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Publications

Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
THE RIGHT HAND OF THE SUN 2008 John Murray	<p>Shipwrecked on the coast of Aztec Mexico, Geronimo is one of only two men to survive the sinking of their great Spanish galleon. Taken in by the winic Indians, Geronimo learns that if he is to survive, he must abandon his European customs and language and learn to live as the Indians do.</p> <p>Ten years pass, and one day a man comes with a bag of dazzling jewels and buys Geronimo's freedom from his winic master. Hernan Cortes calls Geronimo back from the jungle to his new exploration fleet waiting nearby.</p> <p>Charismatic, plotting and seductive Cortes quickly understands the value of having Geronimo in his inner circle as a translator who can help facilitate his vision of plunder, religious conversion and conquest of these 'primitive peoples'.</p> <p>Geronimo understands too late that he now has no choice but to betray the very people who saved his life and taught him about the beauty of living.</p> <p>What follows is two-stranded tale: at once an action-packed, lush, and lyrical story of political manipulation, destruction, passionate love - and the end of one of the greatest empires on earth.</p>

Publication Details	Notes
THE YELLOW CATHEDRAL 2002 Bloomsbury Publishing	<p>Arguably Mason's most explicitly political novel, <i>The Yellow Cathedral</i> is set in the impoverished southern Mexican state of Chiapas in the early 1990s, at the time of the rebellion by the indigenous population and Zapatista activists (the EZLN) against the wealthy landowners and the political establishment. The book relates the attempt by the opposition party (the PRD) to install a (democratically elected) 'rebel' governor, Avendano, in place of Rosas, the placeman of the central government, and representative of the dominant PRI party. The narrative switches between a number of characters who represents different aspects of the conflict. Benito, a young PRD activist, is impatient at the peaceful strategy advocated by his respected uncle Hernandez, and falls in with a group who carry out a disastrous raid on a ranch. Rafael is another young man whose work for the PRD estranges him from his father. Similarly, Rafael's sister Maria has angered her father over her conversion to evangelism and her rumoured affair with the local PRD candidate, Mateo Mendez. Mateo is eventually beaten by PRI supporters, and Maria driven from her home by a mob. The life of the rebel governor Avendano, who works with little or no equipment or money in the thick of communal life, is contrasted with that of Rosas, the official governor, who frequents meetings with the President and Pereira, the leader of the local ranchers. Pereira wants Rosas to suppress the rebels ruthlessly, but the president has instructed Rosas to win hearts and minds, albeit with few resources that might back up the demands for reform. The Zapatistas initiate an uprising, which is suppressed by the army. In San Cristobal, a mob attacks the cathedral, where the left-wing Bishop Samuel Ruiz is staging a fast in support of the rebels. Indigenous supporters of the Bishop protect the cathedral, and are attacked, but police eventually arrive to disperse the mob. The novel contains a postscript that explains the political background to its composition, and lists a number of books and websites dedicated to the situation in Chiapas.</p>

Other

Publication Details	Notes
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PERFECTION 2003 Spinsters Ink	The novel is set in 16th-century Germany, at the time of the Anabaptist rebellion. The civic leaders of Munster are supporters of the Anabaptist movement, and so attract to the city hordes of refugees fleeing religious persecution. Among these are the charismatic former actor and playwright, Jan Bockelson, and the zealous Jan Matthys, who quickly become the most powerful figures in the city. They expel all non-believers, and abolish money and private property. Munster is subsequently besieged by the expelled Bishop von Waldeck, and Mattys, with a small troop of men, rides out to confront the besiegers, convinced that his enemies will be defeated by God, and that his assumed victory will initiate the founding of a New Jerusalem. The troop is massacred, and Matthys's head displayed on a pike. Subsequently, Bockelson takes charge, and continues the siege for another year, during which he crowns himself king and enforces polygamy. As the inhabitants of the city suffer starvation, the bishop makes a determined assault on the city's defences, during which a recurring character, Sister Agnes, makes her escape.
HUMMINGBIRD JOHN MURRAY	A new novel.
Angel 1994 HAMISH HAMILTON	<p>"ANGEL is many things: an anatomy of an obsession, a moving love story, and an intriguing exploration of gender and sexuality. It is also a vivid picture of an era: the irresistible rise of the Nazis, the brutality and bureaucracy of their reign and the lurid characters of Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler are drawn with rapid strokes. Yet above all, Mason is a brilliant story-teller, and she handles her intricate narrative with the same combination of detachment and passion that Freddy brings to her flying." (The Daily Telegraph)</p> <p>"ANGEL raises fascinating questions about the human mind living with evil." (Literary Review)</p> <p>A novel about a woman's passionate determination to fly and its cost, ending in a final desperate mission over a Germany in flames.</p>
The Racket 1990 CONSTABLE	<p>"The reader is swept down a white-water river of narrative: or, more precisely, down two rivers rushing to one dark and treacherous sea." (The Listener)</p> <p>A novel about crime, corruption and secondary-school teaching, set in Brazil.</p>
THE WAR AGAINST CHAOS 1988 Hamish Hamilton	<p>There hasn't been a war for as long as anyone can remember. Why not? And what is the secret at the heart of the unnamed city?</p>
THE ILLUSIONIST 1983 Hamish Hamilton	<p>A dazzling novel about magic, philosophy, early Christianity and sex, set in first-century Palestine, shortlisted for the 1984 Booker Prize.</p>
Bethany 1981 Hamish Hamilton	<p>What happens if you stop telling lies? Bernard Levin in the Sunday Times described this first novel as "a direct assault upon the entire basis of modern civilisation."</p>