

# **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

## **Influences, Intersections, Interactions**

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## **“A bit part in someone else’s fantasy”: Narrative Ethics in Tana French’s *The Trespasser***

**Brandi Byrd (University College Dublin)**

Antoinette Conway, the protagonist of Tana French’s 2016 detective novel *The Trespasser*, is a firm believer in “hard facts,” dismissing equally the theories of her colleagues and the alibis of her suspects as “twisty hypothetical fairy tales,” the resource of those “who don’t have the strength to make actual situations go their way” (104-5). As her murder investigation unearths the elaborate revenge plot of a woman whose life had been scripted by a man who imagines her an “extra in his hero film” (370), however, Conway realises that such stories are precisely the tools people use to shape reality.

Read through the lens of narrative ethics and Foucault’s power/knowledge, I argue that *The Trespasser* explores the ways that power operates through the construction and circulation of narratives. As Foucault suggests, “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it.”<sup>1</sup> Conway’s investigation complicates her ideas about power; just as her authority as law enforcement is bolstered by narratives casting her as the “good guy” (119), she is also, as a dark-skinned working-class woman, undermined by a pernicious and internalised discourse. However, these complications also illuminate a narrative ethics of power. Once Conway is aware of narrative’s reality-shaping potential, she is not only mindful of “the gains, losses, and risks taken up when selves represent or are represented by others,”<sup>2</sup> but is able to renarrate herself in empowering, constructive ways.

## **Labour Agency among the Dubai-Irish: Social Stagers or Acquiescent Actors?**

**Frances Carter (National University of Ireland, Galway)**

The changing nature of Irish migration combined with legislative changes in traditional receiving countries, such as Canada and Australia, has meant that Dubai has emerged as a new immigrant destination for Irish highly-skilled migrant professionals (‘the Dubai-Irish’). Dubai is characterised by the low numerical minority status of its local population (90% of the population are non-nationals), a gender imbalance (70% of the population are male), and an ambiguous tiered system of economic, political and social rights among permanent residents linked to the legal framework of migration, which prohibits citizenship except under strict conditions. This has led to a fluctuating, informal hierarchy of migrant communities. This research has two aims. Firstly, the research investigates how reworking strategies as a component of labour agency are used by the Dubai-Irish to overcome constraints and optimise opportunities in this migrant hierarchy. Secondly, the research explores the tension between labour agency as perceived by the Dubai-Irish and their behaviour, embodied as re-working strategies. The research uses a qualitative research design, incorporating a case-study methodology, situated in constructivist

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Newton, Adam Zachary. *Narrative Ethics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1995. 18.

grounded theory. The biographic-narrative interpretative method ('BNIM') of interviewing is being used. NVivo 11 has been chosen to code data as it allows for systematically exploring the inter-related nature of the data by tracking initial, focussed and theoretical codes using a process of Peircean abduction.

## **Jack B. Yeats: An Irish Comic Strip Artist in London**

**Michael Connerty (Central Saint Martins, UAL)**

As well as being a revered artist in Ireland, widely regarded as the most important Irish painter of the twentieth century, Jack B. Yeats was also a popular and prolific comic strip artist, creating numerous characters for the early comics, published in London by Alfred Harmsworth and C. Arthur Pearson. He originated a number of recurring characters, as well as one-off strips, single panel gags and illustrations for serialised humour stories, in titles such as *Comic Cuts*, *The Funny Wonder*, and *Puck*. Unlike the work for which he is best known, which was produced following his return to Ireland in 1910, Yeats created many of his most successful comic strip characters during a period of 'exile' in London and Devon, between c. 1893 and 1910.

Art-historical and biographical accounts of Yeats's life and work have tended to overlook, or at least offer scant analysis of, this substantial contribution to the development of English comics during a crucial period in their evolution. This despite the high circulation figures enjoyed by these comics at the time, in Ireland as well as mainland Britain, which would arguably have exposed Yeats's comic strip work to a wider audience than would have been the case with the later expressionist painting with which he is now most closely associated.

Certainly, it is the case that for most of the twentieth century comic art suffered a critical neglect generally, but this paper will also argue that socio-political factors, such as the Irish nationalist ambivalence (before and after independence) towards the products of British popular culture, aligned with the identification of Yeats with a traditional construction of national identity, left no space for the British comic strip work in the narrative of his development as an artist.

