IRELAND: A HISTORICAL AND LITERARY SURVEY

Irish literature: a dual tradition: Irish (Gaelic) and Anglo-Irish (since the 17th century).

Earliest surviving Irish poetry: 5th century and 6th century.

9th century: Viking invasions: place names, proper names, syllables…

*11th century: Anglo-Norman intervention in Irish clan’s conflict.*

1066: Norman Conquest.

12th century: Anonymous poetry. Christian elements (devotional) and non-Christian ones (sagas and Fenian tales).

13th century: first poetry in French produced by the Norman settlers.

14th century – 17th century: growing English-language minority enclave.

15th century: poetry schools (in winter and in darkness; learning poetry by heart; oral tradition).

*16th century: Ireland progressively dominated by the English.*

1588: Spanish Armada defeated.

Until 1601 (battle of Kinsale) the Irish aristocrats were the patrons of poetry in Irish composed by the bards (poems of praise or castigation of the Lord).

1607: “Flight of the Earls”: Irish aristocracy goes into exile in Europe. Irish population disposed of good land.

*1607: Flight of the Earls (exile and dispossession after the battle of Kinsale)-*

1610: Plantation of Ulster commences.

*1610: Beginning of the Ulster Plantation.*

*1649: Oliver Cromwell conquers Ireland and Scotland.*

*1690: Battle of the Boyne (William of Orange, who was a protestant, against James Stuart). Protestant hegemony in Ireland.*

17th century: English becomes the language of the administration and law. The Irish population begins to use English. Poetry written in English for the Anglo-Irish: themes of exultation.

Poetry written in Irish: themes of loyalty, futility of hope and defeat. Loss of the privileges for the bardic poets; loss of an audience.

18th century: aislings (vision poems) about the expectations of the return of a Stuart Pretender.

Jonathan Swift: in favour of the expansion of the English language in Ireland.

Goldsmith: Irish decay vs. English prosperity.

Anglo-Ireland begins to feel separate from England. Nationalist literary symbols: the blackbird, the black rose, the poor old woman. Folk poetry written in English. End of bardic poetry.

1776: American Declaration of Independence.

1789: French Revolution.

1798: Rebellion of Protestant upper and middle class together with Catholic peasant farmers. Defeat.

*1800: Act of Union (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland): Protestant privilege in religion, education and the ownership of land.*

1845: Failure of the Irish potato crop.

1846: Famine in Ireland.

1829: Daniel O’Connell: movement for the Catholic Emancipation. Campaign for the Repeal of the Union. Development of the nationalist feelings. English as the language of opportunity.

19th century: Literature written in English: entertaining the oppressors and comformig the oppressed (Thomas Moore). J. Clarence Mangan: versions of poems from the Irish; images of striving salmon; retellings of ancient Irish Tales; first generation of translations from Irish; literary melancholy.

Lady Gregory: gave W. B. Yeats access to the literature in Irish.

*1916: Eastern Rising*.

*1919-1921: War of Independence.*

*1921: Irish Free State established. It leaves Northern Ireland as part of the UK.*

*1922 – 1923: Civil War.*

1923: Film censorship.

1925: Legislation prohibiting divorce in Free Sate passed.

1929: Censorship of Publication Act passed.

1936: IRA declared illegal.

1937: New Irish Constitution.

1939: Outbreak of World War Two. Éire states intention of remaining neutral.

20th century: James Joyce (critic of Irish and Anglo-Irish culture); Austin Clarke (narrative poems about old sagas); Patrick Kavanagh (rural world); Samuel Beckett (he uprooted himself, like Joyce, and left for France).

1948: Ireland declared a Republic.

*1949: Republic of Ireland (Ireland leaves the Commonwealth).*

*1968: Beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.*

1969: Samuel Beckett awarded Nobel Prize for Literature. British troops sent into Northern Ireland.

1972: Bloody Sunday.

1973: Ireland joins European Economic Community.

1981: Bobby Sands and nine other prisoners starve themselves to death.

1980s: Emigration (c. 30,000 per annum).

1990: Mary Robinson elected president.

1995: Divorce legalized in Republic after referendum.

1997: Mary McAleese elected president.

1998: Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland.

IRELAND: A BRIEF SURVEY OF ENGLISH COLONIZATION

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