The Irish novel has had a distinguished history. It spans such diverse authors as James Joyce, George Moore, Maria Edgeworth, Bram Stoker, Flann O’Brien, Samuel Beckett, Lady Morgan and John Banville. Yet it has until now received less critical attention than Irish poetry and drama. This volume covers three hundred years of Irish achievement in fiction, with essays on key genres, themes and authors. It provides critiques of individual works, accounts of important novelists and histories of subgenres and allied narrative forms, establishing significant social and political contexts for dozens of novels. The varied perspectives and emphases by more than a dozen critics and literary historians ensure that the Irish novel receives due tribute for its colour, variety and linguistic verve. Each chapter features recommended further reading. This is the perfect overview for students of the Irish novel, from the romances of the seventeenth century to the present day.

John Wilson Foster is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of British Columbia, Canada.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE IRISH NOVEL

EDITED BY

JOHN WILSON FOSTER
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks are due to Dr Daniel O'Leary for compiling the chronology.
### 1641–1700

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1641</td>
<td>Catholic rebellion in Ulster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651–65</td>
<td><em>Parthenissa</em>, Roger Boyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1665</td>
<td><em>The English Rogue</em>, Richard Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td><em>English Adventures</em>, Roger Boyle</td>
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<td>1687</td>
<td><em>Theodora and Didymus</em>, Robert Boyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>Victory of William of Orange over James II at the Battle of the Boyne</td>
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<td>1691</td>
<td>Treaty of Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td><em>Incognita</em>, William Congreve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td><em>Vertue Rewarded</em>, Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>Institution of anti-Catholic Penal Laws by Dublin parliament</td>
</tr>
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### 1700–1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td><em>Irish Tales</em>, Sarah Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1726</td>
<td>Dublin printing and book-selling shop opened by George Faulkner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Death of Swift</td>
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<td>1752</td>
<td><em>The History of Jack Connor</em>, William Chaigneau</td>
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<tr>
<td>1756–66</td>
<td><em>The Life and Opinions of John Buncle, Esq.</em>, Thomas Amory</td>
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<td>1759–67</td>
<td><em>The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman</em>, Laurence Sterne</td>
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<td>1760–65</td>
<td><em>Chrysal</em>, Charles Johnstone</td>
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<tr>
<td>1761–7</td>
<td><em>Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph</em>, Frances Sheridan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1762</td>
<td><em>The Reverie</em>, Charles Johnstone</td>
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<td>1765–70</td>
<td><em>The Fool of Quality</em>, Henry Brooke</td>
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1766  The Vicar of Wakefield, Oliver Goldsmith
1767  The History of Nourjahad, Frances Sheridan
1768  Death of Laurence Sterne
A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, Laurence Sterne
1774  Death of Goldsmith
1778  First Catholic Relief Act
1781  The History of John Juniper, Esq., Charles Johnstone
The Triumph of Prudence Over Passion, Anonymous (‘An Irish lady’)
1782  Grattan’s Parliament; Dungannon Volunteer Convention
1786  The Adventures of Anthony Varnish, Anonymous [Charles Johnstone]
1791  United Irishmen founded by Theobald Wolfe Tone and others
1793  Relaxation of Penal Laws
1795  Battle of the Diamond, Armagh and founding of Orange Order
1797  Death of Edmund Burke
1798  United Irishmen lead insurrection resulting in 30,000 deaths

1800–1850

1800  Act of Union (takes effect 1801)
Castle Rackrent, Maria Edgeworth
1803  Dublin uprising under Robert Emmet
1806  The Wild Irish Girl, Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan)
1808  The Wild Irish Boy, Charles Robert Maturin
1812  The Absentee, Maria Edgeworth
The Milesian Chief: A Romance, Charles Robert Maturin
1814  O’Donnel: A National Tale, Lady Morgan
1817  Ormond, Maria Edgeworth
1818  Florence Macarthy: An Irish Tale, Lady Morgan
1820  Melmoth the Wanderer, Charles Robert Maturin
1825–6  Tales of the O’Hara Family, John Banim
1826  The Boyne Water, John Banim
1828  The Croppy, Michael Banim
1829  Catholic Emancipation
The Collegians, Gerald Griffin
1830–3  Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry, William Carleton
1833  The Nowlans, John Banim
**Chronology**

