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Editorial

Barbarians at the Gates? Americans in the Man Booker Prize

*When Paul Beatty received the 2016 Man Booker Prize for his novel *The Sellout*, at a glittering dinner in London's Guildhall studded with distinguished guests in formal dress, he made history. His was the first novel by an American author to receive the 48-year-old award, widely considered the most prestigious prize for fiction in the English-speaking world. Whether his success was a success for the Booker Prize (as it has been called from the beginning and still is even after its official rebranding as the Man Booker Prize in 2002); whether this decision sounds the death-knell for British fiction; whether the Booker has lost its distinctiveness or increased it; what the purpose of literary prizes is, after all, and what gives them their value: all these are among the questions posed by the decision, in 2013, to open the competition to US authors. The contretemps is worth pondering for what it reveals about globalism in the literary world, protectiveness and openness, and the recognition awards can provide.*

Background

*When the Booker Prize was established and first awarded, in 1969 (first winner: P.H. Newby's *Something to Answer For*), the rules were straightforward. It was a cash award "for the best novel in the English language, written by a Commonwealth or Irish citizen, and published in the UK" (Caine 2003, 14). There would be a shortlist of finalists, chosen from*

all those titles submitted by their publishers; the decision would be made by a small group of expert judges, each of whom read all the submitted books.

There have been some significant changes during the 48-year history of the Booker. Some countries have left, or joined, or rejoined the Commonwealth, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, without affecting their inclusion in the Booker scheme. Observers notice an early bias toward writers from the home islands: "In the first decade of the prize after 1969 perhaps the lists of books chosen were safer, more 'English,' more predictable (of course it may just be the time)" (Carson 28). For instance, the six shortlisted authors in 1969 were all domestic: four English writers and the Scottish Muriel Spark and Gordon Williams. Oddly, the judging panel in the early days was much more cosmopolitan than the authors they judged. While American novelists were ineligible, American judges including Mary McCarthy, Brendan Gill and Saul Bellow helped to choose the Booker winners during that first decade. Sometimes there were as few as two books on the shortlist; sometimes there were as few as two judges; and occasionally the prize was split between two novels. These irregularities have been ironed out and the current standard is that there will be five judges (rarely six), six books on the shortlist, and only one winner.

*The Booker Prize changed dramatically in 1981. First, that was when it began to be televised live on BBC Two. This signally increased the publicity and visibility: effects which also resulted from the exciting selection, in that year, of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. There had been winning books about India before, several of them, but Rushdie's was different, a genuinely post-colonial text written in a style unlike that of any previous winner. This decision has been reaffirmed by the identification of *Midnight's Children* as the best Booker-winner of the first 25 years, and then of the first 40 years. Luke Strongman has commented on the increasing internationalization of the prize, based on its first 26 years.*

. . . while the Booker Prize is predominantly British it has not always gone to British novelists. In fact, even if Rushdie, the Nigerian writer Ben Okri, the Japanese-born Kazuo Ishiguro, and V.S. Naipaul are considered British, twenty "British" novelists have won the prize over a twenty-six-year period, with the balance being made up of authors from the Commonwealth and Ireland. Thus the Prize reflects the awareness of an evolving literature from "centres" other than London. (224-25)

For some tastes, indeed, the openness to other centers was too much of a good thing, as an anonymous 1993 reviewer in Private Eye indicated in identifying the prescription for a Booker-winner as "foreign, funny name, 'poetic' prose style and so on" (When 17).

Richard Todd's history of the Booker Prize provides an explanation of what happened after 1981 that connects Rushdie with the American ineligibility:

The most important point . . . was that Rushdie's 1981 success created a precedent that enabled commentators to conceive of the Booker as a prize administered in Britain but offering English-speaking readers a panoramic, international and intensely current view of "fiction in Britain." In turn the events of 1981 created a climate in which the exclusion of fiction from United States writers initiated an interesting process of disconnection of British and American preoccupations and interests from each other, rather than intensifying what had become a kind of competitiveness in which British fiction must always lose... (82-83)

The belief that British and American competition would always be resolved in favor of the Americans is one that has arisen, quite insistently and somewhat pitifully, over the years of debate, alongside other reasons for leaving things as they had always been. Sir Michael Caine, longtime chairman of the Booker organization that funded the prize, explained in 1998 that "at various times" they had considered replicating the prize elsewhere and had "looked carefully at the US, but concluded that the sheer size was too great and correspondingly expensive" (9).

