

John Lanchester

Writer - fiction/children's

John Lanchester was born in Hamburg in 1962. He was brought up in the Far East and educated in England. He has worked as an editor at Penguin, was Deputy Editor of the *London Review of Books* (and remains on its editorial board), and has also written a weekly column for the *Daily Telegraph*. His first novel, *THE DEBT TO PLEASURE*, published by Picador in 1996, won the Whitbread First Novel Award, the Betty Trask Prize and the Hawthornden Prize. His second novel, *MR PHILLIPS* (Faber), was published in 2000 and was hailed as a “postmodern Ulysses”.



Agents

Caradoc King

Publications

Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
REALITY AND OTHER STORIES 2020 UK: Faber US: Norton	Household gizmos with a mind of their own. Constant cold calls from unknown numbers. And the creeping suspicion that none of this is real. <i>Reality, and Other Stories</i> is a gathering of deliciously chilling entertainments - stories to be read as the evenings draw in and the days are haunted by all the ghastly schlock, uncanny technologies and absurd horrors of modern life.

Publication Details	Notes
THE WALL 2019 Faber & Faber	Kavanagh begins his life patrolling the Wall. If he's lucky, if nothing goes wrong, he only has two years of this, 729 more nights. The best thing that can happen is that he survives and gets off the Wall and never has to spend another day of his life anywhere near it. He longs for this to be over; longs to be somewhere else. He will soon find out what Defenders do and who the Others are. Along with the rest of his squad, he will endure cold and fear day after day, night after night. But somewhere, in the dark cave of his mind, he thinks: wouldn't it be interesting if something did happen, if they came, if you had to fight for your life? John Lanchester's thrilling, hypnotic new novel is about why the young are right to hate the old. It's about a broken world you will recognise as your own-and about what might be found when all is lost.
CAPITAL 2013 UK: Faber; US: Norton	<p>Pepys Road is a south London street of substantial late-Victorian houses. Built for lower-middle class families, over the years it has come up in the world and now, in 2007, it has reached a boom-time peak, the double-fronted houses going for around £2.5 million.</p> <p>Its inhabitants are a rich cross-section of old and new money, class and race. Roger Barker, banker at Pinker Lloyd, and his shopaholic wife Arabella, at No. 52 are archetypes of New Britain success, with their super-rich holidays, weekend country rectory and money to fritter. Albert Howe's widow Petunia at No. 82 has lived there since the sixties, décor unchanged, and is sitting on a hidden treasure trove while dying from a brain tumour. The Kamals, who own the end house and convenience corner shop, are also key contributors to the local micro-economy. As is Freddy Kano, eighteen year old football prodigy from Senegal, head-hunted by the premier league club Hammersmith and housed with his father at No. 27. But Pepys Road needs more than its homeowners to maintain the social infrastructure. Zbigniew, the Polish builder, is crucial to the street's housing up-grades, and Matya, the Barkers' beautiful new nanny, may have a catalytic effect on their crumbling marriage. There is also the mysterious night-time intruder who has been graffiti-ing the street with the mysterious message 'We want what you have'. All is not well in Pepys Road. The bubble of complacency and affluence may be about to burst.</p> <p>John Lanchester's 'state of south London' - and maybe the nation - novel is possibly the most enthralling, sinister, funny and subversive he has written. Capital is in meltdown!</p>
MR PHILLIPS 2013 UK: Faber; US: Putnam; Canada: McClelland & Stewart	'At night, Mr Phillips lies beside his wife and dreams about other women.' A 50-year-old accountant who has been made redundant and cannot admit the truth to his family, Mr Phillips sets off for work as if nothing has happened. His day encompasses a blue movie, a bank robbery, and a coming to terms with his past and present. A poignant and beautifully observed tale, full of humour and pathos, from the author of the Whitbread First Novel Prize-winning THE DEBT TO PLEASURE.

