Edited by Benjamin Kohlmann

Edward Upward and Left-Wing Literary Culture in Britain

EDWARD UPWARD AND LEFT-WING LITERARY CULTURE IN BRITAIN

Offering the first book-length consideration of Edward Upward (1903–2009), one of the major British left-wing writers, this collection positions his life and works in the changing artistic, social and political contexts of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Upward's fiction and non-fiction, from the 1920s onwards, illustrate the thematic and formal richness of left-wing writing during the twentieth-century age of extremes. At the same time, Upward's work shows the inherent tensions of a life committed at once to writing and to politics. The full range of Upward's work and a wealth of unpublished materials are examined, including his early fantastic stories of the 1920s, his Marxist fiction of the 1930s, the extraordinary semi-autobiographical trilogy *The Spiral Ascent* and his formally and thematically innovative later stories. The essays collected here reevaluate Upward's central place in twentieth-century British literary culture and assess his legacy for the twenty-first century.

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Edited by

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Note on the Text

The chapters in this collection build on Upward's published writings as well as on archival material housed in collections at the Huntington Library (San Marino, USA) and at the British Library (London, UK). The 76 diaries which Upward kept between 1924 and 2002 have been in an uncatalogued collection in the British Library since Upward's death in 2009. In this book quotations from the diaries are followed by the volume number and date of the entry, e.g. '19: 10 May 1953'.

Edward Upward – A Chronology

This chronology builds in part on a chronology of Upward's life that was compiled by his daughter Katherine Allinson and his grandson David Allinson. Further information on Upward can be found on the website maintained by David Allinson: http://www.edwardupward.info/.

The chronology printed below lists only some of Upward's literary and nonliterary works. For a more detailed bibliography the reader is referred to Alan Walker's *Edward Upward: A Bibliography, 1920–2000* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2000).

	Edward Upward's Life	Historical and Cultural Events
1903	Edward Falaise Upward born on 9 September in Romford, Essex; father is a medical doctor; mother helps to organize her husband's practice; Upward identifies with the Nonconformism of his father's family; he has three brothers, one sister	
1914		Outbreak of World War I
1917	Student at Repton School in Derbyshire; forms close friendship with Christopher Isherwood; at Repton, Isherwood and Upward begin to collaborate on stories about the 'Other Town' (Mortmere)	Russian Revolution
1918	Begins to write poetry	End of World War I
	Reads widely; favourite authors include Emily Brontë, Wilfred Owen, W.N.P. Barbellion, Mark Rutherford, John Bunyan, Robert Tressell	
1920		Foundation of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB)
1924	Poem 'Buddha' wins Chancellor's Medal for English Verse at Cambridge	
	Travels to Paris to buy copy of James Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i>	
1925	Leaves Cambridge with a degree	

	Edward Upward's Life	Historical and Cultural Events
1926	Starts series of teaching jobs and works as private tutor, stints at Carbis Bay (Cornwall), Lockerbie, Scarborough and Ottershaw College	General Strike
	Reads and comments approvingly on poems by W.H. Auden which he finds 'infinitely better than [T.S.] Eliot's'	
1927	Upward's brother Laurence develops schizophrenia; Upward's diaries express the fear that he might also develop symptoms of the disease	Publication of final part of Proust's <i>A la recherche du temps perdu</i> , a work admired by Upward
1928	Writes Mortmere story 'The Railway Accident' (published in 1949 under the pseudonym 'Allen Chalmers')	Publication of Isherwood's novel <i>All</i> <i>the Conspirators</i> which features a character 'Allen Chalmers', modelled on Upward, and which is dedicated 'to
	Drafts 'golf club novel' (not completed)	Edward Upward'
1929		Harry Pollitt elected General Secretary of the CPGB (resigned in 1956)
1930	Shows his poems to Auden who dislikes them; stops writing poetry after this incident	
1931	Canvassed in Bethnal Green as Communist Party candidate for parliamentary election	Auden and Upward visit each other at their schools on several occasions in 1931 and 1932
1932	Visits USSR (Leningrad, Kharkov, Kiev), but remains unaware of famine and Stalinist terror	Auden's 'A Communist to Others' published; the poem is modelled in part on Upward's recent espousal of Communism
	Visits Isherwood in Berlin; asks Isherwood to find him a position as foreign language tutor, but his plans do not come to fruition	Publication of Auden's <i>The Orators:</i> <i>An English Study</i> ; the third of Auden's 'Six Odes' in this work is dedicated 'To Edward Upward, Schoolmaster';
	Joins the Communist Party; membership initially on a probationary basis, partly self-imposed, until 1934	Auden excises the dedication in post- war editions of the poem
	Begins 'The Border Line' (an early version of <i>Journey to the Border</i>)	
1932	Teaches at Alleyn's School, Dulwich, until his retirement in 1961	

