
Book of Abstracts

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Tradition, Transition and Transformation

Performance and Cultural Dynamics



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Revealing an amateur dramatic legacy: Listowel Drama Group, 1944-1959

Dr. Fiona Brennan

When John B. Keane experienced the Abbey Theatre rejection of his play *Sive* in 1958, he looked to the Listowel Drama Group and producer Brendan Carroll to perform the play. Founded by the playwright Bryan MacMahon in 1944, during a period when many amateur companies and groups were flourishing throughout Ireland, this group had developed as an impressive, talented outfit. Simultaneously, as competitive amateur drama festivals became established countrywide, in order to encourage the advancement of artistic standards, Listowel Drama Group proved very ambitious.

The amateur dramatic movement is recognised as an important element of Irish social history, as a means of circumventing the Catholic Church's Lenten ban on dancing and its condemnation of the un-Christian evils of Hollywood. Yet, the amateur movement remains one of the most under-researched elements of Irish theatre history.

Apart from the legendary success of Keane's *Sive* in 1959, Listowel Drama Group's artistic achievements are relatively under-celebrated. I will discuss this rich local dramatic tradition and the preservation of its history 1944-1959; its vital role within the national amateur movement and the establishment of the All-Ireland Drama Festival in 1953 as well as the subsequent transition to the professional stage by Bryan MacMahon, Eamon and Maura Kelly. I will also discuss how the preservation, or lack thereof, regarding vital archival material should be one of the amateur dramatics' historian's gravest concerns.

Biography

Dr. Fiona Brennan is author *George Fitzmaurice: "Wild in His Own Way": Biography of an Abbey Playwright* (Carysfort Press, 2005). In 2014, Fiona was awarded the Stephen Joseph Award by the Society for Theatre research (UK) for her project on 19th century private theatricals in the Great Houses of Co. Kerry. Fiona recently presented a lecture "Kerry's Women Playwrights: A Forgotten Literary legacy" as part of a series organised by Kerry Women Writers' Network.

World (s) Under the Lens in Schaubühne's *Hamlet*

Angela Butler

This paper will examine the act of filming in Schaubühne's production of *Hamlet* and its implications. Schaubühne's production is what I regard to be an example of Total Theatre. One may consider the defining characteristic of Total Theatre to be a representation of what Slavoj Žižek calls "the Event". Žižek defines the Event as an encounter with an Idea, a time when it seems that the Real is momentarily fractured and something else surfaces. Žižek states that Event is a form of framing, "... a shift in our relationship to reality." It is an encounter that exacts a change in our body. In light of this, this paper will explore the effect the Digital Age exerts on this transaction. It will analyse the co-presence of different "worlds" during the performance and examine the effects this may have on an audience's experience.

Biography

Angela Butler is a first year PhD student at Trinity College Dublin. She holds a degree in Drama with Psychology from the University of Ulster and an MPhil in Theatre and Performance from Trinity College.

From Charlie Hebdo to ISIS' Propaganda: Biopolitics of (Re)presentation in Contemporary Cultural Hybridity

Dr. Calchi-Novati

On the 7th of January 2015 the cover of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo featured a caricature of French novelist Michel Houellebecq smoking a cigarette while wearing a wizard's hat, beneath the title 'The predictions of Wizard Houellebecq'. Two speech-bubbles announced that: 'In 2015, I lose my teeth. In 2022, I do Ramadan!' Such 'predictions' are articulated in his controversial novel of 2015 *Soumission* [Submission], which has not yet been translated into English. *Submission* describes a contemporary France led by a coalition in which the senior party is the Muslim Brotherhood. When Muslim France materializes, all of a sudden, but without any announcement, women do not wear skirts or dresses any more, but just trousers and loose shirts. Muslim France appears to be opulent and crime-free; a state that ensures that even the most unattractive man will find at least one young and pretty wife, if not two or three (according to his income of course). In an interview on state TV channel France 2 Houellebecq said that such a political scenario is not implausible, rather 'It is a possibility – not in as short a term as in the book, not in 2022. But it is a real possibility'.¹ In this paper, I wish to address the unstable concept of 'real possibility' by analyzing some of the main features of the biopolitics of (re)presentation in contemporary cultural hybridity. On the same day as the publication of Houellebecq's novel and the aforementioned issue of Charlie Hebdo, two gunmen killed twelve people at the headquarters of the Paris magazine. In response to this terrorist attack, we all became Charlie. It appeared on signs carried by the people in the streets, in the numerous vignettes published by cartoonists on and off line, even in the title of a panel organized by the Guardian: Je Suis Charlie, I am Charlie, We all are Charlie. But are we really? Or are we closer, at least metaphorically speaking, to those hostages, completely sedated and dressed in orange jumpsuits resembling prisoners in Guantanamo, who are displayed in the sophisticated videos and images produced and broadcast by the ISIS' propaganda machine? I would claim that it is exactly in these cultural and political performances that we encounter the most sinister side of 'cultural hybridity', that unexpected "sameness of the other" that is becoming increasingly explicit in and through the contemporary (re)presentation of terror.

Biography

Dr. Calchi-Novati received a B.A. magna cum laude in Letters & Philosophy, an M.A. (honors) in Public Relations from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan) and an M.Phil. (first) in Irish Drama & Film from Trinity College Dublin. Her work has appeared in *Performance Research*, *Performance Paradigm*, *About Performance*, and *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy & the Moving Image*; and in edited collections. She holds a Ph.D. awarded with distinction for her thesis *Performativities of Intimacy in the Age of Biopolitics*. She lectures in Performance Studies and Critical Theory, and is working on her second PhD in Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures, at the Institute of Philosophy, in the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, supervised by Professor Alenka Zupančič.

The Right to be Forgotten and the Image Crimes of Digital Culture

Dr. Matthew Causey

This abstract falls under the category of 'reconstructions of identity and hybridity' as outlined in the ISTR Call for Papers. The topic ventures outside the specific concerns of the theatre arts and engages an analysis of a performance of trauma which can reflect usefully on contemporary spectatorship and identity and their engagement in arts practice.

Nowhere is the ethics of spectatorship more challenged than the presence of child pornography on the net. Victims of this process find the original abuse to be only the beginning of a ceaseless victimization and a resultant non-delusional paranoia in which the digital circulation of the images of the event of abuse and trauma are exploited and distributed. The composite body of the victim remembered digitally and circulated electronically creates a bio-virtual exchange in which the original trauma is replicated and re-experienced. The spectatorial subject of this techno-performative abuse may consider their position to be without responsibility or guilt, but the act demonstrates the troubling ethic at the heart of digital culture. When we are watched and watching, engaging and accepting of surveillance, forwarding and retweeting, we partake in a careless conflation of daily life and virtual existence in which rights to privacy and personal space are radically reduced. There is a porous gap between the virtual and the real with each embedded in the other altering their course and configuring the users, abusers and subjects.

