THE
MACMILLAN
DICTIONARY
OF IRISH
LITERATURE

THE MACMILLAN DICTIONARY OF IRISH LITERATURE

ROBERT HOGAN

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Zack Bowen

William J. Feeney

James Kilroy

ADVISORY EDITORS

Mary Rose Callaghan

Richard Burnham

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

M
MACMILLAN PRESS
LONDON

Macmillan Education

© Robert Hogan, 1979

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission. No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended). Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published in the United Kingdom 1980 by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

London and Basingstoke
Associated companies in Auckland, Delhi, Dublin,
Gaborone, Hamburg, Harare, Hong Kong, Johannesburg,
Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, Manzini, Melbourne, Mexico City,
Nairobi, New York, Singapore, Tokyo.

Paperback edition first published 1985

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The Macmillan dictionary of Irish literature.

1. English literature—Irish authors—
Dictionaries 2. Irish literature—
Dictionaries

I. Hogan, Robert, 1930—

820.9'9415 PR8706

ISBN 978-1-349-07797-7

ISBN 978-1-349-07795-3 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-07795-3

The paperback edition of this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For permission to quote various published lines of verse, the editor and publisher gratefully make the following acknowledgments: to Mr. Monk Gibbon for four lines from "Microcosm," to Mr. Brendan Kennelly for several lines from several poems, to Mr. Sean O'Faolain for four lines from his translation of Donnchadh Mor O Dalaigh's "Truagh mo Thuras ar Loch Dearg," to Mr. Tom Paulin for a stanza from "Near the Christadelphians," to Allen Figgis & Co., Ltd. for Eavan Boland's poem "Requiem for a Personal Friend (On a half-eaten Blackbird)," to Mr. Seamus Heaney and Faber and Faber, Ltd. for quotations from "Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist*, "Ban Clay" from *Door into the Dark*, and "The Tolund Man" from *Wintering Out*; to Mr. Paul Muldoon and Faber and Faber, Ltd. for quotations from "How to Play Championship Tennis" and "Blemish" from *Mules*; to MacGibbon and Kee/Granada Publishing, Ltd. for quotes from Desmond O'Grady's "His Bath" and "Land," to the Goldsmith Press for a quotation from Desmond O'Grady's "Back to Our Mountains," to Victor Gollancz, Ltd. for a quotation from Eavan Boland's *The War Horse* and also from Michael Longley's *Man Lying on a Wall*; to the Estate of the late Joseph Campbell for quotations from "I Am the Mountainy Singer," "The Old Woman," and "The Key"; to Oxford University Press for quotations from *North* by Seamus Heaney, © 1975 by Seamus Heaney, from *Wintering Out*, by Seamus Heaney, © 1972 by Seamus Heaney, and from *Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice*, edited by E. R. Dodds, copyright © the Estate of Louis MacNeice, 1966, all reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.; and to Miss Anne Yeats, Mr. M. B. Yeats, and the Macmillan Company of London and Basingstoke for quotations from W. B. Yeats' "Among School Children" and "Under Ben Bulbin."

CONTRIBUTORS

Jerry C. Beasley
University of Delaware

Zack Bowen
University of Delaware

John Boyd
Lyric Players Theatre

Terence Brown
Trinity College, Dublin

Richard Burnham
Dominican College

James M. Cahalan
University of Cincinnati

Mary Rose Callaghan
Proscenium Press

Anne Clissmann
Trinity College, Dublin

Peter Costello
Dublin

Denis Cotter, Jr.
Dublin

Barbara DiBernard
University of Minnesota

James Douglas
Bray, Co. Wicklow

Paul A. Doyle
Nassau Community College

Grace Eckley
Drake University

William J. Feeney
DePaul University

John Wilson Foster
University of British Columbia

Helmut E. Gerber
Arizona State University

Christopher Griffin
Dublin

Mark D. Hawthorne
James Madison University

Jane Healy
Dublin

Richard M. Kain
University of Louisville

Colbert Kearney
University College, Cork

A. A. Kelly
Great Britain

Brendan Kennelly
Trinity College, Dublin

Frank Kersnowski
Trinity University

James Kilroy
Vanderbilt University

Thomas Kinsella
Temple University

James Liddy
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Nora F. Lindstrom
Bradley University

William J. Linn
Brooklyn

M. Kelly Lynch
Boston

J. B. Lyons
Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin

Michael McDonnell
Fairfield University

Patricia McFate
University of Pennsylvania

Nora McGuinness
University of California, Davis

Alf MacLochlainn
National Library of Ireland

Bryan MacMahon
Listowel, Co. Kerry

Andrew Marsh
Irish Press

James H. Matthews
Eckerd College

D.E.S. Maxwell
York University

Donald C. Mell
University of Delaware

Thomas Merrill
University of Delaware

Liam Miller
Dolmen Press

Sven Eric Molin
George Mason University

J. H. Natterstad
Framingham State College

John Nemo
Bradley University

James Newcomer
Texas Christian University

Johann A. Norstedt
*Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University*