## **Space and Death: A Comparative Analysis of the First Collections of W.B. Yeats and Juan Ramón Jiménez**

**Nuria de Cos Lara (Trinity College Dublin)**

Lately, the works of W. B. Yeats (1865–1939) have begun to be discussed in an international, non-Anglophone comparative context. However, analyses favouring the examination of Yeats's work through a Spanish comparative lens are still scarce. My paper compares the early works of Yeats with those of the Spanish Nobel Laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881–1958). Jiménez not only shared aesthetic and ontological principles with the Irish poet, but also similar contextual characteristics such as belonging to Western peripheral countries in Europe that were profoundly religious. My paper compares the earliest collections of both poets to trace intersections in their approaches to the themes of death, religion, and transcendence. To do so, I analyse one striking aspect that the two collections share, which is a liminal use of space. Both collections present their characters in a heterotopia whenever the poems are connected to metaphysical queries

about death. By placing the work of Yeats in a Spanish context, I am able to gain a unique perspective on his poetry. I argue that the fact that both collections discuss themes of death while trying to reach transcendence through a liminal setting is symptomatic of them being collections of the rite of passage. Comparing Yeats's Indian poems and 'Ephemera' to Jiménez's 'Salvadoras' reveals this, as Jiménez's presents similar traits to Yeats's, but Jiménez's are more vocal in terms of their performative nature as poems of the rite of passage.

## **The Consequences of World War Two on Cultural Policy in Northern Ireland: The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts and the Development of International Cultural Exchanges**

**Lara Cuny (Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris)**

World War Two can be interpreted as the arrival of Northern Ireland onto the international stage: its key position in the battle of the Atlantic and the concentration of foreign troops on its soil established it as a loyal and useful partner for the Allies. The impossibility to travel to Great Britain forced artists from the Province to remain there. Ulster thus became a meeting place for local as well as foreign artists sent by their governments as soldiers or entertainers for the troops. However, these artistic exchanges outlived the war, thanks to the action of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.).

This institution, created in 1943, sought to combine the promotion of local arts with the subsidizing of tours from foreign companies or artists. Indeed, interactions with high-quality artistic work from abroad were seen as a necessary condition to enhance the standards of Northern Irish arts and to educate the taste of the population. Yet exporting Northern Irish arts was no less important, as the preparation for the Festival of Britain in 1951 underlines.

My paper will thus study how the context of the Second World War and the creation of C.E.M.A. enhanced international cultural relations within the Province - not only among artists, but also with the local population - and abroad. C.E.M.A. firmly believed that Northern Irish arts and culture could not prosper if they remained isolated and considered that its own role was to oversee this process of constant interaction.

## **The Colours of Medbh McGuckian's Poetry: Blue and Transcendence**

**Fanni Fekete-Nagy (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (ELTE), Budapest)**

Peggy O'Brien writes that "[c]olour [...] is one of Medbh McGuckian's favourite languages. She's explored its connotations deeply and is enthusiastic and lavish with its use."<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, to

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, Peggy. "Reading Medbh McGuckian: Admiring What We Cannot Understand." *Colby Quarterly* 28.4 (1992): 239-250.

date, there has been little focused analysis of the use of colours in Medbh McGuckian's work. In my paper, I will analyse her use of the colour *blue* using examples from across Medbh McGuckian's poetry. On the one hand, blue is associated with religion, spirituality and the sphere of the divine, and it appears frequently in spiritual poems that thematise the poet's Catholic background and Christian faith. On the other hand, blue is connected to art, creation and creativity, and these connotations reveal something about Medbh McGuckian's attitudes and beliefs regarding poetry, writing and inspiration. I will be using quotations from well-known and much analysed poems, such as "Breaking the Blue" (1992), but also lesser known ones, such as "Four O'Clock, Summer Street" (1988) or "Carving Colour" (2008). I will not attempt to find a single, unified interpretation, but rather focus on the interplay of various poetic images. To illustrate this, I will include examples of the juxtaposition of different colour, and mention the relationship of the colour blue to other recurring motifs of Medbh McGuckian's work, such as clothing, houses, and flowers. Through the exploration of these associations, I will demonstrate the ways in which colours take on symbolic meanings and become central in McGuckian's poetry.

## **Queer Spaces: Lesbianism and Class in Irish Lesbian Writing**

**Amy Finlay (Queen's University, Belfast)**

Referring to queer drama produced in the years following the 'Celtic Tiger' in Ireland in *Queer Performance and Contemporary Ireland*, Fintan Walsh states that 'queerness extends beyond subjective desire to expose the interplay between sexuality and class and in order to illuminate how material conditions are implicated in shaping sexual expression, identity, social mobility and opportunity' (Walsh 104). Walsh's comments are appropriate to short fiction by Irish authors Mary Dorsey and Edna O'Brien. Whilst their work precedes the Celtic Tiger, it shares many of the same economic and cultural anxieties that queer drama produced during these years explored. In Dorsey's 1989 short story collection *A Noise from the Woodshed* and Edna O'Brien's 1968 short story 'The Mouth of the Cave' we glimpse women who, for economic and geographical reasons, are forced to conceal their sexuality.

Few critics have analysed how lesbian desire, location and economics are related in lesbian fiction. My paper examines the interplay between location, wealth, class and desire examined in short fiction by Edna O'Brien and Mary Dorsey and ultimately argues that lesbianism is affected by geographical constraints. Walsh states that 'capitalism and economic growth can promote access for some people to certain experiences within the city, but underneath surface success, deep structural differences persist' (Walsh 105). My paper highlights that in Irish lesbian short fiction, the only opportunity for lesbians to live openly are those who have the means to buy privacy or to move to more hospital shores.