The paper is an attempt at a grounding theory of the culture that for many people exists in digitized societies, taking into account the manner in which their identities and subjectivities are constructed, negotiated and, in some cases, exploited and abused. This chapter examines how experiences of identity and trauma are altered by the ceaseless circulation of material within the folds of social media, the obscurity of the darknet, the coded disguises of crypto-anarchism, the removable media of the sneakernet and the commercial appropriation of identity through Google, Facebook, et. al.. The chapter investigates where there might be a shared experience between the electronic performance of the self both on-stage and on-line, the forfeiting of the private to the narcissism of a virtual public, and the most controversial examples of image-crimes taking place in the possession and distribution of data contained in revenge porn (RP) and child sexual abuse images (CSAI).

In this paper I explore the technological rememberings of trauma as performed by users of child pornography, the ceaseless virtual (but nonetheless real) victimization of the abused, and how participants of digital culture engage in this electronic and panoptic space. I will suggest how these phenomena position a new posthuman, composite subject and how the fields of art and performance and technology are configured in the wake of this new situation.

Biography

Matthew Causey is Director of the Arts Technology Research Laboratory at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, where he is Associate Professor of Drama and Director of the Arts Strand of the Ireland-wide PhD in Digital Arts and Humanities. He is the author of *Theatre and Performance of Digital Culture: from simulation to embeddedness* (Routledge 2009) and co-editor of *Performance, Identity and neo-Political Subject* (Routledge 2013) and the forthcoming *The Performing Subject in the Space of Technology: from the virtual toward the real* (Palgrave 2015).

Up Close and Personal: Siamsa Tíre's What the Folk! Bodies, Memory, Space

Dr. Finola Cronin

Performances of theatre and dance have huge potential to connect to performers and spectators cognitively, emotionally and physically. Certain performances however seem to activate us particularly phenomenologically so that 'resonances are dispersed on the different planes of our life in the world, while [...] repercussions invite us to give greater depth to our own existence' (Gaston Bachelard). Performed by a select group of the National Folk Theatre ensemble and directed by Jo Mangan in 2010, Siamsa Tíre's What the Folk! has taken place site-specifically in dwelling houses in Dublin, Edinburgh and Cork. Spectators assemble in a hallway or porch and are led to a parlour for tea and cakes. As the performance progresses in the small domestic spaces, the performers' sharing of (seemingly) personal anecdotes and memories, and songs and dances builds an intimate and charged environment that triggers proprioceptive and kinaesthetic engagement. This paper considers how ideas presented in What the Folk! invite reflection on concepts of urban and rural and on perceptions of folk theatre within contexts of Irish culture. I ask how the performance of embodied memory in confined spaces queries the notion of 'Folk' as we experience the world of the performance transsubjectively - where an idea 'given us by another...takes root in us' (Bachelard).

Biography

Finola Cronin teaches in Drama Studies in the School of English, Drama and Film at UCD. Her research area is dance studies and she is in the process of expanding her PhD dissertation *Dance Theatre in Ireland: The Performance of Place and Agency* towards publication. She trained in dance in Dublin and London and danced with Company Vivienne Newport (Frankfurt), Tanztheater Wuppertal (Pina Bausch), and most recently with Raimund Hoghe (Germany). She was Dance Specialist at the Arts Council of Ireland from 2003-2007. Her current choreographic project draws on Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chambers and Other Stories*. She serves on the boards of Siamsa Tíre - The National Folk Theatre and Dublin Dance Festival (as Vice-Chair), and she co-curates Galway Dance Days /Corp_Real with Drs. Ríonach Ní Néill and Aoife McGrath.

Embodiment of the Tragic Absolute: Beckett's *FIZZLES* in the City

Burç İdem Dinçel

Birth merges with death again and again in Attic tragedies so much so that this notion proves to be an established zero benchmark in terms of dwelling upon the afterlife of the tragic axiom after antiquity. George Steiner's conception of "absolute tragedy" in his *The Death of Tragedy* becomes quite telling in this regard: "absolute tragedy exists only where substantive truth is assigned to the Sophoclean statement that 'it is best never to have been born.'" Indeed, in his grasp of the nature of the human condition in the tragic axiom, Samuel Beckett stands closer to Attic tragedians than any other translator does, since almost two and a half thousand years later he would strike the same tragic note in his *A Piece of Monologue*: "Birth was the death of him. Again. Words are few. Dying too. Birth was the death of him." Yet, as the present paper intends to demonstrate, Beckett translates the tragic axiom *on* and *on* in his universe perhaps even more decisively in his *Fizzles* by uttering, "I gave up before birth, it is not possible otherwise, but birth there had to be..." And it is precisely at this point that the paper will focus on Company SJ's production of *Fizzles* as regards to the translation of the tragic absolute into a performative act. Performed in Dublin Fringe Festival at 14 Henrietta Street, the production sites *Fizzles* in the heart of the city through the *presence* of the performer Raymond Keane as an end result of Sarah Jane Scaife's distinctive approach to Beckett. The paper, therefore, will concentrate on how the process of embodiment takes place over the course of the performance.

Biography

Burç İdem Dinçel is a PhD candidate in Drama at Trinity College Dublin. He has published extensively on Theatre and Translation Studies in various academic journals and gave lectures on twentieth century theatre, theatre movements, Traditional Turkish Theatre, as well as on the history of Turkish theatre. He is the author of *Last Tape on Stage in Translation: Unwinding Beckett's Spool in Turkey*.

“Always already” in emergence: the ‘nascent’ state in contemporary Irish theatre

Paul Donnelly

Since 2008, theatre-makers in Ireland have been split into two categories; emerging or established. This separation in terms is primarily motivated by the Arts Council’s re-structured funding strands; yet, ‘emerging’ and ‘established’ have taken a firm root in the vocabulary of producers, curators, academics, and - most of all - theatre-makers themselves. But what does it mean to be an emerging theatre-maker? What is the value of labelling a theatre-maker as ‘emerging’ when, by that token, it is equally viable to state that they have already emerged to earn such recognition? Or, have these terms slipped into common usage without being identified for commodifying theatrical creation?

This paper argues that not only have our theatre-makers ‘always already’ emerged, but that it is necessary to disrupt the opposition inherent in labelling theatre-makers as emergent or established. Furthermore, this paper will refer to Hans Thies Lehmann, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Francois Lyotard to analyse the work of contemporary Irish theatre-makers, such as Anú, BrokenTalkers, The Company, THEATREclub, and Dead Centre.

Biography

Paul Donnelly is currently researching post-dramatic and experimental theatre in recent Irish theatre history. He is completing his Ph.D. under the supervision of Professor Chris Morash in the School of English, TCD. Other research interests include performance, space, and spectatorship.

Tradition. Transition. Transformation? The Abbey Theatre and Women Playwrights

Dr Brenda Donohue

This paper will address the notion of the stage as a site of cultural tradition, transition and transformation through a specific analysis of the Abbey Theatre's relationship with female playwrights over a twenty-year period, from 1995-2014. As the Abbey occupies a central role, not only in contemporary Irish theatre and theatre history, but crucially in the project of constructing an Irish national cultural identity, the underrepresentation of women on that stage has implications for how "woman" and Irish national identity interact. The paper conducts a statistical review of the plays produced on the Abbey and Peacock stages, both new writing and revivals, through the years of the Celtic Tiger boom to the years following the financial bust. It also considers the role that Abbey playwriting initiatives have played in encouraging and promoting writing by women for the theatre. It will seek to understand, through the analysis of the data, the relationship between the Irish theatrical tradition, the Abbey repertoire, and women playwrights. The theatre's attempts at transition to a more gender-balanced writing tradition, through their playwriting initiatives, will also be examined. Finally, the question of whether a transformation in whose voices are represented on the national stage is desirable or possible, is addressed.

