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press release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1.00 AM. FRIDAY 8 JANUARY 1971

1971 BOOKER PRIZE for FICTION

Booker McConnell Limited and the Publishers Association, joint sponsors of Britain's largest fiction prize, worth £5000 to its winner, announce the panel of judges to choose the winner of the 1971 award. Four of the five judges, Saul Bellow, John Fowles, John Gross and Philip Toynbee will be newcomers to the panel, while the fifth judge, Lady Antonia Fraser, will continue from the 1970 panel.

Biographical notes on all the judges are attached.

The format of the 1971 Booker Prize is to be different from previous years in that the date of the announcement of the winner of the prize will be brought as close as is reasonably practical to the publication date of the winning novel. To achieve this, publishers will be invited to submit full-length novels, written in English by citizens of the Commonwealth, Eire and South Africa, with scheduled publication dates between 1 September and 15 November 1971 only. However the judges will be entitled to call in for consideration any full-length novel conforming to the same writing criteria, first published in the United Kingdom at any time during 1971. While it is hoped that the winning book will be an Autumn novel, so that, coming close to publication the award would have greater impact, the prime consideration of the judges will, of course, remain merit.

A short list will be announced when the judges have narrowed their choice to the final six contenders. The announcement of the winner of the Prize will follow shortly afterwards.

The Booker Prize for Fiction was created in October 1968 by Booker McConnell and the Publishers Association for the best novel written by a citizen of the Commonwealth and published for the first time in Britain. The first winner of the Prize in 1969 was "Something to Answer For" by P.H. Newby (Faber). The 1970 winner was "The Elected Member" by Bernice Rubens (Eyre & Spottiswoode).

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The Panel of the 1971 Booker Prize

Saul Bellow

Saul Bellow was born in 1915. He was educated at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. Hon, D.Litt., Northwestern University, 1962. He lives in Chicago and is at present a member of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. He is the author of three short plays and his other publications include The Adventures of Augie March (1953) and Herzog (1964) both of which won the National Book Award for Fiction and Herzog was also awarded the International Literary Prize, The Victim (1947) Seize the Day (1956), Henderson the Rain King (1959) and Mr. Sammler's Planet (1970).

John Fowles

John Fowles was born in 1926. He was educated at Bedford School and Oxford University, where he read French. He has lived in France and in Greece. He is the author of the bestselling The Collector (1963) The Aristos (1965), The Magus (1966) and The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969) which won the first Silver P.E.N. Award for Fiction. Both The Collector and The Magus have been filmed.

Lady Antonia Fraser

Lady Antonia Fraser was born in London in 1932. She read History at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and, after graduating, worked for a publisher for three years. She is married to Hugh Fraser M.P.. In 1969 her much-praised biography Mary, Queen of Scots was published and she is now working on a book about Oliver Cromwell.

John Gross

John Gross was born in London in 1935. He read English at Oxford after which he worked for a time in publishing. He has taught at both London and Cambridge Universities. He has contributed to many papers and magazines and has worked basically as a freelance writer for the last six years. His publications include Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters (1969) and his latest book James Joyce is about to be published.

Philip Toynbee

Philip Toynbee, novelist, was born in 1916. He has been a member of the editorial staff of the Observer since 1950. He was educated at Rugby School and Christ Church, Oxford. Mr. Toynbee was editor of the Birmingham Town Crier from 1938 to 1939; commission in Intelligence Corps 1940-42; Ministry of Economic Warfare 1942-44; on staff of SHAEF in France and Belgium 1944-45; Literary Editor of Contact Publications 1945 to 1946. His publications include The Savage Days (1937), School in Private (1941), The Barricades (1943), Tea With Mrs. Goodnan (1947) The Garden to the Sea (1953), Friends Apart (1954), Dialogue across a Generation (1963), (with Maurice Richardson), Thanatos: a Modern Symposium (1963), Two Brothers (1964), A Learned City (1966), Views from a Lake (1968).