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.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

LITERARY HISTORY (2005). She is one of the editors of the Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, vols. 4 and 5: Irish Women’s Writings and Traditions (2002). She contributed the entry on ‘Feminism’ to the Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture (2005).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks are due to Dr Daniel O'Leary for compiling the chronology.
CHRONOLOGY

1641–1700

1641 Catholic rebellion in Ulster
1651–65 *Parthenissa*, Roger Boyle
1665 *The English Rogue*, Richard Head
1676 *English Adventures*, Roger Boyle
1687 *Theodora and Didymus*, Robert Boyle
1690 Victory of William of Orange over James II at the Battle of the Boyne
1691 Treaty of Limerick
1692 *Incognita*, William Congreve
1693 *Virtue Rewarded*, Anonymous
1695 Institution of anti-Catholic Penal Laws by Dublin parliament

1700–1800

1716 *Irish Tales*, Sarah Butler
1726 Dublin printing and book-selling shop opened by George Faulkner
1745 Death of Swift
1752 *The History of Jack Connor*, William Chaigneau
1756–66 *The Life and Opinions of John Buncle, Esq.*, Thomas Amory
1759–67 *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Laurence Sterne
1760–65 *Chrysal*, Charles Johnstone
1761–7 *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, Frances Sheridan
1762 *The Reverie*, Charles Johnstone
1765–70 *The Fool of Quality*, Henry Brooke
CHRONOLOGY

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
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
       Valentine M'Clutchy, William Carleton
1847  The Black Prophet: A Tale of the Famine, William Carleton
       The Emigrants of Abadarra, William Carleton
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
       Fairy Water, Mrs J. H. (Charlotte) Riddell
1879  Formation of Land League
       Early Bardic Ireland, Standish James O'Grady
       Knocknagow, Charles Kickham
1882  Cuculain: An Epic, Standish James O'Grady
1884  Founding of Gaelic Athletic Association
1885  A Mummer’s Wife, George Moore
1886  Gladstone’s Irish Home Rule Bill defeated
       A Drama in Muslin, George Moore
1887  Establishment of National Library of Ireland
1888  Confessions of a Young Man, George Moore
       Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, William Butler Yeats
       The Nun's Curse, Mrs J. H. (Charlotte) Riddell
1889  An Irish Cousin, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross (Violet Martin)
1890  Parnell divorce case
       Beside the Fire, Douglas Hyde
       When We Were Boys, William O’Brien
1891  Death of Parnell
       The Picture of Dorian Gray [1890], Oscar Wilde
1892  Grania, Emily Lawless
Chronology

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 Cuculain*, 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
CHRONOLOGY

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
(The John Weldon)

1918
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
Heloïse 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 tOileáinach*, Tomás Ó Críomhthain  
*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 Blian 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 tOileáinach)*, 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  
*Mary Lavelle*, Kate O’Brien

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
SNAPSHOT

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 Súilleabáin

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
CHRONOLOGY

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 Dhuán, Breandaí O’ 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

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Divorce referendum narrowly passes in Republic; Prince of Wales’s visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Wig My Father Wore</em>, Anne Enright</td>
</tr>
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<td><em>The Statement</em>, Brian Moore</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td><em>Reading in the Dark</em>, Seamus Deane</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Woman Who Walked into Doors</em>, Roddy Doyle</td>
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<td><em>Angela’s Ashes</em>, Frank McCourt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td><em>Grace Notes</em>, Bernard MacLaverty</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Star Factory</em>, Ciaran Carson</td>
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<td><em>The Untouchable</em>, John Banville</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Belfast (or Good Friday) Agreement provides for devolved government in Northern Ireland</td>
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<td><em>Death and Nightingales</em>, Eugene McCabe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Foley’s Asia</em>, Ronan Sheehan</td>
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<td><em>The Blackwater Lightship</em>, Colm Tóibín</td>
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**2000–**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Book</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td><em>What Are You Like?</em>, Anne Enright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>At Swim, Two Boys</em>, Jamie O’Neill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td><em>That They May Face the Rising Sun</em>, John McGahern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Story of Lucy Gault</em>, William Trevor</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Shroud</em>, John Banville</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td><em>Dancer</em>, Colum McCann</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Parts</em>, Keith Ridgway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>The Master</em>, Colm Tóibín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>IRA announces cessation of armed struggle</td>
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</table>