1837  
*Confessions of Harry Lorrequer*, Charles Lever

1839  
*Fardorougha the Miser*, William Carleton

1840  
National Repeal Association founded by Daniel O’Connell

1845  
Great Famine begins; death of Thomas Davis

1847  
*Valentine M’Clutchny*, William Carleton

1848  
*The Black Prophet: A Tale of the Famine*, William Carleton

1850  
*The Emigrants of Ahadarr*, William Carleton

1845  
Great Famine begins; death of Thomas Davis

1848  
Failure of Young Ireland Rising; John Mitchel founds *United Irishman*

1850–1900

1850  
Formation of Tenant League

1851  
*Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1858  
James Stephens founds Fenian Brotherhood

1863  
*The House by the Church-yard*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1864  
*Uncle Silas*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1869  
Church of Ireland disestablished

1872  
*In a Glass Darkly*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1879  
*Fairy Water*, Mrs J. H. (Charlotte) Riddell

1882  
*Knocknagow*, Charles Kickham

1884  
*The House by the Church-yard*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1885  
*In a Glass Darkly*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

1886  
*Fairies and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, William Butler Yeats

1887  
*The Nun’s Curse*, Mrs J. H. (Charlotte) Riddell

1888  
*Confessions of a Young Man*, George Moore

1889  
*An Irish Cousin*, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross (Violet Martin)

1890  
Parnell divorce case

1891  
Death of Parnell

1892  
*Grania*, Emily Lawless
1893  Eoin MacNeill and others form Gaelic League, with Douglas
        Hyde as president; second Home Rule Bill defeated
        *The Celtic Twilight*, William Butler Yeats
        *The Heavenly Twins*, Sarah Grand

1894  Esther Waters, George Moore
        *The Real Charlotte*, Somerville and Ross
        *A New Note*, Ella MacMahon

1897  Dracula, Bram Stoker
        *Geoffrey Austin, Student*, Patrick Augustine (Canon) Sheehan
        *The Beth Book*, Sarah Grand

1898  *The Triumph of Failure*, Canon Sheehan

1899  *Some Experiences of an Irish RM*, Somerville and Ross
        *Autobiography of a Child* [1898–9], Hannah Lynch

1900–1925

1900  Death of Oscar Wilde
        *My New Curate*, Canon Sheehan

1901  *The Triumph of Cuclain*, Standish James O'Grady

1902  *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, Lady Augusta Gregory

1903  Wyndham Land Act
        *The Untilled Field*, George Moore
        *The Riddle of the Sands*, Erskine Childers

1904  Abbey Theatre opens in Dublin
        *Gods and Fighting Men*, Lady Augusta Gregory
        *Séadna*, Peadar Ua Laoghaire (Canon Peter O'Leary)
        *John Chilcote, MP*, Katherine Cecil Thurston

1905  Sinn Fein founded by Arthur Griffith
        *The Lake*, George Moore
        *The Soggarth Aroon*, Canon Joseph Guinan

1907  *The Northern Iron*, George A. Birmingham

1908  *The Moneylender*, Joseph Edelstein
        *The Fly on the Wheel*, Katherine Cecil Thurston
        *When the Tide Turns*, Filson Young

1909  Death of Synge

1910  *Deoraíocht*, Pádraic Ó Conaire

1911–14  *Hail and Farewell*, George Moore

1912  *Titanic*, built in Belfast, sinks on maiden voyage; third Home
        Rule Bill becomes law but in abeyance due to Great War and
        1916 rebellion; Ulster Covenant (unionist) pledging resistance
        to home rule; Ulster Volunteer Force raised
Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race, T. W. Rolleston
The Charwoman’s Daughter, James Stephens
The Crock of Gold, James Stephens
The Red Hand of Ulster, George A. Birmingham
The Rough Way, W. M. Letts

1913
Great Lockout in Dublin; formation of Irish (National) Volunteers
Father Ralph, Gerald O’Donovan

1914
Dubliners, James Joyce
Waiting, Gerald O’Donovan

1914–18
First World War; many Catholic and Protestant Irish servicemen

1915
The Red Horizon, Patrick MacGill

1916
Easter Rising in Dublin
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce
The King of Ireland’s Son, Padraic Colum

1917
The Threshold of Quiet, Daniel Corkery
Changing Winds, St John Ervine

1918
The Valley of the Squinting Windows, Brinsley MacNamara (John Weldon)
The Fire of Green Boughs, Mrs Victor (Jesse Louise) Rickard

1919
Beginning of two-year Anglo-Irish war; first meeting of Dáil Éireann

1920
Government of Ireland Act provides for founding of Irish Free State and Northern Ireland
Irish Fairy Tales, James Stephens
The Cask, Freeman Wills Crofts

