Margaret Kelleher (University College Dublin)
What is Digital Humanities and What’s It Doing in Irish Literary Studies?

My title is borrowed from Matthew Kirschenbaum’s influential 2012 article, “What is Digital Humanities and What’s It Doing in English Departments?”. In the course of this lecture, I will examine some of the landmark digital projects in Irish literary studies over the last decade and discuss their impact and significance, their methodologies and objectives, and crucially their long-term future and sustainability. Writing in 2001, in his landmark publication, Radiant Textuality, literary critic and digital humanist Jerome McGann cautioned wisely: “The general field of humanities education and scholarship will not take the use of digital technology seriously until one demonstrates how its tools improve the ways we explore and explain aesthetic works—until, that is, they expand our interpretational procedures.” Thus, an alternative (if less polite) series of key questions for this lecture might read: So far? Any good? And so what?

Professor Margaret Kelleher is Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin, and was appointed to this Chair in 2012. Previously she was the founding director of An Foras Feasa: Maynooth University’s Humanities Institute. She has published widely in the areas of Irish women’s writings, nineteenth-century Irish literary studies, famine studies, and digital humanities, and has recently completed a monograph entitled Language Crossings: Myles Joyce, James Joyce and the Maamtrasna Murders. She is Chair of the Irish Film Institute, former Chair of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (from 2009 to 2016) and was a member of Science Europe’s international Scientific Committee for the Humanities from 2012 to 2015. She has been visiting scholar at University of São Paulo, Boston College, Peking University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Concordia University Montreal, St John’s College Cambridge and University of Virginia.
KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

Derek Attridge (University of York)
Modernism, Technique, and Feeling in the Contemporary Irish Novel

The techniques of realism developed in the nineteenth century were, in part, a means of heightening the emotional impact of the novel: by minimising the reader’s awareness of the textual surface, they offered unimpeded access to the depicted scenes of grief, excitement, anger, sexual attraction, and so on. The experiments of modernism, drawing attention to the operations of language and genre, weakened this affective resource, and writers had to find other ways to evoke emotions. Games with language could be used for comic purposes, as Joyce, Beckett and O’Brien demonstrate, but other registers of feeling proved more of a challenge, met in different ways. Much contemporary Irish writing builds on those nineteenth-century methods, often brilliantly, but a few novelists keep the modernist tradition alive in ways that yield to none in their affective power. This talk will examine the techniques used by writers such as Eimear McBride, Kevin Barry, and Mike McCormack to evoke emotion while exploring new ways to expand the possibilities of fictional writing.

Professor Derek Attridge is the author or editor of twenty-five books, among them several studies of James Joyce, including Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory, and History, published by Cambridge University Press in 2000, and the second edition of The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce was published in 2004. Among his contributions to literary theory are The Singularity of Literature (published by Routledge in 2004) and The Work of Literature (published by Oxford University Press in 2015). He has also published widely on poetic form and South African literature. He is Emeritus Professor in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York, and a Fellow of the British Academy.
Irish history encompasses a deep-seated fear of betrayal, a response especially prevalent since the revolutionary period at the outset of the twentieth century. The novel is the literary form most apt for the exploration of betrayal in its social, political and psychological dimensions. The significance of this proposition comes into focus in terms of a number of recent developments—most notably, the economic disaster of 2008 (and the political and civic betrayals implicated therein) and the ongoing revelations of the Catholic Church’s failure in its pastoral mission. Such developments have brought the language of betrayal to the forefront of contemporary Irish life. In this presentation, I will consider the concept of betrayal from a variety of religious, psychological and literary perspectives, before going on to outline a peculiarly Irish response to this most ubiquitous of human experiences. This analysis will be grounded in extended readings of Anne Enright’s The Gathering (2007) and Donal Ryan’s The Spinning Heart (2012).

Gerry Smyth is Professor of Irish Cultural History at Liverpool John Moores University. He has published widely on a range of issues, including monographs entitled The Novel and the Nation (1997), Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination (2001), Noisy Island: A Short History of Irish Popular Music (2005), Music in Irish Cultural History (2009), The Judas Kiss: Treason and Betrayal in Six Modern Irish Novels (2015), and most recently Celtic Tiger Blues: Music and Modern Irish Identity (2016). He is also a musician, playwright and actor, and has performed in these capacities at events throughout Europe. He is currently working on a book-length study of music in the life and work of James Joyce, and a new play based on the life of Brendan Behan.
In the twenty-five-year span of her writing career, Anne Enright has been developing a style which, from the very beginning, aimed at jumbling stereotypical ways of describing a human individual. Informed by her favourite discipline, psychoanalysis, she found her own literary ways of exploring the “interactionals” which constitute the unicity of every “individual.”

In this paper I want to define what “interactionals” are and how they work. The concept of interactionality itself is common in all contemporary philosophy deriving from Nietzsche and Deleuze, Freud and Lacan, as we see in Giorgio Agamben, Brian Massumi, Bracha Ettinger, Didier Anzieu and Christopher Bollas. Here I will focus on how interactionality is realized in Enright’s 2007 short story “Caravan.” This short text will allow us to see how a family holiday enables the protagonist, Michelle, to face her deep-seated fear that she is a bad mother. Each of the abovementioned philosophers and analysts will offer terms which will allow us to very precisely map the different languages Enright’s protagonist uses to come to terms with her problem: Michelle uses body/skin and gestural language, textile and object language, space and verbal language. Our main focus will be on the ways in which she handles textile, as this will prove to be what Bollas calls a “transformational object.” Michelle’s constant care with clothes will allow her to reach a few sub-epiphanies, where inside and outside world, life and death, Eros and Thanatos, past and present, self and Other, literal and metaphorical worlds interact.

Hedwig Schwall is director of the LCIS/Leuven Centre for Irish Studies (Belgium); co-editor of RISE, the Review of Irish Studies in Europe; and project director of EFACIS, European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies.
A peculiar feature of much contemporary Irish writing is its remarkable self-consciousness about the “newness” and exceptionality of the moment and its attendant dilemmas. This deliberate knowingness is also evident in the configuring of the city of Dublin. It is also remarkable how many contemporary novelists consider the role of art in general and the novel in particular in rendering this new world. The anxiety of literary influence is certainly a factor but so too is an apprehension about the viability of the novel form itself in a modern world dominated by a variety of new forms of expression and communication from Twitter to Snapchat. Writers such as Paul Murray and Anne Haverty, give expression to an obvious anxiety about the role of the artist and the position of the novel in the present. But their mode is a comic one, itself an indication of their uneasiness, as if knowing irony is a defence against the new world which will not take art seriously. Theirs, perhaps, is a downbeat diagnosis bound up with a general disquiet about the various shifts brought about by the advent of the Celtic Tiger and its general refashioning of Irish culture. Deirdre Madden’s most recent novels, *Authenticity* (2002), *Molly Fox’s Birthday* (2008) and *Time Present and Time Past* (2013), also ponder the nature of art in the Ireland of the late 20th and 21st centuries. I want to argue that Madden offers a more nuanced response to, and critique of, the wholesale changes wrought by material wealth and success, and that she recognizes the power of art and its continuing centrality to mediating the human stories of modernity.

*Dr. Derek Hand is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the new School of English in Dublin City University. He is interested in Irish writing in general and has published articles on W. B. Yeats, Elizabeth Bowen, Colum McCann, Molly Keane, Benedict Kiely, Mary Lavin, and William Trevor, and on contemporary Irish fiction. He has lectured on Irish writing in the USA, Portugal, Sweden, Singapore, Brazil, Italy, Sweden and France. The Liffey Press published his book *John Banville: Exploring Fictions* in 2002. He edited a special edition of the Irish University Review on John Banville in 2006 and co-edited a special edition of the Irish University Review on Benedict Kiely in 2008. He was awarded an IRCHSS Government of Ireland Research Fellowship for 2008-2009. His A History of the Irish Novel: 1665 to the present was published by Cambridge University Press in 2011 and has recently come out in paperback. He is currently co-editing a collection of essays on John McGahern.*
Shirley Chew (Nanyang Technological University)
“A woman in a doorway”: Eavan Boland and the Poetics of the In-between

The heart of the very fine essay, “The Woman The Place The Poet” [Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1995), pp. 154-174], is an actual journey Eavan Boland undertakes from Dundrum, a Dublin suburb, to Clonmel, a hundred miles southwest in Co. Tipperary, where her great-grandfather was from 1874 the master of the workhouse.

The structure of the essay moves back and forth, in memory and imagination, to both suburb and workhouse, to the “healings” Boland found settling in Dundrum and the “terrible sufferings” the woman she envisioned coming to Clonmel with two small children in the last quarter of the twentieth century would have had to endure.

Repetitions and change; patterns and violent, random event; continuity and stasis; contradictions and compromise—the turnings and returnings of Boland’s search are to discover a place on the edge of dream, “in which I locate myself as a poet: not exactly the suburb, not entirely the hill colored with blue shrubs, but somewhat composed of both.” It is this “zone between them” where poetry enters—where the poetics of Boland’s work are directed to repossessing the ordinariness of lives in new and powerful ways, to remaking myth as instructed by history, and to realizing the ways in which the woman as poet finds her place and voice—that my paper sets out to explore.

Shirley Chew is Emeritus Professor at the University of Leeds and currently Adjunct Professor at the School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She has published widely in the field of postcolonial literatures from Commonwealth countries, and co-edited Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics (1999); Re-constructing the Book: Literary Texts in Transmission (2001); and A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature (2010). She is the founding editor of Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings (2001-present).
Breath-Crystals: Art as Breath in Beckett, Arikha and Celan

Though a long-lasting friendship connected Samuel Beckett with the painter Avigdor Arikha, peculiarly no direct biographical connection seems to exist between either artist and the poet Paul Celan, in many respects Arikha’s Romanian Jewish counterpart and (at least in Adorno’s critical theory) Beckett’s aesthetically closest contemporary. They may never have encountered one another, but a common conception of the work of art as “breath” nonetheless weaves through their work. As Celan puts it in “The Meridian,” “[p]oetry is perhaps this: an Atemwende, a turning of our breath. Who knows, perhaps poetry goes its way—the way of art—for the sake of just such a turn?” Arikha similarly remarks, “Art is nothing. It is a breath, it passes through the breath and stays in the breath.” This paper will explore the way these artists’ work engage the question of what it is to live beyond the guarantees of history, of the concept, of the subsumption of every particular into universal equivalence, as symbol or sign. That means passing beyond the claims of the human into a space where the human takes its place again as a thing among other things and art obliges that suspension of the breath in which attentiveness comes to: “Dull with breath. Endless breath. Endless ending breath. Dread darling sight.”

Regaining “one’s mental balance”—Reading the Oxen of the Sun episode in *Ulysses*

Most studies of the Oxen of the Sun have focused on the function of style in the episode (Iser et al.) or have sought to identify sources (Janusko et al.). Given the directions Joyce gave his readers via his correspondence with Frank Budgen and his interventions in Budgen’s *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934), this research focus is to be expected. After all, Joyce provided Budgen with an engaging list of sources and a detailed schema at the same time as urging him to “please write to me” about an episode he complained had cost him “1000 hours of work” (*Letters* II, 465). Given the wealth of manuscript material and the fact that some “900 candidates for literary entries on the British Library notesheets” for the episode “remain unidentified” (Davison, *Genetic Joyce Studies*, Spring 2009), it would seem this task alone would keep the proverbial Professors more than fully occupied. This paper eschews both stylistics and source hunting to quarry a few carefully selected locutions for what might be disclosed about meaning and how that meaning might relate to key locutions in other episodes.

*Peter Kuch* is the inaugural Eamon Cleary Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Otago. He holds an Honours degree from the University of Wales and an M.Litt and D.Phil from Oxford, where he studied with Richard Ellmann and John Kelly. He has held posts at the University of Newcastle, Australia; Université de Caen, France; and the University of New South Wales, Australia; and been a Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University, at Trinity College, Dublin and the Keough-Naughton Institute at Notre Dame (USA). He has published some 60 refereed articles, book chapters and books on Yeats, Joyce, Eliot, Irish theatre, Irish literature, Irish and Australian film, literary theory, Australian literature, and Australian history. He is a commissioning editor for the Irish Studies Review (Routledge) and is on the editorial board of several journals. His *Irish Divorce/James Joyce’s Ulysses* (Palgrave Macmillan) was launched in Dublin on 7 June 2017.
In a remarkable letter to Aidan Higgins (22 April 1958), Samuel Beckett commented on the draft manuscript of Higgins’s first short story, “Killachter Meadow.” After gently upbraiding Higgins for some stylistic quirks and technical infelicities, Beckett concluded with some warm words of encouragement: “In you already, with the beginner, there’s the old hand. Work, work, writing for nothing and yourself […].” Eighteen years later, Higgins was one of the judges for the annual Hennessy Literary Award (for short stories published in the weekly “New Irish Writing” page of the Irish Press). In his rather cranky judge’s report, Higgins reserved his enthusiasm for Dermot Healy’s story “Banished Misfortune”: “If there is a better account of modern, changing Ireland, I have yet to read it” (Irish Press 16 October 1976). In this paper I want to trace the anxiety—and the ecstasy—of influence in a particular strand of Irish short story writing. These early texts by Higgins and Healy will be considered in the context of what Richard Kearney has called the Irish “counter-tradition”—an anti-realist and self-reflexive mode of writing which “share[s] with Joyce and Beckett the basic modernist project of transforming the traditional narrative of quest into a critical narrative of self-questioning” (Transitions 1988). In tracing this short genealogy of Irish counterrealism, I wish to propose a particular taxonomy of form in which Aidan Higgins plays a pivotal role, becoming—in the words of one exuberant TLS reviewer—“a missing link between high modernism and contemporary writing.”

Keith Hopper teaches Literature and Film Studies for Oxford University’s Department for Continuing Education. He is the author of Flann O’Brien: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Post-modernist (revised edition, 2009); general editor of the twelve-volume Ireland into Film series (2001-2007); and co-editor (with Neil Murphy) of Flann O’Brien: Centenary Essays (2011) and The Short Fiction of Flann O’Brien (2013). Recent work includes co-editing (with Neil Murphy) a series of four books by and about Dermot Healy: The Collected Short Stories and an edited reprint of Healy’s debut novel Fighting with Shadows appeared in 2015; The Collected Plays and a volume of critical essays entitled Writing the Sky: Observations and Essays on Dermot Healy were published in 2016 (by Dalkey Archive Press). He is a regular contributor to the Times Literary Supplement, and is currently completing a book on the writer and filmmaker Neil Jordan.
1. Anne Enright: aesthetics, prosperity, and the Celtic Tiger
(Chair: Katherine Blyn Wakely-Mulroney) - Seminar Room 8

Matthew Ryan (Australian Catholic University)
Austerity in Prosperity: Anne Enright’s The Green Road

In a review of Anne Enright’s novel The Green Road, Alex Preston refers to the use of stereotypes in Enright’s work, writing that it “often feels as if she’s playing with our expectations of what an Irish novel should do – the boxes that must be ticked in order to satisfy some Anglo-American dream of Ireland.” Since her early work, Enright has manipulated national and gender stereotypes in a knowing and sometimes playful way. This paper focuses on the use of the well-worn Irish tropes of the mother and the family home as they appear in The Green Road. In particular, it considers the ways alternative historical and social possibilities are coded into cliché and stereotype. Rather than appearing as a linguistic limitation or an exhaustion of meaning, these images and characterisations are pointing to unrealised cultural resources from the past. A recuperation of historical failure is enacted in Enright’s use of these stereotypical forms. David Lloyd’s Irish Times serves as an analytical model. Lloyd sees Irish landscapes and ruins as carriers of past failure but also of futures not yet achieved. Enright draws new meaning from old imagery, refashioning the ideas of the mother and the home for a critique of the present. This paper reads The Green Road in relation to The Gathering and The Forgotten Waltz as post-Celtic Tiger texts that, in the evocation of cultural impoverishment through stereotype, bring a historical legacy to the critique of the current economic crisis.

Matthew Ryan teaches Literature at the Australian Catholic University. He has published on contemporary Irish writing, including in the edited collection, Anne Enright Visions and Revisions: Irish Writers in Their Time.

* Eve Kearney (University College Dublin)
Tiger Mammys and Dark Rosaleens: Mother Ireland and the Celtic Tiger in Anne Enright’s The Green Road (2015)

In her memoir Mother Ireland, Edna O’Brien famously stated that “Ireland has always been a woman, a womb, a cave, a cow, a Rosaleen, a sow, a bride, a harlot, and, of course, the gaunt Hag of Beare.” This paper will interrogate the role of maternal figures in Anne Enright’s The Green Road, focusing on the matriarch of the Madigan family, Rosaleen, and her oldest daughter and heir apparent, Constance. It will argue for Constance’s matriarchal claim over that of her sister Hannah’s based on both traditional and contemporary figurings of Ireland in relation to historical and traditional concerns, as well as family hierarchy and structure as depicted in the novel. In examining Rosaleen in relation to the traditional poetic representations of Ireland, this paper will draw comparisons between Rosaleen’s maternal position and motives, and traditional representations of colonial Ireland, as well as interrogate how Rosaleen is figured in Enright’s formally experimental novel. It will then move to
examine Constance as the successor to the Madigan matriarchy, and will argue that the relationship between Constance and her Celtic-Tiger identity is symbolic of contemporary Ireland as depicted in *The Green Road* by Enright. Where Rosaleen represents traditional Ireland and its concerns and conceits, Constance is representative of Enright’s views of contemporary Celtic-Tiger Ireland and its excesses and losses. The inter-personal and familial relationships that Constance constructs will then be explored in tandem with the concept of the short-story cycle and how Enright uses formal experimentation to emphasise Constance’s position and identity in Celtic-Tiger Ireland.

*Eve Kearney is a first year doctoral student in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin, where she is attempting her thesis “Contemporary Irish Anxieties in the Post-Celtic Tiger Short Story (2008-present).” Recent conference presentations include Concordia University’s inaugural postgraduate Irish Studies conference in Montreal (March 2017), and the European Network for Short Fiction Research’s annual conference in Leuven, Belgium (May 2017).*

*Caroline Moreira Eufrausino (University of São Paulo)*

**Inside-Out Perspective: The Aesthetics Proposed by Anne Enright**

When asked in an interview why the body is a recurrent theme in her writings, Anne Enright answered “I don’t know! We have nowhere else to be, right. So the body is where we are, the body is the problem. The body dies, so it isn’t just a modern problem. It is a very long-term issue” (Bracken 2011, 22). In this casual way, the writer draws attention to one of her best narrative techniques: the move from the inner self to the outside world in an aesthetic attempt to construct her own “authentic” space (either symbolical, imaginary or physical). In order to do so, Enright proposes a type of inside-out aesthetics: we read her narratives from the individual to the society, from the issues of the body to the conventional gender relations, from the inside to the outside. For this paper, I aim to demonstrate how the aesthetics as proposed by Anne Enright are based on the relationship between body, mind and representation. I first examine representations of the self in *What are you like?*; then turn to the representation of pregnancy in *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*; finally I attend to form in *The Green Road*. Enright demonstrates in her works her own deep concern about how womanhood is represented in contemporary Irish literature and she aims to dismantle the ideal of a perfect, virginal and pure Irish woman. The central argument is that the real Irish woman, reflected by Enright, “is not a coherent and stable subject” (Butler 1990), as was assumed by the institutions of power throughout the twentieth century, and this woman must be represented inside out in order to be closer to the real.

*Caroline Moreira Eufrausino is a PhD student at the University of São Paulo.*
2. Flann O’Brien: transformations  
(Chair: Daniel Jernigan) - Seminar Room 6

Jeremy Fernando (National University of Singapore)  
Choo choo train, chuggin’ down the track—on John Duffy’s Brother

This paper attempts to tease out the relationship between the tale—Flann O’Brien’s John Duffy’s Brother—and its telling. It reads the movement, the transference, transformations, that occur throughout the tale: and by doing so, attempts to attend to not just its rhythms, cadences, form, but also the shifts in thought, alongside its translations, and its slippages. By paying attention to the possibility that the tale is a testimony—one that is fully aware of its status as testimony, as well as the complexities, even impossibilities, of testifying—this paper opens the dossier that language opens itself to the possibility of language; not through referentiality, a correspondence between a notion and something in the world, but as language. Thus, reading—and all attempts to respond with and through language—is an imaginative gesture where nothing is known; where perhaps what can be known is nothing. Perhaps then, all that we can respond to are the movements of language speaking with itself. Hence, each response to language is not just based on, and in, memory (after all, without the repeatability of grammar we would not even be able to begin) but one in which each moment of reading is an event, quite possibly one that is new and strange.

Even to the extent where the moment John Duffy’s brother is “possessed of the strange idea that he was a train,” he was.

Jeremy Fernando is the Jean Baudrillard Fellow at the European Graduate School, where he is also a Reader in Contemporary Literature & Thought. He works in the intersections of literature, philosophy, and the media; and has written sixteen books—including Reading Blindly, Living with Art, Writing Death, and in fidelity. His work has been featured in magazines and journals such as Berfrois, CTheory, TimeOut, and VICE, amongst others; and he has been translated into Japanese, Italian, Spanish, and Serbian. Exploring other media has led him to film, music, and art; and his work has been exhibited in Seoul, Vienna, Hong Kong, and Singapore. He is the general editor of both Delere Press and the thematic magazine One Imperative; and is a Fellow of Tembusu College at the National University of Singapore.

* 

Setsuko Adachi (Kogakuin University, Tokyo)  
A Ride on John Duffy’s Brother with Michael Kearney’s “Walk Inside Your Empty Head”

John Duffy’s Brother (1940) is a short story by Flann O’Brien, which Julian Gough explains in two sentences: “[O]n one level a comic tale of a man who wakes up one morning believing himself a train, and who choo-choos into work in that condition. On another level, it is a fine, grim tale of a man suffering a nervous breakdown, telling no one, and recovering” (New York Times 18 Oct. 2013).
Trains’ “annihilation of space by time,” said Karl Marx, was the enhancer of capitalism; and trains have become a symbol of the Industrial Revolution. Concepts of rural and urban space underwent a shift during the Industrial Revolution as did concepts of Time, which became more controlling. Trains distributed commodities to markets and commuters to their factories and offices with time precision. The industrialization paradigm shift encroached upon humans, as John Duffy’s brother’s becoming a train indicates, creating the modern-capitalist network.

This paper is a ride on John Duffy’s brother’s train, driven by the hybridized force of industrialization and modern-capitalism, into the 21st century with “Walk Inside Your Empty Head” by Michael Kearney, an Irish-American residing in Tokyo, acting as the terminal station. The journey departs from Ireland-Europe traversing through the U.S.A. and Japan revealing cultural reactions to the industrial and modern-capitalist forces that manifest identities. Furthermore, an analysis of postmodern beings, termed “2.5-dimensional beings,” who are emerging during the paradigm shift that is a result of the technological development of Advanced Information and Communications Systems (AICS), will be offered. It is hoped that the journey provides insight into the changing landscape of identity construction during these paradigm shifts.

Setsuko Adachi is associate professor in the Department of Information Studies at Kogakuin University, Tokyo. Her main research interests are identity formation and cultural systems analysis. Recent publications include: “Undermined Empathy, Undermined Coexistence: Japanese Discursive Formations Related to Empathy,” “I think; therefore, I am.,” and “Reinterpretation.”

* Yuval Lubin (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Turning into Text: Mutiny and Metamorphosis in Kafka and O’Brien

In many of their respective works, both Franz Kafka and Flann O’Brien depict failed rebellions against the structure of text. This paper will argue that Kafka’s novels, The Castle and The Trial, provide a scheme for the opposition against the text represented in O’Brien’s At Swim-Two-Birds. The scheme is composed of three stages: mutiny, surrender and metamorphosis. In Kafka’s novels The Castle and The Trial, the protagonists are represented as failing to avoid their roles in their respective stories. At first, the characters reject their roles as part of the novels’ story entirely. The characters then surrender to the world of the text and internalize the concepts governing it in an attempt to overcome that world. Finally, the characters transform into agents of the text, operating in accordance with their underlying nature. This scheme illuminates the progression of the narrative in O’Brien’s At Swim-Two-Birds. It reveals the evolution of the contradiction of textual authority in the novel. The characters transform from figures rebelling against the tyranny of text to representatives of textual authority. They adopt the arbitrariness and dominance of textuality, acting chaotically and ultimately becoming part of a narrative. However, O’Brien develops on Kafka’s scheme, transferring the comedy from criticism on the narrative to criticism of both narrative and rebellion. As such, O’Brien’s work differs from Kafka’s by emphasizing the comedic elements in the texts, which introduces the possibility of reconciliation to the narrative.
Yuval Lubin is a Master’s student in the Department of English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, concentrating on modernist literature. His interests include the role of comedy in modernist literature, the employment of carnival as a method of evaluation, and critical comparison of film adaptations of literature to the source material. His research examines the representation of epistemological failure through comedy in Moby Dick and The Third Policeman. Yuval has a BA in English from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has won the Teitelbaum Award for Excellence in the Novel and was a beneficiary of the German Learning Scholarship from the Europe Forum at Hebrew University.
This paper aims to examine Brendan Behan’s controversial play *The Hostage* (1958), which portrays the ambiguous responses of socially and politically marginalized characters to militant Irish republicanism and hardline unionism. Their voices, untimely in political terms yet potentially appropriate, from both sides of the divide, suggest an alternative approach to reshaping the nationalist and unionist historiographies of Ireland. The dramatization of these politically invisible figures, including an Anglo-Irish house owner, prostitutes, a homosexual navy man and his black boyfriend, a skivvy, a Russian sailor, and a British hostage being guarded by an IRA officer, illustrates an unpleasant Irish reality that disgraces the puritanical façade maintained painstakingly by the Catholic nationalist government during the mid-twentieth century. The characters survive as individuals on the social margin yet are put under a collective spotlight by the playwright who left the Irish Republic Army to which he once pledged loyalty. *The Hostage* presents Ireland as an “anomalous state,” as described by David Lloyd, while its inclusion of underrepresented characters could be seen as paving the way for a post-nationalistic imagination of Ireland after the 1916 Easter Rising. More significantly, through the occasional Brechtian distancing effects on stage and dramatic ironies employed in the play, it might be regarded as counteracting the assumption that Gayatri C. Spivak expressed in her “Can the Subaltern Speak?” This paper will therefore examine how Behan, from a working-class background, intended to rebuild fragmented Irish experiences in a theatrical context, and whether this problem play contains a “history from below”—without imperialist structures but effectively reversing the nationalistic power relation in which minority groups are still subordinated and oppressed.

Wei H. Kao lectures at National Taiwan University. He is the author of The Formation of an Irish Literary Canon in the Mid-twentieth Century (2007) and Contemporary Irish Theatre: Transnational Practices (2015). He is working on the representations of political turmoil and history in contemporary Irish drama.

* 

Nicole Winsor (University of Notre Dame)
“Circuitous route[s]”: Postcolonial Modernism/Modernity and the Case of Denis Johnston’s *The Old Lady Says “No!”* 

In the introduction to *The Old Lady Says “No!”* Denis Johnston addresses claims that his play was influenced by James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, stating that any trace of Joyce could only have found its way into his play “by a most circuitous route.” He must, he says, have picked up certain phrases via the painter, Patrick Tuohy, who was “bandying” them “around Dublin as early as the Nine Arts Ball of 1925” (Johnston, “Opus One” 18). It is entirely possible that this story is as apocryphal as that of the play’s title, yet Johnston’s consistent repudiations of his “influences” raise important questions about precisely where the play fits within Irish, European and/or (post)colonial modernist contexts: to what extent should we read the play as a
provincial version of German expressionism? Is it more accurate to describe this play as a reactionary response to Revivalist or post-Independence modernity? Does the specificity of Johnston’s references disqualify this play from being read within a broader global context?

