



ISTR 2019: Foundation Building, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick  
May 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> 2019

## **Conversations Through Time: Intersectional, Intergenerational, Interdisciplinary**

### **Book of Abstracts**

**Keynote Speakers:** (in chronological order)

**Dr Lisa Fitzpatrick, University of Ulster**

**Title: Defining Freedom: Intergeneration and Intersectional Debate in Contemporary Feminism**

This paper looks at how tensions within feminism as an intersectional, cross-generational movement were foregrounded by the #Me Too and #Time's Up movements, with a particular emphasis on contrasting conceptions of freedom. Drawing on Bergson's writings on free will, and Elizabeth Grosz's new materialist engagement with his work, the essay considers the competing and overlapping conceptions of 'freedom from', and 'freedom to'. Seeking to situate feminist arguments and activism temporally, the essay proposes that different forms of freedom are more urgent at different stages in the movement, and that this is partly what underlies the ambivalent response of some older feminists to #Time's Up. It also reflects upon the possibly complicity of second wave feminism with forms of sexual exploitation.

These contemporary protest movements have reinvigorated feminism, while reasserting the old feminist adage that 'the personal is the political' in a way that is oppositional to contemporary neoliberal constructions of freedom and empowerment.

The paper seeks to open up some of these questions to consider freedom as a powerful and conflicted feminist value with the potential to ameliorate differences of class, race, and ethnicity.

#### **Biography**

Dr Lisa Fitzpatrick is Senior Lecturer in Drama at University of Ulster in Derry. Her areas of research include post-conflict performance, gender and violence, and contemporary performance in Ireland. Following the publication of her monograph *Rape on the Contemporary Stage* (Palgrave, 2018), she is working on the issue of violence and the erotic.

She was a convenor of the conference 'Protest and Performance' in Derry in January 2019, and is currently working on a funded project with Kabosh Theatre Company, on a project about women and conflict.

**Dr Emilie Pine, University College Dublin**

**Title: Thinking about Breaking and Silence: Staging Testimony**

What are the ethics and aesthetics of representing child abuse, sexual violence and state violence? What role does storytelling play in allowing these experiences of violence to be heard? How do we think about silence in the wake of its 'breaking'? These questions will inform this discussion of Irish and international theatre works that attempt to give voice to the silent.

### **Biography**

Emilie Pine is Associate Professor of Modern Drama at University College Dublin. Emilie is Editor of the *Irish University Review* and Director of the *Irish Memory Studies Network*. She is PI of the Irish Research Council New Horizons project *Industrial Memories* a digital humanities re-reading of the Ryan Report on institutional child abuse. Emilie has published widely in the fields of Irish studies, Performance studies, and Memory studies, including *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture* (Palgrave, 2011) and *The Memory Marketplace: Performance, Testimony and Witnessing in Contemporary Theatre* (forthcoming Indiana University Press, 2019). Her first collection of personal essays, *Notes to Self*, is published by Tramp Press (2018) in Ireland & Hamish Hamilton in the UK, was shortlisted for the Royal Irish Academy Michel Deon award, and has won the IACI Butler Literary Award, and the An Post Irish Book Awards for Best Newcomer, and Book of the Year 2018

**Panels:** (in chronological order)

### **Panel One**

**Dr Ian R. Walsh, NUI Galway**

**Title: Irish Language Pantomimes at the Abbey: How popular entertainments led to a renaissance in Irish Theatre**

This paper will argue that the Irish language pantomimes staged at the Abbey, the National Theatre of Ireland throughout the 1940s and 50s led to a revolution in staging methods in Ireland. These pantomimes intended to aid the State's revival of the Irish language took the form of popular Christmas entertainments that presented ancient Irish myths in the Irish language via a performance style that mixed the conventions of the British pantomime and the Broadway musical. They were popular with patrons but despised by critics and denounced by subsequent scholarship as a low point in the history of Irish theatre. However, the primary writer and director tasked to stage these entertainments was Tomás Mac Anna, who would go on to become the first artistic director of the Abbey, win a tony award and is credited as bringing a new international experimentalism to the theatre contributing to what has been termed a 'Second Renaissance' (Murray) in Irish theatre. Mac Anna always claimed that it was his work on the pantomimes that taught him everything about directing and design. The demands of these entertainments meant that he had to learn how to stage scenes with large

casts and become expert at transitions to several locations whilst also incorporating choreography and song into his productions. The pantomimes schooled Mac Anna in a type of staging that was in direct contrast to the naturalistic style employed in the production of the Abbey's signature realist dramas of peasant life. This paper will re-examine the wealth of materials (prompt scripts, letters, images, designs) now available on these pantomimes through the Abbey Theatre Digital Archive at NUI Galway to support the argument that these popular entertainments helped to usher in a new era in Irish theatre.

### **Biography:**

Dr. Ian R. Walsh is a Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at National University of Ireland, Galway. He has published widely on Irish theatre and performance in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections. His books include *Experimental Irish Theatre* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); *The Theatre of Enda Walsh* (Carysfort, 2015) co-edited with Mary P. Caulfield and *Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming 2018) co-written with Charlotte McIvor.

### **Geoffrey Gould**

#### **Title: Identifying A New Generation of Playwrights**

The past decade has witnessed seismic changes in language, content and form in Irish theatre. There has been a distinct shift away from the traditional theatre of the playwright to the work of the 'theatre-maker'. Since 2000, new plays by young/er playwrights are less likely to be produced by theatre companies and less likely to be supported by funding bodies than the work of the 'theatre-maker'. This paper will contextualise the circumstances out of which the new generation of playwrights emerged and the obstacles that they have been facing, and explore how they are re-inventing Irish drama through diverse dialectic relationships with the stage and the audience.

This paper will identify four possible areas that the contemporary playwrights have emerged from and work within. Lack of funding during the recession combined with the collapse of almost forty independent theatre companies from all over Ireland led to high unemployment for emerging and established actors and as a result many actors were forced to write and perform their own plays leading to a new group of writers; playwrights who perform their own work. (Pat Kinevane, Mikel Murfi, Seamus O'Rourke, Alice Barry, Sonya Kelly, Noni Stapleton, Jacinta Sheeran, Emmet Kirwan and Margaret McAuliffe.)

Third level English and Drama courses increased substantially which in turn led to a larger group of graduates entering the theatre workplace. Many of these graduates decided to write for theatre rather than perform in it leading to a secondary group of writers: playwrights who are influenced by University courses. (Abbi Spallen, Tara McKeivitt, Carmel Winters, Kate Holly, Shane Mac an Bhaird, Seanan McDonnell, Stefanie Preissner, Nancy Harris, Emma O'Grady, Veronica Dyas and Lucy Caldwell.)

Traditionally playwrights have come from all areas of society. Most may have been influenced by family or early experiences with the theatre and this group still appears to be generating playwrights from a traditional background. (Micheál Lovett, Ailís Ní Riain, Michael Hilliard Mulcahy, Oisín Flores Sweeny, John Sheehy and Neil Flynn.)

The final group of writers are those writers who like to work with a director and a cast in developing a play for the stage; playwrights who work in conjunction with a theatre company. (Michael West, Grace Dyas, Michael Keegan Dolan.)

This new generation of playwrights is creating a new style of theatre, that is attempting to explode an elitism attached to theatre since the days of The Irish Literary Theatre and that is built on traditional methods of story-telling and myth fused with a modern vernacular that is challenging a century-old theatre writing tradition. As Christopher Murray observes “theatre is there like poetry to alert to nuances, to draw attention to possibilities ... what great playwrights have always insisted upon....to give us a greater not lesser sense of reality..” and this new generation, in treatment of content, theme, language and form are creating new ways of presenting that greater sense of reality to contemporary audiences.

### **Biography**

Geoff Gould has worked as a theatre director in Irish theatre for the past twenty five years. He is a former Artistic Director of the Everyman Palace Theatre Cork (1996-2001), founder and Artistic Director of Blood in The Alley Theatre Company and The West Cork and Blackwater Fit-up Festivals. Geoff has worked with new writers over the last ten years including Micheál Lovett, Cónal Creedon, Ailís Ní Riain and Shane Mac An Bhaird. He has toured nationally and internationally with productions by Brian Friel, Marina Carr and Donal O’Kelly and is currently doing a PhD Track on contemporary Irish theatre. His research interests include contemporary plays, contemporary playwrights, storytelling, seanachais, reachtaire and bardic poets.

### **Dr Siobhán O’Gorman, University of Lincoln**

#### **Title: ‘Fake News,’ Nationalism, and Theatre NO99’s *Unified Estonia* (2010)**

In 2010, Tallinn-based theatre company, Theatre NO99, produced a 44-day-long project that began with a press conference announcing a new political party called ‘Unified Estonia.’ The party was, of course, fictitious, but its infiltration of the media to spread its deliberately populist and ostensibly nationalist image appears to have contributed to its achievement of 25% in pre-election polls. The performance culminated in a spectacular ‘party convention’ attended by approximately 7500 people; it has since been lauded as one of the largest theatre events in contemporary Europe, and it went on to win the top prize (the Golden Triga) at the last Prague Quadrennial in 2015. Retrospectively, the moment for such a project to garner significant acclaim seems strikingly timely – prophetic even – considering a range of concurrent and subsequent political developments internationally.

Theatre NO99 intended to expose the populism inherent in party politics, and *Unified Estonia* can be seen to illuminate how theatrical spectacle can be used affectively and effectively to promote nationalism. Yet, in spite of Theatre NO99’s good intentions, a member of the company reflecting on the project in 2017 suggested that they will never know whether they were successful in their aims to educate people about citizenship and political responsibility; he also revealed that during Estonia’s 2015 elections, two new parties – one of which was neo-fascist – constructed strikingly similar public images and succeeded in taking seats in the parliament. Taking this into consideration, *Unified Estonia* calls to mind Hans-Thies Lehmann’s assertion that: ‘It is not through the direct thematisation of the political that theatre becomes political but through the implicit substance and critical value of its mode of representation’ (2006: 178). This paper reassesses *Unified Estonia*’s mode of representation from such intersecting perspectives as nationalism, populism, affect, and Claire Wardle’s conception of the ‘disinformation ecosystem.’

### **Biography**

Siobhán O’Gorman is a Senior Lecturer and MA Theatre Programme Leader at the School of Fine & Performing Arts, University of Lincoln. She is on the editorial board of *Studies in Costume & Performance* and the executive committee of the Irish Society for Theatre Research. With Charlotte McIvor, she edited the first book to focus on devised performance within Irish contexts, *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practice* (2015). Her monograph, *Theatre, Performance and Design: Scenographies in a Modernizing Ireland*, is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan. Her work also has appeared in several edited collections and such journals as *Scene*, the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* and *Irish Studies Review*.

## **Panel Two**

**Dr Úna Kealy and Dr Kate McCarthy, WIT**

### **Title: In Dialogue with Deevy: ‘Letters’ from the Margins**

Teresa Deevy’s personal and professional means of expression was the written word and she was a keen correspondent through letters and postcards. While many of these texts have disappeared, her correspondence with her friend and fellow Waterford playwright James Cheasty became available to Deevy scholars in Waterford in 2015 and provide the original primary research material for this paper.

*Letters from the Past: The Teresa Deevy and James Cheasty Archive Project* considers how Deevy’s correspondence to Cheasty (1952-1957) provides insight into Deevy’s personality, the construction and conceptualisation of her work, and the milieu of literary Dublin in the 1950s. No account of Deevy’s personal or professional struggle to construct and present her work after her success in the Abbey Theatre in the 1930s exists making this research an important contribution to scholarship for those interested in Deevy’s dramatic works, and also theatre historians interested in the development of Irish theatre in the 1950s. The presentation demonstrates how theatre researchers can creatively engage with ‘the unpublished past’ (Buss and Kadar, 2001) and interpret fractured and fragmentary personal narratives that reflect shared but tacit cultural conventions with the particularity to place and character that such correspondence can convey.

Phase one of this research was facilitated through an intergenerational transcription project involving students and faculty from Waterford Institute of Technology and the University of the Third Age, Tramore. Phase two involves interpreting Deevy’s letters and postcards as social documents (Grant, 2018), and then employing Steven Stow’s (2012) approach of considering the correspondence as constituting a dramatic text with a main character, plot and central narrative and, as such, seeks to creatively contribute to Irish theatre research practice.

## **Biographies**

Dr Úna Kealy works part-time in Waterford Institute of Technology and questions of identity, marginalization, social inclusion and exclusion drive her current research. Her research into the work of Teresa Deevy includes curated exhibitions, rehearsed play readings, community projects and public lectures. A full list of her published work can be accessed through her Waterford Institute of Technology staff profile.

Dr Kate McCarthy is Lecturer in Drama at Waterford Institute of Technology. Her research

interests include; drama and theatre education, the arts and education, contemporary theatre practice, in particular participatory performance and live art, and the work of Teresa Deevy. She is a member of the Arts Education Research Group at Trinity College Dublin. As a practitioner, Kate has facilitated and devised numerous contemporary performance projects.