Biography

In 2013 **Brenda Donohue** completed her doctoral studies in the Dept. of Italian in Trinity College Dublin, funded by the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies. Entitled *Towards a Theory of the Anxiety of Ontology*, her thesis focussed on the themes of death and feminist ontology in the work of two contemporary female playwrights, Marina Carr and Emma Dante. Her research interests include feminism and performance, Irish and Italian theatre, and translation for theatre. Brenda's recent publications include the article "Chi ha la mamma non piange: refusal, rejection, and conflicted motherhood in the plays of Emma Dante" in *Intervalla. Spec. Vol. "To Be or Not to Be a Mother: Choice, Refusal, Reluctance and Conflicts. Motherhood and Female Identity in Italian Literature and Culture"* (forthcoming 2015), and an article entitled "Whose Voices Are Heard on Our National Stage?: Female Playwrights at the Abbey Theatre 1995-2014" in the edited collection "Populating the Irish Stage" (forthcoming 2016). Brenda is a member of the Irish Society for Theatre Research and the International Federation for Theatre Research. She is currently working on a new piece for theatre that will use the techniques of Verbatim Theatre to recount the experiences of black Irish people growing up in Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s.

Dublin's Theatre Royal Remembered

Conor Doyle

This paper celebrates Dublin's greatest and still missed Theatre Royal. The Royal was the largest theatre in Europe at the time with both Ireland's and the world's greatest entertainers appeared on this stage. Names like Judy Garland, Danny Kaye, Jimmy O'Dea, Gracie Fields, Maureen Potter, Nat King Cole, Noel Purcell, Bill Haley and the Comets, Sean Connery, Walt Disney, Ruby Murray, Count John McCormack plus the entertainers who started their careers there, Frank Carson, Patricia Cahill, the Batchelor's, Val Donnican and many more. Stories of the patrons who attended the different shows and the truth about legends which surrounded many of the performers are interspersed with news reel clips, photographs, posters, music - which were previously thought to be lost – voice recordings and of course some of the memorabilia from this most famous theatre.

The source of the material for this paper has been gathered over many years from the Jimmy O'Dea Collection and from the Irish Theatre Archives, the University of Lancaster – Jack Hylton Archive, BBC Television, the Irish Film Archive, the National Library of Ireland, the Irish Architectural Archive, the ITN Source Archive, NEAR FM radio, and the Movie Tone Archive. Most importantly the patrons of the Royal with their stories and memories have contributed. The paper also touches on the Catholic churches' influence and their censorship of the performers in the Royal. Finally, the paper examines why this magnificent iconic art deco building which was the heart of Dublin was demolished.

Biography

Conor Doyle inherited what is believed to be one of the largest theatre, film, TV and radio memorabilia collections from his god parents Jimmy O'Dea and Ursula. The Collection has been donated to the Irish Theatre Archive and parts to the National Museum of Ireland. Conor produced and presented a four part radio series for Dublin's NEAR FM radio about the Theatre Royal and it's closing in 2012 I was then invited to give a talk in Dublin's City Hall as part of the Alfie Byrne series of talks. This was followed by a request by the Lord Major to give his talk in the Mansion House. Since then he has given nearly thirty five talks to different Historical Society's and Groups around the city. In a new departure has now taken part on four sell out lunch time concert about the Royal. In 2013 Conor also took part as an advisor and was interviewed for RTE's "See you at the Pictures" documentary which was aired in April of that year.

Drama and Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Ecological Advocacy in Greg Mbajiorgu's 'Wake up Everyone'

Dr. Norbert Oyibo Eze

A major problem glaring at the faces of ordinary Nigerians apart from poor governance and Boko Haram insurgency, is ecological crunch consisting of drought, desertification, oil spillage and now unprecedented flooding which has been dissipating human lives, livestock, homes, farmlands, sources of traditional water supply, business premises and all kinds of municipal services. In fact, these diverse ecological challenges which indeed are global in dimension have compelled a few playwrights like Steve Water, Mike Barlett, Moira Buffini and Greg Mbajiorgu etc., to map out a new advocacy in theatre performance and research through eco-drama. This paper attempts to analyse and interpret Mbajiorgu's *Wake Up Everyone*, which is Africa's first play on climate, as a drama of contestation,, resistance and revolt against conservatism and human insensitivity to our environment. The study will explore how this playwright conceptualizes ecological crunch in Nigeria as well as how he articulates and contests the challenges militating against ecological adaptation in the country. The play, it will be argued, suggests that with climate change becoming increasingly menacing and the global future looking bleak, our world requires a paradigm shift in our approach to ecological issues and that drama is a salient strategy to engineer the new advocacy.

Biography

Norbert Oyibo Eze holds PhD in Theatre Arts. He is currently the Head of Department of Theatre and Film Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He has published in local and international journal, has attended many academic conferences and has three books and a play to his credit. His research interests include dramatic theory and criticism, theatre history and dramatic literature.

Chan and Chou--Buddhist Clowns in *Waiting for Godot*

Wei Feng

Contemporary Legend Theatre's 2005 Beijing opera adaptation of *Waiting for Godot* displaces Beckett's metaphysical background with Chan Buddhism. The adaptation strategy is reasonable because critics have discovered numerous connections between Buddhism and Beckett. Wu Hsing-kuo, CLT's director, practices Chan Buddhism in life and theatre. To communicate the existential condition in this tragicomedy, Wu employs the role type *chou* [clown], which has similarities with Chan Buddhism. Referring to Chan Buddhist philosophy, history of *chou* in China, and comic theory, this paper attempts to evaluate CLT's adaptation strategies by addressing the following questions: How is Chan Buddhism related to Beckett's philosophical and religious background in *Waiting for Godot*? What are the similarities and differences between *chou* and Chan Buddhist masters? How does *chou* enlighten audiences with peculiarities evident in Chan Buddhism? What new dimensions could Buddhist interpretation add to the original play? In conclusion, CLT manages to make the stage a space of epiphany constantly missed by the two tramps. If Beckett's play ends in chaos, meaninglessness, loss of reason, and desperate inability to change or even narrate the above predicaments, then the Buddhist impasse derives from the ignorance of the ready but elusive exit.

Biography

Wei Feng is a PhD candidate in the Department of Drama at Trinity College Dublin. His research interests include intercultural theatre, classical Chinese theatre and Western theatre. He is working on his thesis tentatively entitled 'Intercultural Aesthetics in Contemporary Classical Chinese Theatre'. He is also a translator of several books, such as David Livingstone Smith's *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave and Exterminate Others* and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*.