By exploring the play’s temporal and spatial disruptions, and the juxtapositions of cultural orders produced by Johnston’s “ethnographic surrealism” (Clifford, “On Ethnographic Surrealism” 539-64), this paper proposes a reconfiguration of avant-garde montage as a concept in Irish modernism specifically, and in (post)colonial modernism more broadly. With reference to recent developments in New Modernist Studies, I will argue that this play captures the order and chaos of modern life in post-Independence Ireland and as such it is characteristic of a specifically Irish postcolonial modernism that nevertheless resonates with other modernisms across the globe.

Nicole Winsor is a candidate for the PhD in English at the University of Notre Dame where she is a Presidential Fellow. Originally from New Zealand, Nicole’s primary area of research is in (post)colonial modernisms and modernities. Her dissertation examines drama produced after periods of indigenous cultural revivalism in Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand, and it explores how geohistorical particularities impact the ways in which modernist creative innovations are generated and developed in “peripheral” regions of the globe. By focusing on Irish, Australian, and New Zealand postcolonial modernisms as they are made manifest in drama, she aims to add to current broader scholarly conversations about how we define the field of modernist studies in the twenty-first century.

*Katherine Hennessey (American University of Kuwait)

“Hell is Empty, and All the Devils Are Here!”: Shakespeare in 21st century Irish Theatre

Whether the focus is on tempests and sea-changes or rebellions and revolutions, on the taming of unruly social agents or their tragic end, Shakespeare’s plays speak to societies in the throes of transformation. Perhaps this explains why over the past decade Shakespeare has flourished on the Irish stage, in productions that are highly innovative not only in terms of casting and set design but also in terms of their reflections upon contemporary socio-political issues within Ireland and around the globe.

Representative productions to be considered include:
- Lynne Parker’s 2006 Taming of the Shrew, set in rural Ireland in the 1970s. The performance provided caustic commentary on the oppressive, patriarchal nature of a money-grubbing society in which marriage is reduced to a tool for ensuring the transfer of property, with clear parallels to the crasser and more materialistic aspects of the transformation of Irish society by the “Celtic Tiger.”
- The Arabic-language production of Richard II at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in 2012. Performed by the Palestinian troupe Ashtar and directed by Irish playwright and director Conall Morrison, this play was—perhaps inevitably—interpreted as a commentary on the prior year’s “Arab Spring” protests.
• The dueling Dublin Shakespeares of 2015—*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Abbey, set in a nursing home, which cast esteemed actors in their fifties and sixties in the roles of the young lovers, vs. *Romeo and Juliet* at the Gate, its title characters played by young Irish actors just beginning their careers.

• Galway-based Druid Theatre Company’s remarkable adaptation of the Henriad, and its references to Irish insurrection and British conquest, as a six-hour marathon history cycle entitled *DruidShakespeare* (2015).

This paper will explore the strategies by which Irish playwrights like Marina Carr and Mark O’Rowe and Irish theatre practitioners like Selina Cartmell, Wayne Jordan and Garry Hynes adapt Shakespeare’s texts to provoke meditation upon and debate about Ireland’s history and its urgent contemporary challenges.

*Katherine Hennessy is a Visiting Fellow at the Moore Institute at NUI Galway. She has just completed a two-year research fellowship with the Global Shakespeare programme at the University of Warwick and Queen Mary University of London, and is an assistant professor in the English department of the American University of Kuwait. She is the author of Shakespeare on the Arabian Peninsula (Palgrave, 2017).*

*Chitra Jayathilake (University of Sri Jayewardenepura)\n*Translations: Biopolitical linguistic cartography?\n
Irish playwright Brian Friel’s Anglophone play, *Translations*—a three act play set in 1833, in a school in a Gaelic-speaking village in Ireland, which premiered at Field Day Theatre Company in Derry in Northern Ireland in 1980—theatrically explores how language was subtly used as a biopolitical stratagem during the period of British colonialism. Despite the significance of the play for the field of postcolonial, literary and cultural studies, existing scholarship has overlooked adequately exploring the diverse nuances of biopolitics reflected through the manipulation of language, and the correlation between language and colonial legacies. The play is scarcely read through both biopolitical and postcolonial lenses. By identifying this lacuna, this paper interrogates the regulation of language as represented in the play-text with a view to shedding light on linguistic biopolitical trajectories linked to colonialism, and how such stratagems are extended as colonial legacies. Thereby, the paper offers a new critical vocabulary to, and sheds light on, postcolonial and cultural studies in general, and specifically to the field of Anglophone Irish studies.

*Chitra Jayathilake is Senior Lecturer in English at the Department of English of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. She holds a PhD in English—with a focus on postcolonial studies and twentieth century dramas—from the University of Keele in the United Kingdom; an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) from the Postgraduate Institute of English, Sri Lanka; and an MA in Linguistics from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Her research interests lie at the intersection of postcolonial studies and language studies.*
4. James Joyce: aesthetics, teaching, hospitality
(Chair: Richard Barlow) - Seminar Room 9

Ian Tan (Raffles Institution, Singapore)
The Dialectic Imagination: Aesthetic Form and Openness in the novels of James Joyce and Flann O’Brien

This paper will offer a consideration of the relationship between the novels of James Joyce and Flann O’Brien through the lens of dialectical philosophy as set forth by Hegel and Adorno. First, I will map the literary qualities of the "Bildungsroman" onto Hegel’s seminal philosophical work, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, by reading it as a discourse on how self-consciousness emerges and finds its innermost potentialities for freedom through interaction with its world. This impetus will inform my reading of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where I demonstrate how the novel is underpinned by dialectical tensions which are resolved through the thematic and stylistic shape of the novel. *Portrait* can thus be read as a Hegelian narrative of how the artistic spirit comes into being, by reconciling the inner world of its strivings with the social contingencies and contradictions which shape artistic production and reception. In contrast to Joyce’s modernist faith in the integrity of the artistic vision, the novels of Flann O’Brien revel in openness, indeterminacy and irresolution. I will locate the postmodern element in O’Brien as an example of negative dialectics, where the play of the terms held in dialectical tension does not lead to wholeness and completion, but to their opposites. Using Adorno’s work *Negative Dialectics* as a critical lens, I will examine O’Brien’s novels—*At Swim-Two-Birds, The Third Policeman, The Hard Life*—as comic contrasts to the Joycean temperament. O’Brien’s self-conscious use of novelistic form thus positions him as continuing the aesthetic innovations of Laurence Sterne, where the comic vision of Irish life and politics is irreducible to any single hegemonic political or aesthetic standpoint, but celebrated in the very adventure and excess of writing itself.

*Ian Tan is an educator based in Singapore, who teaches Literature at Raffles Institution. He is interested in the relationship between literature, philosophy, and film, and has written and spoken widely on these topics. His essays on film have been published in the journals Senses of Cinema, Offscreen, and Bright Lights Film Journal. He has also written two student guidebooks on Literature texts, and published reviews of poetry collections at www.singaporepoetry.com.*

*Elizabeth K. Switaj (College of the Marshall Islands)*
From the “Isle of Saints and Sages” to the “Pearl of the Pacific”—and the Slum:
Teaching James Joyce in the Marshall Islands

At the 2016 Trieste James Joyce Summer School, Malcolm Sen discussed the importance of rereading Joyce for the Anthropocene and, in particular, how the potential for mass displacement caused by anthropogenic climate change demands that we develop new ways of understanding ideas of exile. Since joining the faculty of the College of the Marshall Islands on Majuro atoll in 2013, I have lived and worked with people for whom the potential of mass displacement is an increasingly close threat. Indeed, some of my students have already been displaced from smaller islets
by rising seas. Those whose families come from Bikini or the other nuclear affected
atolls have already experienced exile induced by human alterations of the
environment. Many of these displaced people ended up on an island with Majuro atoll
now threatened by sea-level rise. Others went to Ebeye, sometimes called the slum of
the Pacific and one of a few islands within Kwajalein atoll where the Marshallese are
allowed to live because of the U.S. military base and missile testing range that
occupies the rest—just one of the ways in which the Marshallese remain
“semicolonials.” This paper will provide additional historical and cultural background
on the Marshall Islands. Then, I will discuss how the concerns my undergraduate
students have brought to Joyce’s texts influence my own reading and what that means
more broadly for reading Joyce in a contested, and sometimes frightening, 21st
century.

Elizabeth K. Switaj is the Chair of Liberal Arts at the College of the Marshall Islands
and a Board Member of Jambo Arts, an island NGO. Her book James Joyce’s
Teaching Life and Methods was published in 2016 by Palgrave.
5. **Joyce and Beckett in the 21st Century**  
(Chair: Carissa Foo) - Seminar Room 4

Lisa Zuliana Binte Zulkifli (Nanyang Technological University)  
Feminist Perspectives of James Joyce’s Works

This paper will explore how, through a variety of feminist methodologies (psychoanalytic, Marxist and literary), James Joyce’s writing has been of service to women, especially female empowerment. The paper will examine three pertinent issues regarding gender relations and women’s subjectivity. Firstly, Joyce’s treatment of the male gaze, be it artistic or carnal, disempowers it by illustrating how the men who objectify their women only end up disillusioned and “paralysed” themselves. This will be investigated in “Araby,” “The Dead” and Stephen Dedalus’ encounter with the “bird girl.” Secondly, Joyce’s employment of French feminism’s *écriture féminine* allows his women to reclaim their bodies, destabilize phallogocentrism and “speak” for themselves despite mediation through a male pen. Moreover, he does so while ensuring that the woman’s body is socially and historically contextualised; questioning if in Catholic Irish society women could establish substantial material protection. This will be examined in “Sirens,” “Nausicaa” and “Penelope.” Lastly, this paper attempts to mediate how Joyce attempts writing for the sake of oppressed women despite his privileged position and his sexist remarks, revealing the anxiety and critical self-questioning that plagues his writing. From presenting gender relations in the realist short stories *Dubliners*, to critically examining the artist and muse dichotomy in *Portrait*, to deconstructing phallogocentrism and establishing a platform for an authentic female voice (or at least as authentic as it can be from a male writer) in *Ulysses*, James Joyce proves to be a writer whose works remain critically important and applicable to numerous branches of feminist criticism.

*Lisa Zuliana Binte Zulkifli is a third-year undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University, completing her bachelor’s degree in English. Her research interests include James Joyce, the sexual agency and liberation of women in erotic fiction, fairy tale appropriation and how male writers write the woman’s body and psyche for feminist insights.*

*Yao Xiaoling (Nanyang Technological University)
Desire Deferred Maketh the Plot Sick? Beckett and Waiting for the Ending

Construed as a relatively plotless play, how one makes sense of the plotting of plotlessness in *Waiting for Godot* and how we are to understand the driving force behind the narrative become significant issues to consider. The narrative desire of the intentional plot, according to Peter Brooks, is the desire for an acquiescent ending which must be sought with complicated dilations and detours on its own terms in the middle. However, this paper attempts to argue that the desired ending of the plot is perpetually deferred in this play and it is this lack that becomes the driving force of the progressive plot. Specifically, the textual dynamic in this play starts from a narratable suspense with Estragon’s metaphorical efforts to take off his boots and his opening sentence “nothing can be done.” The constant process of waiting, repetition and wandering in the middle comprised of inefficient communications and impotence,
construction and erasure, indicates the plot’s need of return and calling-back to a previous stage before the plot reaches an ending. In this way, readers can perceive a metaphorical pattern and anchor meanings from the metonymically displaced details and fragments. However, unlike Brooks’ assertion, the plot’s desire for an acquiescent ending after its complicated deviations is never gratified in this play. To invoke Lacan’s interpretation, behind the desire is nothing. Godot as absence never came and will never come. But it is this lack that makes the plot continue to desire in a repetitive way. Estragon and Vladimir have to come back and keep waiting for Godot tomorrow.

Yao Xiaoling is currently a PhD candidate in English Division at Nanyang Technological University, working with Professor Neil Murphy. Her research interests include modernism, memory and narrative. Her PhD project is on Joseph Conrad’s autobiographical memory and its verbal texture.
6. **Contemporary Irish poetry I**  
(Chair: Deirdre Flynn) - TR+1

Joanne Chia (Singapore University of Technology and Design)  
Reading Quantum Physics in Derek Mahon’s Concept of Translation

Nature is an important metaphor that arguably makes Derek Mahon’s original work, all the way from “Disused Shed in Co. Wexford,” coherent as a whole. More importantly, it points to the source of the reality of his work. This paper posits that his concept of translation belongs to the understanding that a poem, if a true representation of the word medium, may be present in a form that, in some ways, already carries its own meaning. To prove this, Grigori M. Kružkov’s “Quantum Mechanics and the Theory of Poetry Translation” (1992) provides an important starting point – pointing to an “uncertainty” relationship that could help define the work of poetry as expressive of a particular kind of language belonging to nature. Furthermore, Kružkov’s paper proposes that the presence of a theory of translation can be proven through reference to concrete quantum phenomena present in “uncertainty” relationships in the field of quantum physics. However, translation is just a preliminary concept in Kružkov’s paper, and with limited practical application in poetry translation. Nonetheless, the method is important to prove that the resulting “sublime” process of symbolic translation from object to symbol that takes place through the concept of poetic translation is the key to understanding the kind of “language” that helps us to appreciate the effect of symbolism in art. In particular, this paper demonstrates its symbolism in relation to the concept of art as may be seen in the “translation” work of Mahon. Moreover, this activity of translation transcends the cultural symbols evident in a collection such as *An Autumn Wind* (2009).

*A graduate of the NTU Division of English, Joanne works at SUTD as an English and Writing instructor. Her thesis was on the aesthetics of the poetry of W. B. Yeats and Derek Mahon.*

*

Naoko Toraiwa (Meiji University)  
“he becomes / half-man, half-vine, asphyxiating”: Sinead Morrissey’s kinopoetics

Observing the largest waves of regional and international migrants in recorded history at the turn of the twenty-first century, the author of *The Figure of the Migrant* (2015), Thomas Nail, proposes kinopolitics, “the reinvention of political theory from the primacy of social motion instead of the state.” Migration, one of the constant features of Irish society, is a key issue of this century, and is becoming even more so since 2016, when the tension between European and US policies and immigrants, including asylum seekers, reached a critical point.

While in the past context of Irish immigration, roots or identity, Yeatsian stone-like, unchangeable elements tended to be focal points, Nail emphasizes “kino,” “motion,” as the primary feature of social life. Indeed, “motion” is the primary feature of life
itself, not only “social” but “natural,” and also in terms of art. Deleuze—whom Nail acknowledges as one of the advocates of the significance of one form of migration (nomad)—was fascinated by cinematography (kino, graphia), an art device which depicts ever-moving images. Moving and becoming, rather than being, have been highlighted as crucial concepts within all aspects of contemporary life. Migration has become an important feature in world literature, and again in Irish writings in the 21st century. Focusing on “motion,” this paper will discuss poems by Sinead Morrissey, whom Elmer-Andrews once called “Migrant Muse.”

*Naoko Toraiwa, Ph.D is Professor of English at the School of Political Science and Economics, Meiji University, Tokyo.*

Leah Tan (Nanyang Technological University)
Shifting Spaces of Poetry: Eavan Boland and the Irish Literary Tradition

Recollecting her early days as a female Irish poet, Eavan Boland muses that “it isn’t how women represent themselves that concerns [her]. It’s how they are represented before they even begin to write – that’s the area of conflict.” Taking Boland’s words as a point of entry, I examine the strategies through which Boland contests, in her poetry, the fixity and aestheticization of women in art. In particular, I focus on the formal poetic devices that Boland employs to take up her position within, and to speak out from, the objectified and subordinated spaces in which female figures find themselves in conventional modes of representation in art. Finally, from a broader perspective, I look at the ways in which Boland, through her poetry, negotiates her relation to the male-dominated Irish literary tradition, and (re)claims the authority to speak as a female Irish poet.

*Leah Tan is a PhD student at Nanyang Technological University. She is interested in questions relating to the philosophy of art, as well as the relation between art and politics.*
7. **Ireland on screen**  
(Chair: Christopher Trigg) - Seminar Room 3

Andrew Fitzsimons (Gakushuin University)  
The MacGuffin: Agency and Transformation in Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* and Neil Jordan’s *The Crying Game*

Alfred Hitchcock popularized the term “MacGuffin,” which refers to a plot device that motivates and drives the story in a commercial film. The MacGuffin is, usually, of seemingly vital importance to the characters, but of little significance outside the world of the film. For Hitchcock, the MacGuffin is a pretext for the exploration of other concerns. This is shown most clearly in *Psycho* (1960) as the MacGuffin, the money stolen by Marion Crane, is set aside, literally and figuratively, after her horrific murder. Occasionally, a Hitchcock film contains more than one MacGuffin. In *Vertigo* (1958), Scottie’s fear of heights kick-starts a plot within which his encounter with a second MacGuffin, the fiction within a fiction of Madeline’s possession by a spirit from the past, leads to his destruction. I will show in this paper how these MacGuffins are not merely devices but are entwined within the thematic concerns of *Vertigo*, and how in Neil Jordan’s *The Crying Game* (1992) the Hitchcockian MacGuffin and the exploration of masculinity and sexual politics in *Vertigo* are invoked and elaborated upon within the context of a film ostensibly concerned with the conflict in Northern Ireland.

*Andrew Fitzsimons is a Professor in the Department of English Language and Cultures at Gakushuin University, Tokyo. His publications include The Sea of Disappointment: Thomas Kinsella’s Pursuit of the Real (Dublin: UCD Press, 2008); Thomas Kinsella: Prose Occasions 1951-2006, ed. (Manchester: Carcanet, 2009); and the poetry collections, What the Sky Arranges (Isobar Press, 2013) and A Fire in the Head (Isobar Press, 2014).*

* * *

Saravanan Mani (Nanyang Technological University)  
Black Comedy and Bleak Life in *Six Shooter*

This paper examines the comedic presentation of crisis of faith in the face of death in Martin McDonagh’s Academy Award-winning debut, *Six Shooter* (2004). McDonagh’s short film is a devastating comedy about the aftermath of arbitrary encounters with death. Instead of resolving the protagonist’s crisis of faith, the film presents the failure of easy resolutions. The acclaimed Irish playwright’s films share the macabre themes of his plays, but they also have a playfully violent excess that warrant a closer look.

Set in a train heading towards Dublin, the film observes the responses of characters who have each recently encountered the death of a mother, a wife or a child. The characters’ losses isolate them in their grief and yet also compel them to seek each other out. However, this set-up for a reconciliatory narrative is disrupted by the film’s hyper-violent and non-naturalistic conclusion, highlighting the cruel irony of living. By resisting conventional social customs of respectfully mourning the dead, the film
portrays whimsical and petulant characters who are capable of terrible selfishness as well as great empathy. The suffering in the film is self-reflexive in its absurdity, as the characters’ attempts to seek meaning and order in a chaotic world result in a meaningless farce. The tension between the black comedy and serious subject matter is cynical and honest. The film’s narrative indeterminacy and moral ambiguity invites us to consider McDonagh’s rejection of Hollywood film conventions in his oeuvre.

Saravanan Mani is a graduate student at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, pursuing his PhD in screen ethics. His research interests are American crime television, long-form serial television and documentary subjectivity. He is contributing writer and editor at ScreenEthics.com and has written and presented on entertainment, performance and cultural studies.

* 

Michael Walsh (Nanyang Technological University)
Willie McBride, the Somme and the making of a modern Irish martyr

Eric Bogle wrote *No Man’s Land* in 1975. When it was released as *The Green Fields of France* by Davey Arthur and the Fureys in 1979, the song topped the Irish charts for a record-breaking 10 weeks and has since been recorded by Bob Dylan, Donovan, The Chieftains, Stiff Little Fingers, Dropkick Murphys, Liam Clancy and over fifty others. In Australia it was declared one “of the most striking musical essays yet written on the futility of war” (d’Haeye, *The Sun-Herald*). Yet *No Man’s Land* has been associated with controversy too: branded a rebel song in Ulster during The Troubles, singled out by Tony Blair as a “peace anthem” and prelude to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, it was chosen by the Royal British Legion for the Poppy Day appeal in 2014—provoking a petition of protest signed by over 20,000 people. In addition to exploring the “complex relations between cultural and political history” (Roshwald and Stites, *European Culture in the Great War* 6) in Ireland as witnessed through this composition, this presentation also looks at the making of the documentary film, “A Warm Summer Breeze” by Dan Frodsham. In the film, Bogle returned to the grave of Willie McBride on the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme to recite his poem to the now infamous Inniskilling, only to find that it had become a real life pilgrimage site for an entirely fictional Irish martyr. The film will be screened during the conference.

*Michael Walsh is interested in the relationship between culture and conflict. He is the author of the book Runaway Dreams: The Story of Mama’s Boys and Celtus, which investigated the role of rock music in Northern Ireland during “The Troubles,” and the forthcoming An Old Man’s Tears: Eric Bogle, Music and the Great War (Routledge, 2018).*
8. **John Banville: fiction, travel-writing, and memoir**

*(Chair: Thierry Robin) - Seminar Room 9*

Aurora Piñeiro (National and Autonomous University of Mexico)
In Search of Lost and Regained Cities: Prague and Dublin as Imagined Geographies in John Banville’s Writings

In *Prague Pictures: Portraits of a City* (2003), the reader encounters a “Caveat Emptor” or a disclaimer of warranties that announces the hybridity of the text she/he is about to read: a writing defined as an attempt to conjure a place by a mingled effort of memory and imagination. Thirteen years later, John Banville’s *Time Pieces: A Dublin Memoir* (2016) is again a hybrid text that constructs an urban space, and a meditation on the past, as well as the difficulties of discerning how and where to locate a “real” city if, indeed, such a singular thing may be said to exist. The aim of this paper is to explore the themes of mediation and authenticity, in conceptual and performative terms, in *Prague Pictures* and *Time Pieces* as books that may be read as manifestos of Banville’s poetics, and works that fuel an ongoing conversation between the author’s concern with the perfect sentence and a passion for the visual arts that permeates his narrative universe.

*Aurora Piñeiro, PhD, is Associate Professor of the Department of English Literature at the National and Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where she teaches seminars on contemporary narrative in English, including the works of authors such as Banville, Tóibín, Donoghue and Keegan. She was a visiting researcher at UCD from September 2014 to June 2015. In 2015, her interview “The Evidential Artist: A Conversation with John Banville” was published by Nordic Irish Studies Journal (volume 14).*

*

Adam Staley Groves (National University of Singapore)
On Some Motifs in Banville’s The Blue Guitar

Wallace Stevens spent a fair amount of time wandering around galleries; he also wrote about painting. Painting shared in what Stevens called a “universal poetry.” Stevens’s prose “The Relations Between Poetry and Painting” reveals a mode of being painters and poets have in common, a “subject…from two points of view” during a time when “modern art” proves “uncompromising” thus impotently “resembles modern politics.”

John Banville’s recent novel, *The Blue Guitar*, appears to take Stevens’s “subject” seriously. A tension surrounds Oliver Orme, an ambivalence tone possibly created by an uncompromising stasis of modern politics, or neoliberalism. When Banville brings to life human denaturation it may be due to a loss of the practical imagination that, contrarily for Stevens, was central to the production of reality.

The decline of embodied, technical skill suggests the end of reality, if not history, is near. For one motif Banville’s painter shares with the poet is a lack of practical application or what Hegel said of poetry, that “inasmuch as the work has a purely technical side,” technical skill matters “least of all in poetry.” Yet the poem is an
instrument, it can be played as well as appear anywhere. The technical question concerning poetry is our ability to decreate our contemporary sacrifice: that the imagination was somehow permanently severed from human activity.

Denaturation concerns our relation to objects in the world, or to engage the “thing” which Stevens remarked “is not a thesis.” Poetry provides a “temporary abridgement,” a practical use of “supreme fiction,” and central to poetry is art and creative projection. The objects of art fall into our view and their view conversely falls unto us. This could be the sensibility of a “universal poetry,” the tension and tone of the gallery encounter is a probable guitar that allows us to penetrate and not evade the “pressure of reality.”

*Adam Staley Groves is a lecturer and teaching fellow at Tembusu College, National University of Singapore. Adam studies poetry and its theory.*  

*Pang Ru Yan Jeannette (Nanyang Technological University)*  
Walking into the Sea: Textures of Reality in John Banville’s Fiction

John Banville envisions *The Sea* as a “very simple book about [his] childhood” (Imhof 170). Max Morden, a middle-aged Irish man, returns to his hometown after the death of his wife, Anna. Different facets of his past unfold in his consciousness as he meanders through the sea of his memories—memories that appear in a kaleidoscope of shapes and forms as they blend and mingle with other memories and imaginative inventions. Morden retreats into a twilight netherworld between waking and dreaming, between reality and imagination, in which he experiences a sense of repose in the oneiric regions of the past. This paper focuses on the textures of experience in Banville’s fictional world, which is definitive of a more capacious sense of reality and self. The first mode being the experience of sinking into a womb-like space—a submergence in darkness; the second, the intensity and immediacy of experience; and lastly, the sense of disembodiment and loss of one’s self. The past is not simply that which is excavated from the remote regions of memory, but is also, perhaps most essentially, crystallized in the lines of abstract time and poetic images. These versions of transposed reality, that have a powerful and intoxicating value, animate the dormant regions of consciousness—a vivification of one’s sense of being. And it is in this world covered with the brushstrokes of one’s imagination—the redeeming visions of art—that we can walk calmly and peacefully into the indifferent sea at the close.

*Jeannette Pang is a graduate of Nanyang Technological University’s English literature programme. She is also interested in the field of aesthetics (Japanese aesthetics in particular), philosophy, music and art that is never far off from the world of literature. Curiosity and wonder underpin these explorations—and the hope for something more.*
9. **Ireland and the World: comparative perspectives**  
(Chair: Koh Tai Ann) - Seminar Room 7

Tian Ju (ShanXi University of Finance and Economics)  
Acceptance and Impact of Augusta Gregory and Her Works In China

Dame Isabella Augusta Gregory, an Irish female playwright, rose to fame in Ireland and the world because of her contribution to the Irish Literary Renaissance. Augusta Gregory captured Chinese scholars’ attention in 1920s, when some progressive and advanced litterateurs began to introduce her work in influential journals in the Republic of China. Chinese literary giant Mao Dun is the first person in China to translate her works, *Market Tiger* (10 Sept. 1920), *Hiking Hover* (24 Sept. 1921), *The Traveling Man* (1 Mar. 1922) and *The Goal Gate* (1 Nov. 1922). Chinese dramatist Tian Han gave some of her works a brief introduction, praising her creative style. Another Chinese dramatist Yu Shangyuan praised her in 1924 as a heroine of the Irish Literary Renaissance Movement. Her most famous play, *The Rise of the Moon*, became the focus of translation, adaptation and performance in China. Three versions presented in 1928, 1929 and 1958 showed distinguished translating styles and features, which drew special attention from the circles of translation and art. In the book, *English Literature*, published by the Commercial Press in 1934, the author Xu Mingji introduced Augusta Gregory’s short plays and evaluated her historical achievements. *The Rise of the Moon* has been performed on the Chinese stage many times from the 1930s till the present, and became an endearing play during wartime China. This play has also been adapted into *San Jianghao*, depicting heroic deeds of the Chinese anti-Japanese hero San Jianghao, which caused a sensation amongst Chinese literatus. In recent years, more and more Chinese young scholars have been keeping their eyes on Augusta Gregory and studying her literary contributions.

