

IRISH LITERATURE IN TRANSITION,
1980–2020

Irish Literature in Transition, 1980–2020 elucidates the central features of Irish literature during the twentieth century's long turn, covering its significant trends and formations, reassessing its major writers and texts, and providing path-making accounts of its emergent figures. Over the past forty years, life in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland has been transformed by new material conditions in each polity and by ideological shifts in the way people understand themselves and their relation to the world. Amid these remarkable changes, culture on both sides of the border has emerged as a global phenomenon, one that both reflects and intervenes in rapidly changing contemporary conditions. This volume accounts for broad patterns of literary and cultural production in this period and demonstrates the value of contemporary Irish literature within Anglophone and European traditions and as a body of work that has kept its eye trained on the particularities of the island and its inhabitants.

ERIC FALCI is Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Continuity and Change in Irish Poetry, 1966–2010* (2012) and *The Cambridge Introduction to British Poetry, 1945–2010* (2015), as well as a number of essays on twentieth- and twenty-first-century Irish and British poetry.

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IRISH LITERATURE IN TRANSITION

General editors:
Claire Connolly, University College Cork
Marjorie Howes, Boston College

This six-volume series captures the dynamic energies transmitted over more than 300 years of the established literary landmarks that constitute Irish literary life. Ambitious in scope and depth, and accommodating new critical perspectives and approaches, *Irish Literature in Transition* captures the ongoing changes in the Irish literary canon. Each of the six volumes revises our understanding of established issues and texts and, simultaneously, introduces new questions, approaches, and authors. These volumes address periods of transition, but also periods of epochal upheaval and turning points of real significance. Each one of these books challenges in different ways the dominant approaches to a period of literature by shifting the focus from what happened to understanding how and why it happened. They elucidate the multifaceted interaction between the social and literary fields in the evolution of Irish literature until the present moment. As a whole, the *Irish Literature in Transition* series constitutes a new kind of literary history across centuries of intense cultural and literary creation. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the Irish literary experience, creating a new and dynamic version of literary history that highlights the significance of change as a lived, felt force.

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University of California, Berkeley

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Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Series Preface</i>	xv
<i>General Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xviii
Introduction	
<i>Eric Falci and Paige Reynolds</i>	I
PART I TIMES	
1 The Contemporary Conditions of Irish Language Literature <i>Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhúigh</i>	25 27
2 The Cultures of Poetry in Contemporary Ireland <i>David Lloyd</i>	44
3 Troubles Literature and the End of the Troubles <i>Julia C. Obert</i>	65
4 Contemporary Irish Theatre and Media <i>Paige Reynolds</i>	81
5 Writing Childhood: Young Adult and Children’s Literature <i>Patricia Kennon</i>	96
Coda: Eavan Boland and Seamus Heaney <i>Eric Falci</i>	III
PART II SPACES	
6 Habitations: Space, Place, Real Estate <i>Adam Hanna</i>	119 121

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
7	Crossings: Northern Irish Literature from Good Friday to Brexit <i>Stefanie Lehner</i>	136
8	Adaptations: Commemoration and Contemporary Irish Theatre <i>James Moran</i>	152
9	Relocations: Diaspora, Travel, Migrancy <i>Ellen McWilliams</i>	168
10	Arrivals: Inward Migration and Irish Literature <i>Anne Mulhall</i>	182
	Coda: Tom Murphy and Brian Friel <i>Patrick Lonergan</i>	201
	PART III FORMS OF EXPERIENCE	209
11	The Irish Realist Novel <i>Joe Cleary</i>	211
12	Faith, Secularism, and Sacred Institutions <i>Diarmaid Ferriter</i>	228
13	Writing the Tiger: Economics and Culture <i>Sarah Townsend</i>	246
14	Violence, Trauma, Recovery <i>Christopher Langlois</i>	263
15	Modes of Witnessing and Ireland's Institutional History <i>Emilie Pine, Susan Leavy, Mark Keane, Maeve Casserly, and Tom Lane</i>	278
	Coda: Edna O'Brien and Eimear McBride <i>Clair Wills</i>	295
	PART IV PRACTICES, INSTITUTIONS, AND AUDIENCES	305
16	Mediation and Translation in Irish Language Literature <i>Ríona Ní Fhrighil</i>	307
17	Irish Studies and Its Discontents <i>Ronan McDonald</i>	327

	<i>Contents</i>	vii
18	Historical Transitions in Ireland on Screen <i>Barry Monahan</i>	344
19	Irish Blockbusters and Literary Stars at the End of the Millennium <i>Stephen Watt</i>	360
20	Contemporary Literature and Public Value <i>Margaret Kelleher</i>	375
	Coda: <i>The Irish Times</i> , Tramp Press, and the Future Present <i>Paige Reynolds</i>	392
	<i>Index</i>	401

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ix

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List of Contributors

xi

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xiii

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Series Preface

Irish Literature in Transition provides a new account of transitions between and across the centuries of Irish literature. Adopting varying frames and scales of reference, the series offers an original map of a territory too often navigated via the narrow channels of political history. Each of the six volumes revises our understanding of established issues and texts and, simultaneously, introduces new questions, approaches, and authors. Together, these books generate alternative genealogies across time and space and help readers to understand and interrogate the ways in which one period re-imagines and remakes another.

Discussions of Irish culture have long focused on the close relationship between literature and history. For all the power of such narratives, however, the field has yet to develop a sufficiently dynamic sense of that relationship. Literary transitions do not ‘reflect’ historical change in any simple or straightforward way. Rather, the complex two-way traffic between these realms involves multiple and uneven processes such as distortion, selection, repression, embrace, and critique. The temporal relationships involved in such traffic include simultaneity, time lag, and anticipation.

The six books in this series track patterns of transmission and transformation across Irish culture. More specifically, they ask: what kinds of transitions are registered and provoked by literature and culture? What are the levers and mechanisms of change? How helpful are our current concepts of literary movements, time periods, and national traditions? What is the status of the literary in our literary histories and how do we understand the relations among form, genre, and chronology?

We consider these questions from our own location in a time of scholarly transition. The sheer weight of archival material now available is transforming our sense of both the past and present of Irish literature, while prompting us to produce new kinds of critical narrative. Older literary histories of Ireland are coming under pressure from new modes

of reading, such as those attuned to ecocritical issues, affect theory, queer genealogies, questions of scale, and diasporic and transnational geographies. As the concept of the ‘survey’ itself comes under scrutiny in classrooms and universities, these volumes show how authoritative interpretations can be innovative, challenging, and enabling for future readers and writers. Each volume intervenes in continuing critical conversations about culture rather than summarising the field or closing down debate. At the same time, the series charts the contours of literary history across the centuries in ways that highlight the significance of change as a lived, felt force.

Transition: the term means passage from one well-defined period to another; it also helps to track subtle interconnections, contingencies, or modulations; and it will provoke questions about the definition of change itself. In adopting that term, *Irish Literature in Transition* seeks to provide insight into the future of Irish Studies as it re-imagines the literary past and present.

CLAIRE CONNOLLY, *University College Cork*
MARJORIE HOWES, *Boston College*

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CLAIRE CONNOLLY, *University College Cork*
MARJORIE HOWES, *Boston College*
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xix

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