
IRISH STUDIES AROUND THE WORLD – 2021

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Introduction

Maureen O'Connor

We had such high hopes for 2021. There was a time in the summer when those hopes seemed about to be fulfilled, but for much of the year we were back to where we were the year before. Because of the unrelenting pandemic, some 2021 cultural and academic events relevant to Irish Studies remained virtual, some were held using a blended format, and some events took place in person. Most of the major Irish Studies conferences remained online, such as the British Association for Irish Studies (BAIS), which, ever-innovative, held another month-long conference in May, this time on the subject of the Irish diaspora. This event followed the association's research day, held on 17 March, which functioned as a wonderful kind of clearing house, a place to learn about all sorts of Irish Studies projects around the world. The event's Twitter hashtag, #BAISDay2021, continues to be a valuable resource. In May, the French Society for Irish Studies (SOFÉIR), held its annual conference virtually, on the topic, "Strange Country, Ireland in Politics and Culture, 1998-2121." The June 2021 American Conference for Irish Studies conference (ACIS), "Heritage, Healing, and Home," hosted by Ulster University, at the Magee campus, Derry City Centre, and addressed by (among others) the president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, showcased the impressive IT skills of the university, some of which can yet be seen on the conference YouTube channel: <https://tinyurl.com/4u6b97vr>. Also online and in June, hosted by University College Cork, was the 2021 Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland conference, on the subject of "Dwelling(s) in Nineteenth-Century Ireland." The 2021 European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies Conference (EFACIS), "Interfaces and Dialogues," hosted by the Centre for Irish Studies in Charles University, Prague, was held virtually in September. The Irish Women's Writing Network, <https://irishwomenswritingnetwork.com>, held its first virtual symposium in September, while another new event, conducted both online and in-person, was Ireland's first Working-Class Studies conference, held in November. Some sessions happened over Zoom and some were in person at Liberty Hall in Dublin, a building of historical significance in the labour movement. It was the site of a soup kitchen, organised by Maud Gonne and Constance Markievicz, for workers affected by the 1913 Lock-out and the headquarters for several newspapers: *The Irish Worker* and *The Worker* (both shut down by the British authorities), as well as *The Worker's Republic*, edited by James Connolly until the 1916 Easter Rising. Irish labour was also the subject of a series of talks hosted by the Irish Labour History Society in February and March. All of the usual sources for academic talks in Irish Studies continued to host events online in 2021, including Trinity Long Hub, Glucksman Ireland House, New York, the Moore Institute at the National University of Ireland, Galway, Irish Studies at St Mary's University, Nova Scotia, and the Newberry Library in Chicago. Many of the events hosted by these centres are yet available online.

There are a number of exciting events to report from the last year, and it might be easiest to proceed through the calendar. In Ireland, the year got off to a joyous bang, with RTÉ's New Year's celebration, the highlight of which was a cover of the Saw Doctors song "N17" by up-and-coming Nigerian-Irish superstar, Tolü Makay, who sang with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, a performance that has been downloaded from YouTube over a million times (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6sD1i3M0qY>). On 14 January, Queens University Belfast hosted the East Side Arts / Northern Ireland Writing Showcase, with a keynote from Dawn Miranda Sherratt-Bado, "'This Must Be the Place': Mapping Contemporary Women's Writing from Northern Ireland." As mentioned, one of the benefits of the new virtual world, is that so many talks are available online, like this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Di4bZCT7H0M>. A long-anticipated January event was the brilliant production of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*, live-streamed from the Olympia Theatre on 30 January, starring Siobhán McSweeney, whom you might know as Sister Michael from *Derry Girls* (which by the way, completed shooting its third and final season in December). Perhaps it is not surprising that 2021 was the year for Beckett's *Happy Days*: an Irish-language, Company SJ site-specific production, based on Inis Oírr, one of the Aran Islands, was part of both Galway's International Arts Festival as well as the Dublin Theatre Festival. Late January was also when Seamus Scanlon of City College New York hosted an online Japan-Ireland project, "Echoes of Calling," a Japanese dance production by Japanese choreographer and dancer Akiko Kitamura that incorporates Irish traditional music.

The first day of spring in the Celtic calendar, 1 February, which is known as Imbolg and St. Brigid's Day, symbolising hope and renewal in both the pagan and Christian traditions, saw a number of events that got the cultural year off to an energetic start. I am cheating a *little* by using Brigid's Day to introduce you to a podcast that actually launched in December of 2020, from Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster: "The Bad Bridget Project: Criminal and Deviant Irish Women in North America, 1838-1918." Siobhán McSweeney is one of the hosts of the inaugural episode. But to get back to 2021, the National Library of Ireland hosted an online talk on 1 February that explored all the crafts and legends associated with the date, which will be celebrated as an official national holiday next year. A number of events marked the day internationally, hosted online by several Irish embassies through the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs fourth global St Brigid's Day, which featured talks by authors such as Emilie Pine and Emma Donoghue, politicians and activists like Máiréad McGuinness, Monica McWilliams, and Ailbhe Smyth, and also focused on women and science, as well as in music and the visual arts. The virtual celebrations happened in thirty cities, including Madrid, Chicago, Vancouver, Shanghai, Sydney, Washington DC, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, and London.

This year and next are the most challenging as we reach the end of the Decade of Commemoration, beginning with the partition of the island in 1921, which ignited the Civil War that ended with the establishment of the Free State in 1922. Under the darkening shadow of Brexit and continuing debate about the future of the Northern Ireland protocol, the partition centenary has been the occasion for multiple events around Ireland, north and south, many of them highly controversial, such as a commemorative church service in Armagh in October, an invitation to which was declined by president Michael D. Higgins. In February, Queens University Belfast announced a series of public talks, "The Partition of Ireland: Causes and Consequences," that began in April. In June, a documentary, *Partition, 1921*, aired on RTÉ. Whether the attempt to present a balanced, objective discussion was successful may be debatable. In May, Dr Linda Connolly of Maynooth University presented a talk in Áras an Uachtaráin (the Irish president's residence), discussing a largely neglected aspect of the period under consideration: "Ethical Commemoration, Women and the Irish Revolution 1919-23," the text of which is available here: <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/linda-connolly-ethical-commemoration-women-and-the-irish-revolution-1919-23>. A related project is

“Outrage,” by visual artist Louise Lowe, Markievicz Award winner, in collaboration with Dr Kelly Fitzgerald, UCD, which explores outrages perpetrated against women during Civil War period. May is also when the Irish Department for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media launched “Mná 100” as part of the government-sponsored series of Decade of Commemoration events. “Mná” is the Irish for “women,” the focus here being on women’s activities in the period 1921-1923. The Century Ireland website, sponsored by the department, <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com>, is an invaluable resource for centenary-related material, including the year-long Hedge School Series and details of the recently launched exhibition, “Studio and State: The Laverys and the Anglo-Irish Treaty,” which consists of artworks, talks, performances, and online tours, and will run into early 2022. Dublin Castle has placed the original Anglo-Irish Treaty on display for the first time. The Oxford seminar series in Irish History included numerous presentations on partition, the peace process, and the Northern Irish protocol. The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, addressed an October conference on the topic held in University College Cork, “Negotiating the Negotiations: New Perspectives and Appraisals of the Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921-2021,” and even Irish Studies in New Zealand, specifically at the University of Otago, has launched a series of public lectures on the subject.

March is the month of Ireland’s patron saint. St. Patrick’s Day celebrations continued to be subdued in Ireland this year, with no official parades. An aerial light display over Dublin used drones instead of fireworks to create its elaborate effects, and RTÉ broadcast a virtual parade, featuring videos from around the globe. While in nearly-COVID-free New Zealand traditional Paddy’s parades were able to go ahead, a number of American cities and towns conducted drive-through or “reverse” parades: floats were parked and performances were held in large public spaces to be viewed by passing cars. A less celebratory, more critical approach to understanding Irish identity was the St Patrick’s Day premier of *Home*, an Abbey Theatre production about the Magdalene laundries. Filmed over the course of seven days in February, it comprised a series of readings of testimonies of survivors as well as official reports of investigations into these institutions. Directed by Graham McLaren and Neil Murray, the performance piece was available for free on YouTube for four months after its initial release. The 2020/2021 Women’s History Association of Ireland conference, also held online in March, was on a related topic: “Besieged Bodies: Gendered Violence, Sexualities, and Motherhood.” March was the month of the Chicago Irish Film Festival, just of one of many Irish film festivals held annually around the world, as well as Culture Ireland’s Seoda Festival, an international online festival (via YouTube) of Irish culture, including the performance of “Notes from a Quiet Land,” curated by Sinéad Gleeson. The last March event to include here is the launch of a webinar series, “The Jews of Ireland and Irish-Jewish Encounters,” from Cambridge University’s Woolf Institute.

Ireland’s popular president, Michael D. Higgins, turned 80 in April, and among the celebratory observations of the day was the broadcast of *Ómós - Michael D @ 80* on TG4, the Irish-language television station. Singers and poets from around the world contributed to the programme, including the award-winning Zambian-Irish rapper and poet, Denise Chaila, and Tolú Makay, two young women who were everywhere on the Irish cultural scene in 2021. Around the same time, in mid-April, the Global Irish Network, hosted by the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, held a webinar, a series of talks on “Post-Covid: A New Irish Studies?,” a panel of talks from scholars in the USA, the UK, and Ireland. Another online event from April was the Franco-Irish literary festival, which focused on ecological and environmental approaches to literature. The 2021 Cork International Poetry Festival was also run online this year, in May, which is when the Global Irish Diaspora Congress online initiative was launched. The inaugural event was titled “The Global Future of Irish Studies” and featured members of EFACIS, the organisation that has continued their essential and diverse “The Irish Itinerary” podcast.

Bloomsday was once again curtailed by concerns about the coronavirus, with some events in Dublin held in person and some online, as was the case in many venues around the world. RTÉ radio re-ran the famous thirty-hour Bloomsday *Ulysses* marathon recording/performance from 1982, while the Irish Embassy in France gave away 500 copies of Joyce's novel (one could also choose the short-story collection, *Dubliners*). The Cork Midsummer festival was held both online and in-person in June, while the Galway International Arts Festival, originally scheduled for July, postponed some of its planned events until the autumn and some until summer 2022. Large summer festivals struggled, but the autumn calendar promised (and delivered) innovative and diverse work as well as a return to beloved classics. The first play by an Irish Traveller to appear on the Abbey stage, *Walls and Windows*, by Rosaleen McDonagh, directed by Jason Byrne, was livestreamed in September. McDonagh is also the author of the memoir *Unsettled*, published in 2021. The "Queen of Ireland," drag artist Panti Bliss, hosted the Mother Summer Block Party in September at Collins Barracks in Dublin, which included a performance by Denise Chaila.

October's Dublin Theatre Festival held some events online and some in-person, including Mark O'Halloran's *Conversations after Sex*. The Wexford Spiegelent Festival featured an in-person line-up, including *Tomfoolery*, a comedy revue by Tommy Tiernan. Also in October, the Irish Rep Company in New York staged a production of Kevin Barry's *Autumn Royal*, a live performance that was also made available to livestream. Another live October performance made available to livestream and on-demand (fully captioned) was produced by the Peacock Theatre, *What I (Don't) Know about Autism*, by Jody O'Neill. Not only did the play address the complexities of autism and feature both autistic and non-autistic performers, but the performance space was also designed for a neuro-mixed audience, encouraging attendees to respond and move about as they please. The arrival of the Omicron variant of COVID in late November caused problems for Irish theatre, as new restrictions on attendance were brought in and many performances had to refund tickets, affecting anticipated events, like Paul Sheridan's new play, *Philo and Me*, and the Abbey theatre production of Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*, starring Aidan Gillen, who was also one of the stars of the new crime-family drama on RTÉ that debuted in September, *Kin*. While *Faith Healer* has proven a hit and will run through January 2022, *Kin*, like many things in 2021, was something of a disappointment.

October is Ireland's Black History month, and an international series of commemorations in the autumn were organised around the 175th anniversary of Frederick Douglass's visit to Ireland, a good year to launch the "Black and Irish Gala" in December, an awards ceremony highlighting achievements in the fields of culture and business. The Embassy of Ireland in the United States provided information on many of the events in Chicago, at Princeton, and in University College Cork, as well as a short film, *Black Abolitionists in Ireland*, created by the African American Irish Diaspora Network: <https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/usa/news-and-events/news-archive/frederick-douglass-in-ireland--175th-anniversary-commemorations.html>. New York University published a report on their "Black, Brown, and Green Voices" project and held an online conference, "Where Do We Go from Here? Revisiting Black Irish Relations and Responding to a Transnational Moment." A momentous event in more recent Irish social history was the 2018 referendum on repealing the 8th amendment, and in November, University College Dublin launched a website on women's reproductive rights in Ireland, "Archiving the 8th": <https://archivingthe8th.ucd.ie/>.

Despite an exceptionally challenging year for academics who have had to teach, administrate, research, and write under impossible conditions, I have managed, with help and cooperation, to increase the number of reviews for this current issue, although not by as much as I had hoped. Everyone is still under unprecedented pressure, and I am most grateful to those reviewers who came through and produced stellar work despite difficulties. Last year I concluded by noting that the winter solstice sunrise was livestreamed from within the chamber

of the Neolithic passage tomb in Newgrange. The same happened in December of 2021, though this year there were some in-person attendees as well. As I wrap this up, I find myself regretfully thinking of Yeats's phrase, "another emblem there," when I recall that the skies were too dark and overcast to illuminate the chamber in 2021. This YouTube video of this year's occasion had to resort to photographs taken the previous year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecjqezW0ggi>. Let us hope the light returns in 2022.

Maureen O'Connor lectures in the Department of English in University College Cork. She is the author of *The Female and the Species: The Animal in Irish Women's Writing* (2010), co-editor, with Derek Gladwin, of a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, "Irish Studies and the Environmental Humanities" (2018); with Kathryn Laing and Sinéad Mooney, of *Edna O'Brien: New Critical Perspectives* (2006); with Lisa Colletta, of *Wild Colonial Girl: Essays on Edna O'Brien* (2006); and, with Tadhg Foley, of *Ireland and India: Colonies, Culture, and Empire* (2006). Her latest book, *Edna O'Brien and the Art of Fiction*, was published by Bucknell University Press in 2021.

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Republic of Shame: How Ireland Punished "Fallen Women" and Their Children

Caelainn Hogan

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Reviewer: Margot Gayle Backus (University of Houston)

As Angela Bourke observes, in traditional Ireland, an array of folk beliefs and practices handled "social deviance and stigma, [using] a vocabulary and a system of metaphor through which to contain the sort of tensions that Victorian administrators preferred to house in grim four-story buildings" (580). Caelainn Hogan's *Republic of Shame* describes the convergence in modern Ireland of certain grim Victorian buildings and institutions *with* traditional vocabularies of deviance and stigma which gave rise to the network of orphanages, mother and baby "homes," industrial schools, and Magdalene laundries she terms the "shame-industrial complex" (19). Hogan's interwoven accounts of specific institutions from various vantage points – of the religious and lay people who worked in them, the mothers and other family members who willingly or unwillingly surrendered children to them, of adults unable to trace their own origins, and of children and adults who never left them – fill heretofore undetected gaps in our understanding of these institutions.

In a concise rationale for her approach, Hogan identifies what has been missing from the existing journalism, research, and reports that have sought to expose, explain, or quantify these "institutions and the culture that produced them." "The moral judgment" of the institutions, she points out, "is the easy part." In this book, Hogan is undertaking what she terms, the "hard part":

to enter into the mindset and methods of the nuns who created and operated the institutions, the churchmen and politicians who supported them, the public servants who compiled reports about them, the doctors, priests, and social workers who referred women to them, the families that sent their daughters to them, and the women and children who spent time in them. (7)

Hogan pieces observations, memories, and statistics from interviews and archival research into layered accounts foregrounding particular institutions. These accounts are enriched as she revisits particular institutions across chapters serially organised around specific perspectives: those of nurses, domestics, and nuns who worked in the institutions; the priests and professionals who oversaw them; their inmates; the children of inmates; the families of inmates; and those residents who lived side-by-side with these institutions. This elegant and eloquent schema places post-Treaty Ireland's institutionalisation of women and children in a newly comprehensive framework, one that is subjective, but not sensationalising, and rigorous, but not sanitising.

As Hogan points out, the “building blocks” of independent Ireland's church/State infrastructure were neither “intrinsically Irish” nor “intrinsically Catholic” (29). These building blocks include “the United Kingdom's Poor Law system, and the network of workhouses established under it”; the Protestant Magdalene Asylums, the first of which was established in Dublin in 1767; and the laundries that “started as halfway houses run by lay people at a time when the State's own approach was to incarcerate the vulnerable, poor or morally contagious” (30). This holistic account of the multifarious origins of Ireland's shame-industrial complex may have important implications for a broader understanding not only of modern institutions, but of what material and intangible benefits they produced for various groups, and how these came, in modernising society, to outweigh any ethical responsibility to one's neighbours. If Ireland's shame-industrial complex was not the product of any one institution or organisation, neither did it serve the interests of an all-powerful oligarchy. Rather, as Hogan makes clear, these interlocking institutions were so powerful and pervasive because they appealed to the self-interest of virtually everyone with any reason to know about them, with the exception of their inmates (37).

Hogan's bird's-eye view of “Ireland's architecture of containment” allows us to see across spatial, temporal, and social opacities that have limited our ability to view forms of institutionalised cruelty and neglect in twentieth-century Ireland even across specific institutions, let alone in any broader context.¹ Unquestionably, moral and religious beliefs rationalising cruelty, punishment, and neglect drove the institutions of other modernising societies, as Angela Bourke reminds us when she uses “Victorian administrators” and “grim four-story buildings” as metonyms for British modernity. Yet beliefs, practices, and institutions identifiable in modernising societies around the world have seemed anomalous when encountered in the context of “independent Catholic Ireland's” belated and “disorientingly rapid” modernisation, where they attained, in Hogan's words, “a sort of dark perfection” (29).

Central to this “dark perfection,” as most would agree, was a synchronisation of institution, stigma, affect, and subject formation brought about through the nascent Irish State's alignment with a particularly shame-based, anti-sex, anti-body strain of Irish Catholicism. As Hogan demonstrates, however, shame was not merely the by-product of this synchronisation, nor was it merely an alibi for its operations. Rather, shame itself was at the system's core. At

¹ Jim Smith's term “architecture of containment” more or less coincides with Hogan's “shame-industrial complex.” I use the term here, and look forward to using both terms in the future, because Hogan's schematisation of Ireland's institutions allows us to work in more nuanced ways back and forth between the material, economic *architecture* of these institutions and their affective, ideological infrastructure.

the end of her first chapter, Hogan quotes Sister Goretti, an elderly nun, explaining that Irish families in earlier decades could not have borne “the burden of an unmarried woman and her child ... because of the shame,” and responds with the question that will organise the book as a whole: “but where did the shame come from?” (10).

In her early chapters, Hogan identifies several tributaries that flowed into the shame-industrial complex, starting with a “narrative of the early decades of St. Patrick’s Guild,” founded in 1910 when a woman who ran a “home” for Protestant children in Dublin sought help from her neighbour, Mary Cruice, for “a young Catholic woman and her child.” Dublin diocesan archives suggest that Cruice was unable to find a Catholic organisation in Dublin “providing for ‘unwanted babies’” (11). This detail alone speaks volumes, since Catholic-run Magdalene laundries were already well-established, so that the absence of any arrangements for the infants of so-called penitents makes clear that their fate would have been dealt with on an ad hoc basis, with culturally normative outcomes ranging from infanticide to informal fosterage or adoption, and life trajectories for surviving infants ranging from remaining in the care of their extended family, to adoption, to institutionalisation. Thus, Cruice founded St. Patrick’s Guild to redress a pattern of infant abandonment and neglect that the Guild’s activities would serve to systematise and expand.

From the outset, Cruice’s organisation displayed many of the defining characteristics of what would become the shame-industrial complex. For instance, the Guild prioritised the physical restriction and cultural erasure of illicitly pregnant Irish Catholic women, some of whom were intercepted by a “network of informants” as they attempted to leave the country, and some of whom were captured in England and forcibly repatriated (14). These women’s infants seem to have remained an after-thought. They were put up for adoption, fostered out, or kept by Miss Cruice “until the child was three and could be committed to an industrial school” (16). Although the birth mothers (or their families) were obliged to pay for their child’s care, the range of outcomes—from de facto infanticide, to ad hoc fosterage, to adoption—remained the same. Perhaps unsurprisingly, rates of infant mortality remained high, and infant death was often owing to malnutrition (14). As Hogan traces strands of history littered with grim body counts, she repeatedly notes beliefs or attitudes rationalising or minimising the deaths of infants and children. In her account of the early years of St. Patrick’s Guild, for instance, she quotes a doctor’s complacent response to one year’s high mortality rates: “Our babies are of such a class as to be predestined to disease” (14).²

Having examined the founding of an early-twentieth-century Dublin Mother and Baby “Home,” Hogan reaches back into the more elusive origin of the embodied shame that both produced, and proliferated in response to, abuse and neglect in such post-Treaty institutions. She notes that Dublin’s “Foundling Hospital [...] set up on the grounds of the House of Industry in Dublin,” over “a century before the Famine.” As with St. Patrick’s Guild, the central impetus of the Foundling Hospital was “saving illegitimate children from abandonment and infanticide” (20). In this instance, however, in addition to a staggering body count – in the decade from 1750 to 1760, “half of more than 7,000 babies admitted died in the institution” (30) – Hogan quotes a Victorian scholar describing the prevalence among the survivors of the Foundling Hospital he interviewed of a specific kind of shameful alienation that would become central to the workings of the shame-industrial complex. In an 1876 pamphlet on the history of the Foundling Hospital (which closed in 1835), William Dudley Wodsworth notes that these survivors all described a “feeling of painful wonderment and anxiety [...] as to whom their parents might possibly have been” (29).

² Catholic church/State oversight of the Guild was formalised in 1943, when Mary Cruice transferred control of St. Patrick’s Guild to the Daughters of Charity, whose work with foundlings dates back to the seventeenth century France, when the order ran a home for babies abandoned on the streets of Paris (29).

As Hogan's informants repeatedly observe, children whose origins are obscured through some form of church/State intercession remain bereft of a fundamental sense of belonging, and thus of any secure identity. The prevalence of such systematically broken bonds in Ireland helps to explain where the personnel who ran the Irish shame-industrial complex came from. One woman who served as a nurse at Temple Hill, a mother and baby "home" that grew out of Saint Patrick's Guild, contends that among the religious sisters she worked with from 1958-1987, there had not been a single "normal human being." The sisters, as she puts it, "lacked that connection"—the capacity to empathise or connect with others – though she is not sure whether it was "beaten out of them or whether they never had it" (22). Hogan's informant describes her uncertainty about whether the nuns' lack of connection resulted from physical abuse, or whether this pathology might have been innate. Thus, she raises the possibility that the shameful alienation that ideally suited certain individuals for work in the shame-industrial complex may have been passed down intergenerationally in socially-sanctioned families once it was instilled into infants and children of earlier generations.

For the first dozen or so years following the 1992 Bishop Casey scandal, the paradigmatic abuses of the mid-century Irish church/State theocracy were identified almost exclusively as those directed toward those women who were deemed immoral or to pose a risk to public morality. This focalising of women as the paradigmatic subject of Irish church/State abuses makes sense, given the church's moralising focus on adult women in their sexual and reproductive capacities (12). Yet, this focus renders obscure or easily forgotten a vast range of appalling and systemic abuses to which children, the poor, and the disabled have been and continue to be routinely subjected. Hogan's holistic exploration of Ireland's various church/State institutions from an array of angles helps to make more fully visible the ways in which sexual stigmatisation and abuse not only robbed women of their most fundamental humanity, but also became the basis for a far-broader somatisation of all children who could be deemed the product of a given woman's immorality, even if the woman's only "original sin" was poverty or independent thinking. Ideologically speaking, and crucially, this continuing fixation on women's immorality afforded post-Treaty modernity with a license to disqualify parents and break up families at will, effectively neutralising the sense of self from which human social agency springs.

As the rate of Irish modernisation accelerated, sexual and moral shame increasingly legitimated the exercise of church/State control over infants, children, women, and thus over biological and ideological reproduction itself. The embodied shame the shame-industrial complex instilled in its inmates, in turn, pervasively shaped Irish subjectivity in a manner conducive to the system's further growth. By Hogan's account, Ireland's shame-industrial complex not only produced, but was also the product of systematic, mass-scale (dis)placement of infants and children into foundling hospitals, workhouses, orphanages, foster care, and adoptive families. Her work affords a new frame of reference in which to view twentieth-century Ireland's seemingly anomalous interlocking institutions by tracing their origins to earlier colonial institutions that coexisted alongside traditional belief systems and arrangements they would go on partly to absorb, and otherwise supplant. Thus, *Republic of Shame* represents a valuable opportunity to reconsider the role of institutional incarceration not only in modern Ireland, but, comparatively, in modernising societies around the world. Schematically, Hogan's emphasis on the role of Ireland's shame-industrial complex in radically and rapidly foreclosing ad hoc community arrangements for the care of displaced infants and children suggests a broader correlation between industrial capitalism's sanctification of the heterosexual nuclear family, with its strong affective bonds, and the rise of modern institutional machinery prioritising the severance of every bond connecting mothers, parents, extended families, and communities to all infants deemed "unwanted." Surely the connections between the widespread success of the heterosexual nuclear family, and of the modern ideologies that declared that

family synonymous with morality, are worth reconsidering in light of the role played by institutionalisation in eradicating all viable pre-modern arrangements for the nurture of infants and children.

