

British Writers and the Approach of World War II

By Steve Ellis

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This book considers the literary construction of what E. M. Forster calls 'the 1939 State', namely the anticipation of the Second World War between the Munich crisis of 1938 and the end of the Phoney War in the spring of 1940. Steve Ellis investigates not only myriad responses to the imminent war but also various peace aims and plans for post-war reconstruction outlined by such writers as T. S. Eliot, H. G. Wells, J. B. Priestley, George Orwell, E. M. Forster and Leonard and Virginia Woolf. It argues that the work of these writers is illuminated by the anxious tenor of this period. The result is a novel study of the 'long 1939' , which transforms readers' understanding of the literary history of the eve-of-war era.

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Steve Ellis is Professor of English Literature at the University of Birmingham and has published on a wide range of both medieval and modern literature. His previous books include Dante and English Poetry: Shelley to T. S. Eliot (1983); The English Eliot: Design, Landscape and Language in 'Four Quartets' (1991); Chaucer at Large: The Poet in the Modern Imagination (2000); Virginia Woolf and the Victorians (2007) and T. S. Eliot: A Guide for the Perplexed (2009). He has edited several volumes, including Chaucer: An Oxford Guide (2005). Ellis is also a poet and translator, having published three volumes of poetry and an acclaimed translation of Dante's Inferno.

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