Micheál macLiammóir's Easter Rising

Professor Joan FitzPatrick Dean

This paper looks at commemorative celebrations of the 1916 Easter Rising staged by Micheál macLiammóir in the 1929 Dublin Civic Week, at the Dublin Gate Theatre in 1930, 1932, and 1933, and at the RDS in the 1935 Military Tattoo.

The Ford of the Hurdles (1929), like Shakespeare's *Henry V*, was an overtly nationalistic history play designed to legitimate the state and to instil pride in the nation's noble past. First staged as part of the Dublin Civic Week, its final episode, "Easter: The City at Dawn," became a Gate staple for the next few years, particularly for its patriotic Easter week bills. In April 1930 it was paired with *Juggernaut*, written by a past pupil at St. Enda's, David Sears, and, in late March 1932, it appeared with a revival of Pearse's *The Singer*. In April 1933 a revival of the entirety of *The Ford of the Hurdles* offered Dublin audiences yet a fourth opportunity to see macLiammóir's "Easter: The City at Dawn."

Three years after the Eucharistic Congress in September 1935, the Army premiered its third military tattoo at Dublin's RDS to benefit of military charities. The tattoo was a two and one-half hour spectacular held for five evening performances. The representation of 1916, referred to in the press as "Easter Dawn," centered on a half-size replica of the GPO that was set ablaze for five consecutive evenings. The re-enactment took as its inspiration the final act of macLiammóir's *The Ford of the Hurdles*, "Easter: The City at Dawn."

Biography

Joan FitzPatrick Dean is Curators Teaching Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Recent books include *All Dressed Up: Modern Irish Historical Pageantry* (Syracuse, 2014), *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Wisconsin, 2004), and *Beyond Realism* (Rodopi, 2015 but still forthcoming). Recent articles have appeared in *New Hibernia Review*, *Irish University Review*, and *Theatre Journal*. She was Fulbright Lecturer at Université de Nancy II (France) and Fulbright Scholar at University College, Galway (Ireland).

'1916: Home: 2016': Performing Histories Known and Unknown

Dr. Miriam Haughton

This paper considers the collaborative efforts and aims of academics and artists working within performance and Irish studies to intervene in regional, national and international programmes for artistic and discursive commemoration currently in planning for Easter 2016 in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora.

The 1916 Easter Rising/Rebellion's legacy as the key turning point in the struggle for national independence is inscribed in Irish history, politics and culture. Yet, this legacy is documented as requiredly patriarchal, Catholic, nationalist, and exclusive in multiple ways. In recent revisionist histories, these privileges and discriminations are noted, particularly through feminist research and performance practices.

Creative responses by ground-breaking productions such as Patricia Burke Brogan's *Eclipsed* (1994), Anu's *Laundry* (2011) and Brokentalkers' *The Blue Boy* (2011), among many more, have conveyed the complex politics underwriting Ireland's lesser known histories of institutionalization, particularly the narratives of Magdalene laundries, industrial schools, orphanages and related institutions. These performances present the histories of an emerging nation where vulnerable children and adults were criminalized and sexualized, suffering punitive consequences monitored and imposed by state and religious rule, and rarely challenged by wider Irish society. It is these histories of silence and survival that this project intends to examine critically and stage. In particular, how strategies of silence and invisibility aided widespread complicity with illegal activities and inhumane practices, consciously and unconsciously.

Academics and artists from the island of Ireland, North and South, and across global diasporic communities, consider the potential creative power of programming interdisciplinary performances and symposia to occur simultaneously, centralising conversations that make visible the histories once hidden, silenced, and suppressed. Led by a steering committee with representatives from NUI Galway, Queen's, TCD, and UCD, and politicized artists such as Patricia Burke Brogan, Thomas Conway, Evelyn Glynn, Louise Lowe, Declan Mallon, Paula McFetridge, and Declan O'Gorman, we aim to produce and support events mirroring this model of academic and artistic collaboration for these purposes of activism and affect.

Biography

Miriam Haughton is a lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at NUI Galway. Her monograph *Staging Trauma: Bodies in Shadow* is forthcoming with the Palgrave MacMillan series, 'Contemporary Performance InterActions'. With Maria Kurdi, she co-edited the third edition of ISTR journal *Irish Theatre International*, themed 'Perform, or Else' (2014), and the collection *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practices by Women in Ireland* (2015). She has published multiple essays in international journals, including *Modern Drama*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, and the *Irish Studies Review*. Miriam is a supporting member of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi), an executive committee member of the Irish Society for Theatre Research (ISTR), and a member of the feminist working group of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR). 1

A Cog in the Wheel of Change: Red Kettle Theatre Company and Regional Theatre Development

Elizabeth Howard

In 1973, the Irish government instated a new Arts Act that expanded the discourse around community arts and prompted the strategic development of arts infrastructure and organisations through the targeting of a number of regional centres. This targeted approach facilitated arts and cultural policy to become an instrument of regional regeneration promoting employment, social inclusion and resulting in greater democratization of the arts.

One of these State-identified regional centres was Waterford city, which in the 1970s was a place of factory closures, high unemployment and emigration. In June 1979 a community initiative called Waterford Arts-for-All was founded with the aim of canvassing for a city-based arts centre. This initiative led to the organisation of festivals and arts events held in various spaces around the city. Using a variety of government support structures including employment and local enterprise schemes and support from the Arts Council, the Arts-for- All initiative gave rise to two significant arts organisations in the city, namely Red Kettle Theatre Company and Waterford Youth Drama. An arts centre was acquired in 1984.

Richard Schechner describes a performance as having the basic structure of gathering- playing out an action or actions – and dispersing. A performance can be a social happening such as a parade, a ritual or a protest. This paper considers how diverse performances can hold deep political significance for a society, and explores the ways in which cultural traditions can be transformed by differing political demands. This paper tracks the wider social and cultural contexts which led to the reconstruction of the identity of the arts community in Waterford, focusing on the establishment of Waterford Arts-for-All.

Little is known about Waterford's theatre practice within the landscape of Irish theatre, and this paper aims to contribute to the knowledge in this area. The paper will have relevance to national and international scholars of Irish studies, theatre and culture, and also arts policy makers as it will reflect on aspects of arts policy in particular as they affect regional arts development.

Biography

Elizabeth Howard was awarded a PhD scholarship by WIT in 2013 for research into a Waterford-based project entitled *Performing the Region*. Her research uses the Red Kettle archive as a primary source of research, which since the formal wind-up of the company in 2014, has been housed in the Luke Wadding Library at WIT. Elizabeth holds an MA in Performance Making from Goldsmiths College, London, and a BA (Hons) in Drama and Theatre Studies with Counselling Skills from the University of Chester. Elizabeth has extensive industry experience as a performance maker, theatre director and creative producer, working in Ireland and London with practitioners from a wide range of theatrical styles including Ben Barnes, Mark Ravenhill and Ridiculusmus. Most recently she performed at Cork's Trash Culture festival with her devised and politically oriented comic show *The Impossible Solo*, and worked as assistant director to Jim Nolan on the Waterford premier of *Blackwater Angel*. She is currently teaching undergraduate Theatre Studies at WIT.

