

23rd aedei conference

**THE USES
AND ABUSES
OF IRISHNESS**

UNIVERSITY OF HUELVA, SPAIN

28-30 MAY 2025



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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PLENARY SPEAKERS

Mikowski, Sylvie (University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne),"The Tradition of Small-town Narratives in Recent Irish Fiction: The Uses and Abuse of a Marker of Irishness?"

Reading Long Island, Colm Tóibín 's sequence to his best-selling novel Brooklyn, one is struck by the discrepancy between the title and the story, which is in fact entirely located in Enniscorthy, the small provincial town where Eilis originates from and where she has returned twenty years after her marriage in New York to an Italo-American. But the topic of the returned emigrant -already illustrated by many Irish writers, for instance by George Moore in his 1902 short story "Homesickness"- does not only apply to the protagonist. Indeed, Tóibín as a writer is himself returning to one of the most traditional topos of Irish fiction, that is to say, the setting of the small provincial town, with all its negative connotations involving social pressure, petty jealousy, intolerance, puritanism, gossiping, shaming, hypocrisy, exposure, etc., the template for which being perhaps Brinsley Mc Namara's 1918 novel The Valley of the Squinting Windows. Other classic examples that come to mind are some of Edna O'Brien's short stories, or William Trevor's 2009 Love and Summer. The emphasis laid in those narratives on the limiting, censoring nature of the Irish small-town community, especially as far as women and sexual behaviour are concerned, can easily be accounted for by the stifling, oppressive atmosphere prevailing in post-independence, Catholic, nationalist Ireland, in the decades leading up to the profound social and economic transformations brought about by the Celtic Tiger era. However, the excellent reception of Claire Keegan's 2022 Small Things Like These, especially following its adaptation into film, points to the enduring relevance today of such a tradition, seemingly belying the grand narrative of the modernization and normalization of the country in the twenty-first century. What is more, a new wave of writers, including -among others- Colin Barrett (Young Skins, Homesickness, Wild Houses), Megan Nolan (Ordinary Human Failings), Mike McCormack (Solar Bones), or even Sally Rooney (Normal People, Intermezzo), widely celebrated for their innovative styles and their ability to capture and reflect contemporary moods, are still using small-town Ireland as a charged signifier of social malaise and individual failure. In the same line, Kevin Barry's City of Bohane can be read as a stylized, semi-parodic take on the tradition of the small-town narrative, whereby confirming its enduring currency.

With this in view, the first part of this paper will tackle small-town narratives as a veritable subgenre -not to be confused with narratives of rurality-, possibly the locus of the specificity of Irish fiction, of which I shall try to explore and describe the main staples, such as the conflict between individual drives and the rules of the community, tradition and modernity or postmodernity, the local and the universal, inclusion and exclusion, etc. I shall also point at the aesthetic issues underlying the writing of small-town fiction, such as the prevalence of realism, or even naturalism, but also of modernism and experimentation. The second part will examine how the topos of small-town Ireland is being appropriated and re-written by some of the younger writers listed above, who in the wake of the socio-economic transformations induced by twenty-first century post-nationalist, post-Catholic, post-Troubles, ultraliberal Ireland, introduce new motifs to the genre, such as violence and masculinity, social and economic decline, racism,

immigration, environmental damage, drug and alcohol abuse, social networks and interconnectedness, etc. As a result, it seems that the genre of the small-town narrative is still today a powerful and efficient instrument of social critique and satire, which may be regarded as a typically Irish brand of “State-of-the-nation fiction”.

Sylvie Mikowski is Professor emerita of Irish Studies at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (France). After completing a PhD on John McGahern, she wrote her “habilitation” dissertation on “The Invention of a Tradition in the Contemporary Irish Novel”. Her main publications include *Le Roman irlandais Contemporain*, *The Book in Ireland*, *Memory and History in France and Ireland*, *Irish Women Writers*, *Ireland and Popular Culture*, *Popular Culture Today*, *The Circulation of Popular Culture between Ireland and the USA*, *Ireland: Phantoms and Chimeras*. She has also published numerous book chapters on various contemporary Irish writers, particularly women writers, and her articles have appeared in *Etudes irlandaises*, *Angles*, *Etudes britanniques contemporaines*, *RISE*, etc. She is a former chair of the SOFEIR, the French Society of Irish Studies, former President of the steering committee of GIS E.I.R.E., former co-editor of the French journal *Etudes Irlandaises* and current review editor for *RISE: Review of Irish Studies in Europe*. She is currently preparing a translation and edition of George Moore’s novel *A Drama in Muslin*, which was never published in French.

O’Donnell, Katherine (University College Dublin), “The Uses, Abuses, and Misuses of Knowledge: The Report of the Republic of Ireland’s Mother and Baby Home Commission”

This talk draws on the work of feminist and anti-racist social epistemologists who have considered epistemic injustice as a social and political phenomenon in order to read the final report of the Republic of Ireland’s Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters (hereafter *MBHC*ol* Final Report*).

From 1922-1998 there is copious evidence of the systematic arbitrary detention of girls and women and neglect of their children in state-funded Mother and Baby Homes and County Homes, and the widespread coerced or otherwise unlawful adoption of children born to unmarried mothers. I claim the MBHC*ol* wilfully maintain ‘a belligerent ignorance’ of the experiences of the mothers who spent time in Mother and Baby Homes, the people who were born there and the evidence of forced family separation. I use evidence of testimony gathered by my colleagues, Dr Claire McGettrick born Lorraine Hughes and Dr Maeve O’Rourke in their Clann Project which was submitted to the MBHC*ol* as a contrast by to highlight the distinct strategies of epistemic injustice deployed in the *MBHC*ol* Final Report*.

This paper proceeds with a detailed discussion of the epistemic strategies of those with established privilege to highlight the investments of at least some of the Irish establishment in seeking to ensure that testimonial and hermeneutical injustice prevails in relation to unwed mothers and those who were born outside marriage in 20th Century Ireland. The motivation behind (and indeed cumulative effect of) these strategies is to maintain the status quo in terms of the dynamic confluence of privilege and oppression in Irish society. Those who do not have their human rights recognised by those in power are invariably those who already labour under a stigmatised social identity. The

privileged in a society are reluctant to recognise the rights of those who are socially oppressed as they are reluctant to reform the established power systems by which they accrue their privileges.

This paper concludes with a discussion of the epistemic strategies of those with established privilege to highlight the investments of at least some of the Irish establishment in seeking to ensure that testimonial and hermeneutical injustice prevails in relation to unwed mothers and those who were born outside marriage in 20th Century Ireland.

Katherine O'Donnell is Professor of the History of Ideas at UCD School of Philosophy, University College Dublin. Until 2015 she was Director of UCD Women's Studies Centre (a position she held for ten years). While on leave from UCD in the academic years of 2015/2106 and 2016/17 she lectured in the University of Oxford BPhil's Programme in Philosophy, teaching the modules on *Feminist Philosophy* and on return to UCD she moved into the School of Philosophy to become the first faculty appointment in the History of Ideas. Prof. O'Donnell has been awarded a number of teaching awards including the University College Dublin's President's Gold Medal for Excellence in Teaching, and the British Universities Learning On-Screen Award (2014). She is a member of the 5-person Justice for Magdalenes Research group whose academic/advocacy was critical in securing a state apology and redress scheme for Ireland's former Magdalene women. She is widely published in the History of Ideas including 43 peer-reviewed essays and several authored and co-authored monographs and volumes, as well as a recent historical novel called *Slant*. Her research has also been recognised as highly impactful and she is the only scholar to be awarded with three research impact awards by UCD, including the inaugural "engaged research impact prize". She has been invited to give guest lectures and keynote conference addresses in eleven countries.

WRITERS

Catherine Dunne is a Dublin-based writer of literary fiction and non-fiction whose novels have been translated into Albanian, Danish, Dutch, Greek, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. *In the Beginning* was published in 1997 to much critical and popular acclaim. *A Name for Himself* followed a year later and was short listed for the Kerry Fiction Prize. Between 2000 and 2014, she published seven further novels: *The Walled Garden*, *Another Kind of Life*, *Something Like Love*, *At a Time Like This*, *Set in Stone*, *Missing Julia* and *The Things We Know Now*. Her non-fiction book, *An Unconsidered People* was published in 2003. Catherine has also written short stories and non-fiction pieces for various publications, among them *Moments*, *Travelling Light* and *Irish Girls about Town*. She has been twice awarded the Arts Council Bursary for English Literature, and she received the Irish PEN Award for Outstanding Contribution to Literature in 2018. Her other prizes include the inaugural Rapallo Bper Banca European Prize for Literature (2023) for *Una buona madre (A Good Enough Mother)* and the 700th Anniversary Giovanni Boccaccio International Award for fiction (2013). Her shortlistings include Novel of the Year at Listowel (Kerry Prize), Bancarella Booksellers' Award (Italy), Irish Novel of the Year (Irish Book Awards) and International Strega Prize for Fiction (Italy). Catherine was nominated for the first Laureateship for Irish Fiction and longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award (2018). She was Vice-Chair of the Irish Writers' Centre 2010-2013 and co-founded the Italo-Irish Literature Exchange, which led to an anthology 'Lost Between' ('Tra una vita e l'altra') published in Ireland and Italy. Together with Enrica Maria Ferrara she co-curated the first FIILLI in September 2023 (Festival of Italian and Irish Literature in Ireland) a collaboration between the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and Irish PEN. Dunne's work has been supported by Literature Ireland, The Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation and Irish in Italy. She was elected Chair of Irish PEN/PEN na hÉireann in February 2023 and to Aosdána in 2024.

Claire Kilroy is the author of five novels, *All Summer*, (Faber, 2003), *Tenderwire*, (Faber, 2006), *All Names Have Been Changed*, (Faber, 2009), and *The Devil I Know* (Faber, 2012). In 2023, after an eleven year silence, her fifth novel, *Soldier Sailor*, about the early years of motherhood, was published to universal acclaim. *The Times* selected it as the *Times Novel of The Year*, and it was named a Best Book by *The Sunday Times*, *The Irish Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The New Statesman*, *The Economist*, *The Irish Examiner*, *The Journal*, *The Irish Independent*, *Vogue*, and *The Independent*. It was shortlisted for the 2024 Women's Prize for Fiction, the Sky Arts Literature Award and the Irish Novel of the Year. She studied at Trinity College and lives in Dublin.

BOOK PRESENTER: Caroline Magennis

Arpías: un manifiesto de las mujeres que no quieren tener hijos

Each generation has more childfree women than the one before. For many, it is an active decision made for a wide range of reasons. Despite this growing trend, we continue to live in a society where women are often judged for deciding to remain childfree - for not conforming to narrow expectations. For being a Harpy. In this timely and thoughtful book, Caroline Magennis looks beyond the often-divisive conversation around women who choose to be childfree and offers an alternative message of hope and celebration. With humour and intelligence, she explores why motherhood isn't right for everybody and how any woman - whether a parent or childfree - can live a full life, while also reminding the reader that your freedoms and the right to autonomy should never be taken for granted.

La maternidad no define a una mujer, pero su libertad sí

Cada generación tiene más mujeres sin hijos que la anterior, por razones que van desde querer una mayor libertad económica hasta el deseo de priorizar la carrera profesional, las amistades o el tiempo libre. Pero en una sociedad que sigue aferrada a los patrones convencionales, estas mujeres a menudo enfrentan críticas, prejuicios y etiquetas injustas. Se las juzga por decidir no tener hijos, por no ajustarse a las expectativas, por ser arpías. En estas páginas, Caroline Magennis nos invita a reflexionar sobre los privilegios que acompañan esta elección y a cuestionar las estructuras sociales que reprueban a quienes toman la decisión activa de no ser madres. Con un tono humorístico y empático, explora por qué la maternidad no es para todas y cómo las mujeres, con o sin hijos, pueden vivir plenamente sin renunciar a sus libertades. Más allá de las cifras y los estereotipos, este libro celebra la diversidad de elección y cuestiona las normas que intentan definir a las mujeres exclusivamente a través de su rol como madres. A partir de investigaciones sobre tendencias sociales y entrevistas con otras mujeres sin hijos, Magennis respalda sus argumentos con un mensaje sincero de esperanza y celebración.

Caroline Magennis is Professor of Contemporary Irish Literature at the University of Salford, where she leads the School of Arts and Media on impact and public engagement. She is the author of Northern Irish Writing After The Troubles (2021), which was the joint winner of the BACLS Prize, and Harpy: A Manifesto for Childfree Women, which was published in May 2024 by Icon Books (English) and March 2024 Grupo Planeta (Spanish). Originally from Portadown, Co. Armagh, she has published widely on literature and culture from the North with a focus on women's writing, contemporary fiction and popular culture.

DELEGATES

Altuna-García de Salazar, Asier (University of Deusto), “A ‘second coming’ of Individuals and Communities in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland: Donal Ryan’s *Heart, Be at Peace*”

This paper analyses Donal Ryan’s novel, *Heart, Be at Peace* (2024), in order to show how individuals and communities negotiate new realities stemming after the demise of the “Celtic Tiger” in today’s Ireland. Drawing on theoretical approaches to ethics, vulnerability and moral economy, especially as those proposed by Ganteau, Levinas, Ricoeur and Keohane and Kuhlning among others, the analysis offered approaches Donal Ryan’s representation of individuals within a community that was hit by the crisis of 2008 and the death of the “Celtic Tiger” and that may be preparing for ways to recovering former ideals, once the neoliberal, ultra-capitalist abuses of the Tiger did not offer all their promises for everybody. Abuses from the past give way to new abuses which trigger new conditions in Irish society. Set in a small town in rural Ireland, Ryan’s novel can be read as a sequel/companion to his multi-award-winning *The Spinning Heart* (2012), but can also be read independently. In this context vulnerability appears in the proximity of and exposure to the individuals within a rural community that faces abuse stemming from the violation and inversion of the general economy of the Tiger and its aftermath in today’s Ireland. This paper proves that Donal Ryan’s novel approaches the possibility of conversion, of an alternative to abuses of the recent past that are halted, however, by the promise of fast money again. The paper wonders whether lessons from the past still remain unlearned.

Dr **Asier Altuna** is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Deusto, Bilbao and was the former chairperson of AEDEI (Spanish Association for Irish Studies). He was a Basque Government fellow at the Centre for Irish Studies NUI Galway, Ireland and Deusto University between 2003-8. Visiting lecturer at UNAM, Mexico, Pune University, India, Osaka University, Japan, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, Nizwa University, Oman, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan and Xiamen University, China. He was involved in a Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad project on the dysfunctional Irish family and currently also in a Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad project on cultural practices of silence and vulnerability in contemporary Irish fiction (INTRUTHS and INTRUTHS2). He has published on 19th cent. Spain and the Basque Country in Irish writing, and multicultural and transcultural Ireland. He is a member of the Centre for Irish Studies Banna/Bond.