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The Routledge Handbook of Irish Studies

Edited by Reneé Fox, Mike Cronin, and Brian Ó Conchubhair
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Reviewer: John A. Ball (Oklahoma State University)

The Routledge Handbook of Irish Studies, edited by Reneé Fox, Mike Cronin, and Brian Ó Conchubhair, is without question an ambitious book. It seeks to give a comprehensive overview of the state of the field of Irish studies in 2020, and, overall, it succeeds at that goal. It is a substantial work, coming in at around 500 pages with thirty-nine essays written by subject area specialists in fields ranging from history and literature to architecture, queer (or quare) studies, music, material culture, women's studies, and material culture to give but a sample. These areas are broadly organised into six sections: an Overview, Historicizing Irish Studies, Global Ireland, Identities, Culture, Theorizing, and Legacy. Temporally, while occasionally dipping back to earlier periods, the collection focuses on the period from the nineteenth century forward and ends with a final essay addressing Ireland and COVID-19. These diverse topics are held together by a series of introductory essays provided by the editors in each section. These introductions are invaluable in navigating the scope of the book as no matter what one's academic training, there will be some essays that are unfamiliar intellectual territory. The result is a collection of essays where the whole is more than the sum of its parts. It admirably meets its stated goal as a summary of the state of Irish Studies. However, it goes beyond to be both an impassioned plea and a working model for what Irish Studies should be going forward. Additionally, it is also a composite study of contemporary Ireland in its own right.

The main audience for *The Routledge Handbook of Irish Studies* (henceforth *RHIS*) is, unsurprisingly, academics working in the field of Irish Studies. For established scholars in this

field, the *RHIS* presents them with an overview of the latest scholarship in a multitude of disciplines and a chance to position their own work within that scholarship. The *RHIS* is useful as well as it shows underserved areas of research as well. Maureen O'Connor's chapter on Irish animal studies stands out here, both for its argument of the value of examining culture through the lens of animals both real and symbolic, and for its demonstrations of numerous points where this area can enrich Irish Studies. This collection likely will spark numerous ideas for future study. For graduate students, newer scholars, or those returning to research, this collection is a gold mine. It not only provides a current state of the field, but the up-to-date references in each essay are numerous, and a strong starting place for building a bibliography for future research. Finally, the broad range of essays offer many suggestions for collaboration on research between disciplines. This aspect of the study should not be undersold: Irish Studies at its best has always been multidisciplinary, and one of the central themes of *RHIS* is to expand that diversity.

The *RHIS* argues that its reassessment of Irish Studies is necessary, because in 2007 Ireland went through a recognizable shift in era. Broadly, the collection argues that with the end of the "Troubles" and the rise of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s, Irish Studies shifted focus away from traditional questions around nationalism and church history. This lasted until the 2007 economic crisis, which sparked new discussions around a more inclusive Ireland and new interrogations of neoliberal policies. This era is the central focus of the collection. With a certain self-awareness, the collection also suggests we are on the edge of a new era by including a final speculative essay by Malcolm Sen on the impacts of COVID-19 on Irish society. The essay effectively finishes the collection as it ends the work with a note of uncertainty. It reminds the reader of the global nature of what we are all living through as well as emphasising how understanding a pathogen is not just about the physical virus but also about the cultural interpretations and practices that go with it. The collection finishes in this voice of uncertainty, both in that the pandemic is far from over and that it may well mark the start of another era of Irish Studies that will require new questions and approaches. In doing so the *RHIS* proclaims its confidence in its own ideas and an openness for further conversation that marks the very best scholarship.

This mapping of eras is crucial to the larger academic argument of this collection, but it also provides a lively discussion of contemporary Irish culture. This was a surprise as a reader, as the essays do not directly react to each other's scholarship. However, they indirectly build their points around a series of shared events in recent Irish history such as the 2004 referendum on birth-right citizenship, the successful referendums on gay marriage and abortion, the recent uncovering of the full extent of the horror of mother and baby homes, and the struggles of growing wealth inequality from the austerity programs after 2007. The essays do so not only through academic studies, but also via popular culture and media. The murder-mystery author Tana French makes several appearances, as do contemporary poets, and political advertisements. Material culture, such as a memorable artist's addition to a vintage porcelain saucer which, indeed, does call into question the missing teacup, shows the importance of including the physical as well as the intellectual dimensions of modern Ireland. These are not only valuable points of academic analysis, but they also give connection points for readers who may find themselves engaged with arguments in unfamiliar disciplines.

The essays in *RHIS* collectively make an argument not just for how Irish Studies has changed, but also offer a working model of how it should continue changing. Setting the baseline of Irish Studies as it existed before and during the Celtic Tiger period, this collection makes a collective argument that Irish Studies has pulled away from its historic focus on nationalism and church history. It shows a growth beyond the constraints of history and literature to incorporate other academic disciplines. It calls for more gender inclusivity, and especially for more gender and queer theory. It argues that contemporary Ireland needs more engagement with theories and scholarship around race to reflect what it means to be Irish today.

Its scholarship shows that neoliberal governmental policies are not only creating widening economic disparities, but they are also failing to provide needed support for the Irish language. Additionally, the collection recognises that Irish Studies benefits from a growing international dimension that has expanded beyond Ireland and, to a lesser degree, the United States. These arguments are supported by the very diversity of the essays which are themselves evidence for the state of the field.

If there are any critiques to be made, they are the ones typical for this type of work. The broad scope makes it challenging for the reader to hold onto the themes and arguments of a collection. There is also a feeling that in setting up the pre-Celtic Tiger scholarship as an old-fashioned point of contrast to where the field is today, that the work has created a bit of a straw-man argument. René Fox's chapter in *RHIS* demonstrates how contemporary authors since 2007 have drawn on nineteenth-century Irish literature previously overlooked in Irish Studies as a whole. Fox makes the important argument that this use suggests there is much in the nineteenth-century text that deserve another look and perhaps a larger place in Irish Studies. Similarly, the pre-Celtic Tiger historiography and scholarship certainly retains value, especially if approached with new questions in mind.

The *RHIS* is a compelling and extraordinarily useful collection for anyone engaged in Irish Studies. There will be a tendency for scholars to read only the sections related to their disciplines, but it absolutely is worth engaging the collection in its entirety. The essays speak to each other, if indirectly, and together they build a composite picture that is a working model for diverse, international, and inclusive scholarship. It presents a compelling vision of what Irish Studies was, is, and will be.

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From Whence I Came: The Kennedy Legacy, Ireland, and America

Edited by Brian Murphy and Donnacha Ó Beacháin

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Reviewer: Robert Collins (University of Limerick)

There is no denying the intense Irish interest in American politics and in particular, the race for the White House and the furore surrounding presidential campaigns. The contemporary elections of Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden have arguably been followed on Irish television screens even more intensely than Irish election results. Despite the enduring relationship between Ireland and the United States, interest in the presidency largely began with the election of John F. Kennedy on 8 November 1960. The victory of the first Irish Catholic president ensured a keen Irish interest, as well as the growing celebrity of the former senator from Massachusetts.

In this work, Murphy and Ó Beacháin explore this interest in an easy-to-read collection of essays that were mostly derived from papers presented at the Kennedy Summer School in

New Ross, County Wexford. The diverse contributions range from a discussion of Bridget Kennedy, JFK's great-grandmother, to contributions from a speechwriter and chief strategist who worked on the staffs of, respectively, Barack Obama and Bernie Sanders. Throughout the work, effective use of contemporary accounts provides valuable insights for any reader into the perceptions and motivations of the Kennedy family, their colleagues, and political opponents. The most obvious example of this is Ó Beacháin's contribution on the various electoral victories of the 35th President of the United States. Similar in approach to his previous work *From Partition to Brexit: The Irish Government and Northern Ireland*, he cleverly documents the manoeuvres and meetings held to ensure JFK's path to the presidency, alongside the importance of his father's wealth.

For scholars particularly interested in the complex and nuanced relationship between Ireland and the United States in the twentieth century, contributions by Michael Kennedy, Mary Daly, and Alison Meagher, certainly enhance the existing literature. Michael Kennedy, Executive Editor of the significant Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Project, exploits the DIFP archive to demonstrate the limited involvement of President Roosevelt and Joseph Kennedy in the drafting of the 1938 Anglo-Irish Agreement. Joseph Kennedy, JFK's father and US Ambassador to the UK, was appointed to the role in the same year but Michael Kennedy comes to the interesting conclusion that "no compelling evidence" exists that his appointment had any impact on the agreement and that "De Valera played the American card in hope rather than expectation" (38).

Daly discusses the changing Ireland-US relationship in the years preceding Kennedy's presidential visit to Ireland in June 1963. One interesting insight in the essay is the assertion that Irish government policy on Northern Ireland moved away from a focus solely on partition to a more pragmatic approach. In doing so, it solidified the Irish approach that would largely dominate once conflict broke out in the late 1960s. Furthermore, Daly details the often-overlooked visit by Taoiseach Seán Lemass to the US in October 1963, just a month before Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, as well as his feature on the cover of *Time* magazine a month after Kennedy's June visit.

Meagher's essay details the involvement of Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy in attempting to mediate in the Northern Ireland conflict. Kennedy's involvement in the so-called "Four Horsemen" alongside Hugh Carey, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan arguably became his lasting legacy on the conflict. The piece could have been improved further with a meaningful discussion surrounding the importance of opposing groups such as Noraid and the Irish National Caucus, particularly in the aftermath of the 1981 Hunger Strikes. However, Meagher accurately points to the importance of John Hume in influencing Kennedy's stance on the conflict. The relationship between Kennedy and Hume was the driving force behind the "Four Horsemen", alongside Kennedy's considerable clout within the Democratic party.

In addition to these valuable contributions to the existing historiography on Irish-US relations in the twentieth century are a number of personal accounts that provide fascinating insights into the workings of both a presidential campaign and a presidency. Cody Keenan worked as a speechwriter during the Obama administration and Tad Devine has extensive experience advising on presidential campaigns and has written of his experience on Bernie Sanders's unsuccessful 2016 campaign. These accounts articulate a unique perspective on individuals who often operated on the periphery but nevertheless played important roles in the running of a campaign and a presidency.

Overall, Murphy and Ó Beacháin have put together a collection of essays that despite Kennedy's worldwide notoriety still provide a valuable contribution on the cult of personality that can be created around a historical figure. By challenging some presumed narratives that have long circulated about the Kennedy family and legacy, this collection is invaluable to any

scholar interested in American politics, as well as the relationship between Ireland and America throughout the twentieth century. Furthermore, the accessibility of the work should also appeal to a wider readership, and anyone interested in the Kennedys, including the legacy of his Irish visit, one that still resonates on this island nearly sixty years later.

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Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland and Contemporary Women's Writing

Edited by Claire Bracken and Tara Harney-Mahajan

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Reviewer: John Conlan (Maynooth University)

It might seem difficult for a young person to imagine the bizarre popular culture of the Irish economic boom. No strangers to hyper-consumerist values themselves, most university undergraduates (born after 9/11) would not have been as immersed in the zany phantasmagoria of money and status that shapes the world of Claire Kilroy's novels, for example. This was a bizarre period in which national newspapers became daily-administered vehicles for distracting us from the inequities that underlay the speculative bubble of the Celtic Tiger. It was an era in which broadsheet lifestyle magazines mocked us with illusions of attainable grandeur, where photoshoots advertised a newly-minted cabal of B-listers who swigged champagne with lawyers and property magnates, enticing us to magical venues with names like "Rénards" or "Lillie's", garish Hybrasils where, it seemed, we could all enjoy the pursuits of the moneyed, professional classes. Indeed, it would be hard for the average, rent-oppressed student to imagine the sheer malignancy of the Stockholm Syndrome that permeated culture-at-large in the lead-up to the economic crash. In the rapidly neoliberalising mediascape, the most visible canaries in the coalmine were wealthy suburban economists who acted as condescending field-anthropologists, fascinated by the working class and their penchant for breakfast rolls. In this circus-mirror of national self-awareness, it was therefore unsurprising that more disturbing goings-on in the Department of Finance or the Central Bank flew under the radar.

Such was the bread-and-butter of everyday culture during the boom. The aftermath which we inhabit – the trial of Anglo bankers, the economic self-reckoning of the Nyberg report – is a more sober existence altogether. It seems appropriate, therefore, that a recent essay collection, *Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland and Contemporary Women's Writing* manages to reinvigorate what often feels like an exhausted market in rear-view assessments of Ireland's boom-bust escapades. Here, editors Claire Bracken and Tara Harney-Mahajan maintain a distinct awareness of the disturbing underside of our neoliberal moment, as it is best captured in the work of contemporary women writers.

The volume was originally published as a special issue of the journal *LIT (Literature, Interpretation, Theory)* back in 2017, and the editors deliver a thought-provoking introduction, providing a comprehensive overview of the philosophical significance of the project and the

writers who have been included. The book features critical essays on Kilroy, Emma Donoghue, Louise O'Neill, Marian Keyes, Belinda McKeown, Anne Enright, Christine Dwyer Hickey, Eimear McBride, and Melatu Uche Okorie. As well as the critical essays (which go beyond mere single-author critical studies, as Emer O'Toole's essay on "Waking the Feminists" makes clear), the collection is bolstered by interviews with two of the authors. Mary Burke's interview with Kilroy opens the collection, and in what is perhaps the centrepiece of the book, Melatu Uche Okorie is featured in a critical introduction/ conversation with Sara Martín-Ruiz, as well as in her short story "This Hostel Life." Mindful of issues of inclusivity, the editors are also cognizant of the space-constraints of their project, as they are keen to highlight many other writers who have not been included (Sara Baume, Doireann Ní Ghríofa, Danielle McLaughlin, and Laoisa Sexton all receive honourable mention). With this inclusive scope and mindset, *Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland* is an effective exercise in archive-building, tracing feminist connections and solidarities across different genres and mediums.

Working at the intersection of theories of gender, neoliberal precarity, and posthumanism, the writers included in this volume speak to the delayed awareness of the excesses of the economic boom. The critical essays are therefore an important intervention to the extent that they show how Irish women writers have been immersed in the ethical quandaries of the Celtic Tiger from an early stage, questioning "gendered constructions of late capitalism" and "the ways in which Irish recessionary culture locates the feminine as a site of blame for the excesses of the Tiger period" (2). In the introduction to her interview with Kilroy, Mary Burke presents us with the image of "the frivolous woman laden down with Brown Thomas bags" (29). Intolerable as this mirror to our own shabby genteel culture may be, it is precisely the fraught entanglement of gender and socio-economics that is addressed by the volume throughout, as it explores the contest between masculine-coded discourses of neoliberal austerity and the voice of a feminist writing that is inimical to such values. As the introduction argues, "the Celtic Tiger era's fetishization of female excess deflected attention from the macho politicians, builders, and developers hustling the economy away; a disordered male capacity for dangerous risk-taking" (29).

Burke's interview with Kilroy leads nicely into a comparative study of her novel, *The Devil I Know*, which is read alongside Anne Enright's *The Green Road*, and Christine Dwyer Hickey's *The Lives of Women*. Exploring the idea of the "neoliberal present" (54), Mary McGlynn notes how the "ghostly home" and the "globalized non-place" (57) are symptoms of an extenuated spatio-temporal predicament across these novels about the Celtic Tiger written by women. McGlynn points to what Diane Negra calls "idealized, cosmopolitan mobilities" (57) as recurrent tropes in the writers under consideration, and the queer temporality which she sees at work in either author is exemplary of a "neoliberal logic [that] re-insinuates itself via a vernacular, unofficial rhetoric of inevitability, assuming a guise of 'always and everywhere'" (57).

Rachael Lynch continues the theme of queer temporalities with her essay on "Gina and the Kryptonite: Mortgage Shagging in Anne Enright's *The Forgotten Waltz*", which offers a theoretically ground-breaking reading of Enright's 2011 novel. Here, the child-figure of Evie in Enright's novel is read as a futuristic emblem of feminist kinship, where the unconventional relationship between Evie and the narrator, Gina, projects the posthuman ideal of non-heteronormative kinship. In Lynch's analysis, Enright emerges as a sort of tech-utopian feminist, and she detects "the figurative possibility of a post-human world that privileges connection and relationality" (130) in the Irish novelist's descriptions of the electronic communications that mediate Evie and Gina's interactions.

In her convincing assertion of Enright's posthumanist credentials, Lynch places the Irish novelist's work in the context of feminist posthumanism, from Cary Wolfe to Rosi Braidotti. The Deleuzian aspects of Braidotti's programme for imagining new forms of

posthuman kinship is manifested, according to Lynch, in the “non-normative bonds” that are central to Enright’s novel (131), a vision of community that speaks to current theories of the “xenofamilial” (Hester 65). Perhaps the most convincing part of Lynch’s vision of posthuman solidarity in the novel is her framing of Enright’s book within the network of media reviews that occasioned its release back in 2011. Here, the rather lukewarm critical response that the novel first elicited is revised to give a recuperative reading of Enright as a novelist deeply engaged in questions of identity than her early critics (who were irked by the “emotionally flattened” cast of the novel [117]) might have been alert to. Lynch thus manages to achieve a successful remediation of Enright, restoring her place in the vanguard of post-recession writers.

Margaret O’Neill’s essay on Emma Donoghue and Marian Keyes deals explicitly with the topic of the economic recession. O’Neill reads the authors’ respective novels, *Room* and *Brightest Star*, as illustrating “the violence inflicted by neoliberal systems of economic and social repression” (75). Situating the two writers with respect to the social impact of the banking bailout and austerity, O’Neill sees the characters of *Room* as subject to a regime of “biopolitical control” that, following Sara Ahmed’s theory of “migrant orientation” (75), calls for a queer re-orientation of the neoliberal subject. Whilst a contemporary writer like Donoghue “opens the possibility of discovering other life paths” (76), Keyes portrays a similar “linguistic violence” (80), whereby corporate media language insinuates itself into everyday existence, leading to the entrapment of vulnerable characters in a consumerist dystopia.

This critique of the hyper-consumerist overtones of Tiger-era culture is expanded in Susan Cahill’s essay “A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing?: Girlhood, Trauma and Resistance in Post-Tiger Irish Literature”, where the novels of Eimear McBride and Louise O’Neill are placed within the context of discourses of the “Celtic Kitten” that tend to commodify adolescent femininity. Cahill distils a powerful sense of the exploitative nature of Tiger-era culture, and the way in which “Femininity became increasingly constructed in postfeminist neoliberal terms such that female empowerment became coded as the freedom to consume” (156). Along these lines, the stream of consciousness style of McBride becomes a medium for expressing vulnerability, and the “immediate porousness” (160) of the young girl’s consciousness becomes a facet of the trauma of abuse. O’Neill’s novels are likewise read as a reaction to trauma and loss, and Cahill is attentive to the complex dynamic by means of which “we are forced to examine our own complicity” in the kinds of misogyny and rape culture that inform the world of her characters. The role of affect and what Sara Ahmed terms the “cultural politics of emotion” are persuasively emphasised as the abiding themes of both authors.

Patrick Mullen has similar concerns, as he looks to Lauren Berlant in his essay “Queer Possession and the Celtic Tiger: Affect and Economics in Belinda McKeown’s *Tender*.” Exploring the “complex relations between affects and economics” (96), Mullen sees an epistemology of the closet at work in the trajectory of Ireland’s passage from boom-time to crash. The way in which McKeown’s character Catherine develops a complex relationship with her queer friend James shows a type of person who “violently defends re-fabricated closets in order to reproduce her own social and psychic value” (96). Key to this complex psychodynamic is the notion of “possession,” a multivalent term, as Mullen reminds us, and one that operates in both an affective and an economic frame of reference. Mullen’s close-reading of McKeown’s novel is illuminating in this regard, and in keeping with the style of the critical works which inspire him (like Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism*). As a critical essay about a woman writer’s engagement with the fraught gender relations of the Celtic Tiger and its aftermath, Mullen deepens our appreciation of the “queer pleasure taken in language” by McKeown, as well as her attunement to a queer perspective that is best equipped to interrogate the psychic cost of economic circumstance, “the pride and the paranoia [...] liberation and control” (105).

The most explicitly polemical piece of the collection is Emer O’Toole’s essay on “Waking the Feminists: Reimagining the Space of the National Theatre in the Era of the Celtic

Phoenix.” Here, O’Toole directly addresses any lingering scepticism there might be about the necessity for a coordinated feminist response to underrepresentation of women’s voices in Irish arts and letters. She focuses on the controversial way in which Abbey Theatre director, Fiach Mac Chongail, defended its 2016 centenary program, entitled “Waking the Nation.” The program, which included only one woman playwright, inspired a collective backlash from arts practitioners under the hashtag #WakingtheFeminists (or WTF, coined by Maeve Stone of Pan Pan Theatre Company). O’Toole reads the concerted activism which followed as an example of political dramaturgy, what Baz Kershaw calls the “knowing performativity” of subversive political spectacles (138), as well as an example of the kind of “performative assembly” that Judith Butler makes central to her work on gender and power.

O’Toole sees the ethos of collaborative performance which inspired the WTF movement as continuous with the existing (although marginalised) history of politically committed dramaturgy on the Irish stage. Grace Dyas’ *Heroin* (2010) and ANU Production’s *Laundry* (2011) are taken as recent examples of an inclusive vision of feminist solidarity and an antidote to masculinist discourses of neoliberal austerity. As O’Toole writes, the meeting that was staged at the Abbey in the wake of the centenary program’s announcement “emphasized collectivity and barriers to inclusion, countering faux-meritocratic claims of austerity and neoliberalism. It temporarily materialized an intersectional feminist space within the national theatre” (149). O’Toole is most astute when she points to the too-easy dismissal of such intersectional activism as “identity politics” (143), reminding us of the blind-spots internal to many socialist movements, and how the solidarity and community-building of an intersectional, feminist dramaturgy might offer us a more sophisticated and inclusive programme for change.

The capstone of the collection is undoubtedly Melatu Uche Okorie’s story “This Hostel Life,” originally published as part of a collection of short stories of the same name by Skein Press in 2018. Sara Martín-Ruiz gives a critical introduction to Okorie as well as an interview with the author that addresses topics ranging from the challenges faced by non-white authors during the Celtic Tiger to the difficulties involved in achieving publication in Ireland. In Okorie’s own words, “I think for every writer, publication is a sort of affirmation, a form though which you know someone thinks what you have to say is worth hearing” (180). In this light, *Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland* is a powerful contribution to efforts at redressing the unequal distribution of platforms for minority voices, a lingering problem in Irish publishing. *Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland* reminds us that there is much work left to be done.

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Irish Divorce: A History

Diane Urquhart

Cambridge University Press, 2020. 296 pages.

ISBN: 9781108717250

Reviewer: Kate Costello-Sullivan (Lemoyne College, Syracuse, New York)

Diane Urquhart's new study, *Irish Divorce: A History*, offers the kind of research one does not realise is essential to the larger body of knowledge until it has been written. While most considering this topic would immediately revert to the Republic's failed referendum of 1986 and the subsequent successful vote in 1995, Urquhart shows that divorce was a contentious and complex socio-political issue for the better part of the preceding 300+ years. Even more importantly, she combines exhaustive research with a holistic consideration of the issue not only in terms of gender, but also through the lenses of class, religion, nationalism, and ideology.

Any study of the history of divorce in Ireland would likely need to engage the gendered dynamics in play, and Urquhart does this masterfully. Her comprehensive review of the subject productively exploits resources ranging from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI); the Dublin Diocesan Archives; Parliamentary and Governmental records from the Republic, Northern Ireland, and England; and the National Library of Ireland, among others. This enables her to expose the legal double standard under which women historically laboured in petitioning for a divorce; for example, being required to prove "double offences" (instead of just one for grounds) out of "concerns for the hereditary transmittal of property" (17-8), or the greater risks women faced of losing child custody (e.g., 88, 106, 119).

As importantly, her careful tracing of evolving laws allows Urquhart to identify how shifts in definitions of gender, family, and home impacted such rulings. Thus, divorced women were subject to greater moral and social censure, and recognition of their legal status was sporadic and slow. Urquhart indicates that women's domiciles were not legally recognised in law until 1973 (e.g., 10, 31, 159). Similarly, as gendered definitions of masculinity shifted and the husband's role became more associated with that of "protector," wife beating came to be considered "unmanly," and the "court's onus shifted ... to the safety of the wife and her fear of injury" (53, 111-12). Urquhart's use of actual court cases from archival records humanises her subject and undergirds a central premise of her study, that divorce, which can be a mercy that "ultimately frees people from unhappy, loveless and abusive unions" (251), was a humane outlet long denied to Irish citizens, north and south.

Taking an intersectional approach, Urquhart also examines the ways in which class complicated and sometimes confounded these gender dynamics. While acknowledging the "social complexion" of divorce in terms of maintaining wealth dating back to Brehon law (5-6), Urquhart also systematically exposes how access to divorce was compromised as much by financial as by legal means. Because divorces were heard at Westminster after the Act of Union, for example, they correlated heavily to class, a hindrance that adhered well into the twentieth century (see, e.g., 99-101). Like gender, class considerations also biased divorce rulings: for example, upper-class women were "believed to be less resilient to violence than their lower-class counterparts" (108). Urquhart's study traces many instances where a lack of access, combined with the gendered double standard, forced couples, particularly women, to stay in unhappy and sometimes violent marriages.