Re-Lighting the Fire: The Festival of the Fires at Uisneach, the Sacred Centre of Ireland

Ruth Illingworth

The Hill of Uisneach, Co. Westmeath, is one of the most important historical and mythological sites in Ireland. One of the Royal Assembly sites of pre-Norman Ireland, the hill features in all the mythological cycles of tales. Uisneach was said to be the home of the sovereignty goddess, Eriu, after whom Ireland is named. Eriu is said to rest under a boulder on the hill known as the Catstone or Ail na Mireann-the "stone of divisions." This was the place where the five provinces of Ancient Ireland met and it was seen as the omphalus or "naval" of Ireland-the Irish Delphi. Uisneach is also linked with the Solar God, Lugh and with the "Father God, Dagda. The hill was also the site of a sacred tree considered to be the Irish Axis Mundi. The Oxford Dictionary of Celtic Mythology has described Uisneach as "a place that has played a significant role in the Irish imagination.

Uisneach was the site of a major Bealtaine fire festival. The lighting of the Uisneach fire was the signal for igniting fires on hills across the whole island. Since 2009 this festival has been revived. This paper will look at the ways in which the Uisneach Festival of the Fires has, during a time of recession and loss of sovereignty, attempted, through musical, spoken word and visual arts performances, to celebrate inclusive Irish cultural identities, and reimagine what it means to be Irish in the globalised 21st century world.

Biography

Ruth Illingworth is a Historian and Tour Guide. She has taught at Maynooth University and is the author of two books on the history of her home town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Since 2009, she has acted as Historical Consultant to the Uisneach Festival of the Fires and has led tours of the hill. She has also helped to draw up the Technical Document setting out the case for Uisneach to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. She has contributed to History programmes on BBC and RTE.

Enemy of the Stars and the Politics of Performance

Dr. Nicholas E. Johnson

A central component of the 2014 *BLAST at 100* Symposium at Trinity College Dublin was a commission for the first performance of Wyndham Lewis's famously "unstageable" 1914 version of his Vorticist play *Enemy of the Stars*. This challenging text blends images, extended prose, and theatrically "impossible" stage directions with more conventional dialogue. This paper's author collaborated with undergraduate students to create a site-specific and semi-immersive experience of the play within the Trinity Long Room Hub space. Rather than a theatrical performance in the conventional sense, this was practice-based research, presenting the experimental outcomes that emerged from theatre artists grappling with Lewis's hundred-year-old text. In 2015, a theatrical version for a wider audience was created and staged both in Dublin and in Fez, Morocco, as part of an international festival of experimental theatre.

The *Enemy* project makes a methodological contribution in the field of practice-based research and the study of modernism, since it uses performance as a strategy of literary and critical investigation. On the political and philosophical level, however, the project presents a number of challenges. The Vorticist movement — and this piece in particular — ties in with philosophies of egoism (Max Stirner, and to some extent Friedrich Nietzsche). Politically, in the 1920s and 30s, elements of the movement were aligned with fascism. Bringing to life a literary work with power relations that are proto-fascist and misogynist, and then bringing this work to an Islamic monarchy in North Africa, would appear to raise a number of practical and ethical questions, which this paper will explore.

Biography

Nicholas E. Johnson is an Assistant Professor of Drama at Trinity College Dublin, as well as a performer, director, and writer. He has contributed articles to *Theatre Research International*, *Forum Modernes Theater*, the *Journal of Art Historiography*, the *Journal of Beckett Studies*, and a number of edited collections, including the Methuen Critical Companion *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (2013) and *Ireland and Performing the Historical Imagination* (Palgrave, 2014). With Jonathan Heron, he co-edited the special issue on performance for the *Journal of Beckett Studies* (23.1, 2014) and co-founded the Samuel Beckett Laboratory. Recent theatrical projects include the first performance of Wyndham Lewis's 1914 version of *Enemy of the Stars* (director), *The Machinewreckers* after Ernst Toller (translator/director), *The Brothers Karamazov* (adaptor/director/ performer), and *Ethica: Four Shorts by Samuel Beckett* (director) at Áras an Uachtaráin and the Enniskillen Beckett Festival in 2013. He is artistic director of Painted Filly Theatre and one of the founding directors of the Samuel Beckett Summer School, both based in Dublin.

Celtic Tiger Dramas: Class, Consumption and Presumption of Privilege

Dr. Eamonn Jordan

This paper will look at the dramatization of class disparities, the circulation of and attitudes towards wealth, assets, money, and poverty, and will also consider the various advancements of privilege, opportunity and agency during the period of relative material abundance and financial boom that was Ireland's Celtic Tiger (1993-2001 and 2002-2006) or CT¹ and CT². I will consider how writers dealt with the ways that social identities seemed to have mutated due to a period of increasing liberalism, and how playwrights mapped the pressures and gains of social mobility. I will also look at how interested writers were in documenting the frenzied consciousness of excessive consumption, borrowing and investment in property, the latter based on a myth of alchemy of sorts. As my focus will be a class-based analysis, I will also consider how temporary, new-found wealth or fanciful, in many instances, equity wealth, alongside evolving gender and racial stereotypes and less than clear-cut class divisions complicated both the performances of privilege and disadvantage. Of course, the other layers to this are the obsessions writers had with material lack, drugs, criminality, unemployment and poverty.

Biography

Eamonn Jordan, University College Dublin Senior Lecturer in Drama Studies. He edited *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre* in 2000, co-edited with Lilian Chambers *The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories* (2006) and *The Theatre of Conor McPherson: 'Right beside the Beyond'* (2012). He has written three monographs *The Feast of Famine: Plays of Frank McGuinness* (1997), *Dissident Dramaturgies: Contemporary Irish Theatre* (2010) and *From Leenane to LA: The Theatre and Cinema of Martin McDonagh* (2014).

Colonial Restitution and Intercultural Performance: A Canadian Indigenous and Irish Case Study

Dr. Jason King

This paper will examine the historical role of performance in the transmission of indigenous Wolastoqiyik or Maliseet and Irish Famine memory between New Brunswick and Ireland in the period from 1825 until the present. More specifically, it will argue that the embodiment of Maliseet ancestral memory in the form of the “Akwiten” or “Grandfather Canoe” that was taken from them in 1825 by Lieutenant Stepney St. George and then recently restored provides a case study in which the restitution of a cultural artefact creates a context for the development of genuinely reciprocal intercultural exchange and performance.

Lieutenant Stepney St. George (1791-1847) was an Anglo-Irish landlord who had been stationed in New Brunswick where he obtained the birch-bark canoe which he brought back to his estate in Headford, co. Galway, in 1825. As chairman of the town’s famine relief committee, he made extraordinary efforts several years later to alleviate the suffering of his tenants during the Great Hunger. Shortly before he perished in May 1847, he observed that “even on this very day I have seen several persons actually die in the streets of this small village and fever is commencing its attack on us”. And yet, within a generation, he had been transformed beyond all recognition into a folkloric figure of oral tradition by Lady Gregory in *Poets and Dreamers: Studies and Translations from the Irish* (1903), based on her interviews with workhouse inmates in Oughterard, who recalled his supernatural exploits and encounters with fairies, shape-changing animals, and witches. The transformation of the memory of Stepney St. George from a self-sacrificing Irish landlord into a supernatural folk hero attests to the permeability of the documentary and oral, English and Gaelic language sources that were adapted for the Irish Revival.