*Tian Ju studied Irish drama when she was earning her doctorate, and has an interest in Irish literature and history.*

*Wang Zhanpeng (Beijing Foreign Studies University)  
Historical Studies and the Interdisciplinarity of Irish Studies in China*

Literary studies has long been regarded as the home discipline of Irish Studies in China. Over the past decade, historical studies has become another home for Irish studies academically. Since the Irish Studies Centre was established at BFSU in 2007, the history of Ireland has entered the curriculum of the programme. More authoritative works of Irish history have been translated into Chinese language, e.g. Robert Kee’s *Ireland: A History* and Dermot Keogh’s *Twentieth Century Ireland* (to be published in 2017). Moreover, through the study of Sino-Irish relations, scholars in China deal with questions of Irish identity, which has become part of the efforts to address the disciplinary identity of Irish Studies in China. This is exemplified by the study of Sir Robert Hart and his success in the Chinese Customs during the late Qing Dynasty. In this process, Irish studies in China has developed a distinctive approach by going beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries, by examining Ireland’s historical, political, literary, and social complexity. This also results in an increasing interest in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dialogues among literary studies, historical
studies and other academic disciplines such as politics, sociology and international relations. For example, Chinese academics explore the unique Irish contribution to literary criticism, one which locates the literary text within the complex historical context of the island. In their recent debates on the making and reforming of Irish identity, which have traced the transformation of Ireland from De Valera’s conservative, rural, Catholic island into a modern or even postmodern European nation, this multidisciplinary dialogue is highlighted by the centenary commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising in Beijing.

Wang Zhanpeng is the Associate Dean of School of English and International Studies, and the Director of the Irish Studies Centre and of the British Studies Centre at Beijing Foreign Studies University. Prof. Wang and his colleagues have established the first multidisciplinary Irish studies centre in China since 2007, and launched the Irish Studies Network in China in 2014. His research focuses on the politics of the European Union, Irish studies, and British politics and international relations. He has authored and co-authored several books and over 40 journal articles or book chapters. He is the author of Transnational Democracy and its Limits: A Study of the Constitutional and Lisbon Process of the European Union (2010). He is also the editor of Sino-Irish Relations: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (2011), and Annual Report on Development of the United Kingdom 2014-2015 (2015).

* * *

Mojtaba Rouhandeh (University of Sorbonne-Nouvelle)
Charles Vallancey and Persia: On the Persian Origins of Ireland

In 1807 in Dublin, Charles Vallancey, a British French-born engineer in the British army, published his book An Essay on the Primitive Inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland: Proving from History, Language, and Mythology that They Were Persians or Indo-Scythiae. In his book, he claimed that the Celtic population of Ireland originated in the Middle East, and they might have migrated to Ireland from either Persia or India. This idea was much disputed by his contemporaries such as Edward Ledwich and Bishop Thomas Percy (Connolly, Oxford Companion to Irish History 578).

Vallancey lived in India for some time and claimed to have learned languages such as Persian, Sanskrit, and Arabic (Connolly 578). Today scholars remain suspicious of these claims. This is reinforced by his work on the Irish language. He came to Ireland in 1762, and in 1773 he published his book on Irish Grammar under the title of Grammar of the Hiberno-Celtic or Irish Language (Welch, Oxford Companion to Irish Literature 585). However, he had a handbook and a small dictionary of Irish, but until his last days he only knew some words and phrases in Irish (Welch 585).

The name Persia alone awakened 18th and 19th century authors to oriental enchantment. The Orient, and more specifically Persia, at the beginning of the 18th century was linked to magic, mysticism, ancient history, and a mysterious power that could bring change into people’s lives. In An Essay on the Primitive Inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, Charles Vallancey creates links etymologically, linguistically, religiously and culturally, between Iran and Ireland. In this paper, I propose to address his claims on identity from a Persian angle using Eric Hobsbawm’s ideas on language and identity. Why should Charles Vallancey look for
the origins of the Irish not in the West, but in the East? Did he turn to Persia for its magical power in order to construct a myth of origins linking Ireland to Persia?

Mojtaba Rouhandeh is a Ph.D student in Irish Studies at the University of Sorbonne-Nouvelle working in the field of literature, and on a comparative study between Iran and Ireland.

*

Iva Yates (University of Limerick)
Cathleen Ní Houlihan and Antígona Pérez: A Nationalist Irish-Puerto Rican Connection

In 1968, Puerto Rican playwright Luis Rafael Sánchez brought to the stage La pasión según Antígona Pérez (The passion according to Antígona Pérez). The play’s title character, Antígona Pérez, is based not just on Sophocles’s Antigone, but on the life of Olga Viscal Garriga, who refused to acknowledge American sovereignty over Puerto Rico and was sent to jail for eight years after participating in a peaceful protest. Antígona Pérez represents Puerto Rico as a nation trapped under the vise of the United States.

On the other hand, in W. B. Yeats’s play Cathleen Ní Houlihan, the poor old woman represents an Ireland hoping to break free from the grasp of the British. And when she is free, she transforms from an old woman into a young one; the symbol of a new beginning.

These two plays, written at different times in the twentieth century, both use women to represent island nations that have been subjected to colonial rule by different empires; the Spanish and then American in the case of Puerto Rico, and the British in the case of Ireland. This paper will examine both plays from a transnational perspective, and look into how Ireland’s and Puerto Rico’s parallel histories converge, how the plays differ in outlook, and how this is portrayed in the text.

Iva Yates is currently a PhD candidate in Creative Writing at the University of Limerick under the supervision of Prof. Margaret Harper Mills and Prof. Joseph O’Connor, author of Star of the Sea and Ghost Light, among others. The paper is based on research from Iva’s doctoral thesis, which consists of a novel and a dissertation.
10. Jack B. Yeats, Aidan Higgins, and Louis MacNeice: Reconsiderations
(Chair: Angela Frattarola) - Seminar Room 6

Nadia Osman Khallaf (Al Azhar University, Cairo)
A Study of Aidan Higgins’s Balcony of Europe: The Movement Towards the Irish Realist Novel in the 21st century

In his controversial second novel, Balcony of Europe (1972), Aidan Higgins crosses the border from Ireland to Europe and back, following in the footsteps of his celebrated self-exiled predecessors, Joyce and Beckett. The chief protagonist, Dan Ruttles, a middle-aged Irish painter (alias Higgins) travels to join an expatriate European community residing in a small fishing village, Nerja in Andalusia, Spain, around 1962-3. This innovative novel (in form and content) is described by most critics as episodic and non-linear fiction. But it cannot be mistaken for a travelogue merely because it embodies a rich catalogue of details. Essentially, the novelist uses a unique, vibrant prose style which employs all the five senses, without being averse to including ordinary, ugly and sordid features in his canvas. It is my intention in this paper to critique the current assertion that Balcony of Europe is a “misshapen novel.” In fact, it is an example of a highly-organised prose craft which paves the way for the formation of the 21st century Irish realist novel. Higgins resorts—in his distinctive art of the novel—to interdisciplinary methods primarily influenced by the Irish visual arts renaissance, especially the postmodernist landscape paintings of Paul Henry and the Northern Irish artists’ collage arrangement, which coalesce in the overall artistic design. The novelist expands, moving with his material, from microcosm (the homeland) to macrocsosm (global) spheres to finally encompass universal connotations.

Nadia Osman Khallaf is Professor Emeritus in the Department of English at Al Azhar University in Cairo. She teaches graduates courses in critical theory and comparative studies, and supervises M.A. and Ph.D dissertations. She was previous chair of the department and vice-dean of the college.

* Nao Igarashi (Durham University)
The Function of Images in Louis MacNeice’s Autumn Journal

Imagery has an important role in Autumn Journal (1939). There is a doubleness of meaning; descriptive images convey the poet’s feeling or the mood of the world in the time around the Munich Agreement in 1938, while symbolical images are not irrelevant to the actual scenes where the poet mentions them. MacNeice may have learned from the poetry of W. B. Yeats (such as “The Municipal Gallery Revisited”) the way in which images based on reality have something more than a literal meaning, and develop the poet’s thought and imagination. Several critics have already noted the importance of the imagery in Autumn Journal; Peter McDonald discusses the “sexual imagery” of women and “bride” (Louis MacNeice: The Poet in His Contexts 92), and Michael O’Neill and Gareth Reeves undertake a detailed analysis of the water imagery (Auden, MacNeice, Spender: The Thirties Poetry 188-93). Referring to these past studies, this paper will examine images such as wind, leaves, fire, and those related to sleep, focusing on their recurrence and interrelationship, as well as each
image’s meaning. They have in common a certain ambivalence: they can suggest both beginnings and ends, birth and death, movement and stasis. This ability to communicate ambivalence through images gives a temporary comfort before the predicted crisis. MacNeice’s attempt to secure imaginary space in his poetry is significant as an answer to the high demand on the poet’s political engagement in the thirties.

Nao Igarashi is a PhD student at Durham University in the UK. Her research interest is in Louis MacNeice’s poetry and his concern about the role of poet. Her PhD thesis, in progress, examines how MacNeice’s self-awareness as a poet is reflected in his use of poetic forms and techniques.

*  
Andrew A. Kuhn (Boston College)  
The Fiction of Jack B. Yeats and the Irish Revival  

In June 1908, the Cuala Press issued the first in a series of poems and images entitled A Broadside. Jack B. Yeats edited, wrote ballads, and drew images for the monthly periodical which modeled itself on the broadsheets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In one sense, A Broadside is a lighthearted reworking of Young Ireland’s ballad tradition; however, Jack Yeats’s idiosyncratic interests and editorial choices created a publication with a much wider range of reference than the tired political pieties of The Nation. Particularly, in the recurring representations of pirates, cowboys, and tinkers, the ballads and illustrations of A Broadside presented alternative forms of political and social reality that challenge the forms of native Irish identity that dominated revival discourses. In these works, Yeats combined pen and ink drawings with many of his own verses, fantastical ballads of far away places, and local occurrences and legends. While his paintings have rightly garnered significant attention, his literary works, which include memoirs, novels, short stories, and plays, add another dimension to the contributions of the Irish literary revival as it creates a form of folk art. In this presentation, I investigate Yeats’s literary endeavors in A Broadside and later works as they present an imaginative revival that looks beyond an ideal peasantry into a much broader world of adventure, heroism, and absurdity.

Andrew A. Kuhn is a doctoral candidate in the English Department at Boston College. His research is in British and Irish modernism, and print culture. His current research examines modernist literary institutions in the works of Yeats, Joyce, Gissing, and Woolf. He is the editor of Dubliners Bookshelf and author of articles on Irish print culture and literature.
11. Queer Studies and Irish Writing
(Chair: Graham Matthews) - Seminar Room 8

Ed Madden (University of South Carolina)
Reasons to Stay, Reasons to Go: Queer and Other Irish Diasporas in the Plays of Colm Clifford

This presentation focuses on two plays by Colm Clifford, an Irish gay migrant active in the early 1970s gay liberation movement and a founding member of the agit-prop theatre group, the Brixton Faeries. Through the 1980s he began to write plays and poetry addressing the migrant identity and belonging—especially the difficult interstitial identities of the queer ethnic migrant. His first play, *Friends of Rio Rita* (1985), performed for both LGBT and Irish theatre audiences in London, addressed the difficulties of being gay and Irish. As he explained in a 1985 interview, “I can list forever the oppression of Irish people living in England, yet I cannot live [as a gay man] in Ireland”—a difficult position exacerbated by the anti-Irish racism of English gay men and the anti-gay attitudes of the Irish migrant community. His second play, *Reasons for Staying* (1986), broadens its focus to include a woman who stayed in England after seeking an abortion and an old navvy whose friends back home have died, as well as a second-generation Irishman and his English fiancée whose perceptions of Ireland are coloured by nostalgia and tourist posters. Clifford’s work, which has failed to receive critical attention or adequate publication, is a critical intervention in representations of gender and sexuality in the Irish diaspora, and as the Irish canon of LGBT work becomes increasingly calcified, a reconsideration of his work suggests the centrality of diaspora studies to Irish queer studies—and the necessity of queer studies to Irish diaspora studies.

*Ed Madden is Professor of English and director of Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina. Madden is the author of recent and forthcoming essays on queer Irish cultures in *Éire-Ireland*, Irish University Review, *Breac*, and *Performance Ireland*. He was a 2010 research fellow at the NUIG Centre for Irish Studies."

Alexandra Poulain (University of Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle)
“Performing selves”: Queer autobiographical performance in contemporary Ireland

Using the broad definition of autobiographical performance offered by Deirdre Heddon in her *Autobiography and Performance: Performing Selves* (2007), this paper looks at four recent productions which resort to the complex, often paradoxical strategies of autobiographical performance in order to bring marginalised queer voices and bodies onto the stage. Panti’s *A Woman in Progress* (2009) and Neil Watkins’ *The Year of Magical Wanking* (2010) are autobiographical monologues spoken and performed by their authors, which complicate the notion of a coherent, unified self by playing on the gap between artistic personae (Panti, Heidi Konnt) and officially sanctioned identities (the “authors,” Rory O’Neill and Neil Watkins). Una McKevitt’s *The Big Deal* (2011) is a verbatim play whose script uses the diaries and letters of two real-life transgender women, performed by two professional cisgender actresses. Finally, Amy Conway’s *I (Heart) Alice (Heart) I* (2010) is a fictional play which parodies the conventions of documentary drama and autobiographical
performance. Using the concept of “gay shame” and its recent requalification as a force of creativity and mobilisation (see David Halperin and Valerie Traub’s edited volume *Gay Shame*, 2009), the paper explores the fraught relationship between theatre and authenticity and seeks to analyse the aesthetic and political implications of these works, and to assess the degree to which they serve radical agendas, or on the contrary, promote a normalising ideology.

Alexandra Poulain is Professor of Postcolonial theatre at the University of Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle. She has published extensively on W. B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett, Tom Murphy, and more generally on modern Irish theatre from the Irish Literary Revival to the present day. Her new book *Irish Drama, Modernity and the Passion Play* (Palgrave) is forthcoming.

* 

Tina O’Toole (University of Limerick)  
A Queer Revival? Feminists, Revolutionaries, and Writers

In his pioneering essay, “Queering the Irish Renaissance,” Adrian Frazier suggests an “erotics of literary influence” as a framework within which to read the interactions of Moore, Yeats, Martyn, and their cultural representations. This reveals powerful counter-narratives to received ideas about the Literary Revival, which tend to depict a unified, nationalist and somehow inevitable cultural moment in the evolution of an independent Irish state. More recent scholarship delineates male homosocial relations / the male body in *fin de siècle* Irish cultural politics (e.g. Harris, 2002; Valente, 2011; Mullen, 2012). Meantime, women’s experiences and bodies remain all-but-invisible in mainstream accounts of the Revival, even in contemporary queer Irish scholarship sightings of her are rare enough.

This paper sets out to reinstate women’s experience and contemporary feminist ideas at the Irish *fin de siècle*. It contends that the radical impetus produced by “New Woman” writers was key to the discursive nexus producing Irish revolutionary culture, where women’s lived experience may be mapped onto the embodied and politicised female protagonists of New Woman narratives, rather than the mythical, disembodied, and bloodless feminine figures usually associated with the Revival. Tracing the New Woman influence into the writings of the revolutionary generation, it explores complex webs of belonging that characterise militant Irish women’s activism and writing. Re-inserting the work of, for instance, Rosamond Jacob or Dorothy McArdle at the centre of cultural nationalist experiments in the period, I argue, provides us with an opportunity to reassess the ideological constructions through which the cultural struggles of the period have been conceptualised.

Tina O’Toole is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Limerick. Her most recent publications include *Women Writing War: Ireland 1880-1922* (UCD Press, 2016; co-edited with Gillian McIntosh & Muireann O’Cinnéide) and *The Irish New Woman* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), which explores the textual and ideological connections between feminist, nationalist and anti-imperialist writing and political activism at the *fin de siècle*. Her essays appear in *Modernism/Modernity*, *Irish University Review*, and *New Hibernia Review*; she has also edited journal special
issues including Éire-Ireland (47) on “New Approaches to Irish Migration” (2012; with Piaras Mac Éinri).
12. Writing Justice
(Chair: Deirdre Flynn) - Seminar Room 8

Eugene McNulty (Dublin City University)
Interrogating law and literature: K and other letters

The most cursory of engagements with contemporary Anglophone culture reveals the extent to which the social imagination is shaped by concerns for the law and its illicit countersigns. To walk into any bookstore with its vertiginous shelves of crime fiction, legal fiction, and true-crime narratives is to find oneself in a culture-scape fascinated by the law, by breaches to the licit and the imaginative spaces of the illicit. As Kathy Laster puts it, we “seemingly cannot get enough of the political machinations of lawyers, the personal pathos of litigants and the ethical dilemmas embedded in the legal process.” In turn, Richard H. Weisberg reads this as symptomatic of the energies shared by the law and man’s instinct towards cultural expression. Legal figures, as he reminds us, “both attract and repulse writers”; while often “targets of biting caricature and sarcasm on the one hand,” they also function to metaphorize “the thematic, formal, and even personal concerns of the literary artist who lashes out at them.” After all, the law’s search for meaning and explanation, for cause and effect, for motivation and intention, for truth and judgement, speak quite directly to the concerns of the literary too. More than this, the structural similarity reveals a common source or impulse, with the law and the literary each functioning as “a relativistic method of ordering reality through language.” This paper attempts to unpack this conceptual relationship as encoded in contemporary Irish writing. Drawing on the work of writers such as Seamus Heaney, Eavan Boland, and Colm Tóibín, the paper seeks to reveal the ways in which such cultural production traces not simply an ongoing problematization of the “law”—the diachronic marker of real-world legal process—as it shapes and impacts upon the lives of those in its purview, but also that more fundamental need to engage with the “Law”—the synchronic marker of extra-historical justice and / or judgement, within the contours of which we make and define our socio-political ground.

Professor Eugene McNulty is a member of the School of English, Dublin City University. His main research interests focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish literature and theatre history. He is the author of The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival (Cork University Press, 2008), the co-editor of five books (including Crime Cultures: Figuring Criminality in Fiction and Film and Hearing Heaney), as well as articles in journals such as New Hibernia Review and The Journal of Postcolonial Writing. His current research concerns the conceptualization of the law in Irish literature.

* 

Emilie Pine (University College Dublin)
Digital Witnessing: Re-reading the Ryan Report on Institutional Child Abuse
This paper will discuss cross-disciplinary ways of re-reading the Ryan Report, the official report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, eight years after its publication. The Report detailed 70 years of institutional child abuse, compiled during a 9-year state investigation and culminating in a 2,600 page document, with over 1,500 witness statements. The Ryan Report is one of the most important publications in the history of the Irish state, and it is also one of the least read.

This paper addresses different ways of reading this material, from the 2010 documentary play *No Escape*, compiled by Mary Raftery, to new digital methods for text analysis. The paper asks to what extent people actually read the Report and what ethical and memory challenges are embedded in using the Report as an archive or source? The paper will draw on the Irish Research Council UCD project *Industrial Memories*, which aims to render the Report more accessible via a combination of digital text analysis (e.g. generating word clouds denoting different language spaces for victims and Church response testimony), digital media (e.g. a walking tour app of the site of one of the Dublin institutions), and traditional humanities approaches using memory and trauma theory to “read” the ways in which the Report makes the past present.

Dr Emilie Pine is Associate Professor in modern drama at University College Dublin. She is Editor of the Irish University Review, the founding Director of the Irish Memory Studies Network (www.irishmemorystudies.com), and Lead Investigator on the major digital humanities research project Industrial Memories (Irish Research Council New Horizons 2015-18). Emilie Pine has published widely on Irish theatre and culture and memory studies, and is author of *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture* (Palgrave, 2011).

*Emma Kelly (Queen’s University Belfast)*

“I want you to know that I forgive you”: Restorative Justice Mechanisms in *Philomena* and *Calvary*

On 26 November 2016, an open letter from a former Christian Brothers pupil—known only as “BJ”—to Br Hugh O’Neill, supreme general of the Christian Brothers, was published in *The Irish Times*. In this letter, which chronicles the lifelong effects of the childhood abuse suffered by BJ at the hands of two Christian Brothers, the author posits that the legal processes established to address historical clerical abuse have failed and “have simply obscured solutions, further traumatising victims.” The key to healing, BJ argues, lies in “restorative-justice mechanisms, whereby offenders and victims meet and reconcile”; mechanisms which BJ hopes will lead him, and others who experienced clerical abuse, to “forgiving the living former Christian Brother who harmed me.”

Released in the wake of the publication of both The Ryan Report and The McAleese Report, *Philomena* and *Calvary* also grapple with post-apology Ireland. This paper discusses how, through the physical and spiritual journeys undertaken by their protagonists, both movies question whether adequate steps have been taken to help the victims and survivors of what James M. Smith terms “Ireland’s Architecture of Containment,” and whether these processes have helped facilitate healing from this
personal, societal, and cultural trauma. Through a close analysis of the restorative-justice scenes featured in *Philomena* and *Calvary*, this paper will also examine how both movies explore forgiveness as a possible final step in the path from traumatic rupture to reconciliation and healing.

*Emma Kelly is a PhD candidate at Queen’s University Belfast, where she holds a Department for Employment and Learning Postgraduate Research Studentship. Her research is primarily concerned with representations of the “(m)other” in Irish cinema.*

*Adam Hanna (University College Cork)
Seamus Heaney’s Versions of Justice

This paper considers the work of Seamus Heaney from a Law and Literature perspective. It demonstrates how central issues of law enforcement were to his imagination, especially the partisan nature of pre-Troubles policing; the fate of the hunger striking prisoners of the early 1980s; and the global injustices that he campaigned against as part of his work with Amnesty International. Drawing on newly-released materials from the Heaney letters archive at Emory University, Atlanta, this paper reveals a connection between one of the greatest legal controversies of the years of the Troubles, the 1988 ‘Death on the Rock’ shootings in Gibraltar, and Heaney’s volume *Seeing Things* (1991). Throughout, this paper demonstrates how Heaney’s use of coded references, small-scale publications and alternative versions of poems are all connected to his perception of the distance between law and justice in Northern Ireland.

*Dr Adam Hanna is an IRC Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of English, University College Cork.*
14. Remaking Flann O’Brien
(Chair: Mike Kearney) - Seminar Room 6

Mengni Kang (Nanyang Technological University)
Voidness and Multiplicity: An Unnaturalizing Reading of *The Third Policeman*

To label *The Third Policeman* as a Menippean satire may not do justice to Flann O’Brien, whose blatant execution of metafictional aesthetics overtly voices his defiance of the traditional code of allegory. While the Catholic faith in sin and hell is deeply inscribed in O’Brien’s work, the self-conscious narrator, the massive use of frame-breaking strategies and the polyphonic composition engender it a pioneer of postmodern narratives. It is fair to say that *The Third Policeman* is an early postmodern text pursuing the poetics of nonsense as a means to a satirical end, exemplifying the transition from the modernist epistemological dominant to the postmodernist ontological dominant.

The paper argues that by presenting a paradoxical juxtaposition of a multiplicity of meaning and a voidance of meaning, O’Brien’s novel satirizes a blind belief in rationalism, denying the attempt to capture any spatial and temporal stability in a universe dominated by scientific empiricism. The research will adopt unnaturalizing reading strategies to examine how the text employs anti-mimetic narrative techniques to foreground the incomprehensive epistemological shifts in contemporary science. Specifically, the paper will look into three interrelated aspects of unnaturalness. In terms of the narrator, *The Third Policeman* confronts readers with a mechanical, alienated and elusive voice, typifying the existential crisis one encounters when displaced in a radically rationalistic world. The ironic effect is further enhanced by the fact that the narrator Noman’s knowledge of the scientist de Selby in no way helps to shed light on his plight. As for unnatural minds, the frequent appearance of inexplicable metaphors like chests and mirrors, the polyphony and ambiguity of Noman’s words, and the nonsense conversations among characters, all pose challenges for interpretation. The reader is cued to constantly build new cognitive scripts, finally realizing that it is impossible to work out a coherent textual consciousness. In the aspect of the storyworld, lengthy footnotes underscore metalepsis and undermine authorship, stressing the deferral of meaning. Extensive physically and logically impossible scenarios likewise highlight the ontological oscillation the idolization of science brings about.

The paper applies unnatural narratology and investigates the role anti-mimetic elements play in criticizing Faustian self-absorption in pure rationalism. It is concluded that the co-existence of voidance, a lack of a definite meaning, and multiplicity, a sense of infinity, makes *The Third Policeman* a postmodern Menippean satire.

*Mengni Kang is a PhD student from the English Division of Nanyang Technological University. Her research focuses on narrative studies and postmodern fiction. Her thesis examines how unnatural narratology accounts for postmodern narratives. She is also interested in cultural studies, especially the interaction of pop culture and capitalism.*
Candice Balete (Nanyang Technological University)

“Hell goes round and round”: Interminable Recursions in Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*

In the publisher’s note to *The Third Policeman* (1940/1967), Flann O’Brien writes: “Hell goes round and round. In shape it is nearly circular and by nature it is interminable, repetitive and very nearly unbearable.” This paper looks at the recursive images in the novel—such as Policeman McCruiskeen’s chests-within-chests and the comparison of Joe’s body to the skins of an onion—as well as the novel’s implied interminable, *mise-en-abyme* narrative structure. The use of nested images in the novel emphasize the text’s dual status as both “words and world,” as Patricia Waugh writes, simultaneously highlighting its foremost status as textual construct, as well as its capacity to constitute and construct fictional worlds. Incidences of recursion such as these intimate the narrative’s capacity to spiral indefinitely into itself. There is a perturbing sense that these incidences of successive regression are endless, and it is as though the reader is looking directly into the abyss—a textual kind of Hell that is of O’Brien’s own creation. In its consideration of these recursive structures, this paper discusses the capacity of fiction to envisage the infinite, as well as its capacity to create tentative frameworks through which the notion of vertiginous infinite regress could be made more fathomable within the finite limits of human understanding.

*Candice Balete has recently completed her MA in English at Nanyang Technological University. This paper is abridged from the first chapter of her MA thesis, “The Anti-Epistemological Impulses within O’Brien, Borges, and Gray’s Metafictional Narratives.” Aside from Flann O’Brien, other Irish writers whose works Candice is interested in include Dermot Healy, Seamus Heaney, John Banville, and Samuel Beckett.*
15. John Banville’s (and Benjamin Black’s) recent fiction
(Chair: Derek Hand) - Seminar Room 9

Neil Murphy (Nanyang Technological University)
John Banville: Literature as Art

This paper will consider some of the ways that the visual arts are deployed in John Banville’s fiction, particularly in his Man Booker Prize-winning novel, *The Sea* (2005). I focus primarily on how *The Sea*’s narrative structure is formulated in close dialogue with French artist Pierre Bonnard’s paintings of his wife, Marthe. In Banville’s literary re-telling of and engagement with Bonnard’s paintings, the narrative is constructed in sympathy with the artistic principles that governed Bonnard’s paintings. For example, Bonnard continued to paint Marthe long after she died, but always at the age at which they met. Material reality is transfigured and preserved but, crucially, in apparent movement rather than stasis. *The Sea* is an exemplum of the kind of artistic ambition that lies at the centre of Banville’s work more generally. It is arguably the novel in which his artistic imagination achieves its most refined expression, because his philosophical discourse on art is also ultimately most closely reflected in its own status as a work of art. The paper will situate *The Sea* in the context of Banville’s work, more generally, and in terms of his long-held fascination with art.

