

Abstracts & Bios

Day 1: Wednesday 16 September

For a more detailed overview of the scheduled events please refer to the Academic & Social Programme

14:00-15:00

Slow Men: Modernist Poetics

Room 200, Chair: Ruben Borg (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Who Hobbles after the Subject: Parables of Writing in *The Third Policeman* & *Molloy*

Yael Levin (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

From peg legs to prosthetics, meniscus tears to arthritis, the experimental fiction of the twentieth century is rife with slow men. This paper will follow the twentieth-century evolution of the male protagonist from able to disabled by calling on examples from Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* and Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*. Where critical negotiations of fictional handicap are often grounded in the works' social, economic, and historical context, my reading will trace the theme's metaliterary dimension. Narrative explorations of physical impediment traditionally signal the breakdown of creative agency and the failure of artistic inspiration; an author struggles to conclude or promote the plot when his or her protagonist is resistant to forward movement. The two novels in question repeatedly undermine such self-reflexive signposts. The manner in which they do so will be brought in evidence of two observations on the authors' views on writing and text. First, the broken subject is no longer a figure for blocked writing but rather the site for the proliferation of language. Second, the protagonist's handicap – that figurative exploration of an alternative to the Cartesian *cogito* – assumes the key to his maker's poetics. That is to say that the method whereby Beckett and O'Brien stage their narrators' infirmities is illustrative not only of their views on writing but also of the divide evident in their respective reflections on the craft. Where movement in Beckett is belaboured, forced, painful, and ineffectual, *The Third Policeman's* one-legged men suffer no such limitations. The former explores a writing that issues forth from inertia, the latter, a writing that issues from collage, a piecing together of incongruous parts. O'Brien's protagonist is as much a collation of bits and pieces as is the de Selby Index he has written. The paper will conclude with the suggestion that by tracing the evolution of such alternative models of textual production we uncover a hitherto uncharted link between the authors' poetics and the manner in which they literally deconstruct their writer-narrators. That language exceeds subjectivity has been made clear by twentieth-century theories ranging from Saussure's linguistics to Lacan's psychoanalysis. *Molloy* and *The Third Policeman* bring this realization to bear on the ensuing displacement of the writing act. It is to this attempt to relocate, reshape and rethink the writing subject that the paper will attend.

Yael Levin is a senior lecturer at the Hebrew University English Department. Her book, *Tracing the Aesthetic Principle in Conrad's Novels* was published in 2008 by Palgrave Macmillan; further research on Conrad, James, Beckett and other writers has been published in a number of journals and volumes including *The Conradian*, *Conradiana*, and *Partial Answers*. She is currently working on a book project titled *The Interruption of Writing: The Plight of the Writing Subject from Porlock to the Digital*.

The Celibate Lives of Mr Duffy: 'John Duffy's Brother' & 'A Painful Case'

Paul Fagan (*Salzburg University*)

While provoked by numerous sly digs on the author's part, the critical standard of the enmity with which Brian O'Nolan contemplated his inheritance from Joyce has steadily marginalised his complex and playfully antagonistic responses to that writer as 'the foot-stamping of a frustrated apprentice unable to better his literary master' (Jed Esty). Where these Irish modernists appear to diverge most strikingly is in their representations of sexuality: if Joyce's writing increasingly absorbs the *fin de siècle* sexual discursive explosion, O'Nolan's increasingly retreats to a homosocial world in which heterosexual and homosexual intimacy are figured as submerged but omnipresent threats. Particularly revealing is the declaration of *The Third Policeman's* narrator: 'Women I have no interest in at all ... A fiddle is a better thing for diversion'.

In this paper I suggest that these apparently clear lines of distinction begin to blur when we consider the ways in which O'Nolan engaged the celibate lives represented in *Dubliners*, using them as models for his own form of 'celibate modernism'. Focusing on the ways in which O'Nolan's 1940 short story 'John Duffy's Brother' establishes resonances with, and creatively re-imagines, Joyce's 'A Painful Case', I argue that a celibate reading of these stories, in their handling of liminal cultural identities and experiences with the border, can open up previously submerged stakes, tensions, problems. While recent discussions focus on uncloseting their protagonists (both named Mr Duffy), I will call upon Benjamin Kahan's recent study *Celibacies*, which charts a daring alternative genealogy of modernism by foregrounding celibacy as one of its significant political, social, and sexual identities. By considering the representations of celibate identities found in each writer's short fiction, I hope not only to cast new light on the relationship between Joyce and O'Nolan, but also to unearth their implicit affirmations that 'there is not one but many silences'.

Paul Fagan is a lecturer in cultural studies and modernism at the University of Vienna and a Senior Scientist at Salzburg University. He is the co-editor, with Ruben Borg and Werner Huber, of *Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies*, which was listed in *The Irish Times* top 10 non-fiction books of 2014. He is currently working on *Problems With Authority*, a follow-up collection of Flann O'Brien essays with John McCourt and Ruben Borg, and a monograph titled *Positions of Distrust: The Literary Hoax and the Irish Tradition*.

15:30-17:00

The Body Politic

Room 200, Chair: Ondřej Pilný (*Charles University, Prague*)

'Nothing in the world would save me from the gallows':

O'Brien's Shifting View of Capital Punishment

Katherine Ebury (*University of Sheffield*)

This paper will examine O'Nolan's changing attitudes to capital punishment through a study of references to scenes of execution in the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns and in *The Third Policeman*. These topics were hotly debated in the period from the Irish Civil War until O'Nolan's death. Yeats famously argued for capital punishment as proof of the Irish State's legitimacy: after the execution of 77 Republican prisoners, he commented that 'The Government of the Free State has been proved legitimate by the one effective test; it has been permitted to take life'.

I will use Derrida's deconstruction both of the death penalty and of abolition movements, as well as a comparative approach that contrasts O'Nolan's work with Joyce's discussion of hanging in 'Cyclops', to establish the politics and poetics of the capital punishment in O'Nolan's work and in Ireland after the establishment of the Free State. *The Third Policeman* in particular is remarkable for its repeated 'unjust' scenes of the barely averted hanging of the narrator, as well as a remembered scene of the execution of a bicycle. It is interesting to consider whether O'Nolan's shifting portrayal of capital punishment as sometimes just and sometimes nonsensical supports or critiques State-sanctioned violence. In short, the paper will build on Jennika Baines's recent discussion of the role of fantasies of murder in O'Nolan, as well as Ondřej Pilný's work on punishment, in order to explore the *lex talionis* at work in O'Nolan's texts.

Katherine Ebury is lecturer in modern literature at the University of Sheffield. Her first monograph, *Modernism and Cosmology*, appeared with Palgrave in 2014. The proposed paper comes from a new project on literary responses to capital punishment in the twentieth century, particularly in late modernism.

Brian O'Nolan, Immunity and the Autoimmune

Maebh Long (*The University of the South Pacific*)

This paper explores the treatment of the body, illness, and medicine within O'Nolan's works, moving from the discourse of bodily disfigurement and disgust that has already figured in readings of his works to the concept of immunity and the autoimmune. Donna Haraway has argued that the immune system is a boundary line drawn between self and other, a division which facilitates modernity's biopolitical control. On the side of the self is normal internality and defence, while on the side of the other is pathological externality and offence. This binary is embedded in the notion of the immune system as barrier, a protection of integrity and individuality. But with the introduction of the autoimmune, and a deeper conceptualisation of the concept of a barricade that which occupies both sides at once, the opposition falters. In *Rogues* Derrida describes *autoimmunity* as the 'strange illogical logic by which a living being can spontaneously destroy, in an autonomous fashion, the very thing within it that is supposed to protect it against the other, to immunize it against the aggressive intrusion of the other'. The body has the destructive capacity to turn on itself, and immunize itself against itself. This paper explores the relation between bodily integrity and self-destruction in the works of O'Nolan, noting in particular the ways in which medicine and a discourse of protection/ exposure operates to disturb the notion of the human.

Maebh Long is Senior Lecturer in Literature at the School of Language, Arts, and Media at the University of the South Pacific. She is the author of *Assembling Flann O'Brien* (Bloomsbury, 2014), a monograph of theoretical engagements with Flann O'Brien/Myles na gCopaleen/Brian O'Nolan. In addition to modern and contemporary literature, Long's principle areas of engagement and publication are literary theory and philosophy. Her recent publications include articles on Derrida in *Parallax* and *Australian Humanities Review*, and on Flann O'Brien in *Double Dialogues*, *Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies* and *Flann O'Brien & Modernism*. She is currently working on *Oceanic Modernism*, a project which explores creative expressions of modernity in the South Pacific.

Slow Metamorphosis: Inaction, Stagnation & Pointlessness in the Late Works of Brian O’Nolan
Alana Gillespie (*Utrecht University*)

The pace and extent of change in Irish society and culture strangely seems to parallel Brian O’Nolan’s literary and journalism career. In both, the 1950s are regarded as a period of stagnation or decline. But O’Nolan was not at a still-stand, despite the decreasing frequency of *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the quiet spell in his literary production. Politically, the Irish 1950s laid the groundwork for the more dramatic changes of the 1960s, so it is unsurprising that debates about reforms in this period are marked more by extended deliberation and disagreement than decisive agreement and action. O’Nolan’s later writing reflects the perception of the 1950s as a time of inaction in which real change was impossible due to a prevailing network or *dispositif* of counteractive social forces and institutions that cancelled out each other’s attempts at change and victimised average citizens. This perception will be explored in this paper in reference to *Cruiskeen Lawn* and *The Hard Life*.