After his death, Lieutenant St. George’s canoe was bequeathed to the Queen’s College (now National University of Ireland) in Galway in 1852, where it remained perched on the rafters of the James Mitchell Museum for over one hundred and fifty years. When it was sent to the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa in 2007 for conservation, it was discovered to be the world’s oldest and to have belonged to the Wolastoqiyik or Maliseet First Nation in New Brunswick, “who believed it had been stolen and vanished from their possession for good”. After a short campaign and the intercession of Ireland’s future president, Michael D. Higgins, NUI Galway returned the “Akwiten” or “Grandfather Canoe” to the Maliseet First Nation. According to President Higgins, “it had been the practice of the Maliseet people to name their canoes as vessels into which the souls of ancestors had been poured”. In gratitude, Maliseet Chief Candice Paul expressed their intention “to build a replica to present to Ireland as thanks for repatriating” their cultural and spiritual artefact “which had been talked about for generations”. “We would like to bring our skills and our music as a type of cultural exchange,” she declared. The replacement of Stepney St. George’s colonial relic with the Maliseet replica would create a new context for genuinely reciprocal intercultural exchange and performance. It would not only celebrate the restitution of an indigenous cultural artefact, but also commemorate Maliseet and Irish ancestors whose cultural memories were mediated, intermingled, and transmitted across the Atlantic and colonial divide through these

objects. Indeed, such restitution is no mere token gesture, but a self-conscious “performative act of re-membering across real, acknowledged and respected, difference”. Ultimately, the return of the “Akwiten” “Grandfather” canoe brings together indigenous Maliseet and Irish oral traditions within a new context of intercultural commemoration, exchange, and performance.

Biography

Dr. Jason King is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Researcher in Migration, Interculturalism, and Performance in Contemporary Ireland at the Moore Institute and Drama and Theatre Studies at NUI Galway. He has previously lectured at the University of Limerick, Concordia University, and NUI Maynooth. His research specializes in intercultural performance at the intersection of migration, memory, and literary studies in the past and present. His publications include “Irish Multiculturalism in Crisis: Integration, Migration, and Recession in Contemporary Ireland” (forthcoming special issue of *Irish Studies Review*, co-edited with Pilar Villar-Argaiz), “Irish Global Migration and Memory” (special issue of *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents*, co-edited by Margu rite Corporaal), “Memoir, Memory, and Migration in Irish Culture” (special issue of *Irish Review*, co-edited with Tina O’Toole), and *Where is Home: An Educational Resource on Refugees in International and Irish Perspective* (co-authored with Piaras Mac  inri). His work on interculturalism, migration, and Irish theatre and performance has appeared in *Irish Review*, * ire-Ireland*, *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* among other journals and multiple edited collections.

Variations on the Role of the Central European Immigrant in Recent Irish Theatre

Professor Mária Kurdi

For about the last two decades an increasing number of Irish plays have included Central and Eastern European immigrants to Ireland in their cast. These characters usually hold a marginal, yet significant functional role in the dramatic works. Critical analyses of these characters tend to discuss them as the cultural Other Irish people are learning to cope with. In this paper Stella Feehily's *O Go My Man* (2006) and Owen McCafferty's *Quietly* (2012), one set in Dublin, the other in Belfast will be discussed, focusing on the divergent ways in which the immigrants' presence and their perspectives taken on what surrounds them contribute to the dramaturgy and the portrayal of social changes in Ireland, South and North. Feehily's immigrant character called Alice recurs in different roles, such as waitress and baglady, offering a surrealistic, grotesque mirror to the life and ambitions of the Irish protagonists as a comic shadow figure. In *Quietly*, an immigrant male character working in a bar where two Irishmen from the respective main communities meet complicates the representation of the issue of how groups with a different past can relate to each other in a society.

Biography

Mária Kurdi is professor in the Institute of English Studies at the University of Pécs. Her main areas of research are Irish literature and theatre. Her publications include three books on contemporary Irish drama, the most recent one being *Representations of Gender and Female Subjectivity in Contemporary Irish Drama by Women* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2010). She is also author of a collection of interviews with Irish playwrights published in Hungary. Among her edited works there are journal issues containing papers on modern Irish and Anglophone drama. Her scholarly articles have been published in various journals as well as in scholarly volumes. She has co-edited *Brian Friel's Dramatic Artistry: "The Work Has Value"* with Donald E. Morse and Csilla Bertha (Carysfort Press, 2006) and hosted the ISTR Conference at her home university in 2011. Her latest works are the 2014 issue of the ISTR journal *Irish Theatre International*, which she edited with Miriam Haughton, and a volume of selections from the work of Marvin Carlson in Hungarian translation, edited with Zsuzsa Csikai. In 2015 her forthcoming work is the collection *Radical Contemporary Theatre Practices by Women in Ireland* which she edited with Miriam Haughton and it will be published by Carysfort Press.

J. M. Synge's stage keens: turning a "pre-modern" performance ritual into a modern spectacle?

Dr. Hélène Lecossois

Issues of language, class, gender and religion cluster around the practise of keening: looked down upon by the colonial power because lacking reticence and mistaking the private sphere of sorrow for the public sphere of social propriety and self-control, keening was also frowned upon by the Catholic Church which strove to consign women's speech to the private sphere and disapproved of female keeners encroaching on a man's (the priest's) prerogatives. Stories of keeners being whipped into silence by priests are recorded. Performed in Irish by illiterate women, it also came to be despised by the middle class farmers emerging after the Great Famine. Partaking of orality and a performance tradition, keening came to be regarded as archaic and incompatible with the modernity Ireland was trying to achieve.

This paper will study the difference between keens performed during a funeral ritual and stage keens, such as those found at the end of *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) or *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). It will inquire into J. M. Synge's staging of this so-called "pre-modern" ritual on the stage of one of the most prominent institutions of Ireland's modernity, the National Theatre. It will pay particular attention to the dislocating effects that such a performance entailed. One thinks for instance of a linguistic dislocation: to write in English a form of oral poetry so intrinsically linked to the Irish language and to the resistance of Irish culture to Anglicization is to reproduce, albeit unwittingly, the muting of the Irish language that colonization resulted in. Yet, if the narratives of Synge's plays and the context of their production point to the irremediable loss of a culture, the performative aspect of the ritual they end on potentially contradicts the writing off of that culture. The paper will argue that instead of sealing the irrevocability of the loss and the silencing of the keener's voice, the performance of a mourning ritual on stage may allow these supposedly past practices to live on, offer alternatives to a hegemonic conception of modernity, and encourage a perception of loss as a creative process, containing germs for a reconfiguration of the collective.