Urquhart displays sustained sensitivity not only to divorce's legal construction, but also, as evident above, to the ideological and interpretive frames that shaped those juridical contexts. This provides for some fascinating and nuanced readings of contemporary social and political calculations not only in the Republic, but also in Northern Ireland and under British

government. Urquhart thus illustrates the ways that a nation's self-conception can influence the state's legal contexts and debates, at times with lasting consequence.

Naturally, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church on divorce is a consistent theme. From the 1860s, the Catholic hierarchy condemned state involvement in what was considered a Church affair (85). Their influence was of course particularly pronounced after the establishment of the Free State and with de Valera's 1937 revision to the Constitution. Yet Urquhart lays bare the ideological assumptions being made both by the Catholic Church and by the new Irish government. She contextualises the hierarchy's attempt to assert its authority in the Republic throughout the twentieth century in terms of an evolving Irish national identity, for example, detailing how the divorce issue and deferral to the Church reflected the "insecure government [of] a beleaguered new state" (175). In that regard, she contends, the eventual deconstruction of divorce, like the removal of the privileged place of the Catholic Church from the Constitution and the acknowledgment of women's legal status cited above, reflects "a mark of maturity" in the Irish state—one that arguably continued with the Repeal of the 8th Amendment in 2018 (237).

As importantly, Urquhart recognises that the divorce debates betrayed tacit assumptions about what Irish identity meant. From at least the 1790s, divorce was associated with "imported immorality" and a fear that "Ireland was adopting English vices," a refrain still sung well into the mid-twentieth century (30, 191). This again reflects a presumed, fundamental, and national moral superiority (30). While the Catholic Church also asserted the preeminence of the majority opposition to divorce, this assumption, again, implied that limited demands for divorce reflected disagreement rather than potential lack of access (178, 183). Similarly, the new-found government fretted about the divorce debate as a question of minority rights, thus exposing not only their awareness of the potential pitfalls of alienating their Protestant citizens (a conversation in which Yeats famously engaged), but also the (erroneous) presumption that divorce was a "Protestant issue" in the first place (180-183). Divorce – and its exclusion based on Catholic moral teachings – even came to be seen as a potential obstacle to reunification (166). Urquhart thus illustrates the complex forces at play in this debate: definitions of national character; state building; the entanglement of religious and political identity; and responses to imperialism.

Northern Ireland, too, reflected the complexities of these religious, national, and ideological intersections. Despite the Catholic Church's claims to the contrary, Urquhart notes that "[m]oral conservatism in Northern Ireland [...] crossed religious and political bounds" (166). Just as Republicans in the South fretted over the appearance of "Rome rule," Northern Unionists watched the divorce debate through the lens of their own political priorities: "The DUP and the OUP [...] hoped for the referendum's defeat to stall the emerging involvement of the Republic in Northern Ireland affairs epitomized by the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement" (166). Adherence to outdated British Parliament precedents, Urquhart contends, reflected the Northern Irish Parliament's "timidity to waver from Westminster practices" (134-35). In Northern Ireland, as in the Republic, questions of respectability and privacy impacted families' willingness to come forward to divorce publicly, and claims to moral exceptionalism inflected these debates (see 146, 168-69). Finally, as in the Republic, there were concerns that broaching the subject of divorce would "stir up a sectarian controversy," reflecting the fraught interreligious tensions impacting both the Republic and Northern Ireland (Moorehead qtd in Urquhart 147).

Given the timeframe of her study, Urquhart also examines the evolution of the divorce debate within the wider context of the British Empire. Her exploration of parliamentary analyses of the divorce debate provides a nuanced understanding of British concerns with not only avoiding religious and nationalist tensions, but also the equitable application of the law within the UK. While Urquhart acknowledges predictable British fears of inflaming their

Catholic subjects by broaching the topic of divorce as a “religiously controversial issue,” she also traces sensitivity to, and discomfort with, the lack of “legislative uniformity” from the Act of Union on (69, 131). She thus notes that contemporaries in the 1850s argued for “equality between two countries wedded by the act of union [sic]” (67) – a concern that was still being invoked regarding Northern Ireland as late as 1976 (163).

Finally, Urquhart highlights the role of the creation of the Free State and Northern Ireland in 1921 and 1922 in laying the groundwork for the Republic’s legislative lack of divorce for the next eighty years: “parliamentary divorce ceased at Westminster. Its jurisdiction was transferred to the new parliament of Northern Ireland; but this was not reciprocated in the Irish Free State ...” (130, 247). Such context broadens our vision from the narrow confines of the Republic and its founding ideologies to engage the wide sweep of how Ireland arrived at that pass. Urquhart’s address of divorce in the British, Northern Irish, and Irish contexts masterfully interweaves these related dialogues while carefully capturing the unique attributes of each.

Urquhart ends her work by reiterating the value of divorce as a vehicle for release from unhappiness; she acknowledges the reality of marital breakdown, its ideological inflections and appropriations, and its complex history in Ireland. In many respects, her conclusion is a perfect encapsulation of this study. As lucid as it is thorough, *Irish Divorce: A History* contributes a comprehensive look at a fraught social issue through exhaustive research and careful contextualisation. It offers a profoundly humane and empathetic analysis of what, for many, proved an elusive necessity that was cordoned off—for centuries—by ideological, nationalistic, imperial, and/or political boundaries and further inflected by class and gender. As a result, this study has much to teach us not only about divorce, but also about the ways the self-fashionings and political maneuverings of a nation-state can subvert the very citizens they are purportedly meant to serve.

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Geofeminism in Irish and Diasporic Culture: Intimate Cartographies

Christin M. Mulligan

Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 269 pages.

ISBN: 9783030192143

Reviewer: Christine Cusick (Seton Hill University, Pennsylvania)

Geofeminism, as an interpretive lens, has the potential to expand the scope and impact of fields such as ecocriticism, feminist studies, and cultural geography. At its best, this inquiry invites readers to interrogate not only the ways human experience of nonhuman nature are wedded to gender identity, power, and constructs, but also the ways the human animal, in body, mind, and imagination, occupies space and time. As is the case with most specialised terminology in academic discourse, it has not evolved without critique, and this study is quite cognizant of this context while still working to “revive” its use. To successfully scaffold and synthesise these epistemological nuances is no easy task, and yet in Christin Mulligan’s study *Geofeminism in Irish and Diasporic Culture: Intimate Cartographies* she achieves just this.

In the book’s introduction, Mulligan asserts that through a juxtaposition of chronological periods and genres she aims to study “the ways in which their symbolic landscapes respond to centuries-old literary traditions and see to resituate ‘occupied territory’” (4). She prepares the reader that she will trace “the struggle for each of the authors and filmmakers to find their voices and tongues (Gaelic, Shakespearean, or otherwise) amidst [the] complex history filled with lacunae created by oppression from various authoritarian and misogynist institutions” (3). This ambitious pursuit is a necessary and often neglected one, and this study contributes to the conversation by tending to the gaps and silences created across time and space and by simultaneously holding these conditions of being in the world within the same critical breath. Mulligan achieves this through an expansive definition of geofeminism that includes “intersectional geofeminist theoretical paradigms and postcolonial geocriticism” (4) and an authentically robust, interdisciplinary methodology.

Border-crossing of time, genre, text, and place guides this study. “*Saor an tSeanbhean Bocht!*: Moving from *Cailleach to Spéirbhean*,” for example, begins with an examination of historical contexts for the archetypes of *an tseanbhean bhocht*, the poor old woman, or *ancailleach*, the hag, as well as *an spéirbhean*, the sky queen, with specific attention to the ways this feminisation of Ireland is connected to an analysis of the presence, and absence, of the Irish language in varying discourse. Beginning with a close study of “Róisín Dubh” in the Jacobite period, shifting to the lens of translation work of nineteenth and twentieth centuries, moving to the Joycean adaptation and then to the satirical turn in the work of late-twentieth-century poets, the chapter navigates the location of colonial resistance and transgression of hierarchical notions of time, history, and space. Throughout this genealogy, the conclusion insists that the nuanced cultural preoccupation with these icons indicates that psychological decolonisation is neither tidy nor complete.

Through a close study of Ní Dhomhnaill’s “*Cailleach/Hag*” and “*Primavera*” Mulligan examines a contemporary perspective on the sky-woman images and their relevance for Ní Dhomhnaill in light of the legacy of James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, and Paul Muldoon’s treatment of the *aislingí* in English as well as in Máirtín Ó Cadhain’s prose. Mulligan argues that it is the geographic specificity that distinguishes Ní Dhomhnaill’s point of mythical and personal location. Rather than a sweeping map that subsumes all of Ireland, it is the “intimate cartography” that is in fact subversive, that works from within the historic objectification of women, of the *Cailleach/hag*, to in fact upend it. Such reading of Ní Dhomhnaill’s disembodied “hag energy” is the sort of turn that characterises this study, a reminder that a diachronic

interrogation of hierarchy, of archetype, of identity, is not a linear process and sometimes leads us into the underworld as much as the one that surrounds us.

In chapters such as “Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s Traumatic/Erotic Map: Transubstantiating the Body of Ireland” Mulligan deepens the analysis of Ní Dhomhnaill’s cartographic impulse, engaging the lens of cartographer and writer Tim Robinson’s conception of “dwelling” in compelling ways, positing the possibilities of mapping as a generative act that can in fact be a gesture of recuperation, of reclaiming both language and stories of human inhabitation. More specifically, Mulligan argues that Ní Dhomhnaill’s use of lyric address to confront trauma positions Irish-language female speakers as subversive agents within social, political, and religious contexts and that essential to this are the rhetorical forms and structures of the Irish writing.

In keeping with its spirit of transgression, the study unabashedly calls into question the potentially short-sighted disregard of artistic / religious traditions because of their complicity in oppressive power systems and suggests that in so doing we are losing sight of how poets such as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill subvert and reconstitute this history and how in this transgressive spirit reveal the centrality of linguistic intervention.

Through close reading and diligent theoretical frameworks that draw heavily on feminist critics, including Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, and postcolonial critics such as Homi Bhabha, this study gracefully traverses time and space. It invites us to consider how cultural texts bring “seemingly disparate” ideologies, such as traditional Irish Catholic perspectives on the body and spirit and feminist ideologies into dialogue. It engages meticulous readings of canonical figures from Yeats to Joyce to Heaney, always for the sake of illuminating the cartographies that script and are inscribed by the female voice. Moreover, the diligent narrative continuity across chapters allows the reader to experience the very embodiment of time and place that she invites us to interrogate.

This study calls us to consider marginalised contemporary voices not merely against figures of the Irish canon, but as necessarily entangled with them. And while the juxtaposition of Yeats against mystery thriller writer Tana French may not seem a likely move, this is perhaps the very point. Using French’s “revisionist mythology” as a lens to highlight Yeats’s economic, gender, and political privilege in relation to his contrived escapes into otherworld, Mulligan calls into question the assumption of its safety, offering as example French’s novels and the historical case of Bridget Cleary, a seamstress, who thought by her family to be a “changeling” was burned by her husband in 1895 during a home exorcism. The study thus uses a juxtaposition of Yeatsian quest and conceptions of the otherworld against the lived tragedy of female as “changeling” to craft a feminist critique of place and invocation of the changeling in French’s fiction with particular emphasis on *The Likeness* (2008), ultimately concluding that French uses Irish mythology to “reshape the legacy” of Yeats.

While this is not, and never purports to be, an ecofeminist study, the book’s final chapter “Coda: The Necessity of thinking Geologically and Globally on Irish Grounds” thoughtfully gestures toward the implications of such analysis for understandings of Ireland and the Anthropocene with particular emphasis on the necessity of translation studies and a transnational interpretive lens.

Mulligan is willing to embed her own intellectual curiosity within its time and place in this study, from recalling her first undergraduate encounter with Seamus Heaney’s “Postscript,” extending the experience into present classrooms, to offering a “coda” that marks how conference proceedings stirred her still-expanding ideas on the value of these conversations. In this way, she maps her own “intimacies” as a scholar and as a human. This is an admittedly ambitious study, traversing genres, languages, canons, genders, oceans, and centuries. At times it perhaps tries to encompass more than might be necessary, but given the design of its scope and purpose, it admirably achieves both breadth and depth.

Offering us a relatively new voice in Irish Studies, this monograph offers us a glimpse into the possibilities and energy of our field as one that will increasingly hold space for the female voices and experiences of the past and present. Mulligan not only invites us to reimagine the primary texts, but in several instances, she thoughtfully calls us to reflect on and re-imagine leading voices of our field, and as a result, on our own work as scholars. Her analysis is rigorous and her conclusions are unapologetically hopeful, arguing ultimately that language allows for healing and “redemptive maps,” even against centuries fraught with colonial and patriarchal oppression.

In his series editor’s preface, Robert T. Tally Jr. suggests that the aim of the Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Series is to “make possible different ways of seeing literary and cultural texts.” I would argue that in the series’ inclusion of Mulligan’s study, this goal is achieved.

Christine Cusick earned her Ph.D. in English at Duquesne University with specialisations in Twentieth-Century-British and Irish Literature and Environmental Humanities. Her research and publications are in the areas of Irish Studies, Ecocriticism, Creative Nonfiction, Writing Pedagogy, and Cultural Geography.

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Transhumance and the Making of Ireland’s Uplands

Eugene Costello

Boydell and Brewer, 2020. 240 pages.

ISBN: 9781783275311

Reviewer: Terry Dunne (Laois Historian in Residence)

In the Irish past, how most people earned their proverbial crust was in agriculture. In the late-modern period this was especially true for the decades between the early-nineteenth century retraction of textiles, and the late-twentieth-century advent of foreign direct investment. This centrality is not, however, reflected in scholarship. Consequently, *Transhumance and the Making of Ireland’s Uplands* is especially welcome. It is the first full-length published work on the archaeology of agriculture and rural life in, primarily, late-modern Ireland since the 2006 essay collection, *Unearthing Hidden Ireland*, edited by Charles E. Orser, Jr. The present reviewer is a sociologist, and this is a work in archaeology, so doubtless there will be disciplinary-specific aspects which I will not necessarily appreciate. However, we surely want to ascertain how the book speaks to a wider cross-disciplinary audience. It is worth noting that while the rural West, in particular, was a great focus of sociology and anthropology up to the 1980s, this interest has dissipated, something which ill serves the need to understand agriculture as we experience the twin crises of biodiversity and climate.

Transhumance, or as it is more usually called in the Irish context, booleying, is a form of mobile pastoralism where herds and herders move to seasonal pastures and settlements. It occurred in a specific short-distance form in north-western Europe, with a further divergence between patterns in Scandinavia, on the one hand, and in Britain and Ireland, on the other. Transhumance in mainland Europe is typically associated with more long-distance seasonal movements. The simplest way of putting it in the Irish context is that transhumance has

principally meant the summer pasturing of dairy cows in upland areas of rough grazing commons, usually under the watch of young people, often young women, who reside in seasonal summer dwellings while engaged in this work.

Eugene Costello's book has three study areas: Gleann Cholm Cille, in Donegal, and on the north-western seaboard; the Carna peninsula, in Galway's Connemara and on the western seaboard; and the inland Galtee mountains in the south. He also draws on two sites of previous archaeological fieldwork, Achill Island in the West and the Mourne mountains in the north-east. He makes a sensitive study of these landscapes drawing on archaeology, placenames, oral tradition, historic documents, and soil science. However, even with that great interdisciplinary strength it is perhaps the starting premise of regional diversity which is the real key to the book's success. The selection was based on ethnographic evidence for the existence of transhumance in the relevant areas at least up until the mid-nineteenth century, and, crucially, the diversity of environments they represent. That diversity is not just a matter of altitude; the Galtees are much higher than the uplands found in Carna or Gleann Cholm Cille. In the opinion of this reviewer a crucial aspect is, as Costello puts it "there is much more agriculturally productive land around the Galtees than in the two western study areas" (6).

Is it possible that the evidence of transhumance in the Galtees is representative of a wider phenomenon of transhumance in the south-west? Costello identified other uplands in the region as having potentials for archaeological fieldwork, namely the Comeraghs and the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, but less oral tradition on booleying has been recorded there (e.g., by the Folklore Commission). Other uplands in the south-west have been afforested by conifer plantations and consequently are less conducive to archaeological fieldwork. In fact, Costello has identified at least some evidence for transhumance for at least some of the 1550-1900 period for an even wider range of south-west upland across Kerry, Cork, Limerick, and the borders of Tipperary and Waterford. Of course, in one sense, it should hardly be surprising if booleying played a significant role in Ireland's south-westerly dairying heartland, as dairying was central to the practice. Transhumance is remembered today in such evocative placenames, as, in the southern slopes of the Galtees, Cnoc an Bhainne, or Hill of the Milk (120), or, alternatively forgotten, in archaic names on old maps such as Glaunary, or Gleann Áirí, meaning Valley of the Summer Milking-place (114). It was specifically dairy herds that required the daily attentions of pastoralists on their summer pastures and hence a need for people to relocate with the herds.

The broad south-west is important to an overarching argument of the book. Costello challenges the E. Estyn Evans school with regard to the apparently archaic, conservative, and timeless nature of social forms in the far West of Ireland. That suggests that the seaboard Western periphery is essentially a sort of open-air museum of the past, or at least it was in the more recent past, Jean Graham having carried out "pioneering" (46) work on transhumance in the 1950s in Evans's Queen's University Belfast bailiwick. That is all well and good; there is no part of modern Ireland that was somehow outside of modernity. That granted, it must be said nonetheless the impression one gets from Costello's case studies is of a comparative conservatism in the two western ones adjacent to the Atlantic. As he puts it, "landowners in certain parts of Connemara and Donegal had generally shied away from altering rural society over the preceding century and a half or more" (138), that is, before opening decades of the nineteenth century. Likewise, he argues that, with the exception of the Galtees, late transhumance, into the mid-to late nineteenth century, was "generally practised only by the land-starved communities along the western seaboard" (171), which seems like a verdict of marginality. Kelp, yarn, and migration get occasional mention, in what is in fairness a book on a specific agricultural practice, but perhaps these issues speak more to how communities of Western seashores were integrated into global capitalism.

The south-facing slopes of the Galtees were altogether a more dynamic social environment, probably because of the presence in the adjacent valley of “much more agriculturally productive land” (6) than in the two western case-studies. These rich lands were subject to the so-called improving attentions of the Kingston and O’Callaghan estates, quite the contrast with the comparative lack of attention the Conolly estate bestowed on south-west Donegal. While upland colonisation took place elsewhere, there were radical discontinuities in the Galtees as permanent settlement moved up the contour line, bringing with it booleying to new altitudes. This took the form of what Costello calls “planned settlement expansion,” different from the more piecemeal organic expansion and targeted colonization of the other case-studies areas. This upland colonisation in the Galtees seems to have not been a matter of making permanent habitations out of booley sites, and, again, unlike the other case-studies, it created a new booley zone of dispersed seasonal settlement, dissimilar to the more clustered booley sites elsewhere, which themselves reflected the more nucleated pattern of permanent settlement in the West. It is not just a matter here of interventionist landlords. Booleying on the Galtees was part of an international butter trade, part of the south’s successive salted beef, butter, and bacon export booms.

The sections on the Galtees are the shining strength of the book. However, it is of course necessary to illuminate that situation through comparative case-studies. Regarding which, it is worth mentioning that suitable attention is paid to the comparative secondary literature on transhumance in Wales, Scotland, England, and Scandinavia. In the case of the Galtees, Costello can draw on the work of historical-geographer William J. Smyth and prolific folklorist Caoimhín Ó Danachair; the latter remarkably recorded oral tradition of booleying on the Galtees in 1940. Undoubtedly, though, Costello adds greatly to our knowledge, bringing in how the upland archaeology of transhumance fits into the changing patterns of land holding and estate policies identified by Smyth.

Costello argues that the Galtees were an outlier in the south-west in having a later, mid-to-late nineteenth century, history of booleying. However, a great deal of evidence is not presented either way as to how much of an anomaly it was. A great deal seems to rest on the work of folklorist Ó Danachair, who, in the 1940s, established the presence in oral tradition of booleying in the Galtees and its absence in the hills of West Limerick. The latter was given over dry cattle by the nineteenth century (170). However, Ó Danachair does not seem to have been involved in a systematic research into transhumance across the region. Costello’s other examples of nineteenth-century Munster uplands without dairy herds are from, at best, the fringe rather than the core of the dairying area, namely north Clare. On the other hand, the logic of his argument that booleying should be thought of as a modern adaptation rather than an archaic survival would suggest a greater presence in the primary territory of the dairy industry. On that note, as detailed above, Costello has in fact found a number of areas across the south-west where booleying was present, at least to some degree, over the 1550–1900 period. It seems to me, then, that he is in fact undervaluing his own research by postulating the case of the Galtees as anomalous, based on what seems a fairly geographically limited secondary literature. Certainly, the Galtees may have seen comparatively late booleying, yet still there may have been more Munster transhumance at least into the nineteenth century. It is worth bearing in mind there is a one-hundred-year gap between period before the Great Famine and the commencement of organised collation of folklore and oral tradition.

There is tremendous detail here on how the landscape was shaped. Of the 16,200 hectares in the Galtees study-area the work identifies 4,000 hectares improved and enclosed between the Down and Civil Surveys of the 1650s and the 1840s Ordnance Survey. A notable contrast is found with lands on and outside the Kingston and O’Callaghan estates, with their acid brown earths abutting the less advantageous peaty gleys of their neighbours’ land. Costello is attentive to the agency of the settlers in crafting this land: “Renegotiating the meaning of

these landscapes in reality involved a lot of back-breaking work: digging ditches, hauling limestone up from lower ground, building lime kilns to burn and spread the lime, beginning potato cultivation and, of course, setting up house” (121).

Reference is made to “Whiteboy agrarian disturbance” (139), but unfortunately missed is the opportunity to consider quite how a contested landscape south Tipperary, in particular, was. There was more population growth in Carna, and very much more in south-west Donegal, than in the parts of Tipperary and Limerick bordering the Galtees. The safety valve sought by landlords in upland colonisation was not for demographic pressure, per se, but for programs of farm consolidation in the lowland valleys, that is, for the creation of larger tenancies, often a central measure in the concertina of development known under the misleading rubric of improvement, a contested process of dispossession and resistance. There was more of this around the Munster case-study simply for the reason of the comparative high-value of the farmland the Galtees look out upon. Much of what we are seeing here is regional specializations driven by the “greater emphasis on surpluses after the medieval period” (11), which it is important to recognise is experienced as compulsion and coercion and which can be resisted or evaded. Indeed, the ending of booleying on the Kingston estate section of the Galtees was down to the imposition of a rent per cow in the upland grazing. Equally interesting end points were made in parts of the West, with the colonisation of commons by more marginalised tenants or with the emigration of the young women (176-7). There is scope here for bringing in more of the agency of subaltern social groups, in different ways, in expanding booleying into new altitudes in upland colonisation but also in how that relates to class relations and class conflict in the lowland, or in dissolving booleying either in enclosure from below or in escape to the New World.

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The Edinburgh Companion to Irish Modernism

Edited by Maud Ellmann, Sían White, and Vicki Mahaffy

Edinburgh University Press, 2021. 504 pages.

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Reviewer: Matthew Fogarty (University College Dublin)

The Edinburgh Companion to Irish Modernism represents a veritable treasure trove of sociohistorical and geopolitical revaluations, inventive theoretical insights, and cutting-edge approaches to modern and contemporary Irish literature. Comprised of an introduction and five principal parts, all of which are five-to-six chapters in length, the volume draws impetus from two distinct but closely related theoretical strands. On the one hand, it sets itself apart from “other handbooks and critical anthologies by highlighting the ‘heresies’ of Irish modernism, its trademark resistance to orthodoxy and tradition” (2). As evidenced by the structural arrangement of the main body – Part I: Heresies of Time and Space, Part II: Heresies of Nationalism, Part III: Aesthetic Heresies, Part IV: Heresies of Gender and Sexuality, and Part V: Critical Heresies – this approach establishes a key theoretical touchstone, which also lends the collection a suitably flexible coherency. On the other hand, these heretical inquiries are

frequently informed by the critical expansions described by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in their landmark 2008 essay, “The New Modernist Studies,” that is, “horizontal” expansions, which open the door to writers working outside the metropolitan epicentres most closely associated with aesthetic modernism and to writers working outside of the 1890-1945 time period, and “vertical” expansions, which complicate the distinctions between high art and popular culture. The outcome is a multifaceted and timely meditation upon the backgrounds, complexities, and legacies of Irish Modernism which casts new light on those to whom the term “canonical” has long been applied and foregrounds the significance of authors left too long to languish in the canonical shadows.

Even when this edited collection revisits some of the Irish cultural contexts that are traditionally associated with modernist art and literature, it does so in a nuanced way that highlights under explored dimensions. Using the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (1824-42) to analyse W. B. Yeats’s *The Dreaming of the Bones*, for example, Cóilín Parsons identifies a quasi-spiritual engagement with the 1916 Rising that blurs the boundaries between the local and the global and complicates what it means to be both “Irish” and “modernist.” Juileann Veronica Ulin observes a similarly complex engagement with nationhood in her detailed exposition of the postage stamp in early-twentieth-century Ireland, noting how it was used to endorse Irish independence and promote Free State values in the decades before and after partition. The puritanical bent of the Free State provides a backdrop for Kelly Sullivan’s critical overview of Irish visual culture, which ranges from the beginning of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement in the late-nineteenth century through to “The Emergency.” Much as Parsons’s and Ulin’s contributions invite reflections upon the tensions between selfhood and nationhood, Catherine Flynn’s analysis of the satirical *Cruiskeen Lawn* column, written in both Irish and English by Flann O’Brien, using the penname Myles na gCopaleen, for *The Irish Times* between 1940 and 1966, foregrounds a critique of Irish neutrality that invites correlations to be established between O’Brien’s humour and the subversive strain that Sullivan identifies in the bawdiness of Harry Clarke’s *Geneva Window*. Wendy J. Truman positions representation of the body in Yeats’s late poetry as a response to this cultural context. For his part, Ed Madden brings this historical backdrop to bear on A. J. Stanley’s under discussed 1940 play, *Troubled Bachelors*, and demonstrates how this text complicates conventional ideas around masculinity, even though the text itself is not formally or attitudinally unconventional.