Notably, Noel Browne’s Mother and Child Scheme seems to lurk in the shadows of *The Hard Life* in Collopy’s campaign for women’s public toilets. As with the Mother and Child Scheme affair, neither Church nor State was willing to advocate (or indeed consider adapting) Collopy’s scheme. Readings of *The Hard Life* as a comic *bildungsroman* about impossible maturity underscore the idea of average citizens being victims of counteractive social forces. The columns dealing with the Mother and Child Scheme affair (however elliptically and really an attack on Alfred O’Rahilly) show O’Nolan engaging directly with the question of who has the right, responsibility, or power to influence social change. Ultimately I will argue that O’Nolan’s later writing approaches metamorphosis as a necessarily gradual phenomenon, resulting not in a bang, but a whimper.

Alana Gillespie is a Lecturer at the English Department and affiliated researcher with the Institute for Cultural Inquiry at Utrecht University, where she earned a PhD for her thesis on Brian O’Nolan’s comic critique of tropes of tradition and modernity in independent Ireland. She contributed an article on controversy about science in *Cruiskeen Lawn* to the recent *Flann O’Brien: Contesting Legacies*. In addition to a number of forthcoming articles on O’Nolan, Gillespie is completing a monograph on the subject of comedy and cultural remembrance in O’Nolan’s work.

Day 2: Thursday 17 September

9:30-11:00

‘Gob, Ladies, it’s Changed Times!’: The Metamorphoses of *Cruiskeen Lawn*

Room 200, Chair: Catherine Flynn (University of California, Berkeley)

The Diurnal World of Ephemeralism: Text Reuse in the Newspaper

Ronan Crowley (*University of Passau*)

Seeing and Reading the Metamorphoses of *Cruiskeen Lawn*

Catherine Ahearn (*Boston University*)

The Third Twin: The Brief Career of Caoimhín Ó Nualláin, Columnist

Ian Ó Caoimh (*University College Dublin*)

The proposed panel examines *Cruiskeen Lawn* as the site of Brian O’Nolan’s most sustained engagement with and transformation of Irish cultural and political life. Representing over a quarter of a century of the writer’s inventiveness and running to some three million words, the column offers an extended virtuoso riff on Emergency-era and postwar print culture. Long dismissed as a distraction from O’Nolan’s more legitimate work as a novelist – what one might dub the ‘ruin is the word’ school of criticism – more recent responses are alert to *Cruiskeen Lawn*’s reiterative quality, its value as not only as a cultural and historical record, but also as a sustained artistic masterpiece.

Inasmuch as metamorphosis names *Cruiskeen Lawn*’s heady mixture of new and borrowed writing, reading the column nowadays is to encounter transformations that exceed Mylesian quotation and wordplay. Whether as bound volumes of selections, as part of the ProQuest Historical *Irish Times* database, or in new emergent digital formats, the afterlives of *Cruiskeen Lawn* represent an ongoing process of metamorphosis through remediation. Ronan Crowley focuses on O’Nolan’s recycling and rewriting of newspaper copy to locate the column in the media environment of interwar and postwar Ireland. Catherine Ahearn takes into account the gains and losses of collecting *Cruiskeen Lawn* for a modern readership and how reading the columns apart from their original context influences our understanding of them. Though the column was always reflecting change while changing itself, can an edition of *Cruiskeen Lawn* effectively communicate this metamorphosis?

Expanding upon the ways in which Myles na gCopaleen’s *Cruiskeen Lawn* continues to be reconsidered in its own right and repositioned within the Brian/Flann/Myles *oeuvre*, Ian Ó Caoimh considers the journalistic writings of Brian Ó Nualláin’s brothers. Ciarán Ó Nualláin is virtually unknown outside of Irish-language scholarship but is gradually attracting significant critical attention. Further underexposed, and triangulating the virtually self-generating node, is the work of Caoimhín Ó Nualláin. This other brother, *aka* Kevin O’Nolan, an academic classicist and folklorist, was briefly a columnist with the Irish-language monthly magazine *Comhar* in the 1940s. Caoimhín’s subversively humorous columns plunder and reconfigure both the language and literature of Irish with a distinctively Ó Nualláinesque ingenuity. This paper will aim to demonstrate how the methods and concerns underpinning Caoimhín’s scant, concentrated periodical writings not only rebound and reverberate between Myles’s *Cruiskeen Lawn* and the ‘Amaid’ columns of Ciarán Ó Nualláin, but reach back to the methodology of *Comhbhrom Féinne* and *Blather*, in a reading informed by the work of Catherine Flynn and Joseph Brooker.

Ronan Crowley is Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Universität Passau. He took the PhD in English from the University at Buffalo in 2014 for a dissertation on transatlantic copyright regimes, genetic criticism, and the Irish Literary Revival. His research interests are in the Revival and Irish modernism, which he insists are one and the same thing.

Catherine Ahearn is a PhD candidate at the Editorial Institute at Boston University. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on *Cruiskeen Lawn*, Irish print media in the early twentieth century, and how we responsibly collect and re-publish Myles na gCopaleen’s column for a modern audience. In the past, she has enjoyed working for the T.S. Eliot Research Project and for organisations such as the *New England Review*, Picador, and the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. She recently co-edited an issue of *The Parish Review* (Fall 2014) with Adam Winstanley on *Reading Brian O’Nolan’s Libraries*.

Ian Ó Caoimh is doing a PhD on the work of Ciarán Ó Nualláin in the School of Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore in University College, Dublin, where he also works as a Research Editor on the dúchas.ie folklore digitisation project. He has previously worked as a translator with the Houses of the Oireachtas, on the editorial staff of the publisher An Gúm, as a journalist with RTÉ and as the editor of *Comhar* magazine, including a commemorative Flann O'Brien number in December 2011.

9:30-11:00

From Monads to Nomads: The Philosophies of *The Third Policeman*

Room 111, Chair: Ruben Borg (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)

Enlightenment Matters: *The Third Policeman* & Early Modern Ontologies

Einat Adar (*Charles University, Prague*)

Flann O'Brien's preoccupation with systems of knowledge and science has been often commented upon. His attitude is mocking, satirical, and even nihilistic, ridiculing the human search for dependable truth. This has frequently been taken as an attack on 'enlightenment rationalism', but a closer look at the ontologies of enlightenment philosophers reveals a deep affinity with the quirky physical phenomena of *The Third Policeman*.

The Leibnitzian monads which are at the same time souls and particles of matter, or Berkeley's immaterial world of ideas where all objects are spiritual, seem rather close to Flann O'Brien's pseudo-science in which atomic particles carry the identity of their previous owners and magical garments predict the life-span of their wearer. In *The Third Policeman* matter is animated and deeply personal. The laws of nature are not abstract rules that apply to all bodies equally, but a series of specific and autonomous phenomena that are adjusted to the circumstances of each individual.

In a way, the novel responds to the crisis of the sciences in the early twentieth century. The splitting of the atom, relativity theory, quantum mechanics, and other contemporary discoveries have replaced the orderly Newtonian world with a new ontology that is unstable but at the same time emphasises the role of the subject as observer. In my paper I would discuss how *The Third Policeman* transforms contemporary scientific language to a world that has the ontological features of earlier philosophical systems, creating a more spiritual and personal universe.

Einat Adar is a PhD student at the Centre for Irish Studies at Charles University Prague, working on a thesis provisionally titled 'Berkeleyan Images in Samuel Beckett's Work'. She is the co-editor of *Tradition and Modernity: New Essays in Irish Studies* where she also published an article 'Or Percipere: How Berkeleyan is Samuel Beckett's *Film*?'

'Hell Goes Round and Round': Flann O'Brien, the Absurd, & the Authenticity of Death

Daniel Curran (*Maynooth University*)

In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger writes that death 'limits and defines the possible totality of [existence]'. This paper will discuss how death has been a prominent theme of Irish modernism and focus on the relationship between death and the search for authentic selfhood in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*.

From the indomitable force of death at sea in the works of Synge to the haunting figure of the dead Mother in Joyce's *Ulysses*, death serves as the site of existential finality which goads characters to strive toward authentic selfhood in Irish modernism. For Heidegger, as well as Synge and Joyce, death serves as an impetus toward authenticity. However, Flann O'Brien breaks the mould established by other Irish modernists. By reading *The Third Policeman* as an absurdist text, this paper will argue that O'Brien undermines the conclusions of other Irish modernists by presenting the search for truth and authenticity as an absurd task framed within the repetitive Sisyphean exercise of death. For O'Brien, death no longer marks the end, rather it becomes the space in which the search for truth and authentic selfhood is obscured and eternal. Using a reading of Camus's *Myth of Sisyphus*, this paper will explore the ways in which O'Brien engages with themes of death and authentic selfhood.

