# Contents

Editor's Preface ix
Longman Literature in English Series x
Acknowledgements xii
Author's Preface xiii
Introduction 1
Descents from Decadence: 1890-1918 20
The Critical Agenda 20 Aesthetes and Academics 25 Modernism Nascent 38 Shakespeare the Omniscient 43 The Novel and Realism 48 Canons for Everyman 54 Men of Letters and Great Loins 58
The Modernist Revolution: 1918-1945 64
T. S. Eliot and the Critical Agenda 64 'Classical' and 'Romantic' Positions 69 Close Reading and the Rise of New Criticism 78 Crisis and Criticism 86 Shakespeare in Space 91 Theories of the Novel 97 Canons of Modernist Revaluation 105 The Destructive Element 110
Beyond the New Criticism: 1945-1968 116
The Critical Agenda 116 High-Tide of New Criticism 121 Alternatives to New Criticism 128 More Shakespearean Themes 139 The Rise of the Novel 144 Canons for Courses 151 The Babel of Interpretations 156

## 5 Literary Theory and Textual Politics: Since 1968 161

'Theory' and the Critical Agenda 161
Textualities: Structuralism and Beyond 166
Contextualisms: New-Left and Feminist Critiques 177
Shakespearean Subversions 188
The Novel Re-Opened 193
Canonicities in Question 199
Limits to Postcriticism 204

#### Chronology 209

### General Bibliographies 246

- (i) Reference Books 246
- (ii) General Histories and Surveys 247
- (iii) Studies in British and Irish Criticism 247
- (iv) Studies in American Criticism 248

#### Individual Authors 250

Notes on biography, major works and criticism 250

Index 285