*Neil Murphy is an Associate Professor of Contemporary Literature at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he also holds a joint appointment in the School of Art, Design and Media. He is the author of Irish Fiction and Postmodern Doubt (2004) and editor of Aidan Higgins: The Fragility of Form (2009). He co-edited (with Keith Hopper) a special Flann O’Brien centenary issue of the Review of Contemporary Fiction (2011) and The Short Fiction of Flann O’Brien (2013). More recently, he has co-edited (with Keith Hopper) a multi-volume sequence related to the work of Dermot Healy, published by Dalkey Archive Press, which includes a scholarly edition of Fighting with Shadows (2015), Dermot Healy: The Collected Short Stories (2015), Dermot Healy: The Collected Plays (2016), and Writing the Sky: Observations and Essays on Dermot Healy (2016). He has published numerous articles and book chapters on contemporary fiction, Irish writing, and theories of reading, and is currently completing a book on John Banville.*

*Thierry Robin (University of Brest, Western Brittany)*

Doctor Banville and Mr Black: the visionary, the mercenary and the reactionary: the ambiguity of similes

This paper intends to resort to tropology as a critical tool and method, taking after Jenn Webb (*Understanding Representation*, 2008), Christopher Prendergast (*The Triangle of Representation*, 2000) and Frank Ankersmit (*History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*, 1994). The aim is to show or demonstrate to what extent the key trope to be found in Banville’s work is that of the simile, revealing the ambiguity of his aesthetics: both pointing to the past and a classical Jamesian influence, and to a more contemporary/visionary/post-modernist one, combining baroque, reflexive, and ironic elements. Banville may thus be regarded as providing a
complex link bridging the gap between early 20th century literary realism and 21st century more transgressive writing. I focus on The Infinities (published in 2009) and compare this novel with some installments in the Quirke series by Benjamin Black, where similes are more often than not of an entirely different kind. Although similes and metaphors are similar, similes explicitly use connecting words or grammatical markers (such as like, as, so, than, as if, as though, or various verbs such as resemble, look or sound like) which deliberately underscore the idea of speech as based on contrived constructions drawing attention to its own artifices, categories and limits. With similes, what is underlined more or less directly is that while one cannot get directly to the essence of one thing, one may still give an idea of it by referring to yet another object thought similar in a potentially distant or even outlandish manner. This new object may in turn be compared to yet another entity and so on and so forth. While similes may be used for humorous purposes, satire or merely evocative comparison, they may also betray the idea that language is a matter of never-ending contiguity, where the speaker never accesses the core of things and beings but simply bounces or ricochets off the surface of the referential outside world, like an impossible image reflected by a carnival mirror. From Adam Godley to Dr Quirke, I explore how Banville’s aesthetic agenda proves at the very least disjunctive, not to say problematic, from an Irish viewpoint.

Dr. Thierry Robin teaches Irish literature—among other things—at the University of Brest, Western Brittany.

* 

Hedda Friberg-Harnesk (Mid-Sweden University)
In the Loop of an Infinite Replay: John Banville’s The Blue Guitar

The idea of an endless replay of all things, making the “notion of an end” an impossibility, is discernible in John Banville’s The Blue Guitar (2015). Oliver Orme—the novel’s painting and pilfering narrator—muses that “in our fallen, finite world,” nothing can be finished, only broken off, abandoned.” Only in “the loop” is completion possible (Banville 222). Banville’s loop is in dialogue with Nietzsche’s cycle of eternal recurrence (68), but to my mind also with Jean Baudrillard’s (1996) envisioned “uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference” (5-6). To Baudrillard (2003), there is “no conclusion,” only a “passing from one form to another” (91). In a system turned simulacrum, we are, according to Baudrillard, “consigned to an infinite replay of all that happened before”: history is “riffling through its own dustbins and looking for redemption in the rubbish by dusting off and re-circulating old ideologies, values” (Horrocks 23-24). Ideas of recycled energies, then, have inspired my theoretical approach here. Among reviewers of The Blue Guitar, Sameer Rahim (2015) seems disappointed that the novel “returns to familiar ground” and Theo Tait (2015) deplores that, in it, “old ground” is “being worked over, again and again” (33). I posit that a writer of fiction might be engaged in a “riffling through,” or sorts, of existing material—albeit not for redemption—and that such a practice is not tired repetition, but a reiterated effort to restore textual energies by recycling them. Such an effort to revitalize art—making it over, making it new—constitutes, I suggest, a strategy for managing the void.
Hedda Friberg-Harnesk is Associate Professor Emerita and former coordinator of English at Mid-Sweden University. Interested in memory, myth, and postmodern theory in Irish writing, her primary research field is the work of John Banville, on which she has published widely.
16. Ireland and Japan: a bountiful friendship
(Chair: Seán Golden) - Seminar Room 4

Eishiro Ito (Iwate Prefectural University)
The Japanese Effect on Yeats, Joyce and Heaney

This paper focuses on how Japanese poetry has influenced Irish literature, especially W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and Seamus Heaney. The Irish writer Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) wrote numerous essays and books about Japan, which greatly helped introduce Japan to the West. The first successful Japanese poet Yone Noguchi presented the traditional Japanese poetic form, haiku and tanka, to the West through his lectures, books and his English poems with Japanese tastes. Particularly, the Imagist Movement was affected by the short Japanese poetry. Joyce’s “I Hear an Army” is considered as an Imagist poem. On Sandymount Strand in Dublin, Stephen Dedalus made a short poem: “He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth’s kiss” (Ulysses).

On 15 November 2000 in Dublin, Seamus Heaney gave a lecture, “Petals on a Bough,” as an introduction to a reading of “Japanese Effect” poems, comparing Japanese poetry with the works of William Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, Ezra Pound and even a ninth-century Irish poem. In fact, Heaney himself wrote some haiku-like brief poems. Irene De Angelis explains “The Japanese Effect in Contemporary Irish Poetry” (2012), but the Japanese impact on Irish literature is not limited to poetry. It is widely known that Yeats was inspired by the Japanese Noh play, leading him to write “The Four Plays for Dancers,” while Joyce owned a copy of “‘Noh’ or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical State of Japan” written by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound.

Eishiro Ito is an associate professor of English at Iwate Prefectural University, Japan, and has been an IASIL member since 1993. He has given a presentation at the annual IASIL conference every odd year since 2001 and read a paper at the International James Joyce Symposium every even year since 2000.

*

Shotaro Yamauchi (Sanno University)
Yeats and Hojin Yano: An Awakening of a Japanese Yeatsian

Hojin Yano, also known as Mineto Yano, was a Japanese scholar of English decadent literature. His 1978 book Seikimatsu Eibungakushi (The History of English Fin de Siecle Literature) is considered to be the bible of the Japanese scholars of English decadent literature.

In his 1931 essay “Henei (Partial Portraits),” Yano writes about his meetings with Yeats in 1926 and 1927. In the essay, Yano attempts to do some interviews with Yeats on his contemporary poets, like T. S. Eliot. In turn, Yeats ceaselessly questions Yano on traditional and modern Japanese culture like zen, saying the only country he longs to go to is Japan. Yano was overwhelmed by Yeats’s strong interest in Japan and felt ashamed of his ignorance of Japanese literature and culture.
However, at that time, Japanese scholars like Yano were strongly conscious of learning from Western culture, not Japanese culture. When Yano was most active as an English scholar, Japan had begun to incorporate western culture and to despise Japanese traditional culture.

After Yeats’s death, Yano wrote an essay “Yeats to Nippon (Yeats and Japan)” which was included in his 1955 book Eibungaku Yawa (Evening Chats on English Literature). In this essay, Yano passionately celebrates Yeats for his extraordinary adoration for Japan, as if Yano had become a nationalist.

For Japanese Yeatsian scholars in the early twentieth century, to study Yeats was to reevaluate their lost Japanese culture. By examining the work of Yano, I will reveal how, through Yeats, he became aware of his “Japaneseness.”

Shotaro Yamauchi is a part-time lecturer at Sanno University, Kanagawa.

* 

Li Yuan (Guangdong University of Foreign Studies)
W. B. Yeats’s Encounter with the Noh Theatre: Anti-theatricality and Nationalism in At the Hawk’s Well

As an already established poet, Yeats found it difficult to transform the lyrical voice in his poetry into a multitude of theatrical voices and characters when he turned to dramatic writing during the Irish dramatic revival. In addition to dramatic form, he was constantly confronted with the contingencies of such theatrical elements as stage props, actors and an audience. His modernist preference for spoken diegesis over theatrical mimesis, his distrust of actors, and suspicion of the big audience and the public sphere, all led him to abandon his earlier ideal of “People’s Theatre” and seek out an aristocratic theatrical form. Yeats’s encounter with the Noh theatre led to the production of At the Hawk’s Well in 1916, in which he found solutions for the problems he struggled with in a poetic theatre. Inspired by Noh, Yeats “invented a form of drama” which not only implements his anti-theatrical discourse that rejects realism, but also produces an intimate theatre that refuses a mob. Instead of offering an authentic recreation of the Noh, Yeats adapted it for his own aesthetic and political purposes, thereby imprinting it with the marks of his own version of nationalism. As he believed in the pedagogical power of theatre to educate the nation, Yeats’s interest in Noh was not, as many of his critics have argued, a departure from his commitment to an Irish national theatre. In this Noh-inspired, ritualistic, trance-provoking play, the spirit-possessed and troubled Cuchulain manifests Yeats’s ambivalent attitude towards nationalism, which synthesizes opposition to irrational obsession with the embrace of mythic heroism.

Li Yuan is a professor at the School of English Language and Culture, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China. She was a postdoctoral fellow in the English Department of Harvard University (2013-2014) as part of the China Scholarship Council-Harvard University Exchange. Her research focuses on Modern British and Irish theatre and drama, and translation studies.
Homosociality and Gift-giving in Michael Longley’s Poetry

The matter of gift-giving is a recurring theme in Longley’s work, and many of his poems addressed to male poets involve some manner of exchange; this is often the sharing of physical objects or the provision of domestic spaces. I believe these acts are intended to question the dominance of hegemonic masculinity in anglophone culture, particularly in Northern Ireland, by presenting alternative systems of social exchange, many of which border into what might be conceptualised in terms of physical intimacy. These non-normative acts of male gift-giving and domesticity are, in part, rendered in Longley’s poetry as stays against the (masculine-coded) violence in Northern Ireland.

This paper will discuss specifically how his poems addressed to other men, concerning either male socialisation or non-normative male sexuality, form an important thread in his work; it will also examine how Longley questions the reader’s definitions around moments of emotional proximity, problematizing the boundaries of what might be considered a sexual act or one of same-sex friendship or social bonding.

This paper will discuss poems from throughout Longley’s work, focusing primarily on his later collections, from the versions of Homer and Ovid in The Ghost Orchid (1995) to the elegiac poems for his twin brother in The Stairwell (2014). It will incorporate theories on male homosocial desire from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s Between Men (1985), and Raewyn Connell’s essay Hegemonic Masculinity (2005). Though a significant body of criticism has already formed concerning Longley’s work and cultural significance, particularly Fran Brearton’s Reading Michael Longley (2006), very little has focused on his distinctive challenges to gender norms; Sedgwick and Connell’s work provide useful models for making explicit the systems of behavioural control that Longley contests.

Dave Coates is a second year PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh, writing on Louis MacNeice’s influence on contemporary Northern Irish poetry. He writes poetry criticism at http://davepoems.wordpress.com.

Sorcha de Brún (Ulster University)
Joe Steve Ó Neachtain: Masculinities and the New Gaeltacht Gothic

In common with many other contemporary Irish language and Gaeltacht writers, much of Joe Steve Ó Neachtain’s short stories and novels examine different expressions of masculinity and the male experience in the context of the Irish speaking world. The world that Ó Neachtain creates in his fiction is a patriarchal and conservative one that is dominated by the rule not just of the father, but of the forefather, and where the individual man is portrayed frequently as an unwitting subject of patriarchy. One of Ó Neachtain’s most salient features as a Gaeltacht writer...
is the manner in which his fiction explores how the mores and values of the 21st century present frequently collide with the ghosts of the past, and how political and historical events such as the Great Irish Famine, the experience of Colonialism and the Northern Ireland conflict continue to resurface in the imagination of many of his protagonists, colliding unexpectedly with their present.

This paper will look at how Ó Neachtain has created distinctive gothic masculinities in his prose writing by drawing on themes, characters and particular literary devices such as the traditional ghost story. The paper will show that Ó Neachtain focuses on diverse themes such as male friendship, politics and history to explore masculinities and to occasionally parody the male body as was common in Irish fiction of earlier periods. In particular, this paper will show that these gothic masculinities are expressly related to the Gaeltacht experience. Finally, the paper will conclude by arguing, as pointed out by some commentators, that while Ó Neachtain is generally considered to be a writer of popular fiction, it may be more appropriate to view him a writer for the public. It will also suggest that the reason for his popularity is his use of traditional techniques of storytelling, which continue to resonate strongly with the contemporary Gaeltacht reader.

Sorcha de Brún has a PhD in modern Irish language prose literature from Ulster University, Northern Ireland, under the supervision of Professor Fionntán de Brún and Mr. Iain Mac A’ Phearsain. Her thesis was on men and masculinities in the fiction of Gaeltacht writers Pádraig Ó Ciobháin, Micheál Ó Conghail and Joe Steve Ó Neachtain. She was the recipient of a John and Pat Hume Scholarship in Maynooth University 2007-2010. She is a Research Supervisor and Irish language tutor in Hibernia College, Dublin, and has taught Irish literature and language in Maynooth University, Ulster University and Dublin City University. She has published essays and reviews in Bliainiris, Feasta, Comhar, and The Irish Times. Some of her poems and short stories for children are on the Sêideán Sí Primary School Curriculum for Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools. She is currently preparing her thesis for publication.

*Ryan K Evans (Lancaster University)
Sean O’Casey’s Eye for Colour: A Production History of The Plough and the Stars

Sean O’Casey valued colour in the world as well as his writing. Several of his plays use colour or the idea of colour within their titles, and all of them utilize colour in some fashion through specific stage and textual directions—as in The Plough and the Stars with costumes like Peter Flynn’s brightly coloured and out of place Forester’s uniform. Productions of The Plough reflect O’Casey’s concerns over the victimization of the working-class Dubliners caught in the middle of the violence. Surrounded by oppressive organizations and ideologies armed with a desire for power, a group of tenement dwellers attempt to survive by whatever means necessary. The diversity of their own opinions allowed O’Casey and later directors to broach the difficult topics of World War I, the Easter Rising, and British rule; however, he presents those difficulties through the eyes of the civilians and not the soldiers. Jack Clitheroe simply acts as the catalyst for this discussion, while audience members see Dublin through Nora’s eyes. Colour, through costuming, lighting, staging, or language, often plays a significant role in directing the audience’s moods and reactions. I will
consider six productions of *The Plough*, starting with the original 1926 production directed by O’Casey, considering the significance of the use of colour. The interest in the more radical narratives of the Easter Rising leading up to 2016 has been explored by the Abbey Theatre, mixing modern society with April 1916 in a highly interpretive fashion, and London’s National Theatre’s more traditional production.

*Ryan K Evans is a third year PhD student at Lancaster University in Lancaster England. He hopes to establish in his thesis—which explores the use of colour in the works of Sean O’Casey—a culture of colour in both O’Casey’s dramaturgy as well as potentially within Irish drama generally. Born and raised in the United States, he earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and History from Brigham Young University – Idaho and a Master of Arts degree in English from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah.*
18. The Joyce Experience: Digital Texts and Virtual Reality in Literary Research and Pedagogy
(Chair: Margaret Kelleher) - Seminar Room 9

Andrew A. Kuhn (Boston College)
Dubliners Bookshelf: Digital Bibliography and Criticism

_Dubliners Bookshelf_ takes Joyce’s short story collection _Dubliners_ (1914) as a starting point for investigating intertextuality, reading practices, bibliography, and evolving literary tools for a digital environment. The online collection curates and explores digital facsimiles of the books explicitly mentioned in _Dubliners_. My paper explores the creation of the project and its uses in the classroom to demonstrate the ways in which bibliography, print culture, and literary criticism might come together through digital humanities tools.

*Andrew A. Kuhn is a doctoral candidate in the English Department at Boston College. His research is in British and Irish modernism and print culture. His current research examines modernist literary institutions in the works of Yeats, Joyce, Gissing, and Woolf. He is the editor of Dubliners Bookshelf and author of articles on Irish print culture and literature.*

* * *

Joseph Nugent (Boston College)
From Digital to Virtual: Virtual Reality, Immersive Technology, and Gamifying your Classroom

In response to the use of virtual reality in the teaching of literature, this panel considers questions such as: Can or should learning be gamified? What are the learning limits of the immersive experience? How can these advances enhance our students’ encounter with literature and history?

Professor Nugent’s current seminar is teasing out these questions from the cutting edge of technology. Taking Joyce’s _Ulysses_ as the base text, twenty students are currently conceptualizing and constructing a game to be negotiated in virtual reality. By zooming in on the material culture of _Ulysses_, the game will exploit Joyce’s meticulously researched and observed texts as windows onto the social and cultural life of _fin-de-siècle_ Dublin. Called _Joycestick_, the project is a proof-of-concept experiment in applying tomorrow’s technology to today’s classroom.

*Joe Nugent is a seasoned teacher and manager of innovative and interactive technology-driven scholarship developed in the laboratory-classroom. Joycestick, like Nugent’s other projects, is designed to bring this demanding writer, through his students, to the general public. His seminars have previously produced the downloadable website Walking Ulysses, the smartphone app JoyceWays, Dubliners Bookshelf, and the augmented edition of Joyce’s short stories, Digital Dubliners.*
Ryan Reede (Boston College)
Unifying the Text through Unity

Unity, the cross-platform game engine, has enabled a new generation of scholars to imagine literary texts in an immersive 3D environment. This form of coding and gamification can be an essential piece in the reimagining of literary criticism and pedagogy as students and scholars can create new ways to encounter literary works through the making of new digital worlds. In my presentation, I will explore some of the results of applying Unity to literary interpretation and demonstrate some of the problems and discoveries we made while coding Joycestick.

A native of Los Angeles, Ryan Reede is a recent graduate of Boston College with successful majors in Film Studies and Computer Science. Reede’s extensive experience in videography, 3D imagery, panoramic photography and facility with a wide range of applications led to his successful steering of Joycestick from conception to release.
19. Contemporary Irish poetry 2
(Chair: Lye Kitying) - Seminar Room 4

Boey Kim Cheng (Nanyang Technological University)
New Estates: Suburban and Domestic Spaces in Contemporary Irish Poetry

In his poem “Glengormley,” Derek Mahon concludes “By / Necessity, if not choice, I live here too.” Mahon’s bleak and resigned view of the suburb is shared by many Irish writers seeking to escape its confines, an anti-suburban attitude often inextricable from the Joycean desire to fly by the nets of nationality and religion, and the political and economic troubles in the 70s and 80s. In recent years, however, there is a revisiting of Irish suburbia led by Eavan Boland, whose groundbreaking suburban poems stake out the hitherto anonymous space as a place where issues of nationhood and womanhood are vitally explored. Boland’s work maps a liminal site where the boundaries between public and private, centre and periphery, city and country are breached, and her attention to the domestic milieu provides a liberating shift from the West of Ireland as the dominant locus for Irish poetry. This suburban poetics informs the emerging women’s poetry in the 1980s and 1990s but is by no means a solely gender-oriented shift. Male poets like Eamon Grennan and Conor O’Callaghan investigate the suburb with equal commitment and sensuousness. What this reveals is the need to delineate new spaces and name the in-between zone in which so many of the poets live and work, beyond the country-city helix. This paper will track the development of this new estate and the fresh readings of place and identity it has sponsored.

Boey Kim Cheng has published five collections of poetry and a travel memoir entitled Between Stations. His doctoral thesis is entitled “Searches, Soundings, Probes”: Readings of Place in Contemporary Irish Poetry. He teaches Creative Writing at Nanyang Technological University.

*  

Stephanie Schwerter (University of Valenciennes)
“From Cork to Leningrad”: The Russian-Irish Connection in Sean Dunne’s Poetry

Séan Dunne is one of the Irish poets whose work has undeservedly been neglected in the field of Irish Studies. He was born in Waterford 1956 and died in Cork in 1995. Dunne has written three collections of poems – Against the Storm (1985), The Sheltered Nest (1992) and Time and the Island (1996). He is also the author of two prose books The Road to Silence (1995) and In My Father’s House (2002), the latter being the account of his childhood in Waterford. In his poetic work, a special interest in Russian history and literature can be discerned. Among contemporary Irish poets, Dunne is not the only one to be attracted by Russia. Writers from Northern Ireland such as Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and Medbh McGuckian, frequently refer to tsarist Russia or the Stalinist era in order to establish a subversive link between the two historical periods of political violence and the Northern Irish conflict. Thus, they attempt to use Russian history as a lens in order to attract attention to the shortcomings of their own society. It is, however, difficult to compare Dunne with his Northern Irish fellow writers. The themes evoked in his poems are generated to a great extent by his own biography. A general sympathy for the victimized and
socially disadvantaged is a striking feature of his poetry. Among others, he evokes the themes of political violence in Northern Ireland, the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust and Irish emigration after the Famine. The Russian poet who visibly influenced Dunne’s work most is Anna Akhmatova. This paper will focus on Dunne’s translations of Akhmatova’s poetic work and their relevance to Irish Studies in the 21st century.

*Stephanie Schwerter is professor of Anglophone literature at the University of Valenciennes. Before moving to France, she spent six years in Northern Ireland, working at the University of Ulster and at Queen’s University Belfast. Her research interest lies in Northern Irish Film and Fiction as well as in the intertextual links between Irish, French, German and Russian poetry. Among her publications count Northern Irish Poetry and The Russian Turn (2012) as well as Belfast in der nordirischen Troubles fiction (2007), a monograph on the literary representations of Belfast in Northern Irish fiction.*

*Britta Olinder (Göteborg University)*

Vona Groarke’s Pictures of Ireland

Vona Groarke has a unique voice. And a very Irish voice, grounded in the Irish landscape, in its history and in its literary works. In Groarke’s first collection *Shale* (1994), the evocation of Maria Edgeworth’s house in the poem “Patronage” ties together the novelist’s time and her family situation with her home location, and the poet’s experience of it from her outside view. Irish literature is in a profound way alive in Groarke’s work. Other examples are her version of the *Lament for Art O’Leary* and her edition of Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Deserted Village*. With the celebrations of the Easter Rising not very long ago, Groarke reminds us of the practical, domestic factors during this critical week. “Imperial Measure” takes its point of departure in a letter from Patrick Pearse to his mother to calm her anxieties. This is a satirical, even cynical view of the other side of heroism and idealism to add to the picture of Ireland. As a description of the country, a special place in her poetry should be given to “Athalones,” a six-page poem of the many different towns to be seen in this central Irish Poetry in the course of one day—a kind of Ulysses in shorter poetic form? These are just a few glimpses of the broad painting of Ireland in Vona Groarke’s poetry.

*Britta Olinder, Göteborg (Gothenburg) University, has written widely on Canadian, Australian, Indian, and Irish literature, including essays on such authors as Aritha van Herk, Marian Engel, Janice Kulyk Keefer, Sally Morgan, R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, John Hewitt, James Joyce, Anne Devlin, and Deirdre Madden. She is the editor of Literary Environments: Canada and the Old World (2006) and co-editor of Criss-Cross Tales: Short Stories from English-Speaking Cultures (with Anne Michal Moskow, 2002), Re-Mapping Exile: Realities and Metaphors in Irish Literature and History (with Michael Böß and Irene Gilsenan Nordin, 2006), and Place and Memory in the New Ireland (with Werner Huber, 2009).*
20. Reconsidering Aidan Higgins
(Chair: Michelle Chiang) - TR+1

Lara O’Muirithe (Trinity College Dublin)
An “imperfect pearl”: Re-viewing Aidan Higgins’s *Balcony of Europe* through the lens of baroque art historiography

Aidan Higgins’s *Balcony of Europe* (1972 and 2010) has been subject to glib criticism, with adversaries objecting to its “convoluted form” (Murphy, *Irish Fiction* 56). In *The Modern Irish Novel*, Rüdiger Imhof argues that “Higgins seems to have noticeable difficulty with shape” (27). Meanwhile John Banville opines: “so much fine writing is blurred and even lost in the formlessness of the book ... Mr. Higgins has no sense of form” (Murphy, “An Afterword” 417). Countering such intellectually conservative critiques, which compare *Balcony of Europe* with Higgins’s more formally stable novel *Langrishe, Go Down* (1966), Neil Murphy’s chapter in *Irish Fiction and Postmodern Doubt*, “The Mutability of Form,” addresses how the author’s rejection of “sequential plotted narrative” assists the phenomenological concerns within the later publication (57-58). Likewise, this paper defends *Balcony of Europe*’s protean aspects—which I classify as baroque form. *Balcony of Europe* suggests an expansive visual purview. Elaborate form is its lifeblood. *Balcony of Europe* issues a late modern-baroque creed: “there are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees. Our globe seen by god is a transparent law, not a mass of fact” (Higgins 239). This registers an aesthetic intimacy with Heinrich Wölfflin’s description of baroque art in *The Principles of Art History*: “the soul aspires to dissolution in the sublimity of the huge, the infinite. Emotion and movement at all costs” (10). The baroque, according to art historiography, is “a style in which appearances take precedence over essences”—*Balcony of Europe* shares with it an unusual hallmark of being implicit with conceptions of style itself (Turner 268; Gray 228). Higgins’s work should be retrieved from an Irish critical lineage dismissive of formalist experimentalism. Joe Cleary’s introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* betrays the teleological strain in Irish Studies in its habitual historicism. My aesthetic-art historiographical framework demonstrates how Higgins’s text is a *tour de force* of Irish modernism, deserving of renewed scrutiny—in all its marvelous excess.

*Lara O’Muirithe obtained a BA in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London). She graduated with an MPhil in Irish Writing from Trinity College Dublin. Aidan Higgins is the focus of her doctoral research. Her PhD is funded by the Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship (2015-2019).*

*Patricia Karunungan (Nanyang Technological University)
Absent Longing: Love and the Epistolary Form in Aidan Higgins’ *Bornholm Night-Ferry*

What does it mean for love to exist only through letters? In Aidan Higgins’ *Bornholm Night-Ferry*, the love affair between Fitzy, an Irish writer, and Elin, a Danish poet, is presented in a purely epistolary form. The rendering of memory and feeling into language permits us to scrutinise the medium’s capacity and limitations as a means of
representing and sustaining human relationships. However, the use of the epistolary form—as a subset of language—complicates the analysis by implicating two worlds: that of the text and its resonance with a readerly “reality.” The letters permit a special love-language to develop between Elin and Fitzy, an intimate discourse meant only for an audience of two. The implied truths about love and memory gleaned through the voyeuristic act of reading are resisted by the narrative’s ending, in which language fails to sustain the romance. The following questions then arise: given the anti-realist nature of the book, is the love we have been given access to even “love” in any fixed sense? What do we do with this indeterminacy? Does love even demand to be codified in language? This paper examines how the transaction between the epistolary form and reality in Bornholm Night-Ferry reveals language to be a misrepresenting agent that cannot be the medium of love.

