

Werner Huber, Sandra Mayer, Julia Novak (eds.)

IRELAND IN/AND EUROPE:  
CROSS-CURRENTS AND EXCHANGES

# **Irish Studies in Europe**

Edited by

Werner Huber, Catherine Maignant, Hedwig Schwall

Volume

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**IRELAND IN/AND EUROPE:  
CROSS-CURRENTS AND EXCHANGES**

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**Ireland in/and Europe:**

**Cross-Currents and Exchanges /**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Vienna, July 2012

Werner Huber  
Sandra Mayer  
Julia Novak



## INTRODUCTION

Werner Huber, Sandra Mayer, Julia Novak

“Hibernicise Europe and Europeanise Ireland”<sup>1</sup> – this apocryphal quotation from James Joyce seemed a good motto for an EFACIS (European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies) conference precipitating a volume of essays on Irish-European cross-currents and exchanges. Vienna as the venue for that conference (University of Vienna, 3-6 September 2009) and the editors’ home base also evinced its potential as a place of exchange and negotiation. Ever since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Austria in general and Vienna in particular have been branded and promoted as the hub, cross-roads, and marketplace of a redefined Central Europe.

Incidentally, James Joyce nearly made it to Vienna, but not quite – as he did not take up the invitation his friend Oliver St. John Gogarty extended to him late in 1907. (Gogarty then had lodgings at Spitalgasse 1 in the 9th district, very close to the Old General Hospital, which is now part of the University). Even so, Joyce provides excellent parameters to initiate discussions of the “Ireland vs/in/and/with/without Europe” theme.

For a start, one could do worse than listen in on the autobiographical persona of Stephen Dedalus musing as he is walking along Dollymont Strand on “a day of dappled seaborne clouds”:

Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slowdrifting clouds, dappled and seaborne. They were voyaging across the deserts of the sky, a host of nomads on the march, voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The Europe they had come from lay out there beyond the Irish Sea, Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and woodbegirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshalled races. (Joyce, *Portrait* 167)

Europe thus is many things to Joyce, not only the Gothic/Exotic Other, as this quotation would lead us to believe, but also a symbol of liberation, cosmopolitanism, and modernism. At the end of his book *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce aka Stephen Dedalus prepares to leave Ireland, an “afterthought of Europe” (*Stephen Hero* 52), for Paris to study medicine and encounter Life! The parameter of Ireland vs. Europe in the whole of Joyce’s *œuvre* neatly reflects the trajectories of exile, return, distancing, and appropriation, as expressed in the famous apothegm containing Stephen’s advice to one of his fellow students: “Told him the shortest way to Tara was *via* Holyhead” (*Portrait* 250). And Joyce did indeed follow his own advice. Although he spent the better part of his life in ‘exile’ in mainland Europe (the

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1 Joyce, as quoted by Kearney 17. In Joyce’s highly autobiographical play *Exiles* (publ. 1918) we find the lines: “If Ireland is to become a new Ireland she must first become European” (45).

Habsburg Empire, Italy, France, Switzerland), he could never get away from the ‘matter of Ireland’ as the essential subject and theme of his work.

In yet another variation, the Ireland/Europe dichotomy is satirised by the arrogant piss-artist (if you excuse the language) that Stephen Dedalus has become by the time we follow his career in *Ulysses*: “You suspect [...] that I may be important because I belong to the *faubourg Saint Patrice* called Ireland for short. [...] But I suspect that Ireland must be important because it belongs to me” (*Ulysses* 599).

This healthy reversal of perspective is also underlying the agenda of these proceedings. The conference brought together scholars from many different countries, from many different schools, approaches, and disciplines<sup>2</sup> to engage in comparative studies and explore mechanisms of cultural transfer, contact, reception, and intertextuality, still they were united in their common aim and effort to question and explain traditional perspectives and to illuminate and deconstruct (as the case may be) myths and stereotypes that Ireland and Europe have entertained about each other in the twentieth century mainly.