Publication Details	Notes
FRAGRANT HARBOUR 2013 UK: Faber; US: Viking; Canadian: McClelland & Stewart	<p>John Lanchester's first novel, THE DEBT TO PLEASURE, hailed as “a novel masquerading as an essay masquerading as a cookbook”, was a highly entertaining work of linguistic exuberance. He then followed this with MR PHILLIPS, an existentialist stream-of-consciousness monologue, the apparent antithesis to THE DEBT TO PLEASURE.</p> <p>His third novel, FRAGRANT HARBOUR, is another startlingly different book. The novel is a portrait of the trajectory and consequences of colonialism. Set in Hong Kong, it at first appears a naturalistic story of emigration, ambition and success. But Lanchester peels away at the layers of corruption and cultural disintegration in the former British Colony, at the same time creating a story of unspoken love and lost ideals. Tom Stewart arrives in Hong Kong in 1935, fluent in Cantonese thanks to a bet made between a Yorkshire businessman and a French nun during the crossing. His tutor is a young Chinese nun called Maria, and their relationship underpins a story set against the backdrop of Hong Kong's and China's history: the Second World War and the Japanese occupation; the meteoric commercialisation following the war, the penetration of Hong Kong by the triads; and ultimately, the return of the Colony to the Chinese in 1997.</p> <p>In FRAGRANT HARBOUR, John Lanchester explores the subtle and complex relationship between today's world and its past. As the moral imperatives governing people change, so does our understanding of how society works, and it is this that Lanchester describes so powerfully in the story of his four central characters.</p>

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
HOW TO SPEAK MONEY 2014 Faber	<p>With his usual wit, Lanchester explains how the world of finance really works. He clarifies more than 300 words and phrases and covers everything from personal banking to ideas seemingly too complex for most people to grasp. This is more than just a reference book and makes economics understandable to anyone</p>
HOW TO SPEAK MONEY 2014 Faber	<p>Money is our global language. Yet so few of us can speak it. The language of the economic elites can be complex, jargon-filled and completely baffling. And we need to understand it because if we can't, then the elites will write their own rules.</p> <p>Now John Lanchester, bestselling author of Capital and Whoops!: Why everyone owes everyone and no one can pay, sets out to decode it for all of us, explaining everything from high-frequency trading and the World Bank to the difference between bullshit and nonsense.</p> <p>As funny as it is devastating, How To Speak Money is a primer and a polemic. It's a reference book you'll find yourself reading in one sitting. And it gives you everything you need to demystify the world of high finance - the world that dominates how we all live now.</p>

Publication Details	Notes
WHOOPS! HOW EVERYONE OWES EVERYONE AND NO ONE CAN PAY 2010 UK: Penguin Press; US: Simon & Schuster	<p>After years of unprecedented success when the world was becoming (im)measurably richer, free-market capitalism has suddenly imploded. The reasons why this happened are, for most of us, obscure. Money touches on our deepest emotions, our most intimate fears and hopes, which makes it all the more difficult to accept the reality that in a downturn this sharp, in face of an economic crisis so systemic, we are no longer in control of crucial aspects of our lives.</p> <p>Writing out of a simple need to understand what just happened, John Lanchester will examine the global economic collapse through each moment of this intensely human drama – from the population of Iceland being told that their banks had simply run out of money to the people of Cleveland, Ohio, finding their homes repossessed and their city now part-owned by Deutsche Bank; from the billionaire who gambled on share-prices and lost on a massive scale to the government economists who based their vital calculations on an inherently flawed mathematical model. A vivid, witty and crystalline account of the otherwise daunting mess that confronts us all, WHOOPS! will trace the ways in which economics, politics and human psychology all converged at this crucial moment, provoking a series of worldwide convulsions that changed the very nature of modern life.</p>
FAMILY ROMANCE 2008 UK: Faber; US: Penguin; Canadian: McLelland & Stewart	<p>‘One of the things I have noticed about my novels is that they all concern people who can’t quite bring themselves to tell the truth... I’ve come to realise, in writing this book, that this interest in damaged, untellable life-stories comes from my parents, and especially from my mother. I grew up with a sense that there was another, fuller, darker narration looming behind the various shorter stories she told so well and so funnily.’</p> <p>John Lanchester’s outstanding family memoir is about a woman who spent twelve years as a nun, about a man who fell in love with her and about the huge deception she made to ensure that they might marry. It is a work of detection, a family mystery about a long-kept secret. It is also an extraordinarily moving meditation on the elusiveness and disconnections of love and on the nature of story-telling.</p>