole (1500-1556) - had been appointed Cardinal in Rome. In 1554 he returned to England as Papal Legate and became one of Mary's most trusted advisers. (A biography of Pole's mother, the Countess of Salisbury, by Hazel Pierce has recently been published; see *Booklist*.)

Beckett anatomises the conflicts assailing Mary's court and tells Pole's story, paralleling it with that of Robert Fletcher, a Carthusian monk. Subtitled *A novel of the Reformation* Beckett's book is perhaps a little heavy going as fiction but works well as an informative background to the Tudor novels discussed below.

Staying with the Tudor court but looking back to the reign of Henry VIII, Philippa Gregory's **The other Boleyn girl** (2001) focuses on Mary, little-known sister of Anne, who was Henry's mistress and mother to two of his illegitimate children. Soon, though, his eye



wandered and he tired of her as he was later to tire of so many other women. (See **Six wives** by David Starkey in *Booklist*.) Although initially about Mary, **The other Boleyn girl** encompasses Henry's later attraction to Anne and her determination that the King should divorce his first wife and marry her.

The picture Gregory paints of Anne Boleyn makes an interesting contrast with the Anne conjured up by Suzannah Dunn in **The queen of subtleties** (2004). This Anne eloquently narrates her own story in the form of a protracted letter to her small daughter (the later Elizabeth I). This alternates with the first-person narrative of Lucy Cornwallis, confectioner to Henry VIII and the creator of edible and decorative subtleties as opposed to Anne's less tangible artfulness.



Philippa Gregory returned to the Tudor court with **The queen's fool** (2003), this time examining the rivalry between Mary Tudor (later known as 'Bloody Mary'), and the young Elizabeth. The action occurs between the death of Henry VIII in 1547 and Elizabeth's accession in 1558 on the death of Mary.

This turbulent period is viewed through the eyes of Hannah, a young Jewish girl who has escaped the Spanish Inquisition and becomes Queen Mary's court fool. In this licensed role she is one of the rare courtiers able to comment truthfully and she gives a graphic account of the religious persecutions, court rebellions and political intrigue that marked Mary's sanguinary monarchy.

Astraea (2001), the first of a trilogy by Jane Stevenson - concerns the Queen of Bohemia (exiled daughter of James I) and her forbidden love for Dr Pelagius, an African prince who was earlier sold into slavery but later freed. Set in seventeenth-century Holland, the tale makes compelling reading. The same is true of the second in the series, **The pretender** (2002), which concerns the mulatto son of this union, Balthasar van Overmeer, who becomes a doctor in Holland.

The final volume in the trilogy, **The empress of the last days** (2003), is structured rather like AS Byatt's **Possession** (1990), in that contemporary students in the present are researching past events. This structure is less successful than that of the first two novels, despite the excitement the students themselves experience. Their discovery (via a play by Aphra Behn among other esoteric

routes) that a descendant of Pelagius, a young black woman in Barbados, has a legitimate claim to the British throne fails to ignite a corresponding spark in the reader.

Gaveston (2002) is an updated version by Stephanie Merritt of machinations at the court Edward II (1284-1327). But instead of a royal court, Merritt sets her novel in a modern university campus where a business tycoon (also called Edward) stands in for the king and a young professor - Piers Gaveston - is his favourite. As in its real-life prototype (and Marlowe's play), the plot soon takes a tragic turn, bringing down both superno and his protégé.

Rudolf II (1552-1612) was king of Hungary and of Bohemia, and became Holy Roman Emperor on the death of his father in 1576. Set mainly in Prague where Rudolf resided for most of his reign, **The book of splendor** (2002) by Frances Sherwood depicts the Emperor as mentally unstable. In his somewhat demented pursuit of eternal life Rudolph sought out Rabbi Loew, the creator of a golem (or clay figure brought to life) who could bestow immortality.