**Dr Fiona McDonagh, MIC**

**Title: Staging Edgeworth's *The Knapsack* for a contemporary young audience**

Anglo Irish author Maria Edgeworth was one of the most prominent writers of adult and children's literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. Having written six plays for children, she can also be considered one of the first Irish Theatre for Young Audience (TYA) playwrights. In 1801, Edgeworth wrote *The Knapsack*, a 'home theatrical' as part of her Moral Tales collection. The play, set in Sweden, is a story about a family separated by a war between Sweden and Finland. Historically, when the soldiers' knapsacks were returned to relatives, it signified the death of their loved one. In this play, the wife of a soldier, Catherine, begins to fear the worst when a carriage filled with knapsacks arrives nearby. Her husband's knapsack is mistakenly returned to her and thus the story begins. Narrative taboos within Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) are common and considered "culturally determined and subject to changing views on childhood" (Van de Water 2012). Many contemporary theatre makers dedicated to TYA are not afraid to tackle tough subjects; however, when a play explores the implications of war, it presents concerns for the artist, such as the potential dilution of the content, or the aesthetic possibly being compromised in order to better facilitate audience engagement. This paper explores the considerations that the authors, two TYA practitioners, negotiated when contemplating the staging of *The Knapsack* for a young audience in contemporary Ireland. We examine how the historical representations and story-telling would communicate with the audience 'in a world much altered' (Bull 2013) and consider the issues that would have to be negotiated when staging it. From the outset of our analysis of this piece, our engagement with the play presented us with a myriad of challenges, such as its complex language; its representation of children; and its contradictory moral message. However, we did not wish to become overly preoccupied with the problems, but rather recognise the value in staging such work, and interrogate the process of staging a historical text such as this. Plays such as *The Knapsack*, with its historical language and references, and Edgeworth's perceptions of childhood, offer an excellent example of life at that time and have a lasting historical value (Van de Water 2015). The driving question remains, however, whether Edgeworth's *The Knapsack* still has something to 'teach' a young audience today.

### **Biography**

Fiona McDonagh completed her PhD at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick in 2014. She is now a Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Mary Immaculate College, where she teaches on the BA in Contemporary and Applied Theatre Studies. Prior to that, Fiona was the Artistic Director of Cups and Crowns Children's Theatre Company for over ten years.

### **Panel Three**

**Dr Katherine Nolan, Technological University Dublin**

**Title: Fictioning the Past: Performing the Self as the Mistress of the Mantle in Post-Catholic Ireland**

How is the act of performing historical imaginary identities, that is deliberately ‘fictioning’ the past, useful as a method to examine femininities in present-day post-catholic Ireland? Ireland is a society in transition. As the nation moves from a deeply religious to a secular state, attitudes to gender are shifting, as attested to by activism and constitutional change on issues such as same-sex marriage and abortion access. This paper will discuss *The Mistress of the Mantle*, a series of recorded and live performances in which I perform myself as models of femininity observed in my childhood in late seventies, and early eighties Ireland. The title refers to the mantle of responsibility as well as the hearth of the home, and the work explores the rite of passage of becoming ‘bean an tí’ or the ‘lady of the house’. The work explores a tangle of associations of women, nation and home, mobilising concepts of the motherland and the domestic home. I propose this performance of fictional, historical images of femininity as a method to understand the renegotiation of personal, national and gendered identities in an Ireland in transition.

In order to unpack the work, I will consider ways in which we have ‘conversations with the past’ and how we perform the past in the present. According to Bakhtin’s concept of *heteroglossia* language and ideologies of different epochs co-exist in any given historical moment, through which the subject can speak from multiple and contradictory positions. Understood through this concept, the work operates, not as a straightforward critique, but as the act of ‘trying on’ a stereotypical Irish femininity’ in order to understand the pleasures, pains and contradictions of the lived experience of becoming the role.

This performance of the past in the present is also encompassed in the concept of postmemory, which refers to the memory transmuted to the ‘generation after’. Most often applied to collective traumatic events especially the Holocaust (Hirsch), I want to propose, not that Ireland’s past is entirely traumatic, but that the term may be usefully applied in a general sense as the intergenerational transmission of ‘memory’. How does conceiving of the work as performing the memory of a previous generation open up new understanding of how women’s ostensibly ‘by gone’ roles might haunt, influence or constitute femininities in the present, and of how personal experiences are mapped to collective narratives.

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## **Biography**

Dr. Katherine Nolan is an artist, lecturer and researcher specialising in gender and new media. With a particular focus on tensions between the experiential and the spectacular body, her research investigates femininity, identity and desire in the context of digital cultures. Recent publications include *The Camera and the Selfie: Narcissism, Self-Regulation and Feminist Performance Practices* (DRHA, DCU 2015).

She has exhibited internationally in Europe, America and Asia and regularly curates with MART and Dublin Live Art Festival. Recent exhibitions include *The Mistress of the Mantle* solo exhibition at MART Dublin and group shows at LACE Los Angeles, Supermarket Art Fair Stockholm and Future Histories at Kilmainham Gaol

Her extensive teaching experience, includes a course leader role at the University of the Arts London and visiting lectureships at The National College of Art and Design, Crawford College of Art and Design, and Central Saint Martins, London. She is currently a Lecturer in Creative Digital Media at Technological University Dublin

**UMAR NIZARUDEEN, JNU, New Dehli**

## **Title: Performative Continuum of Indigenous Life in Kerala, India**

Life in its various contexts such as the legal, political, social and moral contexts occur theatrically. In theatre there is a theatricalisation of contexts. There is a fictionalisation of contexts as in Godot where existentialism is framed. Thus original life is etiolated, leeches and presented sans its vitality in the theatrical arena, something which happens in the performance arenas of the Keralan elite, as in *Kathakali* (Schechner). But in the indigenous life and their subaltern local performativities shorn of classical trappings, this acquires a vital sheen that preserves the energies of real life. Therefore the stage play to be performed is not a hollow, parasitic void, but a signifying presence. Play acting is an essential structural function for the indigenous communities. A logical interrogation of theatre happens in these performances which go back to their primordial green lore, with water as the arche. Certain incantations which do not serve signifying function also occur, but these are the paradigms. Question of context is taken for granted, just as equality is taken for granted in organic societies. It is precipitated in the playing arena. Communication is the crucial thing. It happens even when it fails. The basic structure of communication we call meaning. It is an epiphany, a revelation in the sense given by Walter Benjamin, of messianic time. Communication itself occurs as a truth and as a concept. It is the primordial media of water. Spoken utterance is the main material. But its cadences give it the sheen of song. The speech act theory of JL Austin and the subsequent rebuttal by Derrida and the ensuing debate will be in this context, pertinent. This presentation will be accompanied by a masked solo, where the indigenous *adiya* tales from Kerala, will be narrated on stage to the accompaniment of fishing songs.

## **Biography**

Umar Nizarudeen is a research scholar the Centre for English, JNU, New Delhi. He is associated with the University of Calicut as a faculty at Government College, Kalpetta, Kerala. His poems have been published by *Vayavya*, *Muse India*, *Culture Cafe*, and also broadcast by All India Radio.

**Dr Deirdre Flynn, UCD**

**Title: Making the personal political: Autoethnography and Ann Blake's Overnight Minority Report**

This paper looks at the first iteration of Ann Blake's *The Morning after the Life Before* and how through an autoethnographic approach Blake aimed to make the political personal. *Overnight Minority Report* was performed in a number of venues prior to the referendum on Equal Marriage in May 2015 in Ireland.

Using her own personal experience, Blake uses her story to encourage a yes vote in the forthcoming referendum, and asks the audience to vote at the end of the performance. However, the question they are asked is not the based on the wording of the referendum, but directly relates to Blake's own personal circumstance: 'Will you let me marry the love of my life?'

Blake shares her own difficulties with coming out, and answers many of the questions for those basing homosexual relationships on the heteronormative institution. This story speaks to her heterosexual audience members, creating comparisons to their own relationships and demonstrating how her relationship with her partner is no different, but is subject to social, political, religious and personal prejudice.

This paper will discuss the importance of personal stories, including Blake's, to the success of the Yes Equality campaign in 2015 and is based on teaching led research in her module *Theatres of Change*.

## **Biography**

Dr Deirdre Flynn is Assistant Professor in Irish Studies at the School of English, Drama, Creative Writing and Film at University College Dublin. She has published widely on contemporary Irish and world literature, and recently published two co-edited collections with Palgrave; *Irish Urban Fictions* and *Representations of Loss in Irish Literature*. She works on contemporary Irish and world literature, theatre and film.

## **Panel Four**

**Dr Miriam Haughton, NUI Galway**

**Title: Galway 2020: A Feminist-Activist Bid**

This paper proposes a study of how the bid book *Making Waves* submitted by Galway for the designation of European Capital of Culture 2020 was embedded with feminist and activist principles, processes, and objectives. *Making Waves* is 'a metaphor for a series of actions that will challenge the status quo and enable a shift in behavior so that we achieve solidarity in diversity and replace apathy with cultural confidence.' (4) This feminist-activist ideology is

fundamental to its objectives, as outlined in the Introduction, which declares, ‘Our vision for Galway 2020 is that it will be a catalyst for a future of inclusivity, participation and cultural sustainability.’ (4) This paper will provide analysis of the bid book as a feminist action, including the projects proposed by local artists, and, the ethos of collaboration across companies, communities and individuals involved in creating the bid. The estimated €45 million investment could be transformative for a region marked by urban youth and diversity facing precarious futures, rural decline, and historically, most harshly impacted by The Great Famine (1845-49). However, since winning the bid, this feminist approach has been significantly problematised by those who then took on the management of the project.

In this paper, I address how the Galway 2020 bid process galvanised the powerful potential for artistic growth and public interactions created by a community of artists, organisations and individuals harnessing feminist-activist principles and strategies. At the same time, this paper questions how ‘official’ power is threatening the realisation of that potential, by sidelining the artists involved in the creation of the bid book, and instead, returning to established modes of business management, which have resulted in multiple crises for the project and the loss of public confidence.

## **Biography**

Dr Miriam Haughton is Director of Postgraduate Studies in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She is author of *Staging Trauma: Bodies in Shadow* (Palgrave, 2018), and the co-edited collection *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practices by Women in Ireland* (Carysfort, 2015). Her research has appeared in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *Modern Drama*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Irish Studies Review*, *Mortality* and multiple edited collections. Miriam is Director of the Feminist Storytelling Network ([feministstorytelling.ie](http://feministstorytelling.ie)), and Executive Committee member of the Irish Society for Theatre Research.

## **Salomé Paul, UCD**

### **Title: From Her Point of View: The Myth of Phaedra in Marina Carr’s *Phaedra Backwards***

In this paper, we will consider the feminist deconstruction that the mythological figure of Phaedra undergoes in Marina Carr’s *Phaedra Backward*.

Phaedra belongs to the category of the monstrous women haunting the Western canonical literature alongside with Medea and Clytemnestra. Even though she is mentioned in epic poetry, the construction of her evil identity really started with Greek tragedy, and more specifically with the now-lost plays of Sophocles (*Phaedra*) and Euripides (*Hippolytus Calyptomenus*) showing Phaedra as an unscrupulous lusty woman. This tradition was then pursued by Seneca who dramatised her transformation from a passionate woman into a mythological, and so inhumane, monster. Thus, Phaedra is regarded in the canon as the embodiment of the unnatural, and thus destructive, female sexual desire. The emergence of her figure is undeniably connected with the patriarchal structure on which ancient societies, Greek as well as Roman, used to rely on. Indeed, Phaedra expressing her desire towards Hippolytus appears as a corruption of the conventions overruling female behaviour. Therefore she stands as a threat to male authority since a woman assuming her sexuality gains power over her own life. In this respect, the canonical monstrous figure of Phaedra must be considered as a

production of “male gaze”, her character being reduced to an object of disgust in order to advocate men’s control over women.

In *Phaedra Backwards*, Marina Carr challenges the mythological as well as the tragic pattern of Phaedra’s story. Diverting the traditional linearity of the dramatic narrative in tragedy, the play starts with showing its own denouement. Such a dramatic trick enables Carr to play on the common knowledge the audience and/or the reader must have about Phaedra’s myth. As the plot goes literally backwards, the playwright establishes a new dramatic authority with her character of Phaedra since the actions performed during the play arise from her memory. Using, and thus twisting, such a *topos* of Irish literature and theatre, Carr confers a creative role on Phaedra, making her similar to the narrator of an autobiographical novel. This new position illustrates the heroine’s empowerment in the play as it enacts on stage Derrida’s theory about the unavoidable connection of writing with power. As a “dramatic narrator”, Phaedra is able to tell her own version of the story which appears to be an unexpected retelling of the traditional myth. Even though all the topical mythemes are displayed, such as the feeling of love between the heroine and her stepson, Carr reverses most of them to call into question the construction of monstrosity in the canon. *Phaedra Backwards* breaks the automatisms the audience and/or the reader must have been used to it, turning the traditional monsters, Phaedra and the Minotaur, into victims of systemic oppressions, thus exemplifying Helene Cixous’ conception of feminine writing.