Asensio Peral, Germán (University of Almería), “The Irish Catholic That Never Was: Echoes of Ireland in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Works”

In *This Side of Paradise* (1920), F. Scott Fitzgerald’s first novel, Monsignor Thayer Darcy, an Irish Catholic priest, assures main character Amory Blaine of their ancestral Irish Catholic spirit: “Celtic you’ll live and Celtic you’ll die” (171). Both Monsignor Darcy and Amory Blaine were characters modelled after Father Signourney Fay, the author’s spiritual mentor, and Scott Fitzgerald himself, respectively. In fact, most of Fitzgerald’s writing has been described as “transmuted autobiography” (Bruccoli xv), which is also true of references to his Irish origins in his work. Three of his grandparents

were originally from Ireland. The McQuillans, his mother's family, and the Fitzgerald were Irish Catholics who, like many, had emigrated from Ireland in an attempt to escape from the bleakness of the Famine. Glimpses of his Irish background can be gleaned from his early correspondence and short stories such as "Benediction" (1920) and "Absolution" (1924), in which the protagonists' conflicted relationship with their beliefs and the rituals of their religion echoes Fitzgerald's own admissions about his ancestry. In *This Side of Paradise*, Ireland fails to hold an imaginative sway over young Amory, who finds little glamor in Ireland's peasant commonality and political struggle. Similarly, Fitzgerald once admitted in a letter that he was "half black Irish and half old American stock" (*Letters*, 233), thus confessing an inferiority complex caused by his cultural mélange.

This paper, therefore, examines Fitzgerald's early fiction and correspondence through a biographical lens and brings to the fore the looming presence of his Irish Catholic background. I argue that "Benediction", "Absolution", and *This Side of Paradise* reflect Fitzgerald's ambivalence toward his ethnic and religious heritage, which his characters both deride and celebrate, only to later discard it as a nostalgic hindrance in his pursuit of literary and spiritual liberation.

German Asensio obtained both his Bachelor's degree and his Master's degree in English Studies at the University of Almería (Spain), both with honorary distinctions. He completed his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Almería (2020) on Irish writer Brian O'Nolan (1911-1966), also known as Flann O'Brien and Myles na gCopaleen, and mid-twentieth century Irish politics in his *Cruiskeen Lawn* column (1940-1966). He is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Almería (Department of Philology/English Division) and has published articles and delivered papers on O'Nolan's novels, short stories and columns.

Barros del Río, María del Amor (University of Burgos), "Sally Rooney's *Intermezzo*: The Art of Putting Existential Anxiety into Words"

In *Intermezzo*, Sally Rooney delves into the difficult relationship between Ivan and Peter, two brothers who have recently lost their father and are going through difficult times in their lives. Throughout the novel, it becomes evident to the reader that there is more at stake than simply the relationship between the siblings, but also the difficulties that they both face in integrating into society, which they both experience in different ways.

As usual in her literary production, the author focuses on the duality of the inner world and the social world, the complexity of sentimental relationships, and the universal need to complete oneself with one's partner. This is all examined through the lens of theories of vulnerability, relationality, and affect (Butler 2003, 2012; Flannery 2022). In addition, this contribution assesses Rooney's use of the novel as an appropriate literary genre for the dilemmas facing contemporary Western cultures and examines the narrative formulas employed in *Intermezzo* to express the tensions between individual and society, which take the form of existential anxiety. Through experimentation, the author refines her narrative style and makes it faster, chaotic at times. Rooney also plays with the narrative voice and resorts to speech alterations and ungrammaticality in order

to convey the difficult meshing between the individual and contemporary Irish society in the narrative.

María Amor Barros del Río is Senior Lecturer in English Studies at the University of Burgos (Spain) and Secretary of AEDEI (The Spanish Association for Irish Studies). Her teaching and research interests include contemporary Irish literature, particularly women's writing, gender studies and language teacher education. She is the author of *Metáforas de su tierra: Breve historia de las mujeres irlandesas* (Septem, 2004) and co-author of *A Practical Guide to Address Gender Bias in Academia and Research* (Fundación General de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2016). She is also the editor of *Transcultural Insights into Contemporary Irish Literature and Society: Breaking New Ground* (Routledge, 2024). Her work has been recognized by positive reviews in international journals, grants and awards received to date.

Borges, Esther (University of São Paulo), “The New Irish Other: Reception and Rejection of Queer Racialised Immigrants”

Ireland is no stranger to the concept of Otherness, due to its long history under British colonisation and economic instability leading to a large history of emigration. In both society and literature, the aftermath of such manifests through the Irish assertion of their identities and remarking themselves — defiantly, vengefully or tragically — as the Other, while simultaneously establishing a strong sense of what is to be Irish, to be a part of Ireland. This national self-image seems to maintain itself even as things change and Ireland starts to receive a larger amount of immigrants, especially non-white, non-catholic immigrants, where stress is laid upon this identity against a backdrop of bigotry and the experiences of other Others. To further analyse this, this paper studies three main characters by the Bangladeshi-author Adiba Jaigirdar to understand Ireland's reception to the non-Irish Other, represented by racialised South-Asian non-catholic immigrants. The characters are pigeonholed into boxes and socially reprimanded whenever trying to step out of it, due to a lack of understanding and social empathy which can be traced to not only a lack of overall representation of Islamic Queerness but also an overarching project of restricting non-white heteronormativity that helps settle the current post-colonial status quo of queer iconography and identity within their own cultural heritage and their present life as immigrants to a foreign land.

Esther Borges is a PhD candidate at the university of São Paulo. Their dissertation focuses on Queer Diaspora in Irish literature, and is financed by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). She was a visiting scholar at the University College Dublin during the second half of 2024, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Maynooth during 2025. They are an associate member of the Brazilian association of Irish Studies, (ABEI), the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) and the Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses (AEDEI). She is also part of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Sub-Committee of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL).

Brennan, Paddy (University of Liverpool), “The Starver’s Fortress: Domestic Hunger Strikes in Contemporary Irish Fiction”

In Samuel Beckett’s *Malone Dies*, the eponymous character broods upon the circumstances of his death, musing: “how long can one fast with impunity? The Lord Mayor of Cork lasted for ages, but he was young, and then he had political convictions.” This allusion to Terence MacSwiney and the hunger strike which led to his death in 1920 – a rare instance of Irish politics being explicitly referenced within Beckett’s oeuvre – testifies to a political unconscious undergirding the decision to starve oneself in Ireland, even within an apparently apolitical context.

Depictions of eating disorders abound within contemporary Irish literature, including Victoria Kennefick’s 2021 poetry collection, *Eat or we Both Starve*, in which the poet likens her struggles with anorexia to the hunger strikes of female saints through history. However, as Maud Ellman points out, “as opposed to female saints who fasted in an institution that controlled the meanings of their macerations, the modern anorectic starves at large, deliriously.” This paper will analyse instances of disordered eating within fiction by Edna O’Brien, John McGahern, Claire Keegan, Anna Burns and Emma Donoghue. It will attempt to unpick the political basis – conscious or otherwise – for these apparently irrational habits. By focusing specifically upon female hunger strikes, the paper will explore how characters in these novels attempt to transpose forms of public protest and spectacle onto the private, domestic sphere. As a result of this, the paper will argue that, within the minds of these characters, personal and national traumas become uncannily conflated with one other.

Paddy Brennan is a PhD candidate at the University of Liverpool’s Institute of Irish Studies. He is completing a Blair Chair-funded thesis on Consumption and Self-Starvation in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Irish Fiction. He has also contributed a chapter to the recent *Routledge Companion to Sally Rooney* in addition to contributing to *RISE (Review of Irish Studies in Europe)*.

Carmona Rivero, Noelia (University of Granada), “Exploring Male Identities in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland through Donal Ryan’s *The Spinning Heart* (2012) and *Heart, Be at Peace* (2024)”

The economic success during the Celtic Tiger years completely altered Ireland, as the country was not only changing in terms of economic impact but also socially, as the nation was opening up to an increasingly progressive world. In this sense, it is vital to look at questions regarding male identity in particular, as the decline of the Celtic Tiger brought about yet another crisis of masculinity in Ireland, since traditional roles could not be fulfilled in a paradigm of unemployment, mass loss of jobs, and a general economic collapse. The intricacies of the failure of the Celtic Tiger and the impact it had on the lives and identities of Irish people are thoroughly explored in Donal Ryan’s debut work *The Spinning Heart* (2012). Set during the recession, the story that the author presents in this novel is based on the personal experiences and narrations of twenty-one characters, the majority of them men. Twelve years later, the author has decided to revisit those stories, now in the future, in his new novel, *Heart, Be at Peace* (2024).

The aim of this paper is to examine how the search for identity in our changing world has been an ongoing struggle for male characters in Ryan's novels, and though certain aspects seem to shed some hope for men in the country, others are still a work in progress. For this, I will highlight the multidimensional aspect of masculine identities in the country and explore how, though still present, traditional archetypes are slowly evolving.

Noelia Carmona Rivero is a PhD student at the University of Granada, where she is working on a thesis focused on the representation of masculinities in Donal Ryan's bibliography. She finished her BA in English Studies at the University of Extremadura, where she is now working as a Substitute Lecturer, and completed an MA in English Literature and Linguistics at the University of Granada with an MA thesis on Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*. Her research is mainly focused on the study of masculinities within Irish literature, so her main interests reside on Irish Studies and Masculinity Studies. She is also interested in the representation of gender and queerness in literature and media.

Casas Coelho, María del Rosario (University of Burgos), "Colum McCann Re-signifying Identities – The Transition from *Zoli* to *Let the Great World Spin*"

The Irish author, Colum McCann, a migrant himself, has re-signified identities along the almost 30 years of his career. By setting his novels out of Ireland, and claiming they are always about his homeland, McCann is able to look at it with a critical view. Departing from a multicultural perspective, where cultures are understood to be pure which should not mix, McCann's fiction evolves into a transcultural approach, where the focus is not on differences among people but commonalities. Besides being a writer, McCann is a social activist and uses his fiction to spread messages of empathy and tolerance as tools to improve our lives in society. As part of his social activism, minorities are a constant presence in his novels. This paper focuses on the shift happened in McCann's novels from *Zoli* (2006) to *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) where McCann changed his depiction of migration to mobility and opened more possibilities for the integration of people among others than their own. The keyword for the second phase of McCann's fiction is 'bonding' as his novels have demonstrated from 2009 onwards.

María del Rosario Casas Coelho is an associate teacher at Universidad de Burgos. Her research interests lie in transculturality, transnationalism, and migration in contemporary Irish literature. She published an article at *ABEI Journal* 23(1) "The Kaleidoscopic Perspective in Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009): Trauma and Transculturality", and a book section "Lendo Contos de Literatura Irlandesa" in: *Ensino de Língua Inglesa Através do Texto Literário II: Irlanda* (eBook). She holds a PhD from Universidad de Burgos and Université Polytechnique Hauts de France (12/2024) an MA in Irish literature (2015), and a BA English/Portuguese (2011) both from Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil.

Carvalho Homem, Rui (University of Porto/CETAPS), "Abusive Relationships: Word, Image and the Irish in Paul Muldoon"

The poetry of Paul Muldoon has long been noted for its programmatic transgressiveness – at various levels. Conceptually, it has explored the etymological

implications of 'transgression' as border-crossing, experimenting with varieties of liminality; politically, it has challenged the definiteness of ideological stances, beginning with those that have fashioned Irish historical narratives – but branching out into American and global scenarios; medially, it has engaged in a sustained abrasive relation with non-verbal arts, especially in visual media.

This paper will address such transgressiveness through a critical discussion of Muldoon's writing in the new millennium, with a particular textual focus: his sequence 'A Civil War Suite', from the collection *One Thousand Things Worth Knowing* (2015). I will be arguing that, in this sequence, Muldoon practises intertextual, intermedial and inter-authorial relations as forms of conscious and provocative abuse. At its broadest, this involves a sustained exercise in misreading – a stark re-semanticisation of the creations (verbal and visual) that the five poems in the sequence address. More specifically, the sequence thrives on a set of imaginative dislocations, both in time and place, of the American Civil War theme – into which Irish historical and cultural scenarios are abusively read. This sees Muldoon carry out a series of iconoclasm, targeting some of the pieties that have traditionally informed national narratives in either context – while also testing the limits of representation, both verbal and visual.

Rui Carvalho Homem is Professor of English at the Department of Anglo-American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Universidade do Porto (University of Oporto), Portugal. He has published widely on Early Modern English drama, Irish studies, translation, and word-and-image studies. He is also a literary translator, and has published versions of Shakespeare (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard III* and *Love's Labour's Lost*), Christopher Marlowe, Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin. He is currently completing a project involving poetry and painting.

Clark, David (University of A Coruña), "Using and Abusing Irish Identity during 'The Emergency' as Reflected in Recent Irish Crime and Spy Fiction"

The situation of Ireland during the Second World War was one of great difficulty in the fledgling Free State. Referred to, somewhat euphemistically, as 'The Emergency', the already deeply polarized Irish society was once again split, with citizens forced to take sides during circumstances, which stretched even further the resources of the country. Although active fascist groups, most notably. The Army Comrades Association, later the League of Youth, led by Ned Cronin and Eoin O'Duffy popularly known as the Blueshirts was active during the 1930s, supporting Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, with numerous Blueshirts participating on the nationalist side during the Spanish Civil War. It was no surprise, therefore, when O'Duffy supported Irish intervention on the Nazi side after the outbreak of war in September 1939. The IRA opposed the Irish Government's declaration of neutrality and the organization's desire for a Nazi victory was centred more around anti-English sentiment rather than on a support for Nazi policies. On the other hand, less than twenty years after Irish independence, many Irish people still considered themselves to share common interests with the British, while Irish socialist and communists opposed fascism for ideological reasons. To complicate matters even further, it must be remembered that the Free State shared a land border – although reluctantly – with the UK.

Such a complex situation has been explored and utilized in many recent Irish crime and espionage novels, with writers such as Pam Lecky, Brendan G. O'Brien, Pam Lecky and Michael Russell setting their works during the time of 'The Emergency'.

Dr **David Clark** is Senior Lecturer in English Studies at the University of Coruña. He has held executive positions in both national and international Associations for Irish Studies. He is Director of the 'Amergin' University Institute for Irish Studies. Clark's most recent publications include the bilingual volume (in English and Galician) *The Poetic Legacy of Sir John Moore* (2024) and the edited collection (with Eduardo Barros-Grela) *Post-Urban Spaces in Contemporary Irish Fiction* (2023). *Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction from 1665-2000*, the first in a two-volume study on Irish crime writing, was published by Peter Lang in 2022, to be followed by *Emerald Noir: Irish Crime Fiction since 2000* in 2025.