Many of the chapters that look beyond these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Irish cultural contexts offer new readings of familiar Irish literature. Emphasising the historical, geographical, and symbolic significance of the ocean, insofar as it operated as a conduit for imperial expansions, emigration, and insular images of “Irishness,” Nels Pearson foregrounds new dynamics in the work of W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, and Seán O’Casey, including the relationships between some of their major texts. Using scripture as a critical lens, Vicky Mahaffey reads Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western* as a blueprint for Irish Christian comedy that subsequently resonates in the humour of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and O’Brien, which establishes a heretical fraternity of sorts that revels in the mysteriousness that is often elided by orthodox religious worship. Likewise, in focusing on the gothic novels of Bram Stoker, Dorothy McArdle, and Scottish novelist, Neil Gunn, Luke Gibbons adopts a binocular approach that is informed by the lore of “second sight,” shared by Irish and Scottish Celts, and the traumatic legacy of the Great War. In her analysis of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kathryn Conrad sets Oscar Wilde’s text against a late-nineteenth-century backdrop that includes the activities of Irish revolutionaries and French anarchists, in particular the 1884 explosion at Victorian Station, and uncovers veiled textual allusions to this event that underscore the incendiary qualities that permeate Wilde’s humour. With specific reference to the contemporaneous cultural debate around social degeneration, Seán Kennedy and Joseph Valente identify Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* as a locus for Beckett’s sustained engagement

with bodily and textual failure, citing Winnie's truncated repetitions in *Happy Days*, not as a marker of degeneration, as Nordau would have it, but as a vehicle to express that which is most brutal, overwhelming, and inexpressible.

There are also chapters that deploy a broad range of theoretical approaches to reinvigorate our understanding of familiar literary works. Taking a wide-angle approach to Elizabeth Bowen's fiction, for example, Maureen O'Connor brings new materialism into a productive critical dialogue with contemporary developments in nonhuman studies, which ultimately highlights new ethical dimensions within the depths of Bowen's literary worlds. Inspired by the notoriously fraught terrain of "commemoration," Paul K. Saint-Amour reads *Ulysses*' "Dublin's burning" passage as an untimely meditation upon the potential existence of alternative pasts, unrealised presents, and banished futures, one which connects the Easter Rising to comparable societal ruptures, both in Ireland and beyond, and disrupts the national narrative that is conveniently bolstered by the events of 1916. Noting that Joyce's 1907 essays, "Ireland at the Bar" and "Ireland, Islands of Saints and Sages," are premised by historical inaccuracies, Jeremy Colangelo positions these prose pieces as precursors for the central role performed by gossip and rumour in *Finnegans Wake*. Margot Gayle Backus also focuses on Joyce's writing, alongside that of Yeats, and demonstrates how their respective engagements with "stolen children" establishes a point of resistance to contemporaneous celebrations of British white supremacy. Claire Connolly looks at Yeats as well, setting his lesser discussed 1891 novel, *John Sherman*, alongside Mike McCormack's 2016 novel, *Solar Bones*. Through the lens of ecocriticism, Connolly shows how their respective descriptions of water and waterways offer a poignant snapshot of modernisation and its environmental costs.

There are undoubtedly scholars who might balk at the prospect of a contemporary novel featuring in a companion to Irish modernism, although one might also question how judicious it is to preserve the integrity of labels, such as "modernism," if the price involves shutting down avenues of critical debate. Depending on where one stands in relation to this issue, the emphasis placed on literature published in the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries is either perfectly in keeping with the volume's definition of Irish modernism as "heretical" or a testament to the importance of keeping open these avenues of critical debate. In her analysis of Eugene McCabe's "Victims" (1976), Benedict Kiely's *Proxopera* (1977), and Anna Burns's *No Bones* (2001), for example, Maud Ellmann plots a through line from Joyce's playful yet pointed reflections on partition in *Finnegans Wake* to contemporary concerns around Brexit and the future of the peace process in Northern Ireland. Likewise, in focusing on the legacy of modernist experimentation in Emma Donoghue's *Room* (2010), Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013), and Anna Burns's *Milkman* (2018), Siân White explores how these contemporary writers mobilise literary form in a manner that reaffirms the credibility of survivors' first-hand testimonies in the context of the #MeToo movement. And in establishing how the constrictive values endorsed by the Irish Free State finds something of a corollary in contemporary capitalism, Ailbhe Darcy examines how the Irish-language poetry of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin rejects simultaneously the remnants of Catholic Ireland and its secular neoliberal counterpart.

There are, of course, essays that expand the horizontal and vertical parameters of modernism in less radical ways. In her examination of consumption in Molly Keane's 1980's writing, for instance, Lauren Rich observes both a belated representation of the Protestant Ascendancy's decline and a mode of consolation for those intent on subverting the class and gender roles that bolster Big House culture. Shan-Yun Huang expands both the temporal and spatial boundaries of modernism by tracing Joycean echoes in Wan Wen-hsing's *Family Catastrophe* (1972), and in doing so identifies comparable strands of debate around modernisation and cultural nationalism in early-twentieth-century Ireland and post-war Taiwan. Others expand the vertical parameters of modernism by complicating the distinction between

“high art” and “popular culture,” such as T. J. Boynton’s detailed exposition of how the image of the pious female reader becomes an emblem of dissidence in the hands of Synge, Denis Johnston, Joyce, Flann O’Brien, and Beckett. Indeed, Matthew Brown further complicates this distinction by showing how the “insurgence romance,” a popular genre in early Irish cinema, drew upon aspects of aesthetic modernism even as it sentimentalised revolutionary activity from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like Brown, Sarah E. McKibben takes Robert Flaherty’s fictionalised documentary, *Man of Aran* (1934), as a starting point in a chapter that expands the parameters of Irish modernism to include the Irish-language prose fiction of Pádraic Ó Conaire. Others further complicate the trajectory of modernism in Ireland. Sarah L. Townsend, for example, highlights how the early twentieth-century realist dramas of Rutherford Mayne, Padraic Colum, and T. C. Murray reject Revivalist romanticism. Turning to mid-twentieth-century Irish poetry, Eric Falci observes how long poems penned by Patrick Kavanagh, Brian Coffey, and Sheila Wingfield occupy an experimental liminal space between the lyric and the epic.

In all of these and many other ways, *The Edinburgh Companion to Irish Modernism* makes a vital contribution to the ever-expanding field of Irish modernism. However, it also speaks to a plethora of topics which resonate with our contemporary cultural moment, both in Ireland and beyond, such as white supremacy, climate change, neoliberalism, precarity, misogyny, and the fragility of peace, to name but a few. In doing so, this collection serves a timely reminder that heretical resistance is both a vital and incredibly potent transformative tool.

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The Golden Thread: Irish Women Playwrights, Volumes 1 and 2

Edited by David Clare, Fiona McDonagh, and Justine Nakase

Liverpool University Press, 2021. 560 pages.

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Reviewer: María Gaviña-Costero (Universitat de València)

When bringing together essays on such a long period of Irish literature (1716-2016) there is always a risk of lack of coherence and completeness. The present work, divided into two volumes due to the size of the enterprise, attempts to counter this with the metaphor of the “golden thread” from Lady Gregory’s play *Grania* (1912), a mystical line linking in time the artistic output of a kind of sisterhood made up of Irish women playwrights, as well as the use of chronological order to present each play under discussion. The disparity in the number of plays for which sufficient archival material is available has forced the editors to offer two quite different volumes: the first covers 1716 to 1992, almost three centuries, and the second 1992 to 2016, just over twenty years. This, of course, reflects the state of both theatre-based research

created by women and, more generally, Irish women's writing for most of our history. However, despite this asymmetry – a consequence of greater gender inequality in the past – the wealth of plays covered in the second volume undoubtedly provides a glimmer of hope for future theatre practice and scholarship.

This being the case, such a publication cannot help but produce the impression that the plays studied may not always be the most representative of the respective authors. Nevertheless, its undeniable value lies in the effort to cover a very long period and to recover many valuable plays from a genre-induced oblivion, even if the information has to be accessed from newspapers and archives because the original plays were not published and have inevitably been lost, as editors Clare, McDonagh, and Nakase state when describing the position in which these playwrights have been placed with respect to the canon: “Over the years they have been exiled from their own stages, neglected in academic criticism, and often excluded from the narrative of ‘Irish theatre’ altogether” (1).

The introduction to the first volume describes the three causes that have led to the canonical exclusion of women playwrights in Ireland: the difficulties in getting their plays produced in their time; the fact that most of them could not get published, which meant that they were erased from literary history; and –unfortunately still the case today– the absence of revivals of their plays, even when they were commercially successful. In the introduction to the second volume, the editors outline its timeframe: from Glasshouse Production's 1992 “There Are no Irish Playwrights” showcase, to the 2016 #WakingtheFeminists campaign, sparked by the under-representation of women playwrights in the “Waking the Nation” programme for the centenary of the Easter Rising at the Abbey Theatre. They also illustrate the urgency and necessity of this collection considering that, after the shake-up of the 1992 showcase, everything reverted to the status quo. Therefore, with this book the editors hope to raise the visibility of the plays of these contemporary women playwrights and thereby encourage revivals, publications, and critical discussion. However, I find in both introductions some regrettable oversights in terms of pioneering academic publications in the study of Irish women playwrights: on the one hand, Lisa Fitzpatrick's works, both the landmark book *Performing Feminisms in Contemporary Ireland* (2013), and her recent monograph on the representation of gendered violence on stage, *Rape on the Contemporary Stage* (2018); and, on the other, *Political Acts: Women in Northern Irish Theatre (1921-2012)*, by Fiona Coleman Coffey, a comprehensive survey of theatre written and produced by women in Northern Ireland. That said, because of the length of the work, I deem it necessary to divide the review into two parts corresponding to the two volumes.

Volume 1 (1716-1992)

In the inaugural chapter of this volume Marguerite Corporaal asserts Mary Davys's rightful place as a pioneer of Irish drama written by women, even though the play she discusses, *The Northern Heiress; Or, the Humours of York* (1716), is neither set in Ireland nor has Irish characters. On the other hand, Conrad Brunström's reappraisal of Frances Sheridan's dramatic work, overshadowed by her son's theatrical success, sparks interest, as does his appreciation of Sheridan's sentimental comedy *The Discovery* (1763). In her article, Clóna Ó Gallchoir sets out to prove that Elizabeth Griffith's *The Platonic Wife* (1765) is a nationalist play. She makes an illuminating comparison between the manuscript and the published play to show how its poor reception led to changes to make it more commercial.

The next chapter is a very engaging review of a youth play by Maria Edgeworth, *The Double Disguise* (1786), in which Sonja Lawrenson shows how the writer plays with disability as a political metaphor in the figure of the protean soldier Westbrook. Fiona McDonagh and Marc Mac Lochlainn are Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) practitioners, and their chapter

proposes an adaptation of Edgeworth's *The Knapsack* (1801). It is a compelling project that makes us wonder why it has not yet been staged.

David Clare's chapter demonstrates in rich detail the reason why Mary Balfour's *Kathleen O'Neil* (1814) should be considered a significant text in Irish studies, as it is the first play to use Irish mythology as a plot source. Ciara Moloney, also drawing on mythology, applies the archetype of the triple goddess – maiden, mother, and crone – to the character of Mabel in Anna Maria Hall's *Mabel's Curse* (1837) to reveal the play's complexities.

The author of the next chapter has perhaps the least in common with the other contributors. Mark Fitzgerald is a musicologist and, as such, has focused on women's participation in nineteenth-century Irish opera. Unfortunately, his research has necessarily been based on secondary sources, as there is no written record of the three comic operas composed by Elena Norton and Mary Heyne between 1876 and 1879. For her part, Justine Nakase discusses how Clotilde Grave's *A Mother of Three* (1896) exposes a curious case of cross-dressing in the cultural context of the late-nineteenth century in which clothing acts as a political and social symbol.

In performance studies, reception is too often neglected. This is not the case with the next chapter, in which Anna Pilz describes the public response to Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* (1903) and its history prior to its premiere at the Abbey theatre, as an amateur performance in London and its publication in an Irish American magazine. Still discussing Lady Gregory, the next chapter deals with *Grania* (1912), which, although considered by some to be her best full-length play, and despite the playwright's pivotal role at the Abbey theatre, it has never been performed there. Shirley-Anne Godfrey believes that this is because her protagonist is a woman who is open about her sexual needs. Godfrey debunks the myths surrounding both the playwright and the play.

We are now into the twentieth century, where the change in the status of women becomes apparent in the number of plays available for consideration: the book contains nine chapters in total for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and twelve for the twentieth century. Moreover, as can be seen in the article by the scholar and theatre director Thomas Conway, productions begin to engage openly with politics; indeed, Conway draws on the political stance of the suffragette playwrights Geraldine Cummins and Susanne R. Day to support the claim that their play *Fox and Geese* (1917), despite its ostensible comedy, was in fact a proto-feminist play aimed at the intellectual audience of the Abbey Theatre. Ruud van den Beuken, for his part, provides an illuminating analysis of Mary Manning's play *Youth's the Season—?* (1931) in which he addresses the liminal position of a doomed social class in the Free State, that of affluent young Protestants.

The next chapter presents for the first time in the book the analysis of the adaptation of a play, with a rigorous study of the elements used in the transformation of Teresa Deevy's *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1935) into a vehicle for exploring the double discrimination suffered by Irish deaf women. Una Kealy and Kate McCarthy describe the interpretation by Amanda Coogan and the Dublin Theatre of the Deaf under the title *Talk Real Fine, Just Like a Lady* in 2017. Ciara O'Dowd describes, based on archival information, the premiere of Elizabeth Connor's (Una Troy) *Mount Prospect* (1940). O'Dowd argues that this should be considered a "national" play, that is, "a play composed to speak to the hearts and minds of the nation" (213).

In the following chapter, Kevin O'Connor draws a connection between the play *Tankardstown* (1948) by one of Gate's patrons, Christine Longford, and the Celtic Tiger. O'Connor argues that this is her most celebrated work and that it is prophetic in its denunciation of the country's corruption. Still discussing plays related to the Gate Theatre, Cathy Leeney and Deirdre McFeely consider that Maura Laverty's "Dublin Trilogy" (1951-1952) has long been neglected despite the importance of the first two plays, *Liffey Lane* (1951) and *Tolka Row* (1951), to the Dublin stage of the 1950s and the Gate Theatre's economy. Leeney and McFeely

highlight the originality of Laverty's approach, engendered by her own political agenda. For his part, Feargal Whelan blames the inclusion of Máiréad Ní Ghráda's play *An Triail/On Trial* (1964) in the A-level Irish language syllabus in Northern Ireland and in the Leaving Certificate in the Republic for its lack of resonance, as, in his view, this inclusion has meant the categorisation of the play as an object of study for young adults, and therefore of little interest.

The three chapters which close this volume examine plays that deal with traumatic events in Ireland's recent history: the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the scandal of the Magdalene Laundries in the Republic. Emilie Pine analyses the uses of memory in Northern Irish playwright Christina Reid's three plays: *Tea in a China Cup* (1983), *The Belle of Belfast City* (1989), and *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name?* (1989). Pine argues that the plays show the binding yet dissolving power of memory in family and community. Anne Devlin is, along with Reid, the most important Northern Irish playwright of the twentieth century, although she has only performed two plays on stage; however, she has written extensively for radio, a medium she considers well suited to an intimate experience of the spoken word. Megan W. Minogue looks at one of her least-known plays, *The Long March* (1984), which was first broadcast as a telefilm and has recently been recovered in a publication alongside *Ourselves Alone* (1985). Taken together, these two plays have in common different perspectives on the Troubles depending on the gender of the characters. Finally, we find a study of the first staging of a witness to the inhumane practices that took place in the Magdalene Laundries. Patricia Burke Brogan's *Eclipsed* (1988/1992) is considered a brave document by Patricia O'Beirne, especially as it dares to grant a voice to the nuns who worked and ran the place.

In the coda concluding the first volume, Cathy Leeney explores the reasons for the invisibility of theatre written by women, even when the play has been successful, because commercial success does not usually mean revivals. She presents as one of the reasons the way in which women have adopted the male gaze and demonstrates with Susan Glaspell's play *Trifles* (1916) how women do see differently.

Volume 2 (1992-2016)

The second volume begins with Fiona McDonagh's exploration of one of Marie Jones's plays for children, *Don't Look Down* (1992), in which the playwright addresses disability. McDonagh praises the play as ground-breaking, although she is careful to expose its shortcomings as seen from today's perspective on the handling of disability. Still focusing on non-normative communities in the late-twentieth century, the next chapter takes on Emma Donoghue's stage adaptation of the coded diaries of a Regency woman, Anne Lister, *I Know My Own Heart* (1993), which depicts the double exclusion of lesbian women. Shonagh Hill examines how the playwright counters heteronormative discourse with a subversion of theatrical realism.

Nelson Barre's article on Gina Moxley's *Danti-Dan* (1995) argues that the play goes beyond the depiction of women's oppression in puritanical 1970s Ireland to address society's culpable ignorance of teenage sex and the terrible consequences of that ignorance. From the localism of the previous play, we move on to cultural globalisation with this chapter by director Sarah Jane Scaife on her experience of staging Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998) for a Chinese audience. She details the whole process of translation and negotiation of meaning and the difficulties encountered due to cultural and linguistic interference. These are already the years of Celtic Tiger's once-celebrated economic success, which has had a corresponding representation on the Irish stage. Shane O'Neill examines the ways in which it can be traced in Ursula Rani Sarma's *Blue* (2000).

As can be seen, the chapters in this volume demonstrate the special sensitivity of the female gaze when representing marginalised groups. In her article, Mary Burke exposes a reality that has remained hidden for too long: the discrimination suffered by the Traveller

community. Using Rosaleen McDonagh's *The Baby Doll Project* (2003), Burke discusses the difficulties faced by the Traveller population and, in McDonagh's case, exacerbated by two other factors of discrimination, her gender and her disability. On the other hand, and returning to the Celtic Tiger theme, Clare Wallace argues in her chapter that, although Stella Feehily's *O Go My Man* (2006) is an accurate portrayal of the creative class during the Celtic Tiger years, as a social indictment it is somewhat flawed. The next play discussed is at the opposite in tone and subject matter, since it deals with the Protestant working class in post-conflict Northern Ireland. Carole Quigley's article addresses "toxic masculinity" as depicted in Abbie Spallen's *Pumpgirl* (2006).

As might be expected, Marina Carr is the playwright most often featured in this volume. José Laners compares her play *Woman and Scarecrow* (2006) with the body of medieval Christian texts *Ars Moriendi* (1415), to show how Carr's play is a reinterpretation from a feminine and secular point of view of the preparation for the good death. In the next chapter, the theme of minds on the edge is also addressed. David Clare's study of Lizzie Nunnery's *Intemperance* (2007) is certainly thought-provoking in its exploration of Irish-descended playwrights portrayal of Irish immigrants as mentally unstable. Clare's well-researched documentation demonstrates the fact that the Irish population in Britain suffers much higher rates of mental disorders due to hardship. Thus, in his opinion, both Nunnery and the rest of the playwrights mentioned are merely staging a truth with a very empathetic eye.

While volume 1 includes a study of one of Anne Devlin's little-known plays, another of her neglected works features in Graham Price's chapter in the second volume, an unpublished radio drama, *The Forgotten* (2009). Price explores the use of memory in this play as both necessary and traumatic for both the individual and the community. On a different note, Brenda O'Connell discusses the representation of three social invisibilities in Amy Conroy's *I (Heart) Alice (Heart) I* (2010), in which the characters are two older lesbian women. While O'Connell is keen to demonstrate the relevance of this mock-documentary play in revealing these marginalised positions and in the accurate representation of age and agism on the page, she is also highly critical of the director and playwright's choice to use young actors rather than actors closer to the ages of the characters.

The embodiment of the different faces of motherhood is the driving motif of Dorothy Morrissey's study of Deirdre Kinahan's *Moment* (2011). She argues that all three female characters are contained in one form or another in traditional tropes of motherhood, and that the playwright has created a "kitchen-sink" drama to subvert patriarchal tradition. The next chapter moves away from the naturalism of Kinahan's drama to explore the theme of disability anew, now by means of the freak as metaphor in Lynda Radley's *Futureproof* (2011). Siobhán Purcell contends that the performance of the play reveals how the audience's gaze in the theatre is similar to that of the freak show audience. And back to the study of family relationships, Mária Kurdi discusses the representation in Nancy Harris's *Our New Girl* (2012) of parental and marital failure, comparing the play to Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlin* (1996) and Martin Crimp's *The Country* (2000). Drawing on intersubjectivity theory, Kurdi delves into the different "new girls" exemplified in the stranger who subverts our understanding of the play.

"Toxic masculinity" is again the main theme in a play by another contemporary Northern Irish playwright, as evidenced by Justine Nakase's discussion of Stacey Gregg's *Shibboleth* (2015). Nakase bravely criticises director Pirie's decision in his 2015 performance to stage Wall's character in the play as female rather than as it appears in the text, since this characterisation places the blame for the violence of the male characters on women. Brian Ó Conchubhair's article repeats the accusation already noted of the double discrimination suffered by women playwrights writing in the Irish language when analysing Celia de Fréine's *Luíse* (2016). This chapter presents a difficulty for non-Irish speakers, as none of the quotations have been translated.

The second volume also concludes with a coda, written by Melissa Sihra. She declares Lady Gregory the matron of this sisterhood of theatre professionals and, by relating her work to that of Marina Carr, develops the theory of the hag – the witch/wise woman – and her connection to the supernatural, a recurring theme in the works of many Irish women playwrights.

Conclusion

This is one of those indispensable works that will influence the future of performance studies and feminist criticism. The number and variety of voices on display, the effort in the reconstruction of the canon by adding women playwrights who had been erased in the past, and the declared ambition to draw attention to and create the conditions for revivals and publications of plays created by contemporary women playwrights make this extensive compilation more than recommendable. Although from a very subjective perspective, I also find the use of the footnotes useful because, in my opinion, they help to facilitate the reading flow and allow us to benefit to the maximum from the large amount of data provided in such a diligent manner. All in all, a very enjoyable edition, which makes for a rewarding read and provides essential information.

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Irish Anglican Literature and Drama: Hybridity and Discord

David Clare

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Reviewer: Mike Griffin (University of Limerick)

Part of the Palgrave Pivot series, which facilitates the publication of research “at its natural length” (somewhere between a long essay and a shorter monograph), David Clare’s book on the Irish Anglican tradition in writing and theatre history is a concise, accessible, and effectively argued work which complicates and transcends the vague, addled, and obsolete term “Anglo-Irish.” The term has long muddied the study of Irish literary history, giving as it did no nuanced account of differences in class, theology, or geographical location within the Irish Protestant population. Clare’s key innovation here is to better define Irish Anglicans as a subset of Irish Protestants, separate from other Protestant cultures in Ireland such as those of Presbyterianism, Quakers, and evangelicals, but marked by its own class divisions and distinctions. Clare argues for a greater understanding also of the extent to which Irish Anglicans exist along a cultural spectrum between Irishness and Englishness. Some authors from the Anglican tradition saw themselves as English in Ireland or Irish in England or both, while others again saw themselves singly as Irish, no matter what others thought.

Clare begins his study by quoting Brendan Behan’s amusing distinction between social classes as troubling that blanket category of Anglo-Irishness, implicitly conceived by some, then and since, as an essentially and intrinsically aristocratic part of the Irish population. Behan’s comment on such racialised classism is an excellently chosen departure point:

The myth of the Anglo-Irish, and the attempt to drag writers (particularly those who happened to be Protestants) after the fox-hunt and the royalist inanity, would have us believe that the most rapacious rack-renting landlord-class in Europe were really lamps of culture in a bog of darkness, doing good by stealth and shoving copies of *Horizon* under the half-doors of the peasantry after dark and making wedding presents to the cottagers of Ganymede Press reproductions of Gaugin. (2)

Clare nuances Behan’s “invective” with an allowance for Big House authors who were not as exploitative as the landlord class more generally tended to be; and, while some writers considered “Anglo-Irish” were rich, other Irish Anglican writers came from working-class backgrounds. Behan’s suggestion that the term “Anglo-Irish” be reserved for Big House writers and that lower class Protestant writers should be considered simply as Irish was a view that, for Clare, elides “all that Irish Anglicans from every social class have in common with each other” (4). He argues, further, that there is and has been a “unique mindset” among Irish Anglicans that derives from their historical ascendancy over Catholics, dissenters, and Jews in matters political. Also important has been Irish Anglicans’ connection to England specifically. In his introduction and its notes, Clare makes compelling arguments that relate his study to more contemporary hardenings and softenings of political attitudes on the island of Ireland, and to the mixings of viewpoints resulting from a separation of political worldviews from religious affiliations.