1921
Anglo-Irish Treaty
Héloïse and Abelard, George Moore
The Woman at the Window and Other Stories, Pádraic Ó Conaire

1922
Civil war in south between Free State government and anti-Treaty republicans
The Interpreters, AE (George Russell)
Ulysses, James Joyce

1923
Ratification of treaty; civil war ends; Yeats wins Nobel Prize for Literature
Deirdre, James Stephens

1924
BBC Northern Ireland radio begins broadcasting
The Black Soul, Liam O’Flaherty
The King of Elfland’s Daughter, Lord Dunsany
CHRONOLOGY

Caisleáin Óir, Séamas Ó Grianna
The Loughsiders, Shan F. Bullock

1925–1950

1925 Dáil Éireann (Free State parliament) forbids bills seeking legal divorce
A Vision, William Butler Yeats
The Informer, Liam O’Flaherty
The Big House of Inver, Somerville and Ross [Martin d. 1915]

1926 Radio Éireann begins broadcasting
King Goshawk and the Birds, Eimar O’Duffy

1927 Islanders, Peadar O’Donnell

1928 Death of Standish James O’Grady

1929 Irish Censorship Board set up in Free State
An tOileánach, Tomás Ó Criomhthain
The Last September, Elizabeth Bowen

1930 Sir John Magill’s Last Journey, Freeman Wills Crofts
A Flock of Birds, Kathleen Coyle

1931 The Puritan, Liam O’Flaherty
Women and God, Francis Stuart
Mad Puppetstown, M. J. Farrell (Molly Keane)

1932 Death of Lady Gregory
Pigeon Irish, Francis Stuart
Skerrett, Liam O’Flaherty
The Ladies’ Road, Pamela Hinkson

1933 Death of George Moore
Fiche Bliain ag Fás (Twenty Years A-Growing), Maurice O’Sullivan
Peter Abelard, Helen Waddell
Island Story, Olga Fielden

1934 A Nest of Simple Folk, Sean O’Faolain
The Islandman (An tOileánach), Tomás Ó Crohan
The Ante-Room, Kate O’Brien

1935 Death of George Russell (AE)

1936 IRA outlawed in Free State
Bird Alone, Sean O’Faolain

1937 New constitution for ‘Eire’, establishing presidency; forbids laws granting dissolution of marriages
CHRONOLOGY

Famine, Liam O’Flaherty
Peter Waring, Forrest Reid
1938
Douglas Hyde first President of Eire
Murphy, Samuel Beckett
The Green Fool, Patrick Kavanagh
The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats
Out of the Silent Planet, C. S. Lewis
1939
Death of Yeats
At Swim-Two-Birds, Flann O’Brien (Brian O’Nolan)
Finnegans Wake, James Joyce
Call My Brother Back, Michael McLaverty
My Cousin Justin, Margaret Barrington
1939–45
Second World War (Free State neutral, Northern Ireland a combatant)
1940
Dutch Interior, Frank O’Connor
The Third Policeman (not published until 1967), Flann O’Brien
1941
Death of Joyce
A House of Children, Joyce Cary
An Béal Bocht, Flann O’Brien
The Land of Spices, Kate O’Brien
1945
The House in Clewe Street, Mary Lavin
1946
Odd Man Out, F. L. Green
1948
Republic of Ireland Act establishes Free State as a republic
Tarry Flynn, Patrick Kavanagh
1949
Death of Douglas Hyde; Eire declared Republic, leaves Commonwealth
In a Harbour Green, Benedict Kiely
Cré na Cille, Máirtín Ó Cadhain
The Heat of the Day, Elizabeth Bowen