Daniel Curran is a PhD student at the English Department, Maynooth University. He holds a First Class Double Honours B.A. degree in English and Philosophy from Maynooth University and is a winner of the Peter Connolly Award for highest graduating result in English. He has also completed his M.A. in Irish Culture and Literature for which he completed a thesis exploring the relationship between selfhood and death in the works of James Joyce and Flann O'Brien. His research interests include existentialism, existential phenomenology and Irish literary modernism. Having been awarded the John and Pat Hume Research scholarship, Daniel will begin work on his PhD thesis this year which will explore the convergence between Irish literary modernism and existential thought focussing on the works of James Joyce, Thomas MacGreevy and Samuel Beckett.

Becoming-Imperceptible in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* & Cees Nooteboom's *The Following Story*

Ruth Clemens (*University College London*)

Rosi Braidotti's 2013 book *The Posthuman* attempts to displace the hierarchy of anthropocentrism. Her writing develops Deleuze's philosophy of becoming and argues against the privileging of the self: 'This is just one life, not my life. The life in "me" does not answer to my name: "I" is just passing'. This posthuman passing of the 'I' is characterised as *becoming-imperceptible*, a process narrated through the experience of death in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* and Cees Nooteboom's *The Following Story*.

Braidotti's conceptualisation of nomadism is particularly relevant in O'Brien and Nooteboom's works: O'Brien's deterritorialising use of English in a modernist era of Irish political upheaval mirrors Deleuze's analysis of Kafka's 'minor literature', and Nooteboom's use of Dutch and his largely international reception indicate a nomadic element in his characteristically postmodern writing. The perceived boundedness of the embodied self is playfully undermined in both works: the human becomes *-mollycular* and *-bicycle* in O'Brien, and a body has the potential to fall asleep in the Netherlands and wake up in Portugal in Nooteboom. In both novels, scientific and historical measurements of time form a static and anthropocentric phenomenology that are destabilized through a ludic process of becoming. The self is decentred and fragmented in the most radical way, and death becomes another process of becoming: the becoming-imperceptible that forms a necessary element of a vitalist philosophy. The cyclical narratives and ontologically dubious footnotes take advantage of the book as object, showing that this process is not closed but open and endlessly in-between.

Ruth Clemens is currently studying for a MA in Comparative Literature at University College London. Her dissertation focuses on the use of footnotes and marginalia in literature, and her broader research interests include British and Irish modernism, surrealism, Dutch studies, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Rosi Braidotti. In October she will begin a PhD in transnationalism and modernist marginalia at Leeds Trinity and Leeds Centre for World Literatures.

11:30-12:30

Myles & Sport

Room 200, Chair: Ronan Crowley (*University of Passau*)

Kilkenny Cats: Half-Cumán?

Richard T. Murphy (*University of South Carolina Upstate*)

My paper traces the interactions between two staples of Free State life: the GAA and the *Cruiskeen Lawn* column. The contrast between the creator of the narrator in *At Swim-Two-Birds*, whom Gregory Dobbins has called ‘perhaps the laziest character in all of Irish fiction’, and the culture of rude male health fostered by the GAA could not be more striking, and indeed, Myles dealt with much earnest criticism for his failure to sufficiently recognise the contributions of Gaelic sports to Irish civilisation. I explore familiar collisions between popular nationalisms and the postcolonial intelligentsia, as well as Myles’s satire of the bureaucratic discourse that the Association shared with other arms of the state. The paper should speak to the theme of the gathering by highlighting two conceptions of bodily metamorphosis, the GAA’s ideal of transformation from emaciated Famine survivor to ruddy hurling midfielder, and O’Brien’s wry voice of the earnest wit dedicated to talky leisure.

Richard Murphy is an Associate Professor of Modern British and Irish Literature at the University of South Carolina Upstate. He has published articles on Flann O’Brien, Francis Stuart, Nuala ní Dhomhnaill, and Brinsley MacNamara, and he is an occasionally effective left back for the Greenville Gaels hurling team. He last visited Prague in the summer of 1990 with a guy from Nebraska who looked very much like Vladimir Lenin.

Writing Sport and Irish Identity: A Place in the Team for Myles?

David Toms

This paper seeks to explore the place of sport as a theme in the construction of Irish identity in modern Irish writing and asks whether or not Flann O’Brien can be seen as part of the team of Irish writers who employed sport to magnificent effect in creating questions about the nature of Irish identity. By examining the ways in which both James Joyce and Sean O’Casey utilised sport in their writing (Joyce in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* especially and O’Casey in *The Silver Tassie*), we may be able to say something useful about the way in which Brian O’Nolan writing as Myles na gCopaleen used sport in his columns in *The Irish Times* to provoke similar questions about sport as a signifier of national identity. Specifically, it may be possible to offer a new understanding of his sporting references, by placing them next to ways in which both Joyce and O’Casey played with sport in their work to show the potential fluidity of Irish identity as Ireland metamorphosed from member of the United Kingdom to independent state. The playful sporting references of

Myles na gCopaleen might thus be understood as being part of a team/theme through which modern Irish writers played with changing notions of Irish identity.

David Toms is a graduate of University College Cork's School of History, where he was previously a tutor and lecturer. He writes regularly for the group blog, *The Dustbin of History*. His first monograph, *Soccer in Munster: A Social History, 1877-1937* is available now from Cork University Press.

11:30-12:30

Mixed Inks: Bohemian Rhapsodies

Room 111, Chair: Yael Levin (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

O'Brien's Poe? *The Third Policeman* & *The Tell-Tale Heart*

Matouš Turek (*Charles University in Prague*)

Keith Hopper comes to the conclusion that 'the intertextual locus of *The Third Policeman* – the dominant genre that underscores and binds its various concerns – is the popular "whodunit"'. How exactly is it 'an orthodox murder mystery' (as Flann O'Brien put it), however, if the reader is invited to follow not the investigators but the culprit, who even confesses to the murder in the first paragraph, meaning there seems to be little mystery left to solve? Hopper rightly asserts that these are but few of O'Brien's 'inversions' of the typical murder mystery, and it is a task for intertextual comparison to find correspondences or possibly influences.

Edgar Allan Poe, one of the founders of the genre, fashioned his short stories as either 'tales of ratiocination' or 'tales of terror'. The former label is commonly applied to those crime mysteries which focus on the manner in which the detective observes his surroundings and draws conclusions, enabled by his power of estimation and intellectual prowess (as in 'The Purloined Letter'). The latter can describe most of Poe's other tales, where psychological derangement and the grotesque are portrayed and detection is not a principal theme.

There is one story in the Poe corpus which falls into both categories, a murder mystery both centred on the question of detection and featuring an insane, first-person narrator. This story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, provides a strikingly pertinent intertext to *The Third Policeman*. Apart from the obvious connection that both texts are murder mysteries narrated in the first person by the murderer, there are remarkable points of similarity in how the narrative is framed, in the psychology of the narrator-murderer and also in details of the plot.

Matouš Turek studies MA History and English at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. He concentrates chiefly on medieval cultural and literary history, where he favours intertextual and comparative approaches. Turek is currently preparing an international Ph.D project on the representations of the forest in late-medieval vernacular sources, but has a comprehensive interest and education in literatures written in English. Flann O'Brien has become a personal favourite ever since Ondřej Pilný introduced his works to the class several years ago, and this paper is the fruit of this slight infatuation. Turek's other activities include translating poetry and drama into Czech and teaching English.

Turning into Text: Mutiny and Metamorphosis in Kafka & O'Brien

Yuval Lubin (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)

In many of their respective works, both Franz Kafka and Flann O'Brien depict failed rebellions against the structure of text. This paper will argue that Kafka's novels *The Castle* and *The Trial* provide a scheme for the opposition against the text represented in O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The scheme is composed of three stages: mutiny, surrender, and metamorphosis. In Kafka's novels *The Castle* and *The Trial*, the protagonists are represented as failing to avoid their roles in their respective stories. At first, the characters reject their roles as part of the novels' story entirely. The characters then surrender to the world of the text and internalise the concepts governing it in an attempt to overcome that world. Finally, the characters transform into agents of the text, operating in accordance with their underlying nature.

This scheme illuminates the progression of the narrative in O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*. It reveals the evolution of the contradiction of textual authority in the novel. The characters transform from figures rebelling against the tyranny of text to representatives of textual authority. They adopt the arbitrariness and dominance of textuality, acting chaotically and ultimately becoming part of a narrative. However, O'Brien develops on Kafka's scheme, transferring the comedy from criticism on the narrative to criticism of both narrative and rebellion. As such O'Brien's work differs from Kafka's by emphasising the comedic elements in the texts, which introduces the possibility of reconciliation to the narrative.

Yuval Lubin is a Master's student in the Department of English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem concentrating on modernist literature. His interests include the role of comedy in modernist literature, the employment of carnival as a method of evaluation and critical comparison of film adaptations of literature the source material. His research examines the representation of epistemological failure through comedy in *Gulliver's Travels*, *Moby Dick*, and *The Third Policeman*. Yuval is a graduate of the English department from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a minor in comparative literature. He has won the Teitelbaum Award for Excellence in the Novel and was a beneficiary of the German Learning Scholarship of the Europe Forum at Hebrew University. In 2014 he participated in a conference held by Salzburg University titled *Austria and America: Cross Cultural Encounters 1933-1955* and his paper from that conference is due to be published in a book compiled of the conference, scheduled later this year.