## **Biography**

After having completed two masters in Classics and Comparative Literature at Sorbonne University, Salomé PAUL started a PhD in Drama studies at University College Dublin and in Comparative Literature at Sorbonne University. Her thesis deals with political transpositions of Greek tragedy in France and in Ireland during the 20th century. She is particularly interested into the political and philosophical use of theatre. She also teaches as a tutor at the UCD School of English, Drama and Film.

## **Martha Fitzgerald, UCD & GSA**

Title: “Mother” Earth and Her Children: An ecofeminist interpretation of postmodern contemporary theatre with reference to *The Children* and *By the Bog of Cats*

This paper explores the relative absence of ecological feminism (or ‘ecofeminism’) as an intersectional analytical tool from the fields of theatrical research and criticism over the last number of decades. In spite of this, much contemporary theatre fulfils the goals of ecofeminism which seek to challenge the patriarchal, colonialist, and capitalist structures that are dependent on the domination of both woman and nature in order to exist. *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood and *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr are used as case studies to support this theory, neither of which have been examined through a scholarly ecological feminist lens thus far. While both ecocritical and feminist analyses of these plays and playwrights have been published – namely through the scholarship of Derek Gladwin, Miriam Haughton and Chantal Bilodeau among others, none have heretofore examined the intersection of the two areas, with the exception of Melissa Sihra who has applied an ecofeminist lens to Carr’s *Ariel in Pastures of the Unknown*. Both plays are examined in relation to theme, form and content under three primary headings: their representation of woman, their representation of environment, and the relationship between these two oppressed forces. The published play texts will be examined as evidence, as well as (where possible) staging and design, journalistic reviews, and comments given on the works by Carr and Kirkwood respectively. Ecofeminism is then positioned as symptomatic

of postmodernism and expressed as an underutilized field of research in theatre that, as a critical framework, is of increasing relevance. Criticisms of ecofeminism are also noted and explored through the writings of Victoria Davion and Chaone Mallory, particularly with reference to its perceived essentialism and incompatibility with mainstream nature-culture dualism.

## **Biography**

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Martha Fitzgerald graduated with a B.A. in European Studies from Trinity College, Dublin in 2016. During her time there she was an active member of DU Players, and artistic director of the university Arts Festival in 2016. Since graduating she has worked in a variety of roles, from theatre-in-education to as a trainee in the European Parliament. She is also a part-time drama and creative writing instructor at the Irish Centre for Talented Youth, DCU (CTYI). In 2017 she co-founded Fizz & Chips Theatre Company with whom she continues to devise and direct, and she is currently completing an M.A. in Theatre Practice, a joint degree between UCD and the Gaiety School of Acting.

## **Panel Five**

**Dr Emma Fisher, MIC**

**Title: Examining puppetry as a tool to disrupt cultural perceptions of the disabled body, within my practice based research play *Pupa***

This paper will look at my practice based research which examined personal and cultural constructions of the disabled body, with the creation of the puppet play *Pupa* as its practical culmination. My research traces the journey of my disability within a piece of theatre, from able bodied, to 'abelist', to claiming my identities and finally 'coming out' as disabled, here I aspired to bring to light and through so doing, to subvert ableist perceptions of the disabled body.

Ableists are defined as those who favored the 'normative' body. Garland-Thomson (1996) created the term 'normate' to describe those whose bodies are not marked with disability. Garland-Thomson argues that stereotypes that have become common place in culture around disability have influenced how the disabled body is seen and how disabled people see themselves. Within this research project, I look at how these ableist views have filtered down through stories and theatre, and indeed through history more generally, into culture today and into the views of society in general.

There were six participants in my study, one of which was me. The play *Pupa* was infused with each participant's view on their own disability, how they see their body and feel society views them. These thoughts and views were combined with my desk research around disability and puppet theory and were infused into the puppets, the script and the dramaturgy of *Pupa*. The process of interviewing the participants and writing the script was an examination of our (the participants) views. This led to questions around our own identities and for some of us, led to us changing our perceptions of ourselves. The play was both how I distilled meaning and documented this journey. Showing *Pupa* to the public was a way to disrupt cultural perceptions. By showing them my research journey and our changing perceptions of disability, I hope that it led the audience to question their views around disability. I cannot prove that portraying our stories through the puppets changed anyone's view of the disabled body other than our own. We presented ourselves and asked the audience to view us and tell us what they thought. While

I will never know the answer, I did ask the question, and questions are the first step in generating change.

## **Biography**

Dr Emma Fisher is a researcher, puppeteer, theatre designer, playwright and educator. She was awarded her PhD in 2018 from the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, Mary Immaculate College. Emma's research explores unconventionally constructed puppets that reflect the disabled body and looks at the history of puppetry to see how it has been applied in ways that transcend oppression of the body. She is the president of Irish UNIMA (World Puppetry Organisation) and on the working group of UNIMA Research Commission, where she started and ran the Broken Puppet Symposium which will have its third iteration in Birmingham in April 2019. She has had articles published in RIDE (Research in Drama Education) and The Puppet Notebook. She founded Beyond the Bark, an inclusive puppet and installation theatre in 2007, which has toured Europe. She was nominated for an Irish Times theatre award for set design in 2010.

## **Simon Thompson, UL**

### **Title: The neutral mask and the development of its application in a new creative pedagogy**

“The first time you put on a neutral mask it seems heterogeneous sort of an object that bothers and suffocates you. Gradually, however, you begin to feel hidden and you start to do things that you would never normally do.” (LeCoq 1987)

When Ameleto Sartori and Jacques LeCoq first developed the neutral mask (1956), their work was influenced by the theorist, director, and actor Jacques Copeau (1879-1949) Since then, neutral mask has become synonymous with actor training and it is the primary pillar in the pedagogy of LeCoq. In the book *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*, LeCoq states that the neutral mask “Helps us discover the space around us, and the rhythm and gravity of things.” (LeCoq 1987) This research paper outlines some initial findings from my practice-based investigation of the use of neutral mask within the devising process.

As a mask performer for over 30 years, I have consistently utilised the neutral mask as a tool in the devising of new work. I also use it within my devising methodology in order to enhance my physical awareness, combined with a mode of action/reaction (play). Throughout the evolution of my creative practice, I have continuously revisited LeCoq's application of the neutral mask, exploring new approaches that promote enhanced cognitive embodiment, with the objective of developing a creative pedagogy for multidisciplinary training using masks and clowning.

To date, my research has primarily been carried out via an auto-ethnographic approach on my own practice, and through in-depth reflection on my training with LeCoq. I have engaged auto-ethnographic methods in order to recover and document my training in clown and mask. This insight into past practices then forms a stepping-stone in developing new practices and approaches to devising that go beyond that training. Part of this auto-ethnographic inquiry took place during a period of artistic residency at Nenagh Arts Centre, Tipperary, where it was possible to test and evaluate new methods over a consecutive period of 30 days, using a combination of workshops with professional artists and through the development of a public performance.

## Biography

Simon is a performer, director and teacher, who trained with LeCoq, and Gaulier. He is currently a Lecturer on the M.A. Festive Arts @ U.L and is studying for a PhD (Creative Pedagogy through Mask and Clown). In 2014 Simon began to write a Clown Trilogy to be performed as three separate 1hr performances. Part 1 “Clown Noir, This is me”. In 2015 Part 2 “Peines d'amour perdues” an adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Love’s Labours Lost”, and in 2016 “Nose Business”. His recent projects include a metaphysical mask exploration of Australian Indigenous Peoples Stories; entitled “Altjeringa” performed by Lucy Dawson as a gestural etude at the Irish World Academy. Currently he’s touring an adaptation of “The Millers Tale” and a work in development is “Lifted Up” a mask performance that highlights the difficulties of sensory overload in adults who are diagnosed with A.S.D, previewed at Nenagh Arts Centre Jan 2019.

## Aideen Wylde, MIC

**Title: *Telling Other Stories* – The ethno-bricoleur and the Jewish community in Ireland.**

“Complex constructs, such as identity, require a research approach that can explore the multifaceted, fluid and emerging aspects of the lived world.” – Fitzpatrick, 2017

This presentation will examine methodologies employed to date in my PaR PhD looking at Jewish identity in Ireland in a new work for theatre, “Here Shall We Rest”. The title of this paper refers to my experience as an emerging ethnodramatist, bricoleur-researcher, actor, and at the core of all these identities, storyteller. Not Jewish, though entangled with the community in many ways, I must constantly renegotiate my own hyphens as outsider-looking- in. Believing fervently up to a point in the power of theatre to transcend cultural difference and the hegemonic concepts of Irish identity that I had grown up with, I now find myself left with one uncomfortable question - do I have to be *of* a story to have the right to tell it?

This presentation seeks to address preconceptions about the Jewish in Ireland - as one version of the community fades away, another diaspora is emerging bringing with it new complexities. Drawing together the theoretical and methodological strands such as othering, the stranger, and the actor-as-medium, I will describe the processes of play-making employed and perform extracts from the recently staged, “Here Shall We Rest”.

## Biography

Aideen is an actor, writer and PhD candidate at MIC examining representations of Judaism in contemporary Irish theatre. She is a member of multidisciplinary theatre ensemble BrokenCrow ([www.brokencrow.ie](http://www.brokencrow.ie)). Aideen trained at the TU Dublin Conservatory of Music & Drama, and holds a MA in Theatre Studies from UCC.

As playwright her works include “Levin&Levin”, a musical play about Weimar Germany’s most famous male impersonators Ida and Bubbie Levin, and the award-winning “Love All” - the true-*ish* story of Ireland’s only ever Wimbledon finalist and his grisly demise. Her next play, “Found”, tells the story of her familial connection to Newfoundland, inspired by her father Donal Wylde’s work there for the 1980’s Radharc documentary series.

## Panel Six

Dr David Clare, MIC

### **Title: Lizzie Nunnery's *Intemperance* (2007) and Compromised Mental Health among the Irish in Britain**

The 2007 play *Intemperance* by Liverpool-Irish playwright Lizzie Nunnery tells the story of an Irish family living in penury in Liverpool during the 1850s. The family has been psychologically scarred by the discrimination they have endured at the hands of English locals, as well as by the death that has surrounded them both in Ireland (in the impoverished Co. Louth countryside and the Dublin slums) and in Liverpool (while residing in the city's disease-ridden "court and cellar" dwellings). This paper concentrates on Nunnery's interest in the anti-social behaviour of the family, which they fear is a product of their "madness". *Intemperance* is part of a line of important works written by English scriptwriters of Irish descent, in which the writers associate the Irish with mental health problems. Prominent examples of such works include *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *Hangmen*, by the London-Irishman Martin McDonagh, and six episodes of the TV series *Cracker*, by Liverpool-Irishman Jimmy McGovern. As numerous studies have shown, incidents of depression, schizophrenia, self-harm, and suicide among Irish-born people in Britain are disturbingly high, especially when compared to the rates among British-born whites and even most migrant groups. By focussing on the mental health struggles of the Irish in Britain, writers like Nunnery are actually capturing something perfectly true (and worthy of attention) about the ethnic community from which they hail.

### **Biography**

Dr. David Clare is Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Mary Immaculate College, UL, and his books include the monograph *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and the edited collection *The Gate Theatre, Dublin: Inspiration and Craft* (Carysfort/Peter Lang, 2018). Dr. Clare has published numerous essays on Irish drama, including a recent article in *Irish Archives* on Gate plays by Mary Manning, Christine Longford, and Maura Laverty. He was co-organiser of the Irish Women Playwrights and Theatremakers Conference held at MIC in June 2017.