Díaz Sierra, Sara (University of Extremadura) "Frances Molloy's Portrayal of a South Derry Accent in *No Mate for the Magpie*"

This paper explores the representation of a rural South Derry accent in Frances Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985), a novel that narrates the abuses of Irish society towards Ann McGlone, a Catholic girl from a working-class family in rural Derry. It focuses on an analysis of fourteen pronunciation features paying special attention to how they are represented through respellings of words. The analysis combines qualitative and quantitative, corpus-based methods which facilitate assessing the authenticity and consistency of Molloy's portrayal. Results from the qualitative analysis reveal that the fourteen features examined seem to occur in the South Derry area, which makes the representation fairly authentic. On the other hand, quantitative findings suggest that Frances Molloy is consistent in her use of respellings throughout the novel. In addition to providing interesting information about the characteristics of the literary portrayal, this study affords a new insight into the linguistic landscape of rural South Derry, an underresearched area. In particular, it highlights the strong influence of Ulster Scots on the dialect spoken in this part of the north of Ireland, which is not surprising given the proximity of South Derry to the Ulster-Scots-speaking area of North Antrim. In so doing, this paper aims to contribute to the well-established field of research on the linguistic analysis of fictional representations of dialect in writing.

Sara Díaz Sierra is lecturer in the Department of English Studies at the University of Extremadura, from which she holds a PhD in Sociolinguistics. She has a BA in English Studies and graduated from the University of Salamanca with an MA in *Advanced English Studies: Languages and Cultures in Contact* in 2017. Her PhD thesis dealt with representations of Northern Irish English accents in fiction and with the perception of those portrayals by people in Northern Ireland. She has published the articles "Produced and Perceived Authenticity in the Northern Irish TV Show *Derry Girls*", "Gender-based Variation in the Perception of Northern Irish Accents in Performance" and "Exploring Authenticity and Literary Dialect from a New Perspective" in the journals *English World-Wide*, *International Journal of English Studies* and *Journal of English Studies* respectively. Her research interests include language attitudes, English language varieties, accents, sociolinguistics and fictional representations of dialect in literary and telecinematic fiction.

de Zubía Fernández, Daniel (University of Maynooth), “Nur in Ireland with Finn: Just Green”

In children's fiction, the act of connecting characters, novels and cultures has flourished in an attempt to expose and approach children's imagination to other cultural spaces. This paper aims to look at the depiction and representation of Ireland, the Irish and Irish related matters in two of the 18 children's books by Toti Martínez de Lezea (Vitoria, 1949) devoted to Nur, who lives in Larrabetzu, a town in Biscay with her parents, *ama* [mother in Basque] and *baba* [father in Arab], her grandparents, uncle and friends.

This fictional character, aimed at kids aged 7 to 11, created by Martínez de Lezea as a present for her granddaughter, starts off the collection of books with *Nur y el gnomo irlandés* (2008) and later sets off to the Irish space with *Nur y el viaje a Irlanda* (2017); illustrated by both Juan Luis Landa (2008) and Ivan Landa (2017). In these two books we find Nur being introduced into the Irish context by the hand of “el gnomo irlandés” who was found among the rubbish and who joins Nur and her friends on their adventures. This “gnomo irlandés” is called Finn and turns to be the perfect excuse for Nur and her friends to travel to Ireland. In their trip they will explore the island by the hand of Finn. With Finn, young readers “recorrerán los verdes paisajes” highlighting a rather conventional portrayal and representation of Ireland, both with images and text where young readers may engage with a topic and approach other places.

Daniel de Zubía Fernández graduated PhD with the Maynooth University where he teaches Spanish. Translation, Spanish Language, Literature, Sociolinguistics and within the European Studies programme within the School of Modern Literatures and Cultures. His research interests concentrate on Cultural Studies, Graphic Fiction, Comparative Literature, Contrastive, Education and Language.

Fernández-Vicente, Olga (University of the Basque Country), “Reimagining Gender and Nationalism: LGBTQ+ Identities and Cultural Narratives in Northern-Irish and Basque Narratives and Arts”

Nationalist discourses frequently portray men as united by a sacred brotherhood, forged through shared sacrifice and the symbolic spilling of bodily fluids, which serves as the nucleus of nationhood. For Irish and Basque revolutionaries, this ideal of masculinity was defined by unwavering loyalty to the nation, with brotherhood functioning as its surrogate. While traditional notions of masculinity contributed to significant social issues, the narrative of heroic and violent patriotism remained a foundational, albeit increasingly diminished, aspect of Irish and Basque identities. Over the past three decades, the emergence of gay and female identities has further complicated these constructs, disrupting the longstanding association between masculinity and nationhood. By integrating the history of LGBTQ+ activism into the broader nationalist narrative, a hidden history of everyday life in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country is revealed—one that challenges entrenched perceptions of identity and belonging. This paper explores these intersections through the lens of literary and cultural studies, focusing on works such as Gregory's Snapshots, McCabe's Breakfast on Pluto, McVeigh's The Good Son, Burns's Milkman, and O'Neill's At Swim, Two Boys. From the Basque perspective, we examine Uribe's film *La Muerte de Mikel* [Mikel's

Death], Olasagarre's novel *Las Maletas Imposibles* [The Impossible Suitcases], and Uribe's opera *Saturrarán*. These works of art illuminate the complex interplay between nationalism and marginalized identities, advocating for a reimagined gender that embraces the diverse and often overlooked experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, thereby enriching the cultural histories of both societies.

Olga Fernández-Vicente earned her Bachelor of Arts in English Studies from the University of Deusto, where she also pursued postgraduate studies. Early in her research career, she received a scholarship to attend the James Joyce Summer School at University College Dublin (UCD). There, she met Fritz Senn, who expressed interest in her research and encouraged her to apply for a scholarship to continue her studies at the James Joyce Zurich Foundation. Her doctoral thesis, completed in 2013, is a comparative study of the works of James Joyce and Pío Baroja. This initial academic endeavor led her to establish a primary research focus on the influence of violence on society through literature, with a particular emphasis on the Irish and Basque conflicts. Additionally, she is committed to making classical literature accessible and engaging for teenagers by utilizing young adult literature, Jung's archetypes, and multimodality as bridges. She is a member of the research groups ENTELEARN (English, Technology, and Learning) at UNIR and James Joyce: Evolución Narrativa y Sus Repercusiones at the University of Seville. Fernández-Vicente has published numerous articles in national journals and has co-edited several scholarly volumes. She has also served on the organizing committees for the International Congress of the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI) in 2014, the annual Congress of the Spanish Association James Joyce in 2009 and 2018, and the Annual Symposium Tartalo in 2023. In addition, she is a founding member of Eusk-Cara. Basque Centre for Irish Studies.

Flynn, Deirdre (Mary Immaculate College Limerick), "The Citizenship Referendum and Ireland's Cultural 'repertoire of images'"

21 years ago, the Citizenship Referendum redefined who was entitled to be Irish and helped to control who could become Irish. It was as Ahmed posits a process in which the 'imagining of the nation' and who belongs in the nation were:

not independent of the material deployment of force, and the forms of governmentality which control, not only the boundaries between nation states, and the movements of citizens and aliens within the state, but also the repertoire of images which allows the concept of the nation to come into being in the first place. (Ahmed)

The referendum passed by 79%, leaving children of immigrant parents in this 'zone of indistinction' The biopolitical infrastructure of the nation, placed these citizens of Ireland in a precarious position, no longer part of those 'repertoire of images' that represent the nation, and subject to deportation orders. This exclusion from the social order uses the law to 'racializ[e] migrant populations' (Lentin).

This paper will consider the impact of the referendum through the 'repertoire of images' presented by the state in Irish cultural output, considering work by Felispeaks, Denise Challa and Melatu Uche Okorie, along with work from a recent partnership with

Unapologetic Magazine reflecting on the referendum. The Citizenship Referendum in 2004 was a pivotal event that has had lasting implications on new communities in Ireland. Since then there has been little analysis of the impact and legacy of this referendum in Ireland.

Dr Deirdre Flynn is a lecturer in 21st-century literature at MIC Limerick. She is a member of the inaugural Young Academy of Ireland. She has published widely on Precarity, Contemporary literature, Irish Studies, Haruki Murakami, Migration, and Literary Urban Studies. Her co-edited collection, *Austerity and Irish women's writing and culture 1980-2020* with Dr Ciara Murphy was published with Routledge in 2022. She is currently working on *The Routledge Handbook of Motherhood on Screen (2025)* with Dr Susan Liddy. Deirdre is the secretary of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) and edits the blog, www.irishwomenswritingnetwork.com. She has worked in University of Galway, UL and UCD.

Franco Batista, Camila (Federal University of Rondonópolis), “Echoes of the Past: Memory and Place in William Trevor’s ‘The News from Ireland’”

William Trevor’s short story “The News from Ireland” (1986) offers a compelling exploration of Ireland’s colonial history, set during the Great Famine (1845-1852). Centered on the Pulvertaft estate and its Anglo-Irish inhabitants, the narrative examines the intricate interplay between memory and place, presenting the estate as a site where personal, cultural, and historical memories intersect and conflict. This paper argues that the estate functions as a *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory), a concept articulated by Pierre Nora, encapsulating the tensions between the diminishing colonial authority of the Anglo-Irish class and the enduring oppression of the Irish populace. The decaying grandeur of the estate symbolizes the fragility and decline of colonial power, while the silence and suffering of the Irish tenants evoke the systematic erasure of subaltern histories. Through the juxtaposition of fragmented perspectives—those of the Anglo-Irish Pulvertafts, their Irish staff, and the governess Anna Maria Heddoe—Trevor reveals the contested nature of memory and its inscription onto physical spaces. The estate becomes a dynamic locus of cultural memory, reflecting both the hegemonic narratives of colonial rule and the suppressed voices of the colonized. Drawing on memory studies, this article integrates Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire* with Jan and Aleida Assmann’s theories of cultural memory to analyze the mediation of memory in Trevor’s work. Ultimately, “The News from Ireland” demonstrates how place serves as both a repository of contested cultural memories and a battleground for competing narratives of power, erasure, and resistance.

Camila Franco Batista is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at the Federal University of Rondonópolis, Brazil. She holds a Master’s degree and a PhD in Literature from the University of São Paulo, where she is also a researcher affiliated with the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies. Her research interests include contemporary Irish fiction, historical fiction, and memory studies. Currently, she serves as the president of the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies (ABEI).

Freire Gargamala, Lydia (University of Vigo), “Negotiating Irishness: Identity, Liminality, and Colonial Tensions in the Works of Elizabeth Griffith and Regina Maria Roche”

This paper examines the representation of Irishness — encompassing language, people, and identity — in the works of two Irish-born authors, Elizabeth Griffith and Regina Maria Roche. Griffith’s *The History of Lady Barton* (1771) situates Ireland as a marginal yet powerful space within a broader colonial framework. Here, Irishness transcends geographical boundaries, taking on a cultural and symbolic liminality. The novel presents Ireland as a paradoxical realm: intimately tied to the dominant imperial identity yet, at the same time, marked by an essence of otherness, rendering it both a refuge from and a counterpoint to the homogenizing pressures of English societal norms. Through the protagonist Louisa Barton, Griffith redefines Ireland as a site of hospitality and mildness, starkly opposing England’s patriarchal cruelty and social threats. Similarly, Roche interrogates Irish identity in *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) and *The Maid of the Hamlet* (1793). Often regarded as the first Irish national tale, *The Children of the Abbey* portrays Amanda Fitzalan’s migrations across Britain and Ireland as symbolic of dispossession and cultural vindication, criticising English moral depravity while simultaneously foregrounding Irish values. In *The Maid of the Hamlet*, Matilda’s transformative journey parallels Louisa Barton’s, positioning Ireland as a space of potential renewal. However, Matilda’s experience is mediated through a persistent sense of English superiority, reflecting a colonial mindset wherein the English are positioned as inherently suited to guide the Irish towards improvement. Consequently, these three works navigate the tensions between colonial influence and cultural resilience, asserting Ireland’s unique role within the literary and national imagination.

Lydia Freire Gargamala is a doctoral candidate in Irish Literature at the University of Vigo, Spain, with research interests that lie at the intersection of literature, feminism, and environmentalism. Her Ph.D. project aims to provide an ecofeminist approach to Irish Gothic Fiction, with a specific focus on female authors of the eighteenth century. She also teaches English courses in the University Program for Seniors at the University of Vigo and the Language Centre of the Fundación Universidade de Vigo. She is a member of academic associations such as AEDEAN, AEDEI, and ECIS (Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society) and of the research group NETEC (Cultural and Textual Negotiations) at the University of Vigo.

Gaviña-Costero, María (University of Valencia), “Tuaisceart Erin go Bragh!': Re-signifying Loyalism and Irishness after Brexit in Rosemary Jenkinson’s *Billy Boy*”

Northern Irish society in the aftermath of the peace agreement is fragmented on multiple levels, with intersections between them that are often marked by physical barriers, symbols and celebrations, such as ‘peace walls’, parades and bonfires. Rosemary Jenkinson’s play *Billy Boy*, which premiered in 2021 as part of the EastSide Arts Festival, reflects the complexity of this society whose symbols and emblems have mutated in meaning and relevance in recent years. In the play, a group of young Protestants from a working-class neighbourhood face the dilution of old social, ethnic and national identities in a post-Brexit, post-Covid Belfast. Jenkinson’s choice of such a recognisable and contested symbol as the bonfires of the 12th of July is both bold and

controversial. Although the playwright claims that her intention was to challenge negative representations of this social group, the fact is that the performance of this ritual, an annual object of sectarian contention, places the audience in an uncomfortable position. While the play succeeds in creating empathy with this disoriented generation, it also encourages deep reflection on what lies behind these sectarian celebrations and their potential for division. Jenkinson gives voice to those who believe that the emblems of loyalism should remain as part of the folklore of Northern Ireland. However, the play also opens the door to the adoption of a new kind of inclusive national identity in which, in the wake of the Brexit debacle, Britishness gives way to an acceptance by this ethnic group of its own Irish nature.

Maria Gaviña-Costero is a lecturer at the Department of English and German at the University of Valencia (Spain), where she earned her PhD with a thesis about the dramatic oeuvre of Brian Friel. Her main research interests include contemporary Irish literature from a gender perspective, the relation between literature and conflict and theatre reception. She has published several scholarly articles both in Spanish and in English on contemporary Northern Irish literature and its reception in Spain. She has contributed a chapter in the books *Adaptations, Versions and Perversions in Modern British Drama; Ireland and Dysfunction: Critical Explorations in Literature and Film; Words of Crisis, Crisis of Words: Ireland and the Representation of Critical Times; Re-Thinking Literary Identities: Great Britain, Europe and Beyond; Non-Violent Resistance: Irreverence in Irish Culture; Trauma, Memory and Silence of the Irish Woman in Contemporary Literature* and *(Re)Writing War in Contemporary Literature and Culture*. She has published the monograph about Brian Friel *Érase una vez Ballybeg*, and has co-edited the two volumes *'Lost, Unhappy and at Home': The Impact of Violence on Irish Culture, Volume I: Literature* and *Volume II: Socio-Cultural Aspects*.