Day 3: Friday 18 September

9:30-11:00

Funny Times

Room 200, Chair: Maebh Long (*The University of the South Pacific*)

Tragic versus Comic Transformations: Myles's Modernist Metamorphoses

Ruben Borg (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)

This paper reads scenes of transformation in Brian O'Nolan's work in light of his experimentation with tragic and comic form. I begin by situating O'Nolan's poetics within an Aristotelian and Scholastic discourse on tragedy and comedy. Focusing in particular on 'John Duffy's Brother', and on segments from *Cruiskeen Lawn*, I articulate a peculiarly Mylesian

response to traditional definitions of genre in order to determine what is comic (or tragic) about the metamorphoses undergone by O’Nolan’s characters.

Ruben Borg is an Alon Fellow (2008-2011) and Head of the Department of English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His articles on modernism have appeared in numerous journals including *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Poetics Today* and *Narrative*. He is the author of *The Measureless Time of Joyce, Deleuze and Derrida*, and co-editor, with his buddy Paul Fagan and Werner Huber, of *Flann O’Brien: Contesting Legacies* (listed in *The Irish Times* top 10 non-fiction books of 2014). He is currently working on a book titled *Fantasies of Self-Mourning: Modernism, the Posthuman and the Problem of Genre*.

‘always five o’clock in the afternoon’:

Wasting Timelessness in Lewis Carroll & Flann O’Brien

Paul Fagan (*Salzburg University*)

This paper argues that the significance of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* novels for modernist writing rests upon their comic reimagining of the classic ‘time and timelessness’ *topos*. In arguing this broader thesis, I focus on the specific ways in which Carroll’s Wonderland – and particularly the rhetoric of time employed in The Mad Tea Party – shapes the absurd, even impossible representations of ‘Eternity’ in Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*. The Mad Hatter’s claim that ‘It’s always six o’clock’ in Wonderland is explicitly evoked in the scholar’s description of The Parish as a place ‘where it was always five o’clock in the afternoon’. Unpacking the stakes of this echo, I argue for Carroll as an enlightening alternative to the standard coordinates of Augustine and J.W. Dunne for O’Brien’s treatment of time.

Critics have noted the importance to modernist thought of the distinction between temporality and timelessness inherited from Plato, Augustine, and Dante. With the advent of its Enlightenment redefinition through Newton *et al.*, Ronald Schleifer argues, time’s opposite was no longer another species of temporality, ‘eternity’, but rather its total absence – an ‘atemporal’ essence. I argue that the comic thrust of Carroll’s and O’Nolan’s experiments with temporality and atemporality lies in the confusion of these distinctions. Each author traces the fall-out of a radical event – Alice’s fall through the rabbit hole, the de Selby scholar’s unnoted death – that transports their protagonists into a realm in which time’s opposite is figured simultaneously, and impossibly, as an ‘eternity’ in which time can still be ‘wasted’. The logic of an ‘eternity’ that still functions along the coordinates of waste and productivity, abundance and austerity, and measureable fluctuations is the comic thrust of Carroll and O’Nolan’s texts, and an underanalysed component of modernist poetics.

Paul Fagan is a lecturer and researcher at the University of Vienna and a Senior Scientist at Salzburg University. He is the co-founder and president of the International Flann O’Brien Society, as well as co-founder and series editor of the peer-reviewed society journal *The Parish Review*. He has published articles and reviews in *James Joyce Quarterly*, *European Joyce Studies*, *Joyce Studies in Italy*, and *Partial Answers*, and contributed chapters to collections from Syracuse University Press, Manchester University Press, Cork University Press, Liverpool University Press, Dalkey Archive Press, and Brill/Rodopi.

All Jokes Aside: Schizo Literature

John Greaney (*University College Dublin*)

This paper will assess a politics of hybridity in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*. *At-Swim Two-Birds*, as it opens with its three separate introductions from different temporalities, sets a process of narrative and plot hybridity in motion. The novel proceeds with the narrator conjugating and amalgamating these separate narratives; figures from Irish mythology and elsewhere coexist with banal characters from contemporary Dublin. Thus, *At Swim-Two-Birds* presents the bizarre situation in which figures from the past are called forth to live in the present of the novel which the narrator is writing. As such, it seems the novel is extending a gesture of hybrid reconciliation of past with present to explore what the offspring of this combination will produce. Thus, this paper will argue that *At Swim Two-Birds* demonstrates the madness of overt and unrestrained attempts at defining the production of hybrid conjugation, and that as a result, when one catapults oneself whole-heartedly into such gestures, the result is – as is the case of Orlick Trellis – a schizophrenic product, borne of an incestuous impulse, which turns upon that which seeks to control it.

John Greaney is a second year Ph.D candidate at University College Dublin, and is supervised by Prof. John Brannigan. His research deals with the period 1930-1970 and explores the performance of memory and silence in the *oeuvres* of Samuel Beckett, Mary Lavin, John McGahern, Flann O'Brien, and Kate O'Brien. Greaney is an Irish Research Council supported scholar.

9:30-11:00

The Politics of the Comic: Metafiction, Metaphor, Metamorphosis

Room 111, Chair: Alana Gillespie (*Utrecht University*)

'A Member of the Author Class':

Metafiction & Authorship in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*

Rachel Darling

This paper explores how metafiction is used to defy traditional understandings of how the novel should work and how the author-character(s) functions within *At Swim-Two-Birds*. By definition the novel form is inherently metafictional, however I argue that the writing characters employed by O'Brien force an even greater degree of self-reflexivity upon the narrative, providing a contrast with accepted modernist ideals about the author. Metafictional texts – sometimes termed 'anti-novel' – transform the usual conventions of the novel, exposing their status as constructed fictions, thus challenging the notion that one of the novel's primary functions is mimetic. It is this conceit that O'Brien questions, attacking the notion that any one literary form (let alone the novel) can truly represent reality.

The coexistence and interplay between the many different literary influences O'Brien evokes reflect the inherently intertextual nature of all fiction, placing the reader at the heart of his 'storyteller's book-web', charged with deciphering the meanings imbued by each textual reference. I examine O'Brien's choice of diverse textual sampling – from cowboy stories, to Irish myth, to modernist literature – which I hold demonstrates an enmeshing of high and low cultures, a central motif of modernism, in which neither is given dominance over the other. By reworking mythology and contemporary fiction, O'Brien shows the importance of placing ancient and modern texts into a dialogue, in order to illustrate the evolution of storytelling and of the novel form.

Rachel Darling recently completed her doctoral thesis at King's College London, on the fictional representations of novelists in the 20th century British and Irish novel. She is currently working as an independent researcher and writer.

Who Framed Brian O’Nolan?

Giordano Vintaloro (*Universities of Udine and Florence*)

Brian O’Nolan wanted the Irish to explore an alternative reality, and build a new country, through laughter. Besides his famous pseudonyms, he employed a lot of different techniques that apparently differentiated his personas’ styles and registers. But all ultimately worked towards the same end. He relied much on language to unmask conventional relationships between words and things. He pushed to the limit the conventional storytelling address to audience, usually employed in live performing, thus greatly engaging his readers. He profited much from the position of a recognized authority he had in his society to launch deeper attacks on conventional beliefs. By doing so, he complied with the duty of the comic: criticising society even at the risk of losing the benefits the post guarantees, but he also changed his role from outsider into negotiator.

Giordano Vintaloro is a freelance translator and copywriter. He published two books on Monty Python’s *Life of Brian* and on Flann O’Brian-Brian O’Nolan. He teaches English language and translation at the universities of Udine and Florence, Italy, and he is a member of the ISHS (International Society for Humor Studies), the Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters and of the Italian Union of Literary Translators, of which he is general secretary. In 2014 he founded the digital publishing house Corpo60 (www.corpo60.it), and his most recent work is the translation into Italian of Brian Whitaker’s *Arabs without God: Atheism and Freedom of Belief in the Middle East*.

‘Quare Country’: The Metamorphosis of Satire in Ireland from Myles na gCopaleen to *The Savage Eye*

Thierry Robin (*University of Brittany, Brest*)

‘Explain what it feels like to be Irish. State at what age you first realized that you were an Irish person’

– Myles na gCopaleen

‘Why are the Irish so influential in the world of Arts?’

– *The Savage Eye*

Brian O’Nolan captured the ambiguous *Zeitgeist* characterising the emergence of a postcolonial Ireland in a whole variety of manners and genres: notably through his *Irish Times* column *Cruiskeen Lawn* (1940-1966), but also in some of his plays (such as *Faustus Kelly*, 1943) and novels, such as *An Béal Bocht* (1941), *The Hard Life* (1962), and his posthumous masterpiece *The Third Policeman* (1967), which locates Ireland at the baroque crossroads between post-quantum physics and enduring parochialism. Two constant features loom large in his work: satire and (the deconstruction of) stereotypes about Irishness. Over forty years after O’Nolan’s death in April 1966, satire and stereotypes bearing on the ‘intriguing little land’ that is Ireland are once again revisited, recycled, and deconstructed, this time on Irish mainstream TV (RTÉ2) in a show entitled *The Savage Eye*, created by and featuring David Andrews Jr *aka* David McSavage.

