

Themed issue of *RISE: Review of Irish Studies in Europe*

“Remapping Irish Literary and Cultural Landscapes in the Mid-Twentieth Century”

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Critical narratives surrounding mid-twentieth-century Ireland have shifted from isolation and cultural philistinism to a more subtle understanding of the period as a time in which contraction meets expansion. Eve Patten, in her introduction to the seminal publication, *Irish Literature in Transition, 1940-1980* (2020), states that the volume is “alert to the geographies of Irish cultural production” in the mid-century. In particular, the collection examines “the impact of alternative spatial and political formations—trans-local and transatlantic, cross-continental and cross-border—in the shaping of Irish literary tradition.” This calls for continued critical attention to the shaping and reshaping of Irish literary and cultural landscapes in the middle decades of the previous century.

Critics have drawn attention to the various ways in which Irish writers engaged with the war despite war-time censorship, negotiated the legacies of Revivalism and High Modernism, wrestled with nationalism and its conservative policies. Recent literary and cultural theories also helped reshape the contours of the literary and cultural spheres of mid-twentieth-century Ireland. The New Modernist Studies and middlebrow culture studies have richly complicated the geographies and cultural strata of mid-century Irish cultural productions. Cultural geographers, drawing on ecocriticism and the “blue humanities,” have highlighted the ways in which archipelagos and coasts—meeting places of land and sea—underpin Ireland’s literary imagination, which suggest a more elusive geography than its island confine.

Literary and cultural historians have recovered once well-known figures whose popularity had diminished through time, providing missing pieces to help us better see the fuller picture. They have also pursued materialist understandings of the publishing venues where literary work and cultural debates took place. Periodical studies scholars have examined how literary magazines like *The Bell* and *Envoy* flourished during this period, how they offered important space for literary, cultural, and political conversations, and how they recalibrated genre conventions. Irish writers also sought publishing opportunities abroad—in avant-garde little magazines as well as commercial publications—in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, and beyond. Conversely, with the 1953 International PEN in Dublin, Ireland was at the centre of the literary world. These transnational and transatlantic connections again attest to the rich and elusive geographies of mid-century Ireland.

Policy changes and technological advancement also shifted the terrain of Irish literature and culture in a material sense. With the introduction of free secondary education (1967) and grants enabling university education (1968), groups that previously were denied access to education began making

their marks in the publishing world, shifting the gender and class dimensions of the cultural sphere. New technologies and media—films, radio, and TV—contributed to the emergence of popular culture, which competed with traditional forms of publication for public consumption. Conversely, film adaptations of literary works, radio plays, and TV shows on books also introduced literature to a wider audience, bringing reading culture closer to the mass and the marketplace. Consequently, the male-dominated elitist mode of cultural production began to make room for new voices from previously marginalized cultural strata.

This special issue of *RISE* defines mid-twentieth century as from the 1930s to the 1970s—roughly coinciding with the conservative years of “de Valera’s Ireland,” starting from Fianna Fáil entering government in 1932, up until Seán Lemass’s programmes of economic expansion which led to Ireland’s European Economic Community membership in 1973. It understands literary and cultural landscapes in the broadest term: horizontally as a geographic space with borders real and imagined; vertically as a space where high and low cultures clash and commingle. We welcome studies that examine the various forms of border-crossing—geographic, linguistic, generic—that contribute to a fuller map of Irish literature and culture in the mid-twentieth century. We especially appreciate scholarship that expands traditional disciplinary boundaries, from the fields of history, film, media, visual culture, and digital humanities. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Irish cultural geographies
- Irish studies in comparative frameworks
- Global Irish studies
- Irish studies and translation
- Regionalism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism
- Cross-border literary and cultural connections
- Ireland and international war(s)
- Marketplace and Irish literature and culture
- Generic crossover and media studies
- Irish literature and magazine culture
- Peripheral literary and cultural figures
- Gender and the publishing industries
- Middlebrow and popular literatures
- Working-class literature
- Irish literature and radio writing
- Digital Humanities approaches to mid-century literature and culture

Please send an initial abstract (max. 300 words accompanied by a short biography) to the editors (risespring2024@gmail.com) before **15 March 2023**. Potential contributors will be notified by 1 April

2023; full articles (6,000-7,000 words) to be submitted by 1 August 2023. Expected publication date is Spring 2024.

In line with *RISE*'s editorial policy, all submissions will be subject to a double-blind peer-review process. Contributors are asked to familiarise themselves with *RISE*'s submission guidelines, which can be found here: <http://risejournal.eu/index.php/rise/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

Important dates

Abstract submission deadline: 15 March 2023

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Article submission deadline: 1 August 2023

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