### **Allison Manuel**

### **Title: In Exchange: Conversations and Confrontations with Empire across Space and Time**

My great, great, great grandfather Richard O'Gorman was a leader of the Young Irelanders who in 1848, in the depths of the Great Famine, staged an armed rebellion against British colonization of Ireland. The British quelled the rebellion, and O'Gorman escaped to the United States. Frustrated with discrimination against Irish he encountered in the US yet seduced by "the American Dream," he gave up his radical past and paved a different path to power as a right-hand man of the infamous Irish political Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall—the city's chief Democratic party organization. Tammany Hall illegally naturalized thousands of Irish immigrants to register them to vote and enlist them in the Union army during the US Civil War. By 1855, over one-fifth of New York City's voters were Irish immigrants—many of whom were Famine refugees. O'Gorman became NYC's Corporation Counsel, the chief legal officer

who handles civil claims against the city, and later rose to serve on New York State's Superior Court. He leveraged his position to funnel a million public dollars in fraudulent claims into the coffers of the "Tweed Ring" and to delay their prosecution for fraud. He gave speeches rallying the Irish to fight for the Union while lauding abolition of slavery. He assimilated into the political opportunism and oppression he once rebelled against in the name of a narrow view of progress. *In—Ex—change* is a poetic exploration of O'Gorman's political evolution in the US, as traced through letters, speeches, and news articles written over the course of his career. As I read through O'Gorman's letters to his fellow former Irish rebels, I was moved by the conviction with which he denounced the America he confronted upon his arrival in 1849. I was also struck with knowledge that he would succumb to many of the very exploitative and dehumanizing facets of the socio-political order that he railed against. The project re-imagines the form and content of the correspondences to make visible the eerily prescient premonitions he makes for American and global futures that haunt his words. It explores the pressures and incentives that drove him to assimilate—and their presence on the page. Ex—as in past, former, departed. Change—as in transition, contraction, distortion, transformation. What did he lose and gain in exchange for committing so completely to his adopted American identity? This collection takes shape through four letters he penned to fellow Irish rebels between 1849 and 1861, as the Union erupted into the Civil War. Where his letters end, his speeches and the *New York Times* articles begin, charting his ascent to political power and descent into corruption. I include responses composed with reorganizations of his words or words printed about him in the press. With these "reprises," I seek to make visible my own research process, as I note subtext and shifts in his sentiments, deeds, and public stances taken over time. I pen replies to his letters, performing the possibility of intergenerational exchanges with ancestors to make meaning from the past and forge direction for the future. How we take responsibility for the legacies we inherit from our ancestors as individuals, as communities, and as nations is critical to how we envision new and different futures.

## **Bibliography**

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## **Biography**

Allison Manuel has been a multimedia storyteller and community organizer in the Bronx, NY for ten years. Through this work, Allison impacts public narrative and policy by supporting individuals and organizations to tell their stories of resistance, resilience, and creation. Currently she serves on the board of the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative, a community-led effort to build an equitable, sustainable, and democratic Bronx economy. As part of the initiative, she is an Economic Democracy facilitator to prepare leaders of grassroots organizations, labor, business, and government to advance knowledge, culture, and enterprises rooted in democratic ownership and shared wealth based on experiences in the Bronx and around the world. She is pursuing a Masters in Fine Arts in the New School's Creative Writing Program for nonfiction and fiction. In 2017 she received the Gaeltacht Summer Irish Language Award to study Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

## **Panel Seven**

**Dr Fiona Fearon, Dundalk IT**

## **Title: Negotiating Representations of Toxic Masculinity on the Abbey Stage 2018**

In 2018, against the background of a growing public discussion of rape culture and toxic masculinity, the Abbey Theatre presented two plays that confronted issues of sex, rape and masculinity head on. In April 2018 Caitríona McLaughlin directed a revival of *On Raftery's Hill* for the Abbey, while in October, Annabelle Comyn's directed *Asking for It* in a co-production between Landmark, the Everyman and the Abbey Theatre. These two plays present us with a disturbing picture of masculinity, twisted by habitual incest or violent misogyny. The rape of Sorrell in *On Raftery's Hill* is seen on stage, while the rape of Emma in *Asking for It* is described in detail through voice overs and flashing images, which makes it just as horrific. The language of Red Raftery and the young boys in *Asking for It* share a common thread of misogyny; these men commit the crimes they do because they have neither the ability to understand that what they are doing is wrong nor the desire to engage with their victims on a human level. *On Raftery's Hill* was presented as the revival of a contemporary classic by one of our greatest Irish playwrights, with an age advisory of 16. *Asking for It* on the other hand was an adaption of a well-known Young Adult novel, and was heavily promoted as a production for schools including an accompanying resource pack provided by the Abbey, although it too came with an advisory age limit of 16. Both plays struck the critical audience as entirely topical in light of contemporary events, but describe the plays variously as 'riveting if hardly encouraging', 'striking and pummelling', 'gruelling', 'unsettling and alarming'. There is a suggestion that they contribute to a narrative of victimhood, merely talking to the converted, acting as imagined witness statements to a reality that is well documented in the media, and to which it seems impossible to bring the kind of toxic masculinity represented in these plays to a state of self-awareness. Looking at the critical reception and audience reaction to these two plays produced in 2018, this paper will interrogate how drama can engage with a discussion around redefining masculinity in contemporary Ireland.

### **Biography**

Dr. Fiona Fearon is a Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland. Her principal areas of interest are audience and performance studies, and she has published on audience ethnography and the performance of grief in contemporary society. Recently she has been working on the Irish Theatre and grief in early twentieth century Ireland, and working class performance culture in County Louth from Home Rule to the Free State. Her most recent publication was 'Playing the Rebel: Propaganda and Amateur Dramatics in County Louth, 1902-1916' published in Donal Hall and Martin Maguire's *County Louth and the Irish Revolution* (Irish Academic Press, 2017). Fiona is a former member of the executive committee of the Irish Society for Theatre Research, and convenor of the ISTR New Scholar's Prize 2012 and 2013. She completed her PhD in December 2007 at the University of Sheffield on *The Selection, Production and Reception of European Plays at the National Theatre of Great Britain, 1963-1997*.

### **Neha Kamrani, UCD**

**Title: Land pollution and Rape in Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill* and Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out*: A Trans-national study of representation of sexual violence on Indian and Irish stage**

This paper proposes to read Marina Carr's *On Raftery's Hill* and Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out* alongside each other for their portrayal of sexual violence on stage. This subject, so

complex, often difficult to recreate on stage, is central to both these plays yet is dealt with in a completely different fashion. Despite the difference in dramaturgy and cultural backgrounds of the dramatists, both the plays employ contaminated land as a symbol of rape. This symbol, however, is not used in an orthodox fashion of a coloniser's 'new-found-land' but is used to critique nationalised and patriarchal spaces. The paper shall analyse how this symbol features in Carr and Padmanabhan's plays and how the metaphor of fecundity is turned on its head in such a representation on stage. In doing so, questions of voyeurism in portrayal of sexual violence on stage and employing psychological coercion shall also be addressed.

## **Biography**

Neha Kamrani is presently researching for her doctoral thesis on 'Portrayal of Sexual Violence on Stage: A transnational study of Irish and Indian Stage' at the University College Dublin, Ireland. She is also a Research Fellow for a project funded by UNESCO to study rape reportage in India. She completed her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Delhi University, following which she went on to pursue her Masters and MPhil at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her MPhil dissertation, *New Rape Narratives in the Indian Public Sphere*, is an academic intervention against sexual assaults as she worked on fictional and non-fictional rape narratives uttered via new media forms such as photographs, documentaries and blogposts. In India, she also worked as a Teaching Assistant at IIT Delhi and as an Assistant Professor at Delhi University.

## **Claire Keogh, TCD**

### **Title: *Manologue vs. Femologue: Unconscious Bias and Contemporary Irish Monologue Plays***

The #WakingTheFeminists movement prompted widespread discussion among theatre practitioners, both in Ireland and overseas, on how unconscious biases affect programming and hiring decisions in our theatres. This paper will examine how both gender and canon biases affect the aesthetic response of readers/spectators to recent Irish monologue plays by women.

Over the past two decades, the monologue plays that proliferated on the stages of Irish theatres were defined by male protagonists who traversed urban landscapes on drink and drug-fuelled nights-out, narrating their experiences through a theatrical language propelled by the rhythms of accelerated heartbeats and electronic dance music. Emerging in stark contrast to the ubiquitous *manologue*, Elaine Murphy's *Little Gem* exploded the form by framing a frank discussion of female sexuality within a comedic structure. Taking this turn in the direction of the evolution of the Irish monologue play as its starting point, this paper will interrogate how the unconscious mind interprets gendered linguistic and dramaturgical markers against a male-dominated canon. Like *Little Gem*, both Genevieve Hulme-Beaman's *Pondling* and Noni Stapleton's *Charolais* premiered during the Dublin Fringe Festival and followed in Murphy's path by constructing women's worlds within comedic conventions. Transferring the location of the monologue to a rural setting, these *femologues* pushed the boundaries established by Murphy into fantasy worlds, portraying the demented desires of their protagonists in coexistence with reality.

The monologue form offers an opportunity to experience women's lives through the consciousness of female characters, offering a unique insight into girlhood, female sexuality, pregnancy and motherhood. However, it also requires the audience to do greater cognitive work to create scenes within their own minds and thus generates greater opportunity for biases to

infiltrate aesthetic evaluation. Drawing on Daniel Kahneman's description of the brain's dual systems of thought and Howard J Ross's research on unconscious bias, this paper will investigate the ways in which the unconscious mind makes decisions that are susceptible to prejudice. Combining these findings from behavioural psychology with feminist linguistic and performance analysis, this paper will provide an explanation of how bias works against female playwrights. In doing so, it will offer insight into the cognitive processes behind the judgement of artistic work and an understanding of the reasons why fewer plays by women have been programmed on the most prominent stages of Irish theatre.

## **Biography**

Claire Keogh is a PhD candidate in the School of Creative Arts at Trinity College Dublin. Her research focuses on Irish plays by women before and after #WakingTheFeminists, investigating the relationship between unconscious bias, feminist dramaturgies and the location of production. She holds an Early Career Research Residency at the Trinity Long Room Hub and is the Playography Researcher/Editor at Irish Theatre Institute.

## **Panel Eight**

### **Joe Duffy, Garret Scally, and Victoria Allen**

#### **Title: *Cilliní*: performing and documenting what could never be said**

This paper discusses the preliminary research material from the *Cilliní* project. *Cilliní* is an experimental documentary film that uses 360° camera technologies and aerial drone camera technologies to create a film-based work, with associated performative acts, that explores the narratives around landscape and the hidden histories of cilliní as sites for the informal children's graveyards which were and, in large part still, remain unrecognised in fields across rural Ireland. The use of cilliní as informal burial grounds for stillborn or unbaptised children resulted in many villages having at least one such site. To deter being disturbed the sites would often be placed in raths/iron age ring forts with trees planted around them. Such sites were deemed as fairy forts and held taboos and curses around them to stop intrusion and to stop their destruction by farmers. The use of mapping, performance events and aerial film to locate/map cilliní are part of a broader communal effort to de-stigmatise these marginalised sites and return the bodies of children to the families through recognition and restoration. Such sites were also used for mass burial during the famine period, so this project will take on a national and global significance. The intention is to develop methods of storytelling and performance that are aided by innovative technologies to address intergenerational understandings of the phenomena of Cilliní. The subject area involves examining sites with a traumatic historical relationship to the past and examining methods to relay stories, challenge perceptions, invite dialogue, and, in the spirit of the conference enable conversations through time.

## **Biographies**

Joe Duffy is an artist filmmaker with an active engagement with analogue, material processes as part of the UK based artist collective Film Material. Experimenting with locative and emergent media he embraces an interdisciplinary methodology to push and examine boundaries of documentary film. He works on a filmmaking course in an Art School in Manchester Metropolitan University, fostering an ethos of innovation and creativity. He exhibits internationally and his film *The Lament* screened at Rome Media Art Festival 2018.

Garret Scally is a theatre practitioner-researcher who uses theatre in educational settings for additional language development. Garret has just completed his doctoral studies on the Professional Doctorate in Applied Theatre (Applied Theatre PhD) programme at the University of Manchester. His research interests include devised theatre, applied theatre, breath and voice work, performative teaching and pedagogical approaches, including the teaching and learning of additional languages through theatre.

Victoria Allen is a doctoral researcher at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel Germany. She is currently completing her PhD in Media and Cultural Studies on the representations of Northernness articulated in industrial Myths and Memories produced in Tyne- and Wearside popular culture. Her research interests are in the area of semiotic and narrative analysis, gender studies, and collective and cultural memory.

### **Cohen Ambrose**

#### **Title: ‘Shocked to Aliveness’: The Aesthetic Arousal of the Feeling-Knowing Body in Susan Glaspell’s *The Verge***

In Susan Glaspell’s 1921 play *The Verge*, the play’s central character Claire Archer experiments with plants and flowers, cross-pollinating and genetically mixing them in an endeavor to create “what hasn’t been.” Speaking of the human social world and its confining “moulds” for individuals to slot into, Claire yearns “...to break it up! If it were all in pieces, we’d be (*a little laugh*) shocked to aliveness—wouldn’t we? There would be strange new comings together...and we would know what it is to be born, and then we might know—that we are.”

In this performance-based presentation, I explore the image of being “shocked” into some new state via an aesthetic form. I question whether affective states can be triggered into feeling and action by external stimuli or if emotions are constructed by the body, as recent neuroscientific research suggest (Barrett, 2017). Using video documentation from a production of the play I directed in October 2018, I explore how *The Verge* performs an aesthetics of bodily experience by staging an artist’s virtual world of affective meaning-making.