## **"Goodbye now, naughty darling": Henry Flower Esq and the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life in *Ulysses***

**Matthew Fogarty (Maynooth University)**

In his 2015 book entitled "Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory", Luke Gibbons places great emphasis on the primacy of the role played by trauma in James Joyce's

work. Indeed, for Gibbons, Joyce's is a style that 'constantly exploits an uncertainty principle that exposes the limits of the literal at precisely those moments of crisis when inner and outer worlds lose their bearings' (*Joyce's Ghosts*, p. 3). This is undoubtedly true of Joyce's characterisation of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, as they each in their own way struggle to awaken from the traumatic nightmares that constitute their personal pasts. As the subtitle of Gibbons's publication would suggest, however, these struggles are in many important ways attuned to those of the still-burgeoning Irish nation as it stuttered toward existence at the outset of the twentieth century. While paying particular attention to the conciliatory function performed by Leopold Bloom's alter-ego, Henry Flower, this paper will consider the degree to which Bloom's psychological response to this personal trauma proves compatible with the central argument put forward by Friedrich Nietzsche in his 1874 essay entitled "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life". Here, Nietzsche argues that a culture might better prosper should it seize the capacity to pick and choose which elements of its history it remembers, and indeed how it remembers them. Notwithstanding the all too obvious and disturbing implications of such a contention, this paper will demonstrate that Bloom's ultimate emergence from the paralysing clutches of his own history highlights the productive potential intrinsic to Nietzsche's argument.

## **Masquerading as an Irish Mother: Kathleen Coleman's Performance of Irishness and Motherhood in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada**

**Tara Giddens (University of Limerick)**

Irish immigrant and Canadian journalist Kathleen Coleman (1856-1915) pushed the boundaries for women in her newspaper columns, especially when she became the first accredited female war correspondent during the Spanish-American War (1898). Using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, I will argue that Coleman not only performed her femininity, specifically "motherhood", but also performed her "Irishness" in her publications.

Coleman began her column "Woman's Kingdom" (1889 to 1911) for *The Toronto Daily Mail* (later *The Daily Mail and Empire*) using the androgynous name "Kit" to disguise her gender identity. This anonymity allowed her to write about "unladylike" topics and fully express her political opinions. After her gender was revealed, Coleman quickly switched to a maternal tone, offering "motherly" advice, addressing her readers as her "paper children," and performing a feminine and maternal role in her writing. This helped to offset her strident, political opinions, and made her appear less threatening to her male peers and readers. Furthermore, Coleman used this tactic to perform her Irishness in her writing. In her column, Coleman revealed she "put on" her Irishness and used it as part of "Kit's" persona calling herself a "fiery Irish" woman and claiming to have descended from Irish kings. In the context of Joseph Valente's term "metro-colonial," which frames Ireland simultaneously as a metropolitan centre and colonised space at the *fin de siècle*, I will argue that Coleman used her Irishness to her advantage, lending her work cultural authority in the "new" state emerging in Canada at that time.

## **Jim Phelan's Irish Sea Archipelago**

**Michael Gill (University of Liverpool)**

In 1974, the historian J.G.A. Pocock argued that the historiography of the Irish and British Isles should reflect the pluralist identity shaped by the almost constant state of flux and absorption of languages, nationalities, cultures and sub-cultures that occurred throughout the centuries. Literary scholars have adapted similar methods to analyse texts through an archipelagic perspective including the mainland, islands and waterways of Ireland and Britain.

This paper asserts that Jim Phelan's prison narratives align with contemporary understandings of a literary archipelago whose geographical focal point is the Irish Sea. Critical attention to these texts, alongside archival material, provides an original reading on a writer whose work intersects Irish culture and external influences and, additionally, new perspectives on marginalised Irish voices in literature.

Raised in Inchicore, Dublin, Phelan spent his early adult years travelling around Ireland and Britain before being convicted of murder in Liverpool in 1923. Phelan served thirteen and half years of a life sentence in various institutions in England. Inspired by the myriad of cultures amongst inmates and staff, together with his Irish nationalist sentiments, Phelan uses incarceration as a formative space to forge an identity as a writer. Combining personal experience, social history and politics, Phelan documents a prison system preoccupied with punitive methods for convicts in custody rather than rehabilitation. This extends to inadequate reintegration programmes for former prisoners. On his release in 1936, Phelan continued to underline the plight of marginalised sections of society including the travelling community and vagrants with publications in several genres.