What follows in Clare’s study is a series of essays/chapters on individual authors or clusters of authors from the Anglican tradition. The second chapter is a timely and engaging consideration of the work of Elizabeth Griffith, whose dramatic works were performed in London between 1765 and 1779. Her work, like many in the tradition that Clare delineates, was intended in the first instance for a London audience but, alert to metropolitan blind spots on

Irish social and political matters, engaged that audience with an often critical outsider's perspective. Clare's considerable pedigree as a theatre historian is evident here: he gives an account of Griffith's work that alludes also to her Irish contemporaries and their reception in England. He reads her life and work as culturally hybrid, consisting of a duality that plays out in her plays' ironies and relationships, and convincingly proposes that her work deserves more attention that it has received up to now from scholars, and at least as much as has been dedicated to playwrights such as Arthur Murphy and Hugh Kelly. He may indeed be right, and proposes that the #WakingTheFeminists moment may be an opportune time to rediscover her work in live performance.

The following chapter spreads its concerns across the lives and works of three male authors – Dion Boucicault, Bram Stoker, and Erskine Childers – who wrote across genres but, again, primarily for English audiences. Ostensibly critical of English imperial attitudes and attitudes towards the Irish in particular, Clare argues that their works are more politically ambiguous, even inert, than their authors' reputations would suggest. Boucicault was a nationalist, Stoker a Home Ruler, and Childers ultimately a determined Republican. In the case of all three, however, Clare argues that, whatever their politics, the deliberate alienation of their intended audience might have been commercially counterproductive. The separation of these authors' convictions from their works is emblematic, in a sense, of the hybrid identities – one might even say imperatives – of some Irish Anglican authors in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Returning to the (later) eighteenth century, the next chapter expands upon the work of Leith Davis and Lesa Ní Mhunghaile in its engaging treatment of the influence of Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789) on near contemporary and subsequent Irish Anglican authors Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson, Mary Balfour, and Lady Gregory. The chapter begins and ends with Gregory and her conversion to cultural nationalist politics following the death of her bigoted, exploitative husband, William Gregory of Coole Park. Lady Gregory's conversion had its key precedent in the moment of Brooke's *Reliques*, which anticipated the antiquarian explorations of other notable Irish Anglican authors interested in and engaged with Gaelic culture. Brooke's contribution, concludes Clare, was to demonstrate "that it was possible to be (authentically) Irish in the English language" (79). Frank O'Connor proposed that Brooke found a path that Samuel Ferguson, James Clarence Mangan, and W. B. Yeats would follow, but Clare here diversifies that lineage to include the Irish female canon.

C. S. Lewis is the unexpected subject of the fifth chapter. Lewis thought of himself as Irish, though his career took place entirely in England. Often read in the light of an English tradition from Chaucer to the later English Romantics, Clare here teases out the influence on Lewis of several authors from the Irish Anglican canon. Lewis's first collection, *Spirits in Bondage* (1919), was heavily embroidered with Yeatsian motifs and images and featured characters from Irish mythology in common with Yeats's verse. Clare also proposes the conflicted influence of Shaw on Lewis's writing and gives an intricate account of Lewis's wrestling with Shaw's concept of the Life Force. The influence of James Stephens's *The Crock of Gold* (1912) is then adduced. From here, however, the study takes a somewhat counter-intuitive chronological turn. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) was frequently referred to in Lewis's work, and influenced elements of his fantasy writing. Clare suggests, and this is at the more speculative end of his interpretation, that Lewis read *Gulliver's Travels* with less of a sense of horror than Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and D. H. Lawrence because he was, like Swift, Irish. On firmer ground, it is suggested that Lewis shared an anti-colonial perspective with Swift, evident in the former's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–56) and *The Cosmic Trilogy* (1938–45). Lewis's Irish Anglican pantheon also included Goldsmith and Burke, whose conservative sensibilities were consistent with Lewis's moral traditionalism. The chapter takes another chronological turn back to the late Victorian milieu, and the influence of Oscar Wilde,

before returning to the eighteenth century and the influence of Laurence Sterne and George Berkeley. The chapter on Lewis is absorbing, but might have been better served by a chronology similar to that of the chapter on Brooke's legacy.

Less diffusely, Chapter 6 deals with Leland Bardwell's 1977 novel *Girl on a Bicycle* in a very satisfying single text study. In Clare's sensitive reading, the novel portrays the internal diversity of Irish Anglicanism, from the world of the Big House Anglicans who retain a cultural affinity with England, and working class Anglicans from outside of Ulster whose Irishness is full and real however much Catholic nationalists might suspect it. The Protestantism of the novel's protagonist Julie de Vraie is of Huguenot derivation, stemming from that French artisanal and professional demographic which had been assimilated into Irish Anglicanism in the eighteenth century. Julie's Anglicanism is not aristocratic, nor does it separate her from the generally Catholic working class population. Her class background pulls her towards a liminal status between the aristocratic Anglican world and that of the labouring Catholic. She retains an element of cultural Britishness at the same time that she resists assimilation into the world of her aristocratic employees. The social and political suspicion of Protestants, no matter their place in this spectrum of hybridity, is a source of resentment in this, and in Bardwell's other novels. Throughout Bardwell demonstrates, in Clare's words, that "the nature and degree of an Irish Anglican's Irish/British hybridity varies, depending on where one is located on the social scale and where one resides" (134).

Concluding as he began, Clare relates his literary study to contemporary discussions of the nature of Irishness. A more nuanced awareness of the diversity within Irish Protestantism, to which this compelling study of Irish Anglican culture contributes, will be of assistance as Ireland embraces, in Clare's words, "more hyphenated identities," including those of "the 'New Irish' and, potentially, in due course, Ulster Protestants" (135). The phrasing "in due course" nods to contemporary shifting demographics and political change north of the border. There, Brexit is having a destabilising effect on the very identities that as a project it sought to consolidate; in a timely way, then, this excellent and concise study equips us with an insightful account of the historical and cultural ambiguities that imbue our present.

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Novel Institutions: Anachronism, Irish Novels, and Nineteenth Century Realism

Mary L. Mullen

Edinburgh University Press, 2019 (Paperback 2021). 264 pages.

ISBN: 9781474453240

Reviewer: Elizabeth Grubgeld (Oklahoma State University)

Mary Mullen has produced an exhaustively researched, theoretically grounded, and systematically argued recalibration of the nineteenth-century Irish novel. Although the nineteenth-century English novel has been traditionally understood to reconcile its characters within the social and narrative frameworks of a liberal democracy based on colonial expansion, evangelical Christianity, and laissez-faire capitalism, Mullens demonstrates that it shares more

in common with the unruly features of Irish fiction of the same period than one might suspect. Novels from either side of the Irish Sea, she argues, articulate both social integration and discordance, ideological consensus and contradiction, and, in place of a neat chronological trail of development, present a frequently disruptive and discontinuous sense of narrative and historical time. Seeking to break down the national literary histories that prevent our understanding how fully the Realist mode can undermine the institutions it purportedly supports, Mullen pairs Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* with the novels of Jane Austen; Charles Kickham and William Carleton with George Eliot; and George Moore's Irish and English novels in comparison with one another and with the work of Charles Dickens and George Gissing.

Key to this analysis are the two terms *institution* and *anachronism*. Employing these terms in ways that differ from common usage, Mullen considers *institutions* as ways of thinking in addition to the more familiar sense of the word as signifying social organisations such as schools, factories, prisons, churches, and so forth. She is most concerned with how ideologically inflected understandings of historical time – particularly as involving notions of progress and development – become themselves institutions that affect the form of fiction and, in turn, fiction's reification of those concepts of time and the hierarchies of class, gender, race, and nation that they serve. Drawing from queer theory and postcolonial studies, she defines *anachronism* as competing understandings of time and historical sequence rather than mere errors or, as did George Lukács, arrangements that clarify the cultural dominance of the imperial novel and its readers over its subject matter: for example, Walter Scott's rendition of what historically would have been Scots Gaelic dialogue into modern English. Anachronisms may take the form of tantalisingly disjointed dates, such as that of the composition of *Castle Rackrent*, its fictional editor's position in time and that of the reader the editor anticipates, as well as the temporal placement of its narrator and the events of the historical past he relates. Anachronism might also take the form of characters who hold beliefs, habits, and appearances that reflect an earlier era than that of their contemporaries or whose narrative trajectories refute institutionalised expectations of social and economic progress. Plots may involve repetition, movement around and back in time, and developmental stasis. A striking example is George Moore's eponymous protagonist Esther Waters, who remains illiterate in an era of rapidly growing literacy rates among the urban poor, whose faith is yoked to the atavistic apostolicism of the Plymouth Brethren, and whose survival and moral triumph follows none of the models of upward mobility preached by social reformers in the late nineteenth century. A tale of repetitions and setbacks, her story concludes in a return to the place of her youth, where female friendship replaces the marriage plot as a completion of the narrative.

Although acknowledging the oppressive force of institutions, particularly in their insistence upon social consensus and the foreclosure of alternate futurities, Mullen distances herself from a Foucauldian condemnation of institutions to instead argue for their malleability and constructive potential. Similarly, while she notes the prevalence of allusions to racial, class, or ethnic others as vestiges of an earlier (and thus less developed) human state, she also traces in each novel those anachronisms that work differently to

show the discordant paces of historical change, propel the reader backward to “useless” pasts that do not continue into the present, and reveal ruptures within institutionalized narratives. Instead of reinforcing the necessity of a single, continuous line of development where the present emerges from the past, these anachronisms question the extent to which historical narratives depend upon a predetermined but exclusionary sense of what is necessary to achieve the future. (8)

This way of thinking about institutions and anachronism has shaped Caribbean studies in the twenty-first century, but has rarely, if ever, been brought to bear on the nineteenth-century English and Irish novel, and Mullen's reworking of literary history is deeply informed by the preoccupation with rethinkings of history and time pervasive in postcolonial, and particularly Caribbean, scholarship.

One of the many contributions of this distinguished book is its sheer bibliographical density, offering a vigorous discussion work from narrative theory, history, and postcolonial studies, as well as generous acknowledgement of earlier scholarship and the contributions of her contemporaries. The endnotes alone make many insightful contributions and offer leads for future research. If there is any criticism to be made of *Novel Institutions*, it is in the excessively abstract and sometimes obfuscating terminology and phrasing of the more theoretical sections of the study. The first chapter is uncommonly rich in its interplay of narrative and postcolonial theory, but a reader not already immersed in those disciplines could ask for more straightforward phrasing that would render the book more accessible. That is all the more important since the sections devoted to analysis of particular texts rely on the concepts laid out within the initial chapter, and yet at points those concepts are less than clear until we see them enacted through specific examples.

To mention just one of these examples, Mullen's analysis of George Moore's *A Drama in Muslin* is without question the finest examination of this important *Bildungsroman* currently in print. The iconoclastic Moore emerges as the hero of her study for the same reasons that he irritated so many of his contemporaries: his blanket rejection of institutions of all kinds (ideological, artistic, and particularly those of church and nation) and his development of a multi-layered irony that both works with and challenges a pessimism that sees one's fate as inborn and manifest in the idiosyncrasies of the human body. Long after Moore repudiated Naturalism (and the 1885 *A Mummer's Wife* is probably the only one of his novels that could be read as predominantly Naturalist), this conviction of an innate fatality endures, but counterposed always to his powerful recognition of the relativism of human perception and the potential to reshape our lives despite what we have been taught to be true. As Mullen argues, his writing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, whether the setting be English or Irish, draws upon anachronisms of history and narrative structure, as well as a systematic undercutting of the reconciliatory tropes with which both *A Drama in Muslin* and *Esther Waters* appear to conclude.

In short, this study accomplishes the formidable goal of rewriting the history of Irish and English Realism in the long nineteenth century. Each page is packed with original and exciting analyses that will cause those who read and study the Victorian novel to reconsider our fundamental assumptions about it.

Elizabeth Grubgeld is Regents Professor of English at Oklahoma State University and author of *Disability and Life Writing in Post Independence Ireland* (2020), *Anglo-Irish Autobiography: Class, Gender, and the Forms of Narrative* (2004), and *George Moore and the Autogenous Self: The Autobiography and Fiction* (1994), all of which received the Rhodes Prize for Literature from the American Conference for Irish Studies in their respective years.

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Art, Ireland, and the Irish Diaspora: Chicago, Dublin, New York 1893-1939: Culture, Connections, and Controversies

Éimear O'Connor

Irish Academic Press, 2020. 380 pages.

ISBN: 9781788551496

Reviewer: Kathleen A. Heininge (George Fox University, Oregon)

In a visually pleasing treatise – it looks more like an art book than a monograph – Éimear O'Connor has provided a comprehensive review of the world of Irish art around the turn of the twentieth century. While the book may at times feel like a clumsy read, with much repetition and reiteration of already stated details, it is clearly meant to be read less as a narrative of the state of Irish art than as a compendium, with stand-alone chapters dealing with much of the arcana surrounding that world. As such, the book coheres less in its narrative than in its thorough examination of recondite details that helped shape both Irish art and the idea of Irishness, especially as it was presented in the United States.

O'Connor's overall project, then, is to address the way relations between Ireland and America helped to support and indeed create Irish art, and she does so by elucidating the connections between patrons, artists, exhibitions, fairs, reviewers, and collectors and consumers of that art.

In her first section, O'Connor connects art and industry, examining the influence of women such as Mrs. Alice Hart and Lady Ishbel Aberdeen who organised centres for activities such as spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, and embroidery, teaching and exploiting what Hart referred to as "cottage crafts." In doing so, Hart created and stoked the desire for a kind of authenticity for such products through her marketing. Both women saw their work as a kind of charity, helping people to support themselves. The Irish Industries Association, established in 1886, was created to expand classes and to increase sales throughout Ireland, England, and the United States. As the work grew, so too did the desire to exhibit that work, and both women (somewhat controversially) became involved in efforts to export Ireland's authentic country charm to international venues, including at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, where two separate "Irish villages" were on display. The example of the two women, each vying for such seemingly similar projects, served to demonstrate the heightened tensions surrounding Irish politics: it was increasingly difficult to separate questions of art and authenticity from the Home Rule question and the Nationalist movement. Donations to each project followed accordingly.

One of the details that becomes startlingly clear throughout the book, lest those of us who are not artists may have lost sight of it, is the vastness of the influence of, well, the influencers: the donors and the reviewers. As O'Connor recounts the networks between John Quinn, an Irish-American lawyer in New York, and those he supported, she forces a consideration of what Irish art might have become without someone such as Quinn. His tastes, his connections, his money, his love of art determined who came to the United States, who showed there, who met whom, and who was nearly assured of success. She does not imply his power was insidious, but merely far-reaching and extraordinarily generous, bringing Irish visual art to the attention of the international scene when what little Irish art was seen outside of Ireland was generally listed as "British," and therefore lacking in distinction. The point is reiterated later, when she discusses the Helen Hackett gallery, which offered another opportunity for Irish artists who may otherwise have gone unnoticed and unheralded.

One of the strengths of O'Connor's book is that her panoply goes far beyond the standards that are most often discussed when Irish visual art is mentioned: John Butler Yeats, Jack Yeats, Seán Keating, and the Hugh Lane controversy are rehashed, but O'Connor also references a number of lesser-known artists and their influence, including Marjorie Organ,

Mainie Jellett, Patric Farrell, Leo Whalen, Sarah Cecilia Harrison, and others. As these more modern artists became better known, controversies arose. As Declan Kiberd notes in the introduction of this text, “Americans, too, were changing, but not at the speed of the Irish intelligentsia: hence the anger vented by Yankee Hibernians on certain radical forms of art from the old country when put on exhibition in the new. Perhaps, in their subconscious, many Americans wanted to keep old Europe old, if only to mark themselves off the more easily as modern” (xv). Those Americans continued to long for what they perceived as authentic representations of Ireland, while the artists fought against stereotypes and preconceived notions of Irishness.

Thus O’Connor effectively illustrates the way competing visions of Ireland, furthered through politics – Home Rule, the Lockout, wars – and personalities – John Quinn, Hugh Lane, Lady Gregory, George Russell, Helen Hackett – also exert control over the success of artists. The trajectory of individual artists and their reception, as O’Connor delineates it, is greatly affected by elements far beyond their control. When Quinn dies and when Hugh Lane’s estate is encumbered, the public impression of Irish art shifts. When George Russell says, having visited a Post-Impressionist exhibit in Dublin, that “the only conclusion I can come to after looking at these pictures was that the painters were not decadent, but merely decrepit,” people listen (118). When Helen Hackett opens a New York gallery and exhibits Irish art, having travelled throughout Ireland collecting items (her diary is quoted extensively – perhaps excessively so – herein), she helps to revive interest in Irish art. Culture, then, is deeply affected by every swing of such politics and personalities.

In the final diffuse section of the book, O’Connor takes on the filming of *The Man of Aran*. While the organising principle here seems to also reflect concerns with “getting it right” as Ireland is represented, the connection of this chapter to the rest of the book is much less obvious, though the section is interesting in its own right, discussing the production and casting processes, and photographic contributions of the director’s wife, Francis Hubbard Flaherty. The transition in the same chapter to the New York World’s Fair and the role of Irish art throughout the *World of Tomorrow* exhibition is murky at best, unless only to bring the thread back at the conclusion to yet another World’s Fair, this time in 1939, to demonstrate that not much had changed over forty-six years.

As O’Connor notes,

Ultimately, and however problematic in retrospect, the construction of Irish identity in America in the closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century was very much influenced by those such as Lady Aberdeen, and indeed, Mrs Hart. [...] Amid all the turbulence of the age, intricate connections between Ireland and America in general, and Dublin and New York in particular, established pathways between here and there that were to prove vital to the development of visual culture in Ireland. (89)

Such has been demonstrated throughout her book, though how effectively will depend on whether the book is approached as a cohesive argument or as a reference book.

Kathleen Heinige is Professor Emerita of English at George Fox University, where she also led the Women’s Studies department. Her most recent publication is her memoir, *Working in Mysterious Ways: My Life through the Rosary*, in which she tells stories of her life through the lens of the Mysteries of the Rosary. She has also published *Reflections: Virginia Woolf and her Quaker Aunt, Caroline Stephen* and *Buffoonery in Irish Drama: Staging 20th Century Post-Colonial Stereotypes*, as well as numerous articles, mostly on Irish literature and culture. She is currently working on a book in which she shares her thoughts on reading the award winners,

having read ALL the winners of the Man Booker Prize, the International Man Booker Prize, the Pulitzer prizes in fiction and drama, and the National Book Awards.

Coffin Ship: Life and Death at Sea During the Great Irish Famine

Cian McMahon

New York University Press, 2021. 336 pages.

ISBN: 9781479808762

Reviewer: Mark G. McGowan (University of Toronto)

It is not often that a book is published and immediately it is adopted as part of a course syllabus for students (in this instance, my students at the University of Toronto). Such is the case with Cian McMahon's masterful book that contributes greatly to the growing historiography of the great Irish Famine. Perhaps one of the principal strengths of McMahon's work is his ability to engage the historiographies of the Famine in Ireland, the United Kingdom, North America, and Australia so effortlessly and in elegant prose. Too often historians have done excellent microstudies of the Famine, but without much of an eye to how their work might engage the broader studies of the Famine in other geographic locales. Too often we are treated to excellent studies of particular Irish estates and assisted migration, but lose a sense of what actually happened to these travellers after they boarded vessels in Cork, Limerick, Derry, Sligo, or Liverpool. Sometimes it is as if they journeyed to join some faceless masses or simply just fell off the edge of the world. On the other hand, many North American-based historians have produced some excellent urban-based studies of the Famine Irish, but without much of a sense of from where or how these persons came. The "coffin ship" is assumed to be the mode of travel and death, and having read this book, I suspect incorrectly.

McMahon quite literally fills in a gap that has been much taken for granted by scholars of the famine: the oceans themselves, and the lives of passengers who could be at sea for six weeks or more if their destination was North America, or six months if it was Australia. While the book reveals that there were notable cases of horrific conditions on board ships, accompanied by high mortality of passengers and crew, McMahon is careful to point out that the "coffin ship" is too broad a category, and a misleading one, when examining Famine migration. In fact, he discusses how mortality rates were actually lower than has been assumed, and that the huddled masses who embarked on these journeys from 1846 to 1855 had more agency than credited to them by historians. One must not see the repeated violations of the Navigation Acts, during the British North American sailing season of 1847, as a measuring stick for all maritime passenger travel during the Famine years.

Based on very thorough mining of primary sources in archives on three continents, and online collections such as DIPPAM (Documenting Ireland: Parliament, People, and Migration), McMahon structures his book like a voyage itself – preparation, embarkation, life, death, and arrival. The two most ground-breaking chapters are "Embarkation" and "Life." In the former, Mahon maps out the various strategies used by the migrants themselves to make choices as to when and where they were travelling. Irish people are seen as information gatherers, using family connections, tapping previous migration chains, soliciting emigration societies, reading emigrant guidebooks, and learning the rules and rights of travellers. They negotiate the best deals for themselves, and many are clear as to where they are headed and to whom. While McMahon acknowledges that there were landlord-assisted schemes, government assistance, and the involuntary migration of convicts, this chapter breaths considerable life into the Famine migrant as possessing agency, thus challenging better-worn tropes of victimisation.

Much the same could be said of the “Life” chapter in the way it brings to the fore the social life, celebrations, culinary experiences, cultural, and religious aspects of life at sea. While people do experience illness, and some die, what is emphasised here is the day-to-day life of passengers, a social history of those Irish who were experiencing life on the open ocean for the first time in their lives. Music and dancing are not necessarily the first things that come to mind when pondering what life may have been like on a voyage in the Atlantic or Indian oceans during the 1840s and 1850s, but they emerge here as significant elements of the experience.

The book is not without some problems. The chapter on “Death” leads off with a quotation from Michael Collins, the contemporary novelist and ultra-marathon runner, who makes a comment that is either taken out of context or based on facts that Collins has misinterpreted (146, 154-5). Most Canadian historians accept, with significant statistical evidence to support it, that one fifth of those Irish who left UK ports in 1847 did not ring in the new year in 1848. McMahon is correct in saying that far fewer died at sea or in quarantine than what this figure suggests, but those who cite it are also including the deaths in the Quebec Marine Hospital, Point St-Charles (Montreal), shed in Kingston, Bytown, Toronto, Hamilton, and Niagara, and points in between. When these places of sojourning are included, the figure Collins cites stands.

The book also repeats the now-disproven notion that Major Denis Mahon evicted tenants in 1847 and sent them to their deaths in Quebec. Here the confusion may well be in Father Browne’s list, published in the *Freeman’s Journal* in 1848, where he mixes the assisted tenants with the evicted ones on Mahon’s estate. The 1,490 assisted migrants from Strokestown were given the choice to leave. In exchange for the surrender of their tenancies and termination of their leases, Mahon provided cancellation of the rent debt, compensation for crops and chattels, carts of provisions, and free passage to Quebec via Liverpool. While deaths on board the four ships used to transport them to Quebec were staggering, when the death records at Grosse Ile are matched with records from Mahon’s own estate – and it is understood that not all passengers on the *Virginus*, *John Munn*, *Naomi*, and *Erin’s Queen*, were from the estate – the mortality rates of “the 1490” were less than the general tally for the ships. The death rates were still higher than the seasonal averages calculated by the author, but the deaths were the result of an outbreak of typhus on each vessel, due in large part to the poor work done by the Robinson Brothers shipping agents, and the lack of perspicacity by port officials in Liverpool, who allowed the ships to sail. Port emigration officers such as Richard Lynch at Limerick, for example, were key to safe conditions on board ship. In 1847, ships departing Limerick for Quebec had the lowest rates of mortality for all UK ports.

I want to add, however, these specific criticisms are minor irritants to scholars of the Famine migration to Canada and should not detract from the overall importance or quality of this book, and its great contribution to Famine scholarship. This semester, my own students in Irish history will be beneficiaries of the tremendous research and myth-breaking offered to us by Cian McMahon in his *Coffin Ship*.

Mark G. McGowan is Professor of History at the University of Toronto, and Principal and Vice-President of the University of St. Michael’s College. He is a specialist in the religious, social, migration, and education history in the North Atlantic world. He has written numerous award-winning books and articles on the Irish Catholic experience in Canada and has more recently focused his research on the Famine migration from 1846 to 1851. His forthcoming book is on the experience of over 1500 Famine orphans in Canada.

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Beckett's Laboratory: Experiments in the Theatre Enclosure

Corey Wakeling

Methuen, 2021. 213 pages.

ISBN: 9781350153127

Reviewer: David Pattie (University of Birmingham)

Corey Wakeling's monograph, *Beckett's Laboratory: Experiments in the Theatre Enclosure*, starts off from the welcome premise that Samuel Beckett's theatrical work is not, as is sometimes assumed, simply an exercise in the creation of performative objects, but is, rather, a type of dramaturgy which is as concerned with the plastic, evolving performance event as that of any of the other main practitioners of the twentieth century. He argues, in other words, that a fruitful way to examine Beckett's theatre is to work on the assumption that it is as much of a performance laboratory as Jerzy Grotowski's "Poor Theatre," albeit one that operates in a different relation to the performer, the scenography, and the text.

This is, to say the least, a welcome argument. Wakeling quotes Jonathan Kalb's much-repeated phrase, that Beckett is "avant-garde to the conventional, and conventional to the avant-garde," and Beckett's own comments to Colin Duckworth ("I simply produce an object"); the rest of the study provides ample evidence that neither statement quite holds true. Beckett's work for the theatre is, in Wakeling's analysis, a laboratory within which the nature of the self can be examined, but one in which a final summation of that nature will never be reached. This makes Beckett's work both ordered and contingent, rigorously structured yet porous, abstract and yet powerfully, viscerally corporeal. The nature of the Beckettian experiment is to create fragile, ordered structures in the midst of a disordered, not to say chaotic, reality. These experiments will fail, because no experiment in such a situation would succeed, but the information generated by that failure will then form the basis of future experiments.