Robert McCrum, an influential British literary editor, made the obvious point that “British fiction does not, of course, exist in a vacuum,” as a result of which “the American question – which was merrily ventilated by the 2002 panel – will probably come to haunt the Man Booker in years to come, if only because the prize derives its historic significance from mirroring the state of English-language culture.” He went on to write approvingly of such a change, “Somehow, I am sure, a way will be found for Man Booker to recharge its batteries with some American voltage. . . . The Americanisation of Man Booker would be utterly consistent with its mission” (“A Literary Editor’s Perspective” 48).

Perhaps in response to the merry ventilation McCrum mentions, John Mullan wrote in 2002 under the impression (declared in his column’s heading) that “from 2004, the Booker Prize will be open to American writers” to list many of the standard arguments against such a change. He also elicited reactions from previous Booker winners, most of whom seemed to welcome the admission of American authors. There was an intermediate position between welcome and repulsion in which several of them called for a continuing British judging panel, to keep it a “British prize” even if non-British novelists competed. Some expressed a worry about the workload of the judges, and some lamented that British writers might not be able to compete: Bernice Rubens (Booker 1970), for instance, simply said “I don’t think we can compete against the Americans,” David Storey (Booker 1977) agreed, and Professor Lisa Jardine, a former chair of judges, said: “With someone like Roth at his best, I can’t see how an Amis or McEwan would touch them” (qtd. in Mullan). It is striking how often Philip Roth is mentioned as a potentially invincible American competitor. True to form, when the expansion came, McCrum welcomed it, writing that the organizers had “finally ironed out the disabling anomaly – the thorn in the side – that increasingly threatened to undermine its vaunted global significance” (McCrum, “The Booker Prize’s US Amendment”). In the event, though,

none of this came to pass for another decade, until the organizers did welcome the US into the fold beginning with the 2014 Man Booker Prize.

The official announcement came on Wednesday, 18 September 2013, from Jonathan Taylor, Chair of the Booker Prize Foundation, and was positive and upbeat, as one would expect. Taylor wrote that the expanded prize “will recognise, celebrate and embrace authors writing in English, whether from Chicago, Sheffield, or Shanghai,” though the opening to authors in Shanghai whose books were written in English and published in the UK would not worry many observers. He mentioned the thoughtful process that the trustees had followed, their eventual decision not to create a separate Booker Prize for US writers (as they had done in 1992 for Russians), and ringingly declared “We are embracing the freedom of English in its versatility, in its vigour, in its vitality and in its glory wherever it may be. We are abandoning the constraints of geography and national boundaries” (“Man Booker Prize announces global expansion”).

In response to worries that the new larger pool would put unsustainable pressure on the judges, the trustees introduced new limitations on how many books publishers could nominate.

Reaction

Two days later the Man Booker website carried a “Weekly Roundup” headed “Reactions to the expansion announcement.” While novelist Mehryn Bragg wrote that the prize would lose its distinctiveness and Howard Jacobson, former Booker-winner, called it the “wrong decision,” without elaborating on why, on the positive side, Kazuo Ishiguro called it a move whose time had come, and Sam Leith, a literary columnist, wrote that “Organising a literary prize around the long-gone historical accident of a set of political and trading relationships doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. The territory of the English novel is the English language.” Responding to

timorous worries about English authors' inability to compete, Kate Saunders briskly insisted: "Could the British literary establishment please get itself a backbone? . . . What a fuss – you'd think Fortnum's [the stylish London department store] had been taken over by Walmart . . . Of course US novels should be included: they will only pop up on the shortlist as often as any other nationality, and we'll all forget we were such scaredy-cats."

The "balance" detected by the official Man Booker publicity machine appeared to the New York Times, writing in the week after the announcement, to be more of a "backlash." Several of the same quotations appeared, from Mehryn Bragg for instance, and the article took the further step of canvassing some reactions from other parts of the Commonwealth: an Australian literary editor complained that Americans are uninterested in cultural artifacts from other parts of the world. Philip Hensher spoke up for non-metropolitan writers, predicting the loss of new voices and declaring that American novels already make their way in the larger world, but "I can think of Canadian, Indian, African novels that struggle to find a broader readership" (qtd. in Erlanger).