## **Saoirse Ronan and Ruth Negga: Hyphenated Irish Stardom**

**Loretta Goff (University College Cork)**

This paper examines the (inter)national identities of two of Ireland's emergent female celebrities, Saoirse Ronan and Ruth Negga, as framed in their films and the media. Ronan, born in America, and Negga, born in Ethiopia, both moved to Ireland at a young age (with Irish parents) and were raised in the country, calling it home. As such, they are largely framed as Irish actors. However, both women are also indelibly linked to another country and can be considered in terms of their hyphenated identities: Irish-American and Irish-Ethiopian. In today's globalised and migratory world hyphenated celebrity identities offer the ideal case study for an interrogation of our own identity construction, performance and negotiation across countries and cultures. The overt and mediated performances of Ronan and Negga demonstrate how their Irish identities are constructed in relation to other national affiliations. Considering gender and ethnicity in addition to nationality, I will examine how each actor is framed in her film performances, particularly as Irish characters (Ronan in *Brooklyn* (2015) and Negga in *Isolation* (2005) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005)), as well as their discussion of nationality in interviews. This reveals not only how they position themselves in regards to their multiple national affiliations (and how this changes in different contexts), but also how they are (often conservatively) positioned by others, reflecting broader societal ideologies.

## ***Blather, Razzle* and Dada: Contextualizing Brian O’Nolan’s Early Journalism**

**Tobias Harris (Birkbeck College, University of London)**

Critical readings of Brian O’Nolan’s bizarre and short-lived magazine, *Blather* (1934-35), have tended to interpret the way that its humour explodes journalistic conventions from the vantage point of the novels that followed it: *At Swim-Two-Birds*, *The Third Policeman* and *An Béal Bocht*. Instead, this paper argues that one must surely view *Blather* as the O’Nolan circle would have seen it: not as an incubator for the novels that came after but as a new project which responded to existing magazines and periodicals and innovated upon those formats.

To contextualize *Blather*, this paper presents the first detailed comparison with its immediate inspiration, the English magazine *Razzle*. The similarities in tone, format and content abound; in particular, *Razzle*’s sophisticated use of metafictional techniques provides evidence for the provocative conclusion that a comic men’s magazine is an equally significant influence on O’Nolan’s work as experimental literary novels by Joyce, Aldous Huxley, Eimar O’Duffy or Sterne. The paper then suggests several continental contexts for the characteristics of *Blather* which differ from or represent a significant development of the *Razzle* format. It’s posited that *Der Dada* (1919-20), a short-lived but important platform of the Berlin Dadaists, is a key but hitherto unidentified parallel and possible source for core formal attributes of *Blather* - fictionalized autobiography and the creation of bureaucratic conglomerates around a single ‘brand name’ - which are also central to O’Nolan’s *Cruiskeen Lawn* column.

## **The Poetry of Postcolonial Islands: Intersections of Irish and Caribbean Verse**

**Ellen Howley (Dublin City University)**

Despite poetry’s long, boundary-crossing history (as one of the oldest literary genres), absorbing influences across formal, linguistic and national borders, academic scholarship often examines poets’ work along the lines of national affiliation. Yet, there has been an increase of work in recent years exploring how poetries from different countries intersect and influence one another.

In that vein, this paper examines the ways in which the Irish and Caribbean poetic traditions overlap thematically and aesthetically. Firstly, I consider the influence of each region’s colonial past on written culture and argue that, despite vastly different experiences of colonialism, these regions can be viewed in a postcolonial light. Subsequently, this paper explores the common concerns found across the poetry of these regions such as the poet’s relationship to the English language, the importance of the island landscape, valorisation of local crafts and skills and the significance of influences from ‘outside’ cultures. These shared themes are illustrated with examples from contemporary poets such as Seamus Heaney, Brendan Kennelly, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin and John Montague from Ireland and Claude McKay, Derek Walcott, Una Marson and Lorna Goodison from the Caribbean.

In bringing these traditions together, this paper shows the ways in which Ireland and the islands of the Caribbean are interconnected. Comparative work such as this emphasises the need to

think about poetry in less nationalistic terms and demonstrates the productiveness of viewing these two traditions contiguously.

## **Beckett and Colour**

**Lucy Jeffery (University of Reading)**

Beckett's knowledge of art history has been well documented by critics such as Lois Oppenheim and Mark Nixon, and is relayed in detail by his biographer Jim Knowlson. As Beckett's interest in art took him to galleries in Dublin, London, Germany, and New York; its influence on his work can be described as international. His friendships with artists such as Bram and Geer van Velde, Henri Hayden, Avigdor Arikha, Louis le Brocqy, Geneviève Asse, and Joan Mitchell confirm this global interaction with the visual arts. As a result of this unfading enthusiasm for painting, colour is everywhere in Beckett's work. From the yellow sweat and pus of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (Dream: 81) to the "blue celeste of poesy" (CSP: 199) in 'Lessness'; colour appears in numerous guises. Indeed, the green greatcoat and dark hooded shroud are familiar garments that contribute towards the "tableau vivant" ('One Evening': 121) of Beckett's world.