Picking up Brian Massumi’s thread that “[a]ffect is only understood as enacted” (2015: vii) in this presentation, I explore the ways in which Glaspell’s play enacts and performs an aesthetic arousal of affect both on the page “on a crest of waves” (Massumi, 2015: vii), as well as on the stage in an embodied ‘feeling-knowing’ that breaks up the continental and analytical traditions of separating knowledge from affect. I draw upon Dewey’s “qualitative character of experience” ([1934] 1980), Johnson and Lakoff’s “image-schematic patterns” (1999), Susanne Langer’s assertion that art expresses “not feelings and emotions which the artist has, but feelings and emotions which the artist *knows*” (1957), and various embodied simulation theories to explore how *The Verge* presents and enacts the qualitative dimensions of the characters’ experiences by the very means of the imagery, rhythms, metaphors, and patterns of the play.

### **Biography**

Cohen Ambrose is a theatre director, performer, writer, and teacher who has lived and worked in various cities in the USA and Europe. He has published articles and plays and has directed

and performed in numerous professional, academic, and community-based theatre productions. He holds an MA in Performance Theory & Criticism and an MFA in Directing. He most recently served as a full-time Assistant Professor of Theatre at the Community College of Baltimore County in Baltimore, Maryland. He now lives in Limerick with his wife and son, working as an independent scholar, freelance theatre artist, and full-time father.

## **Panel Nine**

**Dr Charlotte McIvor, NUI Galway**

### **Title: Baxter Theatre Centre's *The Fall*: Intersectionality, Activism, Effort as Stage(d) Labour**

This paper engages the touring success of South African Baxter Theatre Centre's *The Fall*, a devised work created by an ensemble of former students at the University of Cape Town during the #RhodesMustFall student movement which began in 2015. The ensemble conceived the play as a student of colour-led response to Barney Simon's 1984 apartheid-era play *Black Dog/Inj'emnyama* which also traced activist figures' individual stories. To date, *The Fall* has been performed in Scotland, Ireland, the United States and Australia in addition to multiple runs in South Africa, a frequently sell-out success on this touring circuit.

*The Fall's* travels as a theatrical work on this circuit are mirrored in the play itself by the student activists' dramatized engagement with multiple languages of Western activism and critical race theory (particularly intersectionality) as they negotiate multiple ultimately interlinking struggles towards decolonisation on the University of Cape Town campus. After successfully agitating for the removal of British colonialist Cecil Rhodes' statue on campus, they become involved in associated struggles including for the rights of African refugees, workers on campus, student housing, and against a rise in fees.

But as their platform for action becomes more diffuse, the differences within the ensemble (particularly in regards to gender and sexuality) increasingly interrupt their ability to act (or even dialogue) collectively. The effort of political activism as executed by these members of the post-apartheid generation ultimately constitutes *The Fall's* dramatic action, not the ultimate efficacy of individual or collective acts. Through this refocusing, *The Fall* communicates a compelling dramatic vision for how scholars and audiences might use theatrical dramaturgies to conceive of the necessarily ongoing work of political liberation across interlinked but disparate geopolitical contexts- a potential they deliberately play on through their interrogation of transnational activist discourses within the play and their touring strategy.

### **Biography**

Charlotte McIvor is a Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She is the author of *Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland: Towards A New Interculturalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and the co-editor of *Interculturalism and Performance Now: New Directions?* (with Jason King, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practice* (with Siobhan O'Gorman, Carysfort Press, 2015) and *Staging Intercultural Ireland: Plays and Practitioner Perspectives* (with Matthew Spangler, Cork University Press, 2014). She has published in journals including *Theatre Topics*, *Modern Drama*, *Irish University Review*, *Irish Studies Review* and multiple edited volumes on contemporary theatre and performance.

**Helena Young, UCD**

**Title: The Use of Postdramatic Theatre as a Tool in Social and Political Activism.**

This paper will consider the important social and political activist role that postdramatic theatre plays in contemporary Irish society.

Theatre companies such as Brokentalkers and THEATREclub are using innovative dramaturgical strategies to heighten awareness of the marginalised within our midst. Performance as activism can be fuelled by rage, resulting in drama holding a mirror up to society. The impact of a particular contemporary, non-linear, non-narrative and abstract style of play as implemented by both companies mentioned above will be examined. The plays that will be looked at in detail will be *This Beach* and *Blue Boy* by Brokentalkers and THEATREclub's trilogy on Ireland, which is comprised of *Heroin*, *History* and *Family*. Both these companies have drawn on Augusto Boal's theories of theatre to tell the toughest of stories. It is the techniques that are used, by all disciplines involved, as collaboration is key, that make this type of theatre, personally and societally relevant. While the experience of attending a performance of this type is often an enjoyable one, phenomenologically, it should also provoke thought. It is in this way that post modernism may help to break down the master narratives of society such as religion in order to facilitate the development of micronarratives of oppressed groups such as women, LGBT, disabled and racial minorities. Audience involvement is omnipresent in postdramatic theatre but is now being more widely encouraged even in more traditional forms. While Boal's theatre utilised the stage and involvement of what he termed spect-actors to effect change in society, postdramatic theatre questions moral and political inequality by drawing the audience into an experiential learning experience that is not arrested on leaving the performance.

The new genre of work that both companies engage in is for the most part exploring current situations in Ireland, a country which is still reeling from the exposure of institutional abuse in the Ryan and Murphy reports. While the Brokentalkers' piece entitled *The Blue Boy* asks important questions about why the state allowed this to happen, it does so in a careful, caring way, taking into account the survivor's feelings. In the same way *This Beach* interrogates the refugee crisis, all the time aware of the humanitarian approach required when dealing with this wide ranging current political problem. THEATREclub have also identified those who feel undervalued in our communities and have rejected the hierarchical organizational structures usually associated with institutional theatre. The Ireland Trilogy addresses the widespread problem of addiction, not only to heroin but also to alcohol along with the family dysfunction that so often ensues. While these innovative companies are passionate about their causes, it is imperative that not only the audience but more importantly the critics embrace the ultimate purpose. Postdramatic theatre, because of its urgency and immediacy, requires ongoing funding in order to be any way effective. It would appear that more often the collective collaboration that is so much a part of this style of performance may just be expending its energies and creativity in a direction that will not ultimately provide the intended benefit to society. For Augusto Boal's legacy to live on this situation urgently needs to be addressed.

**Biography**

Helena Young has recently completed a Masters in Drama and Performance in UCD having previously achieved one in Anglo Irish Literature and Drama, also from UCD. She is presently

teaching as a tutor in Drama Studies in the UCD school of English, Drama and Film and has a particular interest in the postdramatic form and its political and social activist role.

**Heidi Schoenenberger, NUI Galway**

**Title: Connecting Arts Organisations and Schools**

The paper theorises the role of connector within the current cultural context of theatre education programmes and policy in Ireland and New Jersey. This connector role is defined within the context of the various responsibilities of those working with and between theatres and schools. Existing terms that exude similar responsibilities and functions of connector include drama facilitator, theatre educator, teacher, artist, teaching artist and consultant.

This is the beginning stages of a longer-term theatre education intervention in schools. Ireland and New Jersey were chosen as the sites of a concentrated case study which will be evaluated through a comparative lens. The paper pays close attention to arts policy that engages with, reflects on and in some cases excludes, the proven value of theatre for the positive personal development of young people (Weltsek et al 2014). It argues that the role of a connector is central to how we think about theatre in education.

The paper is set against the context of two policy frameworks: *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland and the *National Core Arts Standards Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning* from the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards in the United States of America, both published in 2014. These two government initiatives outline the value of arts experiences for children while in schools and outline existing provisions. This conversation is timely, placed during the pilot year of the “Creative Schools” initiative run by the Arts Council of Ireland. Two simultaneous initiatives in New Jersey include “Any Given Child” and “Theater to Learn”, which seek to nurture partnerships between arts organisations and schools in order to create equal opportunities for children to access an arts curriculum that includes theatre. Each of these recent initiatives employ the help of connectors, referred to as either creative associates, teaching artists or partners. The paper proposes that this role can be used to push against the most common barriers to creating quality theatre education programmes in schools and theatres: time and money.

The paper stands among the existing literature on Theatre for Young Audiences, Theatre in Education, Applied Theatre and arts education policy. It seeks to acknowledge the identity of the connector as a position which contributes to the creation of partnerships connecting young people to theatre experiences and vice versa.

**Biography**

Heidi Schoenenberger, Hardiman Scholar at NUI Galway, is pursuing her PhD in Theatre, focusing in Theatre for Young Audiences. Heidi received her Masters in Education in Drama in Education from Trinity College Dublin. She was awarded AATE’s 2018 Distinguished Thesis Award for her research based on the impact that live performance has on students and teachers in primary schools, done in collaboration with The Abbey Theatre. Heidi has worked as an educational consultant, teaching artist and arts administrator in Ireland and New Jersey with organizations such as Baboró International Arts Festival for Children, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance, The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children, Theatre Lovett, Two River Theater, George Street Playhouse, and McCarter Theatre Centre. She completed her Bachelor in Science in Educational Theatre at New York University. Heidi is dedicated to the use of drama as a tool for learning and development internationally.

## **Workshop (Parts 1&2)**

**Dr Dorothy Morrissey, MIC**

### **Title: An inquiry-based approach to understanding research-based theatre**

In these two workshops, participants will inquire into a work of research-based theatre using an inquiry-based approach to aesthetic education developed by Lincoln Center Education (LCE), New York City. This approach – underpinned by the philosophical work of Maxine Greene, focusses on 1) enabling participants to notice what there is to notice in a work of art, and 2) enabling participants to make connections between a work of art and their own lives. In these workshops, the participants will be encouraged to make connections between the work of theatre under inquiry and their work as theatre researchers and professionals. Participants will view the work on two occasions (once in each workshop) and will engage in focussed experiential activities and dialogue prior to and after each viewing.

The work of research-based theatre under inquiry was devised by Dr Diane Daly, as part of her practice-based PhD at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. Diane also performs the work, which is entitled ‘Songs my mother taught me’. In her performance, Diane – who is second-violinist with the National Chamber Orchestra, interrogates her experience of becoming an elite violinist.

### **Biography**

Dr Dorothy Morrissey is a lecturer in drama education at Mary Immaculate College (MIC), University of Limerick. She is course leader of MIC’s MA in Education and the Arts (META). Her research interests include research-based theatre, representations of femininity in artistic work, gender and education, arts education, teacher identity, artist identity and teacher-artist partnership. Her most recent publication, *Teaching as performance: metaphor and narrative as teaching, learning and research strategies in teacher education*, is published in Hanne, A. and Kaal, A. (Eds) *Narrative and metaphor in education*. London: Routledge, pp.193-207.

## **Panel Ten**

**Dr Aoife McGrath, Queens University Belfast**

### **Title: Dancing the *Let Down*: reclaiming space for communicating maternal experience.**

This paper discusses a dance performance developed as part of a research project on Dance and the Maternal, a project investigating the communication of often-untold experiences of maternal corporeality. *Let Down* (2018) is an interdisciplinary dance performance about women’s experiences of breastfeeding created in collaboration with social science researchers. It includes verbatim text from interviews with breastfeeding women and is performed by two women currently breastfeeding their children. This paper will look at how the work attempted to embody and share the “knowledge commons” (Ramsay Burt, 2017) of corporeal experiences created by mothers outside of official, institutional support structures. It will also look at how dancing about breastfeeding - a ‘vexed feminist issue’ (Schmied and Lupton, 2001) – exposed fractures in perceptions of how the topic “should” be addressed.

Breastfeeding can be a divisive and emotional social issue on the island of Ireland, and the topic made headlines recently when Northern Irish MP Sammy Wilson claimed that female MPs who want to breastfeed in the House of Commons during debates are ‘exhibitionists’. The societal pressure surrounding women’s choices about how they feed their babies impacts on their wellbeing, and so breastfeeding can be considered a topic that concerns every member of society; as Adrienne Rich reminds us, ‘we are all of woman born’ (Rich, 1986).

Dance practice provides a particularly rich site for exploring questions of maternal corporeality. The underpinning theoretical framework of the Dance and the Maternal project aims to create a dialogue between dance studies, maternal studies and affect studies, engaging with a strand of maternal studies that looks for ways to acknowledge maternal agency, and to escape the frequent positioning of maternal subjectivity in the ‘melancholia-murder binary’ of psychoanalytical and philosophical thought (Baraitser, 2009). Considering how the choreography of maternal corporeality engages with important current debates surrounding parenthood and feminism, and wider societal debates about issues concerning women’s corporeal autonomy, biopolitics, and ethics, I am interested in investigating how maternal agency can be represented in dance practice and performance, and how this agency might creatively challenge the often oppressive affective environments and circumstances from which it emerges.