To find ammunition for his argument, Wakeling looks in part to works that are sometimes thought of as minor parts of the Beckettian canon. In his first chapter, for example, he makes an interesting case for both *Act Without Words 1* and 2. Very often regarded as rather unsubtle visual metaphors of the crises endured by more celebrated characters such as Winnie, *Godot's* tramps and *Not I's* Mouth, they are, for Wakeling, key performance texts, because they stage the moment when mimesis in Beckett's theatre fails. The protagonists' actions do not represent anything, because the process of action they are bound to is either circular or doomed to failure. In other words, the mimes answer the experimental question, what happens when a form predicated on the imitation of an action finds that it has no meaningful actions to imitate?

The rest of the study traces the working out of other experimental questions; what happens when both actor and audience are plunged into forms of sensory deprivation (as they are most strikingly in *Not I*); what happens when symbolic elements within the construction of the event have nothing clear to symbolise?; how does spectatorship operate, and under what conditions is it placed under strain?; how can performance recreate (or fail to recreate) altered states of mind?; and how can a politics of performance emerge from a laboratory exploration of the fragility of ideology?

Wakeling explores these questions in a series of chapters that are theoretically dense (indeed, if I have one criticism of the text it is that it covers a lot of theoretical ground very quickly) but which repay careful study. This is a text that requires close engagement; however, such an engagement is eminently worthwhile. The placing of Beckett in the performance history of the twentieth century has been a question that has interested Beckett Studies for as long as the field has existed. Wakeling's book might not contain a definitive answer to the question (indeed, given the complexity of Beckett's work, I am not sure that any one text could), but it

does ask some very interesting questions about that relation, and it does provide, if not a final conclusion, then at least an interesting framework for further enquiry.

David Pattie is Senior Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. He has published widely on contemporary British and Scottish theatre, contemporary popular music performance, Samuel Beckett, and contemporary popular culture. He is currently working on a monograph on theatrical performance and popular music.

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Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-2000

Claudia Kinmonth

Cork University Press, 2020. 547 pages.

ISBN: 9781782054054

Reviewer: E. Moore Quinn (College of Charleston, South Carolina)

Claudia Kinmonth's voluminous knowledge regarding the material culture of traditional Ireland shines forth in the pages of her latest work, *Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-2000*. This is to be expected, for her effort extends by fifty years *Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-1950*, which she wrote in 1993 and published with Yale University Press that same year. The comprehensive and largely rewritten introduction not only provides a substantial overview of what the following ten chapters contain, it also sets the tone for the author's rich woodworking, folkloric, and poetic perspective on Ireland's cultural past. From the outset, readers are prepared to experience how that past was understood, preserved, stolen, and, increasingly in the present era, lost. For Kinmonth, the Irish house leads the way, influencing the kinds of furniture found within dwellings as simple as one-room cabins. In later times, when less tightly enclosed spaces could accommodate more furniture and a greater number of material cultural items, house adornment expanded accordingly.

The book is arranged according to type, not region, due to the uneven nature of the materials found in various counties and time periods. One finds, for example, that Scotland influenced Ulster's cutlery, by way of the horn spoon, and its sleeping accommodation, by way of the outshot bed. Styles like cupid's bows, hearts, shamrocks, and fiddle sides are discussed; so, too, are the characteristics of specific furniture pieces. The dresser's "sledge foot," for example, was designed so that it could be replaced when floor dampness caused it to fall into disrepair.

As in another of her earlier works, *Irish Rural Interiors in Art* (Yale University Press, 2006), Kinmonth draws from paintings, sketches, illustrations, engravings, pencil drawings, and even postcards to provide the visual accompaniment that is so welcome – nay, so needed – in a book of this kind. Repeatedly, figures and images align with and testify to the author's narrative; they are complemented further by evidence from diaries, inventories, governmental reports, and more. A key aspect of Kinmonth's methodology is her fieldwork: to acquire the data she so assiduously presents, she knocked on doors in the Irish countryside, seeking the types of extant pieces of furniture that could enlarge Ireland's woodworking story. She then studied and photographed what she viewed, a method that enabled her to detail the contextual features of furniture *in situ* as well as in use. This inspiring undertaking is a distinct boon, for although folk museums and other repositories of Ireland's material cultural past attempt to reconstruct that which was, they cannot compete with the ability to observe the actual placement

of items – paired beds, built-in dressers, cranes, and keeping holes – located just as they were many years ago.

In addition to presenting the history of Ireland’s furniture and furnishings, Kinmonth shares some of the major events that precipitated changes in them. These include the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when shifts occurred in agriculture; The Great Hunger (*An Gorta Mór*), when family members were forced to burn household goods for warmth; and the period of the Celtic Tiger, when transformations in Ireland’s values took their toll on household design and decoration. What is left, Kinmonth reveals, is a treasure on the one hand but a vanishing trove on the other. “[T]he rejection of old houses,” she writes, “inadvertently contributed to the wholesale destruction or exportation of the furnishings they once contained” (17). With statements like this, Kinmonth conveys the importance of preserving the materials that marked and defined Ireland’s former ways of life.

One of the great strengths of *Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-2000* is that it can be approached from many angles. Although readers will be drawn to chapters that augment their personal knowledge and interest, it is worth emphasising that every chapter has something to offer. The aforementioned introduction supplies a blueprint for the entire work. Suggestive of their importance and provenance, the first five chapters cover stools and chairs, settles (including seats, beds and tables), dressers (with the author’s finely tuned attention to display), storage of food and clothes, and beds. Chapters six to nine are devoted to press beds (and other disguised beds), cradles, tables, and hearths, and shrines. The final chapter considers small furnishings and utensils.

It was often the case that construction was motivated by availability. Unique furniture compositions of bog oak, often made of yew and fir, reveal the individuality of their makers. Other pieces were composed of rush, straw, willow, and even turf. “Wreck timber” or “wreck wood” – that is to say, wood recycled from shipwrecks – was put to good use. One outstanding example can be seen in the hearth of an early-eighteenth-century farmhouse; Kinmonth notes that “its brick smoke canopy, supported on timber from a shipwreck, was cracked when nearby mines exploded on a nearby beach” (124). It is this kind of additional contextual information that makes this book so engrossing.

Interesting is the fact that imagination played an important role in furniture creation; so, too, did imitation. Some of the woodworkers who observed the stylistic features in the decor of the more affluent copied what they saw, fashioning their own pieces with less expensive stock. The finished products resembled those made of mahogany and other more costly and/or imported woods, because craftsmen used saved pieces of hair combs, tire parts, and leather fragments as wood-graining devices.

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, most of the wooden pieces found in Kinmonth’s book are unsigned, made by male members of households who produced “everything that people needed, from the cradle to the grave” (3). On the other hand, the author attends to professional woodworkers like Christopher Sullivan from Lauragh, County Kerry, Patrick Cronin from Skibbereen, County Cork, and several others whose reputations were well established. Evocative of the stuff of pure hilarity is Kinmonth’s coverage of craftsmen like Cronin who not only made their own coffins but were also buried in them. Beforehand, however, some chose to stand their personal end-of-life creations upright in the corners of their shops, a decision that provoked humour as well as horror. Narratives like these are found throughout the book; collectively they goad readers to delve more deeply into the multiple ways that Ireland’s domestic furniture was not only constructed but deployed. With her functional focus, Kinmonth notes that many items, including coffins, could double up, serving their original purpose but also provoking the folkloric imagination when the time was right.

Indeed, folklore is well represented throughout the work. A blessing written by Anonymous might be understood as a toast:

Long may you live, happy may you be
 Blessed with little children, one, two, three,
 One to wash the dishes, one to sweep the floor,
 And one to rock the cradle if ye want any more. (349)

In addition to well-wishes like this, Kinmonth provides many examples of what certain items meant to the people who used them, how they regarded their home possessions, and how they cared for the things they owned. Readers will become acquainted with the socio-religious salience of holding annual “stations” in homes for the purpose of upgrading and improving from top to bottom a family’s dwelling. They become privy to the fact that good luck could be obtained by placing the dresser opposite the hearth. They learn the importance of “the room.” This little-used parlour, known in certain parts of Ireland as “the west room,” was opened only for special occasions.

Irish language idioms and expressions are peppered throughout the book; one encounters terms like *poll an phaidrín*, a recessed space near the hearth for storing rosary beads. Also known as “the keeping hole,” it could hold clay pipes as well. *An leaba théastair* is a tester or canopy bed. The word *sráideog* means a sleeping arrangement which was created in former times by spreading straw or rushes on the floor on a daily basis. Irish words with English language counterparts, like *cléibhi* (English clevy or clavy, a pair of hooked brackets for holding a spit over a mantelpiece), and *naigín* (English noggin, a straight-sided mug) aid readers’ understanding of how linguistic items were interwoven with people’s beliefs and behaviours.

If idioms, expressions, and actions highlight Kinmonth’s displays of Irish material culture, so, too do stanzas of poetry and snatches of song. A verse from T. C. Irwin’s *Versicles* speaks of “cracked delph full of flowers fair” (262), “delph” being a traditional way to refer to crockery, derived from the Dutch town Delft, known historically for its tableware. The author quotes lines from Séamus Heaney’s “The Settle Bed” (150) and those from Robin Flower’s “The Dance” (161). Although W. F. Marshall’s lines “There’s a low house, a thatched house / At the foot of Bantown lane” are cited, arguably it is Padraic Colum’s poem “An Old Woman of the Roads” that fits the mood of Kinmonth’s opus most admirably. Its opening lines establish a mood:

O to have a little house!
 To own the hearth and stool and all!
 The heaped up sods upon the fire,
 The pile of turf against the wall! (397)

Nor does Kinmonth stop there; in another section, Colum’s poem surfaces again:

A dresser filled with shining delph,
 Speckled and white and blue and brown!
 I could be busy all the day
 Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
 And fixing on their shelf again
 My white and blue and speckled store! (182)

This romantic image of Ireland’s dwellings and the goods to be found therein is balanced with its alternative: the “hard row to hoe” reality of Irish life. Kinmonth provides multiple examples of the constant work – scrubbing furniture by lake and stream, twisting rope, stuffing upholstery, caring for brooding livestock – that occupied the days and nights of Irish women.

She chooses lines from Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village" (337), a poem which laments the loss of a way of life.

With Anonymous's lines from "Lament for the Woodlands": "What shall we do for timber? / The last of the woods is down ..." (17), Kinmonth informs readers not only of the dearth of suitable building material in Ireland but the reasons for it. She is forthright in her descriptions of antique dealers from abroad who "arrived complete with modern upholstered furniture with which to barter" for Ireland's material cultural furnishings (xviii). In an endnote, she divulges that the most insatiable of the thieving lot went so far as to hack out built-in dressers by cutting them in half, a move that caused traditional houses to be weakened "beyond repair" (477).

Kinmonth leaves readers wanting more. Despite the hefty size of the book, it would be of benefit if religious items like the altar or home shrine had been given their own chapter; the same is true for the hearth. Considering the latter's importance in Irish culture, especially prior to the coming of electricity – but even beyond that time in the west and northwest counties of Ireland – more coverage on the significance of the fireside and its folklore would have been welcome. Perhaps in the future, the author will devote an entire book to the Irish hearth.

In sum, although a discussion of each and every aspect of *Irish Country Furniture and Furnishings 1700-2000* is precluded by space and word constraints, readers should be apprised of the fact that much more information is contained within the book's nearly five-hundred fifty pages. In the reading or perusing of them, woodworkers, scholars of folklore and memory, and the myriad others who long to know more about Irish material culture and gain a more substantive appreciation of Ireland's cultural past will be enlightened by the author's choices of images, figures, and comprehensive resources. They will realize that they are in the presence of a scholar as well as a practitioner, one whose remarkable respect for Irish vernacular furniture takes its place alongside the likes of E. Estyn Evans, Alan Gailey, Kevin Danaher, and many more.

E. Moore Quinn is Professor of Anthropology at the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina, where she teaches courses in linguistic anthropology and the peoples and cultures of Europe, Ireland and Irish America. Author of *Irish American Folklore in New England* (Academica Press, 2009), Quinn maintains a strong interest in the oral traditions and verbal art of Ireland and Irish America. In 2018, she co-edited *Pilgrimage in Practice: Narration, Reclamation and Healing* (CAB International). She has served as the guest editor for several publications, including *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (2001), *Practicing Anthropology* (2007), *Irish Studies Review* (2010; 2015) and the *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* (2018). As part of the Great Hunger Institute's publication series at Quinnipiac University, Quinn published on the effects of *An Gorta Mór* as revealed through the lore of Irish American women and children (2017; 2018). In the same series, she published on the experiences of Irish women as seasonal migrants to Scotland in the twentieth century (2020). Additional articles and reviews can be found in *Anthropological Quarterly*, *Éire/Ireland*, *New Hibernia Review*, and the *Irish Literary Supplement*. Quinn's most recent project, a work entitled *Women and Pilgrimage*, will be published by CAB International in 2022.

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Look! It's a Woman Writer!: Irish Literary Feminisms, 1970-2020

Edited by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne

Arlen House, 2021. 277 pages.

ISBN: 9781851322510

Reviewer: Jennifer Slivka (Virginia Wesleyan University)

Recognition of pioneers in Irish feminist publishing begins immediately in *Look! It's a Woman Writer!: Irish Literary Feminisms, 1970-2020*. After the title page, in large font, editor Éilís Ní Dhuibhne declares, “We stand on the shoulders of giants,” paying tribute to Catherine Rose, Eavan Boland, Dr. Margaret MacCurtain, Róisín Conroy, and Mary Paul Keane. The collection of twenty-one essays continues this project of recognition by showcasing covers and informational snippets about ground-breaking books, anthologies, and journals by feminist writers in Ireland from the 1980s and 1990s on certain verso pages. These visuals merely underscore the fact that Irish women writers have not received the kind of attention their male peers – aka “just writers” – received from publishing houses, critics, and even university syllabi. Indeed, the inspiration for assembling this collection of essays came to Ní Dhuibhne after the 2015 Waking the Feminists movement, which was created to “protest against the poor representation of women playwrights in the Abbey Theatre’s programme commemorating the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising” (13). Many of the complaints raised by the younger generation in the Waking the Feminists movement reminded Ní Dhuibhne and her “sister writers and friends, mostly aged sixty and over, of the points we had been making since the 1970s and 1980s” (13). Although they supported the movement’s critique of gender inequality in the Irish theatre world, Ní Dhuibhne “felt that the earlier revolution regarding gender issues in Irish literature had already been largely forgotten” (13), as was the male-dominated literary landscape that women writers of the 1970s-1990s had to navigate, writers whose work paved the way for subsequent generations of female writers.

Ní Dhuibhne asked the contributors, who hail from both the north and south, write in Irish and English, and across various genres (i.e., fiction, drama, and poetry), about their journeys to becoming a writer. She believes “the change regarding gender representation which has occurred in the field of literature to be more revolutionary, profound and historically significant than anything else that has happened in the closing decades of the twentieth century. It is a story which needs to be told” by the writers themselves (14). These writers were born mid-century and came of age during the transformative decades of the 1960s and 1970s. One of the notable commonalities emphasised throughout the collection was the introduction of free secondary education in 1966 and the introduction of university grants in 1967. In the Forward, Martina Devlin states that “with secondary school education now freely available irrespective of gender and family circumstances, girls learned something with far-reaching consequences. The female mind was smart – every bit as keen as the male’s [...] Those with the writing gene were given a fighting chance” (12). The Irish Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1970s and ’80s also heavily influenced the majority of the contributors in both their personal and professional lives.

There are common themes throughout the collection. Most of the contributors track their love of literature from a young age, most frequently citing the work of Enid Blyton and Jo March from Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* as inspirations. This early reading sparked their interest in writing, and public libraries were often viewed as refuges for several writers. Yet, interestingly, several writers did not start to write until the economic downturn of the 1980s; it was a “now or never” moment. For example, Liz McManus found the economic recession liberating, as there was “no architecture work to be had [...] and [she] became a full-time mother [...] and began to write seriously” (281). On the other hand, several writers felt as though they

had to choose between being a mother or a writer. The social and cultural mores that Irish women writers had to overcome, which were often internalised, feature significantly throughout the collection. Mary Morrissy calls this internal “virus of doubt” and failure, the “Cringe” (53). This self-doubt, which arises from internal and external expectations, manifests in questioning one’s status as a writer; whether or not work deserves to be published or not; whether writing is worth it; or if a woman writer can make a living solely as a writer (all contributors say “no”). Catherine Dunne describes how writing began for her as a private act to help with the grief of a stillbirth, but turned into a “privacy laced with something that feels as toxic as shame” (114-15). Dunne notes that “Mary Beard might have something to say about that: about how women work under the cultural constraints of silencings that are so pervasive we have almost ceased to notice them” (115). Mary O’Donnell echoes this when she describes her experience studying abroad in Germany in 1970: “A young victim of cultural inferiority, I am occasionally crushed by the feeling that nothing Irish is quite as good as things elsewhere” (156). Ageism only intensifies the Cringe, or what O’Donnell labels “the gendered perspective,” which creates “an obscuring or ignoring of the written work of older female authors” and a “sneaking question in the minds of some people: but is women’s writing any good? – invoking the perennial doubt about the mere possibility of female genius” (159). Like others in the collection, Mary Rose Callaghan addresses the double standard for older women writers, explaining that “age is not an impediment to writing but it could be to getting published [...]. Age and appearance are considerations for women in ways that would never exist for men, who are always either writers or men, never men writers” (291).

Many writers sought to give an authentic voice to women’s lived experiences through the act of writing, as Lia Mills did for survivors of sexual assault through her fiction, but many ran into difficulty when faced with the male-dominated publishing field of the late-twentieth century. Ceila de Friéne describes the poetry scene of the early 1990s as “being not only dominated by men, but that nature formed the theme of many poems which were, naturally, celebrated within a rural setting. There seemed little place in the canon for my poems which had an urban setting and which were surreal in style” (258). Most male editors were gatekeepers whose authority dictated what was considered not only publishable, but worthy of the label “literature.” In the afterword of the collection, titled “Irish Literary Feminisms, 1970-2020,” Alan Hayes, Arlen House publisher, outlines a condensed history of Irish women and publishing, and notes that the “publishing world continues to downplay serious literary writing by women under the frivolous chick-lit moniker” (346). In the subsection, “A Brief Snapshot of Mainstream Irish Publishing,” Hayes identifies Poolbeg Press’s first editor, David Marcus, as publishing “an impressive list which was developed not from a feminist consciousness but from his commitment to short fiction which didn’t discriminate on gender grounds” (346). Indeed, the majority of contributors cite David Marcus as the editor who gave them their first publication. However, Evelyn Conlon, who had two short stories published by Marcus, draws attention to the fact that he was still a major gatekeeper. She notes that he was a “much-respected figure, a person who came to have a lot of say in how the Irish short story would look from the 1970s onwards. Or at least the ones that were published – not to mention lauded and prized. But somehow, after those two were written my next endeavours were deemed not suitable” (185). According to Conlon, it is because her subject matter changed, “the literary view of women was not keeping pace with the real lives that I was watching. No pageant was being made of our actual thoughts and of how we saw our world” (185-186). But this is where the Irish feminist publishers stepped in.

Hayes highlights the contributions those five pioneers made to the field, and also maps out the literary landscape of the time period, specifically focusing on Irish feminist publishers founded during the 1970s and 1980s: Arlen House, Irish Feminist Information, Women’s Community Press, Attic Press, and Women’s Education Bureau. He notes how these feminist

presses “broke new ground, challenged authorities and markets, and created a new vision of Irish publishing. The repercussions of this continue to be felt today” (314). Many of the authors featured in the collection had their work published by at least one of these presses. Several of the contributors also acknowledge the importance of women-only workshops, most notably those spearheaded by Eavan Boland, which supported their continued development as writers.

Others from Northern Ireland had different experiences from their counterparts in the Republic, as the violent backdrop of the Troubles and sectarian politics were inescapable influences on their lives. This is seen first-hand in Anne Devlin’s essay. Medbh McGuckian describes how she was the only woman at her first poetry reading in St Malachy’s College, and “in the 1970s the whole scene became militarised, while the literature course at Queen’s was even more colonial” (232-33). Both northern and southern contributors emphasise the lack of female writers on literature syllabi when they attended university. Although Sophia Hillan recounts how wonderful it was to be a student at Queen’s University Belfast when Seamus Heaney was teaching there, McGuckian outlines the gender bias of the literature course where the only female writers included on the syllabi (Dickinson and Plath) were “portrayed as weird or suicidal” (233). University College Dublin was not much better. In the 1960s Máiríde Woods described the English syllabus as being “designed to put a young person off [...] read[ing] minor texts by dead authors” (269-70), and in the 1970s, Ní Dhuibhne states that only Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, and Emily Dickinson were covered during the three-year program. Mary Dorcey notes that it was not until her final year at school that she discovered Edna O’Brien and Elizabeth Bowen and, later, Kate O’Brien (242). These works along with the student politics of the 1960s and 1970s, greatly influenced Dorcey; she was one of the founders of the first gay rights group in Ireland.

Despite the commonalities in the collection, reading the essays is like dipping into twenty-one different memoirs. Each contributor approaches the topic in their own way, from Cherry Smith’s numbered sections that take us through the stages of her writing life in a sort of modernist, stream-of-consciousness style, to Mary Morrissy’s essay written in the second person, to the more traditional autobiography that most writers in the collection use, though even that ranges from major milestones over the course of their literary and personal lives, to one or two impactful moments that informed their identity as a writer. There are also great differences around the topic of geography. For some writers like Moya Cannon, the rural landscapes of childhood were an inescapable muse, whereas for others like Mary O’Malley, “not being from Dublin or Northern Ireland was a far greater obstacle than womanhood” (170). Yet all of the contributors emphasise a similar point: they write for themselves, either because they want to or need to. Most of the authors cannot pinpoint an exact description of this creative urge, they only know that it is something they cannot ignore, and neither should we. This collection is supremely personal; yet these women’s experiences are part of Ireland’s national story. These parallel and often intersecting stories are crucial readings for those interested in twentieth-century Irish writing, and more importantly, in Ireland beginning to recognise the valuable literary contributions its women have made.

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The First Irish Cities: An Eighteenth-Century Transformation

David Dickson

Yale University Press, 2021. 320 pages.

ISBN: 9780300229462

Reviewer: Flicka Small (University College Cork)

I came to this book with two overriding interests: food and its commodity culture, and Cork City. I work in one and live in the other. However, nothing exists in a vacuum, and this book is packed so full of charts and comparisons that I became totally immersed in every part of the book. Invasion, settlement, colonisation, and shipping are all strong contenders for contributing to Ireland as we know her today, particularly the development of ports and urban areas of Dublin, Derry, Waterford, Drogheda, Belfast, Kilkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Galway, and Cork, which are all covered in this worthwhile publication. This is not a coffee table book but a very well researched analysis of the commerce and social life of the First Cities of Ireland replete with black and white photos, colour plates, maps, tables, and appendices and a comprehensive bibliography divided into sections. There are also copious footnotes.

Where to start, for the book is packed with interesting facts and figures, especially when comparing and contrasting the diverse range of influences and conditions of the given Irish cities. However, this book is divided not by city but by chapters that chart their development from walled enclosures through foreign trade, manufacturing, religious rivalries, urban improvements, print culture, and social conflict. Sometimes it is easy to forget the industries that are now lost or that went before, or why a city is renowned for its butter, for example, or why the small inland town of Kilkenny became a city. We know that we have plenty of grass for grazing and the resulting cattle trade, but could we enumerate all the industries that this grazing spawns, or the wealth that ensues from kitting out crews and ships on their way to Newfoundland or the Caribbean?

My first mistake was to turn to Chapter 8, “Food for Thought” (184), thinking it was a chapter about food. I was wrong. Food matters are in fact discussed in great detail in the chapter named “The Keys of the Kingdom” (54). “Food for Thought” is actually about learning and the significance of a book trade of which I was quite unaware. It is about the literary legacy of Ireland and the primacy of the book, symbolised by Trinity library, a “great warehouse rising out of the marshes,” which was visible to mariners entering Dublin Port as early as 1732 (184). The other great library of the time was Archbishop Marsh’s library, located next to St Patrick’s Cathedral.

Dickson charts the transformation in size and function of the first cities of Ireland during the “long” eighteenth century, from the 1660s to the 1820s, and their active participation in trade and far reaching significance. He assiduously deals with issues of religious composition, education, economy, commerce, law and order, and social change. He also considers how the geographical ebb and flow of migrants to and from Ireland has impacted on the social and cultural diaspora worldwide. This book is not Dublin-centric, but having said that there is a massive emphasis on Cork. This is hardly surprising, having as it does such a deep water and safe harbour on the route from Africa to Bristol to the Caribbean, facilitating ships taking on board cargoes of salt bacon and butter en route. Cork was the larder of the British slave islands, controlling all aspects of the beef trade and the centre for butter exports (60). In the late seventeenth-century, three quarters of the vessels sailing from English ports to the Caribbean

stopped off either in Cork Harbour or Dublin. Similar to the fast fashion industry of today, there was a middleman, so that those making the profit from engaging with the slave trade were not the actual owners of the ships that transported the cargo.