At the EFACIS conference and in the present volume the Nobel Laureate **Seamus Heaney** gracefully consented to open the proceedings with a lecture-cum-reading. Heaney plays variations on the Joycean/Dedalian idea of a European trajectory, as his title indicates (“Mossbawn via Mantua: Ireland in/and Europe: Cross-Currents and Exchanges”), Mossbawn, of course, being Heaney’s birthplace in Northern Ireland, and Mantua that of the poet Virgil. ‘The shortest way’ to Mossbawn and to an overview of the poet’s career and *œuvre* is via five European “starting points” or “provinces.” By these Heaney means models, examples, influences, parallels, perspectives, ways of inspiration. The five categories are as follows: (1) Classical: Greco-Roman civilisation and Judaeo-Christian heritage; (2) Barbarian: the North/South divide in Europe; (3) Hyperborean: twentieth-century Russian and Eastern European poets; (4) Dante Alighieri; (5) direct translation as a “response to different contemporary crises.”

In the second half of his key note address Heaney cites, and comments on, individual poems that are illustrative of his engagement with various dimensions of Europeanness and their effect on his work. He concludes with a new translation of the famous medieval poem “Pangur Bán” about a cat and a monk in his cell hunting mice and words/meanings respectively.

In “Hy Brasil: Cartographic Error, Celtic Elysium, or the New Jerusalem?” **Barbara Freitag** examines early literary representations of the phantom Brasil Island off the western coast of Ireland, which has captured the imagination of writers ever since it

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2 A selection of film papers from the conference including a lengthy interview with Lenny Abrahamson and Mark O’Halloran has been published as a separate volume (see Huber and Crosson).

was first marked on an early-fourteenth-century Italian map. Her essay provides an overview of how the island has variously been portrayed as attractive destination for roguish travellers, the Elysium of the pagan Celt, or the 'promised land' of the saints and shows how it has frequently been related to questions of Irish national and religious identity as well as millenarian prophecy.

Moving from the realm of the legendary to the history of ideas, **Eglantina Rempert** ("My Change of Character': *Rousseauisme* and Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui*") traces the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile, ou De l'éducation* on Edgeworth's writing and on her novel *Ennui* in particular. The great Maria's engagement with the French philosopher was mediated through the reception of Rousseau's ideas on education by her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth. Rempert also sketches the wider social and political implications of the primacy of education and natural living, pointing out traces of Rousseau's legacy in Ireland's social and cultural history all the way to George Russell (AE) and the Co-operative Movement.

One of the most popular Irish writers in early-twentieth-century Europe is the focus of **Gabriella Vöö's** paper, "The Rise of the Hungarian Dandy: Oscar Wilde's Contribution to the Experience of Modernity in Early-Twentieth-Century Hungary," in which she discusses Wilde's initial Hungarian reception and its contribution to the development of a 'cult of the dandy.' Wilde, as the prototype of a 'literary dandy,' was considered both a role model and an inspiration to a whole generation of *fin-de-siècle* Hungarian writers and intellectuals who defined themselves as urban, cosmopolitan, and modern and aimed at the incorporation of Western European literary trends into a newly emerging metropolitan artistic culture.

**Sandra Andrea O'Connell's** contribution, "Published in Paris: Samuel Beckett, George Reavey, and the Europa Press," revolves around the small Paris-based imprint run by the enterprising Irish-Russian poet George Reavey, which between 1935 and 1939 published the poetry of Samuel Beckett, Brian Coffey, Denis Devlin, and Reavey himself, as well as artwork by the likes of Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso. The essay explores the central role the Europa Press played in forging a unique bridge between the European avant-garde and expatriate Irish Modernist writers and the essential channel it provided to these Irish writers, whose work was rejected at home as being outside the traditional Irish canon.

The following three papers deal with Irish authors' fascination with Spain in the twentieth century. In "Franco's Spain: A Dubious Refuge for the Poets of the 'Irish Beat Generation' in the 1960s," **Ute Anna Mittermaier** analyses the poems of Irish writers James Liddy, Michael Hartnett, John Jordan, and Pearse Hutchinson, focusing on the authors' impressions of 1960s Spain and their varying responses to the socio-political malaise of their host country. These young poets can be linked not only by their education at University College Dublin but also by their liberal political and sexual views. Mittermaier's essay reveals the irony of their flight from Irish nationalism

and conservatism to a country then governed by General Franco's authoritarian right-wing regime.

Another contribution on the Ireland-Spain connection, **Sarah Heinz's** essay "From Utopia to Heterotopia: Irish Writers Narrating the Spanish Civil War" discusses Irish writers' fascination with, and assessment of, the Spanish Civil War since the 1930s as a reflection of violent conflicts at home. Examining the works of Somhairle Macalastair, Ewart Milne, Charles Donnelly, and Neil Jordan, Heinz traces a development from utopian praise to contemporary heterotopian visions that centre on the futility and destructiveness of armed conflict and question essentialist notions of nation and class.