	Edward Upward's Life	Historical and Cultural Events
1933	Short stories 'The Colleagues' and 'Sunday' published in the anthology <i>New Country</i> (ed. Michael Roberts), alongside work by Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Isherwood, John Lehmann, Stephen Spender, and others	Adolf Hitler seizes power in Germany
1935	Short story 'The Island' published in <i>Left Review</i>	
1936	Marriage to Hilda Percival (the Elsie Hutchinson of <i>The Spiral Ascent</i>)	Spanish Civil War begins; Upward does not go to Spain, a decision he later regrets (June)
	Joins editorial board of magazine <i>The</i> <i>Ploughshare</i> (Teachers' Anti-War Movement) for which he also writes articles	Battle of Cable Street, in the East End of London, between Metropolitan Police and anti-Fascists (October)
1937	Publication of 'Sketch for a Marxist Interpretation of Literature' in <i>The</i> <i>Mind in Chains</i> (ed. Day Lewis) alongside essays by Anthony Blunt, Charles Madge, Rex Warner and others; Upward describes in his diaries that he was forced to write the essay in a rush and found the essay too polemical as a result	Publication of Isherwood's <i>Lions and</i> <i>Shadows</i> which popularizes the 'Allen Chalmers' label
1938	Son Christopher born	
	<i>Journey to the Border</i> published by Hogarth Press; the novella is based loosely on Upward's experience as a private tutor in Lockerbie	

1939

Isherwood and Auden emigrate to the United States (January)

Non-Aggression Treaty ('Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact') between USSR and Germany; in his diaries Upward defends the USSR's decision to 'stand aside' from a conflict 'waged purely for imperialist ends' (August)

Outbreak of World War II (September)

	Edward Upward's Life	Historical and Cultural Events
1941	Daughter Katherine (Kathy) born	Germany invades USSR
	Evacuation of Alleyn's School and Upward's family to Rossall (Lancashire) until 1945	
	Publication of 'The Falling Tower', Upward's reply to Virginia Woolf's essay 'The Leaning Tower', in John Lehmann's Folios of New Writing	
1942	Short story 'New Order' published in <i>Penguin New Writing</i> (ed. John Lehmann)	
1945	5 Becomes head of English at Alleyn's Upward's diaries express discontent with Harry Pollitt's decision to 'collaborate' with western capitalism (December 1945)	End of World War II
		United Nations founded
		Jean-Paul Sartre begins to publish the semi-autobiographical series of novels <i>The Roads to Freedom</i>
1948	Upward and his wife leave CPGB	
1951	Writes to Spender expressing his regret at the violent excesses of Stalinism	Publication of Spender's autobiography <i>World Within</i> <i>World</i> which denounces 'Chalmers's' indifference towards Stalin's show trials in the 1930s
1952	Sabbatical year at Alleyn's; Upward's diaries record his frustration at failing to make progress with an autobiographical novel (the first volume of <i>The Spiral Ascent</i>)	Stalin dies; Nikita Krushchev becomes First Secretary in 1953
1955		Start of Vietnam War; ends 1975
1956		Hungarian Revolution
		Krushchev's 'Secret Speech' denounces Stalin's personality cult and the purges of the 1930s
1958	Upward, Hilda and Kathy present at inaugural meeting of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) at Central Hall, Westminster	
1961	Retires with Hilda to his parents' old house in Sandown, Isle of Wight; friendship with poet David Gascoyne who also lives on the Isle of Wight	
	CND meetings held at the Upwards' Sandown home from 1961 onwards	

	Edward Upward's Life	Historical and Cultural Events
1962	<i>In the Thirties</i> , the first volume of the semi-autobiographical trilogy <i>The Spiral Ascent</i> , published by Heinemann	Cuban Missile Crisis
1967		Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria
1968		Signing of Non-Proliferation Treaty
		Student protests against Vietnam War; Upward's diary notes the revolts will be unsuccessful 'without an attempt at Marxist-Leninist leadership' (May)
1969	<i>The Rotten Elements</i> , second volume of <i>The Spiral Ascent</i> , published by Heinemann	
1972		Signing of SALT I treaty
1973		Auden dies
1974		First English translation of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's <i>The Gulag Archipelago</i>
1977	<i>The Spiral Ascent: A Trilogy</i> published by Heinemann (includes first publication of volume three, <i>No Home</i> <i>But the Struggle</i>)	
1979		Signing of SALT II treaty Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister
1981		Ronald Reagant takes office as US president
1986		Isherwood dies
1987	Publication of <i>The Night Walk and</i> <i>Other Stories</i> , Upward's first volume of new stories	
1988		Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Head of State of the Soviet Union; Upward is initially in favour of <i>perestroika</i> , but later suspicious of Gorbachev's embracing of free-market ideology
1991		Dissolution of Soviet Union
1994	Publication of short story collection An Unmentionable Man Publication of revised version of	General elections in South Africa, and end of Apartheid; Upward had boycotted South African produce during Apartheid and written in
	Journey to the Border	support of the anti-Apartheid movement
	Publication of <i>The Mortmere Stories</i>	

Edward Upward's Life Historical and Cultural Events

1995	Hilda dies
1997	Publication of collection of stories, <i>The Scenic Railway</i>
2000	Publication of <i>The Coming Day and Other Stories</i>
2002	Son Christopher dies
2003	Upward's last story, 'Cromelin- Brown', is broadcast on BBC Radio 3's <i>The Verb</i> together with an interview by Ian McMillan
2004	Moves to Pontefract to live with his daughter and son-in-law
2005	Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and awarded its Benson Medal
2009	Dies on 13 February in Pontefract, West Yorkshire