

Contents

Introduction: The Cultural Context of the Failure Theme in Fiction, and the Purpose of this Study	9
I. Human Failure	27
Narrative Identity and Failure in Short Fiction	27
Failure in the Novel: A Small Tale, Generally of Love	32
The Trivial, and the Novel as 'a Small Tale'	43
Personal Failure and the Political (I): Irish Fictions	47
Failure and the Observance of the Ordinary	65
Personal and the Political (II): Postcolonial	82
Results: Failure, Identity, and the Ordinary	90
Transitional Section: Failing Aspirations of Humanism	99
II. Failure and the Artist	115
The Failing Artist in a Short Story Cycle	118
The Fictional Artist and His Failing in the Novel	131
Intermediate Results	139
Partial Failure: Divergence of Art and Life	144
Failure and Triumph of the Fictional Artist in the Novel: A Paradox	148
Irony and Black Humour: Artistic Failure vs. Celebrity	155
Success and Failure in 21st-Century Biofictions	158
Conclusion	185

Works Cited	189
Subject index	201
Index of names	205