Groutel, Anne (University of Rouen Normandie), "Navigating Contradictions: Ireland's Economic Diplomacy Strategy, between Values and Economic Interests in China Relations"

Ireland's identity as a small, neutral nation has allowed it to position itself as a leading advocate for human rights on the global stage. The promotion of these rights, rooted in Ireland's experience of struggle for independence, conflict, and peace, has shaped its international reputation as a compassionate, values-driven nation. Today, Irishness is no longer just an internal identity; over time, it has become synonymous with diplomatic initiatives promoting peace and human rights worldwide. It also serves as a soft power tool that Ireland leverages to influence and advance its economic interests abroad.

However, this strategy is not without challenges. Ireland's approach to China reveals a complex negotiation between ethical commitments, a predominantly wary Irish public opinion, and the promotion of economic interests. This tension aligns with broader debates explored in the conference.

Firstly, the strategy of separating the defense of human rights from economic interests underscores the 'old and new strategies of political action,' where pragmatism ultimately overrides ethical advocacy. Secondly, initiatives promoting Irish language,

arts, and heritage aim to present Ireland as a nation rooted in creativity, tradition, and openness. Yet, this curated representation of Irishness frequently contrasts with the realities of modern Ireland, which is increasingly diverse, progressive, and multicultural shaped by immigration, evolving gender roles, and a growing emphasis on inclusion."

Ireland's soft power strategy in China thus highlights how national identity can be tailored to serve strategic economic objectives. It also underscores the "misfits and incompatibilities of cultural paradigms," as the exported image of Irishness often fails to reflect Ireland's contemporary diversity. By examining these dynamics, this paper explores whether Ireland's engagement with China enhances its global standing or compromises the ethical and inclusive principles central to its self-image.

An Associate Professor at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University for 24 years, **Anne Groutel** was appointed Full Professor in English-Speaking World Studies (specializing in Irish Studies) at Rouen Normandie University in September 2024. She has published two monographs: *La coopération économique entre les deux Irlande* (Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2003) and *Les deux Irlandes et la Diaspora* (Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2021). She also co-edited a book entitled *The UK and Ireland's transatlantic economic relationship in the 21st century* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2017) and has authored numerous academic papers. Her current research interests include: Ireland's economic diplomacy and strategy for developing soft power. The economic history of both Irelands from partition to the present day; The influence of the United States and the Irish-American diaspora on the Irish economy. She is the director of the academic research group GIS EIRE: Études Irlandaises, Réseaux et Enjeux, where she also co-directs, alongside Dr. Grainne O'Keeffe-Vigneron (Rennes 2 University), the research strand titled: Repositioning Ireland in the World: Old Configurations, New Realities.

Harb-Ranero, Saide (Independent researcher), "The metaphorical Rape of a Nation: A Postcolonial Reading of *Room* by Emma Donoghue"

As a child of war, I found that understanding the Irish struggle provided me with a gateway into grasping the experiences of my own generation. Through the lens of their resilience, I began to see parallels in my life. This exploration of history not only connected me to the past but also helped me navigate the complexities of our present reality. In nearly every Irish novel, the nation and the narrative are undoubtedly intertwined. Whether through plot, characters, or themes, Irish authors strive to explore and understand their country's history and national struggles through storytelling. This can be seen in Emma Donoghue's *Room* (2010); this is a novel of resilience, narrated from the unfiltered perspective of five-year-old Jack. Born in captivity, Jack knows nothing beyond the walls that imprisoned him and his mother, Ma. She was abducted and raped for years by Old Nick, who is Jack's father. She created a shielded reality in a single confining room, where their captivity was all he knew, but history teaches us that walls, both real and metaphorical, cannot stand forever.

Under "The Values of History: Ireland's Past, Present, and Future," I will examine the evolving concept of Irish identity through the characters of Ma, the enduring Irish mother, and Jack, the surviving generation born into a context of violence and trauma yet poised for change. Jack has been stripped of his identity in a world of isolation

and loss of community, mirroring a colonized nation within imposed borders. Ma protected Jack, her only surviving child, from a world he could not have access to. However, when given the chance, Jack saves Ma's life, twice, once from captivity, and once after being rescued. I will examine how Jack symbolizes the new generation of Irish society, pushing Ma toward a liberation that is paved with modernity. To do so, I will rely on Homi Bhabha's mimicry theory and Edward Said's analysis that the main strength of postcolonialism is that it liberates the mind instead of colonizing it further.

Saide Harb-Ranero is a Lebanese immigrant who survived the Lebanese Civil War during her childhood, an experience that continues to influence my work as a writer and a scholar. For the past twenty years, she has lived in the United States with her family, where she earned a master's degree from Bridgewater State University in 2022. Recently, about a year and a half ago, she decided to move to Spain. Currently, she is in the process of applying for PhD programs in Irish Studies here in Spain, focusing specifically on postcolonial Ireland. In her bachelor's thesis, she explored the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War on the generation that grew up during that time. For her master's thesis, she focused on postcolonial Ireland and examined the effects of colonialism through intergenerational trauma. Because of her thesis "Anne Enright's Reply to James Joyce: A Nation's Tale Told Through *The Gathering*," she was honored to receive the Distinguished Graduate Thesis Award in 2022 for her work.

Hernández González, Marcos (University of La Laguna), "The Past is an Archive of Silences': Re-readings of Irish History in Annemarie Ní Churreáin's Poetry"

In *A Journey with Two Maps* (2011), the Irish poet Eavan Boland disclosed a detailed narration of the steps that she took in her process to discover her authorial voice. The title of Boland's collection of essays crystallises a journey to give shape to her poetic style, as well as two maps: one that symbolises the ways in which Ireland's literary tradition initially haunted her first writings, and one that redirected her compass to new, untransferable, courses. In a parallel manner, the poetic works of Annemarie Ní Churreáin (Donegal, 1981) mirror one of the resultant tensions explored by Boland's maps: the differences between history as the (male, patriarchal) "official version" (Boland 100), and the past as "an archive of silences" (100). Ní Churreáin's two collections, *Bloodroot* (2017), and *The Poison Glen* (2021) re-examine traumatic episodes from the country's recent past by rewriting folk tales and giving voice to stories that had been relegated to oblivion by institutional discourses. Through the insightful lens of poems such as "Six Ways to Wash Your Hands," "Ghostgirl," "Bloodroot," or "Eithne's Mother Speaks," her texts revisit events such as the cases of abuse in the Mother and Baby Homes to generate spaces for the vindication of what has been silenced by history. This paper aims to question how the (ab)uses of Irishness have deliberately obscured the voices of multiple women and children as victims of repression, shame, and moral taboo by applying the framework of silence studies to the analysis of Annemarie Ní Churreáin's poetry.

Marcos Hernández González holds a bachelor's degree in English studies at the University of La Laguna (2018) and finished a master's degree in advanced English Studies at the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2019. He has recently obtained

his PhD degree at the University of La Laguna, with a study on silence in the poetry of Philip Larkin. Since 2018, he has attended several conferences such as the *II Student Conference of Anglophone Studies* at the University of Vienna, the 43rd Conference of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies (AEDEAN) in Alicante, and the 20th International Conference of the Spanish Association of Irish Studies (AEDEI) in Burgos. His research interests focus on contemporary English and Irish poetry and drama, and in the effects of trauma, silence and the chronological and temporal dimension in the poetry of figures such as W.B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Paula Meehan, and Eavan Boland.

Iglesias-Aparicio, Pilar (Independent researcher), “Too Much Irishness in The Construction of The Single Mother as The Nations’ Devil”

The concept of Irish national identity was a key element in the long process of Ireland liberation from English power. The construction of a model of sexual morals, whose guardians should be women, highly based on patriarchal and catholic religious principles, made a fundamental part of this national identity. If any premarital intercourse had been forbidden for women in Irish society since the post-Famine period, this was highly reinforced after the creation of the Free State. In the early 20s, any vestige of women’s sexual activity out of marriage was considered a real threat to sexual morality and, consequently, to the identity of the nation. Marriage is the only place where women’s sexual activity is acceptable, but just for the sake of procreation and men’s pleasure. Motherhood is idealized but only if it happens in wedlock. For decades during the twentieth century, the unmarried mother becomes a symbol of unacceptable and sinful sexual activity, the nation’s main moral and financial problem, what explains why the 1927 *Report of the Commission on the relief of the sick and destitute poor, including the insane poor*, dedicated its chapter VI to the «Unmarried mothers and children». This conception of womanhood and sexual morals will justify the existence of the Magdalene Laundries, institutions for the confinement, repression and punishment of women and girls, and the Mother and Baby Homes, with terrible consequences both for women and their «illegitimate» children. It clearly represents a bad use and abuse of too much Irishness.

Pilar Iglesias Aparicio holds an English Philology PhD by Málaga University, with the Doctoral thesis *Women and Health: London and Edinburgh Schools of Medicine for Women* (2003). She is the author of the book *Políticas de represión y punición de las mujeres. Las Lavanderías de la Magdalena de Irlanda y el Patronato de Protección a la Mujer de España (Politics of women’s repression and punishment. The Irish Magdalene Laundries and the Spanish Patronage for the Protection of Women)*, based on her comparative study, which was awarded the first Kate O’Brien Prize by Malaga University Transatlantic Studies Institute in 2020; and the book chapter “Historical Institutional Abuse against Women in Ireland and Spain during the Twentieth Century”, in María Gaviña-Costero, Dina Pedro y Donall Mac Cathmhaoill (eds) (2024), *‘Lost, Unhappy and at Home’: The Impact of Violence on Irish Culture. Vol II: Socio-cultural aspects*, (pp. 47-62). Peter Lang. She has given lectures, talks, discussion panels, workshops and has

published articles in different journals about pioneer women doctors; misogynistic scientific-medical discourse; feminist literary criticism; institutional violence, etc.

**Jarazo Álvarez, Rubén (University of Santiago de Compostela),
“Frictions, Misfits, and the (Ab)Uses of Irishness in *Derry Girls*”**

Channel 4’s *Derry Girls* (2018–) deploys the road movie’s tropes—mobility, transgression, and frontier-crossing—as a humorous yet incisive vehicle to explore how “Irishness” is both used and abused in post-conflict Northern Ireland. While national identity in Ireland frequently relies on traditional cultural narratives that privilege certain expressions of belonging, *Derry Girls* playfully exposes the narrowness of such definitions. The protagonists’ failed attempts at a liberating journey to see the boyband Take That reflect not just the literal constraints of pre-ceasefire borderlands, but also the symbolic limitations placed upon youth, women, and ethnic minorities within a rigid conception of “Irishness.”

Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s notion of “use” as both a selective institutional tool and a site for “misfitting,” this paper reads *Derry Girls* as a “queering” of Irishness that thrives on friction. The friends’ thwarted quest—punctuated by encounters with Travellers, anxious parents, and state authorities—mirrors how hegemonic culture often excludes or marginalizes those who do not align with normative ideals of national identity. Simultaneously, the series reveals how these very misfits harness comedic subversion to transcend limiting discourses and reclaim symbolic space. Gendered tropes of the road movie are inverted through the character of James, whose “outsider” status as an English boy ironically opens vistas of agency denied to the female leads.

By poking fun at enduring stereotypes and staging moments of self-assertion amid armed checkpoints and school bus inspections, *Derry Girls* uses the teen sitcom format to reimagine Irishness beyond binaries of North/South or tradition/modernity. Rather than championing a grand unifying myth, the show documents and celebrates small-scale acts of refusal and resistance. In so doing, *Derry Girls* illustrates how comedic “misfitting” can become generative—challenging the uses (and frequent abuses) of Irishness and championing more inclusive, friction-filled ways of belonging.

Dr. **Rubén Jarazo Álvarez** is Lecturer in English at the University of Santiago de Compostela. His interdisciplinary research combines gender studies and cultural studies. He has published extensively in these areas, including the titles *In the Wake of the Tiger: Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (2010), *The Cultural Politics of Harry Potter: Life, Death and Transition* (2019) or more recently “Masculinity and Displacement in Pre-Ceasefire *Derry Girls*” (*Estudios Irlandeses*) (2022), “‘Girls just wanna have fun’: Female Adolescence and Joyful Insurrection in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s *The Dancers Dancing* (1999) and Lisa McGee’s *Derry Girls* (2018–)” (2022), along with Aida Rosende-Pérez, or “‘It’s fucking tiny.’ Road movies, adolescencia e inmovilismo en *Derry Girls* (2018–)” (*Atlánticas: revista internacional de estudios feministas*) (2023).

Jorge, Charlie (University of the Balearic Islands) “Abusing the Irish Nation: Institutional Persecution in Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820)”

With plots revolving around dysfunctional families, priestly and monkish manoeuvres, villainous feudal lords, and its whole array of ghosts, castles and family secrets, gothic literature is replete with manifold layers of meaning. Since its emergence in the late 18th century, the Gothic has been used as a tool for socio-political propaganda, included in the agenda of politicians and pamphleteers of every hue in their pursuit of forging nations. In the case of Irish Gothic, its use has been exploited to its full potential, as the rise of the genre was surrounded by injustice, rebellions, sectarian violence, the Act of Union and an impending Famine.

Charles Maturin’s Irish gothic masterpiece, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), is fraught with references to contemporary Irish affairs, immersing the reader in a journey of madness and violence, both physical and psychological. Throughout his extended period of life, the novel’s eponymous wanderer will offer a Satanic exchange of destinies to his victims, sunk in despair. In this paper, we will focus on one such victim, Alonzo de Moncada, as he relates his long suffering and persecution through plotting and psychological abuse by the members of the religious institution he was forced to enter, as a result of his decision to recant his monastic vows. Through Alonzo’s narrative, Maturin will shed light on the suffering and injustice experienced by the Irish nation, who had been coerced into the Act of Union, and the abuses they were subjected to by an unfathomable foreign power.

Dr Charlie Jorge holds a PhD in Comparative Literature and Literary Studies from the University of the Basque Country. The topic of his thesis was a study in depth of the figure of the hero in Charles Robert Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*, a novel that forms the core of his research. He specializes in Gothic literature, Archetypal Studies and Irish Studies, and has been working for some years on the novels of Gothic authors such as Charles Maturin, Ann Radcliffe or Maria Regina Roche. He has recently published some articles on the archetypes of the Terrible Mother and the Scapegoat in Irish Literature and on the image of the Catholic Church in *Melmoth the Wanderer*. He has also been working with the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research for several years, where he is in charge of the project “The Uncanny in Language, Literature and Culture”. This project has recently led to the publication of two edited volumes on the Uncanny.