Having grown up between Manila, New York, and Singapore, Patricia Karunungan nurtures interests in diasporic literature, as well as postmodernism and memory narratives. Most recently, she co-edited the fiction anthology this is how you walk on the moon. She will be embarking on her postgraduate studies in English Literature at Nanyang Technological University later this year.

*Zoea Tania Chen Jinyan (Nanyang Technological University)

Aidan Higgins’ Bornholm Night-Ferry: The Gravity of Lightness

This paper will consider the manner in which Aidan Higgins depicts non-material modes of consciousness in his epistolary novel, Bornholm Night-Ferry. In the fiction, one encounters the slow expiring of Elin Marstrander and Finn FitzGerald’s love affair within an intimate, textual universe of letters. As readers, we are invited, like the protagonists, to peruse their impassioned imagined spaces, whether it is within their temporary co-habited rooms, or in Denmark, Ireland, or London—or in the temporal gaps within their letters. In these spaces, we witness the manner in which the two figures flit in and out of material reality in a bid to prolong their stay in the “dream-world.” However, we are also made aware of a certain facticity in dreaming where, in many cases, one must first acknowledge or reckon with material reality so that reveries can endure or hold their form. Higgins’ text aspires to illustrate the idea that the fragility of dreams should not stand in opposition to reality as an ontological mode; rather, it is essential for the dreamer to come into contact with reality to usefully resist it. The dreamer sees dreaming as a separate response to living that transposes meaning. In other words, the fragile texture of the dream appears as a form in its own right and is not indicative of a lack of structure, or an absence.

Zoea Tania Chen is a postgraduate student in Nanyang Technological University’s English Literature programme and a theatre-maker. She is especially interested in the ephemerality of the everyday and tries her best to capture ethereal moments. She is passionate about art and especially the way in which literature and theatre can have enduring impressions on people. She is a strong believer in the power of dreams, empathy, memory and introspection.
(Chair: Michelle Wang) - Seminar Room 6

Donal McCay (independent scholar)
The Further Journeys of Mad Sweeney

One of the most enduring of stories from Irish mythology is the tale of Buile Suibhne (Mad Sweeney). Cursed by a Christian saint and condemned to live as a bird, the pagan chieftain, Sweeney, fled from the Battle of Magh Rath where, in 637AD, the Pagan forces of the North East of Ireland fought and lost to the armies of the new Christian religion. The myth was passed down orally by the seanachí before being finally written down in the sixteenth century. The first two of three texts were translated by John O’Donovan and published in 1842. The third source—Buile Suibhne—was translated by J. G. O’Keeffe and published in 1913. O’Keeffe’s work influenced Flann O’ Brien’s translation in At Swim-Two-Birds and Seamus Heaney relied on the O’Keeffe translation for his Sweeney Astray.

Both O’Brien and Heaney use the story of Sweeney, a deserter and an outsider, to proclaim the artist’s search for freedom. Many other Irish poets, novelists and playwrights have also chosen to use the story of Mad Sweeney to examine the painful experience of the exile, the outsider and the dissenter, including Samuel Ferguson, W. B. Yeats, Austin Clarke, Tom McIntyre, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Paul Muldoon, John Montague, Derek Mahon, and, most recently, Mary O’Malley. The myth travelled to the United States with Flann O’Brien’s friend, William Saroyan, who wrote and directed Sweeney in the Trees, and Sweeney later became the subject of American anti-war works by the novelist William Wharton and the poet Patricia Monaghan. This paper will investigate the extent to which the story of Mad Sweeney endures as an iconic myth of modern literature.

Donal McCay was born in Strabane in Northern Ireland in 1949, and was educated at St Columb’s College, Derry, and at University College Dublin. He has worked in business management for over forty years, and co-owns and manages a company providing foreign language training for business and professional purposes. He completed an MA in Irish Studies at St Mary’s University, Twickenham in 2015.

* 

Victoria Yee Wei Wen (Nanyang Technological University)
Diaspora and Myth-making: Irish Lore in Neil Gaiman’s American Gods

Neil Gaiman’s depiction of America as a mythic place in American Gods explores “the soul of America”—what immigrants brought with them and what they found in America. Existing scholarship focuses on Gaiman’s use of mythology and folklore to create a complex, postmodern narrative that is derived from different sources. Intertextuality plays a large role in American Gods, seen in the way the recreation of Mad Sweeney reveals influences from Irish authors such as W. B. Yeats and James Joyce. The figure of Mad Sweeney has also been used in Seamus Heaney’s 1983 translation Sweeney Astray and Flann O’Brien’s 1939 novel At Swim-Two-Birds, where O’Brien uses Sweeney’s story to contrast old and new stories.
A minor character in the array of mythological figures, Mad Sweeney is a version of the Irish king Suibhne, and was brought to the New World by a girl from Bantry. As a personification of the immigrants’ beliefs and experiences, Sweeney likewise acclimatises to the New World and grows to be more American than Irish. In Irish lore, he is a figure of madness and wandering, making for a liminal figure that Gaiman uses to cross boundaries so as to explore issues of migrancy and diaspora. This paper will examine the way Gaiman recreates this version of Sweeney from the legendary king in order to speak about the Irish immigrant experience and the eventual cultural diversity that comes to describe America. Gaiman’s Sweeney has lost his Irish accent, drinks American liquor, and does coin tricks with gold from his leprechaun’s hoard. Through Sweeney, he questions what it means to be American, delving into the creation of modern America’s cultural diversity through cultural dislocations.

Victoria Yee is a graduate student earning an M.A. in English Literature at Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests include contemporary women’s writing, feminist studies, postcolonial literature, and comparative mythology. She is currently working on Neil Gaiman’s The Sandman. Her thesis addresses the role of myth and stories in a contemporary world, and the way these complex body of myths and stories form a kind of epic bricolage for the modern age.

*Cheong Xian Hui Adel (Nanyang Technological University)
The Comic Spirit of Flann O’Brien’s At Swim-Two-Birds and The Third Policeman

The ludic impulse in Flann O’Brien’s At Swim-Two-Birds and The Third Policeman is seen through the comic, which goes hand in hand with the reader’s visualization of these fictional worlds. The comic, as one dimension of the play in language, is so entwined with the ideas explored in both novels that to fail to recognize the comic on its own terms is to overlook its centrality in regard to how these storyworlds are shaped. Although unable to remember his own name, the narrator of The Third Policeman brushes it off lightly: “But the unexplainable exhilaration which I drew from my surroundings seemed to invest this situation merely with the genial interest of a good joke.” In spite of chaos, and even nothingness, there is a sense of freedom and playful revelry from being unfettered by the laws of logic. For the reader, as co-producer of the work, laughter offers a different response to the destabilization of meaning in face of such aporias. Especially, if laughter as an expression of the doubleness of rationality and irrationality, and meaning and meaninglessness, bears witness to limits of human knowledge. Drawing on Charles Baudelaire’s concept of the “absolute comic,” this presentation will examine how humor and the comic in At Swim-Two-Birds and The Third Policeman influence the way these fictional worlds are conceived by the reader, particularly with relation to play as an alternative organizing principle.

Adel Cheong completed both her undergraduate and masters degrees in English Literature at Nanyang Technological University. For her thesis, titled “What Succeeds Postmodern Fiction? Milan Kundera’s Ignorance, John Banville’s The Sea, and Julian Barnes’ The Sense of an Ending,” she explored the concerns of space and
time in twenty-first century fiction. Her research interests are in narratology, and postmodern and contemporary fiction.

Karen Lui (Nanyang Technological University)
Flann O’Brien and the Postmodern Self

Postmodern fiction writers such as Flann O’Brien constantly attempt to subvert the authority that people often affix to what they believe is the one absolute truth based on scientific evidence. In “Identity and Selfhood as a Problématique”, Peter Wagner observes that “notions of the ‘decentring of the self’ and of the ‘post-modern self’ . . . question . . . the existence of the human self as a unit and its persistence as the ‘same’ self over time” (34). Selfhood is often restricted and dictated by outward appearance. While appearance can be one of the ways to express selfhood, it does not reflect the flexibility of selfhood. This essay presents an analysis of “John Duffy’s Brother,” “Two in One” and The Third Policeman, and considers the liminal state of the self, in which a person’s identity does not remain the same but it also does not transform into something completely unrecognizable. In particular, it focuses on how O’Brien’s infusion of his narratives with folklore illustrates how the self is continuously in transition, regardless of the outward appearance. This essay demonstrates how O’Brien undercuts the conventional authority that science has over folklore, and illustrates the impossibility of accurately defining the self and breaks down the boundaries between binaries.

Karen Lui is a final-year undergraduate student majoring in English Literature at Nanyang Technological University.
Hattie Induni (University of Leeds)
“‘Ireland of the ruins’: Resistant Cultural Memory in William Trevor’s The Story of Lucy Gault

Ruins present a unique opportunity for critiquing heritage. While ruined spaces present access to history, their decay and instability as structures marks distance from the past even while communicating it. As Walter Benjamin has argued, when “history has physically merged into the setting,” its meaning is made insecure. Irish writers have used these ambiguous historical documents in order to unsettle and resist established historiography, particularly in regards to the conflicts of the early twentieth century. In this paper, I will examine how William Trevor’s The Story of Lucy Gault (2003) uses ruin, both as a physical presence and a conceptual preoccupation, in order to reflect on the way recent Irish history is conceived, understood, and appropriated as cultural memory.

Beginning during the War of Independence, Trevor’s novel depicts a century in which Ireland is unable to escape the memory of its revolution, instead continuing to live amidst the markers of destruction: “Ireland of the ruins I have heard it called, more ruins and always more.” Trevor’s text has been placed within the tradition of the “Big House novel,” yet his deployment of ruin resists this subgenre. Lahardane, the house in question, is not destroyed. Instead, ruin becomes a melancholic imaginative presence, and a role is given to less momentous spaces not normally deemed significant to Irish history, from a vagrant’s decaying cottage to Europe’s post-war landscape. Acknowledging that national memory is fractured and unstable, without emotional resolution, Trevor’s novel suggests Ireland’s twentieth-century history can be reappraised from the vantage point of the twenty-first.

Hattie Induni is a third year doctoral student at the University of Leeds, researching the significance of ruins and cultural memory in literary representations of Ireland between 1916 and 1945. Hattie has a BA in English from the University of Cambridge and an MPhil in Irish Writing from Trinity College, Dublin.

* 

John Singleton (National University of Ireland, Galway)
Sex and the City: The Urban Space of a Rural Elegist – John McGahern’s The Pornographer

The 2016 commemorations of the Easter Rising, the closing of the Magdalen Laundries, coupled with the #WakingTheFeminists and #RepealThe8th movements, re-invigorated debate surrounding attitudes towards gender and sexuality in 20th century Ireland. In literary studies, however, too often these investigations are framed by recourse to essentialist division between rural naivety and urban promiscuity. This paper addresses the issue of evolving attitudes to sexuality in young men and women from a rural background living adult lives in the capital city. I will investigate McGahern’s The Pornographer (1979) to explore representations of the “GUBU” world of late 1970s Dublin, a world of internal migration and a secularising,
bourgeois public service caught between its conservative, Catholic upbringing and the
globalising, Neo-liberal economic agenda. I argue that, through *The Pornographer*,
McGahern explores the psychological liminal space where his characters reside—
neither fully rural nor fully urban, no longer traditional and not yet modern—and
investigates how the forces and limitations of one space necessarily shaped how life
was lived in the other. I analyse how *The Pornographer* expressed a modernising
Ireland shaped by “sex in the city” and offers an insight into the thriving urban life in
1970s Ireland, an aspect of McGahern’s fiction too often overlooked by critics in
favour of the rural elegy of later works.

John Singleton is a second-year Ph.D. candidate with the School of English and The
Moore Institute at NUI Galway. He received his primary degree in English and Music
in 2008 and an MA in Anglo-Irish Literature in 2009 from UCD Dublin. His thesis
investigates on the fiction of John McGahern.

* 

Li Chengjian (Southwest Jiaotong University)
From Seamus Heaney to Brian Friel: Holding a mirror to contemporary Irish writing
since the 1960s

The two late writers, the poet Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) and the playwright Brian
Friel (1929-2015), are two world-known Irish figures of letters sharing many
similarities. Both started building their literary reputations in the mid-1960s and
proved to be enduring, energetic writers over the following five decades. Both are
widely regarded as important and representative figures in poetry and playwriting,
particularly in the ways they reflect the North in their writing since both were born in
Northern Ireland. The paper juxtaposes the two writers by discussing their efforts at
balancing the public and the private, the political and the aesthetic, the traditional and
the innovative, the local and the universal, in relation to the core topic of
responsibility and freedom in contemporary Irish writing.

Both Northerners worked as art directors for Field Day Theater Company in the
1980s, when the Trouble crisis was at its height in Northern Ireland. Seamus
Heaney’s play *Cure at Troy* (1990) and translated poem *Sweeney Astray* (1983), and
Friel’s two plays *Translations* (1980) and *Making History* (1988), were closely
connected with Field Day. I explore Friel’s experiments in his silence plays and
Heaney’s pursuit of innovation in poetic form, which are particularly impressive
aspects of their work.

Professor Li Chengjian is Dean of the School of Foreign Languages at Southwest
Jiaotong University. She has published articles on Edmund Spenser, Brian Friel,
Shakespeare’s historical plays, and Seamus Heaney. Her monographs include Irish-
British Poet: Seamus Heaney and His Balancing Cultural Strategy (2006) and Studies
23. Marina Carr: Reimagining Irish society  
(Chair: Sarah Jane Scaife) - Seminar Room 8

Regina Li Yan (Southwest Jiaotong University)  
From *The Tinker’s Wedding* to *By the Bog of Cats*: The Exploration of Irish Travellers

The Irish traveller is an ethnic minority with a long history and its history dates back to the 1840s. In the history of Irish literature, there are many works covering the life of Irish travellers and *The Tinker’s Wedding* and *By the Bog of Cats* are two famous plays among them. *The Tinker’s Wedding* is one of the representative works by John Millington Synge in 1908 and *By the Bog of Cats* is the masterpiece of Marina Carr in 1998. The two plays were published at the beginning and the end of the 20th century respectively. The main characters in both plays are Irish travellers. The paper analyzes different characteristics of the leading roles in both plays and reasons for such differences. Moreover, in recent years, the life and status of Irish travellers have changed and there are also many relevant researches about them from the aspect of anthropology. By reviewing such literature, I compare characteristics of Irish travellers in the above-mentioned two plays and in the real society to offer a better understanding about this ethnic group.

*Regina Liyan is a postgraduate student from the School of Foreign Languages, Southwest Jiaotong University in Sichuan, China, majoring in English language and literary studies.*

*  
Liu Jixing (Southwest Jiaotong University)  
A Study of *By the Bog of Cats* Under the View of Intertextuality

*By the Bog of Cats* is a famous play written by the Irish female playwright Marina Carr in 1998. It was performed at Abby Theater in Dublin in 1999. After its first show, the play achieved great success, being widely welcomed at home and abroad. Marina Carr applied the frame and basic plot of *Medea* (an ancient Greek tragedy) in her *By the Bog of Cats*, which represents the tragic experience of an Irish woman who was driven from a soft girl to a “desperate and savage” mother—committing suicide and killing her daughter. The intertextual dialogue between *By the Bog of Cats* and *Medea* not only reveals the humble and oppressed position of women in society from the ancient times, but also attends to the figures of marginal men. French literary critic and feminist Julia Kristeva’s theory of “intertextuality” holds that there is connection and reflection among texts; one text is adapted and shifted by another, so that there is a systematic and complex network among many texts. This point of view pushes scholars to study a text within a wider cultural background. This paper will explicate *By the Bog of Cats* with reference to three aspects of intertextuality: meaning-generation, textual form and aesthetic effect.

*L Liu Jixing is a graduate student in the Foreign Language School at Southwest Jiaotong University in Sichuan, China. He majored in English Literature and is interested in the study of Irish drama and literature.*
Tracing the “tiny little thing” from 1933 to 1998, through the texts of three Irish dramatists

“In this paper I will look at the role and position of “woman” in Ireland, since the foundation of the state, through the prism of three Irish playwrights. I will trace the prevailing conditions and attitudes to women, marriage and pregnancy from the early days after the founding of the state to the present day and the situation we continue to find ourselves in, with regard to the women and children of our society.

I have been in a very interesting position with regard to the research of the drama that has reflected and shaped this period in our history, by working both nationally and internationally within my research and practice in Irish theatre. I have been given the chance to view the dramas and texts from an almost anthropological perspective, by hearing the texts embodied and explored by actors and students from as far as India to America and many other countries in between, including Singapore. This has enabled me to view my own country both as insider and outsider and has given me a very interesting perspective on both.

The texts I plan to look at are Mary Manning’s *Youths The Season* (1933), Samuel Beckett’s *Not I* (1872) and Marina Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats* (1998). Through the prism of these three plays I will examine what it was to be a woman, particularly through the institutions of family, religion and state in Ireland of the 20th century. I will include in this research the many voices from Asia that have ultimately deepened my understanding of these texts and interrogate the recent events in Ireland, which have thrown light once again on our past history in relation to women and their children. I am referring in particular to the recently uncovered burial sites in the mother and baby home in Tuam, and the deaths of a woman and four children in a woman’s refuge in Tallaght.

Dr. Sarah Jane Scaife, Adjunct Lecturer TCD, Artistic Director, Company SJ, researches and directs the writing of Samuel Beckett and other Irish playwrights nationally and internationally. Company SJ ([Company-sj.com](http://Company-sj.com)) are touring their Beckett in The City series of work. Research projects include female Irish writers of the early twentieth century and a new Beckett production.
24. Emma Donoghue: All Kinds of Otherness
(Chair: Graham Matthews) - Seminar Room 8

Carissa Foo (Yale-NUS College)
On Female Hesitancy in Emma Donoghue’s Stir-Fry

This paper will explore the idea of hesitation in Emma Donoghue’s Stir-Fry. It is interested in how moments of hesitation make possible the discovery of sexuality and self, which in turn destabilise the concept of the (re)productive individual and derail the natural teleology of sexuality. Whilst hesitation may appear to be a sign of weakness and passivity, it is indicative of a nascent and precious confidence that stems from the gradual articulation of a vocabulary for desire. Addressing homosexual identity and queerness, Stir-Fry focuses on the cusp of being: the novel leads up to the climactic moment of Maria’s sexual awakening; by extension, her coming out to herself. A kind of female hesitancy is at play. The moment of hesitation is a temporal lapse in the Bergsonian sense; a “moment of deliberation” which allows for negotiations between the silence and speech, the unknown and expressed. Examining how tentativeness and voyeurism enact female hesitancy, this paper argues that hesitation is an act of resistance that destabilises heteronormative certainties and configurations of identity and sexuality, and creates alternative, almost unnatural trajectories for she who would not live and love as the paternalistic nation mandates.

Carissa Foo is a Lecturer of Humanities and Writing in Yale-NUS College. Her main field of research is twentieth-century women’s writing and its dialogues with continental philosophy, especially phenomenology and existentialism. She received her Ph.D from Durham University, U.K., and Master of Arts from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

* Yi-Peng Lai (National Sun Yat-sen University)
Fasting Girls and Nationhood: Hunger, Politics, and Historiography in Emma Donoghue’s The Wonder and Mary Gordon’s Pearl

In her provocative study The Hunger Artists, Maud Ellmann writes: “There is something about hunger, or more specifically about the spectacle of hunger, that deranges the distinction between self and other” (54). By looking into two contemporary novels that deal with fasting females and the historiography of Irish hunger memories, this paper will be addressing, questioning, and examining the female object and the politics of hunger in the diasporic context of a national narrative.

Set in rural Ireland in the 1850s, Emma Donoghue’s latest novel The Wonder (2016), a disconcerting story of a “fasting girl,” is an alternative historiographical narrative of the Great Famine. Narrated from the perspective of an English nurse, who eventually becomes the rescuer of the famished girl, the novel pulls out the problematic dynamics between the empirical subject and the empirical object, historicality and
historiography, silence and remembering, and the politics of hunger and that of the Great Hunger. In Mary Gordon’s *Pearl* (2005), however, the performance of hunger is a political means to voice for the silenced ones by the heroine Pearl, a second-generation Irish American girl. In the case of her self-declared hunger strike, which for her is an act of witness for the injustice, the question of voice and silence in the patriarchal construction of a colonial historiography is at stake. In this paper, by examining these two novels along the lines of the writing of the two voluntary fasting girls, I propose a reading of the female body as a representation of the famine/political sub-narrative of the nation, and will proceed to elaborate on how such hunger narrative features as a “female space” (Kelleher) in which the “orality” (Lloyd) of the silenced is performed in the imaginings of a historical discourse of the nation by the diasporic subject.

Having recently graduated from Queen’s University, Belfast, with a doctoral thesis on Ulysses and ecocriticism, Yi-Peng is currently a postgraduate researcher at National Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan. She has published on Joyce and ecocriticism, and is interested in the conversation between nature and culture in the context of Irish literature.

* 

Samuel Caleb Wee (Nanyang Technological University)  
“…Need to Listen to Jack”: The Alterity of Childhood and Literature in Emma Donoghue’s *Room*  

In *Room*, Emma Donoghue successfully ventriloquizes the voice and perspective of Jack, a five-year-old boy who has never known a world outside of the titular room. Over the arc of the novel, however, she enacts a heteroglossic intrusion of adult discourses into the main narrative voice, such as when Jack happens upon a television program where the events of his life have been appropriated as a mythic symbol. I argue that *Room*—in that brief moment—anticipates and parodies potential readings of itself by foregrounding several critical lenses, from Plato’s Allegory of the Cave to postmodern theory, thus implicitly critiquing the act of interpretation which academics perform upon literary texts. This critique shares certain similarities both to Sontag’s famous call for “erotics” over “hermeneutics,” as well as Felski’s characterization of contemporary literary criticism as being dominated by a “hermeneutics of suspicion.” My paper will thus review the alternative ideas of literariness proposed by theorists such as Derek Attridge and Harold Bloom, who have all argued in their own terms that the radical nature and strangeness of literature is at odds with symptomatic readings through critical lenses. I will also examine notions of the “otherness of childhood,” a term coined by geographer Owain Jones as a way of foregrounding the epistemological difference of childhood experience from adulthood and advocating against “colonising [children] through adult ideologies” (142). Ultimately, I will argue that *Room* draws parallels between the alterity of childhood and literature, and enacts a way of negotiating through both.

*Samuel Caleb Wee completed his undergraduate education at Nanyang Technological University in 2016, having written on the narratological structures of Tash Aw for his undergraduate thesis. He is currently a Masters’ candidate at NTU, and is also the*
co-editor of this is how you walk on the moon (Ethos Books, 2016), an anthology of anti-realist short stories.
25. Dermot Healy: across the genres
(Chair: Geraldine Song) - Seminar Room 7

Michael Kearney (Kogakuin University, Tokyo)
An Examination of Location, Time, and Being in Dermot Healy’s *A Fool’s Errand*:
Existing in the Absurd

The here,
and the now,
holding on to each other,
have traveled far.
(Dermot Healy, “The Wild Goose Chase” 60)

Location and time are vital elements in much of Dermot Healy’s work. They function
more than mere aspects of setting; they drive narrative and thought. Particularly in his
poetry, Healy displays that he is acutely aware not only of how he is situated in place
and time, but also of how being is a function of location and time. This paper will
focus on Healy’s engagement with, and musings on, location, time, and being in his
last book of poetry, *A Fool’s Errand*. Within the work, the poet encounters locations
where the past, present, and future swirl together, continually displacing each other,
where “[t]he beginning / and the end / are old friends” (61). In the rooms, and on the
landscapes and seas where these displacements occur, Healy glimpses the entirety not
only of his being, but of all existence; he reveals that both the linear, where “the
present, / with a shrug, / drops us off some windy Wednesday at the cemetery gate”
(62), and the cyclical, within which “we began / at the end” (65), are coexistent. The
paper will examine Healy’s *A Fool’s Errand* in respect to Martin Heidegger’s
questioning of being in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and Albert Camus’ notions on
the absurd in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and offer a reading of what Healy is perhaps
communicating about how he sees the nature of existence.

Michael Kearney, associate professor at Kogakuin University, received his PhD in
Literary Theory from the University of Limerick. His research interests lie in the
intersections of literature, art, music, and theory. Publications include: “The
Undermining of a West Briton: The Deconstruction of Joyce’s Gabriel Conroy”
and *Four Letter Words*, a book of poetry.

*Ho Jia Xuan (Nanyang Technological University)
Framing Narratives in Dermot Healy’s *A Goat’s Song*

This paper examines Dermot Healy’s presentation of time in arguably his finest work,*
*A Goat’s Song*. Much has been written about Healy’s experimental style, his play with
multiple narratives and realities, as well as his uncanny ability to create interior,
fictional worlds which are both deeply contemplative and fractured. As a novel made
up of two distinctly separated narratives in the form of the protagonist’s sense of his
reality and the fictional world created through his imagination, *A Goat’s Song*
presents many different narrative techniques which draw our attention to the
representation—or perhaps the failure of representation—of reality. In this almost
schizophrenic endeavor, recollection becomes a process of recreation; memory
becomes fiction, and the narrator becomes an artist of his own past and present states of imagination, leaving a narrative that draws attention to the very fictionality of its construction. This convergence of multiple realities contemplates the very representation of imagination—and consciousness—in the form of the writer’s work, in particular, how each narrative manages to suspend the movement of time as one temporality flows into another without any semblance of linearity. I will analyze a few key areas in Healy’s novel which reflect instances of disjunctive temporalities: the heightened awareness of temporal and spatial displacement reflected through the protagonist’s thought processes and descriptions, as well as his position as a playwright in the text and the implications that come with this role.

Ho Jia Xuan is currently a PhD student at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His area of interest lies in Modernist fiction, and his dissertation is on the fictionality of time in Modernist fiction. He is also interested in experimental fiction and theatre, and his MA dissertation was on Modern tragedy.

* 

Ondřej Pilný (Charles University, Prague)
Dermot Healy, Verbatim Theatre, and Collective Memory

Triggered by the recent publication of the Collected Plays of novelist Dermot Healy (2016, eds. Keith Hopper and Neil Murphy), this paper focuses on Healy’s documentary drama Men to the Right, Women to the Left. Written on the basis of testimonials from the clients of a senior care centre in Monaghan, the play was first staged at the Abbey Theatre Bar as part of “Bealtaine, the Season of Creativity in Older Age” in 2001 and was later broadcast by RTÉ Radio 1. My paper juxtaposes Healy’s method of composition with those of British verbatim playwrights from the same period, outlining the remarkable similarities but also noting that unlike most verbatim theatre, Men to the Right, Women to the Left does not involve an overt political theme or activist agenda. In fact, it is surprising that while the reminiscences on which the play is based concern a border county in the period from before World War II until approximately the 1960s, any mention of tension between the local Catholics and Protestants is virtually absent. I argue that despite, or possibly even because of this, Healy’s play which records the voices of ordinary people from rural Monaghan should be perceived as a vital resource for the construction of collective memory, in Maurice Halbwachs’s sense of the term.