## **Biography**

Dr Aoife McGrath (BA Hons TCD, PhD TCD) is a lecturer and Subject Lead in Drama at the School of Arts, English and Languages, Queen’s University Belfast. After a professional dance career in Germany and Ireland, Aoife worked as a choreographer, dance critic, and as Dance Advisor for the Irish Arts Council. Publications include her monograph, *Dance Theatre in Ireland: Revolutionary Moves* (Palgrave, 2013), and a co-edited collection (with Dr Emma Meehan, CDaRe, Coventry), *Dance Matters in Ireland: contemporary processes and practices* (Palgrave, 2018). Recent choreographic work includes *Please* (NIMHAFF, 2017), *Within: Body + Time* (Accidental Theatre, 2018) and *Let Down* (Being Human Festival, Breastival, Northern Ireland Human Rights Festival, 2018). Aoife is co-convenor (with Prarthana Purkayastha, Royal Holloway) of the IFTR Choreography and Corporeality Working Group, an executive committee member of ISTR, a member of the board of directors of Dance Limerick, and a performer/choreographer member of Dance Ireland.

## **Clara Mallon, UCD**

### **Title: (Post)Dramatic Strategies: Performing Difference in Pat Kinevane’s Solo Theatre**

Pat Kinevane’s extraordinary solo performances are born out of a fundamental sense of social justice and an affinity with the dispossessed. *Forgotten* (2006), *Silent* (2011), *Underneath* (2014) and *Before* (2018) focus on decentred identities constituted on the fringes of contemporary Irish society. In the last decade in particular, Kinevane has been at the forefront of advancing some of the solo performance strategies central to Irish theatre; his works fuse the comic with the tragic, improvisation with carefully planned execution, and entertainment with serious cultural critique. These unique performative works range freely through diverse theatrical styles to represent Irish characters marginalized by their communities. While the performances have received countless favourable reviews, won numerous awards and still tour nationally and internationally today, scholarly responses to Kinevane’s work are particularly lacking.

This paper argues that Kinevane's solo theatre offers a platform through which hegemonic political frameworks are challenged and identities are presented outside the established social norm. Utilizing Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) among others, I will demonstrate how Kinevane's theatre inscribes but also contests some of the modalities of postdramatic discourse. What is remarkable about Kinevane's works is his ability to promote identification with marginal characters, while simultaneously creating critical distance through which we can consider the political implications of their subordinate positions. This is achieved through the combination of strategies associated with postdramatic discourse and the mechanisms of traditional storytelling. Rather than reading *Forgotten*, *Silent*, *Underneath* and *Before* as pieces of dramatic literature, this paper suggests that they are better understood as "theatre works" that are only fully realized in performance. Though Kinevane works off written scripts, these texts can be viewed as only one element in the scenic creation that might be seen as a crossroads between monologue, mime, dance and stand-up comedy and improvisation. The performances are incredibly effective in instilling the tragic Aristotelian emotions of fear and pity and Kinevane achieves an undeniable empathy and identification with characters exile. Yet he perpetually subverts the expectations these conventional markers produce; utilizing theatrical stylization, direct address, monologue and narrative interruption as primary vehicles for this ongoing disturbance. Through a performative analysis of the constructional, formal and stylistic techniques operating in his theatre, this paper argues that the unique interpretive positions in which Kinevane places spectators is generated specifically by some of the aesthetic qualities Lehmann identifies as postdramatic. Kinevane's combined use of (post)dramatic strategies can be seen as an essential part of his attempts to create consciousness raising on the behalf of the spectator and promote critical thinking among audiences. Through foregrounding the politics of identity difference within a postdramatic framework (unfixed, temporal and transformative), I argue that Kinevane's theatre effectively creates conditions to imagine new hybrid identities and re-imagine Ireland in more inclusive terms.

## **Biography**

Clara Mallon holds an MA in drama and Performance from University College Dublin. She has experience in playwriting, performing and directing. Clara is a teaching assistant with UCD and lecturer in Early Irish Theatre. Clara is currently researching contemporary Irish theatre and the work of Pat Kinevane for her Phd proposal.

## **Ciara Murphy, NUIG**

### **Title: 'The Social Turn'. Reclaiming Public Space and Personal Histories Through Performance in Contemporary Ireland**

This paper seeks to interrogate performance practice in Ireland that disrupts the marginalisation of female experience by staging women's history in public space. Following on from second-wave feminism's promotion of women's stories through performance in Ireland in the 1980s, this paper contends that what Claire Bishop refers to as 'the social turn' encouraged further investigation of women's histories from the 1990s onwards and responded to a societal tendency to confess, expose and witness history by mirroring these methodologies in their performance practice.

In *Staging Trauma* Miriam Houghton states that: "[m]ultiple paradigms of female histories, experiences and narratives become conditioned to exist at the margins and lurk along the periphery of social consciousness, cultural practice, and political policy. These are the shadowed spaces of public discourse." (25) The case study analysed is ANU Productions' The

Monto Cycle (2010-2014), which exemplifies through their performance practice this tendency to confess, expose, and witness. I argue that a diversification of performance form in Ireland took place during a time of social, political, and cultural upheaval and responded to moments of social crisis in Irish society throughout the twentieth century and will utilise theories from Brian Singleton, Charlotte McIvor, and Siobhán O' Gorman to furnish this argument. This paper contextualises this diversification in relation to the broader European context of theatre and performance by comparing this diversification to a similar diversification of form in Britain, following Jen Harvie.

Irish performance's relationship with memory and remembrance will be charted in this paper through an analysis of The Monto Cycle by furthering critical theories by Emilie Pine, Brian Singleton, Miriam Haughton, and Fintan Walsh. I argue that ANU engage the audience in active participation, encouraging the interrogation of histories that have not been part of the dominant national narrative. Through its performance analysis this paper will illustrate how this reclamation of public space in ANU's work is in fact a feminist act. This paper will reflect on how performance paradigms in Ireland experienced a period of diversification due to a period of significant social change. The relationship between the active, immersed audience and the public spaces of performance are a key theoretical concern for this paper and the broader context of these forms of presenting performance will be juxtaposed with close analyses of the four performances in ANU's The Monto Cycle.

## **Biography**

Ciara L. Murphy is a final year PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance at NUI Galway, Ireland. Ciara's research is an interrogation of the relationship between contemporary Irish performance and social change on the island of Ireland, focusing on site-responsive and participatory performance practice. This research is supported by the Galway Doctoral Scholarship Scheme. Ciara was a researcher on the collaborative research project for #WakingtheFeminists, 'Gender Counts: An Analysis of gender in Irish theatre 2006-2015', that examines how key roles in Irish theatre have been gendered over the last ten years. Ciara has also published on contemporary Irish theatre in the *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, *New Hibernian Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* and in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance* (2018).

## **Panel Eleven**

### **Kate Harris**

#### **Title: Provoking Dialogue**

This paper explores the Daughters of the Revolution collaborative theatre project based on women's experiences of maternity in Ireland. The aim of the project was to illuminate women's stories, make visible the underlying power dynamic in the Irish maternity services, and through performance establish a space where dialogue could take place between service providers and service users. A total of nine performances took place between 2016 and 2018 in Dublin, Waterford, and Galway followed by post-show discussions with panellists and audience members representing a range of perspectives on the maternity services; including obstetricians, birth activists, midwives, and members of the public. This paper considers the application of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques both in creating performance as provocation and effectiveness in establishing a Third Space where dialogue could take place between divergent perspectives with a parity of esteem.

## Biography

I have been working as a drama facilitator and theatre maker since 2005, using participatory theatre techniques to work in partnership with artists, community groups, and educational institutions.

Commissions include workshops and devised theatre performances for Cork City Partnership, Smashing Times Theatre Company, Amnesty International, National Institute of Intellectual Disabilities, Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Access Group, and the School of Nursing and Midwifery Trinity College Dublin.

I hold an MPhil in Theatre and Performance Studies from Trinity College Dublin, my master's thesis, 'Creating Dialogues: The Role of Theatre of the Oppressed in *Hidden*', exploring the use of Theatre of the Oppressed to create dialogue between Dublin communities affected by drug addiction, the Dublin Regional Drug and Alcohol Task force, and healthcare providers.

Publications: "Performing the revolution, creating a counter-narrative on birth in Ireland". *Untangling the Maternity Crisis*. Ed Nadine Edwards, Rosemary Mander, and Jo Murphy-Lawless. London: Routledge, 2018. Pages 107-114.

## Lisa Risch, UCD

### **Title: Stigma and Community: Attitudes to Mental Health Issues in Anne Devlin's *After Easter* and Paula Meehan's *Mrs Sweeney***

Mental health treatment in the West has vastly improved in the past fifty years and in Ireland, there has been a shift to move care into the community during the 1970s and 1980s which led to a reduction in the number of inpatients in institutional care. However, isolation and stigmatisation remain an issue due to the general public not understanding mental health. I analyse the public attitudes to mental health issues in Anne Devlin's *After Easter* and Paula Meehan's *Mrs Sweeney*, first performed in 1994 and 1999 respectively. Both plays show that, while mental health care has undoubtedly improved, the general attitude towards such issues remains largely unchanged and those suffering from mental illness are met with judgement and a lack of understanding. This is not an attempt to diagnose the characters in the play with any form of mental illness and instead focuses on the way other characters engage with those they perceive to have mental health issues to discuss social implications that are highlighted within the plays. Both *After Easter* and *Mrs Sweeney* display a deep distrust of institutionalised care. During the time the plays were written and first performed in the 1990s, the asylum system went through fundamental changes which saw a move from institutional to community care. This is reflected in both families – Greta's sisters and Lil – not wanting their loved ones committed to a mental institution. Health professionals are not depicted in a positive light, with Dr Campbell unwilling to help Greta and the nurse Emer using derogative language to discuss her patients in *After Easter*, as well as the general practitioner refusing to come to see patients after dark in *Mrs Sweeney* on top of the negative stories about asylums from Lil's surroundings. However, the broader community also displays a lack of understanding when it comes to mental health issues: they are unable to deal with those suffering adequately and often talk about the patient rather than engage with them directly. There is, in both plays, a fear of society finding out about the mental illness of a family member and, therefore, a wish to keep their suffering secret which increases stigmatisation and further prevents sufferers from actively

seeking help. In this respect, unfortunately, the plays have aged very well. Even though a lot of work has gone into decreasing the stigma attached to mental illness, the general attitude of society still devalues those who speak openly about their struggles, leading to many people suffering in silence. Mental health care has made huge advances in the past fifty years but there is a lot of work still to be done, especially concerning public attitudes. This can be highlighted by looking at Devlin's and Meehan's work and asking how we can move on to a more understanding and inclusive community, in which those with mental health issues are encountered without stigma and are afforded the respect they deserve.

## **Biography**

Lisa Risch is an MA student in Drama and Performance Studies at University College Dublin. She completed an undergraduate degree in English with Creative Writing at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland before moving to Dublin for her postgraduate studies. Her research interests are contemporary Irish theatre, memory studies, and mental health.

## **Moonyoung Hong, TCD**

Title: "Dancing on the Hobs of Hell": A Performative Analysis of Dancehalls and Discos in Tom Murphy's *On the Outside / On the Inside* (1974) and Enda Walsh's *Disco Pigs* (1996)

Dancing is deeply associated with the development of Irish culture and society. From the traditional Irish dances to the inflow of foreign dancing such as jazz dance, dancing has been a significant part of the Irish nationalist movements, target of social control, market for commercial industry, as well as an everyday leisure activity for the local community. Emblematic of Irish culture, the staging of the dancehall in *On the Outside / On the Inside* and the disco in *Disco Pigs* question the social issues that dancing encompasses, whether it be institutionalisation, containment culture, class divisions, gender politics, urbanisation, commercialisation of romance, repressiveness of the Catholic church, Americanisation and more. In other words, the plays materialise the practice of space surrounding the dancehall and deconstructs its conceived representations and forces that oppress the characters' lives. In *The Irish Dancing: Cultural Politics and Identities 1900-2000* (2013), Barbara O'Connor draws on Eva Illouz's claims related to the consumption of romantic utopia and how romance replaced religion as the focus of everyday life in the twentieth century. O'Connor asserts that "dance venues fostered the performance of romance in the everyday life," where "romance is lived on the symbolic mode of ritual, but it also displays the properties of the staged dramas of everyday life." Aspirational consumer culture was formed through film, advertisements and popular media, and O'Connor goes on to argue that the dancehall space was a "romantic utopia," especially for many women and youth. Dancehalls "gave dancers the opportunity to transcend their everyday reality and enter an alternative, more exciting and magical world" which was created by "a sensuous material reality." In the plays, characters negotiate between the perceived and conceived spaces of the dance venues and the theatrical interplay between these spaces produce a lived space for the audience. Set in different time periods, the paper analyses the respective dance spaces from an intergenerational and comparative perspective. Both plays capture the anxiety and period of youth—a stage in life where young people are unsure of where they are going but desperately in need to declare themselves. This need to express attests to the nature of dance venues and theatre as sites of forging performative identities. The paper examines the socio-cultural and thematic representations of the dance spaces as well as the various productions and staging of the plays, building on Tom Murphy manuscripts preserved

in TCD, the digitised Abbey theatre archive in NUIG, and the 2017 performance of *Disco Pigs* by Reality:Check Productions at Smock Alley Theatre.