Micheál O hAodha
Abbey Theatre

Seamus O'Neill
Carysfort Training College

Coilin Owens
George Mason University

Kathleen Danaher Parks
University of Delaware

Raymond J. Porter
Iona College

Victor Price
Great Britain

Martin Ryan
Dublin

Ann Saddlemeyer
University of Toronto

George Brandon Saul
University of Connecticut

CONTRIBUTORS

ix

Nuala Saunders
*Convent of Mercy, Callan,
Co. Kilkenny*

Bonnie Kime Scott
University of Delaware

Mary Helen Thuente
*Indiana University-Purdue
University*

Jack W. Weaver
Winthrop College

Terence de Vere White
The Irish Times

Terence Winch
Washington, D.C.

CONTENTS

Preface	xiii
Introduction	3
Gaelic Literature	
Seamus O'Neill	17
A Note on the History of Irish Writing in English	65
The Dictionary	75
Chronology	729
Bibliography	743
Index	749

PREFACE

A preliminary word seems necessary about the plan of this book.

The General Introduction might really be titled "The Literary Uses of Ireland," for the principal characteristic of writing in Ireland is its Irishness. While this statement may seem obvious, it also is obvious that, since the Renaissance, nationality, as expressed in literature, has been increasingly diminished by internationality. For instance, the excellence of what D. H. Lawrence called "Classic American Literature" was considerably diluted by an international, and particularly an English, influence. The inimitable excellence of the nineteenth-century American authors Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and especially Walt Whitman appears to lie mainly in the extent to which they resisted that influence and allowed themselves to be receptive to their own native milieu. And the triumphant progression of Russian literary masters in the nineteenth century, from Pushkin to Gogol to Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Turgenev and Chekhov, certainly must be attributed to the backwardness, the provinciality, the isolation, and the ingrown "Russianness" of their society.

Irish society also, until the very recent past, remained surprisingly insulated from the modern world. Although in many ways pernicious, that isolation did have the effect of intensely focusing the attention of the Irish writer on the little world of his Four Green Fields. Even now, when Ireland is a much more outward-looking society, the effects remain dramatically evident. The General Introduction, then, is an attempt to chart how the Irish writer used this narrow, but rich, subject matter—the landscape, the climate, the history, the manners, the morals, the customs of his native land.

The General Introduction is not a capsule review of Ireland past and present, as any attempt to compress so much information into so little space would be to court superficiality with a vengeance. Rather, it deals with

those facets of Ireland that the writers themselves have thought the most salient and that have appeared so constantly in their work. As a historical or sociological or even literary survey, the Introduction is too short and mal-proportioned to serve; but as a not wholly subjective view of how Ireland's writers have portrayed their country, and of what those writers have thought important, it may introduce the reader to at least the primary preoccupations of Irish literature.

In planning this dictionary, the most difficult editorial question to resolve has been how to treat literature written in the Irish language. Such literature is centuries-old and continues to be written, albeit in a trickle, even today. The range of that literature, from saga to satire, is broad indeed, and the quality of much of that literature is brilliant. However, the fortunes of the Irish language have been wedded to the fortunes of the Irish nation. As England's power waxed in Ireland, the old Irish culture waned and Irish as a living language progressively decayed. The year 1800 may be taken as symptomatic of the triumph of the English language in Ireland. In that year, the Act of Union abolished the separate Irish Parliament and included Irish representatives in Westminster. Irish, of course, was still spoken, but as the sole language it survived only in secluded rural pockets. An Irish language revival around the turn of the twentieth century was a harbinger of the secretly growing political revival that was to culminate in the Easter Rising of 1916, in the Irish Free State, and finally in an independent republic that comprised most of the island. However, political independence did not mean that the Irish language could be restored as the living language of the people. Ireland became nominally bilingual, but, despite great dedication and immense effort, it was impossible to go back.

Today, Irish alone is spoken in a few small sections of the country. The language is studied in the schools from an early age, and some modern books of merit have been written in Irish. Nevertheless, it remains true that the great works of modern Irish literature have been written in English. It is also lamentably true that the classic works of the Irish language are to be perceived, even by the Irish themselves, mainly through their influence on modern Irish writing in English. Whether in direct translation, adaptation, or even simply as a fecund source of allusion and inspiration, that influence is profound and pervasive, but it is an influence at one remove.