Biography

Hélène Lecossois is *maître de conférence* in the Department of English at the Université du Maine, Le Mans, France. She is the author of *Endgame de Samuel Beckett* (Paris: Atlande, 2009) and of many articles on 20th-century Irish drama. With Hélène Aji, Brigitte Felix and Anthony Larson, she has co-edited *L'Impersonnel en littérature: Explorations critiques et théoriques*, (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009) and with Jeffrey Hopes *Théâtre et nation* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011). She is currently working on a monograph on J. M. Synge and colonial modernity.

Making Love at the Crossroads: is it theatre?

Nastaise Leddy

James Joyce's *Ulysses* was performed, traditionally, at Blackrock Town Square, beside the Stone Cross, last Bloomsday in a play adapted by Iris Park and the proposer Nastaise Leddy.

'A Play on *Ulysses*' was a festive occasion where each of the ten actors, three mime artists, three musicians, and four hundred spectators, recognised and loved herself in the others (States, 1985, p. 108). Everyone wanted to "make theatre happen" (Tindemans, 1983, p. 55). Yet with passing traffic encroaching upon its embodied era, Colonial Dublin, this theatre could be peculiarly fragile. Its performance space, marked by a carpet on the ground, merged with the audience, so an offstage actor had no wings in which to be, or not be, her character (Fortier, 1997, p. 51). When Bloom, 'Dublin's Jew', squares up to the racist bullies, transformation is punctuated by their crumbling before him in tableau at the Stone Cross, not onstage, not, not onstage: Bloom mirrors the Cross from its liminal space, in the name of love, 'the opposite of hatred' (Joyce, 1960, p. 432).

Did the audience, as a body, recognise the *Ulysses* affirmation for life in terms of "love and its opposing qualities?" (Kiberd, 2010) (Brook, 1987, p. 99). Did it reflect that these opposition 'qualities' survived colonialism? Did it reflect upon what it means to have a national identity? (Fortier, 1997).

This proposal is for a phenomenological analysis of the performance to discover whether the players, as spectators and performers in communion, made theatre at the Blackrock Crossroads, Dublin.

Biography

Nastaise Leddy adapted and produced over forty works by Shakespeare, Synge and Joyce together with Irish legends and political satire. Her work with children was regularly produced at the Four Courts on behalf of the Bar Council of Ireland and she also adapted theatre for the River Side Arts Centre in Newbridge and the NCH John Field Room. Since graduation at UCD Drama and performance Studies (thesis on Drama in Education, August 2009) she has worked mostly with adult professional performers. Iris Park and Nastaise secured funding from the BAI to adapt *Ulysses* for a six part radio series broadcast 2012/2013 Dublin City Radio. Due to the success of their 'Play on *Ulysses*' at Blackrock Town Square, Bloomsday, 2014 the Blackrock Business Network together with Dunlaoghaire Rathdown County Council are supporting an upgraded Drama Festival, Bloomsday 2015. Nastaise is currently adapting and directing theatre with young adult drama students with sensitive talents and abilities at Park House, Stillorgan in Dublin.

Three Sisters—Waiting for Godot

Siwei Li

“Three Sisters—Waiting for Godot” is a combination and adaptation of Anton Chekov’s and Samuel Beckett’s homonymous plays, produced by the Chinese director Lin Zhaohua and Beijing People’s Art Theatre in 1998. Ever since its appearance on the stage, the production has received polarised reception from critics and theatre goers. This essay will analyse the play as well as its performances from three aspects: the first aspect is to interrogate how and why the intermingling of two western classics by a Chinese theatre maker is actualised in light of its external environment; the second is to observe what visible elements the production applies so as to weld the two plays together, and details that are sacrificed in order to justify the amalgamation; the third is to reconsider the aesthetic and political evaluation of the production. The essay adopts Antonin Artaud’s theatrical theories and phenomenology to support its analysis. The aim of the essay is to assess the function and position of theatre works of such kind in the more and more globalised world

Biography

Siwei Li is a first year PhD student of drama from the School of Drama, Film, and Music, Trinity College Dublin, supervised by Professor Brian Singleton. His research interest is in intercultural theatre and phenomenology. His current study is on contemporary Chinese spoken drama, especially which is adapted from a western play, and its exportation.

Forgotten Theatre - The Dwindling Canon

Gavin McAlinden

In this piece, two actors perform a short scene from Abbey Theatre playwright Elizabeth Connor's 1942 play 'An Apple a Day'. Each time the actors try to recreate the scene they find that sections of the play have been lost. Soon the actors find themselves locked in a Pirandellian limbo whereby they know they exist, the audience know they exist, but the play simply can't function because too much of it has been lost.

Biography

Gavin McAlinden is a full time PhD student at Kingston University writing a thesis on neglected female Irish playwrights of the 1930s and 40s with a particular interest in Teresa Deevy and Elizabeth Connor. He is also a filmmaker, theatre director and acting coach. You can see examples of his work at www.charmoffensive.org.uk

LATEST NEWS: Blake by Thomas Kilroy receives development support from Out Of Joint. Pentecost nominated for two Off West-End Awards Best Director and Best Ensemble Acting.

Stones and Bones: Unearthing the Arche-Fossil in Pan Pan's *Embers*

Dr. Trish McTighe

Pan Pan Theatre Company's production of Beckett's radio play *Embers* is a piece of theatre in which lighting and sound designers, live performers, and a visual artist together create a performance piece which is part art installation and part radiophonic experience. Carpeted in gravel, the theatre space visualises and literalises the shingle which *Ember's* protagonist Henry hears in his mind; the lighting, playing off the crenelated surface of the sculpture of a giant skull, visually references the water that Henry hears. These effects form a set of signs directly echoing the text. Yet for all that, this paper will suggest that the immensity of the sculpture as material object and as metaphor, and the overall compelling beauty of the image, serves to draw the spectator's attention away from the words spoken. Rather than make the case, however, that the production has failed to realise some ideal performance intended by the author, as some reviewers have done, or discuss generic boundaries, as still others have done, I take the production on its own merits. I consider instead how, while it may not necessarily direct us back to Beckett's text, the production presents an example of an ecological performance of deep time, thus imaging Quentin Meillassoux's 'Arche-fossil'. In Pan Pan's *Embers*, the significance of the speaking human and the textual archive is displaced in favour of a geological one: a post-Anthropocene drama of stones and bones which points towards the future remnants of human culture.

Biography

Trish McTighe is currently a post-doctoral researcher on the Staging Beckett Project at the University of Reading, UK and a recent visiting scholar in Irish drama at Fordham University. Her book, *The Haptic Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett's Drama*, was published with Palgrave in 2013 and she has published in the journals *Modern Drama*, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, and the online Irish studies journal *Breac*.

Shakespeare after Panti, or, what you will?