So the move to allow Man Booker competition by all English-language authors, specifically American novelists, beginning in 2014 was, depending on the source of the analysis, either an opening up, a recognition that in a globalized world, national boundaries – especially those derived from a historically compromised imperialism – are less important than the republic of letters and the nation of the English language (in the words of one Indian observer, "fiction is one place where no boundaries exist" (Jandial)); or it was a terrible idea, driven by Philistine market forces, promising dire consequences.

A survey of the arguments offered against the change, and the predictions made based on it, helps to provide some basis for judgment. The most persistent critic of the new Man Booker rules has been Philip Hensher, a novelist, professor, and literary journalist whose name has been on the

Booker shortlist as well as the panel of judges. His immediate response, published in The Guardian, was entitled, "Well, that's the end of the Booker prize, then." He offered several of what would become the standard arguments, but added an additional complaint: that the Booker Prize was already dominated by Americanism, because so many of the authors considered, wherever they came from, were students (or instructors) in US programs, or were American residents. On the 2013 shortlist of six authors, for instance, the Zimbabwean and the Bengali author were graduates of US universities, while Ruth Ozeki was US-born and lived partly in Brooklyn. Mohsin Hamid, the only representative of the Commonwealth on the 2017 list, studied creative writing in the United States. This steady influence would be unaffected by any changes in eligibility.

Counter-Arguments

From the beginning there were powerful objections to the admission of Americans, from novelists and critics major and minor. These were the most frequently advanced arguments:

1. There are significant cultural differences between the US and the other countries whose authors are eligible.

Julian Barnes, who famously called the Booker Prize "posh bingo" in the years before he won it, initially seemed only mildly opposed: "There's a certain cultural cringe in this country to the big American books, and I fear that British writers will win much less often. And often the Booker gives a platform to young writers and encourages them, and that, I think, is much less likely to happen" (qtd. in Bury). By the autumn of 2016, faced with the first American winner, he was calling for a reversal. He called the new standards "straightforwardly daft" (qtd. in Knapton). Among his arguments: "There was and there is a real Commonwealth culture. It's

different. America doesn't really feel to be a part of that." Author Amanda Craig concurred that "Americans are not only different culturally but they have loads more support via creative writing programmes – they can actually make a living as literary novelists. We can't" (qtd. in Griffiths). That the existence of US creative writing programs regularly supports Commonwealth authors as well as US citizens complicates Craig's argument.

As for the more homogeneous culture in the Commonwealth as contrasted with the United States, this is a difficult argument to parse. Some critics suggest that Americans are more interested in money; others that their writers suffer from a blockbuster complex; others, that they are actually less interested in literary prizes (and it is true that the Pulitzer Prize is not announced at a gala ceremony televised live to the nation). Jim Crace says, "I'm very fond of the sense of the Commonwealth. There's something in there that you would lose if you open it up to American authors" (qtd. in Rai). Insofar as the argument is for uniformity of general culture in the Commonwealth, clearly distinguishable from that of the United States: is there really greater alignment between Zimbabwe and England than between England and the US? Does Canada really have more in common with Nigeria than with its neighbor to the south? Perhaps. Misha Rai, an Indian (ironically being educated in one of America's creative writing programs) writes: "there are still literary connections, based on the wide historical legacy of the Commonwealth, that tend to stylistically and thematically link Booker novels, and this literature . . . will not be the same with American novels in the mix." The assumption of a common culture in the Commonwealth, presumably because of a shared British colonial heritage, is problematized by some inexplicable inclusions; as I wrote in 2016, "the presence of a Libyan [Hisham Matar] – who was actually born in New York – on the list in 2006 . . . makes one wonder how elastic the criteria were and suspect that any novel in English whose author was not an outright American had a good chance to be considered" (Moseley, "The Booker Prize 2016" 675).

Heather Mallick, a Canadian columnist, made the case that allowing American competition in the Booker Prize will be “fatal to everyone’s interests,” insisting, “a Canadian or British novel is as different from an American novel as asphalt is from cloth. Each is useful for its purpose but you don’t wear asphalt nor drive on fabric”; “Americans don’t speak English. They speak American,” she declares (Mallick). One can only wonder, however, if American English is the only variant that does not sound like Canadian or English English; a randomly chosen passage from *Midnight’s Children*, or *True History of the Kelly Gang*, or *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* would hardly be mistaken for the work of – to choose two authors shortlisted under the old rules – American-born Canadian finalist Carol Shields or American resident from the age of two Jhumpa Lahiri.