This vivacious narrative is populated by many real-life figures in Rudolph's court, including alchemists, mathematicians, astronomers and seers. Sherwood's research into the Kabbalah (a Jewish mystical text) and her keen interest in the details of seventeenth-century court life make her unusual approach to the historical novel a rewarding experience for the reader.

No less fascinating is Anne Enright's depiction of another sort of court life in **The pleasure of Eliza Lynch** (2002). The eponymous heroine of this novel was an adventuress born in Ireland in 1835 who became the mistress of Francisco Solano Lopes (1827-70), shortly to succeed his father as president of Paraguay in 1862. A self-aggrandising dictator, Lopes involved Paraguay in hostilities against Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina simultaneously and made Eliza the figurehead of his wars.

In many respects Eliza's story is similar to that of Evita Peron, especially in the allure she exerted over the couple's followers. Whilst Enright tends to challenge the demonisation of Eliza making her an attractive, vulnerable and romantic figure, two recent biographies take a different and possibly more objective line. (See Cawthorne and Rees in *Booklist*.)

The wreck in 1629 of the Dutch ship, Batavia, is the subject of Kathryn Heyman's novel, **The accomplice** (2003). On her maiden voyage, Batavia smashed into a low-lying archipelago fifty miles off the coast of Western Australia. This disaster happened when the captain, Ariaen Jacobsz, conspired with a merchant's agent, Jeronimus Cornelisz, to seize the ship and all its treasure. Two hundred and twenty souls were pitched on to two waterless islands, after which the merchant, Francisco Pelsaert, left with crews in two open boats to seek help in Java. (See Dash in *Booklist*.)

In **The accomplice** (2003) Kathryn Heyman vividly relates these events and the murderous anarchy which descended

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on the survivors. Interwoven with this shocking disaster is the personal history of Judith Bastiaansz who had been sailing with her family to start a new life. Judith is witness to the atrocities committed by Jeronimus, and Heyman skilfully integrates the historical facts with the young woman's sense of loss, fear and guilt.

Andrea Barrett is another writer drawn to tales of the sea, as evidenced in two of her earlier books, **Ship fever** (1996) and **The voyage of the Narwhal** (1998); the latter is briefly discussed in the **CL** of Oct/Sept 2001. In her latest book, Barrett extends her exploration of the nineteenth century, especially its scientific investigations. **Servants of the map** (2002) merges two narrative genres: the family saga with its complex of personal interconnections and the semi-fictional account of popular science. Incorporating characters from her earlier books, the family tree that emerges is as interesting as the research the characters pursue.

Among individuals who have received fictional treatment are Sally Hemings, the black slave who was for many years the mistress of Thomas Jefferson. In her novel entitled simply **Sally Hemings** (2002), Barbara Chase-Riboud paints a moving portrait of the woman who bore the third president of the United States seven children.

Clara (2002) by Janice Galloway is based on the life of the nineteenth-century pianist and composer Clara Schumann (1820-96) whose husband, Robert Schumann (1810-56), is much better known to the average modern reader. Yet, as a young woman Clara's musical reputation outstripped that of her husband and she was admired by such musical luminaries as Chopin, Liszt, Mendelssohn and Brahms.

What Janice Galloway powerfully conveys in her novel is the way in which music, and especially piano music, dominated Clara's life. Born into a family which dealt in pianos and to a father, Friedrich Wieck, who was the leading piano teacher in Leipzig, Clara was expected to excel at the instrument. Nor did she disappoint, becoming an outstanding concert pianist and undertaking demanding tours. With her marriage - much opposed by her father - Clara's talents took second place to her husband's often irrational needs and to those of the eight children she bore him. Although Clara lived on for 40 years after her husband's death in 1856, Galloway elects to end her narrative at that point.

One last look (2003) by Susanna Moore gives us a fictionalised version of another kind of relationship, that of George, Lord Auckland, who chose to take his sister, Emily Eden, to India as first lady when he was appointed Governor-General in 1836. Moore bases her chronicle on Emily's letters home which were published in 1866 under the title, **Up the country**; on the journals of the youngest Eden sister who also went to India (later published by Janet Dunbar in 1988 in **Tigers, Durbars and Kings**); and on the diaries of long-time Indian resident, Fanny Parks.