Limerick benefited from Cork's pre-eminence, by proximity and filling the gap in supplies when Cork ran short (64). Indeed, several Limerick families became major traders in France and the Caribbean. One, David Creagh, bought a plantation in Barbados and in 1718 the *Prosperity* sailed into Barbados with 92 slaves (65). Limerick also traded with the Dutch whereas Waterford tended to trade with the European Continent. Cadiz in Spain had the largest Waterford colony anywhere on the continent (66). Waterford was also a stopping-off point between the West Coast of England and Newfoundland for the fishing on the Cod Banks, resulting in many Waterford firms having family connections in St Johns (67).

Belfast was not ideally positioned for trade with southern Europe or transatlantic trade stop-overs, but developed a linen industry taking delivery of flaxseed, rum, flour, sugar, and tobacco on ships returning from America. Transporting indentured servants from Belfast to North America was a form of human trafficking that also flourished in Derry. Kilkenny, the only inland city, was not lacking in commodities and services, and the growth of Dublin led to its vitality. A workshop economy based on textiles meant that worsted blankets were the staple manufacture up to 1820. Valuable agricultural land supported the growing of large quantities of wheat, making it the breadbasket of Dublin. In addition, coal was mined in Castlecomer and polished black marble was highly sought after for chimney pieces and tables (69). Kilkenny was strategically located on the main Cork, Waterford, Dublin road, which led to a flourishing business in wholesale beers and an influential provincial newspaper. Grocers, predominantly Catholic, dominated the retail trade, and there was a healthy service industry in the roadside inns (70). Drogheda was well placed for cross-channel trade, particularly with Liverpool. The trade in linen yarn was superseded by food exports of oats and oatmeal, wheat, and flour. By 1780 Drogheda had become the largest grain market in the country. However, this led to food riots directed at exporters and the ships on the quay.

This development of the cities through commerce and expansion led to advances in architecture and the arts. The 1720s saw the first shops to have glass windows and the introduction of a browsing space and display cases. The Wide Streets Commission, established in 1757, assumed the presence of shops and gave a European boulevard ambience to the city. Present-day friends of the Crawford will be interested to read that a short-lived group called The Cork Society for Arts and Sciences, engaged a local architect Daniel Murphy to produce a city map with proposals for new streets and bridges. He proposed to establish a street from Fenns Quay to the Custom House which would add beauty and health to the city, but it was never realized (166). The Custom House now houses the Crawford Art Gallery at Emmet Place. I also discovered that flooding in Cork is not a new phenomenon; a great flood occurred there in January 1789 (167).

By the nineteenth century, Irish cities were radically changing again. Firstly, by the Act of Union in 1801, which took away the need for the affluent and the influential to maintain their town houses, especially in Dublin, and to repair to London where the seat of government now resided, and secondly by famine. In one case, the Moira House on Usher's Island in Dublin, which had been a literary and political sanctuary under the patronage of the Countess in the late 1700s, became the Mendicity Institution in 1820 (241-47). Dublin was never to recover architecturally, and the buildings that came after were never as grand as those such as the Customs House or the Four Courts. Fortunately, there was a spread of skills in the technical sphere as artisanal people had to move onwards and outwards. Woollen weavers from Dublin and Cork were recruited to Mexico where they formed the basis of a royal manufactory. Waterford tanners settled in the Basque country, while mezzotint engravers brought their techniques to London; Irish wallpaper manufacturers could be found in Bordeaux and

Philadelphia; silk weavers and dyers moved to England. Training in the Dublin Society schools of design and architecture had far reaching influence such as James O'Donnell's New York brick houses, and the gridiron street scheme that distinguishes many older North American cities, but which originated in Limerick (253).

Events over the last decade have made us re-evaluate our cities. Recessions, Celtic Tigers, Brexit, and COVID have all had profound consequences on city life and affected the way we live in, or away from, them. The race to urban centres after the famine is only reflected in the exodus to the country when we could work from home. The 5km limit imposed in the early stages of the COVID pandemic either kept us within the city limits or alienated us from the city for nearly eighteen months. Personally, locked-down in Cork City with a job that eventually petered out, left me with time to roam deserted streets and harbour walls and appreciate the laneways and foodways that have made Cork a city of food. During a couple of months in the Liberties while I awaited the arrival of my first grandchild, I immersed myself in reading as much as I could about Dublin City. In conjunction with other publications – I am thinking in particular of Peter Sirr's *Intimate City: Dublin Essays* and *The Coastal Atlas of Ireland*, edited by Robert Devoy – David Dickson's overview of Irish urban development in *The First Irish Cities* has been a very valuable and intriguing resource that answered many questions and gave satisfying explanations.

Flicka Small has a PhD from University College Cork, Ireland, where she teaches in the School of English. Her research interests centre on the semiotics of food in contemporary literature and commodity culture, particularly in the writings of James Joyce. Flicka is co-curator of the Odysseys exhibition at the Crawford Art Gallery (2022) marking the centenary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the impact travel has on an artist's work. She is also producer of the short documentary *Framed in Cork* (2020) exploring James Joyce's Cork family roots. Flicka has also published chapters in the *Atlas of the Iveragh Peninsular* and the *Reimagining Ireland* series.

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Bohemian Belfast and Dublin: Two Artistic and Literary Worlds, in the Work of Gerard Keenan
James Gallacher

Edward Everett Root, 2020. 150 pages.

ISBN: 9781911454625

Reviewer: Kaitlin Thurlow (University of Georgia)

Gerard Keenan, also known as Joe Biggar and Jude the Obscure, seems to have circulated under the literary radar in Bohemian communities in his native Belfast. James Gallacher connects the author's literary strands of journalistic, critical, and creative writings into one volume, *Bohemian Belfast and Dublin: Two Artistic and Literary Worlds, in the Work of Gerard Keenan*. The collection sheds new light to the author's legacy, rescuing unpublished work from his later years and uncovers a wealth of essays and short novels produced over the course of his professional life.

Those unfamiliar with Gerard Keenan, or who will be re-introduced to him outside of his work as Jude the Obscure (a contributor to the *Honest Ulsterman*) will find a meticulously researched collection here. Gallacher weaves Keenan's critical and creative work together to

position him as a leading figure moving between Bohemian Belfast and Dublin where he traversed artistic, literary, political, and social circles. Gallacher frames each selection chronologically with a richly detailed backstory in a well-researched introduction. Providing relevant historical context, he fills in biographical information and offers literary analysis of Keenan's experimental fiction.

Gallacher points out that Keenan, who adopted the pseudonym Jude the Obscure, became "a longstanding keynote columnist for long running Northern Irish literary magazine from 1971 until its final print issue in 2003" (1). Keenan published the column in the "The Business Section" of *Honest Ulsterman*, covering a range of cultural commentary, including a 1996 essay on Duke Ellington. In February 2016, *Honest Ulsterman* editors Michael Foley and Robert Johnstone profiled Keenan in the online magazine shortly after his death in October 2015. In the identity of Jude the Obscure, which he adopted from the 1895 novel by Thomas Hardy, Keenan may have found an allegiance. In 1971, the BBC adapted the 1895 novel into a TV mini-series, and Keenan perhaps saw a little of himself in Jude Frawley, the stonemason striving for a more scholarly life. Foley details how the fractured family circumstances in Keenan's youth affected in his later worldview:

But, regarding the critical essays he wrote for the *Honest Ulsterman* as Jude the Obscure, I think that the crucial influence was nothing artistic but the early death of his father, an accountant who provided his family with a comfortable middle-class lifestyle and status. Perhaps unexpectedly for an accountant, Keenan's father was cultured and well-read, and passed on a love of literature to his son, who would have expected a full education and a professional career, only to have his family suddenly plunged into poverty and be obliged to leave school at the age of fifteen to earn money in menial jobs.

In the remembrance, Johnstone added, "I suspected that his experience of losing his father at an early age and growing up Catholic in wartime Belfast had instilled in him a determination to provide for himself." The *Honest Ulsterman* formed as a print magazine was subtitled "A Handbook for Revolution," in response to which the Royal Ulster Constabulary raided the printers, failing to comprehend that a revolution might be a poetic rather than a Republican or Marxist one. The *Ulsterman* website describes the magazine as "created by the late poet James Simmons in May 1968, when Paris was teetering on the brink of revolution and Northern Ireland civil war."

In Dublin, Keenan published in the literary magazine, *Envoy*, a mid-century periodical with other notable contributors, Patrick Kavanagh and Flann O'Brien. In a 2015 *Irish Times* profile Adrienne Leavy described *Envoy* as "The short-lived but influential magazine aimed to define a national cultural identity, whose enemy was perceived as native conservatism and isolationism rather than British imperialism." Scholarly interest in periodicals have called attention to the generative output from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the British Isles from the last century. As Claire Connolly contends in the forward to Malcolm Ballin's 2008 book, *Irish Periodical Culture, 1937–1972 Genre in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland*, "Periodicals strive for artistic permanence too: they have an affinity with the world of books, and are close cousin to the collected or uniform edition, with its claims to cultural prestige" (xi). According to Ballin, "As a 'thing' [...] the periodical has a social and cultural life beyond the reach of any individual, group, or coterie" (xi). Periodicals serve as a cultural touchstone to Bohemian and underground communities in times of transition and upheaval. James Gallacher ushers Gerard Keenan from obscurity to endow him with a level of permanent distinction in this collection.

In the introduction, Gallacher says of Keenan, born in 1927 to a Catholic family in North Belfast, that he “felt a profound dislocation regarding his surroundings, a theme returned to several themes throughout his work” (11). One of his earliest stories, “A Disappointing Day,” written in 1946, marks his first publication in *Lagan, A Miscellany of Ulster Writing*. In a letter to Anne Tannahill of Blackstaff Press, Keenan characterises his writing as “a social panorama of corner of Ulster society not often considered Ulsterish” [...] more of a Bloomsbury sort of decadence disguised as farce [...] this reader will see the city more clearly by having to break the code” (5).

“The Changeling” (1950), a story published in *Envoy*, was an important breakthrough, drawing the attention of Patrick Kavanagh, whose “Diary” entries proved influential. Kavanagh’s “entries for the magazine would come to represent the single most important influence on Keenan’s style” (21). Gallacher, a Research Coordinator for the European Federation of Associations and Conferences of Irish Studies (EFACIS) at KU Leuven, Belgium first discovered the writer “during the latter stages of his doctoral studies at the University of Liverpool” (2). “The name Gerard Keenan” he contends, “is one in large part lost to Irish literary history” (1). “Researching the development of literary movements in the bohemia of post-war Dublin” (2) led him to *Kavanagh’s Weekly* and eventually to a work of Northern Irish publications like the *Honest Ulsterman*.

“In Refugee from Mars,” a critical piece published in the second issue of *Kavanagh’s Weekly* on April 19, 1952, Keenan grows impatient yet hopeful in the city’s stalled theatre renaissance and looks for examples in literature from P. G. Wodehouse and Graham Greene for motivation. He declares, “Rioting is dead in Belfast and it may never return, but I think dullness will always be its destiny” (29).

Farset is an unpublished novel completed around 1953 under Keenan’s other pseudonym, Joe Biggar. According to Gallacher “an illuminating insight into the workaday culture of mid-century Belfast, the story charts Keenan’s earliest literary stirrings, plotted as they are correspondingly with pitted acts of schoolboy rebellion, a low-level subversion of a rather stygian status-quo” (32). Here, Biggar disguises literary figures and other bohemian figures from his circle within the plot in a creative project in order to fulfill the “hidden subversion and intellectual endeavors, subterranean and concealed at the Farset river, underground tributary of the Lagan” (32). Gallacher notes, “The central pseudonymisation is that of the city of Belfast itself, which becomes transformed into Farset” (5).

In *Soundings*, a literary anthology of Irish writing, Jude the Obscure published a short story, “Parents and Priests” (51). The story reconciled some of the difficult themes of Keenan’s childhood with a combination of bitterness and nostalgia. The narrator’s ill father suggests the boy cheer himself by look for “*Tales of the Long Boy ... You’ll enjoy those stories. [He] said he would and went to the library straight from the hospital but without any luck; none of the Chesterton’s was in*” (56).

In *Anthony Cronin*, Keenan reviews the author’s *Dead as Doornails*, weaving the main characters, “Behan, Kavanagh and Myles, then begins to reveal the interplay between them,” clearly aligning himself with Cronin’s style, “shadowy, withdrawn, never up-staging the heroes of this tale” (70). *The Sick Men of Sunday (Farset and Gomorrah)* is a serialised novella first published in the *Honest Ulsterman* from 1977-1978. In this series, Gallacher suggests that the now middle-aged Keenan is working through the central themes of his life and relationships: “As it moves from 1950s Belfast to 1970s London, the writing becomes preoccupied with Keenan’s often fraught relationship with [Gerard] Dillon.” Their relationship is an “encapsulate microcosm of the central and arguably irreducible contradiction of Keenan’s entire career; that of reconciling his intellectual bohemianism with his sense of responsibility towards his family” (74). With his critical eye, Keenan maintained open-mindedness and tolerance of differences, remembers Johnstone in the *Honest Ulsterman*. About Gerard Dillon, his “attitude was

impeccably enlightened” and his advocacy for women writers, citing, “One of the figures he revered most – along with Shakespeare – was George Eliot.”

In “The Business Section,” his debut as an *Honest Ulsterman* columnist, Keenan sets out to expose the right-wing leanings of “Kavanagh, Beckett and Myles.” He writes

[T]he three have one thing in common, that none was a worker. Kavanagh was a small farmer and professional journalist; Becket was a university lecturer; Myles was a professional man in the Administrative Class of the Civil Service [...] The three were gentlemen and fitted easily into the aristocratic tradition which is one of the curses of Ireland wherein the worker is either held in contempt of is patronised. (100)

Keenan appears to have devoted his later years to fictional works including *Shelley Pain*, previously serialised in the *Honest Ulsterman* in 2000, and *Gerry and Bill*, an unpublished novel written between 1988 and 2000. The thirteenth selection, *The Streetwalkers of Pimlico*, may be the most stylistically bold inclusions in this volume. Gallacher concludes the book with an observation about Keenan’s artistic frustrations, with an eye towards another life in London. *Streetwalkers* “offers a languid representation of 1950s Pimlico, a world of shaded artist’s salons and hazy drunken picnics, offset always by Keenan’s parallel workaday existence as a newspaper clerk” (51). One scene in the story satirises a discussion group, the author’s account of the Belfast Labour Party. When a young woman named Della remarks on his reading of Christopher Isherwood’s *Sally Bowles*, the narrator remarks, “She had would have been called a salty tongue, effing and blinding about capitalism and the rich as her audience of shipyard workers cheered her on” (153).

This volume will be of interest to scholars of Irish periodical culture and history and others interested in the workings of the Belfast and Dublin Bohemian life of the twentieth century. Though Gallacher brings to light Keenan’s collection of critical writings, his creative work may draw new attention, whether written under his various sobriquets or not.

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New Zealand's Response to the 1916 Rising

Edited by Peter Kuch and Lisa Marr

Cork University Press, 2020. 268 pages.

ISBN: 9781782054047

Reviewer: Sonja Tiernan (University of Otago, New Zealand)

In an interview for a student newspaper in 2016, Bríona Nic Dhiarmada described the making of her highly acclaimed documentary series, *1916: The Irish Rebellion*, as an opportunity “to look at that [Easter Rising] event not only simply as Irish history or Irish-British history, but as part of actually world history.”³ The success of that series caused many to reflect on the events of Easter week from a global perspective. The centenary commemorations in 2016 were marked by Irish Embassies, community groups, and academics world-wide interrogating Irish emigrant involvement and reactions to the rebellion abroad. While commemorations occurred in England, Scotland, the United States, Canada, and Australia, many links were found in less obviously connected countries. On 22 March 2016, a two-day conference was held at Toitū, Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin, New Zealand. The conference theme, “Yet no clear fact to be discerned,” involved presentations from fifteen speakers examining New Zealand’s response to the 1916 Rising. This volume, edited by conference organiser, Peter Kuch along with Lisa Marr, includes ten chapters stemming from this commemorative event.

The involvement of New Zealand troops during the six days of the rebellion, or indeed the responses to the insurrection against British rule as seen in New Zealand have, to this point, been vastly overlooked. Indeed, Kuch accurately claims in the introduction that this volume is the “first considered account.” The ten essays are presented chronologically and together they weave an engaging, if not surprising, story of New Zealand responses to the Irish rebellion. There is unfortunately no focus on Māori in this volume, although the editors note that a call was made to include contributions relating to the indigenous population of New Zealand, who have many close ties with early Irish settlers. The ten chapters successfully cover a wide aspect of accounts including perspectives of women and the rising, literary and theatrical responses, media assessments, and religious interventions.

The first chapter details an often overlooked account of New Zealand troops who fought alongside British forces in Dublin to quash the rebellion. “‘The Empire Strikes Back’: Anzacs and the Easter Rising 1916,” is by Jeff Kildea who, in his previous role as Professor of Australian History at University College Dublin, uncovered vital new research contributing to our knowledge of the Irish at Gallipoli during the 2014 centenary of World War One. This chapter does not disappoint, as Kildea assesses how New Zealanders got caught up the fighting in Dublin when British authorities marshalled all available troops in the area. Kildea describes how some New Zealand troops were on leave in Dublin when the fighting broke out and as members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force they were called to action. This chapter is littered with interesting accounts such as that of Corporal John Godwin Garland who describes being shot at by Countess Markievicz travelling past him in a car as he stood on Sackville Street. Of course, as Kildea notes, this is most unlikely to have happened as Markievicz was by then stationed in the area of St Stephen’s Green and later at the Royal College of Surgeons.

³ Becker, Courtney. “Documentary reflects on 1916 Irish rebellion”. *The Observer* (16 Apr. 2016). <https://ndsmcobserver.com/2016/04/1916-irish-rebellion-premiere/>.

Nonetheless, such witness accounts provide an insight into New Zealand troops' perceptions of the fight for Irish independence.

The following two chapters focus on women and the rising. The first of these focuses on a detailed assessment of Australasian press coverage of women involved in the rising written by Dianne Hall, an Irish historian based at Victoria University in Melbourne. Hall has written extensively on the history of the Irish in Australia, most significantly she co-wrote, with Elisabeth Malcolm, a *New History of the Irish in Australia* which offered a vital re-evaluation of this area. Hall's chapter in this volume provides an insightful overview of the changing attitudes towards Irishness and gender in Australia and New Zealand following the rising. Her assessment of newspaper reports provides interesting perspectives; she cites, for example, the New Zealand newspaper the *Otago Daily Times* who reported on the wedding of Grace Gifford and James Plunkett in the chapel at Kilmainham Gaol. The article describing the "Sinn Fein Romance" managed to find a New Zealand link, reporting that Grace's brother-in-law, Thomas MacDonagh, had attended school with Chaplain-Captain P. Dore of the Auckland Rifles, who was injured at Gallipoli.

In the following chapter, Lisa Marr provides an insightful assessment of New Zealand women's reaction to the rising. This chapter provides a deeper understanding of negative reactions in dominion territories to the Irish insurrection. As Marr aptly observes, news of the rising reached New Zealand the day following the first Anzac Day commemoration there, held on 25 April 1916. Anzac day remains a significant memorial day in New Zealand, most evident by a national public holiday marking the landing of the Anzacs, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers at Gallipoli. Women were at the centre of organising this first commemorative event and many women reacted with what Marr describes as shock and outrage at the news of the Easter Rising. One woman, named Elizabeth, wrote scathingly in the "Ladies' Pages" of the Dunedin newspaper the *Otago Witness*, hoping for a speedy execution of Roger Casement. As Marr attests, it was difficult for women to express views that would be considered disloyal to the British crown at a time when New Zealand was celebrating their loyalty to the Empire. However, when the executions and reprisals began in Ireland, many other women in New Zealand did become vocal, empathising with the plight of the Irish. This chapter is meticulously researched and offers the reader fascinating accounts.

Peter Kuch's article "Play v. Play: *The Otago Daily Times* and the Dunedin stage as a regional New Zealand response to the Easter Rising 1916," offers a welcome inclusion from a literary and theatrical perspective. His assessment focuses on one Dunedin newspaper which Kuch singles out as offering a markedly different approach to other New Zealand newspapers at this time. This approach works exceptionally well as Dunedin journalists were offered the opportunity to provide an assessment of the rising through the lens of productions of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *Peg o' My Heart*, staged in the city months prior to and following the rising. This chapter offers a wealth of information regarding not only *The Otago Daily Times* interrogations of Irishness but also provides an account of Irish influence on theatre in Dunedin following the influx of Irish settlers to the region, attracted partly by the goldrush of the 1860s and the ensuing development of the city.

This volume is packed with fascinating new information regarding the Irish in New Zealand at the time prior to and after the Easter Rising. The contributors have produced chapters imbedded with thorough research uncovering how Ireland was perceived by New Zealanders more broadly in the wake of the Irish strike for independence. Other chapters include Rory Sweetman's account of "Bishop Henry Cleary and the North King Street Murders." Cleary, originally from Wexford, was appointed as the Catholic Bishop of Auckland in 1910. After visiting the scene of the atrocities at North King Street, Cleary exposed his outrage through the pages of the *New Zealand Tablet*, a weekly Catholic newspaper. Veteran historian of Ireland, Brad Patterson, provides a most engaging account of the rise and fall of the Protestant Political

Association in New Zealand in the wake of the rising. This chapter sheds light on sectarianism at this time and Patterson has produced a much welcome assessment of this often overlooked aspect of New Zealand: Irish history.

Other chapters include contributions by Jim McAloon who assesses *The Maoriland Worker*; Seán Brosnahan's extraordinarily detailed account of objectors to military conscription in New Zealand in the aftermath of the rising; Stephanie James's examination of the Irish-Catholic press in Dunedin and Adelaide in the three years following the rising; and Malcom Campbell's insightful assessment of reactions to the rising in the British Empire and the United States.

New Zealand's Response to the 1916 Rising is a welcome addition to the field of Irish studies in Australasia and will no doubt be of interest to this field globally. Peter Kuch and Lisa Marr have produced a volume brimming with new and engaging perspectives, showcasing fresh archival research.

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A History of Irish Women's Poetry

Edited by Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley
Cambridge University Press, 2021. 490 pages.
ISBN: 9781108478700

Reviewer: Pilar Villar-Argáiz (University of Granada)

Editing a book which surveys the history of Irish women poets from earliest times to the present day is a challenging task, given the omissions and obscurity of many voices in the past. In the introduction, Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley acknowledge with admirable honesty the "incompleteness" of their own "narrative" of women's poetry, pointing out that the history they try to trace is full of "fragmentation, obscurity, and neglect," rather than being "linear" and consistent (8). In spite of this, the editors manage, with great efficiency, to depict a literary trajectory which is comprehensive, diverse, and inclusive.

The volume opens with two long introductions, the first by editors Ailbhe Darcy and David Wheatley, and the second one by Anne Fogarty, one of the major voices in criticism of contemporary Irish literature. In their introduction, the editors reclaim the importance and necessity of foremothers in Irish women's poetry, delineating a literary history of confluences and feedback associations both past and present. Figures like Jane Wilde, who wrote as "Speranza," for instance, exert tremendous influence on writers such as Eiléan Ní Chuileannain, given the former's ability to negotiate between feminine and national matters and her effective dealing with the limitations a public role entails. The editors also recognise the eighteenth-century poet Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chomhaill (with her iconic poem *The Lament for Art O'Leary*) as a meaningful precursor for many contemporary poets such as Doireann Ní Ghríofa. In the second introduction to the volume, Anne Fogarty eloquently revises some of the foundational images of the poet as male in the Irish tradition, and makes the polemical claim that Irish women poets are still disregarded "because they have not been read with any enduring regularity and

consequently depth” (25). Unlike women poets in other countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, they have infrequently been admitted to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century canons. Fogarty also offers a concise and illuminating overview of anthologies from the eighteenth century to the present in order to highlight the omission of women poets, and provocatively concludes that there is less space devoted to their presence in twentieth-century anthologies published after the 1960s.

One of the achievements of this volume is the decision to describe the literary scene not only by drawing on well-known major figures but also by including often overlooked or under-researched writers, depicting a cultural panorama of complexity and multiplicity. The effect of this decision is observed in a number of chapters by well-recognised scholars, looking back into Ireland’s poetic past and legitimising the work of women as important foremothers. In chapter 8, Matthew Campbell focuses on the long-eclipsed poetry of Dora Sigerson, a poet from the revolutionary period (and usually thought of as a Revival figure) who is claimed as predecessor for contemporary writers such as Medbh McGuckian. Campbell deftly examines the mixture of the domestic, the political, and the melancholic in her work, concluding that it is necessary “to bring into sharper view an idiosyncratic, distinctly odd, frequently angry, and sometimes plainly depressed poet” (170). Sarah Bennet also draws our attention to poets (i.e., Temple Lane, Kathleen Arnold Price, and Sheila Wingfeld) who have frequently been excluded from literary analysis in post-independence Ireland, given their exclusion from canonical accounts of neo-Revivalist and modernist poetry. Jaclyn Allen’s essay centres on the Other “Northern Renaissance” of the mid-twentieth century. Her analysis challenges the dominant narrative of a predominantly male tradition of writing by incorporating four women poets as case studies: Elizabeth Shane, May Morton, Freda Laughton, and Celia Randall. These writers, as the author demonstrates, anticipate later poets by articulating the challenges involved in intersecting gender aspirations with the hegemonic discourses of poetry and nationhood. Moynagh Sullivan also recovers from history another forgotten name, that of the prolific poet Carla Lanyon, focusing on aspects of her fifty-two-year publishing career such as her ecological descriptions of the natural world and the influence that the changes in her life exerted on her poetic symbology. Another poet from the same period retrieved from neglect, this time by Daniel Tobin, is Lola Ridge, a poet shaped by the influence of her diasporic experience in the US, resulting in pervasively transnationally inflected work and a non-insular sense of Irish identity.

