

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

## **Anthologising Irish Writing from the Nineteenth Century to the Present**

Editor: Brian Haman (University of Vienna)

‘[...] the seas of literature are distraught with storms and currents, and full of the wrecks of Irish anthologies’.

W. B. Yeats *A Book of Irish Verse* (1895)

Although ubiquitous today, anthologies of writing—whether Irish or otherwise—are a relatively recent development, dating to the eighteenth century and the emergence of the modern notion of ‘literature’. In its most general sense, a literary anthology is a published collection of independent texts, focusing on a specific genre (e.g., poetry, short stories, travel writing), a particular national literary culture, a given period (e.g., Victorian, Romantic), a certain geographical region, or other predetermined purpose(s). Moreover, anthologies have become an instrumental part of literary cultures, shaping form and content, influencing the teaching and discussion of writing, contributing to the development of literary criticism and the literary canon, and helping to (re)define national identities.

As Yeats observed when christening his own anthology of Irish verse over a century ago—an observation still valid today, the seas of literature are indeed full of anthologies (although the extent to which they may be regarded as cultural flotsam is debatable). Closer to our own time, in her editor’s introduction to the anthology *Being Various. New Irish Short Stories* (2019), Lucy Caldwell asks:

Who is more Irish: a writer born in Ireland who moves and stays away, or a writer born elsewhere who chooses to come – and there’s that ‘here’ again. A writer born in what is technically Ireland, in the ‘island of’ sense, but who chooses to identify with ‘the mainland’? A writer born outside of Ireland to parents who keep it alive through songs, St Patrick’s Day and waking up in the wee hours to watch the rugby? A writer born in Ireland to parents from elsewhere, who constantly has to answer the deathly question, ‘No, but where are you really from?’

The issue of anthologising writing, namely of deciding whom or what to include, is also a fraught exercise, for it necessarily involves boundaries, demarcations, and exclusion(s), to say nothing of those in a position to make such decisions, as Caldwell suggests. Notably, she has included a number writers born outside of the island of Ireland to non-Irish parents, who nevertheless live, work, and create in today’s Ireland—the so-called first wave of ‘new Irish’ writers. Among them are Yan Ge (China), Melatu Uche Okorie (Nigeria), and Arja Kajermo (Finland/Sweden).

Similarly, recent anthologies such as Sinéad Gleeson’s *The Art of the Glimpse: 100 Irish Short Stories* (2020), *The Glass Shore: Short Stories by Women Writers from the North of*

*Ireland* (2016), and *The Long Gaze Back: An Anthology of Irish Women Writers* (2015), have introduced marginalised voices—women, LGBT writers, Traveller folk stories, neglected authors from a century ago—into discussions about the Irish literary canon. Rather than consolidating Irish writing and an Irish literary tradition, recent anthologies have expanded our notions of authors, genres, ‘Irish writing’, and indeed ‘Irishness’.

This forthcoming themed issue of *RISE: Review of Irish Studies in Europe* is devoted to exploring the many issues and implications of anthologising Irish writing from the nineteenth century to the present. Topics might address, but are not limited to, the following broad thematic areas:

- **Anthologies of Irish writing and questions of language:** How do anthologies navigate the linguistic landscape of Irish writing, particularly in relation to Ireland’s complex linguistic history, e.g., translation and adaptation, language politics, and language revival and preservation.
- **Anthologies of Irish writing and canon (re)formation:** How do anthologies contribute to the shaping and reshaping of what is understood to be the Irish literary canon, including discussions on inclusion criteria, editorial decision-making, and the representation of diverse voices?
- **Irish writing anthologies and marginalised voices:** What is the nature of the representation, or lack thereof, of marginalised voices such as women, LGBTQ+, minority ethnic groups, and socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, among others, in Irish writing anthologies?
- **The economics of Irish literary anthologies:** What are the economic aspects of producing, distributing, and consuming anthologies of Irish writing, including discussions on copyright issues, market dynamics, the role of publishing houses, and their impact on access and dissemination?
- **Anthologies of Irish writing in the digital age:** How does technology influence the anthologising of Irish literature, including the roles of digital platforms, e-publishing, online accessibility, and what are the implications?
- **Anthologising Irish writing versus Irish literature:** Are there distinctions, whether implied or explicit, between anthologising Irish writing as a broad category and anthologising specifically within the realm of Irish literature?
- **Genre and anthologies of Irish writing:** Are different genres within Irish writing, such as poetry, prose, drama, and non-fiction, represented and curated differently in anthologies? And what, if any, impact does this genre-specific approach to anthologising Irish writing have on readership and scholarly discourse?

We welcome interdisciplinary approaches and encourage submissions from early and established scholars working across literature, cultural studies, history, and related fields.

Please send an initial abstract (max. 300 words accompanied by a short biography) to the editor ([brian.haman@univie.ac.at](mailto:brian.haman@univie.ac.at)) by **15 September 2024**. Potential contributors will be

notified by **31 September 2024**; full articles (6,000-7,000 words) to be submitted by **01 February 2025**. Expected publication date is **Spring/Summer 2025**.

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: <http://risejournal.eu/index.php/rise/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

#### Important dates

Abstract submission deadline: 15 September 2024

Notification of tentative acceptance: 31 September 2024

Article submission deadline: 01 February 2025

Expected publication: Spring/Summer 2025

For more information, please contact the editor: Brian Haman ([brian.haman@univie.ac.at](mailto:brian.haman@univie.ac.at))