

# Irving, John (1942-) Encyclopedia Article

## Irving, John (1942-)

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## Irving, John (1942—)

The novels of John Irving have been regular bestsellers ever since *The World According to Garp* won international acclaim in 1978. Irving's first novel, *Setting Free the Bears* (1968), established many of the fictional characteristics that would earn him critical and popular favor in works that include *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981), *The Cider House Rules* (1985), *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (1988), and *A Son of the Circus* (1994). Believing that "exquisitely developed characters and heartbreaking stories were the obligations of any novel worth remembering," Irving is a comic novelist whose books are distinguished by engaging heroes and detailed plots. Thematically, many have returned to issues of parenthood, children, the relationships between men and women, and the entanglements of sex. Irving's novels have sold in their millions and both *The World According to Garp* and *The Hotel New Hampshire* have been made into films.

### Further Reading:

Freeland, Alison. "A Conversation with John Irving." *New England Review*. Vol. 18, No. 2, 1997, 135-142.

Reilly, Edward C. *Understanding John Irving*. Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1991.