Jung, Britta C. (University of Limerick), “What’s the Use?”: Irishness and the Conceptualisation of Modern (Foreign) Languages”

As the second decade of the 21st century ends, Ireland faces new challenges: the growing global influence of non-English-speaking nations, the UK’s departure from the EU, and the sociocultural shifts following the Celtic Tiger era and recovery from the 2008 economic downturn. These changes have transformed Ireland from a country of net emigration to net immigration, diversifying its migrant population, which now includes nationals from over 200 countries and speakers of 72 migrant languages. With the UK’s exit, Ireland is one of only two native English-speaking EU countries, uniquely positioned

as a multilingual gateway to Europe. As a result, the Government has pledged to adapt to these dynamics, emphasising education, training, and lifelong learning (cf. *Languages Connect Strategy*, 2017), further highlighted by the introduction of modern foreign languages in the new primary school curriculum (2024).

Despite significant investment by the Government and public and private stakeholders since the country's foundation, Ireland's modern foreign language competence remains low compared to the European average to date and continues to pose challenges. Ireland's relationship with modern foreign languages and language education is complex, shaped by its constitutional bilingualism, persistent and new myths, resource constraints, and inconsistent messaging from stakeholders.

This paper examines the historical dynamics of modern foreign languages in Ireland (and its relationship to Irish), focusing on their perceived usefulness or lack thereof in relation to Irishness. It explores how modern foreign languages have been framed in connection to Ireland's relationship with itself, the UK, Europe, and the wider world, tracing shifts in language policy and discourse to situate Irishness within a broader European and global context.

Britta C. Jung's research brings together cultural, comparative and inter-/transcultural literary studies. It is highly interdisciplinary and has a strong focus on the German-, Dutch- and English-speaking context. She has published widely in these areas in German, English, and Dutch. In addition, she has led a major applied research project on the impact and learning experience of modern foreign languages for the Irish Government (2018-2020). She holds a Magister Artium (2007; Comparative Literature, Art History, American Studies) from the University of Mainz and a Joint PhD from the University of Groningen and the University of Limerick in Transnational German Studies (2015). She has held academic positions (i.e. research and/or teaching) at University of Groningen, Mary Immaculate College, University College Dublin, and Maynooth University. In 2025, she will be a Visiting Professor at the Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France in Valenciennes, France, and the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia, in January and April/May respectively. Her first monograph *Komplexe Lebenswelten – Multidirektionale Erinnerungsdiskurse* (V&R, 2018) investigates the specific dynamics of postmemory in a broad corpus of German literary texts aimed at younger audiences, and in dialogue with the broader socio-cultural context of Germany and Europe. More recently her work has focussed on contemporary narratives of migration, particularly in Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland, as well as translatory questions.

Lehner, Stephanie (Queen's University Belfast), "Queering the Northern Cityscape: LGBTQ Visions & Versions of Belfast"

In Northern Ireland, decades of political unrest led to the marginalization not only of rights but also the experiences and voices of those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and/or Queer (LGBTQ). The peace process arguably helped to create a space in which sexual minorities can voice their experiences and articulate counter-memories to those that tend to dominate ethno-nationalist commemorations of the conflict. Do these stories and visions have the potential to queer Belfast's cityscape? Are

Belfast's city streets and public places experienced differently by LGBTQ+ people, both during the Troubles and the peace process? How do these stories affect the experience of post-Agreement civic space? This paper explores three productions by Kabosh and Theatreofpluck, Northern Ireland's first publicly funded gay theatre company: written by Dominic Montague and directed by Paula McFetridge, *Quartered: Belfast, A Love Story* is an interactive guided walk, first performed during Outburst in November 2017, which also saw the premiere of *Tactics of Time Travel in a Toilet*, co-written by Niall Rea and Alice Malseed and directed by Rea, in collaboration with the PaCCs-AHRC funded project, 'LGBT Visions of Peace'. These two plays will be analyzed alongside Theatreofpluck's performed archive installation, *Tr~~u~~ble*, written by Shannon Yee, from 2015.

Dr **Stefanie Lehner** is Senior Lecturer in Irish Literature and Culture at Queen's University, Belfast, and Fellow at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice (QUB). Her research explores the role of the arts, specifically performance, in conflict transformation processes, with a focus on the Northern Irish context. She also researches and teaches on representations of trauma and memory in (Northern) Irish drama, fiction, film, and photography. She is author of *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature* (Palgrave, 2011) and co-author of *Sounding Conflict: From Resistance to Reconciliation* (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Magennis, Caroline (University of Salford), "Gut Feelings and Affective Communities in Northern Irish Writing"

This paper will reflect on what it means to think with and through the stomach in some recent Northern Irish texts. It will engage with what the stomach feels, how it reacts and what it can tell us about the ongoing legacies of conflict in the literary imagination. How do we understand what our stomachs tell us? As Sara Ahmed has it: 'We vomit; we vomit out what we have been asked to take in [...] Our guts become our feminist friends the more we are sickened.' We will pay attention to those moments when a stomach can't hold their contents, or loudly gurgle, or seize up, and ask what this tells us about the complex cultural construction of the body. Once you listen out for a belly rumble, they are everywhere in Irish texts – from the eponymous Cal sickening at his father's stench of the abattoir and Ripley Bogle's abject stomach to more recent novels like Michael Magee's *Close to Home*, Aimee Walsh's *Exile* and Louise Kennedy's *Trespasses*. This is clearly foregrounded in Anna Burns' *Milkman* ('Therefore, purging and guts out it became') where the narrative is charted through abdominal sensations. This paper will ask what place boking, bellyaching and butterflies have in our understanding of Affective Communities – are we sickened in silence or is collective revulsion a powerful political technique for solidarity?

Caroline Magennis is Professor of Contemporary Irish Literature at the University of Salford, where she leads the School of Arts and Media on impact and public engagement. She is the author of *Northern Irish Writing After The Troubles* (2021), which was the joint winner of the BACLS Prize, and *Harp: A Manifesto for Childfree Women*, which was published in May 2024 by Icon Books (English) and March 2024 Grupo Planeta (Spanish). Originally from Portadown, Co. Armagh, she has published widely on

literature and culture from the North with a focus on women's writing, contemporary fiction and popular culture.

McCann, Fiona (Sorbonne Université), "Beyond Community/Communities in Contemporary Northern Irish Writing"

Just over a decade ago, in January 2014, writer and academic Glenn Patterson wrote a customarily humorous yet thought-provoking article for *The Irish Times* entitled "Don't mention the C-word" in which he reflected on the ways in which the plural noun "communities" has, particularly in the post-Agreement era, replaced the singular term "community" to detrimental effect. As he puts it, "'community' is a word of aggregation" while "'communities' is a word that rather than multiplying, as plurals ought, actually divides" (Patterson).

In the opening short story from Wendy Erskine's first collection, *Sweet Home*, entitled "To All Their Dues," Mo, a woman who has recently opened a small beauty salon in Belfast, is threatened by a local paramilitary, Kyle, who demands that she pay racketeering money in exchange for which he and his henchmen will "protect" her business. When she resists, a snooker ball smashes the window of her boutique and a second visit occurs where Kyle increases the pressure on her to pay up, telling her "It's all about community. Communities don't run themselves. Businesses like yours, they're vulnerable, you see what I mean? There's a lot of people out there who are not nice people and all we are really doing here, you know, if I'm being honest, is offering you our help. As a member of the community" (Erskine 2019, 10). Mo's scathing response is "I know what community means [...]. I know exactly what community means" (Erskine 2019, 10). She does not expand on these statements, but it is clear to anyone familiar with the Northern Irish context that Mo has understood the double-speak in Kyle's words and that she refuses to participate in the verbal charade in which the paramilitary chokehold over certain areas is dissimulated behind a rhetoric of care and solidarity. Mo's answer takes Patterson's skepticism regarding the term "community" to another level, suggesting that it has been hijacked by local thugs so as to justify their economic control over local people and, in an Orwellian twist, has come to embody the opposite of what it should mean.

This paper will analyze how some ultra-contemporary Northern Irish writing reflects on this notion of communities, depicting them (and the spaces between them) as both zones of discord or even violence *and* as spaces fostering an ethics of care. I will argue that it is not so much in the political realm but in fiction and poetry that new imaginaries of "community" can be sketched out, where differences can be accommodated without appearing as a threat and unsuspected convergences can be celebrated. I will discuss the singular aesthetics adopted by these writers so as to foreground this reappraisal of "what community means" (Erskine 2019).

A Professor at Sorbonne Université, **Fiona McCann** specializes in contemporary literature with a particular interest in contemporary Irish and British writing. She has published several articles and book chapters on 20th and 21st Century Irish, British, South African and Zimbabwean writing, on prison writing and on the poetics of care. She is the author of *A Poetics of Dissensus: Confronting Violence in Contemporary*

Prose Writing from the North of Ireland (Peter Lang, 2014), co-author of *Le conflit nord-irlandais. Vers une paix inachevée. 1969-2007* (Atlande, 2023), and editor of *The Carceral Network in Ireland. History, Agency and Resistance* (Palgrave, 2020). Her current research projects include a book on care matters in Irish prose (Liverpool University Press, 2026) and a project on literary interventions in the conversation about "Ireland's Future" (political, environmental, societal, cultural).

McKendry, Scott (Queen's University Belfast), "With Hushed and Lulled Full Chimes for Pushed and Pulled: Northern Poetry's Fear of The Vernacular"

According to eminent linguist Raymond Hickey, the disavowal of nonstandard English in Ireland comes from a 'post-colonial attitude that anything homegrown is inferior'. 'It may seem a little far-fetched,' he asserts, 'but there could well be an unconscious trauma [...] over having abandoned the Irish language' where 'endorsing English [...] is tantamount to disloyalty' to the loss of the native culture.¹

This fear of local usage - ubiquitous across Ireland, North and South is most keenly felt in poetry, an artform which relies so heavily on the revitalising influence of vernacular diction, orthography and grammar. This has been the case across much of Europe as far back as Dante Alighieri, whose treatise *On Eloquence in the Vernacular* (c.1305) makes the case for the Florentine dialect's suitability, over standard Latinated forms, within the literary arts.

During the Irish Revival (c.1880-c.1920), Hiberno-English and Ulster-Scots were a common currency among poets from the North such as Padric Gregory (1886-1962), Moira O'Neill (1864-1955) and Richard Rowley (1877-1947). Curiously and conversely, successive generations rarely employ nonstandard language in their poetry - although when they do, they do so to pointedly. Two decades ago, Scottish critic Willy Maley accused Irish writers who shun dialect of greed, grandiloquence and national treason. The overreliance on standard English is a '[h]yper correction', he writes, indicative of 'downright snobbery'. Instead, they choose 'an academic mode that will get them recognition beyond their shores.'² Strong words, yes, but he has a point.

Looking at the work of Seamus Heaney, Ciaran Carson, Dawn Watson, Gail McConnell and others, the proposed paper will investigate the sociopolitical origins of Northern poetry's ostensible phobia of nonstandard English where it's encountered and employed for its sense of 'Irishness

Scott McKendry is a poet-critic from Belfast. He's currently a Lecture of Practice at Queen's University Belfast, where he's writing a monograph on Anglophone Irish poetry, exploring aesthetic discourse, dialect, literary networks and the politics canon-building. McKendry's chapter on the Ballad is forthcoming in the *Handbook of Poetic Forms* (De Gruyter, 2025) edited by Irmtraud Huber and Jessica Bundschuh;

¹ Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 24. My emphasis.

² Willy Maley, "Ireland, versus, Scotland: Crossing the (English) Language Barrier," Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smyth, eds. *Across the Margins: Cultural Identity and Change in the Atlantic Archipelago* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, p. 24).

another chapter, on the *Honest Ulsterman* and Troubles poetry is forthcoming in *Edinburgh Companion Irish Literature and Periodical Culture* (EUP, 2025) edited by Elke D'hoker and Phyllis Boumans. McKendry's poems have appeared in *The Poetry Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and elsewhere. His pamphlet, *Curfuffle* (Lifeboat, 2019), was a Poetry Book Society Autumn Choice. In 2019, he won a Patrick Kavanagh Award. In 2024 he was chosen by Paul Muldoon as Ireland Chair of Poetry's Poet of Promise and his debut collection, *GUB*, was published by Corsair (Little, Brown).

Meunier, Jean-Charles (Polytechnic University of Hauts-de-France), “‘Molly Malone’ Sung in French: Fish Hawker or Fishy Hooker?”

The song “Molly Malone,” also referred to as “Cockles and Mussels” or “In Dublin's Fair City” is one of the most famous Irish ballads. Two French translations of the song were released after 1988, the date when a statue of Molly Malone was erected in Dublin on the occasion of the Dublin Millennium. This sculpture was the opportunity for researchers to determine if the fictional character in the folk ballad might have been inspired from a real person. While the character's story is told by a first-person narrator, who is assumed to be a male observer, the French translators offer two completely opposite visions of the female character. Hugues Aufray makes abundant religious references to religion, highlighting her chastity, perhaps inspired by the fact that “Molly” is a diminutive of “Mary.” The French singer Renaud, on the other hand, seems to pick up on the nickname commonly given to the statue, “the tart with the cart”: he explicitly insists on the character's association with sex work, to the point where he completely obliterates her activity as a fishmonger. These opposing versions provide two illustrations of the objectifying effect of the male gaze. While the possibility of the existence of a real-world inspiration behind the character has never been ascertained, the fictional Molly Malone serves to represent male projections. Using Serge Lacasse's concepts of hyperphonography, metaphonography and parophonography, this paper proposes a comparative approach of the two French translations in order to show how the portrayal of the Dublin icon Molly Malone betrays the personas of the two French singer-translators.

Jean-Charles Meunier teaches English language and culture, as well as translation studies, at the Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France in Valenciennes. He has published several in-depth articles about the translations of Bob Dylan's songs and has given talks on the topic at international conferences. His PhD thesis, entitled *Multimodal Refractions of Bob Dylan in French Covers*, explores Dylan's songs translated and performed in French over a time span of more than 50 years. In this study, he addresses issues related to metrics and musical adaptation, taking into account Dylan's idiosyncrasies. The specific contexts of the US and French folk revivals are also investigated. Meunier approaches the topic of song translation through the lens of multimodality, i.e. investigating the relationships between text, voice, music and sound and how these converge to create meaning. Great attention is also paid to historical and cultural contexts, in particular to the way culture specific references are transferred within or between modes.