This paper looks at Beckett's use of colour throughout his oeuvre. It focuses on seven colours – blue, green, red, yellow, black, white, grey – and asks what Beckett's use of colour signifies in each instance in which it is used. This research explores what these colours mean and how they can inform a reading of Beckett's works. A 'polychrome perspective' raises questions of aesthetics, nationality, artistic influence, and leads to interesting philosophical parallels. The paper aims to reassess the oft-considered greyness of Beckett's world and asks the reader to think about how Beckett uses colour to create the sense of tension between hope and despair felt and expressed by humankind.

### **Works Cited**

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## **“East and west and neither”: Louis MacNeice and Indian Independence**

**Alexander Jones (Trinity College Dublin)**

In 1947, Belfast-born poet Louis MacNeice travelled to India, on assignment with the BBC Features Department, to cover the event of its independence from the British Empire. His subsequent creative output paints India as an overwhelming landscape that cannot be properly

parsed by the Westerner; it is ‘the most *foreign* country I have ever visited.’<sup>1</sup> However, when he discusses the inter-communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, he comments that ‘on a smaller scale I have found the same thing in Ireland.’<sup>2</sup> How is it that India can inspire dual feelings of estrangement and familiarity in MacNeice?

The paper argues that MacNeice’s complex interaction with India is rooted in an equally complex relationship with Irishness and national identity. On the one hand, his experiences of inter-communal tensions in Ireland give him the critical tools to engage with certain parallels that he sees in India. On the other hand, his role as an employee of the BBC means that he equally sees himself as being a representative of the British colonial power. Through close readings of MacNeice’s poetry depicting India, alongside analysis of his BBC radio play *India at First Sight*, the paper will demonstrate that India forces MacNeice to confront the problematics of national and communal identity that he had previously eschewed in Ireland. As a result, the paper will expand the scope of current MacNeice criticism by drawing out the importance of these influences to the way he engages with colonial spaces.

## **Playing Doubles: Applying Queer Theory to Irish Gothic Texts**

**Alena Kiel (University of Limerick)**

Using the ground-breaking, foundational Irish Gothic texts *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) by Oscar Wilde and *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, the proposed paper will seek to establish Irish Gothic literature as a site of queerness. My work is situated within an entirely unique framework of diverse queer and literary theories, thus ensuring an original contribution to the established field of Irish Gothic Studies, as well as the growing field of Irish Queer Studies: primarily, Kristeva’s theory of abjection in horror literature (1980), combined with Braidotti’s work on nomadic subjectivity (2011), Butler’s conceptualizations of queer theory (1993, 2004) and the performative nature of gender (1988), Bersani’s explorations of queer forms of relationality (1995), and Halberstam’s definitions of Gothic texts and explorations of both *Dorian Gray* and *Dracula* as such (1995). *Dorian Gray* offers an example of Gothic anxiety over inner versus outer beauty, the contrast of which is not ugliness but evil, by causing his bodily and moral sins to be reflected not upon his corporeal self but upon a picture of his likeness, his double. Building upon this, *Dracula*’s titular character engages in doubling by crafting for himself the perfect outer image of gentlemanly grandeur, in order to hide his ‘authentic,’ vampire self. Further, I contend that the characters Dorian Gray and Dracula use their gender performance and sexuality as lures in order to facilitate their deviant endeavours, moving between boundaries of Self and Other and blurring the lines between seduction and repulsion, inside and outside, masculinity and femininity, love and hatred, as well as forcing those with whom they form connections into queer modes of relationality.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis MacNeice, ‘India at First Sight’, in *Selected Prose of Louis MacNeice*, ed. by Alan Heuser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.163.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.164.

## How No Foucault?

James Little (Trinity College Dublin)

At the start of *Worstward Ho* (1983), republished in 1989 as part of the collection *Nohow On*, Beckett outlines a recurring biopolitical scenario in his writing—that of imagining a body in an enclosed bare room:

Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.<sup>1</sup>

Though ‘on’ is often thought to be Beckett’s favourite preposition, this passage, as well as the so-called ‘closed space’ pieces of the 1960s and 70s which precede it, demonstrate that ‘stay[ing] in’ is often an alternative impasse to going on in Beckett’s reduced social worlds.<sup>2</sup> If, as I contend, confinement is central to Beckett’s political aesthetic, ‘[w]hy has there been no sustained examination of Beckett in relation to the work of Michel Foucault’, the most influential 20<sup>th</sup> century theorist of carceral space?<sup>3</sup>

This paper will address the relations between the politics of Beckett’s and Foucault’s writing through an examination of the two writers’ career-long engagements with confinement. Though both were drawn to the asylum and the prison as sites of social exclusion and alienation, Beckett’s poetics of ‘vaguening’ stripped down in his imagined enclosed spaces the socio-political networks that are recorded in such detail in Foucault’s institutional histories and genealogies.<sup>4</sup>

Focusing on Macmann’s asylum scene in *Malone Dies*, I will argue that the absence of a ‘political tactics’ of confinement in the House of Saint John of God points to a wider divergence between Beckett and Foucault, which hinges around the question of an ethics, or an ‘anethics’, of representing a situation of suffering which is not one’s own.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*, in *Nohow on* (London: Calder, 1989), p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Alain Badiou, ‘Saying, Being, Thought: Prose and Concept’. Badiou contends that even on’s negation in ‘nohow on’ is ‘circumscribed by the imperative of saying’, which he sees as fundamental to Beckett’s work. Alain Badiou, *On Beckett*, ed. & trans. by Alberto Toscano and Nina Power (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003), pp. 81–82.