**Michael G. Cronin's** contribution, "Fantastic Longings: The Moral Cartography of Kate O'Brien's *Mary Lavelle*," explores the imaginative reconstruction of Spain in Kate O'Brien's novel *Mary Lavelle* (1936) and her travelogue *Farewell Spain* (1937). Specifically, it examines O'Brien's construction of Spain as a symbolic space for negotiating the author's ideal of liberal individualism through the moral challenge of (homo-)sexual desire. In addition, the symbolic treatment of Spain is placed within the wider context of post-independence Irish intellectual history, as during the 1930s and 1940s European Catholic culture offered to many Irish writers and intellectuals a viable alternative to both Irish Catholic nationalism and Anglo-American secular liberalism.

Irish and French versions of Catholicism and different national attitudes towards the dialectic of church and state, church and society, underpin **Eamon Maher's** essay on "John Broderick and the French Catholic Novel." The Athlone novelist John Broderick has often been linked with the French Nobel Laureate François Mauriac and other 'Catholic Novelists' such as Georges Bernanos and Julien Green. Maher sets out to test the validity and heuristic value of the critical paradigm of the "Irish Catholic Novel" through an intercultural comparison. He reads Broderick's novels *The Pilgrimage* and *The Waking of Willie Ryan* against the main 'Catholic' themes and epistememes in Mauriac's *œuvre*.

In "A Fruitful Exchange," **Claudia Luppino** undertakes a comparative study of the different versions of John McGahern's novel *The Leavetaking* (1974/1984) and its French translation, *Journée d'adieu* (1983), by the poet Alain Delahaye. The encounter between McGahern and his French translator, Luppino argues, played a crucial role in the production of a second and revised edition of the novel ten years after its first publication. Collaborative work on the novel's French translation appears to have convinced the author to rewrite *The Leavetaking* in an attempt to live up to his own ideal of formal perfection, acknowledging the limits of stylistic experimentation that had characterised the 'middle period' of his writing career.

Migration and exile are experiences deeply ingrained in the Irish consciousness and closely interwoven with common notions of Irishness. However, since the days of 'new wave' Irish migration in the 1980s, a more positively connoted concept of Irish diaspora has gained currency. In her essay, **Michaela Schrage-Früh** analyses literary representations of the Irish diaspora in England from the 1990s which interrogate and problematise the notions of national identity and transnationalism, home and cosmopolitanism, place and displacement. Foregrounding issues of gender and religion, she specifically focuses on the representations of individual female characters in Deirdre Madden's novel *One by One in the Darkness* (1996), Anne Devlin's play *After Easter* (1994), and Nuala O'Faolain's novel *My Dream of You* (2001).

**Hedda Friberg-Harnesk's** essay "A Clearing in Inferno: Banvillean Constructions of Prague in *Prague Pictures* and *Kepler*" explores John Banville's literary representations of Prague in his novel *Kepler* and the non-fictional *Prague Pictures*. Following Italo Calvino's notion of the city as an 'inferno,' Friberg-Harnesk points to the restrictions that Banville's versions of Prague impose on its citizens, as well as to the 'clearings' of empowerment and affection it leaves them with. Friberg-Harnesk concludes that although the two texts feature vastly different historical periods – the year 1600 and an early 1980s moment – they both reflect a specifically Irish sense of place.

Displacement and estrangement also feature largely in **Angela Vaupel's** essay on "Exile, Migration, and 'The Other' in Contemporary Irish Writing." Vaupel explores some of the historical and contemporary connotations of the term "exile" (and, consequently, "emigration") as quintessential to the self-definition of Irish writers before moving on to consider immigration literature as exile literature with the help of examples drawn from contemporary Irish prose-writing (e.g. Roddy Doyle, Judith Mok, Chris Binchy).