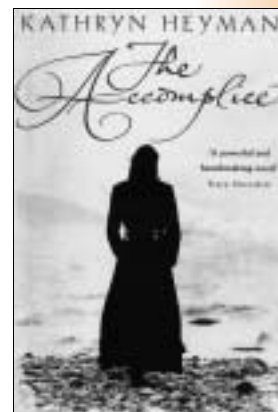
It is perhaps strange that while using all these original

sources (in much the way that Judith Chernaik uses the writings of Shelley's close circle in her brilliant novel, **Mab's daughters** of 1991) Moore prefers to give fictitious names to her characters. Indeed, as critic Sarah Curtis remarks, 'the amount of direct quotation in the novel is so great as to suggest that Emily Eden should be credited with part-authorship' (**Times Literary Supplement**, 2 January 2004). Nevertheless, the story that emerges is colourful and the descriptions exotic, though the more telling passages are seldom Moore's own inventions.

A striking variety of other fictionalised individuals includes the biblical characters Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, in **The red tent** (2002) by Anita Diamant, and Mary Magdalene in **Mary, called Magdalene** (2003) by Margaret George in the course of which the author tries to pinpoint the identity of her subject. Even Napoleon's favourite horse has come under the fictional spotlight in **Marengo** (2001), a composite device which Jill Hamilton uses to trace the life of Napoleon from his early days in Corsica, his rise to prominence and his army's decimation by the Russian winter.

Just predating the action of **Marengo** is the French Revolution, background to **The beekeeper's pupil** (2002) by Sara George. Part-fiction, part-fact this is the story of the blind French naturalist, Francois Huber, who engages a manservant, Francois Burnens, both as valet and as the eyes required for his passionate research into the life of bees. Not a very attractive subject most readers may think but George opens the door for the uninitiated into Huber's amazing ground-breaking discovery of apian violence and sexual competitiveness totally at odds with the sweetness more usually associated with bees.

The Terror that ravaged Paris in the immediate wake of the French Revolution is the setting for Jill Dawson's **Wild Boy** (2003). Using the device of shifting points of view, Dawson relates the discovery of a feral child in the forests of Aveyron who has apparently survived for years without any human contact. Totally without language, the child is given the name Victor and handed over to the care of Itard, a young Parisian doctor, who in turn employs the maternal Madame Guérin to help look after the boy. Herself the mother of an uncontrollable child, Madam Guérin becomes (for 28 years) Victor's caring and, in the end, only guardian, as Itard despairs of 'civilising' the boy or teaching him to speak.



The story has been told before (for instance, in Francois Truffaut's 1971 film, **L'Enfant Sauvage**) but Dawson gives it a new edge. As the mother of a child with Asperger Syndrome, and having read widely about autism, Dawson tacitly proposes this condition as the root of Victor's intractable behaviour. This she believes would also explain why the boy - apparently an idiot to the uninformed eye - was abandoned in the forest. The brutal scar on the child's neck might even indicate that whoever left him there had first meant to murder him.

By tactfully superimposing modern research on an eighteenth-century oddity, and by juxtaposing the points of view of Itard, Madame Guérin and Victor's own inner life, Dawson achieves a remarkable and persuasive whole. Adding further to the dramatic effect of her narrative is the way she offsets the savagery of the Terror with the conduct of the seemingly savage boy.

Tracy Chevalier's new novel, **The lady and the unicorn** (2003), looks back further to the late fifteenth century and the nobleman Jean le Viste who commissions six tapestries. Designed by the talented but often crude miniaturist, Nicholas des Innocents, and executed in Brussels by the weaver George de la Chapelle, the tapestries provide a formidable challenge to all concerned.