Ondřej Pilný is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Centre for Irish Studies at Charles University, Prague. He is the author of The Grotesque in Contemporary Anglophone Drama (2016) and Irony and Identity in Modern Irish Drama (2006), and editor of collections of essays and journal issues on subjects ranging from Anglophone drama and Irish literature to cultural memory and structuralist theory. His translations into Czech include works by J. M. Synge, Flann O’Brien, Samuel Beckett, Brian Friel, Enda Walsh and Martin McDonagh. He is the current Chairperson of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures and Vice-President of the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies.
26. Modern/contemporary Irish fiction
(Chair: Guinevere Barlow) - Seminar Room 6

Deirdre Flynn (University College Dublin)
Holding on to “rites, rhythms and rituals”: Mike McCormack’s homage to small-town Irish life and death

The Goldsmith Award-winning *Solar Bones* is a novel focused on, and dedicated to, loss. As Marcus Conway comes to terms with his own death, he pays homage to the “rites, rhythms and rituals” that were part of his life in small town rural Ireland. The book begins with the bell ringing on All Souls Day, the day of the dead, as Marcus recounts elements of his life in one unbroken sentence. This unpunctuated account is littered with loss: the loss of blood, bodily fluids, family members, life, the Celtic tiger, youth, and memories. In fact, author Mike McCormack told *The Irish Times*, “I have no memories of writing *Solar Bones*,” yet the whole novel is a random collection of memories of life. It becomes a celebration of life, of the simple domestic events that make up a life, that are now lost to memories. This rural existence is something that is slipping away, and McCormack wants to commemorate that life before it is too late, even if it is already dead. As *The Guardian* tells us, “Marcus is a man gripped by ‘a crying sense of loneliness for my family.’ We don’t quite know why until the very end of the novel, which comes both as a surprise and a confirmation of all that’s gone before.” As readers we too are at a loss, as it is not until the final pages that we realise Marcus is already dead, and this book is his account of the life he has lost. This stream of memory and re-telling of his life is how Marcus comes to terms with the trauma of his greatest loss, his own death.

Dr. Deirdre Flynn is a Teaching Fellow in Modern Drama in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. She has worked at the Moore Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. She has lectured at Undergraduate and Postgraduate level in English Literature, and Drama and Theatre Studies. She worked professionally as a journalist for a number of years and is the Network Chair of Sibeal, the postgraduate and Early Career Network for Feminist and Gender Studies.

* 

Chen Li (Beijing Foreign Studies University)
Routes and Roots in Colm Tóibín’s *Brooklyn*

Colm Tóibín’s *Brooklyn* has won much acclaim as a vivid portrait of the tension between the pull of the home and the attraction of the foreign. The female protagonist travels between the home and the foreign, both geographically and psychologically. Travelling incorporates the opposing dimensions of the homonym routes/roots, with routes as pathways between two points of rootedness. It is a movement that can defamiliarize “home,” creating distance to enable the discovery of both the idea of “home” and the sense of “rootlessness.” By reading the novel from the intersection between feminism and globalism, this article aims to explore what it means to think geographically, not only about others “elsewhere,” but also about how the global context affects our thinking about “home.” By juxtaposing Brooklyn/America with
Enniscorthy/Ireland in a somewhat parallel way, with the former’s “foreignness” strangely unstressed, the novel manages to shift the focus from intercultural encounter to the routes in between, to Eilis’ “intercultural fort da” in search for her female autonomy. Yet her tale of routes returns inevitably to evocations of roots, facing up to the evidence and necessity of historically produced legacies out of which group identities are formed. Spatial perspective lends new force to the usual historical perspective of the Irish diaspora, breaking down the boundaries between home and elsewhere to show the ways the local and the global are always already interlocking and complicitous.

Chen Li is an associate professor and vice director for the Irish Studies Center in the School of English and International Studies of Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), China.

* 

James Kelly (University of Exeter, Cornwall)  
Ireland in Ruins: Gothicism post-Union, post-Crash

This paper will consider some recent literature from Ireland (Claire Kilroy’s *The Devil I Know* [2012], Donal Ryan’s *The Spinning Heart* [2013], and Conor O’Callaghan’s *Nothing on Earth* [2016]) which engages with post-Crash Ireland using a Gothic register. The “new ruin” literature of Ireland’s ghost estates will be compared with post-Union Irish literature by Charles Maturin, Alicia Le Fanu, and Sydney Owenson, to think about how writers incorporate architectural remnants into their fiction. In *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, Fintan O’Toole considers how from the late-1990s there was a return to a form of “Irish Gothic” in contemporary Irish writing, and this will question and extend that contention by looking at points of comparison and contrast between writers in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, who place very different ruins in their work in order to think about the effect sudden and traumatic historical changes can have on individuals. Whether a ruined abbey or a ghost estate, the presence of ruins in the landscape force the viewer to think of lives squandered or potentialities unrealised. In Donal Ryan’s novel, a character speaks of how the estate she lives on is haunted by “the ghosts of people who never existed.” Incomplete buildings, ruined through violence, time, or abandonment, remain powerful narrative settings for Irish writers, and comparing the Gothic of the early-nineteenth to the Gothic of the twenty-first century creates a suggestive context for thinking about recent developments in Irish writing and the Irish landscape.

Dr. James Kelly is a lecturer at the University of Exeter’s Cornwall Campus. He is the author of Charles Maturin: Authorship, Authenticity, and the Nation (2011) and editor of Ireland and Romanticism (2011). He has written widely on Irish literature in the nineteenth century, with particular interests in rhetorical culture and gothic writing.
At the basis of Shaw’s immaculate conception of “Bardolatry” was his tongue-in-cheek critique of William Shakespeare for not engaging deeply enough with social problems of the Elizabethan age in the manner Shaw himself addressed in his own time. In *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898) and *Shakes versus Shav*, Shaw chooses to equivocally demystify Shakespeare on the one hand (“what a damned fool Shakespeare was!”); and on the other, eulogizing him as the greatest of authors that ever lived. His ambivalent attitude to the poet is best expressed in his replacing of the last Act (Five) of *Cymbeline* with a version that he wrote himself in 1936 called *Cymbeline Refinished*, because he found in the original, to his despair, “a tedious string of unsurprising dénouements sugared with insincere sentimentality” leaving aside the hero, Posthumus Leonatus whom he thought to be the only character “left really alive” and had, thus, no desire to improve on him. Shaw’s interest in the play was instilled deeply while preparing Ellen Terry for her part of Imogen in Henry Irving’s production of *Cymbeline*. Shaw concludes his version of the play with the following lines about English and Roman syncretism:

“To all our subjects. Set we forward: let
A Roman and a British ensign wave
Friendly together: so through Lud’s town march,
And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we’ll ratify; seal it with feasts.
Set on there! Never was a war did cease,
Ere bloody hands were wash’d, with such a peace.”

My paper will attempt to study the dynamics of Shaw’s adaptation of *Cymbeline* (based on the pre-Roman Celtic king, Cunobeline of Britain, who ruled from 9 AD to 43 AD) which, along with *The Tempest*, marked Shakespeare’s concluding vision of British history during the reign of James I.

---

*Dr. Rupendra Guha Majumdar is a visiting faculty member in the English Department in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India. A Visiting Fulbright Fellow in the Department of English at Yale University (1981-82; 1992-93) and Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at Suffolk University, Boston (2014-15). His book Central Man: The Paradox of Heroism in Modern American Drama was published by Peter Lang (Brussels, 2003). He has published four books of poetry in English (Blunderbuss, Apu’s Initiation, Tomcat, and The Hiroshima Clock); contributed articles to the Columbia Encyclopaedia of Modern Drama, and to various journals and anthologies in India and the USA; translated Rabindranath Tagore’s play, Red Oleanders, into English for The Essential Tagore (Harvard UP, 2011).*
Oscar Wilde famously enjoyed enormous popularity in Russia, both before and after 1917. As Evgenii Bershtein notes in “‘Next to Christ’: Oscar Wilde in Russian Modernism,” at the dawn of the twentieth century, Wilde served as a symbol of both queerness and early Western modernism for the Russian writers and poets of the so-called “Silver Age.” In the post-1917 Russia, and especially in the post-1930s Soviet Union, the queer and artistically innovative side of Wilde was erased for ideological reasons. Fascinatingly, he nonetheless remained, for decades, an accepted, almost mainstream, Western literary figure. In “‘No More Delightful Spirit’: Unlikely Connections with Oscar Wilde,” Anastasia G. Pease reminisces about the omnipresence of Oscar Wilde in the popular culture of her Soviet childhood.

As a fiction writer, Wilde was mainly popular among the young-adult audiences. As a playwright, he was recognized as a harsh critic of “bourgeois morality.” As a result, his society plays were frequently produced on stage and adapted for television. My talk will examine several television versions of Wilde’s prose and dramatic works produced at the height of the so-called “stagnation period” of the late twentieth century: “The Canterville Ghost,” *An Ideal Husband*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *The Tale of a Start Child*. While most of the adaptations appropriate Wilde for the dissemination of the prevalent ideologies of the day, others intimate surreptitious and subversive queerness and reflect on the effects of end-of-the-century technology and imperialism in ways that add a productive new dimension to Wilde Studies.

*Helena Gurfinkel is Associate Professor of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, U.S.A. She is the author of Outlaw Fathers in Victorian and Modern British Literature: Queering Patriarchy (2014) and editor of PLL: Papers on Language and Literature. Her research and teaching interests include Victorian literature, masculinity studies, and psychoanalysis.*

*Julie-Ann Robson teaches at Western Sydney University. With Peter Kuch, she co-edited Irelands in the Asia-Pacific (Colin Smythe, 2003) and has published on Irish*
and Australian literature and drama, with a particular focus on Oscar Wilde and the 19th century.
28. Brian Friel: reimagining Irish society
(Chair: Daniel Jernigan) - TR+1

Sabrya Albalawi (University of Hull)
Brian Friel in the Twenty-First Century: Rethinking the Parent-Child Relation

Brian Friel is considered and will remain one of the principal figures in Irish literature and a leading writer in modern Irish drama. The news about his death on 2nd October 2015 echoed all over the world, not only in Ireland. Many newspapers wrote about his death as a great loss to Irish drama. Richard Pine writes in *The Guardian*, in an obituary entitled “Playwright who was a towering figure of the stage from Dublin to Broadway”: “Living at various times on either side of the Irish border, he was preoccupied with aspects of dualism: divided loyalties, tensions between fathers and sons, the two languages and the island’s two political states.”

I use Marx’s concept of “alienation” in the twentieth century to address Friel’s work. Marx believes that there is a relation between the increase of human growth and the increase of alienation. Marx argues that the problem arises because “[t]he products of [an individual’s] labor also stand opposed to him as a power independent of the producer. Man, is alienated from his labor, from the product of his labor, and, in sense, from himself” (Lysted 90). Friel deals with alienation from self, community, or language within a specifically Irish context. Friel’s background indicates his view of Irish culture in terms of alienation and fragmentation. This paper examines parent-child relationships in Friel’s plays and how he depicts such relations within the Irish social, economic and political background. I also address the consequences of this relationship on Irish families in general, and on the youth in particular.

*Sabrya Albalawi is a PhD student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Hull (United Kingdom).*

* Yu-chen Lin (National Sun Yat-sen University)
Field Day Reassessed: Brian Friel’s *The Home Place*

Although Field Day was politicized as nationalist or postcolonialist when Brian Friel’s *Translations* (1980) was staged as its inaugural play, Friel’s subsequent works indicate that both labels are inadequate. His last work, *The Home Place* (2005), in particular, invites a reconsideration of his main concern as well as Field Day’s even though he had severed ties from the company by then. This play gives a tender sympathy to an English settler who finds himself ill at ease at a home he has cherished at the dawn of land agitations in 1878. He is tended by a loyal Irish housekeeper, who is even more determined than her master to guard his settlement against her own people. By reimagining the Irish anti-colonial struggle as the English diaspora, this play directs us to Ireland in the twenty-first century, which is less concerned with the English-Irish divide than with the necessity for memory exchanges among diverse diasporic subjects in the ethnoscape of Ireland. By staging these exchanges, Friel delineates the future anticipated by Field Day’s reconciliatory agenda as he realigns the nationalist past with the cosmopolitan present of Ireland whose inhabitants are ready to be reconciled with their own foreignness.
Yu-chen Lin is Professor of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Sun Yat-sen University. She is the author of Justice, History and Language in James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, and the Chinese translator of James Joyce: The Years of Growth 1882-1915 by Peter Costello. She has also published articles on modern Irish writers.
Not Even a Shadow of Violence: Interpreting the Political Unconscious in John McGahern’s Anglo-Irish Stories

This paper invokes Fredric Jameson’s notion of the political unconscious in seeking out the textual latencies of contemporary Irish history in McGahern’s short stories. Jameson conceives of the critic’s role as bringing to the surface of the text historical anxieties which have been repressed. It is the experience of the political present which conditions the symbolic forms in which the past is represented. The present keeps reminding us that “the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living” (Marx), that “all history is contemporary history” (Croce) and that history is an uninterrupted, ontologically “open” process (Žižek). Scholars such as Terry Eagleton have adapted the notion of the political unconscious to readings of moribund nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish history, most vividly the death-driven fantasies of the Protestant Gothic. We may thus turn to McGahern’s own Anglo-Irish stories involving the Kirkwoods, and to “Oldfashioned,” a backward glance upon the ever more “dwindling” Protestants. McGahern’s self-consciousness about his own belatedness is signalled formally, manifesting the persistence of unfinished or revenant history. “Oldfashioned” was first published in the *Yale Review* in 1984, a troubled year in Anglo-Irish relations. It is difficult not to read the text as disturbingly “undead,” up-to-date rather than old-fashioned, and as articulating the very presence of its political past. The central rupture of “Oldfashioned” happens “all the more finally because there was not even a shadow of violence” (CE 253) in it, a comment which suggests not only the ghosts of the Anglo-Irish war, but also the contemporary caste antagonisms in neighbouring places where the “robins” and “sparrows” do not feed together (CE 252). The Sergeant’s colonial ressentiment is matched by the Colonel’s historical amnesia. To imagine a “counter-fictional history” in which Johnny indeed became a British officer is to wonder at where he might have been deployed. As Belinda McKeown has observed, the concluding scene of melancholy pastoral, of irrecoverable past time, leads the eye from the Iron Mountains to “the North” (CE 262), suggesting less a direction and more a political territory.

Richard Robinson is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Swansea University, Wales, UK. He is author of *Narratives of the European Border: A History of Nowhere* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and *John McGahern and Modernism* (Bloomsbury, 2016). He has published on James Joyce, Italo Svevo, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan, Edward St Aubyn and John McGahern in, respectively, *James Joyce Quarterly, Journal of European Studies, Critical Quarterly, Modern Fiction Studies, Textual Practice* and *Irish University Review*.

Kevin T. O’Connor (Phillips Academy)
Colin Barrett’s Young Skins and the Language of Place

Colin Barrett dismisses the notion that the bleakness of his fictional landscape is a reflection of a post-Celtic Tiger consciousness: “The margins are always the margins."
All lot of these characters would have been as equally immune to economic growth as they would be to collapse” (Barrett and Sheehan, 2015). But he does concede that during the years of relative national prosperity, there seemed to be a “generation of writers missing” (Barrett and Sheehan), and that without the temptation to take high-paying jobs, young, hungry Irish writers are focusing more energy on literary production. In Barrett’s collection, the center of that energy is a language connected to place. Though his small rural town setting of Glanbeigh has elicited comparisons to the regional enclaves of Hardy, Faulkner and Flannery O’Connor, another formal precursor would be the Joyce of Dubliners. In exploring “deliberately disconnected” (Barrett and Sheehan) and circumscribed characters, he makes language at the sentence level the site of ethical and cultural negotiation. Whether he is employing first-person narrators or free-indirect discourse, Barrett’s intermeshing of disparate registers of language—intimate, native vernacular with the more removed, sophisticated diction and syntax of an implied author—as well as his experimental modulations of tone and point-of-view, enact human character in a communal context. Poised between satiric recognition and sympathetic identification, Barrett’s language is involved, but not judgmental, about these foregrounded characters who are equally poised between conditioning forces and the small habits of choice that define them. Through close-reading of these stories, my paper will address how Barrett’s writing is innovative as well as part of a literary tradition—both Irish and global.

30. Beckett: image and repetition
(Chair: Michelle Wang) - Seminar Room 9

Michelle Chiang (University of Pennsylvania / Nanyang Technological University)
Beckett’s Film and Eisenstein’s Pathos Construction: “a sheer beauty, power and strangeness of image”

In this paper, we look first at the extent Beckett was unsuccessful in adapting Sergei Eisenstein’s concept of pathos construction in Film. Following that, we explore how this results in the audience member’s deterritorialization, where she is transformed by Film to become intuitively aware that she is trapped in an organised system of habit.

At a time of stark advancements in filming techniques, sound and colour technology, audiences would be aware of Film’s divergence from mainstream cinema and notice the influence of the French New Wave and avant-garde films on Beckett’s 1964 work. Notably, the artist was highly influenced by Russian avant-garde film maker Sergei Eisenstein’s film theory. This has not gone unnoticed in Beckett scholarship. J. M. B. Antoine-Dunne observes that Beckett made references to Eisenstein’s pathos construction in his letters to his friends Mary Manning Howe and Arland Ussher. She analyses Eisensteinian influences in Murphy and Watt, and convincingly points to Beckett’s active interest in the film theorist’s work (Antoine-Dunne, “Beckett and Eisenstein on Light and Contrapuntal Image” 317). Yet curiously, Film’s obvious engagement with this Eisensteinian concept has not been examined in-depth in Beckett criticism. As such, I attempt to fill the gap by positing that Beckett’s employment of pathos construction is an interesting failure which nevertheless contributes to rendering the work uniquely Beckettian in its critique of habit.

Michelle Chiang is a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, and research fellow at Nanyang Technological University. Her research interest is in the intersection of Modern Literature, Philosophy and Social Psychology. She has published essays on Beckett and is currently preparing a monograph Me to Play: Beckett’s Intuitive Spectator.

* 

Angela Frattarola (New York University)
“I shall never weary of repeating it”: Samuel Beckett’s Repetition and the Tape Recorder

Considering Beckett’s poetry, radio plays, and drama, not to mention his study of languages and writing in two languages, there is no doubt that he had an ear especially tuned to the acoustic aspects of literature. As Beckett started to repeat and loop phrases in his second novel, Watt, the French radio technician Pierre Schaeffer started experimenting with splicing and re-ordering magnetic tape recordings in the studios of the Paris radio station, Radio Television Français (RTF). Building on the geographical and historical coincidence of these events, this paper argues that the magnetic tape art of musique concrete can serve as an entry point to analyze the
repetition of Beckett’s fiction. The tape recorder, famously used in Beckett’s Krapp’s Last Tape, helps us to understand Beckett’s linguistic loops throughout his novels and short prose pieces. The recorder’s storing and replaying of speech exemplifies Beckett’s repeated suggestion in his fiction that the subject is spoken and alienated through language. Paradoxically, while his repetition empties words of meaning, bringing the reader’s attention to the sounds of words rather than their content, this same repetition, through the course of his fiction, generates its own internal impact and meaning. This, I argue, is done by the familiarity established in the reader’s inner ear—one that is similarly exploited in musique concrete. I conclude by suggesting that Beckett’s repetition represents “inner speech” differently than Joyce’s stream-of-conscious technique. Stripping away a fictional world that his reader can visually picture, Beckett leaves his reader with only a voice, repeating the same basic phrases with minor variations.

Angela Frattarola received her PhD in literature from New York University, where she presently teaches essay writing. Her research primarily focuses on modernism and sound studies. She has published in journals such as Genre, Woolf Studies Annual, Modern Drama, Mosaic, Studies in the Novel, and Journal of Modern Literature, and is currently revising a manuscript titled “Modernist Soundscapes: Auditory Technology and the Sonic Novel.”

* * *

Mary Massoud (Ain Shams University)

Beckett’s Pozzo: A Biblical Reading

While numerous critical works have been written about Beckett’s play, Waiting for Godot, none (to my knowledge) has dealt with the biblical view it masks, possibly misled by much that has been written about Beckett’s so-called “atheism,” and also by various pronouncements made by Beckett himself. Even Ian Bailey’s recent work, Samuel Beckett and the Bible (2014), concentrates (in Godot) on verbal references to the Bible or parts of it, or incidents in it, rather than on the possibility of any underlying Christian conviction of its author. In a previous paper, “Beckett’s Godot: Nietzsche Defied,” I showed that while Beckett rejected institutional religion, he nevertheless held fast to the God of the Bible. I demonstrated that his play, Godot, can very well be read as a dramatic defiance of Nietzsche’s jubilant announcement that “God is dead,” and that in his defiance of Nietzsche, Beckett produced a superb Christian play! This paper begins where the other ends. It is not concerned with the play as a whole, but only with Beckett’s presentation of the character of Pozzo (mainly in Act II), taking off from Vivien Mercier’s plausible view that Waiting for Godot is a play about waiting for the second coming of Christ. By quoting from Beckett’s play, and through relevant biblical references and citations, the paper demonstrates that although Pozzo could possibly represent Jesus Christ in Act II of Beckett’s play, yet this is not at His second coming as Mercier argues, but as He comes today.

Mary M. F. Massoud is currently Professor Emeritus in the Department of English Literature and Language (DELL) at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt. She has lectured at various universities abroad, including the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, UK; the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, USA; and the University
of Indiana in Pennsylvania. She was Chair of DELL from 1984 through 1990, and Chair of the Committee for Promoting Teaching Staff in Egyptian Universities from 2008 through 2012. Her publications include numerous articles in various periodicals on Irish, English, and American literary topics, the book Translate to Communicate (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook), and over 80 plays in both English and Arabic, including Our Father (published in English by the Way Press, Singapore, and translated into 8 different languages). She has received several awards, including the 1997 Editor’s Choice Poetry Award by the National Library of Poetry, USA.

*A*  
Aoife Lynch (University College Dublin)  
What is the Word? Samuel Beckett and the Science of Archive

This paper will explore Samuel Beckett’s use of scientific concepts in his poetry. The question of archive will be considered as a conceptual form of end-as-beginning in relation to the work of Beckett and his Whoroscope notebook at Reading University. The notebook shows Beckett’s interest in science and his engagement with concepts such as Maxwell’s Demon and The Second Law of Thermodynamics. Beckett’s poetry and prose are read in light of these universal laws which consider the effects of the “outside” or exterior on a closed system of energy. Beckett’s first poem “Whoroscope” and his final poem “what is the word” will be seen to encapsulate these scientific processes as they are both texts which demonstrate how the introduction of new knowledge in the form of new words informs and alters what has gone before to produce paradigmatic shifts; an end-as-beginning. This creative process by Beckett will be linked to the question of Irish Modernism which, like the archive itself, becomes a form of future anterior and provides for the dynamic of the reflexive inter-penetration of knowledge in time to encapsulate postmodernism within its formative genesis.

Dr Aoife Lynch obtained a PhD on the late poetry of W. B. Yeats and the prose of Samuel Beckett from University College Dublin in 2013. She is a Member of the UCD Humanities Institute of Ireland and teaches part time in University College Dublin. She has articles in print on the poetry of W. B. Yeats in The Irish University Review and Etudes Irlandaises, and a chapter on Beckett and science in a forthcoming book on the Gate Theatre by Carysfort Press. She is currently working on a monograph on Yeats, Beckett and the science of modernism.
31. Modern/contemporary Irish fiction 2
(Chair: Shirley Chew) - Seminar Room 7

Fahimeh Ghorbani (University of Rennes 2)
The Matter of Dreams: The Reality Inside the Mirror

This paper will interrogate how Irish and Iranian contemporary female writers depart from the patriarchal standpoint in representing women and femininity, choosing to stage silenced characters whose lives and concerns were deemed anecdotal and were often distorted by the male prism. These writers deconstruct the stereotypical masculine perspective and elaborate their own strategies in order to look past the mirror they are handed.

The question of gender in literature is hardly new in the Western world, but it remains an emerging debate outside Europe, particularly in Persian literature. In this paper, I will broach the subject through a comparative study of feminine discourses in Persian and Irish contemporary drama. The way “dreams” as an immaterial form help create imaginary realities disenfranchised from gender stereotypes and become “material” through the performance on stage will be examined. I offer a comparative study of Marina Carr’s The Cordelia Dream and Naghmeh Samini’s Hayulâ-khvâni. Both Carr and Samini are prolific and established playwrights who care about women issues. Furthermore, their approaches to the political, religious and social aspects of the Iranian and the Irish society they write from (and about) are comparable.

I will use the methodologies of New Materialism (as exemplified by Rosi Braidotti’s new feminist materialism) and Critical Discourse Analysis in order to address this question. New Materialism acknowledges the ontological hybridity of the world, which transforms the objective position of women into a subjective position that does not fit in simple feminine-masculine binaries. Critical Discourse Analysis will enable us to account for gender-related issues in the plays by considering the processes of text production, distribution and consumption.

Fahimeh Ghorbani is a PhD student in Irish Studies at University of Rennes 2, France, working on a comparative literary subject between Iranian Studies and Irish Studies.

* Barry Sheils (Durham University)
“Ah now Ireland too much shame”: Non-sovereign relations in Eimear McBride’s The Lesser Bohemians

The eighteen-year-old narrator of Eimear McBride’s novel The Lesser Bohemians uses the word “Irish” as a verb: she Irishes herself “away” from what she wants; to Irish is to turn one’s back for shame. At one point in her story she describes herself as “shame-delight red,” at another as fully “ashamed.” She says she has to learn to grow her skin “to cover her bones.” This paper is an attempt to gather and understand such vocabulary in terms both of a gendered and gendering history of Irish modernist literature, and of a more recent history of shame discourse emerging out of queer and feminist adaptations of psychoanalysis.
I suggest that certain key texts of Irish modernism model what Lauren Berlant has recently named “infrastructural thinking,” which is to say the thinking done by bodies when interposed in awkward, non-sovereign relation to one another. Joyce’s much examined note that modern man possesses “an epidermis rather than a soul” can stand here as a keynote for the pressures of improper proximity when there is no clearly defined sense of ownership of, or belonging to, lived-in spaces. Joyce’s fiction, and in a similar vein Beckett’s and O’Brien’s, delights in the discomforts of wearing skin—skin, which, as well as being racialised and gendered, inevitably registers erotic contact.

McBride, I argue, inherits the epidermal sensitivities of the Irish modernist canon, but she also reflectively shames the same. Availing of a shame vocabulary which over the last three decades has become a prominent means of exploring the presentation of bodies, especially bodies denied the prestige of historical agency, McBride invites us to consider how Irish modernism may be rethought through an alignment of shame, female sexuality, and writing.


* 

Rebecca Graham (University College Cork)
Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s Fox, Swallow, Scarecrow: An Ecofeminist Reimagining of Leo Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s Fox, Swallow, Scarecrow is a defining novel of Celtic Tiger Ireland. The novel reveals the consumerism, superficiality, and sterility of Ireland’s booming twenty-first century culture. The central character, Anna, is a moderately successful popular fiction writer and a wealthy suburban wife and mother. The character of Leo, in contrast, is a champion of Irish language and traditions, and runs a small poetry publishing house from his rural idyll in the Kerry Gaeltacht. All of the characters are involved in different ways with the Irish “Arts” scene, highlighting the novel’s concerns about Irish culture in response to recent drastic economic changes. As Susan Cahill argues, “[t]he novel acerbically critiques the all-pervasive consumerist ethos of the boom years while also commenting on the denial of the past and future prevalent in Celtic Tiger culture through its satirical focus on the contemporary Irish literary scene where literature becomes another commodity” (26).