The second part of this volume, which is more cultural-studies-oriented, opens with a key note address by the economist **John FitzGerald** ("Two Recessions and a Boom: Where Next for Ireland?"). Obviously, speaking in 2009, FitzGerald could not have foreseen the rapid changes the Irish economy is still undergoing today. Nevertheless, working from his privileged position at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Dublin, FitzGerald was well able to offer a less ephemeral, less transient survey of the malaise of Irish economic history than one could have expected regarding the volatile nature of the subject. FitzGerald uncovers in detail the legacy of failed economic policies in Ireland from 1922 onwards with a first bust in the early 1980s, the hubris of the Celtic Tiger era, and the second bust of 2008/09. He rounds off his analysis with a summary of the key challenges facing the Irish economy, and, as it turns out in retrospect also, "investment in education" as the primary lesson to remember.

The effects of economic globalisation are the theme of **Anne Groutel's** "Whither the State?: The Recent Evolution of the Role of the State in Ireland." Groutel scrutinises the role the Irish Government has played in the past two decades while being caught

in the antagonism between transatlantic economic partnerships (the expectations and interests of US multinationals) on one side and European considerations and restraints (in the shape of EU regulations) on the other.

On a different, i.e. philosophical/theological level, **Catherine Mignant** also takes up Irish-European exchanges in “Ireland and European Post-Secularism.” Following up the deliberations of such unlikely ideological bedfellows as Jürgen Habermas and Pope Benedict XVI on (post-)secular societies, Mignant points to the re-instatement, the re-imposition of religion and religious heritage in the post-secular age, which she finds in a number of examples from public/political discourse. Eventually, she argues, post-secularism may be a chance for the Catholic Church in Ireland to redefine its role in the state and contribute, once again, to the shaping of ‘the soul of Europe.’

**Claire Dubois’s** essay sheds light on “The Representation of Ireland in Two Nineteenth-Century French Journals,” *La Revue des Deux Mondes* and *L’avenir*, and shows how both periodicals exploited the public image of Ireland in the context of contemporary French political and religious debates. Thus, for instance, Daniel O’Connell, the leader of Irish Catholic Emancipation, was portrayed as a source of inspiration for the renewal of French Catholicism. Apart from emphasising the numerous common issues in Irish and French debates on religion, freedom, and the nation, Ireland was also represented as a romantic and picturesque island, an image which resonated with the general European perception of Ireland at the period.

**Alison O’Malley-Younger’s** essay “The Business of Pleasure: Modernism, Marketing, and Music Hall in *fin-de-siècle* Ireland” examines the remarkable range of advertising strategies adopted by music hall magnate Dan Lowery Junior in late-nineteenth-century Dublin as an example of the visual and cultural mix of the modern urban metropolis. It demonstrates how a reading of these advertising ephemera can shed light on the commercial ethos of the leisure industries in Dublin, as well as on their implication in a nationalist discourse regarding unwelcome European influences on Ireland.

In “The Irish in Continental Europe and Ireland: Sustained Connectedness across a Virtual Diaspora Space?” **Gráinne O’Keeffe-Vigneron** discusses the changing face of the Irish diaspora in continental Europe, focusing on the impact of new communication technologies on the relationship between Ireland and its European communities. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of a survey of her own constitutes a step towards assessing the nature and extent of transnational exchange and communication between the Irish in Europe and in Ireland, and the role of virtual diaspora spaces such as *EuropeanIrish.com*.

The final two papers are concerned with aspects of didactics in international contexts. **Theresa-Susanna Illés** looks at “Mutational Patterns in the Teaching of Irish as a Foreign Language at the University of Vienna.” Drawing on her own experience as a

teacher of Irish, Illés considers one specific problem area of Irish grammar and language-teaching, i.e. initial mutations, with reference to variations in terminology and practical error-analysis, to speculate on the impact of a specific teaching/learning environment.

The volume concludes with a contribution by **Lesley Lelourec** entitled “Promoting Mutual Understanding and/or Enriching the Curriculum? The Contribution of the ‘Ireland in Schools’ Forum to Bringing Ireland into the English Classroom.” It introduces the work and the resources of the ‘Ireland in Schools’ forum and initiative (liS), which was started in 1993 in response to the virtual non-existence of Ireland and Irish history in national curricula in England and Wales. Having sketched the background and aims of liS to underpin “the peace process in Ireland by fostering better understanding of Ireland in Britain through young people” (liS), Lelourec goes on to analyse a survey she conducted in 2009 to study the impact of liS teachers’ motivations and pupils’ reactions in England, thus returning to Ireland’s longest-standing cross-cultural conflict and exchange.

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