Overall, the volume follows a chronological approach from medieval Ireland to the present day. Chapter 1 by Máirín Ní Dhomnchadha reviews the difficulties faced by women in medieval Ireland as they tried to find a place of their own as poets. As Ní Dhomnchadha shows, this was a challenging task for women because the canons of Old and Middle English were mainly built by the requirement of specialised training for men. In Chapter 2, Danielle Clarke and Sarah McKibben attentively read questions of form, address, and genre in poetry produced by both Anglophone and Gaelic women in the Early Modern period, highlighting similarities in the way in which they exploit poetic tradition and differences with respect to relationships with hegemonic power. The next chapter by Triona Ní Shíocháin surveys the richness of Irish-speaking women’s oral traditions during the same period, including songs, laments (*caoineadh*), vernacular religious verse, and lullabies. Ní Shíocháin gives prominence to the oral performance aspect of such compositions over the written form, arguing that female practitioners had a key role in defying authority, exerting dissent, and exercising power or influence in Irish society. Chapter 4 complicates and deepens the understanding of Irish women’s poetry in the eighteenth century by adopting an archipelagic framework which goes beyond national allegiances and identifies fluid interactivity. Sarah Prescott focuses on women poets not often explored, such as Dorothy Smith, Dorothea DuBois, and Jane Elizabeth Moore, revealing their politically engaged writing and enlarging our knowledge of literary culture in this period. Catherine Jones continues the discussion in the volume, by offering a concise

overview of Irish women's poetry of the Romantic period. Challenging the claim that "there was 'no Romantic era' in early nineteenth century Ireland" (105), this scholar brings to light the work of poets in this revolutionary era, analysing the ways in which it engaged with domestic and political matters. Chapter 6 by Stephen Behrendt deepens this exploration of the Romantic period in Ireland, offering an impressive account of Mary Tighe, arguably the best-remembered poet from this period. The post-Romantic period in modern Ireland is covered by Lucy Collins in Chapter 7, one of the strongest pieces in the volume. Collins argues that the male image (of the soldier, for instance) remains important in the poetic imaginary of Revivalist women poets such as Katherine Tynan or Winifred Letts. Collins reveals the connection between Irish and English literary networks during this period, underscoring ambiguous relations to national affiliations and the strong imaginative appeal these poets find in imagery of motherhood and the Irish landscape.

Four chapters in the collection centre on Irish-language poets over the last seventy years, in order to explore, in words of Daniel Theinová, how they "have responded to the central paradox of Irish as both moribund and undying" (239). While Theinová discusses well-respected writers on the field such as Máire Mhac an tSaoi, Bidy Jenkinson, and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and less-studied, but increasingly well-known poets such as Ailbhe Ní Chearbhuigh and Aifric Mac Aodha, Patricia Coughlan dedicates a whole essay to the Irish-language poetry of Mhac an tSaoi, advocating for an increased awareness of the significance of her literary achievement. David Wheatley attends to questions of attachment and belonging in the writings of Jenkinson, while Kenneth Keating addresses the complexities of "linguistic and psychological bilocation" (286) for bilingual poets such as Ní Dhomhnaill, Celia de Fréine, Doireann Ní Ghríofa and Ní Chearbhuigh.

Any historical overview of Irish women's poetry would be incomplete without considering the legacy and impact that religion has exerted upon the country's culture. Catriona Clutterbuck examines how Catholic inheritance permeates the work of Irish women poets, allowing them to dramatize the binary tensions between "faith and doubt, collective and individual identity, and sacrifice and self-care" (318), using the figure of renewal to reconfigure the creative potential of this faith tradition. Irish women's poetry is also read through the prism of feminism and the political contexts in which poetry has been produced and received. Kit Fryatt's chapter on 1970s-1980s feminism offers an intelligent, scathing critique of Boland in the opening three pages; her discussion of this major poet, although brief, is pioneering in its challenge of this poet's monolithic view of history at a time when this concept was being vigorously interrogated by academic historiography, and in her apt identification of echoes of a Romantic mode of lyric subjectivity in Boland's work. The rest of the chapter surveys the work of other major poets, such as Ní Chuillénáin, McGuckian, Meehan, and Rita Ann Higgins in the contexts of feminism and publishing from the 1970s and '80s.

The following three chapters focus on well-established poets by examining in detail some of their most distinctive themes or motifs. While in chapter 19 Maria Johnson reads a selection of poems by Ní Chuillénáin with ideas of fabrication in mind, Guinn Batten examines Boland's poetics in her essay, centring on the poet's relationship with history from the perspective of Hegel's dialectic. Kathryn Kirpatrick engages with one of the central tenets of Paula Meehan's work: her interest in expressing in poetic form the lives of the working class, and how other themes emerge through this perspective, such as the rewriting of public and private spaces and the reclamation of an animistic vision.

The last three chapters in the volume cover the work of a younger generation of female poets in the last three decades. In Chapter 22, Tara McEvoy examines formal conservatism, artifice, and appropriation in the poetry of Colette Bryce, Leontia Flynn, Sinéad Morrissey, and Caitríona O'Reilly. In the following chapter Nerys Williams focuses on the opposing tendency observed among some contemporary Irish female poets: the experimental poetics and radical

compositional forms of writers such as Susan Howe, Maggie O’Sullivan, and Catherine Walsh. The collection closes with an essay by Anne Mulhall, which examines in comprehensive ways the changing, diverse, and lively atmosphere of the Irish poetic scene nowadays, with the emergence of work by black and minority ethnic poets, radical feminist platforms, and the growth of the spoken word and performance poetry scene.

Overall, this volume demonstrates the importance of challenging the history of marginalisation that for so long almost silenced the work of too many women poets. It both reaffirms and challenges the conception of a clear, straightforward line of development in a tradition of Irish women’s poetry, suggesting a solid trajectory even as it reveals the diverse nature of Irish women’s poetic praxis, while stressing the many gaps, omissions, and absences. The result is a compelling picture of a plural, heterogeneous Irish female voice in poetry from earliest times to the present day, one which shines with a brilliance of its own. Thanks to ground-breaking volumes such as this one, the radiant light of women’s poetry will no longer be extinguished and obscured.

Pilar Villar-Argáiz is a Senior Lecturer of British and Irish Literatures in the Department of English at the University of Granada and the General Editor of the major series “Studies in Irish Literature, Cinema and Culture” in Edward Everett Root Publishers. She is the author of the books *Eavan Boland’s Evolution as an Irish Woman Poet: An Outsider within an Outsider’s Culture* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2007) and *The Poetry of Eavan Boland: A Postcolonial Reading* (Academica Press, 2008). She has published extensively on contemporary Irish poetry and fiction, in relation to questions of gender, race, migration and interculturality. Her edited collections include *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland: The Immigrant in Contemporary Irish Literature* (Manchester University Press, 2014), *Irishness on the Margins: Minority and Dissident Identities* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), *Secrecy and Community in 21st-Century Fiction* (Bloomsbury, 2021), the special issue of *Irish Studies Review* (entitled “Irish Multiculturalism in Crisis”, co-edited with Jason King, 2015), and the special issue of *Nordic Irish Studies* (entitled “Discourses of Inclusion and Exclusion: Artistic Renderings of Marginal Identities in Ireland”, 2016). Villar-Argáiz is currently the Chairperson of AEDEI (the Spanish Association for Irish Studies) and Member of the Executive Board of EFACIS (the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies).

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Ireland’s Gramophones: Material Culture, Memory and Trauma in Irish Modernism
Zan Cammack
Clemson University Press, 2021. 234 pages.
ISBN: 9781949979763

Reviewer: Tom Walker (Trinity College Dublin)

Thomas Edison patented the phonograph in 1877. The following summer, Dubliners were able to see and hear the invention being displayed and demonstrated in a shop on Grafton Street. Those unable to make it there in person could nonetheless read in the *Weekly Irish Times* of how “the voice can be *embalmed* by the phonograph, and made to last indefinitely” (40). As Zan Cammack’s *Ireland’s Gramophones: Material Culture, Memory and Trauma in Irish Modernism* traces, such an attempt to reckon in print with the nature of the phonograph and its

close cousin the gramophone recurred across the century that followed. Starting with the much discussed, though fleeting, references to the gramophone in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the study examines in detail the prominent role played by sound recording technology in a succession of Irish literary texts – Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*, Lennox Robinson's *Portrait*, and Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* – from the 1890s through to the 1930s.

The specificity with which this book, as quoted above, documents the arrival of the Edison's invention is characteristic of its good use of historical sources to evoke the impact of the phonograph and later the gramophone in Ireland. Another strength is the alignment of such historical details to the machine's technical realities; this is a book that uses diagrams, graphs, and tables to considerable critical effect. Indeed, such realities somewhat complicate any sense of the aural immortality effected by the phonograph. The preservation and playback abilities of its recording cylinders were limited “since the wax recordings would rapidly wear down after several replays” (7). Hence the emergence a decade later of the flat disk of the gramophone, which was not only more enduring but could be mass reproduced. As the introduction further outlines, phonographs, and gramophones are also not just to be considered as mediums or instruments of sound. At times, they are shown to shift towards becoming quasi-human voices and subjects in these texts. They are also engaged with as material objects, made up of ornate horns and explosive spring motors, behaving – drawing on Bill Brown's influential theory of how objects transform into “things” – in distinction from their ostensible function.

This contextual and conceptual sophistication as regards the presence of the phonograph and gramophone in Irish literary texts is carried forward into each chapter's more focused analysis. The first chapter, “Gramophonic Trauma: Shattered Narratives and Undead Oralities,” focuses on the role played in *Dracula* by the psychiatrist John Seward's phonograph. This is enlighteningly placed among the novel's provision of modern media technologies (telegrams, typewriters, cameras) and Cammack discusses how, relatedly, the novel's narrative “is constructed of myriad media types and formats, including shorthand journal entries, telegrams, letters, and newspaper clippings” (21). Equivalent in scale (36 percent) to the journal entry as a medium for plotting the story, the phonograph is also linked, via Seward's use of it, to the psychological and, more particularly, to “the novel's near obsession with memory and its failure” (22). Drawing on references to and resonances with contemporaneous theories of mind, the technology's mechanical workings and mnemonic limitations, and close attention to “the deeply problematic anachrony of the narrative” (35), the phonograph emerges as representing the compulsions and discontinuities of traumatic memory in the novel. The chapter then attempts to relate the novel's fictional and fantastic trauma to the broader traumas of post-famine Ireland, set against the emerging prominence of the preservation of oral folklore in Irish culture. Though containing much fascinating detail, especially as regards the role played by the phonograph in the collecting of folklore, this less directly links context to text, offering rather a series of suggestive parallels and resonances.

Stoker's novel also features extensively in the second chapter, “Gramophonic Gendering: Women, Phonographysteria, and the Political Machine.” It opens with an account from an 1899 edition of the *Weekly Irish Times* of “Phonographysteria,” a malady supposedly affecting female stenographers driven to hysteria by the effect on their nerves of having to listen to uncanny, disembodied voices. This offers a way of framing the way gender and trauma intersect in literary representations of the phonograph and gramophone. These associations are also placed against a period, from the 1890s through to the 1910s, in which rise of the New Woman and suffragettism intertwined with Irish nationalist politics. The chapter seeks to “suggest that the roiling undercurrent to this gendered object and Home Rule's specific political tensions subliminally captured the Irish literary imagination – perhaps even more specifically, the Irish male imagination” (59). Focusing on *Pygmalion* as well as *Dracula*, the chapter

convincingly tracks how Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray-Harker, as well as Eliza Doolittle, are sexualised in being associated with phonographs and gramophones in these texts. These three figures are also associated with Irish politics, starting with the “national implications” (62) of Lucy and Mina’s surnames, and linking Eliza’s declaration of autonomy to the passing of the Third Home Rule Bill (drawing on contemporary, pejorative descriptions of the Irish Parliamentary Party as gramophonic).

In focusing on two male authors in the chapter, Cammack explains, “The Irish New Woman authors, for instance, were less concerned with symbols, and especially not those that seemed to objectify and sexualize women, and were more interested in addressing women’s issues head on” (59). Perhaps this is the case. It might, though, have been useful to know which authors Cammack has in mind, or quite what other issues were being addressed and how, not to mention how this chapter’s argument might be related to broader critical efforts to connect technology and the New Women, who have often actually seen new technology, such as the bicycle, as a vehicle for female emancipation. The passing mention later in the chapter of the gramophone in Edith Somerville’s 1919 novel *Mount Music* (and the whole related issue of the distinctly gendered role of the spiritualist medium in the period) felt like a missed opportunity in this respect. Here and elsewhere across the study, some kind of implicit, narrowing notion of an Irish canon seems to be in play. For instance, several of Molly Keane’s novels are mentioned in passing in other chapters without being critically engaged with in any detail. It would have been more helpful too to have a greater range of less familiar texts engaged with from the 1890s through to the 1930s, instead of the closing coda’s swift gallop through the gramophone’s enduring literary role into the latter half of the twentieth century. This ends with a consideration of Brien Friel’s 1971 play *The Gentle Island* and its use of the by now anachronistic gramophone as a manifestation of “the political and cultural strain left unresolved from the early part of the twentieth century” (17), a claim which this book does not have the scope to substantiate and think through to any satisfactory degree.

Related to this canonicity, seems to be the title’s broader label of “Irish modernism.” By this stage in its life, this term seems to have become ubiquitous for reasons that are as much promotional as heuristic. It allows a space to be cleared in the marketplace of the academy for the gathering of these texts, rather than offering any more tangible entry point for their analysis. At one point, for instance, we are told that *At Swim-Two-Birds* is “now considered a central work of Irish modernism, bridging the works of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett” (151). I am not sure what such a comment actually really tells us about this text or the broader nature of Irish cultural production in the period. At the least, some greater reflection on the term’s uses and limitations, as well as some more concerted attempts to draw further related notions of period and mode into the discussion (the gothic, naturalism, expressionism and so on), would have helped draw out a more distinctive sense of these texts’ differing yet, perhaps, interrelated attempts to represent and comprehend Ireland’s shifting modernity. Lacking is much reflection either on the relationship between modernism, Ireland, and the study’s other guiding terms, material culture, memory, and trauma. Appropriate too would have been a clearer sense of the intersections between Irish modernism and the recent turns made towards the material and the technological in modernist studies more generally. One also wonders if a too-ready conflation of politics in Ireland with the politics of Irish nationhood made some works too difficult to accommodate in this critical narrative.

Putting to one side such reservations, however, the final two chapters offer a compelling series of extended readings of how gramophones feature prominently in works that directly engage with the tumult of the Irish revolution, as well as the complexity of its aftermath into the 1930s. The third chapter, “Gramophonic Violence: The Gramophones of the Irish Revolution,” pairs *The Last September* and *Juno and the Paycock*. It opens by situating the gramophone “in the broader scope of the global conflict of World War I, as well as its use in

describing and treating a larger psychology of the era” (95). This again draws on some fascinating historical material, such as the way in which the machine was specifically advertised to serving soldiers on the Western Front, and the contentious role it played in the treatment of shellshock. From this emerges an illuminating reading of how in Bowen’s novel different relationships with the gramophone seem to signify diverging senses of conflict and trauma among the British and Anglo-Irish characters. In O’Casey’s play, a still closer connection between the gramophone and violence is seen as occurring via the record-like body and mind of Johnny Boyle, whose traumas are described as “physical mnemonics for Ireland’s cultural scars” (120). At the moment of the play’s final fade into a halting, stunned admission of chaos, “the silent gramophone embodies Ireland’s dead and its stunned and traumatized living” amid the horrors of civil war (128).

The fourth and final chapter, “Gramphonic Strain: Residual Tension in Post-War Literature,” offers a welcome turn towards the non-canonical, in focusing on Robinson’s under-regarded 1925 play *Portrait*. This draws to considerable effect on the workings of the gramophone’s mainspring mechanism, an understanding of which it shows to be key to the effectiveness of the play’s shocking denouement. Important too is the way in which Cammack recovers the circumstances and responses to the play’s original production, as well as the wider interest Robinson, as Abbey Theatre manager, showed in the gramophone’s theatrical possibilities. The chapter also draws on a welcome degree of historical specificity in its analysis of *At-Swim-Two-Birds*. Thinking through the novel’s suggestive time frames, intergenerational narrative, and use of myth in terms of both the history of Ireland and the gramophone itself yields a subtle sense of the novel’s ending as politically and psychologically ameliorative. This important account will, I hope, gain significant traction in pushing the growing band of O’Brien scholars back towards the difficult task of engaging with the historical and political implications of this most elusive of writer’s “meticulous details” (158). Indeed, in its marrying of careful textual analysis to historical detail and conceptual sophistication this lucid and engagingly written study should have a significant impact on future considerations of the intersection between technology and memory in Irish writing.

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How Ireland Voted 2020: The End of an Era

Edited by Michael Gallagher, Michael Marsh, and Theresa Reidy

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Reviewer: Timothy White (Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio)

How Ireland Voted 2020 garners stellar contributions from the best scholars of Irish electoral politics. In addition to the analysis of leading Irish academics, this edited volume offers a glossary, list of abbreviations, chronology, and set of colour photos to begin the book. This background information is most helpful to those less familiar with the parties and personalities

associated with contemporary Irish politics. The appendices provide election results by constituency and some demographic information of those elected. Chapter 7 allows five successful, mostly young, candidates for the Dáil and one for the Seanad the opportunity to recount their campaign based on their personal experience. These first-hand accounts, and more importantly, the scholarly analysis explain the continuing flux of Irish partisan and electoral politics as the old Irish party system is gone and a new stable political dynamic has yet to materialise. As John Coakley stresses in the concluding chapter, the 2020 Irish election highlighted electoral volatility and party system fragmentation.

In the first chapter, Gary Murphy provides a useful overview of both the history of Irish party competition and the events that led to the collapse of the Fine Gael-led government that had come into power in 2016. This government was based on a confidence and supply agreement with Fine Gael's long-standing opposition, Fianna Fáil. A series of parliamentary losses in late 2019 precipitated Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to ask the President, Michael D. Higgins, to dissolve the 32nd Dáil and called for an election of February 8th of 2020. Varadkar had hoped to hold the election in the summer of 2020, but the political arrangement that allowed Varadkar to hold on to power was collapsing. He recognised that his party, Fine Gael, had not done well in by-elections in 2019 and hoped that his party support would strengthen before he called an election. His reading of the Irish electorate proved at least partially correct, as the election would remove his party from holding the most seats in the Dáil and would mean he would have to agree to be a lesser party in a Fianna Fáil majority coalition government. This was the first time in Irish history that these two parties, which had been the principal rival parties in Irish politics for generations, agreed to share power. Along with the decline in their overall support, Michael Gallagher contends that this signals the end of the era of partisan stability in Irish politics.

Perhaps more surprising that the arrival of a Fianna Fáil-Fine Gael coalition government in 2020 was the electoral success of Sinn Féin. It surpassed Fine Gael as the second largest party in terms of seats in the 33rd Dáil and had candidates frequently win on large first count surpluses throughout the country. Gallagher found that the average Sinn Féin candidate garnered more than twice as many first preference votes than either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. The electoral strength of Sinn Féin was highlighted by winning on early counts rather than requiring transfers, as had frequently been the case in the past. The party's success in the 2020 election was built from lesser but important success in the 2016 election. As Gary Murphy highlights, Sinn Féin's success was built on the collapse of Fianna Fáil in the 2011 election, the demise of the Labour Party in 2016, and the unpopular policy positions of the Fine Gael government on health care and housing. Instead of focusing on its historic call for Irish unity, Sinn Féin gained political traction coming into 2020 based on its call for greater government action on these social issues that were now at the forefront of Irish voters' concerns. Thus, despite a good record of economic and job growth, the Fine Gael-led government lost seats and power in the 2020 general election.

One of the potential reasons for Fine Gael's electoral decline in 2020 was that it did not fulfill its campaign pledges while in power from 2016 to early 2020. In their chapter, Rory Costello, Alice Sheridan, and Duncan Casey find that many of the most important items in the campaign manifesto of Fine Gael were implemented. Some of the campaign pledges were undermined by the necessity to gain support or at least the acquiescence of Fianna Fáil and some Independent TDs. However, some promises made in the campaign were not included in the program for government suggesting that the party was not intent on fulfilling those campaign pledges.

Kevin Cunningham and Michael Marsh account for the decline of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil and the traditional party system to the changing socio-economic conditions in Ireland. Increasing levels of education, growing secularisation, and increased home ownership have

created a much more sophisticated and demanding electorate who they claim is increasingly organised around traditional left-right ideological considerations. Parties that were vaguely center-left or center-right of the past (Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, respectively) are increasingly giving way to a party that more clearly articulates a leftist agenda (Sinn Féin). Lisa Keenan and Gail McElroy found remarkable continuity in the left-right distribution of Irish parties over the last six elections. Thus, Irish voters have a clear understanding of the ideological differences between the parties. In the 2020 general election, Sinn Féin did better with working class, younger, and less religious voters. They also did much better with voters who expressed a populist orientation, a weaker trend in Ireland but still apparent in 2020 compared to previous elections. Cunningham and Marsh also find that Irish voters were less candidate centred in making their choices in 2020 and were more party focused. This allowed many new and less experienced Sinn Féin candidates to be surprisingly successful.

Teresa Reidy's exploration in the candidate selection process for 2020 is illuminating on what Michael Gallagher has previously identified as the secret garden of Irish politics. While much of Irish campaigning and electioneering is transparent, the process of determining who will be the party candidates in each constituency differs by party and over time by election mandates like gender quotas that went into effect in 2016. While the parties all made the 30% threshold of female candidates for the 2020 election, the Irish election law mandates that beginning in 2023, parties will need to achieve 40% female candidates or lose half of their public funding. This represents a challenge for Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, and Fianna Fáil in future elections.

Party leaders and members who select candidates are primarily interested in candidates who can win, maximise votes for the party, and assist other party candidates. Ireland's multi-member constituencies and single-transferable vote election system provides a level of strategy not common in single-member district or list proportional representation election systems. Each party calculated who to select based on the goal of maximising the total number of seats won for the party. While some parties increased the number of candidates they ran across the constituencies, Sinn Féin chose to reduce their number of candidates from fifty in 2016 to forty-two in 2020. This resulted in too few candidates in some constituencies where surprising surpluses from often new candidates could have supported another seat won for Sinn Féin. The major parties were able to draw incumbent TDs as the majority of their candidates for the 2020 election. Given the history of incumbent success in Irish elections, this is not surprising as were the large number of Senators and Councillors who formed the majority of non-TD candidates for the election.

One of the themes of this edited volume is that the old politics of either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael winning and leading Irish governments is gone. Fianna Fáil's demise was the result of the blame that Irish voters placed on this party for its handling of the economic crisis of 2008, a sentiment that determined the results of the 2011 election. While Fine Gael supplanted Fianna Fáil as the single largest party in 2011 and 2016, it did not lead to a new party system. Pat Leahy stresses how the 2020 election continued to bring change to the Irish political system by the emergence of Sinn Féin as a seeming near or co-equal with the traditional large parties.

One of the surprising non-issues of the 2020 campaign was Brexit. The United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union (EU) had come after the formation of the previous (2016) Irish general election. The Fine Gael-led government had received praise and support from Fianna Fáil and most of the Irish public for its response to that particular crisis. However, the party was not rewarded for its handling of Brexit and the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This was important as part of the Dublin government's longstanding support of the Northern Ireland peace process. Mary Murphy's analysis based on exit polls emphasises that this issue was not of major concern to voter choice in the Irish general election of 2020. Ironically, this

issue may have benefitted Sinn Féin as voters became more open and aware of a possible future vote on Irish unity, an issue of perennial interest to Sinn Féin leaders and their political base.

Kirsty Park and Jane Suiter explore the success of Sinn Féin in the election through their analysis of media coverage, including social media. They find that media coverage of Sinn Féin rose dramatically in the last week of the campaign as it became apparent that this party and its candidates were surging in the polls. Media coverage thus came to frame this election momentum that provided Sinn Féin its greatest electoral success in recent Irish history. Social media searches dramatically escalated regarding Sinn Féin in the latter days of the campaign. Park and Suiter found that the media did not give the same attention to health and housing as voters expressed in exit polls. The media inevitably focused on the horserace aspect of politics, but the major Irish media outlets failed to concentrate their coverage on the two issues that were by far the most important to Irish voters.

While the rise of Sinn Féin as an equal competitor to the two traditional large parties is the story of the 2020 general election, some traditional Irish electoral patterns remain. For example, Gallagher found several examples where votes were not transferred based on partisan loyalty but to candidates based on geographic loyalty. This was especially true in large rural constituencies. In their chapter, Adrain Kavanagh, William Durkan, and Caoilfhionn D'Arcy analyse the parties' use of geography in candidate selection and vote management strategies. The maps they devise highlight the purposive effort to maximise vote for multiple candidates of the same party in a constituency. Similarly, Claire McGing's chapter on the Seanad election and the appointment of Senators highlights the continuing influence of the two historic largest parties and geographic considerations. These practices continue to define the localism associated with Irish partisan politics. Despite these continuities, the partisan realignment of Irish politics continues. Future elections in 2023 and beyond will require the parties to nominate and run more female candidates. None have been particularly effective in running women candidates for councillor elections as a means of developing the political experience and name recognition that might allow future women candidates to be successful. Despite important changes, especially in partisan support, traditional patterns of Irish electoral politics remained evident in 2020.

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