<sup>3</sup> Call for Papers, ‘Beckett studies beyond the “normal”’, 3rd Annual Conference of the Samuel Beckett Society, <<https://samuelbeckettociety.org/2016/10/29/samuel-beckett-society-third-annual-conference/>> [accessed 29 January 2017].

<sup>4</sup> For Beckett’s poetics of ‘vaguening’, see Rosemary Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett’s Drama, 1956–76* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988) and S. E. Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett’s Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). I will focus on Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. by Jean Khalfa, trans. by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006) and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 23; Shane Weller, *Beckett, Literature, and the Ethics of Alterity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

## **Periodical Codes: ‘Centre’, ‘Margin’ and Gender in Irish Literary Journals, 1980-1992**

**Laura Loftus (University College Dublin)**

In recent years, there has been a growing body of work addressing the exclusion of women from the genealogy of Irish poetry during the 1950s, 60s and even 70s with important essays from Moynagh Sullivan, Lucy Collins, Anne Fogarty, Kathy D’Arcy, Alex Davis and Susan Schreibman addressing some of the dynamics involved in this occlusion. While critics such as Margaret Kelleher have demonstrated how anthologies contributed to this marginalisation, the role of Irish literary journals in this exclusion has received relatively little critical attention.

This paper opens a new avenue of research in Irish literary studies through introducing a long overdue analysis of how key literary journals contributed to the mainstream marginalisation of women poets during the 1980s. Employing theoretical frameworks from the field of periodical studies, this paper will examine how periodical codes (in symbiosis with broader networks of power within the Irish literary community) were deployed in Irish literary journals both obliquely and explicitly in editorial comments, advertisements and illustrations, combining to create an environment where women and their poetry were excluded. I will also draw on the Bourdieusian concept of the world literary-field as developed in Pascale Casanova’s well-known study *The World Republic of Letters*, where she shows the impact of editorial decisions made in the ‘centre’ (London, Paris, New York) on the literary field in the ‘margins’ or ‘periphery’ of the Global South especially.

This paper will analyse a number of poetry journals both ‘centre’ and ‘margin’ published in Ireland during the 1980s and early 90s to discern how elements such as elevated persona, funding, and institutional and/or social connection effected the gendered ‘shape’ of particular poetry periodicals, and how this contributed to the exclusion of women poets even when editors called for more women to submit work.

## **The Poetic Legacies of James Simmons, an *Honest Ulsterman***

**Tara McEvoy (Queen’s University Belfast)**

An editor, educator and songwriter, James Simmons’s attempts to shape the literary culture of Northern Ireland have been well documented; as Heather Clark argues, “Any discussion of the Ulster Renaissance must pay considerable homage to the *Honest Ulsterman*”,<sup>1</sup> the literary magazine first published in 1968, as well as to Simmons, its founder. Further of Simmons’s cultural endeavours (for example, his establishment of creative writing centre *The Poet’s House*), have also proved influential for generations of poets in Ulster and beyond.

Lesser-studied is Simmons’s own poetic oeuvre (as Martin Mooney apprehends, “Simmons’s work was overshadowed by the attention awarded to the poems of [Seamus] Heaney and [Derek]

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<sup>1</sup> Heather Clark, *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast 1962–1972*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 86.

Mahon”).<sup>1</sup> Yet, as I shall argue, it still merits critical attention given the unique perspectives it offers on nationality and conflict, and its sustained project of reinvigorating traditional forms, most notably the ballad.

This paper will situate Simmons’s poetry in relation to that of his contemporaries and influences, from the “Belfast Group”, to the Movement poets of the 1950s, the Liverpool poets who came to prominence in the 1960s, and Tony Harrison (with whom Simmons studied as an undergraduate at Leeds University). I will pay particular attention to Simmons’s collections of the 1960s and 1970s (including *Late but in Earnest*, *Energy to Burn*, and *West Strand Visions*), charting both his poetic development and the trajectory of his critical reception during a period of great literary moment in Northern Ireland.

## Andersen’s Influence in Oscar Wilde’s Tales

Markéta Pospíšilová (Charles University, Prague)

The stories of Hans Christian Andersen have been thought to be an important source of inspiration for Wilde’s own fairy-tales (see for example Wilde 10–11 or Banerjee; cf Stead) but the analyses of the similarities have been so far rather limited in scope (see for example Nassaar’s articles).

