



There You Are: Writings on Irish and American Literature and History

Thomas Flanagan

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Thomas Flanagan became famous as the author of a trilogy of novels, starting with *The Year of the French*, about Ireland from the rebellion of 1798 to the civil war of the 1920s. But the novelist who began by reimagining the mental and physical world of eighteenth-century County Mayo had long been immersing himself, as a scholar, essayist, and reviewer, in the literature and history of his ancestral land.

In the nonfiction writings collected here, many of them unpublished in his lifetime, Flanagan brings what Christopher Cahill calls his "keen eye and strong gaze and sharp tongue" to reassessments of key figures of Irish culture. They range from Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, through W. B. Yeats and James Joyce, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Collins, to contemporaries and friends like Brian Moore and Frank O'Connor, and American Irish like the Molly Maguires and the director John Ford.

Flanagan probes the tragically intertwined origins of celebrity and literary modernism in the careers of Irish-American writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eugene O'Neill, and John O'Hara. He reflects on what his own novels have taught him about the possibilities of historical fiction. And his thoughts on Irish-American identity sum up the long-pondered mixture of experience and scrutiny he brought to his heritage.

Witty, lively, and learned, this collection reveals that Thomas Flanagan was not only as a master of the historical novel but a writer who meditated broadly and deeply on the Ireland he once described as "a complex, profound, historical society, woven of many strands, some bright and some dark."

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