While the mere comparison of the tone of these two satirical corpuses is already *per se* quite revealing of the moral, cultural (r)evolution in the country and its perception of itself, strangely enough, it also proves quite telling in terms of enduring Irish stereotypes in an ever-shifting globalised world. Resorting to Susan Fiske's Stereotype Content Model (SCM) Theory, my paper will focus on the elements of rupture or permanence feeding the comical satirical vein in Myles' and McSavage's caustic treatment of the Irish identity, from a land of emigration to a land of immigration, from the Gaeligores' artificial enthusiasm towards the revival of the Gaelic tongue to its mock obituary on RTÉ, from rigid taboos concerning sex to new aspects of censorship as regards the treatment of the body and religion, from Father Kurt Fahrt to the child-snatching paedophile priests featured by McSavage, from the Plain People of Ireland in Myles's column to the Bull Mick. This analysis aims to feed the debate on the centrality of satire in Irish literature demonstrating – if necessary – the need to qualify, update, and validate Vivian Mercier's analysis expounded in his seminal 1962 work *The Irish Comic Tradition*.

Thierry Robin is a senior lecturer (Associate Professor) at the European University of Brittany, Brest. I am also a member of the research centre HCTI EA4249 based in Western Brittany –the 4 letters “HCTI” stand for “Heritage and Construction through Texts and Images”. I also collaborate with the CRBC –Center for Breton and Celtic Research, similarly based in Brest. My research focuses on contemporary Irish literature and the connections between ideology, epistemology and the concept of reality. My favourite writers include Oscar Wilde, Flann O'Brien, Samuel Beckett, John Banville, Anne Enright, Dermot Healy. In addition to a large number of papers or scientific contributions bearing on these topics and writers –see above–, I published a book devoted to the study of Flann O'Brien's novels, entitled *Flann O'Brien, Un voyageur au bout du langage* (Rennes, 2008) and coedited with Patrick Galliou a collection of essays dealing with political ideology in Ireland, *Political Ideology in Ireland from the Enlightenment to the Present* (2009).

11:30-12:30

Writing Under the Influence

Room 200, Chair: Richard T. Murphy (*University of South Carolina Upstate*)

**'The situation had become deplorably fluid':
Alcohol, Alchemy, & O'Brien's Metamorphoses**
Noam Schiff (*Brandeis University*)

Ovid's *Metamorphosis* is popularly known as a collection of myths describing a series of physically unambiguous and morally significant permanent transformations of life-like figures into inferior lifeforms. However, containing hundreds of transformatory tales, *Metamorphosis* holds many stories in which the morphing of one entity into another shape constitutes a staged, an imaginary, or even an understated narrative element. Such, for example is Pentheus's transformation into a boar: a visual illusion constructed by Bacchus. My paper utilises the rich and varied potential of Ovid's transformations in order to read further into the similarly complex theme of metamorphosis in the works of Flann O'Brien.

Like Ovid's, O'Brien's metamorphoses often carry moral significance, and are of various kinds. However, Flann's metamorphoses also bear a strong relationship with the alchemic and the scientific. Such transformations are therefore of a dual nature: they are both moralistically Ovidian, and molecularly scientific. A third theme which unites the two aspects of O'Brien's metamorphoses by partaking in equal parts of the moralistic molecular divide is the theme of

alcohol consumption and drinking culture. In the works of the Irish writer, drinking is often an agent for the physical, hallucinatory and even moralistic transformation of fictional subjects. Having learned to bend the nature of time and the essence of matter, the scientifically inclined De Selby, Flann O'Brien's fictional counterpart, turns primarily towards the supernatural alteration of barley, water, and yeast into finely aged whisky. From De Selby's alchemic experiments with whisky, to the 'Mystical transfiguration' of Dublin and its inhabitants upon the closing hours in which alcohol cannot be sold publically, even in the illusory transformation of the audience in *Thirst*, transfiguration through drink and transformation for drink are presented in Flann's *oeuvre* as mutually generative metamorphoses.

Looking into his prose and plays, I would like to focus on the interconnected subjects of alcohol consumption, alchemy, and mythological transformation as three thematically related forms of metamorphoses in the works of Flann O'Brien. I will argue that the numerous references to change through drink and drinking culture in the works of the Irish author cannot be written off as humoristic punchlines. Instead, such transfigurations play an important role in a full reckoning of O'Brien's metamorphoses.

Noam Schiff is a PhD student at Brandeis University, focusing on Beckett and Irish modernism. Noam received a BA and an MA in English from the Hebrew University.

The Comforters & At Swim-Two-Birds:

Parallel Explorations of the Boundaries between Fiction and Real-Life

James Ellis

Almost twenty years separate the publications of Muriel Spark's novel *The Comforters* (1957) and Flann O'Brien's novel *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939). Spark was Scottish; part-Jewish, part-Presbyterian and later a convert to Catholicism; a poet who wrote *The Comforters* at a time when British literature was tending towards the realism of so-called kitchen-sink dramas. O'Brien was a devout Irish Catholic; a student of Irish poetry and an author of satirical articles and short stories. He wrote *At Swim-Two-Birds* at a time when the modernist and avant-garde styles of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett were the influential forces in Irish literature.

Despite the authors' different backgrounds and cultural influences, taken as a pair the novels have a number of distinct similarities. For example, both parody the literary forms of realism and modernism that were prevalent at their time of writing. Both novels also explicitly acknowledge the writer's craft. More overtly, both novels are stories about novelists writing novels, and given that *The Comforters* and *At Swim-Two-Birds* were their authors' debut novels it could be argued that they were both developing their writer's craft in public and sharing this work-in-progress with their readers.

This paper takes as its premise that these similarities in style, subject-matter, and working method are part of a greater parallel between the two novels; that is, that both novels can be read as literary explorations into the boundaries that lie between fiction and real-life. I will consider that premise by discussing some of the ways in which Spark and O'Brien treated the roles of character, author, and reader, and wove those treatments into their respective narratives such that they became significant enablers of that exploration.

James Ellis is a writer of prose and drama. He has recently completed a Master of Studies (MSt) degree in Creative Writing during which he spent two weeks as a submissions reader at an Oxford-based literary agency. He was a prizewinner for the Real Writers Short Story Awards and has had a number of flash fiction stories published as well as a travelogue of his journey through Central America. He read his story, *The Fire-Diver's Assistant*, at the 2015 Brighton Fringe Festival for Rattle Tales, and is currently completing his first novel, *The Wrong Story*.

11:30-12:30

The Local

Room 111, Chair: Radvan Markus (*Charles University, Prague*)

Flann in the Trees

Donal McCay (*St Mary's University, Twickenham*)

Flann O'Brien is often described as a Dubliner. The purpose of this paper is to argue that, whereas the wit and satire of his alter ego Myles na Gopaleen is primarily directed at an overwhelmingly Dublin readership, Flann O'Brien is essentially a 'Northern' writer. Both *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman*, along with many of his short stories and plays, are influenced by his childhood in Strabane and by his frequent subsequent visits to Tyrone and Donegal. The setting of *An Béal Bocht* is clearly Donegal (despite its heterotopic map of other Gaeltacht areas), and the narrative is also influenced by the hiring fairs of Strabane.

This paper will focus on the myth of Mad King Sweeny which is central to *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The tale of Buile Shuibhne, a Middle-Irish myth from the Historical Cycle, was translated by Flann O'Brien himself and whereas all the other forms and styles of writing in *At Swim-Two-Birds* are satirised, O'Brien remains largely respectful of the myth of Sweeny.

I will examine how O'Brien's treatment of the myth complies with T.S. Eliot's 'mythic method', and particularly the use of ancient fable to rediscover what has been lost or destroyed. Comparisons will also be made with the Seamus Heaney translation, *Sweeney Astray* (1983). O'Brien is concerned with circumventing the censor and political authority whilst Heaney wished to avoid the political traps awaiting a Northern Catholic poet. I will examine how, like Heaney, O'Brien uses the story of Sweeny, a deserter and an outsider, to proclaim the artist's search for freedom.

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

Morphed into Myles

Johanna Marquardt (*Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz*)

'Myles and Company' (Tony Gray), 'The Incomparable Myles' (John Ryan), *The Brother (Myles)* (Micheál Ó Nualláin): quite a number of biographical writings on Brian O'Nolan refer to him as 'Myles'. Anthony Cronin writes in *No Laughing Matter* (ironically an account of *The Life and Times of Flann O'Brien*): 'The fate of many licensed jesters had overtaken Myles. He had become his admirers and they him'. The choice of the name Myles points to a localised Dublin readership

which is interested and perhaps acquainted with *The Irish Times* columnist Myles na gCopaleen as well as the eccentric character about town.

This paper sees the Myles referred to not as O’Nolan’s character author, but as a product of an exchange of gazes – some literary, others orally transmitted, even until today, all anecdotal – between Brian O’Nolan and his readership, as well as the audiences of his near-theatrical performances in pubs. Employing Rainer Emig’s theory of eccentricity as a functioning principle of culture, this paper will investigate how Brian O’Nolan (was) morphed into Myles and why the anecdote is the ideal form to accommodate the many contradictions which inhabit this strangely O’Brien-esque hybrid of real man, theatrical performance, and literary character.