The story which Chevalier tells is perhaps not quite as compelling as her earlier **Girl with a pearl earring** (2000), but the detailed presentation of the weavers' work and their race to complete the commission by the specified date are enthralling. Of particular interest are Chevalier's descriptions of the 'flowery mead', a modern term for the millefleurs backgrounds to these fifteenth-century tapestries depicting up to twenty-six varieties of flowers.

In contrast to the historical inspiration of the foregoing books, Edna O'Brien chooses a modern incident for fictionalisation. As she has done previously (for instance, in **Down by the river** (1996) which drew on a case of brutal incest), O'Brien bases her novel, **In the forest** (2002), on a real case history. Here are the appalling facts:

In April 1994, Imelda Riney, aged twenty-nine, and her son Liam, aged three, went missing from her isolated cottage in County Clare. Father Joe Walshe, a curate in County Galway, disappeared a few days later, and when their burnt-out cars were found, suspicion pointed to Brendan O'Donnell, a local youth, home from England, on remand from prison. O'Donnell was captured after six days, having abducted another young girl, Fiona Sampson. Later, the bodies of the three missing people were found in nearby Cregg Wood; all had been shot at

close range. Brendan O'Donnell was charged with their murders and in 1996 tried in the Central Criminal Court in Dublin. He was jailed for life. In July 1997, he was found dead by nursing staff, in the Dublin Central Mental Hospital.

The amazing achievement of **In the forest** is that O'Brien not only turns these events into a gripping psychological thriller but actually elicits a certain sympathy for the murderer whom she renames Michen O'Kane. This she does not by diminishing the horror of his crimes but by suggesting, partly through the boy's own consciousness, what has driven him to such evil. Father John wonders, 'What is it that warps a child... What is it that changes a child from being a child?' And it is these questions that O'Brien tries to answer by tracing the terrible abuse to which the motherless O'Kane was subjected from the age of ten.

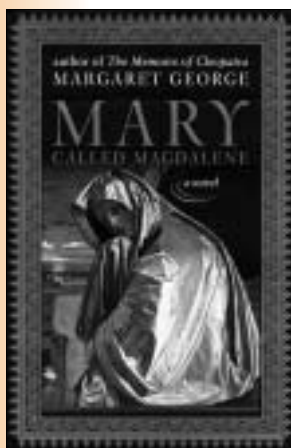
Sena Jeter Naslund takes another modern theme as her subject in **Four spirits** (2003) which centres on the Birmingham, Alabama, Baptist Church bombing. The attack took place in September 1963, killing four black girls. This was during the height of the Civil Rights movement, not that long after the demonstrations of May 1963 when the Birmingham sheriff turned police dogs and fire hoses on the predominantly black protestors. Naslund's novel realistically recreates the turmoil of the period as well as the attitudes of Ku Klux Klan members and numerous other characters, both good and bad.

Also engaged with the themes of terrorism and race is Bernice Rubens's recent novel, her twenty-fourth. **The sergeants' tale** (2003) is based on factual events which occurred in British-controlled Palestine. In August 1947 two British Army sergeants were hanged by the Irgun, which was at loggerheads with the Haganah over Menachem Begin's campaign of terror. The kidnapping and killing of the two men and the booby-trapping of their bodies contributed to the British authority in Palestine refusing entry to the refugee ship, Exodus.

This inflammatory material is reworked by Rubens into fictional form to become an exciting but at the same time sobering novel. She renames the sergeants and makes one an observant Jew and the other a repressed homosexual. The story gathers momentum as numerous characters become involved in spying, torn loyalties and internecine conflict. While this is perhaps not Rubens's best book (a claim, I think, which belongs to **The elected member** (1969), it is certainly a triumph of complex plotting and a skilful exposition of betrayal.

Like Rubens, Michele de Kretser concerns herself in **The Hamilton case** (2003) with a murder which has political connotations. In the 1930s a planter named Hamilton was murdered in the Ceylonese jungle, but the interest of the novel lies not so much with solving the case as with its fraught context.

The heterogeneity of Ceylon is captured with great verve by de Kretser as are the characters of the lawyer Obeysekere, and his unstable family. Even minor charac-



ters spring to life as the author anatomises the numerous, mainly colonial, influences that shaped Ceylon and still have bearing for the modern Sri Lanka.