2. The judging process will become difficult if not impossible. A.S. Byatt, a former winner, has put this argument best: “The Booker Prize is the only book prize that doesn’t sift” – that is, expect the judges to select from a small group after somebody else reads through the submissions and narrows the field – “odd things crop up. It’s a major undertaking, every judge reading everything. This will no longer be possible” (qtd. in Jandial). Several commentators expressed concern about the workload of the judging panel; each year the six judges read somewhere between 135 and 160 books, first to narrow to a longlist of 12 to 15, then to a shortlist of six, then to a winner. If the number of submitted titles were to increase dramatically, such a process would become unworkable.

It was in mitigation of this threat that the Booker trust changed the rules for submissions. Previously a British publisher could submit two books; now each publisher can submit only one, unless that publisher has had books on the longlist in the past five years, in which case it is granted additional nominations. The new restrictions seem effective. In 2013, the last year

Americans were excluded, the judges had to read 151 books; in the three years since the rules change, they have had to read 154, 156, and 155 books.

Of course avoiding judge-abuse has had a consequence for authors, since where there were once 151 “openings” for writers from the Commonwealth, Ireland, and Zimbabwe, the 154 the next year had to be shared with around 40 American authors, reducing the chances of a British or Commonwealth author making the list. Author Susan Hill complained, in 2016, that “the dice are now loaded against UK authors in sheer weight of numbers in the US” (qtd. in Kean).

3. Admitting Americans to a “British” prize without reciprocity is unfair. This is a frequent complaint. Radhika Jones points out that “America has its own prizes, the National Book Award and the Pulitzer”; former winners Julian Barnes and Peter Carey (who has won the Booker twice and lives in New York) both made this point, Barnes asking “which American prizes are open to Brits? In theory I think only the National Book Award is. I don’t think any Brit has won a major American award for years” and Carey finding it “unimaginable” that “the Pulitzer or the National Book award people in the United States would ever open their prizes to Brits and Australians. They wouldn’t” (qtd. in Knapton). Barnes is mistaken even about the National Book Awards, whose regulations state clearly that “all authors must be U.S. citizens” (“National Book Awards Entry Rules and Guidelines”).

British agent David Godwin was arguing already by 2015 that “the very essence of the prize had been compromised”; he insisted that there had been no need to change the rules, in part because “none of the major American prizes are open to Brits. It’s a very sad state of affairs” (qtd. in Ward). Jeanette Winterson told the Telegraph that “the Americans aren’t going to open up the Pulitzer to us. . . . This country is so in thrall to

America. We're such lapdogs to them and that will skew things with the judges" (qtd. in Rai). All these complaints of an unbalanced prize culture are perfectly correct. There has been no discussion about admitting any non-American entries for the Pulitzer or the National Book Award and the tradition of American exceptionalism and nativism – the tradition according to which two American baseball teams compete each year in an event called The World Series – suggests that it will not happen.

Fierce opponent of opening the door to American authors, Philip Hensher also commented on the Pulitzer but took a different tack, arguing that the mediocre writers who appear on its list of winners do not suggest that adding Americans will lead to better books winning: "The assumption that input to the Booker would have resulted in the triumph of the great masterpieces of American fiction rather than the limp products of British fiction is not very sound." This assumption, of course, is not among the reasons advanced for the change, though it may have figured in some minds.

4. The British cannot compete with American novelists (see the comments, above, from Bernice Rubens, David Storey, and Lisa Jardine). Though Hensher insists that the American novel will dominate "not through excellence, necessarily, but simply through an economic super-power exerting its own literary tastes," other British novelists, rather abjectly, have conceded what seems like British inferiority. The starkest statement of this position came from previous winner John Banville, the Irish novelist, who whimpered, "God help the rest of us because American fiction is very strong" (qtd. in Romei). Few other commentators were willing to put the new disadvantage in terms of their fear of the "strength" or literary excellence of American authors, but others readily agreed with Hensher that the economic power of the United States, if not the ability of its novelists, would make American authors hard to win against. It is hard not to see a parallel in the changes in the English Premier League, where opening up rosters to all nationalities has

resulted in English football teams taking the field with, in extreme cases, no English players at all, and no more than about a third of all rosters consisting of home-grown talent, with an undoubted effect of making it more difficult for a British player to find a spot on a British team. British footballers, it seems, cannot compete. Can British novelists?