A dictionary of Irish literature assuredly must deal with writing in Irish. Apart from its own extraordinary merits, literature in Irish remains the bedrock foundation for much, if not most, modern Irish writing in English. Nevertheless, it seemed that this work must stress Irish writing in the English language. After all, W. B. Yeats, James Stephens, and James Joyce are the mirrors in which the entire world, including Ireland itself, sees reflected the old Ireland that was. Consequently, we have adopted a com-

promise by printing a lengthy, specially commissioned critical and historical survey of writing in Irish, from the earliest times to the present day. This survey, written by Seamus O'Neill, himself a distinguished contemporary writer who has published mainly in Irish, appears as a most necessary preliminary to the bulk of the dictionary which treats of Irish writing in English.

The bulk of the dictionary is made up of biographical and critical essays on approximately five hundred Irish authors who wrote mainly in the English language. The number of authors included could have been doubled or even trebled, but to have done so would have been to admit a flood of authors who contributed little of significance to literature and also to curtail strongly the amount of space available for discussions of more important writers.

The choice of authors to be included has been basically the decision of the editor, although he has availed himself of the oral suggestions of so many people and of the written opinions of so many more, that the final choice probably closely approaches a consensus. Most of the authors included are obvious choices, authors whose omission would have been ridiculous from the standpoint of either literature or history. Nevertheless, some will certainly question the inclusion of a minority of authors. Indeed, I fully expect to be asked (especially by the Irish), "Why did you leave out the brilliant A——— and include that poetaster X———?" The reason is probably attributable to ignorance, bias, lack of taste, and human fallibility.

Still and all, in this area of minimal excellence and excellent potential, there is no thoroughly satisfactory solution. One arbitrary solution adopted here has been to limit the entries almost exclusively to authors who have published a book, no matter how slim. Another arbitrary criterion has been to lend a tolerant ear to the new writer who is still establishing himself, even though this practice might mean skimping on or even omitting some minor authors of earlier times whom I myself valued more. Nevertheless, as the work of the dictionary progressed, the hard and fast lines of distinction increasingly blurred. How could one, for instance, defend including Congreve and Goldsmith and Sheridan and even George Darley, who hardly wrote of Ireland at all? The answer is really an intractable bias in their favor.

A few foreign authors have been included, for a few foreign authors have made a rich and lasting contribution to Irish literature. Such volumes as, for instance, Robin Flower's *The Western Island*, or Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*, or J. P. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man*, or J. G. Farrell's *Troubles* seem classics of Irish literature, and to have omitted their remarkable authors from this company would have been jingoistic indeed.

I do not think that any author of outstanding achievement has been

omitted. However, the body of Irish literature, past as well as present, is still being charted, and it is entirely possible that I am wrong. If so, I hope it will be possible to make amends at some future date.

The length of the alphabetical entries varies from about twenty-five words to about ten thousand, and obviously the length of an entry implies some judgment about the author's worth as it appears at present. However, this is only a very rough judgment, and the reader is cautioned not to regard Author A, who is discussed in two hundred and fifty words, as one-sixth less admirable than Author B, who is discussed in fifteen hundred.

The body of the dictionary also contains a handful of general articles on topics such as folklore, which have been of major importance to literature. At one time, I contemplated including a larger number of these general articles, which would deal with historical writing, travel writing, biographies, memoirs, journalism, broadcasting, and other endeavors whose best examples have strong claims to literary worth. After much consideration, however, I decided that comprehensive surveys of such fields would not only extend the book greatly, but would also dissipate its major impact by including much that was tangential or transitory. On the other hand, there are quite a few individual entries for major historians, political writers, editors, orators, journalists, and the like. The dictionary also contains a number of entries for important literary organizations or publications, such as the Abbey Theatre, the Cuala Press, and *The Nation*. The particular articles have been signed by their authors, and any unsigned articles have been written by the general editor.

Finally, whenever a name is followed by an asterisk, it is to be understood that such person or topic or organization has its own separate entry in the appropriate alphabetical place in the dictionary.

Perhaps a third to a half of this book consists of bibliographies. The bibliographies of specific writers or topics follow their individual entries. Most have been compiled by the author of the entry, although the editor is responsible for the bibliographical form of the citations and has frequently made additions and, occasionally, omissions. The individual bibliographies list all of the author's significant works, and "significant work" has ordinarily been taken to mean every individual book publication and all of the important fugitive material. In many instances, it has been possible to list practically everything an author is known to have written. However, in the case of an extremely important or prolific writer, such as Shaw or Yeats, a complete listing has been impossible. Even so, a diligent attempt has been made to list everything of primary or even secondary importance.