Morales-Ladrón, Marisol (University of Alcalá), “In Praise of Maternal Vulnerability in Claire Kilroy’s *Soldier*”

Unsentimental, honest, and unflinching representations of motherhood have been relatively rare in Irish literature until recently. Although it has been a prevalent theme, largely inherited from the “*Mother Ireland*” trope, its evolution has increasingly mirrored broader societal and political transformations, shifting the focus from the traditional woman-as-nation or mother-daughter plots toward an interrogation of motherhood as a contested site of ideological interpellation. Yet the depiction of the subjective, individual experience of mothering and, particularly, the anger provoked by unfulfilled societal expectations and the absence of female solidarity, is a more recent phenomenon. Over the past two decades, first-person narratives addressing the experience of mothering have proliferated in the form autofictions, memoirs, autobiographies and personal essays, exposing the extent to which women are burdened with a life-changing responsibility while remaining disempowered. Claire Kilroy’s raw depiction of early motherhood in *Soldier Sailor* (2023) is emblematic of this trend, though not an isolated instance. From Anne Enright’s seminal *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood* (2004) to Emilie Pine’s *Notes to Self* (2018), Maggie O’Farrell’s *I Am, I Am, I Am: Seventeen Brushes with Death* (2018), Sinéad Gleeson’s *Constellations: Reflections from Life* (2019) or Doireann Ní Ghríofa’s *A Ghost in the Throat* (2020), these texts foreground long-silenced concerns surrounding motherhood, including the (dis)embodied female self, the physical and psychological transformations, infertility, pregnancy loss, (un)bonding, anxiety or exhaustion. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s reflections on the social construction and pathologization of women’s postnatal depression, discussed in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), the present proposal places Kilroy’s *Soldier Sailor* in conversation with these earlier matrifocal narratives. In doing so, it seeks to explore how these texts open up a critical space for the articulation of maternal vulnerability and the often-invisible sacrifices entailed in caregiving.

Marisol Morales-Ladrón is full Professor of English and Irish Literature at the University of Alcalá where she has been teaching since 1994. In 2008, she was Visiting lecturer at the University of Limerick and during 2013-14 she was appointed Fellow professor at University College Dublin. She holds degrees in English Studies, Spanish studies and Psychology. Her research focuses on contemporary Irish and English literature, gender studies, cultural memory and the interrelationship between literature and psychology. She has published on a variety of English and Irish authors. Her publications include the books: *Breve introducción a la literatura comparada* (1999) and *Las poéticas de James Joyce y Luis Martín-Santos* (2005). She has edited the monographs *Postcolonial and Gender Perspectives in Irish Studies* (2007), *Family and Dysfunction in Contemporary Irish Narrative and Film* (2016), has co-edited *Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual Art* (2011), and *Deirdre Madden: New Critical Perspectives* (2022), as well as two studies on feminist criticism: *Mosaicos y taraceas: La Desconstrucción feminista de los discursos del género* (2000) and *(Trans)formaciones de las sexualidades y el género* (2001). She is currently Head of the EFACIS research Centre for Irish Studies “Alka-Éire”, based at the University of Alcalá and Vice-President for Europe in IASIL (International Association for the Study of Irish Literature).

Oliva, Juan Ignacio (University of La Laguna/GIECO-Franklin-UAH/Ratnakara), “Irishness and the Sense of (Non)-Places in Contemporary Irish Poetry”

This paper delves into the relationship between Irishness and space as an anthropological habitat, conceived not only as a topophilic/phobic living environment but above all as an ideological ‘house’ that brings un/happiness to its inhabitants. As a starting point, there will be used Marc Augé’s term on ‘non-places in supermodernity,’ which “designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure) and the relations that individuals have with these spaces ... Non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes. As anthropological places create the organic, so non-places create solitary contractuality.” Thus, this premise will be revolved around making use of contemporary Irish poems—such as “Witness” and “Ode to Suburbia,” by Eavan Boland; “The Frog,” by Paul Muldoon; or “Cold Morning,” by Eamon Grennan—as showcases. To this purpose, issues such as 1. the intimate relationship between the mediat(iz)ed home and the conventional conception of the family; 2. the mental and material toxicity created by the anthropocentric colonization of urban spaces and neighbourhoods; and 3. the concept of Irishness as a common ‘non-place’ where neither originality of any kind nor differences of class, gender, and/or race easily fit in will be tackled. The mapping that emerges from this analysis will be deconstructed using the new Ecomaterialist theories of textual study of the rhizomatic membranes that exist between bodies—not only physical and tangible ones but also political, ethical, moral, and mental ones (cf. Plumwood, Haraway, Bauman, Deleuze & Guattari).

Juan Ignacio Oliva is a full professor of Anglophone Postcolonial Literatures (with an interest in ecocriticism). He studies humans and their environment in ecopoetry and the interactive observation of landscape and the relationship of sensitive selves with an agent and eloquent nature. In addition to several co-edited monographs in journals such as *ExCentric Narratives* (3) or *RCEI* (64/77/81/82/83), he has edited *The Painful Chrysalis. Essays on Contemporary Cultural and Literary Identity* (Peter Lang, 2011), *Realidad y simbología de la montaña* (UAH, 2012), and co-edited *Revolving Around India(s): Alternative Images, Emerging Perspectives* (CSP, 2019). He is editor of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* (2014-), and head of the Universidad de La Laguna Centre for Canadian Studies (1997-). Currently, he holds the position of president of the Spanish James Joyce Association (2019-) and vice president of SAAS (Spanish Association for American Studies): He was also president of the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and the Environment (EASLCE, in the period 2014-2016) and of the Spanish Association for Interdisciplinary India Studies (AEEII, 2014-2019). He is a member of the research groups GIECO-Franklin-UAH (Ecocriticism) and Ratnakara-UAB (Indian Ocean Literatures).

Pinasco E., Sandra (University of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya), “Care and Vulnerability in The Presence of Death: Non-death Losses and Grief in Maggie O’Farrell’s *I Am, I Am, I Am*”

Memory is the passage to self-writing; we cannot write about ourselves without memory which establishes our identity by recognition of the emotional maps that conform

us and that include the landmarks of our lives and the losses we went through. That is because, from a neuroscientific point of view, identity is the product of episodic memory, namely the autobiographical recollections of our lives (Le Doux 2019); there is no history of our past until a conscious memory rebuilds that past, that is until it's brought back into the present. Thus, life writing allows authors to show their vulnerabilities, and the ethics of care involved in treating with them, especially in the proximity of a certain death in way of an accident, a crime or a disease.

Irish author Maggie O'Farrell (1972) allows herself to care and also experience grief for the child, young girl, mother or daughter she has been but almost stop being in the many stages of life she recounts in her memoir *I Am, I Am, I Am: Seventeen Brushes with Death* (2017). Through writing, O'Farrell tries to give sense to these traumatic near-death experiences and, in that process, reconfigures her own emotional schemas.

With a close reading of her memoir linked to the mental, emotional, and social aspects explained by grief theory, this paper will try to answer the following question: How does grief memoirs about non-death losses allow a profound connection with other aspects of the self like family relations, the vulnerability in front of a certain death, intergenerational memory, among others?

Sandra Pinasco E. Head of Research Development at Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya - Lima, Peru. MB in Psychoanalytic Theory, currently studying her doctorate in Lenguas Modernas: investigación en lingüística, literatura, cultura y traducción in Universidad de Alcalá. Her area of research is relational lives and the conformation of the self, and she is currently working with grief memoirs and the possibility of achieving meaning through personal writing for her PhD research. Some published works are "Ambiguous Loss in Grief Memoirs: Meaning Making in Auster and Giralte Torrente Patriographies" (2024) and "Lo que no tiene nombre: an approach to grief memoirs" (2021).

Rodríguez Martín, Gustavo A. (University of Extremadura), "Miguel de Unamuno; or The Spanish Bernard Shaw"

The critical tradition of the first half of the twentieth century often mentions in the same breath three major European writers, namely Luigi Pirandello, Miguel de Unamuno, and Bernard Shaw. However, whereas the connections between Pirandello and Unamuno (and Pirandello and Shaw) have received a substantial amount of scholarly attention, there is hardly mention of the similarities between Unamuno and Shaw. This critical gap is even more unexplainable if we consider, for example, that the British press would often refer to Unamuno as "the Spanish Bernard Shaw."

Thus, this project explores the parallels between Miguel de Unamuno and Bernard Shaw, two of the most influential public intellectuals of their age. These parallels are investigated in different spheres of their lives and works. Although their formative years were very different on the surface, both men developed surprisingly similar approaches to life and literature. For example, their political views share a common socialist background that later evolved in response to the historical events they lived through. Likewise, their philosophical thought and religious beliefs have a lot in common,

especially as the former shaped a critical stance towards the latter in both cases. But perhaps most importantly, their literary production can only be assessed considering their role as outspoken public figures. Shaw once acknowledged in a letter that he “had not read Unamuno” but that he considered him “as being in the same movement as myself.” There is, indeed, much more than meets the eye in Shaw’s words.

Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín lectures on ESL and Modern Literature at the Universidad de Extremadura (Cáceres). He has published widely on Irish literature, with special interest on the works of Bernard Shaw. His work has been featured in journals like *Babel*, *Shaw*, *Yearbook of Phraseology*, *IJES*, the *James Joyce Quarterly*, and *Notes & Queries*. He was the editor of A Continuing Checklist of Shaviana over the last ten years, as well as the author of the bibliographical essay on Bernard Shaw for *The Year’s Work in English Studies*.

Romero Otero, Sara (University of Seville), “Queering the Troubles: Autobiographical Writing and Archival Practices in the Northern Irish LGBTQ+ Movement”

Historical and cultural narratives on twentieth-century Northern Ireland are unequivocally saturated with images of the ethno-nationalist conflict, which have often led to a sidelining of other forms of oppression, such as racism, homophobia, or transphobia. However, recent historical practices, such as Paráic Kerrigan’s *Reeling in the Queers* (2024) or Queen’s University Belfast’s project ‘Queer Northern Ireland: Sexuality before Liberation’ have brought to the fore discussions on queer lives and experiences in Northern Ireland before, during, and after the Troubles, rendering visible the experiences of both anonymous and public figures as members of the LGBTQ+ community in Northern Ireland while also shedding light on the political movement that emerged in the city of Belfast during the early 1970s.

In line with recent understandings of counter-archives as sites historical and cultural resistance, such as Ann Cvetkovich’s approach to ‘archives of feelings’ (2003) and Jack Halberstam’s ‘queer methodology’ (2008), this paper aims to illustrate the ways in which contemporary historiographical and cultural discourse in Northern Ireland is shifting towards a more inclusive, holistic approach to the past, giving space to voices that had remained largely forgotten. In particular, I aim to focus on the various representations of the Northern Irish queer movement through autobiographical practices, as described in Kerrigan’s *Reeling in the Queers* and other approaches to queer lives in Northern Ireland through archival history, as is the case with the LGBTQ+ Heritage archive, the Cork LGBT Archive and the Irish Queer Archive at the National Library of Ireland.

Sara Romero Otero is a PhD student in Philology at the University of Seville, currently researching autobiographical writing and the politics of trauma and remembrance in Northern Irish female authors. Influenced by her degree in Comparative Literature and her Master’s in Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Philosophy, her work focuses specifically on gender studies and female Irish authors, as well as intermedial relationships between literature and cinema.

Romo-Mayor, Paula (University of Zaragoza), “Narratology, Ethics and the Colonial Gaze in Emma Donoghue’s *The Wonder*”

Emma Donoghue’s *The Wonder* (2016) is a historical novel inspired by the numerous cases of fasting girls documented worldwide between the 16th and 19th centuries. Set in the aftermath of the Great Famine, the narrative follows Lib Wright, a young widowed English nurse, as she embarks on a mysterious assignment in a small town in the Irish Midlands. Her task is to closely watch Anna O’Donnell, an eleven-year-old girl allegedly surviving without food, and determine whether she is a genuine miracle or an elaborate hoax. Donoghue’s use of an external narrator with internal focalisation underscores Lib’s role as an observer and examiner. Yet, at the same time, such narrative strategy also helps the writer expose Lib as a prejudiced outsider who envisions Ireland as a land shaped by religious fervour, cultural insularity and resistance to British rationalism. This paper proposes a reading of *The Wonder* from the perspectives of narratology and ethics with a double purpose. On the one hand, it attempts to demonstrate that Lib’s reductive view of Ireland and Irishness reflects the colonial gaze. On the other, it draws on the notion of “implicated reader” to explore the way in which Donoghue navigates the ethical complexities of constructing such a problematic narrative voice.

Paula Romo-Mayor is a lecturer at the Department of English and German Philology of the University of Zaragoza, and a member of the research team Contemporary Narrative in English and the Research Institute of Employment, Digital Society and Sustainability (IEDIS). She graduated in English Studies at the University of Zaragoza in July 2017 and obtained a Master’s Degree in Teacher Training for Compulsory Secondary Education in 2018, after defending with honours her MA thesis. In April 2024, she completed her PhD thesis on the work of Rachel Seiffert under the supervision of Prof. Susana Onega and Dr Silvia Pellicer-Ortín. Her main research interests lie in contemporary British and Irish fiction, Holocaust literature and the representation of trauma, memory and ethics, particularly when engaged in structures of perpetration and complicity.

Ruiz Mas, José (University of Granada), “Galway’s Mayor James Lynch Hangs His Own Son for The Murder of a Spaniard in The Late 15th Century: Myth or Truth?”

A story of love and jealousy, probably of greed and avarice too, justice and murder in connection with the powerful family of the Lynches is popularly believed to have taken place in the town of Galway in the late 15th century. In 1493, the strict James Lynch Fitzstephen, mayor of Galway in 1493-94, allegedly hanged his own son Walter for the murder of a Spanish sailor/captain/merchant/son of a prosperous merchant/nobleman/officer/royal envoy (all these options have been mentioned in Irish folklore and in English/Anglo-Irish literature). Different versions of the Galway legend are also narrated in numerous works by Irish and English/British travel writers, novels, historians, playwrights and journalists. Most of them take for granted that the episode is only a legend and so state it. Indeed, no historical account of the period makes a single mention of it and there is textual evidence that only post-17th century narrations of the event have stated specifically that the wronged “stranger”, whether real or imaginary,

had been a Spaniard. However, whatever its degree of verisimilitude, the episode provides relevant information on the anxiety of the Galway authorities for guaranteeing or consolidating fruitful commercial relations with the north of Spain in the early modern period and were therefore prepared to do anything in their power in such an endeavour. In this paper, I relate the nature of the (presumed) myth, its origin and its dissemination and the possible reasons for its popularity among the local Irish folk.

Dr José Ruiz Mas is an Associate Professor at the University of Granada, where he teaches Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and 19th and 20th century literature. He specialises in Anglo-Spanish and Spanish-Hibernian cultural and literary relations from the 16th to the 21st centuries and in English travel literature on Spain and on the Mediterranean. He has published a number of monographies, book chapters and articles on the aforementioned lines of research.