Johanna Marquardt is researcher and lecturer at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. She studied English literature, linguistics and didactics, political science, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, and philosophy at Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover where she worked from 2011 to 2015 and organised the annual conferences of the German Association for the Study of English and the German Society for the Study of British Cultures, both in 2014. Her PhD research is titled *Flann’s Fantastic Failures: Eccentricity in the Dublin of the Mid-Twentieth Century*.

14:30-16:00

Forked Tongues

Room 200, Chair: Brian Ó Conchubhair (University of Notre Dame)

Translation, Transliteration, Transgression: The First Myles na gCopaleen

John Wyse Jackson

Myles na gCopaleen was first employed by *The Irish Times* to supply a regular column in the Irish language. For a few years after 1940, when he was, by common agreement, at the height of his powers, he did so. The bulk of this material remains unrepublished, and almost nothing has appeared in English translation. So it is almost unknown in the Anglophone world and, with one notable exception, has rarely been discussed or examined, even in Ireland.

Some years ago, I hoped that a dual-language edition of a representative selection from the Irish *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns might one day be published. I read through the columns, translating as I went. Contrary to rumour, they were not simply further episodes from the world of Corca Dorcha, but something fresher and more exciting.

My paper (which will be entirely in English) is likely to be short on theory and long on illustrative examples. It will sample some of the various modes that O’Nolan practised in this Irish material. These include a sequence of anecdotes starring characters from nineteenth-century Irish balladry, satirical ‘academic’ reports of research into a forgotten Gaelic poet, fragments of whose manuscripts are scattered throughout Europe, advertising copy for a new wonder drug, Scrámó, and a raft of pastiche folkloric material.

It will be difficult, if not impossible, to convey orally Myles’s use of transliteration: i.e. rendering English sentences phonetically through Irish orthography, but I shall (briefly) try to do so. Mention may also be made of a little-known 1940s translation of *An Béal Bocht*, which may have drawn its inspiration and methodology from Myles’s own English versions of gobbets from *An tOileánach*. The object of my paper will be to encourage further examination of what may be the last important unexplored body of O’Nolan’s best work.

John Wyse Jackson was born in Kilkenny in 1953, and educated in Dublin. His previous books include *Myles Before Myles: A Selection of the Earlier Writings of Flann O'Brien*, *Flann O'Brien at War*, and *Phenolphthalein: A Fictional Quest for the Eighth Plot*. He has also published widely on the subjects of James Joyce, John Stanislaus Joyce, Oscar Wilde, John Lennon, Irish poetry, and the city of Dublin. He now lives in Gorey, County Wexford, where he owns and runs Zozimus Bookshop (email: info@zozimusbookshop.com).

Lamhd Láftar: Bilingual Cognition in Flann O'Brien

Maria Kager (*Utrecht University*)

Recent studies from the fields of neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics suggest that bilinguals and multilinguals are in many ways fundamentally different from monolinguals, a distinction that starts with a different cerebral structure for language. This disparity will constitute the point of departure for my paper: if multilingual people are intrinsically different from monolingual people, it should follow that multilingual writers must be intrinsically different from monolingual writers.

During his lifetime, Brian O'Nolan was most famous for his daily column in *The Irish Times*, the *Cruiskeen Lawn* (from the Irish 'an cruiscín lán', 'the little full jug'), which he wrote from 1940 until his death in 1966. It appeared mainly in Irish for the first year, then Irish and English alternated until 1943, and after 1943 it appeared almost exclusively in English. Through multilingual wordplay and observations on the (im)possibilities of translations between Irish and English, O'Nolan creates, in these columns, a 'polytonal' discourse that seems to mine linguistic complexities and that would have been unthinkable had O'Nolan not been a bilingual himself. I will call on some of the research in neuro- and psycholinguistics to illuminate O'Nolan's constant back and forth between English and Irish and the importance this may have had for his writing.

Maria Kager is a lecturer in English at Utrecht University, The Netherlands. She holds a double doctorate in comparative literature from Rutgers University in the US and from the University of Antwerp in Belgium. She is currently at work on a book project titled *Polyglot Fancies: Bilingualism & Cognition in Twentieth Century Fiction*.

Day 4: Saturday 19 September

09:30-11:00

Apocrypha & Revelations: The Short Fiction

Room 200, Chair: Keith Hopper (*Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education; St Mary's University, Twickenham*)

**'By the time these lines are in neat rows of print... the writer will be in Kingdom Come':
Distancing & Deconstruction in the Short Fiction of Brian Ó Nualláin & Brother Barnabas
Ciaran Clibbens** (*Hertford College, University of Oxford*)

This paper will widen the critical treatment of Brian Ó Nualláin's short fiction by evaluating early stories published under his own name or as Brother Barnabas. At stake will be the challenges to narrative convention and authorial identity found in these stories, and how they prefigure later preoccupations. In particular, I propose to look at the stories' contrived subdivisions, self-commentary, and metafictional interrogations of language's inability to convey the full range of sensual experience.

Three stories published by Ó Nualláin employ distancing techniques. ‘Revenge on the English...’ is disowned by its author, and framed by the hallucinatory power of food, an image emblematic of epiphanical transfiguration. The return of John Duffy’s brother from train-hood to apparent sanity during his lunch echoes the student-narrator’s meditative chewing in the opening lines of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. ‘The Arrival and Departure of John Bull’ and ‘The Reckonings of Our Ancestors’ share a framing device – found inside the walls of demolished buildings – and the food motif returns in the latter, wrapped around an historic builder’s lunch, a theory ‘confirmed by the stench of the fish and chips on the paper’.

This relegation of literature to litter recalls the cultural detritus produced by Brother Barnabas in student magazine *Combthrom Féinne*. An examination of Barnabas, whom John Wyse Jackson calls ‘the first of O’Nolan’s invented personae’, is overdue, and thematic resonances abound. From the Mylesian self-aggrandising journalism of ‘Graduate cut to ribbons by express train’ to the revolutionary ferment and combustible diegetics of his final contribution, ‘Scenes in a Novel’, Barnabas functions as the ur-text for *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the gateway to the metamorphosed persona that acts as its author-*bricoleur*, Flann O’Brien.

Ciaran Clibbens is a Master’s student at Hertford College, University of Oxford. He is studying with Keith Hopper, writing his dissertation on the changing voices and identities of Flann O’Brien’s short fiction; looking at recurrent motifs, framing and distancing devices. He completed his undergraduate degree at Manchester Metropolitan University, where he won the English prize for his dissertation on prefigurative deconstruction in O’Brien’s novels.

Visual Metamorphoses in ‘John Duffy’s Brother’

Flavia Iovine (*Università Roma Tre*)

In ‘John Duffy’s Brother’ Flann O’Brien’s ‘fascination with trains’ seems to lead his ‘bizarre epic’ – as he defines his narrative in ‘The Arrival and Departure of John Bull’ – into the realm of absurd and surreal metafiction, in a manner somewhat akin to Beckett’s theatre. In this piece of short fiction, O’Brien seems to guide both the self-conscious narrator and the co-creative reader through the main needs and requests of the *avant-garde* between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He recovers the image of the train which is so present in the European literary tradition, from Dostoevskij and Tolstoj to Kafka, Joyce, and Pirandello (*Il treno ha fischiato*, 1914). The image can also be linked with the European visual tradition: French impressionist representations by Monet (*La Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877); the cinematographic *L’Arrivée d’un train* (1896) by Lumière brothers; Russian Expressionism and the Cubism of Kandinsky’s paintings; Italian Futurism and later Symbolism such as *Gli addii* (1911) by Boccioni.

There are striking similarities between ‘John Duffy’s Brother’ and *Il treno ha fischiato*: in Pirandello’s *novella* the protagonist Belluca thinks he is a train but the narrator clearly understands that this is the sign of madness provoked by his alienation and solitude. The narrator calls this momentary illness ‘the tail of a monster’ in which Belluca seems to be transformed. John Duffy’s brother is an isolated and alienated outcast too, but he does not understand what is happening to him, and he never will – nor does his narrator seem to. He becomes a thing – the train – acting out an overturned and anthropomorphic *prosopopea* (προσωποποιία).

Flavia Iovine is a graduate student of Prof. John McCourt at Università Roma Tre. In her II level degree thesis she worked on textual analysis of Flann O’Brien’s short stories and the figures of the narrator and of the reader, strictly linked to Italo Calvino’s *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*.

Magnetic Attraction and Body Doubles: Florence Minerva Meets John Duffy's Brother Paula Tebay

The experimental pseudonymous short story 'Naval Control' sailed into view in the winter of 1932, appearing in the pulp science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. The story is prefaced by an invitation, purportedly by the editors of the journal or the author in question – 'Why, some of our readers have asked, do we take science fiction so seriously? Is there no humour in it? We think there is. But we want to hear from more of our readers about this story, which we are using as an experiment. We think it is very ingenious and cleverly worked out' (original headnote to 'Naval Control', *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, 1932).