As well as ranging over a vast time span from the biblical era to the present, the selection of facton discussed above gives some indication of the enormous choice of topics and variety of real-life characters at the fictionaliser's disposal. This limitlessness is, of course, also true of fiction which, no matter how fantastic, futuristic or magical, also relies on elements of the real which the novelist transforms, distorts or reshapes at will. Debut novels, though claiming to be fiction, are very often a fairly faithful reworking of the author's own life, and many novelists (such as Carrie Fisher, Emma

Tennant, Lisa St Aubin de Teran, Esther Freud and others) sustain this trend in later works.

The difference is that while these novelists are free to invent and alter as they choose, the writers who elect to retell pre-existing historical realities have - or at least should have - some obligation to fact. The best of these fictionalisers will inspire an interest in an area which the reader may never have investigated in an academic study, re-invigorating the past for us and bringing it to life in a fresh and stimulating way.

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BOOKLIST

Fiction

- *Alison, Jane. **The love artist** (2002).
- Bainbridge, Beryl. **According to Queenie** (2001).
- Barrett, Andrea. **Servants of the map** (2002).
- *Beckett, Lucy. **The time before you die: a novel of the Reformation** (2000).
- *Brooks, Geraldine. **Year of wonder** (2002).
- Chase-Riboud, Barbara. **Sally Hemings** (2002).
- Chernaik, Judith. **Mab's daughters** (1994).
- Chevalier, Tracy. **The lady and the unicorn** (2003).
- Davies, Stevie. **Impassioned clay** (2000).
- *Dawson, Jill. **Wild boy** (2003).
- De Kretser, Michele. **The Hamilton case** (2003).
- Diamant, Anita. **The red tent** (2001).
- *Donoghue, Emma. **The woman who gave birth to rabbits** (2002).
- *Dunn, Suzannah. **The queen of subtleties** (2004).
- Enright, Anne. **The pleasure of Eliza Lynch** (2002).
- Galloway, Janice. **Clara** (2002).
- George, Margaret. **Mary, called Magdalene** (2003).
- George, Sara. **The beekeeper's pupil** (2002).
- Gregory, Philippa. **The other Boleyn girl** (2001).
- The queen's fool** (2003).
- Hamilton, Jill. **Marengo** (2001).
- Heyman, Kathy. **The accomplice** (2003).
- Merritt, Stephanie. **Gaveston** (2002).
- *Moore, Susanna. **One last look** (2003).
- Moses, Kate. **Wintering** (2003).

- *Naslund, Sena Jeter. **Four spirits** (2003).
- O'Brien, Edna. **In the forest** (2002).
- Roiphe, Katie. **Still she haunts me** (2001).
- *Rubens, Bernice. **The sergeants' tale** (2003).
- Seton, Anya. **Katherine** (1954, 2002 printing).
- *Sherwood, Frances. **The book of splendor** (2002).
- Stevenson, Jane. **Astraea** (2001).
- The pretender** (2002).
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- Taylor, Debbie. **The fourth queen** (2003).
- *Taylor, Kate. **Madame Proust and the Kosher kitchen** (2003).
- *Tennant, Emma. **Felony** (2002).
- *Tóibin, Colm. **The master** (2004).
- Truong, Monique. **The book of salt** (2003).

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- *Cawthorne, Nigel. **The empress of South America: the true story of Eliza Lynch** (2002).
- Cohen, Morton N. **Lewis Carroll** (1995).
- *Dash, Mike. **Batavia's graveyard** (2003).
- Gordon, Lyndall. **A private life of Henry James** (1998).
- *Pierce, Hazel. **Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury, 1473-1541** (2004).
- *Rees, Siân. **The shadows of Eliza Lynch** (2002).
- *Starkey, David. **Six wives: the queens of Henry VIII** (2004).

Note: *Books not in Provincial Library Service stock.