Schwerter, Stephanie (Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France), “Misfits and Incompatibilities Translation of Culture-specific References in Northern Irish Fiction”

The Northern Irish conflict has generated a specific kind of literature dealing not only with the impact of political violence on society but also with different conceptions of national identity. A certain number of so-called “Troubles novels” has been translated into other languages in order to render the experience of a violent conflict accessible to a foreign readership. Using various examples, this paper explores the translation of Northern Irish prose into German, French and Spanish. Translators are confronted with the challenge of transposing culture-specific references and worldviews into very different cultural environments in which many Northern Irish concepts might not mean anything at all. Furthermore, translators face the typically dark Northern Irish humor, which even people from the Republic of Ireland might find incomprehensible. Turning into cultural mediators, they have to communicate a particular local reality to a German, French and Spanish speaking audience. Apart from the linguistic choices made by the translators, I will concentrate on the different ways in which Northern Irish novels manage to enter the German and French book market. As not every translator has the occasion of living in Northern Ireland, a lack of local knowledge sometimes shines through the translated texts. In my paper, I shall explain why a translator’s German, French or Spanish cultural background might generate misinterpretations of the Northern Irish situation.

Stephanie Schwerter is professor of translation studies at the Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France. Before moving to France, she taught at the University of Ulster and at Queen’s University Belfast. Her current research interest lies in the translation and circulation of Northern Irish literature.

Sebbane, Nathalie (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), “Producing ‘Useful’ Bodies: Institutional Control and Corporeal Discipline in Irish Religious Institutions”

This paper will examine how Irish religious institutions attempted to produce “useful” bodies through systems of control and discipline throughout the twentieth

century. Drawing on extensive archival research and survivor testimonies, it analyzes how religious institutions operated as sites of corporeal transformation, where bodies were subjected to disciplinary regimes aimed at producing subjects that aligned with particular visions of Irish Catholic identity. By examining institutional practices in industrial schools, Magdalene laundries, and Mother and Baby Homes, this presentation aims at exposing how religious authorities implemented systematic programs of bodily discipline - including forced labour, physical and sexual punishment, medical experiments, shaming and strict regulation of movement - ostensibly to create "useful" members of Irish society. Engaging with Sarah Ahmed's critique of utilitarian frameworks and Foucault's concept of docile bodies, this paper will argue that these institutions operated as laboratories of corporeal control where religious and state powers converged in their attempt to forge an idealised Irish Catholic population. Particular attention will be paid to how institutional authorities categorised bodies as either "useful" or "problematic," and how these categorizations determined treatment regimes. This analysis will demonstrate how institutional abuse in Ireland was not merely punitive but productive - aimed at manufacturing specific types of bodies and subjects deemed "useful" to the national project. This historical survey has significant implications for contemporary understanding of institutional legacy and ongoing debates about bodily autonomy in post-Catholic Ireland.

Nathalie Sebbane is an associate professor at the University of Sorbonne Nouvelle, where she teaches British and Irish history and civilisation. After completing her PhD on unmarried mothers in Ireland (1838-1937), she redirected her research more specifically on the Magdalene laundries, on which she published a monograph *Memorialising the Magdalene Laundries. From story to history*, published by Peter Lang in 2021. She specialises in Irish women's history, Church-State collusion, institutional abuse, bodily autonomy, human rights, memory and the transmission of transgenerational trauma.

Seijas-Pérez, Iria (University of Vigo), "From 'Dyke' to 'Lesbian': The Uses of Sapphic Terminology in Irish Young Adult Fiction"

Following the 2015 same-sex marriage referendum, Irish Young Adult – YA – fiction has increased its depiction of LGBTQ+ characters (Kennon 2020). Particularly, sapphic girls are becoming more widely represented. Given the previous lack of representation of these characters in Irish YA fiction, it is relevant to examine how terminology has changed in recent years to make space for a variety of Irish identities. Following a corpus linguistics approach, it is our goal to perform an initial analysis of indexicality patterns in the representation of sapphic identities in Irish YA fiction. In order to do this, we take a group of novels containing sapphic narratives within the Irish context and divide them into different genres to allow for contrastive analyses to be made more accurately. Through this study, we aim to examine the terms used in each of these groups of novels to refer to sapphic identities to evaluate how they have evolved in the last few decades and to shed light on the linguistic conceptualizations of these realities within the YA literary category. Preliminary findings show a predominance of the use of the term "dyke" within the early stages of sapphic YA fiction in Ireland. This tendency, however, seems to have waned in favour of other terms such as "lesbian", which is preferred in more recent novels. This shift in indexicality might be due to a change in

sociocultural parameters pertaining queerness in this country, and further research could reveal whether this is the case in similar literary traditions in other nations.

Dr. **Iria Seijas-Pérez** has a PhD in Advanced English Studies from the University of Vigo. In her thesis, she studied the representation of sapphic adolescent protagonists in Irish Young Adult fiction novels written in English by Irish women authors. She is a member of the research project “Communitas/Immunitas: relational ontologies in Atlantic anglophone cultures of the 21st century” PID2022-136904NB-I00 MCIN/AEI. She has participated in both national and international conferences, and she has also published several articles, reviews, and book chapters; the most recent is “‘Of Course Muslims Can Be Gay’: Sexuality and Religion in Adiba Jaigirdar’s Young Adult Fiction” (*Irish University Review*). Her research interests include Irish literature and culture, LGBTQ+ and feminist studies, and young adult literature.

Sotoca Fernández, David (University of Extremadura) and Jesús Candelario Menacho (University of Extremadura), “Tracing (Im)politeness in Cross-cultural Historical Corpora: An Initial Approach to the Mental Verb ‘Hope’ in Irish English, Spanish and Portuguese through CORIECOR and Post Scriptum (1750-1833)”

This paper performs an initial study of (im)politeness patterns in Irish English, Spanish and Portuguese in historical data. It resorts to the materials available in CORIECOR (Amador-Moreno 2022) and Post Scriptum (CLUL 2014), two corpora containing historical correspondence, to analyze different speech acts and shed light on the sociopragmatic peculiarities arising in each language or language variety. This study focuses on the use of the mental verb “hope” when encoding *requests*, *reproaches* and *apologies* within intimate discourse (Clancy 2015) historically. It concentrates on two specific subcorpora: 1) a subsection of CORIECOR containing private correspondence exchanged between Irish emigrants that relocated to the US and their intimates from 1750 to 1833 and 2) A subsection of Post Scriptum containing judiciary letters exchanged between Portuguese and Spanish families and friends within the same time frame. This research replicates the procedure carried out by Sotoca-Fernández & Ávila-Ledesma (2023) though using Archer’s (2017) spectrum for (im)politeness study to discriminate its results. It contrasts its findings with those retrieved in their study in an attempt to perform an initial approach to a cross-cultural understanding of this linguistic phenomena. Preliminary findings show that the equivalent of “hope” in Spanish and Portuguese (“espero” in both languages) in Post Scriptum is more frequently used to encode these speech acts than in this mental verb is in CORIECOR. Similarly, *requests* encoded through “espero” in Post Scriptum show an even greater predominance than in CORIECOR. These findings point towards key differences in the use of mental verbs for (im)politeness purposes in each language historically. Further research could shed light on these differences and increase our understanding of these linguistic phenomena through time and space.

David Sotoca Fernández is a lecturer and PhD student at the University of Extremadura, Spain. He holds a bachelor’s degree in English Studies and master’s degree in Research in Humanities from this university. His work focuses on the usage of computational tools as a way to perform empirical approaches to the different areas of

study within linguistics. His major research interests lie on the areas of sociolinguistics and Irish studies. His current PhD project deals with (im)politeness strategies in Irish English, performing a diachronic observation of these discourse strategies in CORIECOR using corpus linguistic methods.

Jesús Candelario Menacho is a current PhD student at the University of Extremadura, Spain. He is graduated on English Studies and holds a Master's Degree in Humanities Research and another one in Secondary Education Teaching. He is member of the Center of Irish Studies in Cáceres, and his main fields of research are corpus linguistics and historical sociolinguistics related to correspondence, whether in the form of Irish and Portuguese migration and judiciary letters.

Tallone, Giovanna (Independent researcher), "Dynamics of Use and Abuse in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's Fiction"

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's academic background in folklore significantly underlies her fiction, which often exploits folkloric patterns or motifs rooted in Irish and international folk and fairy tales. This gives a characteristic and innovative flavour to her writing, in which traditional tales or legends are intertwined with their modern counterparts. Her fiction is thus rooted in the use of the past but also in the abuse of traditional forms. Though the etymology of the word "abuse" covers a wide spectrum of meanings, mostly negatively connoted, it is worth noticing that the classical Latin form *abūti* also means "to make full use of", which best applies to Ní Dhuibhne's reworking of traditional forms. Furthermore, the original meaning of the Latin preposition "ab", "away from", is rooted in the word abuse providing a sense of separation or of distance in space and time. On the other hand, continuity between tradition and modernity marks her fiction, which is evident in short stories such as "Midwife to the Fairies", "The Mermaid Legend" or the intertextual organization of the collections *The Inland Ice* and *Little Red and Other Stories*.

From this point of view, Ní Dhuibhne's fiction is based on dynamics of use and abuse, which occasionally point out forms of institutional abuse which are endemic to Ireland. For example, as she points out, her short story "The Blind" from her collection *The Shelter of Neighbours* interlaces motifs from the tale of "The Frog Prince" with the topic of child abuse, a motif that marks, among others, also "The Catechism Examination".

The purpose of this paper is to take into account dynamic intersections of use and abuse at a textual level in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's fiction in terms of thematic exploration and intertextual perspectives, which can provide a reading key to her fiction at large.

Giovanna Tallone, independent researcher, has a degree in Modern Languages from Università Cattolica, Milan and obtained a PhD in English Studies from the University of Florence. Her main research interests include Irish women writers, contemporary Irish drama, and the remakes of Old Irish legends. Publications include essays and critical reviews on Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Mary Lavin, Mary O'Donnell, Clare Boylan, Lady Augusta Gregory, Brian Friel, Dermot Bolger, Vincent Woods and James

Stephens. Her contribution “Beyond Folklore: Gothic Intersections in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s Fiction” was published in the 2024 special issue of the *Irish University Review* on Éilís Ní Dhuibhne. She is a member of the editorial board and a reviewer for *Studi Irlandesi: A Journal of Irish Studies* based in Florence.

Tekin, Burcu Gülüm (University of Zaragoza), “Navigating Distance and Identity: Personal Transformation in Lucy Caldwell’s *Openings* (2024)”

Following *Multitudes* (2016) and *Intimacies* (2021), which mainly explore human interconnectedness, Lucy Caldwell’s latest short story collection, *Openings* (2024), delves into aging, separation, and absence. The collection offers stories that exemplify subtle explorations of identity and belonging through distance, as the characters deal with separations (whether physical, emotional, or symbolic) that lead to existential resolutions. The characters’ disconnections from their familial roots and sometimes homelands create a layered narrative of self-discovery and transformation. In fact, Irishness is not a fixed or singular identity, but rather a symbol that provides a variety of interspaces, marked by both presence and absence in the collection. Therefore, this study examines how the characters’ personal growth is shaped by various distances. Caldwell’s characters face separations and delve into emotional estrangements; as a result, they reflect on their identities, leading to moments of personal transformation. In this way, Caldwell explores not only the distance between the characters and their immediate environment but also the shifting, often conflicted relationships they have with the idea of Irishness itself—whether they ignore it or come to terms with it in the course of their experiences. This study, which draws on critical perspectives from Sara Ahmed, Judith Butler, Carol Gilligan, and Caroline Magennis, analyzes how Caldwell’s work speaks to the complex distances in relation to identity, offering an alternative perspective on the interplay between absence and transformation.

Burcu Gülüm Tekin is a lecturer in the Department of English and German Philology at the University of Zaragoza. She earned her PhD in 2017 from the University of Granada. Her main research interests focus on versatile gender representations and social boundaries within the context of contemporary Irish literature. Her work has been published in various academic journals, including *Estudios Irlandeses*, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, *Studi Irlandesi*, and *The European Legacy*. She has also contributed to several edited volumes, including *Words of Crisis, Crisis of Words: Ireland and the Representation of Critical Times* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), *Ireland and Dysfunction: Critical Explorations in Literature and Film* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), and *Trauma, Memory, and Silence of the Irish Woman in Contemporary Literature: Wounds of the Body and the Soul* (Routledge, 2023). Her latest contribution appears in the edited volume *Transcultural Insights into Contemporary Irish Literature and Society: Breaking New Ground* (Routledge, 2024)

Torres-Fernández, J. Javier (University of Almería), “Queer Experiences of Mis/ab/use in Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance: An Analysis of *Party Scene* (2022)”

This proposal puts forward an analysis of *Party Scene: Chemsex, Community and Crisis* (2022), a dance-theatre performance piece by writer and director Phillip

McMahon and choreographer Philip Connaughton within the THISISPOPBABY family. The theatre company has been recognized for revolutionising the contemporary landscape of Irish queer theatre and performance, standing as a landmark example known for how their productions blend queer culture with pop culture. As the company continues to attract attention and acclaim, cultural products such as *Party Scene* pose questions about politics, identity, and aesthetics in Ireland beyond the scripts.

The piece is centred on chemsex, the practice of consuming recreational drugs during sexual intercourse whether in private or public settings, as a crisis in the LGBTIQ+ community. Creating a conversation around care, identity, isolation, violence, and addiction, the show brings to the fore questions of mental health, consent, and community within the context of queer experiences. Breaking the fourth wall between the audience and performers, I argue that the play challenges its audience to rethink social norms and makes them witness to the ways in which current overlooked struggles affect vulnerable individuals. Through the notion of “use” as posed by Sarah Ahmed, this analysis proposes that McMahon and Connaughton’s work directly addresses the question of how queer identities have been traditionally been abused and excluded from the very definition of Irishness up to the present day.

J. Javier Torres-Fernández, BA and MA in English Studies, PhD in Social Sciences and Humanities (Language and Literary Studies), is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Almería (Spain). His thesis, *The Stigmatizing Illness Narratives and Metaphors of HIV/AIDS in Contemporary American and Irish Theatre*, is currently being reworked into a monograph. He is a member of the Women, Literature and Society (HUM-874) research group and the Communication and Society research centre (CySOC) both at the University of Almería. He has presented papers at more than twenty international and national conferences and his recent publications include articles in prestigious international journals such as *Irish University Review* and book chapters in edited volumes published with Peter Lang, Brill and Routledge, among others. He is also part of the research project “TRANS-FORMATIONS: Queer Practices of Use and Embodiment in Post 9/11 Narratives in English” (PID2023-146450NB-I00), funded by the Spanish Ministry for Universities, the European Union and the National Research Agency.

Tully, Cassandra S. (University of Extremadura), “Reimagining Irish Masculinity: Hozier as a ‘Bog King’”

During the Irish Literary Revival of the 20th century, Irish authors achieved to craft an image of Irishness and masculinity that opposed the propagandistic one created by the English forces with the intention of infantilising and render powerless the Irish resistance (Kiberd, 1996; Valente, 2011). With the imposing image of mythological and hypermasculine Cuchulainn as the country’s saviour against the hegemony of the English (Meaney, 2006; Clayton, 2011), Irish masculinity was swinging from rural identities in which the land, family, and being an honest and good breadwinner were the main goals, to more hypermasculine identities in which sports, sexual prowess, and exploits in the labour market by earning a lot of money was the main focus (Ní Laoire, 2002; Kiberd, 2005).