Although attempts for a more complex analysis exist, such as Markey’s or Kileen’s, I will approach the problem of Andersen’s influence from a different point of view. Considering the specifics of the fairy-tale genre, the individuality of a writer would show most prominently in the treatment of various motifs. Motifs allow greater freedom than characters or plots because they do not need to follow a set of rules.

Examining motifs recurring in both authors’ tales for similarities might therefore be helpful in determining whether Andersen influenced Wilde’s writing. If he did, it should be possible to find traces of the inspiration in the way Wilde processed the motifs also found in Andersen. At the same time the inspiration should manifest itself in a way that cannot be explained by the use of any other sources.

Consequently, I will compare how both authors employ their main motifs, limited for this paper to the motif of God and of love, and search for other possible sources of any apparent similarities. The claim about Andersen’s influence on Wilde would be weakened by finding such other sources or supported if none are found. At this moment, the similarities seem to be rather generic while the differences are substantial enough to incite questions about the extent of Andersen’s influence on Oscar Wilde’s fairy-tales.

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## **Irishness on the Borderline: Southern Loyalist Identity in the Irish Border Region, 1916-1923**

**Daniel Purcell (Trinity College Dublin)**

Recent scholarship on the Irish revolutionary period has attempted to complicate our understanding of the Irish struggle for independence and narratives of what exactly constitutes "Irishness". This paper engages with this scholarship in its examination of non-traditional conceptions of Irishness, in this case through a study of the southern Irish loyalists. By attempting to maintain a dual British and Irish identity they existed in a liminal zone between the two and the stresses regarding the feasibility of this position became particularly evident during the revolutionary period in which Ireland attained independence from Britain and forced a decision upon the community as to which state and nation they truly belonged. This paper explores both these loyalist attempts to articulate this identity crisis and how this anomalous position impacted the communities experience of the Revolution. It examines statements of identity that range from the public (such as speeches and marches) to the private (such as diaries and letter); and distinguishes between internal and external articulations of such. To do this it will also engage with the broader historical debate on violent attacks and other "outrages" aimed against the community. The paper focuses primarily on the two "southern" Ulster counties of Cavan and Monaghan. This community is not only stronger here than in other parts of the country but its members were faced with a more physical choice between Ireland and Britain due to the proximity of the border and the strength of cross-border cultural, economic and social networks.

## **A 'Lovely Girl' or an 'Empowered Woman': Contemporary Femininities and The Rose of Tralee**

**Carole Quigley (Trinity College Dublin)**

The International Rose of Tralee Festival will celebrate its 59th year in 2017. The televised audience for the final event may be dwindling, but with sixty-five International Roses competing in 2016, the festival remains a popular fixture both in Ireland and abroad. Festival organisers claim not to produce a traditional beauty pageant, filled with misogynistic and sexually

oppressive values, but instead, a uniquely Irish platform for promoting the growth and success of young women of Irish descent. However, much commentary on the festival in twenty-first century Ireland critique it for its seemingly anti-woman, anti-feminism rhetoric. This paper aims to examine the festival and interrogate whether it supports the advancements of feminism, contemporary Irish women, and remains a relevant part of Irish culture or not. 2014 saw the first openly gay, cropped hair wearing, tattoo-wielding Rose crowned as the International winner, The Philadelphia Rose, Maria Walsh. She represents a modern Irish woman who refuses to be held back or defined by her sexuality or appearance. Her sexual orientation was accepted by the media as a positive step for the festival, as it is changing to keep up with society, but this paper will examine whether or not this changing force is really present. In 2016, Sydney Rose Brianna Parkins was decried for voicing her opinion on the lack of access to full reproductive healthcare for women in Ireland. The entrance rules for competitors state all women must be unmarried. These are deeply oppressive and sexist realities. This paper will discuss the historical context of the festival, the format of the modern competition and how it can be seen as both a positive and negative forum for young women, in an effort to give a balanced feminist argument for the merits of the festival.