Predictions

From the beginning the opponents of the American amendment made predictions of the damage the Man Booker would suffer. It is still very early but we can begin to consider the extent to which they have come true so far, in the three years of American eligibility. Philip Hensher, in 2016, declared, "Pretty well everything I said was going to happen has happened" (qtd. in Kean). What did he say was going to happen? "When eligibility shifts from the UK, Commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe to English-language novels published in the UK, it is hard to see how the American novel will fail to dominate." In fact, "It will be a brave Booker panel in 2014 that doesn't give the prize to an American novel. . ." (Hensher). As we have seen, the 2014 winner was not an American but an Australian. My own theory was quite different: "Man Booker judges, like our own Supreme Court justices, also read the newspapers, and it would have taken great courage to hand the prize to an American book in the very first year of American eligibility, confirming the darkest imaginings of people like Peter Carey, Jeanette Winterson, and Jim Crace" (Moseley, "Booker Prize 2014" 289). Undaunted, Hensher declared in 2015, "I am sure the prize will go to an American this year" (qtd. in Ward). He was wrong again, as Jamaican Marlon James took the prize; but eventually he almost had to be right, and 2016 was the year. And then 2017 provided a repeat American victory.

Among the other pessimistic predictions, Steven Erlanger included the concern that the "lists will be dominated by American novelists, driving out

others, diminishing the chances of a broader public's discovering something daring, unfamiliar or new." Of course American books can be daring and new, too; but it is true that in the first four years of American eligibility there have been nine American authors on the six-book shortlists, meaning that the UK and Commonwealth have been reduced from twenty-four potential places to fifteen. Kate Saunders had predicted that Americans would pop up on the list no more than other nationalities. Of the twenty-four shortlisted authors from 2014 to 2017, nine were Americans; nine were British, and the remainders were two Canadians, one Nigerian, one Jamaican, one Australian and one Pakistani author. The Commonwealth may be more squeezed out than Britain. Worry that the lists would be dominated by American big names or, as Barnes called them the "heavy hitters" – Philip Roth, Toni Morrison, Jonathan Franzen – seem unfounded. The nine Americans so far shortlisted are Joshua Ferris, Karen Joy Fowler, Anne Tyler, Hanya Yanagihara, Otessa Moshfegh, Paul Beatty, newcomer Karen Fridlund and two arguably heavy hitters, Paul Auster and George Saunders. In 2015 the presence of five American authors out of thirteen on the longlist led to the scare headline "American dominance of Man Booker Prize longlist 'confirms worst fears'" (Ward).

Several other Cassandras argued that the "diversity" of novels considered would be reduced – a claim hard to assess. Perhaps that is what Hensher meant when he declared that the "novel written by an Indian, living in India, about India, without reference to his later life in Cincinnati was dead this year. From next year, the floodgates open, and we can expect never to hear again from an Indian novelist." Happily, this was also wrong, as the 2014 shortlist included Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others*, about a family in Calcutta. It was also suggested that little-known novelists like Jeet Thayil and Keri Hume would no longer have a chance to be considered, much less to win (Rai). A survey of results reveals that the balance between well-known and little-known authors seems about the same as ever; in the

first year of American eligibility the shortlist included both Ali Smith and Howard Jacobson, both several times shortlisted and in Jacobson's case a recent winner, but the prize that year went to Richard Flanagan, a middle-aged Australian novelist whose career was going so badly he was considering giving it up to become a miner.

What other dire outcomes were threatened? A British book editor argued that "the prize will be dominated by big publishing houses who maybe aren't taking as many risks" (qtd. in Erlanger). This has proved almost comically inaccurate as the winners in both 2015 and 2016 were published by previously obscure Oneworld Publications (Beatty reportedly had trouble finding a British publisher), and the initial American-inclusive shortlists also included books from *Serpent's Tail* and *Contraband* and a publisher called ONE.