However, in recent years, masculinities that are neither toxic nor extremely manly (or “laddy”) have been both rewarded and sought out, especially by young women who turn away from toxic traits in their male friends and relationships (Doyle, 2018; Tully, Barron & Amador-Moreno, 2023). It is in this in between that Irish musician Hozier has developed a fanbase that describes him as a “bog king” due to the nature of his songs, his public personality, and the aura created around him as being a mystical Irishman even more so heightened by his latest album *Unreal Unearth* (2023) where he explores Dante’s nine circles of hell through a number of songs that also include lyrics in Irish, mythology, and intertextuality. Hence, in this paper, I present through a corpus linguistic analysis how Hozier’s representation as a “bog king” through the social platform X (previously known as 1 Twitter), reimagines a new type of masculinity in Ireland, which in turn, perpetuate a mythological and unrealistic portrayal of Irishness outside of Ireland.

Cassandra S. Tully holds a PhD in Contemporary Irish Literature from the University of Extremadura. She also holds a BA in English Studies from the University of Seville (Spain), a Master’s Degree in English Teaching and an MA in Gender and Literature both from the University of Extremadura. She has authored a number of articles and chapters on Irish literature and corpus studies. Her monograph for the Routledge Studies on Irish Literature on masculine representation in 20th and 21st century Ireland by Irish male novelists entitled *Masculinity and Identity in Irish Literature. Hero, Lads and Fathers* was published in 2024. Her research interests focus on masculinity as represented by Irish male novelists and how heroic and mythological patterns of masculinity can still be found in today’s protagonists as a reflection of a heteronormative, hegemonic, and toxic masculinity. Her more recent research interest focuses on the representation of LGBT+ characters in Irish novels.

Vaupel-Schwittay, Angela (St Mary’s University College Belfast), “Der Irlandkrimi - A German Reception of Irish Culture as a Substitute for National Heritage?”

In the aftermath of World War II, Germany’s struggle to redefine its national identity, tainted by the Nazi legacy, led to the appropriation of foreign cultures. Irish culture, with its associations of resilience, mysticism and rural simplicity became a favoured alternative. This paper aims to examine the uses and abuses of Irishness in German media, focusing on the contemporary crime TV series *Der Irlandkrimi* [the Irish crime thriller]. Set in the picturesque landscapes of Ireland, the series reflects German longing to escape its troubled history and challenging present by immersing itself in a romanticized, culturally ‘pure’ setting. The crime genre plays a significant role by combining the allure of crime with the appeal of Ireland’s enigmatic, timeless atmosphere. While *Der Irlandkrimi* attempts to avoid oversimplifications and national stereotypes, such as the clichéd portrayal of Ireland as a land of rugged charm and mystical folklore, it risks perpetuating a sanitized, idealized version of Irishness. The show frames Ireland as a place of moral certainty, untouched by the complexities of historical or political conflict. This paper critiques whether the series truly avoids these oversimplifications or subtly reinforces them through its selective ‘use’ of Irish culture. By exploring the intersection of gender, media consumption and national identity, this study assesses whether *Der Irlandkrimi* simply offers an escape into a fictionalized version of Ireland and potentially distorts Irish cultural realities to suit its own narrative needs.

Dr **Angela Vaupel-Schwittay** is a scholar in cultural studies, linguistics and education. She serves as a Senior Lecturer in Liberal Arts at St Mary's University College Belfast (QUB), where she teaches primarily on European culture and area studies. Her courses cover topics such as the history of the idea of Europe, European art and social history, and the representation of identity and otherness in European film and literature. Her research interests lie at the intersection of cultural studies, with a focus on European film, exile, and German, Irish and identity studies. Angela has authored peer-reviewed books and articles on subjects such as women in Nazi cinema, German-Jewish and exile literature (1933–1945) and its reception history, the portrayal of conflict in the cultural media, and the representation of (minority) identity, memory and borders in European cinema. Additionally, she explores Irish-German cultural relations and encounters. A recurring theme in her work – often examined through a gendered lens – is cross-cultural fertilization and appropriation, as well as cultural 'mistakes' and their lasting legacies. Conflict, particularly in the histories of Germany and Ireland, is another central focus of her research.

Villar-Argáiz, Pilar (University of Granada), “Defying Ideals of Transparency: Secrecy and Opacity in the Poetry of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin”

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's poetry is largely drawn to the mystery of religious sacraments and to motifs of concealment, veils and silence. I have already written on the topic of secrecy as present in her 2015 collection of poetry, *The Boys of Bluehill* (*Irish University Review* 40.2, 2019). As I claimed, secrecy is manifested in this collection as silence, uncertainty, and defiant femininity. This chapter continues exploring these themes, by examining the presence of slippery characters and figures of mystery and evasion in Ní Chuilleanáin's latest collection of poetry, *The Map of the World* (2023). In order to study this aspect of her work, I will apply Derridean theories on secrecy as synonym of alterity and singularity, essential aspects in Derrida's rethinking of a new radically form of democracy perpetually open to difference and otherness (*A Taste for the Secret*, 1997). I will also examine the dialectics of transparency and opacity in Ní Chuilleanáin's poetry from the perspective of the new research field of Critical Transparency Studies. A dominant assumption in current demands of transparency is the belief that “the subject has a private core that they can know and show to others” (López 2025). Contrary to this ideal, intrasubjective and intersubjective transparency is consistently undermined in Ní Chuilleanáin's writing, as the female characters in her poems largely remain oblique and radically illegible, thus resisting “the demand to be knowable, understood, measured, categorized and rendered transparent” (Birchall 2021, 164). As I claim, opacity constitutes a central dimension of subjectivity in her poems. Her work, I argue, revalues secrecy, uncertainty and privacy as subversive forces, questioning the ideal of transparency as a desired condition in political and moral terms.

Pilar Villar-Argáiz is a Senior Lecturer of British and Irish Literatures and Director of the Circle of Irish Studies at the University of Granada, Spain. She has published extensively on contemporary Irish poetry and fiction, in relation to questions of gender, race, migration and interculturality. Her books include *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). Villar-Argáiz is currently the Chairperson of AEDEI (the Spanish Association for Irish Studies), Director of the Circle of Irish Studies at the

University of Granada, and Member of the Executive Board of EFACIS (the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies).

Wajs Tauscher, Catalina (Independent researcher), “Am I Abusing Irishness?”

The present exposition is an attempt to try to answer the difficult question regarding the attraction Irishness exerts on me since my childhood. Why this strong interest, this kind of fascination regarding a country and a culture I have had so little contact with in my “real” life?

In my quest for an answer, I have tried to find out which paths of Irishness intersect with my own life, and the discoveries were surprising. Some fantastic elements which belong to Irish traditional folklore represented an answer to some personal questions I asked myself in my childhood. My curiosity increased as I grew up, and the connections between Irishness and Jewishness, the tradition in which I was born, became stronger.

This last year the subject has become a central object of my investigation, and the result includes the surprising discovery that Irish and Jewish paths cross in more ways than I had ever imagined. From the historical perspective parallels include episodes which belong to the remote past and describe the contact between Irish tradition and Jewishness, as well as recent events like the cooperation between Zionists and Irish Nationalists in the 1930's on occasion of their revolt against Britain, or the fact that both countries tried to revive an ancestral language.

It seems that the Jewish - Irish issue has not only caught my attention, but also that of writers and historians. In the last few years some interesting books on the subject were published, like Ruth Gilligan's *Nine Folds make a Paper Swan*, a novel on the subject of the Eastern European Jewish immigration in Ireland, as well as the books *Irish Questions Jewish Questions Crossovers in Culture*, and *Fine Meshwork Philip Roth, Edna O'Brien and Jewish-Irish Literature*.

Have I pushed this issue too far? Am I abusing Irishness?

Catalina Wajs Tauscher worked in Argentina and Israel in the field of education and was awarded a B.A. degree in English Literature by the Tel Aviv University. In 2017 she was awarded a second B.A degree and a Master degree in English Literature by the Open University in London. She obtained her title of Doctor at the University of Zaragoza in May 2022. In her PhD investigation she explores the presence and function/s of folklore in four contemporary Irish novels. She has taken courses on the Irish novel, has attended different seminars and conferences and has presented several papers based on her research. Her Thesis has been accorded the 2024 Ines Praga Award.

Wilson, Ross (University of Liverpool), “Taking the ‘Irish’ out of Irish Unity – Irishness and The Unification of Ireland”

The question of Northern Ireland’s constitutional future continues to feature in the public imagination. It is evident at this stage that the unification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, if it were to occur, would not simply be Northern Ireland tacked onto the Republic, but rather the creation of a new state, described by the SDLP as a ‘New Ireland’. This New Ireland would aim to create an inclusive state which incorporates both the Irish Catholic and British Protestant identities on the island of Ireland. To this end, both the SDLP and Sinn Féin have indicated that cultural symbols, such as the national flag and anthem, should be up for negotiation. Logic implies that other areas, such as the role and use of the Irish language within the State, must also be considered. Research shows that symbolic changes of this nature are less important than material issues for those in Northern Ireland, but are fiercely resisted in the Republic.

The role of Irishness in a United Ireland poses a potentially thorny and often overlooked issue for the people of Ireland: would expanding the inclusivity of the Irish state, through a process that dilutes or changes its Irishness, be palatable to those in the Republic? Is there a risk that these changes could lead to a loss in support for Irish unification in the Republic?

This paper does not aim to provide definitive answers to these questions. Rather, this paper will highlight and explore this potentially thorny and overlooked issue.

Ross Wilson is a third-year Postgraduate Researcher completing a joint PhD with the Institute of Irish Studies and Department of Politics at the University of Liverpool. Ross’ thesis explores conditional support for Irish unification in Northern Ireland. Over the last two years, Ross has used quantitative methods, interviews with politicians and activists, and a Q-Methodology survey to explore support for potential policies on offer in a United Ireland. Other research interests include politics and history of the island of Ireland, ethnonationalism, conflict, separatism, separatist movements, public opinion, and Q-Methodology.

Yebra, José M. (University of Zaragoza), “(Un)grievability and Abuse of the Other in Frank McGuinness’s Short Story Collection *Paprika*”

Frank McGuinness is a versatile artist; mostly a playwright, he has also produced poetry, two novels, short story collections, librettos for operas and scripts for cinema and television. This paper addresses his short story collection *Paprika* (2018) as a melting pot of ideas on the articulation of Irishness in the early twenty-first century. The collection includes twelve stories which, according to Paddy Kehoe, “tend to depict insecure, unhinged individuals who find themselves on the wrong side of a comfortable life” (2018: n.p.). To explore insecurity in sexually dissident characters, the paper analyses “Chocolate and Oranges”, “Hywel” and “Red” because they represent the uses and, especially, abuses of queerness in current Ireland. The three stories feature queer youths in problematic spaces where dysfunctionality (Altuna-García de Salazar, 2016) ranges from the family to the national level. Although Irish society has greatly advanced

on sexuality and gender discourses in the last decades, all three youths experience traumatic experiences which put forward that homosexuality has traditionally been “represented as ‘foreign’ to nationalisms in Ireland” (Conrad, 2001: 124). In “Chocolate and Oranges”, the main character is abused because he is both a Romanian immigrant and queer; in “Hywel”, the protagonist belongs to a Welsh family of Catholic converts and is attracted to a “authentic” Irish guy; finally, “Red” features a family in crisis since the son is kidnapped and murdered by a Islamist terrorist group because of his queerness. Their hybrid status is used to justify their abuses and the feel of ungrievability resulting from their crises, traumata and death respectively. Using Butler’s theory of (un)grievability, the paper analyses how their lives are precarious and therefore not worth mourning because they do not count (2016), or at best they count as second-class citizens.

José M. Yebra is a lecturer in English at the University of Zaragoza. He has published widely on contemporary British and Irish literatures, particularly on Alan Hollinghurst, Colm Tóibín, Naomi Alderman and Will Self. His research trends include contemporary British literature, trauma theory, and gender and queer studies. His latest articles have been published in *The Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, *Anglia* and *Orbis Litterarum*. He has co-edited *Transmodern Perspectives on Contemporary Literatures in English* (Routledge, 2019), written two monographs, *The Poetics of Otherness and Transition in Naomi Alderman’s Fiction* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020) and *The Traumatic Celebration of Beauty in Alan Hollinghurst’s Fiction* (Winter, 2022). He is a member of a research team and a research project on Contemporary Narratives in English funded by the Governments of Aragon and Spain.

Yilmaz, Dilara (University of Kiel), “Selling Irishness: UK Publishers and the Profits from Irish Literature in the Global Literary Marketplace”

Irish writers are increasingly gaining recognition in the international literary industry. Irish writing appeals, first, because of their trending topics (mental health, global politics etc.). Second, they negotiate those from a distinctly Irish perspective, performing authenticity through engagements with Irish history, folklore, and nature, which appeals to international readers. Third, new writers share their state-nurtured careers. Most post-millennial writers go through what I call the Irish pen-to-publication-pipeline: creative writing training, short fiction publications in literary magazines, award nominations, and Arts Council funding. The fourth enabler, however, is the market power of British publishers and their massive purchase of Irish texts rights.

The surge of Irish writing is largely a product of Ireland’s art subsidisation. Yet, once nationally acclaimed, Irish writers¹ sell rights to British publishers², and film rights to the BBC. I argue that the dominance of British publishers over Irish literature, while not new, has achieved a different dimension in recent years. UK publishers actively seek emerging talents and market them as distinctly Irish (often white). Despite Ireland’s financial commitment to literary production, UK market power over Irish publications remains uncontested and plays a crucial role in the boom since the 2010s. British publishers perform as promoters of Irish heritage while accumulating profits. This sociological study uses material from interviews I conducted with Irish writers, publishers,

directors of state-funded literary institutions and other members of Ireland's literary industry.

Dilâra Yilmaz is assistant lecturer of Irish and British Literature and Culture at Kiel University, Germany. She holds a M.Ed. in German, English and History, and a M.A. in English and American Literatures, Cultures, and Media. Her research interests include Irish literature, Ireland's art subsidisation practices, creative economies, literary sociology, gender studies, negative affect, and neurodivergence studies. For her PhD on Ireland's pen-to-publication pipeline, she interviews Irish writers, publishers, editors, creative writing teachers, and other agents of the Irish literary industry in Dublin, Cork, and Belfast. She has been building the interview corpus CrEIC - Creative Economy Ireland Corpus since 2023. She has presented preliminary results from her interview corpus at international conferences in Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany, and continues her project on a research visit to University College Dublin in 2025.