## **Biography**

Moonyoung Hong is a PhD student in the School of English at Trinity College Dublin, writing her thesis on Tom Murphy's plays from the perspective of everyday space. She holds a BA in English Language and Literature from Hanyang University, Seoul and completed her MPhil in Irish Writing at TCD. Moonyoung is a recipient of Trinity's Ussher Fellowship and is serving as the co-convenor of the School of English Staff-Postgraduate Seminar Series 2018-2019. She has published in *Trinity Postgraduate Review* and *The Yeats Journal of Korea*.

## **Panel Twelve**

### **Dr Eamonn Jordan, UCD**

#### **Title: *A Very, Very, Very Dark Matter: Imperial Masquerades/ Alternative Histories***

When Martin McDonagh's latest play, *A Very, Very, Very Dark Matter* premiered at the Bridge Theatre in October 2018 the critical response was exceptionally divided. What was clear, from the numerous reviews and blogs was a recognition of the interdigitisation of race and colonisation, literary writing and cultural appropriation. What was critically marginalised was McDonagh's direct challenges to Britain's historical colonising drive, by way of a critique of the activities of the Belgiumwhat belgian army in the Congo, an intervention, that left 9-10 million dead in the late 1870s.

A play that opens with an African-American actor small in stature playing a Congolese pygmy woman, swaying in a cage of captivity in the attic space of Denmark's Hans Christian Andersen in the 1850s is such an unsettling proposition. She is not simply an objectivised muse, but the creative source of Andersen's work. This type of violatory gender/race relationship was first templated in a story fragment, 'The Shakespeare Room', from *The Pillowman* (2003), where in this instance William Shakespeare stabs with a stick a caged African woman any time he wanted a new play written. Creativity, destructive literary exploitation and slavery are simply not the essence of darkness, but this opening scenario sets out the dynamic of this play that is rich, dark, and disturbingly anarchic in its complexity. In *Dark Matter*, what McDonagh offers is an imaginative, alternative history, a striking back against mass exploitation and the wholesale slaughter of colonial practices.

## **Biography**

Eamonn Jordan is Associate Professor in Drama Studies at the School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin. His publications on Irish theatre include: *The Feast of Famine: The Plays of Frank McGuinness* (1997); *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre* (2000); *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories* (co-edited with Lilian Chambers (2006); *Dissident Dramaturgies: Contemporary Irish Theatre* (2010); *The Theatre of Conor McPherson: 'Right beside the Beyond'* (co-edited with Lilian Chambers, 2012); *From Leenane to LA: The Theatre and Cinema of Martin McDonagh* (2014), *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre* (co-edited with Eric Weitz (2018); and *The Theatre and Films of Conor McPherson: Conspicuous Communities* (2019)

## **Eimer Murphy**

## **Title: Wear Something Green: How the Artistic Community Reinvented the St Patricks Day Parade**

This paper will focus on the St. Patricks Day parade in Dublin as a ‘material marker’ designed to project specific government-sanctioned ideas of ‘Irishness’ on both national and international stages.

Beginning with a brief history of the Dublin parade throughout the decades, the paper will identify how it has been the focus of a series of state-sponsored reinterpretations, each time the parade is reimagined the target audience and reach of the message is widened from the parochial to the national to the international stage.

The paper will then focus on the latest re-interpretation of the parade in 1995 when the parade was handed to the artistic community with the brief to make it ‘the best St Patricks Parade in the world’. Drawing on in - depth interviews, the paper will explore that first year of the new parade, the mammoth undertaking by the Irish artistic community to re-imagine the Parade into something new, confident and exciting to reflect the emerging spirit of a country at the beginnings of the Celtic Tiger era. and the deliberate attempts to coach the parade audiences to become part of the spectacle.

The paper will finally address the impact of this reinterpretation on both the artistic community, the audiences, and the city itself.

### **Biography**

Eimer is from Puckane in Co. Tipperary. Her primary degree is in film, however shortly after graduation she found her way into theatre and has never found her way back. Working as an assistant stage manager, Eimer discovered that a love of old things and a hitherto unexplored aptitude for researching obscure subjects combined with an ability to make things made her an ideal prop maker. Early work with Barabbas...the Company and on five consecutive Gaiety Pantomimes taught her about making weird and wonderful objects that were also, crucially in theatre, indestructible. In 2007 Eimer joined the Abbey Theatre as full-time prop maker and set dresser.

In 2017 Eimer completed a Masters Degree, graduating with honours from the Material Culture Design History MA in the National College of Art and Design. Since then Eimer has presented on Props at a number of events and conferences, including the 2018 Dublin International Film Festival. Eimer has also contributed a chapter on props in the upcoming Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance.

### **Aisling Smith, NUI Galway**

#### **Title: The Egyptian Doctor in G.B. Shaw’s *The Millionairess* (1936)**

One of Shaw’s lesser known and lesser performed plays, *The Millionairess* has been consistently undervalued by theatre critics and theatre producers alike. A parody of social-realism, it can be read as a complex satire of 1930s Britain. Within which Shaw explores issues of capitalism, class, gender and race. This paper looks at the role of the Egyptian Doctor within the play in the context of the mass movement of people following WWI and race relations in

Britain during the inter-war period. With reference to a PaR project I completed in 2017, which saw the staging of an intermedia production of *The Millionairess*, the paper also looks at how Shaw's exploration of race and identity via the Egyptian Doctor can be used to evoke the contemporary issues of Brexit and the EU Migrant Crisis.

## **Biography**

Aisling Smith is a PhD candidate at NUI Galway. Her thesis, "Re-directing George Bernard Shaw: Exploring the Staging of Shaw's Play-Texts for Contemporary Audiences Through Practice as Research", focuses on applying specific performance styles to Shaw's play texts with the view to highlighting their current social relevance through performance. Aisling Holds a BA from UCD and an MA in Text and Performance from RADA and Birkbeck, UL. A director and playwright, she has professional experience of working in the Irish theatre industry.

## **Panel Thirteen**

### **Zoë Tweed, University of Reading**

#### **Title: Shame and its mechanisms in Samuel Beckett's *Footfalls* and *Rockaby*: the intersections of shame and performance**

This paper examines the intersectionality of performance and psychological trauma/shame in the later dramatic work of Samuel Beckett. It explores how shame is manifested and evoked in Beckett's *Footfalls* and *Rockaby*. It asks what role a dialogue between trauma studies and performance studies can play in our understanding of the interconnected themes of time, representation, subjectivity, memory and embodiment.

It argues that shame is primarily evoked through the physical isolation of Beckett's marginalised figures and the repetitive, tormenting cycles that ensnare them. The word 'shame' derives from the Germanic root 'skam/skem' and connects to 'schande', meaning disgrace and the Indo-European root 'kam/kem', meaning "to cover, veil, to hide", with the affixed 's' to mean "hide oneself". At the core of the word lies an urge towards concealment or costuming. Paradoxically, the somatic responses to shame inadvertently draw attention to the subject (blushing, averting the gaze). Essentially shame is multifaceted, contradictory and constantly being negotiated; it is not objective or fixed but rather fluid and chameleon-like, appearing in multiple guises.

The paper examines how the isolation of Beckett's figures offers an insight into the psychic landscape of shame and trauma. In doing so, it suggests that Beckett dramaturgically negotiates trauma and shame on stage, revealing the inner workings of shame and its intersection with performance; its contradictory forces of invisibility and exposure. It proposes that the theatrical apparatus of a dualistic partnership between spectator and performer mirrors the interaction between subject and other/object in the scene of shame, a duologue between the one that feels exposed and the one that looks on.

Why now? The use of the term 'trauma' and its effects has become so ubiquitous in Western society as to render the term meaningless and yet its continual prevalence shows its immediacy and vital significance. Luckhurst has termed this a "traumaculture" in which we are saturated with both the term "trauma" and the growing technological advances that facilitate an almost relentless influx of visual traumata resulting in wide spread desensitisation. This paper considers how Beckett's work offers a minimalism that in contrast to this graphic saturation,

might constitute a different model of articulating and witnessing the experience of the trauma-sufferer in the current climate of great socio-political fissures.

The paper culminates in the notion that despite the overwhelmingly negative feelings associated with shame “it is also widely perceived to contain a positive component. For some theorists, indeed, shame serves at the limit as a site of resistance to cultural norms of identity” (Leys 2007: 124). The notion of shame as constructive, positions Beckett’s alienated figures as resistant to “cultural norms of identity” and indeed the theatrical space, as the platform on which these figures stand, as a spatial site of resistance to cultural norms. Positioning of *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* at the intersection of trauma and shame affords them a liminality, and to use a word of Gontarski’s a “fluidity”, in which fixed or accepted norms can be challenged, undermined and reconfigured.

## Biography

I am a second-year PhD student at the University of Reading, supervised by Anna McMullan and Mark Nixon. My project is funded by the James and Elizabeth Studentship. My project is entitled *The Theatre of Traumatic Repetition: trauma, temporality and performance in the plays of Samuel Beckett*. This is an intersectional project examining themes of witnessing, shame, memory, time and performativity in relation to trauma studies and performance studies. The projects asks about the role that theatre and performance can play in our understanding of trauma and as a site for negotiating public and personal traumatic experience. I am also a professional theatre-maker based in London.

## Ella Daly

### **Title: Intergenerational Family Trauma cause by Ambiguous Loss in the work of Marina Carr, especially *By the Bog of Cats***

In the study of family systems theory, the phenomenon of ambiguous loss is studied for its effect on multiple generations. ‘The premise of the ambiguous loss theory is that uncertainty or a lack of information about the whereabouts or status of a loved one as absent or present, as dead or alive, is traumatizing for most individuals, couples, and families’ (Boss, 2007). The ambiguous loss Boss describes here is frequently seen in Irish theatre and in the work of Marina Carr with absent parents being a recurring theme.

In *Portia Coughlin* and *The Mai* we see matriarchs who are rendered incapable of the role of motherhood by their longing for absent loved ones, Portia's twin brother Gabriel and Mai's husband Robert. As they pine for lost loved ones they, in turn, become absent to the next generation. *The Mai* alludes further to the intergenerational nature of this trauma as Grandma Fraochlain carries the oar of the nine-fingered fisherman about with her, he is both absent and present, it is in the shadow of this oar we learn the Mai was raised. She has learned to raise her children where their needs take second place to a physically absent but emotionally present father. In *Raftery's Hill* we see this taken a step further where the eldest daughter is forced to fulfil the role of the mother to her siblings and wife to her father after their mother's death.

In *By the Bog of Cats* the effects of ambiguous loss are most clear as we see the central character, Hester, constantly searching for information about the mother who abandoned her at age 7. Hester ‘has failed to become a fully subjectified individual as she has never gained a sufficient substitute for the loss of her mother’ (Sihra, 2000). Big Josie, though absent, is a constant emotional presence for Hester. Similarly her lover Carthage is physically present but

emotionally absent, sometimes engaged with his daughter and her mother and sometimes not. Her brother too is physically absent appearing only as a ghost figure in the play. At the conclusion of the play as Hester burns her house around her before murdering her child and killing herself, we see echos of Medea and the slaughter of Jason's children. Hester's actions are as much to punish Carthage for spurning her as they are to protect Josie from a future which would echo her own. In searching so long for Big Josie, Hester has come to confuse love with absence. She would not have Josie spend her life searching for answers about her mother, surrounded on all sides by opinions and untruths about her.

## **Biography**

Ella Daly is an arts manager, writer and theatre maker born in Limerick and based in Dublin. Ella has experience of a wide variety of art forms, theatre, dance, film and youth arts gathered over her 15 year career in Limerick, Kerry and Dublin. Her career to date has seen her work in with Daghdha Dance in film and community arts as Assistant Artistic Director of Samhlaíocht Chiarraí most recently in youth theatre with Limerick Youth Theatre as Outreach Officer and Dublin Youth Theatre as General Manger. Ella has a Postgraduate Diploma in Business for Cultural Event Management from the Institute of Art Design and Technology Dun Laoghaire. Ella's work as an artist has focused on the human experiences of love and home and she has created a number of plays, mixed media performance pieces and immersive events to explore this theme. Her play 'Finding Sympathy', produced by Amalgamation Theatre Company and Directed by Gina Moxley was programmed as part of the 2013 Dublin Fringe Festival, and her play 'The Lighthouse Keeper' was produced again by Amalgamation and Directed by Ciarda Tobin as part of the Made in Limerick strand of Limerick City and Culture 2014.