Canadian observer Heather Mallick promised that "in a world where only prizewinning novelists can realistically hope for public notice, non-American writers will have to cater to the American style. What a foul enterprise it will be." Presumably Paul Beatty, as an American, might be considered to have catered to an American style, but it is hard to see any such compromising in Howard Jacobson or Chigozie Obioma or Sunjeev Sabota or Deborah Levy.

Predictions have a way of seeming accurate, to the predictor. Though the Man Booker website found the 2014 longlist reassuring, claimed that "the fears of those who foretold a transatlantic deluge have not materialized," and believed nothing had occurred to dilute the traditional diversity ("The 2014 longlist"), the organizers would say that, wouldn't they? While the Times Literary Supplement report on Beatty's win assures readers that "the nay-sayers have been silenced" (Lichtig), such is hardly the case, as the vociferous nay-saying from Julian Barnes, Philip Hensher, Jim Crace, A.S. Byatt, and others demonstrates.

Significance

*What is the significance of this controversy? One rather cynical answer is that creating controversy is what the Booker Prize has always done. A good dust-up raises the profile of the award and its winners and those on long- and shortlists, elicits articles in the media, and sells books. The larger question is about the very purpose of literary prizes. As we have seen, Julian Barnes previously dismissed the Booker as a game of chance (“posh bingo”), and A.L. Kennedy, who has been a judge, claimed that the winner was determined by “who knows who, who’s sleeping with who, who’s selling drugs to who, who’s married to who, whose turn it is” (qtd. in Erlanger). Will Self, the English novelist whose *Umbrella* was on the shortlist in 2012, discounted the importance of the Booker by saying “pets win prizes,” and “prizes have come to dominate the literary world because they’re effective marketing tools in a cultural era in which genuine literary criticism and judgment has given way to febrile consumerism” (qtd. in Kean).*

But others assign prizes a greater importance. Mallick seems to believe that only prizewinning novelists achieve any public notice. Novelist Amanda Craig said that “a prize, or even just getting on to the longlist of a major prize, is not the difference between surviving and living but between surviving and not surviving, being published and not being published” (qtd. in Kean). This coincides with another of Philip Hensher’s somewhat apocalyptic claims: “No writer embarks on a career with any illusions that the world owes them a living. But I don’t think I’ve ever heard so many novelists say, as over the last two or three days, ‘Well, we might as well just give up, then.’” Craig also explained that the purpose of the creation of the Booker Prize was stopping “the death of the literary novel,” but believed that death will now be hastened. Radhika Jones considers the Man Booker – before Americans were allowed in – to be “an arbiter of English literature.” David Todd concurs, using Booker eligibility as the defining criterion of what might

be considered an English literary novel. Hensher writes that the Booker, as previously constituted, "has given novelists from a huge range of national traditions a wider readership, and has done so by its limits." It is widely believed that being on the longlist, shortlist, or winner's platform increases sales; this may be why publishers and booksellers are more favorable to the new rules than are British, Canadian and Australian authors.

Of course a stretch of four years is hardly definitive in judging the effect of the rules change. Suffice it to say that fiction, particularly the literary novel, is always in crisis. The relationship between art and commerce is a fraught one, and the artistic purity that would dictate authorial indifference to sales, visibility, and awards, is difficult to maintain. The disparate cultural importance between the United Kingdom and the United States, having shifted in favor of the US, perhaps in the early twentieth century, is still hard for the English to accept, and reassurances that they are the Greece to the American Rome while reassuring do nothing to sell books. The Booker has always been in a process of change. Four of the first five winners were English; then, from 1999 to 2003 the award went to a South African, a Canadian, an Australian, another Canadian, and a sort of Australo-Mexican. Richard Todd, writing in 1996 and commenting on Salman Rushdie's 1981 Booker Prize, wrote that it "created a precedent that enabled commentators to conceive of the Booker as a prize administered in Britain but offering English-speaking readers a panoramic, international and intensely current view of 'fiction in Britain'" (82). It now goes beyond Britain and its Commonwealth but still offers that panoramic, international and intensely current view. The Man Booker Prize will survive, it will provoke arguments and panegyrics and philippics, novels will be bought and read, and in that way it will continue to serve its purpose as the leading English-language fiction prize.

MERRITT MOSELEY,
University of North Carolina, Asheville

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