## **Beyond Transnational: Nation and Paul Muldoon's Haiku Series**

**Malkah (Molly) Rosenberg (King's College, London)**

Paul Muldoon has often been characterised as a 'transnational' poet, from monographs on transnational poetry (such as Jahan Ramazani's 2001 *A Transnational Poetics*) to Irish literary criticism (such as Elmer Kennedy-Andrews' 2014 *Northern Irish Poetry: The American Connection*). Muldoon is the poet of "multiple identity" and "transnational imagination" (Kennedy-Andrews, 2014). Where much criticism of Muldoon's transnationalism ends with the identification of plural national cultures in his work, this paper asks what comes after transnationalism: to what effect does the poet of 'play' put these references? In the haiku of *Hay* (1998) and *Horse Latitudes* (2006), Muldoon is at his most transnational, drawing on and blurring Japanese and Irish forms, manoeuvring between Irish and American histories, and gesturing towards several languages. To move beyond classification, and to interrogate the poet's transnationalism, this paper will pose a series of questions: does the poet allude to multiple nations to illuminate his relation to Ireland? Does Muldoon use cross-cultural reference to tease his critics in self-reflexive play on his 'transnational' reputation? Do Muldoon's uses of multiple forms and international cultural and historical allusions finally only demonstrate the poet's agile mind? Focusing on the haiku series 'Hopewell Haiku' (*Hay*, 1998) and '90 Instant Messages to Tom Moore' (*Horse Latitudes*, 2006), this paper will suggest that Muldoon uses reference to his multiple national inheritances to interrogate the relationship between nation and poetry. In Muldoon's transnationalism, it is the inexpressibility of the material reality and intangible inheritances of nation that is articulated.

## **On the Beating of His Wings: Eroticism and Influence as a Manifestation of the Gothic Sublime in Bram Stoker's *Dracula***

**Rui Rato (Charles University, Prague)**

In this presentation, I aim to explore the eroticism present in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as it refers to the elusive nature of desire and its consequence, embodied meaningfully in the application of the concept of the Gothic Sublime in the novel. It is on the wake of great and terrible actions,

propelled by the selfish and brutal reality of appetite, that the channel is open toward the nebulous regions of the human psyche which bear great weight on the dynamics of the characters of the book. It is important also that there appears to be a connection between violent behaviours, of an obsessive kind, with a luxurious, decadent eroticism – as if it is upon the brink of death that life is at its most potent. The Gothic literary genre revels in the mire of human identity and its sometimes callous and bewildering expression. The aesthetic effects of such excess are my main concern in this presentation.

George Bataille's understanding of eroticism and desire in *The Accursed Share*, along with Vijay Mishra's concept of the Gothic Sublime, will form the theoretical basis for this work.

There is, throughout the novel, a sense of malevolent influence, like that of an ancient evil which is timeless and inexorable, an evil embodied by the Count and his condition, an endless hunger which is contagious, that spreads toward all the other characters like a plague, and on the beating of his wings, upon the long shadow which they cast, they cower, at least until a very similar bloodlust awakens on them that would hunt. The malice practiced within stands as representation of the grotesque fact of reality, as it teeters on the balance between the sacred and the profane.

## **Encounter, Collaboration and Negotiation: An Interrogation of Art Working in Co-created and Co-authored Collaborative Art Practices in Contemporary Irish Society**

**David Teevan (University College Dublin)**

Collaborative art practices in Ireland today that propose a co-created and co-authored methodology are effectively amplifying the voices and values of individuals and communities on the margins of Irish society, enabling them to become part of the mainstream cultural conversation and consequently empowering them to play a part in influencing the unfolding future. The aim of this research is to interrogate this proposition by undertaking a critical analysis of the work of a number of artists, and arts organisations, that have been engaged in open-ended processes of co-creation with communities between 2014 and 2017, with the objective of discovering forms of representation that enable these communities to voice, to a wider audience, themes and issues that are meaningful to them. The study, which will examine the motivation, methodology and evaluation used in these contemporary art practices, will be set within the socio-political, cultural and historical framework of the arts in Ireland. The study will also be informed by the history of International participatory and collaborative art practice and theory and the philosophies and critical thinking that have been influential in this domain. The objective of the study is to interrogate a particular approach to co-creative arts practice and analyse its methods of negotiation and collaboration, as well as provide valuable documentation of a sector of contemporary art in Ireland that to date is largely unrecorded.

# Michael Davitt's Early Life and Its Influence on His Use of Writing as a Political Tool

Jessica Warwick (Liverpool Hope University)

Michael Davitt, prominent Fenian and founder of the Land League, was born in Ireland during the great famine and emigrated to Lancashire in 1850. While in Lancashire, Davitt was educated at the local Catholic school and later the Mechanics Institute. Davitt became a Fenian during the 1860s, and in 1870 he was sentenced to 15 years penal servitude. It was after his time in prison that Davitt became a well-known Irish nationalist leader and writer. Davitt's journalism during the last decades of the nineteenth century places him within the 'New Journalism' movement. Although Davitt achieved literary and political success following his time in prison, it was his education and early life in Lancashire that are essential to an understanding of Davitt as a political and literary figure.

This paper will explore Michael Davitt's role as a writer and the early influences on his use of literature as a political tool. Although Davitt has acquired much academic attention as a revolutionary figure of Irish history, his writing in comparison has received limited scholarly interest. Through a review of his writings, contemporary newspaper reports and the work of his contemporaries, this paper examines some key influences from Davitt's youth; his education, life as an immigrant in the Irish community of Haslingden, as well as the influence of his father as a *seanchai* or storyteller. This research argues that these influences demonstrate Davitt's use of language and literature as a political tool.