'Naval Control', a "short-short story" classified as a piece of comic science fiction, was written by a certain John Shamus O'Donnell, re-discovered by Jack Fennell in 2011 and reprinted as a second appendix in *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien*, edited by Neil Murphy and Keith Hopper (2013). Mirroring the editorial invitation of 1932, the story is included as 'a speculative gesture designed to generate further discussion and enquiry'. Whether this obscure, comic, and perplexing short story can be attributed to a certain twenty-one year old Brian O'Nolan remains open to conjecture. Building on significant intertextual and intratextual allusions and themes listed in the editors' note, this paper will consider the case of 'Naval Control' as potentially one of the earliest assembled and published works of Brian O'Nolan, paying particular reference to his lesser known short fiction.

Paula Tebay is an independent scholar based in Oxford. She is currently working as a tutor on a collaborative postgraduate project with the School of Education at Bath Spa University and a national arts charity working with young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.

11:30-13:00

Sign/Language

Room 200, Chair: Neil Murphy (*Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*)

Enacting the 'catastrophe of cliché': Monstrous Metamorphoses in *Cruiskeen Lawn*

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

In a bureaucratic world, the formatted document is sovereign;
speech is no longer prior to such conventions; it is an after-mimicry of them.
– Seamus Deane, *Strange Country*

This paper proposes that the *Cruiskeen Lawn* columns are amenable to a new comparative reading alongside the works of Karl Kraus, a major satirist of the collapsing Austro-Hungarian empire, who was born a short distance from Prague and became a key influence on Franz Kafka. Kraus once wrote that 'national socialism did not annihilate the press, rather: the press created national socialism'. This reading compares the surreal metamorphoses of clichéd language and empty phrases taking place in both texts as part of a programme of 'reanimating set phrases', which satirises a world in which thought and history are restructured by the idioms of the state, the press and commercial interests.

By imbuing clichés with a self-consistent logical system, Myles na gCopaleen injects journalistic, legalistic, and literary jargon with unsettling life: formulaic clichés and set phrases become primary over speech and stage Irishmen walk the streets of Dublin. In articles such as ‘Die Welt der Plakate’, Kraus depicts the transformation of reality by its stereotyped rendition in advertising: slogans leap out of billboards in order to take on a monstrous second life.

I will argue that Kraus’s ‘Katastrophe der Phrasen’ is renewed in *Cruiskeen Lawn* as the ‘Catechism of Cliché’, which is at once the scene of a dance of the dead metaphor and a profound interrogation of the conventions which link language and power.

Tobias Harris took his undergraduate degree at the University of Oxford and completed his M.A. in Modern and Contemporary Literature at the University of London, receiving a distinction for his dissertation: ‘Cliché, cabaret and catastrophe: Myles na gCopaleen in the context of Karl Kraus’. He is planning to begin doctoral studies under the supervision of Dr Joseph Brooker at Birkbeck College in October 2015.

‘But why this name Vico Road?’: Flann O’Brien’s Onomastic Inquiry

Hunter Brooks Dukes (*University of Cambridge*)

Not far into Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*, the nameless narrator interrupts his narrative with a revealing footnote about de Selby’s theory of proper names. In this paratextual aside, he explains how de Selby ‘regards the earliest names as crude onomatopoeic associations with the appearance of the person or object named’. With this phrase, the pseudonymic O’Brien situates his novel in lineage with a debate running from Plato’s *Cratylus* – a dialogue that attempts to determine whether or not the sign is motivated – through Rousseau’s ‘Essay on the Origin of Languages’, all the way to Ferdinand de Saussure’s insistence on the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. While Maebh Long has recently written an essay on ‘Translation and the Proper Name’, many aspects of O’Brien’s onomastics remain unexplored. This paper, then, will read O’Brien’s interest in Irish and Hiberno-English names – take, for example, the hybrid *mór lawn* in *The Dalkey Archive*, which becomes ‘LAWNMOWER’ right under the reader’s nose – alongside a tradition of ‘name magic’ rediscovered in Yeats’s *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888), Æ’s *The Candle of Vision* (1918), and Edward Clodd’s *Magic in Names & Other Things* (1920). I will also argue that O’Brien inherits an interest in *béire n-etarscartha* (the language of separation), a medieval Irish jurist technique for elevating etymology to a magical science, which he uses to trouble the distinction between words and things.

Hunter Brooks Dukes is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, writing a dissertation under Steven Connor on place-names in twentieth-century Irish literature. Hunter has a paper forthcoming in the *Journal of Modern Literature* entitled “‘That Foul Feeling of Pity’: Beckett’s Vessels and the Animation of Containers’.

Gaelic Inferno: An Béal Bocht between Revival & Determinism

Radvan Markus (*Charles University in Prague*)

The interpretation of Brian O’Nolan’s Irish-language novel *An Béal Bocht*, barring exceptions, usually exhausts itself by exploring various facets of Myles na gCopaleen as a ‘Gaelic satirist’,

isolating the novel from the late modernist/post-modernist tenor of his English-language works. The present paper shall attempt to partially fill this lacuna by analysing the general theme of language in *An Béal Bocht* and pointing to its various interfaces with the satirical tone of the book. Making reference to early Romantic philosophy and post-modern theory of discourse, which, albeit with different emphases, both problematise the Enlightenment view of language as a transparent tool of communication, the paper will present the world of the novel as an extreme example of language determinism.

Language, largely reduced to ideology and clichés, and stripped of its communicative function, becomes the tool that constructs the nightmarish world of rain and poverty in which the book's characters must live. Similarly to *The Third Policeman*, Corca Dorcha becomes a kind of a circular hell, and in a way reminiscent of *At Swim-Two-Birds*, its features are largely created by writers – the authors of the frequently mentioned '*dea-leabhair*' [good books]. Nationalistic ideology is largely at fault, but to a degree also language as such. Significantly, the only escape from the circle is at the cost of totally abandoning human language and society as shown by the example of the beggar Sitric.

Radvan Markus teaches the Irish language and lectures on Irish literature at Charles University in Prague. He has published on literary reflections of the 1798 Irish Rebellion as well as on Irish-language prose of the twentieth century. He also translates from Irish to Czech.

11:30-13:00

Frothing at the Gob

Room 111, Chair: Katherine Ebury (University of Sheffield)

Typographic Materiality: Visual Transformations of Text in O'Brien and Joyce

Yaeli Greenblatt (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Focusing primarily on the two novels *The Third Policeman* and *At Swim-Two-Birds*, this paper will examine Flann O'Brien's use of typographic material imagery through a comparative reading with Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. By introducing erratic page layout, footnotes, fonts, symbols, and illustrations, the visual representation of the text becomes integral to the semiotic structure of the work, drawing the reader's attention to its material nature.

Interactions with book objects are depicted by both authors as grounded in physical reality. In O'Brien, meta-fictional structures allow for comments on the material nature of the artefact, while Joyce portrays reading and writing as a tactile experience, representing text and body as interchangeable. These images of material text are then realised in the graphic strategies of each work. Both O'Brien and Joyce frequently employ parodies of other textual media; in these instances, the text transforms in content and style, but also in its visual features. In morphing into a newspaper, letter, play, scientific commentary, journal, or schoolbook, the formal parody places these works of fiction on the boundary between different genres, lending prominence to graphic imagery. The visual transformation of the text provides an additional layer of metafiction to O'Brien's multilayered works by involving the experience of the reader with the text as object. For both authors, the experimentation with typography culminates in the novel's transgression of the textual medium through the inclusion of graphic imagery, transforming the novel into a graphic-textual hybrid.

Yaeli Greenblatt is a Ph.D student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's English Department. Her research focuses on the materiality of the image in Joyce and its correspondences to the contemporary graphic novel.

'Nothing could be further from Detroit':

James Joyce's Citizen & the Birth of Brian O'Nolan's *Cruiskeen Lawn*

Joseph LaBine (*University of Windsor*)

'—There he is, says I, in his gloryhole, with his cruiskeen lawn and his load of papers, working for the cause'. Given this line from Joyce's *Ulysses*, it seems wholly unsatisfying that Brian O'Nolan found the title of his satirical *Cruiskeen Lawn* from a song. Myles na gCopaleen wrote innumerable comic commentaries on Joyce throughout his career. David Powell notes seventy-seven such appearances in the column but this body of writing has been dismissed by scholars as 'an attack on Joyce' and is connected to what some have held as O'Nolan's 'hack journalism' for *The Irish Times*. Powell fails to note additional articles in his bibliography for the *James Joyce Quarterly*, while Anne Clissmann, and recently Donald McNamara, have both tried to understand the column as disunified journalism when conceptually it screams Joyce. The *Cruiskeen Lawn* is a metamorphosis of literary criticism and O'Nolan seeks to replicate what he believes to be Joyce's comic style of writing. He confounds the 'Joyce industry' with nonsense writing. But what may have been conceived in *Ulysses*, quickly evolved into informal literary criticism combatting the increasingly erudite and inaccessible manner in which academic scholarship on Joyce's works is usually written. His style is absurd, sprawling, and disparaging, but O'Nolan's insight into the cult of Joyce bears the same viciousness of Joyce's Citizen.