Fox, Swallow, Scarecrow is a conscious rewriting of Leo Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina. Donna Haraway’s cyborg feminism argues for a feminist ethics of revision in which canonical texts become the tools with which cyborg writers remake the world. According to Haraway, “[t]he tools [for cyborg writing] are often stories, retold stories, versions that reverse and displace the hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities” (175). This paper discusses ideas of originality and influence, and the position of the woman writer in Ireland’s literary traditions. I argue that Ní Dhuibhne engages with canonical male writers in order to revise and reconceptualise women’s places in literary and storytelling traditions. The train in Anna Karenina symbolises
the inexorable forces of industrial change and progress; in *Fox, Swallow, Scarecrow*, Dublin’s Luas system exemplifies the progressive European cosmopolitanism of New Ireland. These powerful machines advance towards the future without regard for the destruction and devastation they cause. Ni Dhuibhne’s intertextual reimagining of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* undermines concepts of linear progression, presenting instead a more complex and dynamic understanding of the interconnections and intertextualities at work within Irish culture.

*Rebecca Graham is a PhD student in the School of English, University College Cork. Her thesis analyzes Éilís Ni Dhuibhne’s writing using theories of ecocriticism and écritoire feminine. Her research interests include Irish studies, feminism, and folklore. She is postgraduate representative for IASIL and her research is funded by the Irish Research Council.*
32. Contemporary Critical Approaches
(Chair: Hedda Friberg) - Seminar Room 6

Malcolm Sen (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
Future Tense: Irish Literature and Climate Change

The “environmental humanities” is an emergent discipline that draws upon literary, cultural, political and scientific discourses to understand, critique and narrativise environmental issues. Pioneering figures of this discipline comment on the multi-scalar and interconnected complexities in envisioning environmental futures—through analyses of texts, current, historical and projected events, and socio-political ecologies—and argue that political, social and environmental issues are intrinsically interlinked. The “environmental humanities,” within which one may delineate the distinctive foci of postcolonial ecocriticism, narratives and debates about the Anthropocene or the materialist framework of the world ecology hypothesis, is distinct in its aims from literary criticisms of nature writing and also from early versions of ecocriticism. It speaks directly to “ecological imperialism,” the financialization and nuclearization of the planet, capitalism’s deep collusion with environmental degradation, and climate change and its exponential effects, especially in the global South. In the context of Irish literary criticism, there is a significant genealogy of ecocritical analyses that has revolved around landscape studies, cultural memory and imperialism. There has yet to emerge a politically motivated, rigorous ecocriticism within the framework of the “environmental humanities”; a reading of literary and cultural narratives performed from the precipice of climate change. How does Irish Studies engage with climate change and the Anthropocene? How do questions of sovereignty loss in the post-crash era produce environmental questions? This paper significantly widens the scope of Irish ecocriticism. It focuses on post-crash authors, such as Kevin Barry, Sara Baume and Claire Keegan, but emphasises the ways in which geological coordinates in their works speak to urgent environmental questions.

Malcolm Sen is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, University of Massachusetts Amherst where he directs the Irish Studies program and teaches courses on Irish literature, Climate Change fiction and the Environmental Humanities. His most recent award is a Mellon Grant for Blended Learning through the Five Colleges Inc. in Massachusetts. His current book project focuses on climate change, environmental narrative and postcolonial sovereignties. Apart from his academic work, Malcolm has been associated in different capacities with many non-governmental organizations in Ireland and India and served as a researcher for a European Union funded project on Fairtrade Cotton. He has been a broadcaster on Irish radio and has written for The Irish Times and History Ireland among other “popular” publications. He was one of the researchers of the PBS-RTE documentary series on the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916. Malcolm is the series editor of a podcast series on “Irish Studies and the Environmental Humanities” that is widely available to download online.
Cormac O’Brien (University College Dublin)
Contemporary Irish Literature and Culture in the Age of AIDS: The Biopolitics of Stigma

Through a critical survey of several literary and cultural responses to HIV/AIDS, this paper argues that this disease in contemporary Ireland is viewed almost entirely through an anachronistic lens of stigma. Since AIDS first rose to epidemic levels in white, western populations in the early 1980s, most Anglophone nations have seen distinct HIV/AIDS canons emerge in their literary cultures. Yet to speak of an HIV/AIDS canon in Irish writing is to speak of a cultural conversation that has yet to happen. This is not to say that HIV/AIDS is not present in Irish literature. However, echoing Susan Sontag’s point that “considering illness as punishment is the oldest idea of what causes illness” (Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors 131), HIV/AIDS in Irish culture is continually presented as a terrifying disease that only happens to bad people. In a postmodern age of biomedicine in which HIV-positive people can expect to live as long and as healthily as their non-positive counterparts, Irish culture continues to respond to HIV/AIDS in medieval terms of illness as punishment for a life lived badly—a cultural biopolitics of stigma that, as multitudinous studies demonstrate, can only exacerbate new HIV infections. This paper concludes by calling for further scholarly investigation into the notion that successive Irish governments and their agents—most obviously the Catholic Church and RTÉ—have encouraged and inculcated this stigmatizing lens in order to abdicate responsibility and accountability for HIV/AIDS, and as a way of explaining away a public health crisis.

Dr Cormac O’Brien is Assistant Professor in Anglo-Irish Drama at the School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin. Cormac is a specialist in modern and contemporary Irish drama, with a comparative focus on British and American theatre, investigating primarily the relations between governance and citizenship, and gender, sexuality, and national identities. His work in Irish drama further interrogates the correlations and tensions between dramatic structure and form, and the politics of queer representation. Cormac further specialises in the interdisciplinary field of Medical Humanities, comparatively exploring Irish and other Western cultural responses to HIV and AIDS, predominantly in drama, fiction, cinema, and television. He has recently expanded this research into dramatic and literary representations of epidemics and pandemics.

* * *

Graham Matthews (Nanyang Technological University)
Illness Narratives and Family-centred Care in Colm Tóibín’s The Blackwater Lightship

Colm Tóibín’s The Blackwater Lightship depicts three generations of women from the same family—Helen, her mother Lily and her grandmother Dora— who come together to care for Helen’s brother, Declan, who is dying from AIDS. The novel subverts the conventions of the illness narrative by circumventing the patient’s inner world; we learn surprisingly little about Declan’s sexual history, the experience of pain or chronic illness, or clinical practice. Instead, the focus is placed on Helen and the experience of family-centred care. Terminal illness is here granted an ambivalent
status as both rift and suture for the warring family. To date, sociological studies into practices of care have focused on acute and clinical settings, where patients are diagnosed and treated, and healthcare professionals such as doctors and community nurses. Tóibín’s novel offers privileged insight into the oft-overlooked experience of terminal illness and familial care-giving practices within a domestic setting. The novel’s matter-of-fact depiction of Declan’s illness constitutes a rejection of both medical discourse, which tends to sacrifice the individual in pursuit of the disease, and illness narratives, which risk a hermeneutics of sympathy and sentimentality. Negotiating between sentimentality and the clinic, the novel displays and honours the quotidian and practical details that comprise care for a relative in terminal decline.

Dr. Graham Matthews is Assistant Professor at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is the author of Will Self and Contemporary British Society (2015), Ethics and Desire in the Wake of Postmodernism (2012), the co-editor of Violence and the Limits of Representation (2013), and has contributed to various journals and edited collections on contemporary literature.

Lauren Rebecca Clark (Chinese University of Hong Kong in Shenzhen)
Children, Medical Advertising, Consumer Culture and Literature in the Nascent Independent State

The establishment of the Irish state in 1921 went hand in hand with an autonomous advertising and consumer culture. Irish advertisers actively encouraged young citizens to engage in consumption by buying literature, medicines and other products related to their physical and material welfare. Victorian medical advertisements will be presented in this paper to assess to what extent “affluenza” (de Graaf, Wann, and Naylor) impacted the Victorian Irish child. These appeared in “penny dreadfuls,” minor publications, national newspapers and local almanacs. Developments in the state provision of child health and welfare at the end of the nineteenth-century were also related to how these too catered for the child as a buyer in the Irish marketplace.

In order to engage with nascent Irish advertising discourse, an assumption was made on behalf of Irish children that they were to be complicit in the process of their own commodification (see also Denisoff, The Nineteenth-Century Child and Consumer Culture 3). The adverse health effects of consumer culture felt in a nation pushing towards independence makes a consideration of this material all the more pressing. Given that the young were—to employ Baudrillard’s terminology about the commodity in La société de consommation—primary signifiers in medical advertising enterprise, it is important to consider how children and adolescents were offered cures through the development of patent medicines.

As such, this paper will consider the history of Irish consumption and advertising using a contemporary analysis. It will show richness in the texts, ephemera and archival materials that have been overlooked for their lack of direct relevance to national history.

Lauren Rebecca Clark has been a lecturer of literature in universities in England, the Sultanate of Oman and Thailand before coming to China in 2016. Her research
interests include Comparative Literature, French, Irish and Scottish studies, World Literature, social history, Sufi writings, cultural studies and lately, Arabic and Asian Literatures in translation. Her monograph, Consuming Irish Children: Advertising and the Art of Independence, 1860-1921 will be published later this year.
33. Challenging the Canon  
(Chair: Keith Hopper) - Seminar Room 8

Seán Golden (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)  
Pushing the writerly limits as a vocation in Ireland: Aidan Higgins, Dermot Healy, Leland Bardwell

Each in their own way, Aidan Higgins, Dermot Healy, and Leland Bardwell were writers by vocation because they dedicated themselves only and entirely to writing. They tested the limits of form and the limits of style, abhorring repetition. They tested the limits of a bohemian lifestyle through exile, having lived abroad, having returned to Ireland, having abandoned the Irish urban centres for an Irish rural lifestyle. Their production is abundant but their reception in mainstream literary circles has been problematical, perhaps because they never stopped testing the limits nor settled long enough into a single mode that could train the taste of the mainstream reader, needing, as Wordsworth wrote, to train the ears of their audience to newer modes. Leland Bardwell played host to mid-20th century Bohemia in Dublin while breaking new ground in fiction. Her firsthand experience of earlier Bohemias in Britain and France brought new perspectives into contemporary Irish poetry and fiction. Aidan Higgins focused his mastery of style on every kind of subject, fictional or not, so raising the standards of style as to challenge other Irish writers, without setting a mould to be followed. Dermot Healy turned his overflow of creativity and writerly hand to every genre. These three writers share in common the fact that other writers constantly appreciated their work and learned from them, as well as the fact that they never received the recognition granted those other writers. This study will explore the reasons why.

Seán Golden is a Full Professor of East Asian Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). He has taught at universities in the U.S., China and Spain. Before China, he was a specialist in Irish Studies; after, a specialist in Chinese Studies. He has published in The Crane Bag and The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing as well as Cyphers, Force 10, The SHOp and The Stinging Fly. He is co-editor (with Peter Fallon) of Soft Day: A Miscellany of Contemporary Irish Writing.

*

Jaclyn Allen (University College Dublin)  
Re-Defining the Canon: The case of Freda Laughton

Freda Laughton has emerged as one of the most popular poets in the current recovery effort of mid-twentieth century Irish women poets. While most readers respond to her sensuous imagery, which caused a minor scandal at The Bell in the 1940s, her place in the Irish poetic tradition was also debated. Frank Harvey wrote in his Letter to the Editor to The Bell to argue that she was a poet in the English tradition rather than the Irish one and Austin Clarke, a poet and reviewer for The Irish Times, wrote that her images came from English modernism. Nevertheless, The Bell supported her work and her place within the Irish poetic tradition despite being unsupportive of women poets in general. My paper will explore how Laughton fits and does not fit into the definition of an Irish poet. I will focus on the mid-century definition of an Irish poet.
and how this definition is restricted by/to the male gender. I will then examine Laughton’s poetry to show how she conceived of poetry, and demonstrate commonalities and differences between her poetry and canonical poetry of the mid-century period. I will then demonstrate how she was forgotten by showing how she was and is remembered through poetry anthologies. I will conclude that any recovery of Laughton and other women poets would require changing the Irish poetry canon.

Jaclyn Allen is a Ph.D candidate in the School of English, Humanities Institute, at University College Dublin.

*

Chun Yi Jenny Kwok (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
“You are more of a heart’s-scald than our whole army together!”: C. S. Lewis’s Exclusion from the Irish Literary Canon

Starting from the turn of the 21st century, there has been an increasing number of studies devoted to reconsidering C. S. Lewis as an Irish writer. Examples of these studies include Terence Brown’s essay “C. S. Lewis: Irishman?” (1988), Ronald W. Bresland’s book-length study of poetry The Backward Glance: C. S. Lewis and Ireland (1999), and David Clare’s “C. S. Lewis: An Irish Writer” (2010). All testify to Lewis’s frequent use of obscure Hiberno-English and his strong sense of belonging to Ireland. However, while they have argued most convincingly for Lewis’s Irish identity, the following question immediately becomes pressing: why would the man whose nationality and literary sentiments proven Irish have left no trace in the history of Irish literature, let alone becoming a recognised part of the Irish literary canon? What makes Lewis, a frequent traveller to Ireland who was haunted by his homesickness for life, less Irish than some of the more problematic figures, say Shaw, MacNeice and Bowen? This essay puts forth these questions and tries to offer a preliminary explanation. As an Irishman who grew up in pre-partition Ireland, Lewis’s gradual apathy towards Nationalism and the Celtic Twilight—an effort to stay clear of politics that enables the possession of “an authentic Irish identity”—and his choice of English publishing houses over specifically Irish ones for the sake of reaching a wide readership culminate in Lewis’s eventual exclusion from the Irish literary canon.

Jenny Kwok is a Ph.D candidate in English Literary Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her current research interests include: C. S. Lewis’s literary theories and novels; English syllabus at the beginning of the 20th century; highbrow, lowbrow, and middlebrow culture of the 1920s-1960s; and the formation of literary canon. She has published articles on Seamus Heaney and Station Island.
34. Irish media: music, animation, stories
(Chair: Geraldine Song) - TR+1

Geoff Munns (Western Sydney University)
“It’s a long way to Belfast, too”: Place and Exile in Van Morrison’s “Saint Dominic’s Preview”

This presentation considers Van Morrison’s 1972 song, “Saint Dominic’s Preview,” as an example of the utilization of place in his songwriting. In this song, the streetscapes and buildings with their associated sounds, objects, symbols and relationships are caught up with ideas of location and dislocation, and with competing notions of rootedness, openness and exile. As such, Van Morrison can be aligned “with a long tradition of poetic engagements with space, place and landscape” in Irish literature (Alexander and Cooper, Poetry & Geography). This paper highlights “Saint Dominic’s Preview” as one example of the way his lyrics often return to, and re-imagine places through memory, signaling a fluidity of both space and time, and their subsequent lyrical energies. It explores how the song’s often oblique and unsettled series of emblematic spaces provide a coda for the major themes of Van Morrison’s oeuvre. These include childhood memories, musical influences, exile thoughts, and an underlying sense of social and cultural dislocation.

* Geoff Munns is enrolled in a doctorate that involves an interpretive reading of the lyrics and performances of all Van Morrison’s song texts from 1965 to the present day. The study takes up a stance that Van Morrison employs place in many of his songs at lyrical and musical levels, and that this use of place as a poetic and aural device both defines and distinguishes his song writing.

* Irene Lucchitti (University of Wollongong)
“Stories, Poems, Songs and Yokes that fitteth not any description”: Pierce Turner

Ireland’s rich literary heritage is enhanced by the work of Irish musicians such as Pierce Turner. Over a number of decades, he has produced a number of critically acclaimed albums supported by a lengthy story-filled correspondence with his audience. His listeners are also his readers. Wexford-born Turner has for many years divided his time between his native Ireland and his adopted home in Manhattan. His voice is thus both Irish and diasporic, reflecting his engagement with the two cultures to which he belongs. The depth of his continuing engagement with Irish culture becomes clear when his songs are considered in their constituent parts: poetic lyrics, musical composition and performance. A poet who sings his poetry, Turner employs language and tropes that are tinged with green. His highly idiosyncratic musical composition draws on Irish tradition, classical music, plainchant and other Church music as well as on contemporary sources, reflecting a continuing engagement with Irish culture past, passing and present, as well as more mainstream musical culture. His stage performance offers an exuberant mix of music, “yokes” and storytelling. Performing on stages both grand and humble, he favours intimate performance spaces such as bars and private homes, often serving his guests behind the bar at half-time. Situating his performance in such congenial, convivial settings, offering his guests...
both hospitality and entertainment, an experience at once corporeal and cerebral, Turner offers a vibrant new iteration of the proud Irish oral tradition.

_Irene Lucchitti is an Honorary Fellow at the University of Wollongong. Her major work has concerned the autobiographies that emerged from the Blasket Islands and is now centred on Peig Sayers’ texts. She is particularly interested in the oral tradition of Ireland and the links between orature and literature._

*

Eunice Lim Ying Ci (Nanyang Technological University)
Magical Realist Continuities in the Animated Films of Cartoon Saloon and Studio Ghibli

Cartoon Saloon’s two award-winning animated films, _The Secret of Kells_ (2004) and _Song of the Sea_ (2014), are rich with Irish cultural references, folklore, and fantasy, while Studio Ghibli’s animated films like _Spirited Away_ (2001) and _Ponyo_ (2008) ostensibly draw inspiration from Japanese urban culture, mythology, and history. Although the two animation studios and their respective filmmakers—Tomm Moore and Hayao Miyazaki—hail from different countries, there are many distinct similarities between the thematic concerns and stylistic choices of their animated films. By foregrounding the magical realism and drawing parallels between the Irish and Japanese high-context culture messages, this paper illuminates an underlying continuity in Moore and Miyazaki’s works. This continuity testifies to the extension of an animation tradition that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, rewriting and reanimating old narratives of pain and suffering into new narratives of healing and closure as the child protagonists of the respective films embark on adventures that metaphorically and euphemistically represent interpersonal, socio-political, national, and environmental struggles. Considering how both Moore and Miyazaki’s works are hand-drawn rather than computer-animated, this extension of an animation tradition does not only emerge through the narratives but in the form itself, demonstrating a traditional form’s reassertion and revival in a genre saturated by computer-generated images. The magical realist continuities in Moore and Miyazaki’s animated films simultaneously embody the threatened existence of the old and represent an increasingly ubiquitous resistance and resentment of the new.

_Eunice Lim Ying Ci is a Master’s student in the English Division of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University. With an undergraduate background in English Literature and Communication Studies, her primary research interests include Asian languages and culture, in literature and digital narratives._
35. Beyond the Canon
(Chair: Lim Yiru) - Seminar Room 4

Lim Lee Ching (SIM University, Singapore)
Stupendous vocation: John Moriarty and the Triduum project

The world encountered John Moriarty (1938-2007) relatively late in his life; his first book, *Dreamtime* having been published only in 1994. Over the course of the next two decades, he is to publish eight more books, creating a body of work that addresses some of the most pressing intellectual issues of our times. A poet, philosopher, naturalist and mystic, Moriarty’s writing invites us to recover the sources of the deep spiritual roots that have been lost in the process of humanity’s accelerated divorce from the physical world. This paper explores the recuperative impetus that lies at the heart of John Moriarty’s attempts to traverse the vast cultural landscape of the world’s many spiritual traditions. His is a sympathetic understanding of the unifying possibilities that can be realised in the juxtaposition of diverse, disparate cultural sources.

By compelling the reconsideration of the material consequences of our age, Moriarty’s great achievement is to renegotiate the terms of our Enlightenment inheritance. Outwardly performative in his reliance on a ritualistic grammar, it can be argued that Moriarty’s polemical gestures form a systematic trope that approximates a kind of shamanism. In turn, this is largely appropriate to the spiritual ailments that he identifies in—in the first instance—contemporary Ireland, the modern West, and then the world at large. By endeavouring to centre his vision on the universality of the ancient and the sacred, John Moriarty’s commitment is to laying the Celtic Tiger to rest amid the return of a veritable Celtic dawn.

*Lim Lee Ching teaches literature and interdisciplinary subjects at SIM University, Singapore. He is the author of The Works of Tomas Tranströmer: The Universality of Poetry (Cambria, 2017). He is also Editor of the Singapore Review of Books.*

* Dharamdas M. Shende (RTM Nagpur University)

Imagining Human Existence after Postmodernism: *Gulliver’s Travels* in Light of Buddha’s Doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada*

Human beings and man/kind are the same biological species, but the consideration of their biological features do not support the cultural characteristics of man/kind and human beings. This research therefore aims to support the stance of distinctions between the human being and man/kind with a view to predicting that there will be no rise of human being hereafter. It will be explained through the examination of the different types of man/kind and its different cultures that Gulliver comes across during his visits to different lands in the four divisions of his articulation of the ethos of man/kind—which by and large is the same due to its collective existential consciousness centred upon the distinction between “Self” and “Other.” To support this stance, the present study takes a closer look at the articulation of those four different divisions of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726): not as the collection of fragmentary abstract ideas, but as the gradual and consequential development of man/kind from
one stage to another stage—ancient to modern and modern to postmodern period—which would predict its further development after the postmodern period. This development parallels Buddha’s doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada*, which explains that the phenomena arise “as the result of preceding causes and in turn become the causes of future phenomena themselves.”

*Dharamdas M. Shende (Fulbright Scholar at Northern Illinois University, 2004) is Professor at the Department of English of RTM Nagpur University (India). He teaches English as well as American literature. His research is grounded in modern American fiction, particularly the examination of cultural issues in American literature with a comparative focus through religion and philosophy. Other research interests include Dalit Sahitya and deconstruction.*

Christina Morin (University of Limerick)
Reconsidering London’s Minerva Press and its Irish Writers, 1790-1820

The leading publisher of popular novels and gothic romances in Romantic-era London, William Lane’s Minerva Press was understood by critics as driving the period’s troubling surplus of cheap, imitative, and largely female-authored fictions. It was thus roundly condemned, and its publications dismissed wholesale as cultural trash, despite the remarkable popularity they enjoyed with readers at home and abroad. More recent literary criticism has tended to replicate such assessments, viewing Minerva Press publications as unworthy of scholarly attention, often without the benefit of a thorough reading. The result is a fundamental misunderstanding of the Romantic literary marketplace and literary production in the period.

This paper turns attentions to Irish writers publishing with the Minerva Press between 1790 and 1820, including, among others, Regina Maria Roche (1764-1845), Sarah Green (fl. 1790-1825), and Henrietta Rouvière Mosse (d. 1835). Although now considered minor authors at best, these writers deserve renewed attention, not least because their works were among the most widely read of the period, as indicated by circulation, reprint, and translation activity. Considering the significant cultural impact of works by Irish Minerva Press authors, this paper explores the now-overlooked contribution made by these writers to the development of nineteenth-century Irish fiction.

*Tina Morin is Lecturer of English Literature at the University of Limerick. She is the author of* The Gothic Novel in Ireland, 1760-1830 (forthcoming, 2018) *and Charles Robert Maturin and the Haunting of Irish Romantic Fiction (2011). She has also co-edited two collections: Traveling Irishness in the Long Nineteenth Century (2017; with Marguerite Corporaal) and Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890 (2014; with Niall Gillespie).*

Emma Penney (University College Dublin)
Challenging Liberalism: Poetry and Class Struggle in the 1980s
As outlined on the IASIL conference website, “the political, economic, cultural, and artistic histories of Ireland are deeply intertwined with its rich tradition of writing in Irish and English.” However, the economic has rarely been used as a parameter for understanding literature and literary history in Ireland. My research looks at the women’s movement of the 1980s in Ireland and the central role poetry played amongst working-class women activists. It develops an interrogation of liberal discourse highlighting how it has undermined the prominence of working-class women’s poetry within Ireland’s literary history. The classless space of liberal humanism will be challenged for how it has particularly impeded the development of a feminist socialist consciousness within the academy. The paper explores the issue of “classlessness” within academic literary departments—looking at how Matthew Arnold saw poetry studies as a way of “unifying a national culture by overcoming the imperfect perceptions of class.” I will look at how class is a consideration that is seen to tarnish a poem that could otherwise be read on more “neutral” grounds. I will highlight how this logic poses a particular problem for the women’s movement. My paper reveals the challenge that this impulse to “overcome class” poses to developing certain forms of knowledge and critical practice. I will argue that because liberal humanism is the dominant framework for literary critics, a class-conscious criticism has been marginalised. Certain forms of affect are, in other words, unpresentable or even unachievable within liberal discourse. As a result, certain poets and certain aspects of women’s literary history remain under-read or unrepresented.

The paper will also highlight how neoliberal policies threatened the autonomy of women’s community groups in the late 80s and early 90s. It will explore how a decline in creative production in these largely working-class community groups was largely due to neoliberal funding policies (emerging from the EU). Ultimately the paper seeks to explore the impact of liberalism both inside the university (impacting who was read and how) as well as outside the university where liberal ideals underlay new funding strategies which would eventually lead to the decline in creative practice amongst working-class women’s community groups. In the 1980s, there was a belief amongst women writers, activists, critics and poets that poetry could transform society. This paper will assess the impact liberal discourse had on this belief and, as such, on the development of a feminist socialist consciousness. The paper will also explore how the individualism of liberal discourse is consistently subverted by women poets who challenge the ideals of a unified truth and a unified self.

Emma Penney’s academic career began by studying a PLC course at Dun Laoghaire Further Education Institute. She later received a BA in English, Media and Cultural Studies from IADT. Emma studied the MPhil in Irish writing at Trinity College Dublin before pursuing her PhD. Her research is funded by the Roger McHugh Memorial Doctoral Scholarship at University College Dublin.
The Legacy of a Hyphenated Irish: A Drawing Room as W. B. Yeats’s Cradle

The aim of this paper is to think about characteristics of the space of a drawing room in a Georgian townhouse and to link the poet Yeats’s early career with it. This space seems to have had a great influence on the way he engaged in society. Young Yeats’s work “In a Drawing-Room” describes the fine manners that characterize spaces such as a drawing-room. That is a space of socialization. It was vital for Irish social life, and for Yeats, that a house contained a drawing-room. In short, “Georgian” is not the style of architecture but the way of life of those living there. It is important that, apart from the private life of the family, there are (within a house) public and theatrical spaces where people gather and make their appearance. Yeats first learned in a drawing-room at home and then learned to be a guest in a drawing-room in another house. And eventually he began to produce his own drawing-room. Actually, is not the Abbey Theatre an extension of it? For example, its prototype might be some space like “Lady Nancy Cunard’s drawing room in Cavendish Square in London.” While historically considering cultural characteristics of the Georgian style elucidates the hierarchical consciousness that have divided the people, focusing on how to use the space of a drawing room can be to view them in an ecumenical way.

Fuyuji Tanigawa completed a BA and a MA at Doshisha University, and later received a Ph.D. from Osaka City University. After one year as a visiting professor at the James Joyce Research Centre, UCD, he is again a professor in the Department of English Language and Culture at Konan Women’s University in Japan.