1950–1975
1950
Death of George Bernard Shaw; death of James Stephens
1951
Molloy, Samuel Beckett
1953
BBC begins television transmission to Northern Ireland
Watt, Samuel Beckett
1955
The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, Brian Moore
1958
Malone Dies (Malone Meurt, 1951), Samuel Beckett
Cadenza, Ralph Cusack
1960
The Country Girls, Edna O’Brien
The Unnameable (L’Innommable, 1953), Samuel Beckett
1961 Broadcasts by Radio Telefís Éireann begin
1962 *The Lonely Girl*, Edna O’Brien
1963 *The Barracks*, John McGahern
   *The Ferret Fancier*, Anthony C. West
   *Thy Tears Might Cease*, Michael Farrell
1964 Death of Sean O’Casey
   *The Maiden Dinosaur*, Janet McNeill
   *The Old Boys*, William Trevor
1965 Talks between northern and southern premiers Terence O’Neill and Sean Lemass
   *The Dark*, John McGahern
   *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, Brian Moore
1966 *Langrishe, Go Down*, Aidan Higgins
1967 Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association instituted
   *An Eochair*, Máirtín Ó Cadhain
1968 Riots and sectarian violence begin in Northern Ireland
   *An Uain Bheo*, Diarmaid Ó Súilleabháin
1969 Provisional IRA formed; Samuel Beckett awarded Nobel Prize for Literature
   *Strumpet City*, James Plunkett
   *Poor Lazarus*, Maurice Leitch
1970 *Godded and Codded*, Julia O’Faolain
   *Troubles*, J. G. Farrell
1971 Provisional IRA begins campaign of violence
   *Black List, Section H*, Francis Stuart
1972 ‘Bloody Sunday’ riots in Londonderry; Stormont (NI) parliament prorogued
   *Balcony of Europe*, Aidan Higgins
   *Catholics*, Brian Moore
   *Night*, Edna O’Brien
   *The Captains and the Kings*, Jennifer Johnston
   *The Poor Mouth* (*An Béal Bocht*, 1941), Flann O’Brien
1973 Republic enters Common Market
   *Birchwood*, John Banville
1974 *How Many Miles to Babylon?*, Jennifer Johnston
   *The Leavetaking*, John McGahern

1975–2000

1976 *Dr Copernicus*, John Banville
   *The Children of Dynmouth*, William Trevor
1977  A Hole in the Head, Francis Stuart
Proxopera, Benedict Kiely
1978  Bogmail, Patrick McGinley
1980  Company, Samuel Beckett
No Country for Young Men, Julia O’Faolain
1981  Aosdána established to honour outstanding living Irish artists; hunger strikes by IRA detainees in Long Kesh prison
Kepler, John Banville
1982  The Obedient Wife, Julia O’Faolain
1983  Cal, Bernard MacLaverty
Cold Heaven, Brian Moore
Fools of Fortune, William Trevor
Bornholm Night-Ferry, Aidan Higgins
1984  The Irish Signorina, Julia O’Faolain
The Summerhouse, Val Mulkerns
1985  Anglo-Irish Agreement protects majority wishes in Northern Ireland but provides for possible Irish unification
Nothing Happens in Carmincross, Benedict Kiely
The Trick of the Ga Bolga, Patrick McGinley
1986  Ellen, Ita Daly
Mefisto, John Banville
1988  The Silence in the Garden, William Trevor
Sionnach ar mo Dhúan, Breandán Ó hEithir
1989  Death of Beckett
The Book of Evidence, John Banville
There We Have Been, Leland Bardwell
Ripley Bogle, Robert McLiam Wilson
1990  Amongst Women, John McGahern
The Journey Home, Dermot Bolger
1992  Referendum in Republic approves Maastricht Treaty (EU)
The Barrytown Trilogy, Roddy Doyle
The Butcher Boy, Patrick McCabe
Fat Lad, Glenn Patterson
1993  President of Republic (Mary Robinson) visits Queen Elizabeth II in London
Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha, Roddy Doyle
The Heather Blazing, Colm Tóibín
1994  Felicia’s Journey, William Trevor
A Goat’s Song, Dermot Healy
Stir-Fry, Emma Donoghue
1995 Divorce referendum narrowly passes in Republic; Prince of Wales’s visit
   *The Wig My Father Wore*, Anne Enright
   *The Statement*, Brian Moore
1996 *Reading in the Dark*, Seamus Deane
   *The Woman Who Walked into Doors*, Roddy Doyle
   *Angela’s Ashes*, Frank McCourt
1997 *Grace Notes*, Bernard MacLaverty
   *The Star Factory*, Ciaran Carson
   *The Untouchable*, John Banville
1998 Belfast (or Good Friday) Agreement provides for devolved government in Northern Ireland
   *Death and Nightingales*, Eugene McCabe
1999 *Foley’s Asia*, Ronan Sheehan
   *The Blackwater Lightship*, Colm Tóibín

2000–
2000 *What Are You Like?*, Anne Enright
2001 *At Swim, Two Boys*, Jamie O’Neill
2002 *That They May Face the Rising Sun*, John McGahern
   *The Story of Lucy Gault*, William Trevor
   *Shroud*, John Banville
2003 *Dancer*, Colum McCann
   *The Parts*, Keith Ridgway
2004 *The Master*, Colm Tóibín
2005 IRA announces cessation of armed struggle