The individual bibliographies are divided into two sections. The first section lists the writer's works in the order in which they were published. The second, and usually shorter, section lists the major critical, biographical, and bibliographical works about the writer, and is arranged alphabeti-

cally by the last names of the authors, editors, or compilers. To conserve space, the name of the publisher has been shortened to its essential components: thus, Maunsel and Company will appear simply as "Maunsel," the Dolmen Press simply as "Dolmen," and so on. In addition, the subtitles of books usually have been omitted.

Although the limitations of space and human energy have prevented an exhaustive or complete listing, I believe that these bibliographies as a whole constitute the most comprehensive listing of Irish literature that is in print or is likely to be in print for many years.

The Chronology of historical and literary events given at the end of the dictionary is intended not as a substitute for a basic grasp of Irish history and literature but as a simple chart for the neophyte traveler in moments of occasional bafflement. For more precise knowledge, the reader is directed to the excellent volumes of history and literary history cited in the General Bibliography. The latter is a concise listing of the best general books on Ireland, its geography, its climate, its history, its economics, its architecture, its customs, and, particularly, its literature.

A dictionary or an encyclopedia does not always have an index. This volume does, and I trust that the reader will quickly appreciate its utility. Irish literature has emerged from a small and closely knit society. One Irish wit remarked that a literary movement occurred when a number of writers lived in the same place and did not speak to each other. There is a deal of justice in that remark, but in Ireland the writers do always speak about each other. They also necessarily work together, and they inevitably influence one another. For instance, the most pervasive influence in modern Irish literature is still W. B. Yeats, and he is discussed at considerable length in the article by Richard M. Kain. However, Yeats was of crucial importance for the careers of scores of writers, and additional information about him appears throughout this book. To a lesser extent, that same point is valid for many other writers. Hence, the judicious reader will not only read the article about the author he is interested in, but will also consult the Index for other citations.

To save space, there are no separate entries for individual works in the text, unless the author is unknown. Thus, a discussion of *Ulysses* or *Juno and the Paycock* will be found under the entries for their authors, Joyce and O'Casey. If the reader knows the work and not the author, he may quickly find a discussion of the work by referring to its title in the Index. An anonymous work like *The Tain*, which is not entered separately in the dictionary but is discussed in Seamus O'Neill's essay on Gaelic literature, can also be located through use of the Index. The Index does not cite information from the bibliographies, but everything cited in the text proper—both in the introductory material and in the alphabetical entries—is noted.

Not every Irish author or magazine or literary society has been thought important enough to be accorded a separate listing in the body of the work. However, a glance at the Index will indicate that many of these individuals or organizations have been discussed somewhere in the dictionary. For instance, Richard Lovell Edgeworth is cited only in the Index, but will be found briefly discussed in the notice of his very important daughter, Maria; the magazine *Threshold* is cited only in the Index but will be found in the notice of its parent organization, the Lyric Players Theatre of Belfast; the Society of Irish Playwrights, through the Index, will be found briefly discussed in the entry on its chief organizer and first chairman, John Purcell O'Donovan.

An editor of such a volume as this must feel like the captain of a ship manned by many and much more knowledgeable sailors than he. As I have that feeling quite strongly indeed, I should like to mention my particular gratitude to Richard M. Kain and William J. Feeney, without whose erudition, kindness, and generous labors this dictionary still would be far from completion. My indebtedness is scarcely less to Seamus O'Neill, Mary Rose Callaghan, James Kilroy, Zack Bowen, Sven Eric Molin, and Richard Burnham, all of whose friendships I have outrageously exploited. To them, and to the many other brilliant contributors, my deepest and most abiding thanks.

Dr. Johnson said, "A man will turn over half a library to make one book." Of the half a library that was turned over in the making of this book, there were some few volumes to which I constantly returned, and to which every student of Irish literature must remain indebted. I have particularly in mind D. J. O'Donoghue's *The Poets of Ireland*, Stephen J. Brown's *Ireland in Fiction*, Richard Best's *Bibliography of Irish Philology* and its sequel, Patrick Rafroidi's *L'Irlande et romantisme*, Brian Cleeve's *Dictionary of Irish Writers*, and Brian McKenna's *Irish Literature, 1800-1875*. Such volumes have been both an inspiration and a conscience.

My thanks also to Greenwood Press for initiating this project, and particularly to Marilyn Brownstein and Nancy J. Clements for much good and sage counsel.

Finally, I am painfully conscious that, in a work of this size and scope, errors of fact have undoubtedly crept in; and I will be most grateful if readers will bring any such faults to my attention. As for errors of judgment, let Time be the judge, for he is much more judicious than I and considerably less vulnerable.

Robert Hogan
January 1, 1979