This paper is concerned with Myles na gCopaleen's literary criticism and how Joyce's conception of the comic mode informs the *Cruiskeen Lawn*. O'Nolan developed 'comically pretentious literary criticism as a principal mode' (Anthony Cronin); but it is important to look beyond the joke, examine what arguments his commentaries put forward, and reveal how Joyce frames the column. Denis Johnson notes that Joyce scholarship 'is just as much a trade or profession as politics and religion. In the fields of learning there are many lectures that have to be given, and many, many theses that have to be in written in the course of each academic year. And in this respect Joyce provides a widow's curse'. However, few have recognised that much of Joyce's writing is a 'colossal hoax, with no other purpose than to pull the academic leg of the entire world'. *Cruiskeen Lawn* may be the most creative metamorphosis of Joyce in existence.

Joseph LaBine is a recent graduate of the M.A. English Literature program at the University of Windsor. He specialises in Irish Studies with a focus on Brian O'Nolan and James Joyce. He is a member of the International Flann O'Brien Society and has published short articles in *The Explicator*, *Feral Feminisms*, *The Parish Review*, and *17 Seconds*. In April 2013 he became the editor of Flat Singles Press in Windsor. He plans to begin doctoral studies on 'Funny Modernism' in Fall 2016.

In transition: from *Finnegans Wake* to *At Swim-Two-Birds*

Paweł Hejmanowski (*Universidade de Brasília*)

At Swim-Two-Birds and *Finnegans Wake* both came out in 1939, but O'Brien, and the whole of literary Ireland, had been reading segments of Joyce's unfinished novel as they were appearing in Eugene Jolas's Parisian *transition* magazine since 1927 under the name of *Work in Progress*. Two great narratives of the *Wake*—the downfall of HCE and the perennial rivalry between Shem and Shaun—are merged into one in *At Swim-Two-Birds* as they resurface in the trial of Dermot Trellis. As a result, the battle between father and son becomes simultaneously a duel between the author and a character in his fiction, with Trellis playing Shem to his son Orlick's Shaun. Of all O'Brien's intertexts, these are possibly the two that have been subjected to the most severe distortion. Not only do Joyce's narratives occupy hundreds of pages in the *Wake*, but they also stand at the very centre of its thematic contents, whereas O'Brien's reinscription is compressed into mere twenty pages and executed in a light-hearted stylistic register. The present paper proposes to shed some light on the treatment these Wakean narratives underwent in the final pages of Flann O'Brien's first novel.

Paweł Hejmanowski is a lecturer at the Universidade de Brasília and the author of *At Swim-Two-Birds de Flann O'Brien e a Tradição Literária Irlandesa* (2014)

14:30-16:00

Tense Past: Re-Reading the Irish Tradition with Flann

Room 200, Chair: Joseph Brooker (Birkbeck, University of London)

Irish Anti-Realism and Flann O'Brien's Genealogical Reach

Neil Murphy (*Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*)

As early as 1925, sensing the potent connection between ontological anxiety and narrative invention, Jorge Luis Borges saw in Joyce's *Ulysses* what he viewed to be strong evidence of an 'ontological anxiety that is amazed not merely at being, but at being in this particular world where there are entranceways and words and playing cards and electric writing upon the translucence of the night'. In fiction ontological anxiety frequently declares itself as self-reflexive subversion – or self-mockery – which, for A Norman Jeffares, was a characteristic of the Irish novel after Sterne: 'Mock-seriousness, serious mockery: the strain runs from Swift to Shaw, from Sterne to Joyce'. While the Irish novel doesn't have a monopoly on ontological anxiety or on subversive self-referential narrative forms, this paper will argue that there is a clearly discernible Irish novelistic tradition that speaks precisely to these tendencies, a tradition for which Flann O'Brien's major fictions are critically important, particularly in terms of how the novel developed in Ireland after him. While his major work may be formally derived from Cervantes, Diderot, Pirandello, Jarry, among others, its narrative experimentation is also central to an Irish tradition that had always used narrative invention to speak of inner and outer dissonances. This paper will seek to establish some key genealogical connecting lines between Flann O'Brien and other writers of the Irish anti-realist tradition.

Neil Murphy is an Associate Professor of contemporary literature at NTU, Singapore. He is the author of *Irish Fiction and Postmodern Doubt* (2004) and editor of *Aidan Higgins: The Fragility of Form* (2010) and of the revised edition of Higgins' *Balcony of Europe* (2010). He co-edited (with Keith Hopper) a special Flann O'Brien centenary issue of the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* (2011) and *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien* (2013). He has published numerous articles and book chapters on contemporary fiction, Irish writing, and theories of reading, and is currently co-editing four books related to the work of Dermot Healy, while also completing a book on John Banville.

Phwat's in a Nam?: Brian O'Nolan as a Late Revivalist

Ronan Crowley (*University of Passau*)

Second-generation Mylesians rightly contested the culture of anecdote and insider reminiscence that had coalesced around the figure of Brian O'Nolan. In carving out a more critical reception, however, they plumped for the prolepsis of the artist as young postmodernist, in Keith Hopper's able formulation. More recent scholarship has begun the work of returning to history for the motivating contexts of O'Nolan's transformative art, reassessing the writer as a modernist. This paper is continuous with that corrective enterprise, but locates O'Nolan in the cultural field that formed his immediate intellectual inheritance: the Irish Literary Revival. Such an alignment requires us to reorient our views of both the movement and the writer. In fine, the critical bromide that insists on Revivalism as insistently anti-modern, fairy besotted, and laden with nostalgia for Gaelic Ireland no longer offers an adequate account of the creative ferment that characterises the Irish literary field to which O'Nolan responded.

Phwat's in a Nam? a Corca Dhorcha Juliet may well ask. To assess O'Nolan as a late Revivalist, then, is less an exercise in literary periodisation than an engagement with the very real conditions of his metamorphic art. Accordingly, the paper stresses the writer's continuities with and within Literary Revivalism rather than merely rehearse his perceived points of departure from it. Looking to the culture of pseudonym operative in the Revival, the paper historicises a persistent remnant of O'Nolan's anecdotal reception: the writer's penchant for *noms de guerre*. Isolated from its Revivalist context, pseudonymising has repeatedly been misread as a purely individual conceit; once understood against a vibrant backdrop of related activity, its politics of representation and coy misrepresentation come to the fore.

Ronan Crowley is Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Universität Passau. He took the PhD in English from the University at Buffalo in 2014 for a dissertation on transatlantic copyright regimes, genetic criticism, and the Irish Literary Revival. His research interests are in the Revival and Irish modernism, which he insists are one and the same thing.

'A shrunken modernity': Flann O'Brien & Eimar O'Duffy

Keith Hopper (*Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education; St Mary's University, Twickenham*)

'Eimar Ultan O'Duffy is virtually a forgotten writer' – thus begins Robert Hogan's short monograph on the Irish satirist, first published in 1972. Since then, there has been no great rush to revive O'Duffy's reputation, although the time for a proper reassessment of this neglected writer is long overdue. O'Duffy (1893-1935) was a captain in the Irish Volunteers but split with the nationalist movement over the 1916 Rising, which he vehemently opposed; O'Duffy's

counter-bildungsroman of this traumatic experience, *The Wasted Island* (1919), is one of the finest fictional accounts of what R.F. Foster has recently characterised as the ‘Revolutionary Generation’. Of greater interest to Flanneurs, though, is O’Duffy’s ‘*Cuandaine Trilogy*’ (1926-33), which John Cronin has suggested was a direct influence on Flann O’Brien: ‘While he owes much to [James] Stephens for the prevailing tone of certain aspects of his fantasy, O’Duffy can be seen to have exerted an evident influence on the author of *At Swim-Two-Birds* [...]. [Both writers] shared a certain common disenchantment with the superficialities of Irish patriotism [...]. Most importantly of all, O’Brien found in O’Duffy’s novels a fine satirical capacity for producing hilariously effective contrast by introducing into a shrunken modernity the giant figures of Irish legend’. For the purposes of this paper, I want to outline some formal and thematic comparisons between O’Duffy and O’Brien, and suggest that O’Duffy’s influence goes beyond mere parodies of revivalist literature. Philosophically and politically, O’Duffy has much to say to about the condition of post-Independence Ireland, and this cultural debt reverberates throughout the O’Brien *œuvre*.

Keith Hopper teaches Literature and Film Studies for Oxford University’s Department for Continuing Education, and is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Irish Studies at St Mary’s University, London. He is the author of *Flann O’Brien: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Post-modernist* (revised edition, 2009), general editor of the twelve-volume *Ireland into Film* series (2001-2007), and co-editor of *Flann O’Brien: Centenary Essays* (2011) and *The Short Fiction of Flann O’Brien* (2013). He is a regular contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement*, and is currently completing a book on the writer and filmmaker Neil Jordan. Forthcoming publications include co-editing (with Neil Murphy) a series of four books by and about the late Dermot Healy: *The Collected Short Stories* (2015); an edited reprint of his debut novel *Fighting with Shadows* (2015); *The Collected Plays* (2016); and a collection of critical essays and observations entitled *Dermot Healy: Writing the Sky* (2016).