## **Orla Mooney, UCD**

### **Title: The Marginalisation of Narratives in *The Walworth Farce* and *The Pillowman***

In his work *On Stories* Richard Kearney remarks that "If fiction is free to recreate the past as it might have been... history has an obligation to recount the past as it actually was" (31). Furthermore he makes the assertion that questions of narrative truth are "crucial for individual cases of trauma", and "even more so when it comes to historical trauma" (Kearney, 47). Both Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce* and Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* are dramas which demonstrate a concern for what Kearney refers to as "narrative truth" (47). In the former play Dinny acts as director, actor, stage manager, and crucially, writer of the farce which he and his two sons produce and perform daily, trapped in a London flat, both of the sons, to an extent, against their will. McDonagh's play narrates the story of the writer Katurian who faces imprisonment, and ultimately execution, when it is discovered that his stories have become the basis for the murders of several children. The action of each play hinges on the narratives concerned, and on the power relations that are inherent. This paper aims chiefly to analyse the figures and institutions that control the various narratives, and how these powers marginalise the narratives of the oppressed by exacting coercion into following the dominant narrative. This interrogation includes the re-enactment of narratives in each play, both enforced and voluntary. It is my intention finally to examine the issue of contestation of narrative in Walsh and McDonagh's dramas, whereby challenging the dominant narrative means indirectly challenging authority. The paper will use the text of both plays as the primary sources for my analysis.

## **Bibliography**

Kearney, Richard. *On Stories*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

## **Biography**

My name is Orla Mooney. I am currently studying for a MA in Drama and Performance Studies in University College Dublin, for which I received a scholarship. I completed a BA in English in Drama in September of 2018 in UCD also. My area of interest with regard to research is contemporary Irish theatre and performance, having completed a research project on the work of Marina Carr specifically during the final year of my undergraduate degree. It is my intention to further my research of Carr's work through my dissertation, and I hope to continue my academic studies in the future by undertaking a PhD.

## **Panel Fourteen**

**Dr Sue Healy, University of Lincoln**

**Title: Revisiting the Royal Court Theatre's fraught and fruitful years, 1968-1975.**

Published narratives of the Royal Court Theatre 1968-1975 tend to recount an era of discord marred by intergenerational power tussles and characterise the period as a time when the Court fell out of step with contemporary developments in theatre by not fully supporting the emerging playwrights of the era, including David Hare and David Edgar. This paper maps an alternative reading of these years and provides evidence that, on the contrary, as the Court of the early 1970s enthusiastically programmed subaltern and female playwrights, the theatre fell in step with contemporaneous international trends in theatre, and this approach in fact recalibrated the Court with rising international movements. By revealing this understanding of events, the paper contends that the artistic directorship of Oscar Lewenstein (1972-1975) was a direct reaction against an elitist culture at the Court and an institutional habitus which was rooted in and informed by the decline of the British Empire. This paper proposes that the subsequent occlusion of this version of events is due in great part to the consistent and ongoing privileging of negative accounts of the period by the then emerging young white English male playwrights of the era who resented a loss of monopoly of the Court's stage, over the more positive commentary provided by their subaltern and female counterparts empowered under Lewenstein's aegis.

## **Biography**

From Ireland, Sue Healy has a PhD in modern theatre history from the University of Lincoln and is a UEA Creative Writing MA graduate. Healy is currently an Associate Lecturer in Playwriting at the Universities of Lincoln and Portsmouth, and tutors Creative Writing at CityLit. She is an award-winning playwright and Literary Manager at the Finborough Theatre.

**Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin, UL**

**Title: Teresa Deevy's critique of the first Free State government in *Temporal Powers* (1932), *The Reapers* (1930) and *A Disciple* (1931)**

This paper argues that Teresa Deevy's first three plays for the Abbey Theatre constituted a critique of the Irish Free State. I will discuss *Temporal Powers* (1932), *The Reapers* (1930) and *A Disciple* (1931). I propose that these plays signified a startling and courageous theatrical debut, constituting an important intervention into the politics of the new Free State under the Cumann na nGaedhael administration. In her dramas, Teresa Deevy draws out the systemic and structural elements which limited and damaged individuals and communities in twentieth-century Ireland. This paper introduces these little-known plays, contextualises them within Deevy's oeuvre, and discusses her treatment of key themes through an examination of characters, dramatic structure and form.

## Biography

Caoilfhionn Ní Bheacháin lectures in Communications at the University of Limerick. Her research focuses on the literary and cultural history of the Irish Free State, although her interests include a broad range of cultural practices, networks, artefacts and histories from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. She has published essays on Teresa Deevy in *Estudios Irlandeses* (2012) and the edited volume *Irish Women Writers* (eds. D'hoker, Ingelbien, and Schwall, 2011). She is currently co-editing a volume of Teresa Deevy's plays for publication in 2020.

## Dr Sharon Phelan, IT Tralee

### Title: *Siamsóirí na Ríochta and Siamsa Tíre: An Attack on Coco-Colonisation*

This paper is titled *Siamsóirí na Ríochta and Siamsa Tíre: An Attack on Coco-Colonisation* and it focuses on the works of the founder of both establishments, Pat Ahern. Ahern grew up in the village of Moyvane in North Kerry during the 1930s and 1940s. Subsequently he trained as a priest in Maynooth and in the 1950s, he returned to Kerry to practice as curate at St. John's Church, in Tralee. This paper examines how Pat Ahern counteracted the coco-colonization of Irish folk culture through folk theatre.

During coco-colonisation, a native culture comes under attack - from westernised and typically Americanised values. In Ireland, coco-colonisation was rampant by the nineteen fifties - there was a decline in traditional customs and art forms and an incline in popular show bands and American films. Usually, coco-colonization was most prevalent among urban people. Termed "cosmopolitan chauvinists", they consider themselves superior to their provincial others, in this case, the rural natives of Ireland. Pat Ahern perceived coco-colonization erupting among urban people in Ireland during the nineteen fifties. Removed from rural areas, these urbanites rarely received opportunities to experience traditional folk customs or art forms. At times, they even adopted a condescending attitude towards rural people.

However, those who are subjected often re-emerge in differing contexts using other forms of expression; they aim to challenge the authority of those who have hegemonic power. Pat Ahern was one such person. Having observed a growing indifference towards native folk culture and folk arts, he made their re-emergence possible, when he founded *Siamsóirí na Ríochta* (merrymakers of the kingdom). This local group of performers expressed long-established customs on stage using traditional music, song and dance and they were performing in towns and villages on a regular basis by the mid-sixties. Ahern's choice of the term, "*Siamsa*", was significant. It was Gaelic and it was native. It was also obscure, a term which could facilitate experimentation and spontaneity. It suggested an Otherworld, hidden from the mainstream. There, native life and its high spirits and jollity would remain unrestricted.

In 1968, Ahern was commissioned to devise a full-length show, which would focus on traditional folk life and customs and it would use traditional performing arts as tools of expression. Ahern titled his show, *Fadó Fadó* (long, long ago) and the title was significant. Ultimately, Ahern considered the traditional rural lifestyle part of the past. In 1974, he founded *Siamsa Tíre*, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland. Having observed a growing indifference towards his native folk culture, Ahern had made its re-emergence possible, when he placed it into a theatrical context. Today, Ahern's show, *Fadó Fadó* remains an integral part of the repertoire at *Siamsa Tíre*.

## Biography

Dr. Sharon Phelan served on the executive of the Irish Society for Theatre Research. She performed professionally with *Siamsa Tíre* (National Folk Theatre of Ireland) and she was National Facilitator in dance with the Department of Education and Skills. She was also Artistic Director of the *Ionad Cultúrtha* in Ballyvourney, Co. Cork. Today, Sharon lectures in theatre and cultural studies at the Institute of Technology, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland. Sharon has published internationally and in 2014, her peer-reviewed book, titled *Dance in Ireland: Steps, Stages and Stories* was launched at her alma mater, *Siamsa Tíre*. Currently, Sharon is completing another book based on all-inclusive approaches to the teaching of dance.

## Roundtable Discussion

### **Title: (Un)homely Women: Navigating the constitutional definition of “Woman” and “The Home” in Contemporary Irish theatre**

How does contemporary Irish theatre navigate the Constitutional definition of woman ‘within the home’ when concepts of both ‘woman’ and ‘home’ have profoundly changed since 1937? Playwright Dorothy Macardle (1889-1958), was aware that theatre was inextricably linked with the story of the nation: “The theatre, communal in its origins and its appeal, remains sensitive to communal moods and the mind of the dramatist is a kind of weather-vain” she wrote. When the Irish Constitution was written in 1937, she was alarmed at the inclusion of Article 41.2 which reads: “The State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.” It continues: “The State shall, therefore endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.”

Though Macardle requested Eamonn De Valera that this ‘tragic dilemma’, as she called the provisions, be excluded, he refused. At the same time, Betty Archdale, a woman’s equality campaigner, criticized article 41.2 as being based on the “fascist and slave conception of women”. But De Valera did not agree. What is extraordinary is that this article still remains in our Constitution today.

We wish to explore how ideas of “women” and “home” have been intrinsically linked in the Irish theatrical canon, just as they have been in the Constitution. Playwrights have both drawn on, and complicated the relationship between “woman” and “home”. The Irish Constitution has thus, arguably, sculpted the exclusion of women in theatre through their identification with the domestic realm. What do contemporary female theatrical voices say about this entrapment? This round table aims to trace the development and complexity of this relationship, utilizing pre-Constitution, canonical female playwrights (Lady Augusta Gregory, Dorothy Macardle and Teresa Deevy) as a starting point. Within the content of recent times, playwrights such as Anne Devlin, Marina Carr, Stacy Gregg, Deirdre Kinahan and Panti Bliss, have utilized theatre

as a vehicle to disrupt the historical notions of Irish womanhood and explode conventional ideas of home

Of particular interest to us, are contemporary playwright's ambivalent attitudes towards, or complete rejection of, conventional notions of both "women" and ideas of "the home" as a reflection of their increasing instability and ambiguity in the contemporary moment. In an era of escalating globalization and migration, rising debates about gender identity and sexism, paired with a surge in nationalist, right wing politics in the EU and America, the narratives of home/nation and gender/identity are in a position of flux. Do contemporary practitioners subvert the binary construction of Irish society (the private home is regarded as the opposite of public area), and of gender (structured through the opposition of women and men)? Finally, what does contemporary Irish theatre speak about this shift and does it dilute the impact of article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution on Irish Theatrical practices, rendering it increasingly meaningless?

### **Biographies:**

**Clara Mallon** holds an MA in Drama and Performance from University College Dublin. She has experience in playwriting, performing and directing. Clara is a teaching assistant with UCD and lecturer in Early Irish Theatre. Clara is currently researching contemporary Irish Theatre and the work of Pat Kinevane for her PhD proposal.

**Fiona Charleton** hold an MA in Drama and Performance studies from University College Dublin. She also currently works as the theatre critic for the Sunday Times Ireland edition and was nominated for critic of the year in 2018 in the Newsbrand Journalism Awards. She is also a teaching assistant with UCD and a lecturer in Early Irish Theatre. Fiona also qualified as a solicitor in 1988 hence her interest in Irish Constitutional influences.

After having completed two masters in Classics and Comparative Literature at Sorbonne University, **Salomé PAUL** started a PhD candidate in Drama studies at University College Dublin and in Comparative Literature at Sorbonne University, with the support of the French embassy in Ireland. She is particularly interested into the political and philosophical use of theatre. She also teaches as a tutor at the UCD School of English, Drama and Film.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

**Participants:** Dr. Yvon Bonenfant (UCC), Prof. Jools Gilson (UCC), Prof. Mel Mercier (UL), Daniel O'Connell (UCC)

IMBAS <https://www.irishworldacademy.ie/imbas/>

IMBAS is an Irish forum for artists and scholars working within and beyond the University sector who share an interest in arts practice research, particularly in the performing arts. Drawing its inspiration from the old Irish word imbas (often used to refer to creative, poetic and performed wisdom) it is committed to the creation of a distinctive and dynamic Irish model of arts practice research.

Ambition: IMBAS facilitates communication between institutions and individuals, promoting scholarly discourse and modes of practice concerning knowledge creation through performance and performance-related creative practice. Committed to ensuring that arts practice research is fully accepted and valued as an important mainstream academic discourse in Ireland, IMBAS

engages in strategic and collaborative policy development within Irish Higher Education and seeks to influence the development of wider sectoral and national policy regarding performing arts and research.

Initiated at by Prof. Helen Phelan in 2016, and launched at UL in Nov 2017, IMBAS is on the road and looking for its communities of interest to engage in debate and get to work. This roundtable is proposed as a series of short presentations on arts practice research in an Irish and European context, followed by an open discussion. Focusing on arts practice research in Theatre as well as the broader spectrum of disciplinary involvement (particularly Music and Film), Prof. Jools Gilson will present a review of current regulations around arts practice recognition in Ireland, Prof. Mel Mercier will give an overview of student perspectives on practice-based PhDs in Ireland, Dan O'Connor on arts practice research in Film in Ireland and Dr. Yvon Bonenfant (Head, Theatre, UCC) will present on the potential for empowering whatever the Irish model becomes, to dialogue with wider international issues around Artistic Research (AR) / Practice as Research (PAR). IMBAS seeks partnership with practice-inclusive researchers of ISTR to develop an action plan to advance the recognition, resourcing, status, and impact potential of PAR in the Irish context, while exploring how we enable that context to profit from recent international developments in AR/PAR.