Youngmin Kim (Dongguk University)

Will versus Intentionality: Writing Gaze in Yeats’s A Vision

The language and the poem are adjuncts of a particular will. The starting point of all the phenomena of language is the will of the poet, and in the course of execution or abstraction the will representing an artistic ego gains access to the deconstruction of subjective consciousness. The discourse of the Other or the mask or the anti-self takes over the will and controls the language of the poet who, then, is paradoxically provided with freedom from the finite, living world and his “living imagination” (Yeats, Explorations 148). In the poetic process, all the poet has to do in order to experience this phenomenon is to write and meditate and think in language. Only by gazing through the medium of language can the poet abstract an emotion and create a work of art as a result of a “cold” or “detached” conceptual process.

The subject of this gaze which enacts in writing the materials for A Vision is the eyes of Yeats and Georgie. These eyes depict not what the subjects effectively see, but what they imagine, their imaginary inner vision. Although they do not see what they see, they act as if they are mysteriously captivated by what they see, deeply affected
by it. The gaze of the writing subjects in *A Vision* become autonomous, creating automatic writing and automatic speech. Then, *A Vision* is given for “the metaphors for poetry” and poetry achieves its being in language.

*Professor Youngmin Kim is the Dean of the College of the Humanities at Dongguk University, Seoul, Korea. He has been teaching literatures in English and critical theory at the Department of English since 1991 after receiving his Ph.D in English at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was Visiting Professor at Cornell University and Sapporo Gakuin University in Japan, and Visiting Scholar at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. He has served as President of the William Butler Yeats Society of Korea, and has given lectures and seminars at the Yeats International Summer School. He is now the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of English Language and Literature. His current interest is Yeats, Hopkins, Pound, modern and contemporary British and American poetry, transnationalism, world literature, and the digital humanities.*

*Pawan Kumar (Jawaharlal Nehru University)*

Reconsidering Yeats’s Literary Experiment: The Politics and Philosophy of W. B. Yeats in the Light of *A Vision*

Most scholars and critics of Yeats are of the opinion that in the later phase of his literary career, Yeats moved further away from politics. My paper will argue against this common belief and try to establish that Yeats’s later writings should not be read as examples of his disillusionment with politics, but rationalize Yeats’s later work in a new light: his later corpus of literary works, especially *A Vision*, can be alternatively read as mythical appropriation of Yeats’s political subjectivity which is evidently present in the later decades of his life. It is well known amongst Yeatsian scholars that Yeats was immensely drawn towards and his writings influenced by Irish folk-traditions, magical and mystical practices, occult systems, and especially esoteric knowledge systems of the West as well as the East. However, during this period, a flourishing movement, which was quite experimental, was taking shape in his creative articulation of human experiences, time and reality. My paper will try to establish that his politics got subsumed in his mystical endeavor, and metaphorically reincarnated itself in the form of a novel system (*A Vision* being a prime example of the same) which is very much political, modernist, as well as postcolonial. A close analysis of the structure, and more importantly, the sources of *A Vision* reveals that like any other modernist writer/poet, Yeats was also in search of a new voice and a new mode of writing. While doing my archival research at the National Library of Ireland (NLI), I found significant manuscripts, papers and letters that gave me greater clarity about Yeats’s literary experiments and his use of Eastern images and symbols in the formation of new genre, which culminated in *A Vision*. Moreover, because of the lack of familiarity with these systems, scholars/researchers of Yeats never tried to rationalize these connections which have dense philosophical underpinnings. The paper will also try to interrogate our existing categorizations of literary genres and to reason out if *A Vision* can be fit into such watertight compartments or does it aspire to claim a singular space in the literary world.
Pawan Kumar is a Ph.D Research Scholar at the Center for English Studies in the School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
37. **Maria Edgeworth and her contemporaries**  
(Chair: Katherine Blyn Wakely-Mulroney) - Seminar Room 4

Haruko Takakuwa (Ochanomizu University)  
Maria Edgeworth’s Irish Heroines: Domesticity and National Identity

With the Act of Union, how one was to understand Ireland and Irish matters within the framework of the United Kingdom became an important issue. One literary outcome was the development of “national tales.” Sydney Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) was the first novel to use the term “national tale,” and what the critics have come call “Glorvina solution,” a symbolic union between the local, national heroine and the metropolitan man, became a staple formula of this genre. In the Irish novels subsequent to *Castle Rackrent*, Maria Edgeworth came to employ this formula, although differently from Owenson.

Having revealed the Anglo-Irish landlord’s vulnerability in *Castle Rackrent*, Edgeworth’s later Irish novels address this problem by making them a proposition of her schemes for Ireland, namely moral landlordism based on the ideas and practices of her father. *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812) and *Ormond* (1818) take the form of Bildungsroman, and as such the protagonists’ growth is celebrated by their (prospect of) marriage—and here, Edgeworth makes use of the “national marriage plot.” In Edgeworth’s case, however, the plot is inflected to reflect her outlook on British nationality and domestic ideology. The representation of the young women in the novels shows how the question of national identity for Ireland gets intertwined with the idea of the British domestic woman. In this paper, I focus on Edgeworth’s Irish heroines and her use of “national marriage plot” to clarify her complex standpoint on the question of representing Ireland and Irish identity in the post-Union situation.

*Haruko Takakuwa is Associate Professor at Ochanomizu University, Japan. Her main interests are in early-nineteenth-century domestic novels and national tales. Her publications include “Pride and Prejudice as Angels’ Ladder: Jane Austen’s Novel Becomes Takarazuka Musical Theater” (Persuasions On-Line 36.1, 2015) and “‘Wild Irish’ Heroines: Sydney Owenson’s National Tales of the 1810s” (Journal of Irish Studies 26, 2011).*

*Charlotte Hand (Nanyang Technological University)  
Irish Identity and the Paradox of Inheritance

In the midst of a Western obsession to question and reform national identity, the Irish national tales of Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan, *Castle Rackrent* and *The Wild Irish Girl* respectively, sought to reconstitute Ireland’s national character through “some reconciliation between versions of the English and Irish national communities” (Deane 31). Interestingly, these attempts play out, to no conclusion, in political rhetorics centered on land. Both authors conceptualise Ireland as a kind of big house, engaging with the complicated issue of inheritance between English and Irish descendants in terms of both physical (who does the big house and, consequently, land belong to) and symbolic (the problem of the Ascendancy, the location of national identity). The fact that property features as the center of imagining Ireland, I argue,
reveals that the inability to conceive a coherent English-Irish national character stems precisely from its complex nature of ownership—the paradox of inheritance in Ireland can only leave its character as inconsonant. Furthermore, a paradoxical conception of Irishness arises from the Irish Catholics’ lost rights to ownership. The big houses of Edgeworth and Morgan are not merely a reflection of Ireland colonial condition, but what gives the native Irish, as they seek to regain ownership, a sense of national identity. Should the big house not exist as it is, then, it is unclear if there would be such a sense of Irishness.

Charlotte Hand is an undergraduate student in the English department at Nanyang Technological University, where she was placed on the Dean’s List in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016. She will also be a graduate student of the division in August 2017 and holds the University Research Scholarship. Her research interests focus on domesticity and its effects on identity.

* 

Beatrice Bowers (Nanyang Technological University)
The Enforcement of British Authority in Edgeworth and Owenson’s Representations of Ireland

This presentation explores representations of Ireland and Irishness in Maria Edgeworth’s Castle Rackrent, and Sydney Owenson’s The Wild Irish Girl. Given that both works were written after the Act of Union in 1800, their novels can be read as an attempt to sympathetically portray Ireland and the Irish to an English audience. However, the devices used within the text betray a subliminal degradation of Ireland and its people, ultimately perpetuating England’s power over Ireland through the mode of the Irish national novel.

Beatrice Bowers is a third year English student in Nanyang Technological University. Her main research interests are post- and neo-colonialism, postmodernism, and feminist theory.
Contemporary Irish playwrights, such as Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, and Frank McGuinness, share a commitment to issues of neo-gothic tropes foregrounding the spectrality in their plays. Instead of physical settings such as moldering castles and graveyards in traditional literary gothic convention, these modern gothics invigorate telling and re-telling of ghost stories as well as psychological dissolution that shatters the everyday life. Conor McPherson’s plays, in particular, are specifically connected to the twentieth-century neo-gothic. As he blends the eerie and the diurnal, ghosts come with no warning and the characters are constantly haunted by them. In McPherson’s best-known play, The Weir (1997), a drowned child haunts her mother down the telephone line; in Shining City (2004), an abandoned wife ghosts her husband and his priest-turned-psychotherapist; in the film The Eclipse (2009), written and directed by McPherson, the widower is haunted by the apparitions of his father-in-law who is nearing death and his deceased wife.

McPherson’s deployment of gothic tropes can be attributed in part to the Irish literary tradition rich in spiritualism. However, how does the neo-gothic mode of Irish theatre produce further meaning in keeping its characters looking backwards? What does the onstage dramatization of these repeated re-living of the dead, a Celtic Tiger product, mean in the context of a post-Celtic Tiger era? This paper will explore the theoretical and critical functions of spectrality and supernatural experiences in McPherson’s “haunted” plays. By looking into the dramatic sites at which extraordinary presences within quotidian reality are experienced and the ways in which individuals interact with either ghosts or ghostly memories in the everyday fabric of realism, this paper will re-envision McPherson’s attachment to neo-gothic tropes in the twenty-first-century.

Hyesun Jang is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea. She has published on the Neo-Victorian novel and modern Irish drama. Her research is funded by the Global Ph.D. Fellowship sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Education and Korean National Research Foundation (NRF).

*  

Luke Lamont (University College Dublin)  
Analysing the Rise of Documentary Theatre and Theatre of the Real in Ireland

In 2010, the Abbey Theatre commissioned Mary Raftery’s No Escape for a brief but impactful run on the Peacock Stage. This was to be a theatrical response by Ireland’s national theatre to the findings of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, a.k.a. the Ryan Report. Taken verbatim from the public report, the show received much praise and criticism, provoking debate around the purpose of the Abbey Theatre in Irish society and the role of the arts in commemorating one of the darkest chapters in the country’s history. This production reflects the emergence of documentary theatre,
verbatim theatre and “theatre of the real” in the Irish theatrical landscape. It is also an example of an interventionist approach being undertaken by Abbey Theatre officials, who felt there were few artists willing—at that time—to respond to this report theatrically. Raftery, a journalist by trade, was thus approached by the Abbey Theatre based upon her track record in this field, hoping they could create a theatrical discourse to address this issue. The production appears to have had the desired effect, with the emergence of important works such as *The Blue Boy* by Brokentalkers and *Laundry* by ANU (both 2011); works which, like *No Escape*, engage with the archives of industrial abuse in Ireland, but operate less as documentary theatre, and more as “theatre of the real.” This paper will assess the rise of these sub-genres in Irish theatre, and examine the deviation from the traditional role of the playwright as author they represent.

Luke Lamont received his B.A. in English and Philosophy (joint-major) from University College Dublin, and his M.Phil. in Irish Writing from Trinity College Dublin. Funded by the Irish Research Council, he is currently a PhD candidate at UCD School of English, Drama and Film, supervised by Dr Emilie Pine. His thesis is entitled “Act of Witnessing: Analysing the rise of Documentary Theatre within Irish Drama.”

*Alexander Coupe (Goldsmiths, University of London)*

Between wholeness and particularity: Masculinity and the politics of form in Owen McCafferty’s *Scenes from the Big Picture*

In 1986, Northern Irish playwright Stewart Parker declared that it was the dramatist’s duty to envision “a working model of wholeness by means of which society can hold its head up in the world.” This prescription was unfashionable at a time when assimilatory ideas of belonging seemed to have been terminated in the violence of the “Troubles.” During the 1990s, playwrights north and south of the border were instead exploring the particularity of experience in the monologue form: anti-heroic tales appropriate to the decline of muscular and militarist ethnonationalisms. No longer could the male body be staged in such a way as to give flesh to homogenizing ideals. But as the peace process developed in the 1990s and power-sharing government was initiated, Parker’s demand became all the more urgent and the limits of theatre’s particularising ethic more pronounced. How could playwrights represent an idea of belonging that avoided the homogenisation of ethnonationalism while criticizing a neoliberal, “post-conflict” politics defined by the management of difference? This paper argues that the early work of the overlooked Belfast playwright Owen McCafferty responded to this demand for new political formations in Northern Ireland. His abandonment of monologue and duologue, and adoption of the large ensemble cast in *Scenes from the Big Picture* (2003) represent a deep engagement with the politics of form. This shift signifies a departure from typicality, where the male body exemplifies an idea of community, to a theatre of relationality, which represents belonging as rooted in corporeal vulnerability and interdependence.

*Alexander Coupe is an AHRC-funded PhD student in the Department of Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London. His project, provisionally entitled “Embodying community: politics as performance in ‘post-conflict’ Northern*
Ireland,” explores how the body is used to represent and enact ideas of community across a range of performance contexts.
39. James Joyce: revisiting Ulysses  
(Chair: Angela Frattarola) - TR+1

Li Lianghui (Nanyang Technological University)  
“A Mirror Within a Mirror”: A Study of Authorial Consciousness in “Circe”

“Circe” has received much critical attention for its stylistic complexity. While most critics view this chapter as a mixture of hallucination and reality, a few interpret this mixture as a dream of Joyce (Goldman, The Joyce Paradox 96; French, The Book as World 187). The existence of an observer other than Bloom and Stephen has been explored over the course of narrative criticism of Ulysses. Within various interpretations, there is the memorable concept of “the Arranger”—first proposed by David Hayman in Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning and refined by Hugh Kenner in “The Arranger” in his Ulysses. Drawing on the hierarchical dual narrative levels of the Arranger’s over the major characters’, my exploration of the “authorial consciousness” attempts a twofold look into the intricacies of “Circe”: Bloom’s and Stephen’s dramas of memory and imagination, and the authorial drama of “Circe” as a whole. The mixture of personal memory and textual memory gives rise to many anomalies in the construction of the characters’ consciousness. Similarly, the obvious manipulation of characters, settings, and stage directions not only undermines the supposedly less mediated narrative form of drama, but also leads to indeterminate borders between fantasy and reality, and between imagination and memory. The anomalies and indeterminacy register the contradictory thrusts to create and demonstrate the limits of creation. Therefore, the study of authorial consciousness does not seek to simplify the chapter by overlooking the existing conflicts, but to better comprehend the textual incongruences.

Li Lianghui is a PhD student in the English Literature programme at Nanyang Technological University, with particular interests in (post)modern Irish literature.

* Chinatsu Toma (University of the Ryukyus)  
The Cyclical Exchange of Alienation and Re-involvement in Ulysses

This paper investigates the cyclical pattern of interrelation, alienation and re-involvement in Ulysses, and explores a new possibility of linguistic articulation it proposes.

Language articulates the world as an organic unity in two contrasting ways. On the one hand, articulation orders and constructs the world through frames of reference such as the class system, nation state, and organized religion. The Victorian era is one of the most articulation-oriented periods, with fixed frameworks such as the social hierarchy and the code of morality. On the other hand, articulation also creates alienation in the forms of discrimination, exclusivism, and ethnic conflict. Ulysses, a post-Victorian modernist text, describes this alienation and proposes “re-involvement” with it. Re-involvement problematizes the fixation of frameworks and alienation created by linguistic articulation, and opens up the possibility of new associations with the alienated objects. By offering this re-involvement, Joyce brings out the dynamic interrelation between alienation and re-involvement.
Writing is limited in expressing the “entire human business” due to the exclusive nature of articulation. With *Ulysses*, Joyce attempts to break through this limitation by describing the processes of interrelation between alienation and re-involvement. As a result, *Ulysses* brings out the cyclical pattern of this interrelation, in other words, the dynamics of the ever-changing world. Thus, Joyce offers a new possibility of linguistic articulation.

*Chinatsu Toma is a second-year graduate student in the Master’s program at the University of the Ryukyus in Japan. Her research interests are modernism, James Joyce, and Ulysses.*

*Quyen Nguyen (Nanyang Technological University)*

“Dublin what place was it”: Making Sense of the Textual City in *Ulysses*

Since leaving his motherland, Joyce repeatedly made spiritual homecomings by an imaginative reconstruction of his native habitat, urban Dublin. With hyper-realism, he obsessively rebuilt Dublin with each new volume. As a result, the major geographical readings of Joyce are mostly concerned with factuality in the fictive city and treat each of his works, *Ulysses* especially, as the ultimate of realist urban fictions. The revolutionary montage of “Dublins” through an odyssey of style has taken a back seat in Joyce studies. This essay addresses that neglected underlying cityscape and proposes a reading of one of the multifarious countenances of Dublin in the seventh episode of *Ulysses*, “Aeolus.” I will examine the outstanding features of the text that call attention to themselves more than the content, eclipsing other recessive features. Due to their conspicuity, the reader easily spots them in the episode and fixes a name for its style. Thanks to the imitated headlines, the episode becomes a mocked version of the press and constraints the genre of *Ulysses* as a fiction. On the one hand, the reality effect is still powerful in the narrative centre, on the other hand, these headlines attempt to push the reality effect to the periphery and overwhelm the reader with the unrealness. I will show how Dublin stands between the struggles of these two discourses and the city becomes a textual artefact whose final meanings are constantly interrupted.

*Quyen Nguyen recently completed her PhD with the Division of English at NTU, Singapore. Her research interests include James Joyce, Irish literature, Modernism, Translation Studies and Geocriticism. Her PhD dissertation is entitled “City as Writing: Textual Dublin in *Ulysses.*” She is currently translating Joyce’s *Ulysses* into Vietnamese.*
40. James Joyce: humour, translation, language  
(Chair: Lim Yiru) - Seminar Room 9

Séamus Feng Jianming (Shanghai University of International Business and Economics)  
James Joyce and Irish Humour

In the narrative works by James Joyce (1882-1941), humour is used to reflect Celtic connotations, public emotions, and distinctive regionality. In “Paris Notes” of The Critical Writings of James Joyce (1959), Joyce’s aesthetic tendency is clearly revealed: in the artistic realm, comedy is superior to tragedy. Joyce cherishes comic art, so he is bound to publicize the narrative glamour of comic art in his literary work. By comparing Joyce’s works in different periods, readers can perceive that Joyce’s creative pieces are increasingly comic in presenting characters, developing plots, and showing modernity. James Joyce demonstrates the charm of comic art in humorous ways. He exhibits various kinds of humour in Dubliners (1914), A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), Exiles (1918), Ulysses (1922) and Finnegans Wake (1939). Among some kinds of humour displayed in Joyce’s works, the most impressive is Dubliners’ humour, which is built on a long heritage of sorrow in Irish history. Humour comes from day-to-day life. As typical Irish or Celtic humour, Dubliners’ humour shown in Joyce’s works form a part of nationality and intangible Irish cultural heritage. Thus, if readers ignore Irish humour, they can hardly understand James Joyce. To a certain degree, the study of the humour in Joyce’s work can give readers a new window into the connection between Irish work and Irish cultural heritage.

Feng Jianming (Séamus Feng) received his Ph.D from Shanghai International Studies University and completed his post-doctoral program at Fudan University. He is now director of the Irish Studies Centre, professor of English Language and Literature, and supervisor of MA candidates at Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, and a member of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures. His main research interests are in English language and literature, comparative literature and world literature, and literary translation.

*Kumiko Yamada (Rikkyo University)  
Ken Sato’s translation of medieval Japanese queer literature and James Joyce

The recent discovery of Ken Sato’s 1926 journal written in English in Paris, as well as his correspondence, manuscripts, and publications, has changed our view of the writer’s life, particularly knowledge of his contact with Sylvia Beach and James Joyce. Sato is known for his Quaint Stories of Samurais (1928), one of the earliest translations of Nanshoku ohkagami (Tales of Male Love, 1687) by Ihara Saikaku. It was first published in French as Contes d’amour des samouraïs (1927) and subsequently in English for private distribution, printed by Imprimerie Darantière at Dijon. Although his name does not appear, Robert McAlmon was responsible for this publication.
Sato had studied with Ryusaku Tsunoda, author of *Ihara Saikaku* (1897), as a student at Fukushima Secondary School. Tsunoda left Fukushima to teach in Hawaii in 1909 and moved to New York to study and later teach at Columbia University. Sato left Fukushima himself for the US in 1906, and after working and studying in Seattle and New York, moved to Europe in 1923. His command of English and acquaintance with Magnus Hirschfeld in Berlin are revealed in his Paris journal. Sato visited Joyce on 27 October 1926, shortly before his departure for Fukushima where he was forced to return due to ill health and poverty. Although there is no evidence of further communication between the two writers, Sato’s idiosyncratic use of English may be a hint to understanding *Finnegans Wake*, and his literary adventures offer insight into queer literature in Joyce’s days.

*Kumiko Yamada is Professor of English at Rikkyo University, Tokyo. She has published a Japanese translation of Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871-1873, as well as several monographs on James Joyce. Her forthcoming Joyce-to Toyo: “Finnegans Wake”-e-no Michishirube (Joyce and the East: Guideposts to Finnegans Wake) is based on her doctoral thesis submitted to UCD.*

---

Thomas Gurke (Heinrich-Heine-University)

“[T]hat other wor[l]d” – Affect as transnational effect of *Weltliteratur* in Joyce and Beckett

The impetus of Henri Bergson’s notions of perception, time, memory and affect for paradigmatic Modernists such as Beckett or Joyce make us rethink the “globality” of Modernism: can affect be seen as a transnational effect? A category of *Weltliteratur*, even? World literature today is usually viewed as a system marked by cultural difference, exchange, relativism and/or contingency (Spivak, 2008). But Goethe’s earliest concept of *Weltliteratur* does not yet differentiate clearly between qualitative or quantitative categories of “otherness” (Birus, 2004). I would like to suggest affect as an alternative category of indifferenciveness in order to relocate Beckett’s and Joyce’s writing: not through a purely “Irish” relationship, but by viewing the aesthetics of both authors as being globally interlinked through the work of the French philosopher Henri Bergson.

Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* (1896) centers on the concept of the “image” as a perceptual quality which is used in order to re-attach perception to the real. This notion can be traced in Samuel Beckett’s “Ping” (1966/1967): “Ping image only just almost never one second […].” The stream of images, which Bergson sees as central to our perception, is interrupted in the moment of affect. It is within this interval—that the subject experiences the energetic matter of real objects as sensual data of its own body. This reading will show how Beckett’s usage of body and image follows similar strategies in “Ping.”

Joyce’s “Sirens” in *Ulysses* (1922) is often read as an ambitious feat to overcome the boundaries between literature and music, boasting a musical substructure—the mystical *fuga per canonem*—to be its underlying scaffold. Consequently, most analyses of this text focus on the “thematic” and “evocative” potential of the arias,
songs, dances and ballads contained therein. But read through the Bergsonian guise, a new reading of “Sirens” emerges: Joyce’s complex text presents a recherché into the nature of perception and the capability of sound to affect the body holistically, utilizing semantic instability to create an “in-between-ness” that not only “imitates” (musical) affectivity, but performs it within the reading-process itself.

Thomas Gurke is a lecturer at the Chair of Modern English Literature at the Heinrich-Heine-University in Düsseldorf. His PhD-dissertation (2014) focused on the intersemiotic, aesthetic and affective dynamics between music and literature, particularly regarding the texts of James Joyce. His current project explores concepts of authorship within drug literature.
In Irish literary traditions, women were either stereotyped as hags who were tied up with the land or pretty yet feeble women who longed for their male rescuers from lands far away. Additionally, due to the influence of the Catholic Church, Irish women used to be closely bound up with compassion and sacrifice. These male-constructed attributes also derived from nationalism, which favored male dominance over women for the benefit of nation-building endeavors. As a consequence, women fell victim to political propaganda and thus failed to be themselves. Eavan Boland criticizes the label inflicted on Irish women because the traditional image of women is a “cold and exclusive emblem” (Reinbaum 479). By the 1970s, Irish women had been excluded from the center of history, politics, and military activities. However, while Irish women have tended to be characterized in terms of allegorical mother figures, the image of women and their actual lives had significant changes in the last few decades of the 20th century. This transformation, coupled with the traditional images of women, is further explored in Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s poetry. Examining Irish women's writings, ranging from Lady Gregory to Eavan Boland and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, this paper aims to investigate how landscapes, legends, animals, and female bodies are used strategically by the three writers to construct/deconstruct the conventional images and the changing faces of Irish women.

Dr. Hawk Chang is Assistant Professor of the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies at The Education University of Hong Kong. He received his PhD from National Taiwan Normal University and did his post-doctoral study at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. Dr. Chang’s research and teaching interests include modern and contemporary Irish literature, women’s writing, the short story, 20th-century English and American poetry, translation studies, and language and culture. Some of his works have been published in English Teaching and Learning, Studies in English Language and Literature, Hwa Kang English Journal, Journal of Chung Hsing Humanities, Tamkang Review, Universitas-Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture, Wenshan Review, Review of English and American Literature, Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Journal of English Studies, and Neohelicon. His translation of John Millington Synge’s play, The Playboy of the Western World, was published by Bookman Books (Taipei) in 2012. His translation of Brian Friel’s Philadelphia, Here I Come is forthcoming.

* 

Cliona Ó Gallchoir (University College Cork)
Elizabeth Griffith: Female Authorship and Enlightenment Feminism

Elizabeth Griffith was one of the most prolific and successful women writers to emerge in eighteenth-century Ireland. Her most striking success was in the theatre, as the author of six plays, a number of which were staged to popular and critical acclaim. She was however also an accomplished novelist, a writer for children and younger
readers, and an editor and critic. Elizabeth Eger has suggested that commercial realties and generic constraints caused Griffith “to underplay, and perhaps ultimately relinquish, her ‘feminist’ politics” but also that “she was inevitably aware of her considerable achievement as a professional woman author.” In this paper I will explore Griffith’s work across a range of genres in order to assess the extent to which the concept of “Enlightenment feminism” is appropriate as a means of analysis. I will also consider the challenges for women like Griffith who assumed the identity of professional author.

Clíona Ó Gallchoir is a lecturer in the School of English, University College Cork. Her research focuses on writing in Ireland from 1700 to 1820, with a particular focus on women writers. She is editing the forthcoming History of Modern Irish Women’s Literature for Cambridge University Press, to which she is contributing the chapter on the eighteenth century.

*  

Molly Hennigan (independent scholar)  
Narcissistic Melancholia in Maeve Brennan’s The Visitor: Questioning Maternal Allegiance

Owing to the lack of secondary material available on Maeve Brennan, I take a psychoanalytical route to her work and unpack The Visitor in terms of melancholia and the narcissism of the Irish female. My paper is based on my dissertation chapter entitled “Narcissistic Melancholia in Maeve Brennan’s The Visitor: Questioning Maternal Allegiance,” while alluding to the broader national context for women and writers like Brennan, shedding light on why she thrived in New York, and exploring how the lack of role models like Brennan—the absence of work like hers and our broken down relationship with this material—comprises a convoluted undercurrent to what I see as a fractured, for that reason, and overtly gendered Irish literary canon.

Molly Hennigan is House Manager at the National Concert Hall in Dublin and writes short stories and critical essays in her spare time. She wrote her dissertation on Maeve Brennan and Dorothy Macardle when she completed the M. Phil in Irish Writing at Trinity College Dublin (2005), and has published an article on Maeve Brennan with The Irish Times to mark the centenary on 6th January 2017. Her current topic of interest is the female Irish body as a residential site, how it informs the space it inhabits and vice versa.