Emer McHugh

My paper focuses on the Abbey Theatre's 2014 production of *Twelfth Night*, and I contextualise it within the impact of Panti Bliss' Noble Call earlier that year in order to show how the production acted as a response to the controversy surrounding this event. I demonstrate this through its thematic emphasis on the play's subtitle, 'what you will'. Through discussing particular aspects of the production such as set and costume, I explore how, in leading us to question and problematise the validity of 'what you will', director Wayne Jordan and the creative team highlighted the extent to which society is willing to permit certain liberties in terms of class, sex, and gender. In an interview with Peter Crawley, Jordan suggests that '[t]he issue in [Shakespeare's] plays was that people weren't able to say what they wanted to say. I found that a little stultifying, because it wasn't my experience. I also felt it wasn't an Irish condition any more' (2014). In fact, I argue that this production reflected the experiences of people who *aren't* able to say what they wanted to say, or are punished for doing so (those elements that impose their will upon others are still quite present, despite the appearance of a so-called liberal outlook), before finally culminating in an interpretation of the new 'Irish condition' that Jordan describes. Ultimately, this paper asks, what does 'what you will' really mean for contemporary Irish theatre practice and scholarship?

Biography

Emer McHugh read for her primary degree in English, History, and Theatre & Performance at NUI Galway from 2008 to 2012, before completing an MA degree in Shakespeare and Theatre at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham in 2013. She returned to NUI Galway in 2014, where she is an IRC-funded doctoral researcher at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance. Her doctoral research focuses on Shakespearean performance in Ireland 1969-2016 and its associated cultural politics, and she is largely interested in early modern performance studies, audience/reception studies, actors and the archive, and contemporary Irish theatre. She is a contributor to *Reviewing Shakespeare* and serves on the Society for Theatre Research's New Researchers' Network committee.

Politicising performance: audience agency and the response to site. Anú Productions' 'Monto Cycle'.

Ciara L. Murphy

This paper will use the framework of theatre and performance studies as well as performance analysis to interrogate the role of audience and site in Anú Productions' 'Monto Cycle'

Using the four performances in the Monto Cycle, *World's End Lane*, *Laundry*, *The Boys of Foley Street* and *Vardo*, this paper will interrogate how the audience responds to the history of the theatrical site. Anú Productions created these four productions in Dublin's historical 'Monto' area. By drawing on the history of this area in its performances, and situating the performances in the actual site, Anu immerse their audience in the history of the area. My paper will focus on the role of the audience in the created theatrical environment of each production and will analyse how the given history of the area influences the audience's behaviour. These productions use an immersive and site-responsive framework that challenges the boundaries of traditional theatre practices. As such, the lack of the traditional theatre building, and the traditional cast of characters, creates a space in the performance for an active audience member. How much the spectator chooses to engage with the piece is dependant on their response to the site.

By analysing the role of the active audience member, through the interrogation of his or her movement through the site-responsive spaces of these performances, I will illustrate the link between the politics of the site and the actions of the audience.

Biography

Ciara L. Murphy completed a Masters Degree in Drama and Performance Studies in UCD in 2012 on the work of Frank McGuinness. Ciara's research interests include contemporary Irish and British theatre, Theatres of War, immersive, site-specific, and site-responsive theatre. Ciara aims to commence doctoral research in the area of immersive and site-responsive theatre practices in 2015.

Beckett's Grammaticisation of Memory: A Re-Reading of Krapp's Last Tape

Néill O'Dwyer

This paper analyses the technohistoric specificities of Samuel Beckett's acclaimed play *Krapp's Last Tape* under the concept of *technicity*; that is, technology considered in its efficacy, or its ability to produce a desired (artistic) outcome. Beckett's script will be analysed under Bernard Stiegler's accreditation of ontological force to technology—which is derived from Gilbert Simondon's theories. The paper aims, not only to explicate the impact of technicity on the theatrical text, but also to re-read the artistic metaphors given our new theoretical tools.

It will be shown how the play's idiosyncrasy provides a technohistoric lens through which a particular period of (Irish and Western) modernity is preserved. Written in 1958, the play stood on the brink of a *technological turn* towards cognitive technologies and the beginning of globalization and therefore represents a remarkably insightful critique of cultural development. I suggest that not only is *Krapp's Last Tape* charting a kind of conceptual terrain that we now, perhaps belatedly, have some of the conceptual tools to engage, but so too does it chart a conceptual terrain that is very much the experiential terrain of contemporary life.

The paper not only highlights the transformation conferred by technology on the theatrical text and dramaturgy, but it also stresses how Beckett's engagement with technological efficacy initiated the idea of the machine as a *live* performer and therefore represents an epochal rupture opening out from its instantiation, as well as an important sociohistoric, ontological and cultural document.

Biography

Néill O'Dwyer is an artist, PhD candidate and practice-based researcher at the Arts Technology Research Lab (ATRL), in the Drama Department, at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). His research is concerned with artistic possibilities emerging from processes of human-computer interaction, how one can inform the other and why this is useful in broader socio-political contexts. He is a part-time teaching assistant in the Drama Department. He is a member of the Scenography Working Group (IFTR) and is publishing an article in the forthcoming Taylor & Francis journal, *Theatre and Performance Design*. He is a member of the international Digital Studies Network initiated by the Institute of Research and Innovation (IRI), at the Pompidou Centre, and he is an associate researcher of GradCAM (Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media). He is a co-editor on the forthcoming Palgrave Macmillan publication, *Performing Subjectivity in the Space of Technology: Through the Virtual Towards the Real*.

From Stanislavski to Scenography: The Processes and Impacts of Dublin's Focus Theatre

Dr. Siobhan O'Gorman

Dublin's Focus Theatre (1967-2012) was established by Deirdre O'Connell; it developed out of the Stanislavski Studio O'Connell had set up in 1963 with a view to training Irish actors. The firm association of Focus with naturalism and Stanislavski's (often misconstrued) techniques has meant that it is not a theatre acclaimed for its scenographic interventions. Yet, what is less well-known about Focus under O'Connell's direction is that it offered highly visual, experimental productions in addition to training artists who would go on to pioneer similar work during the 1980s. These include Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy, whose staged appropriations of fairy tales blended adaptation and devised performance techniques often using masks and puppets, and Tom Hickey, who collaborated with writer Tom MacIntyre and director Patrick Mason to devise such visually ground breaking works as *The Great Hunger* (1983). Therefore the scenography of performing improvisatory bodies at the Focus provides a missing link between Stanislavskian Irish technique and evolving physical/visual modes of theatrical experimentation.

Examining the work of Focus theatre, and its influences on future developments in Irish theatre practice, sheds light on a number of fascinating questions: What are the similarities in how scenography and the Stanislavski System negotiate the conceptual and the perceptual? What is the relationship between scenography and affect? How might we further situate sensory bodies within scenographic contexts? This paper uses the work of Focus theatre as a case-study for theorising the relationship between scenography and collective actor-training – particularly training employing Stanislavski's techniques.

Biography

Siobhán O'Gorman is an IRC postdoctoral researcher at the School of Drama, Film and Music, Trinity College Dublin where she is working on her book project 'A Stage of Re-Vision: Scenography in Irish Theatre 1950-1990.' She taught at the English Department, NUI, Galway from 2008 to 2013, where she received a PhD for her thesis 'Negotiating Genders from the Page to the Stage'. She co-organized the Dublin Theatre Festival symposium 'Performing Space' in 2014, and is also co-convenor of TaPRA's Scenography Working Group. Her essays are published in such peer-reviewed journals as *Irish Studies Review*, *Scene* and *Irish Theatre International*. She was a critic for *Irish Theatre Magazine* from 2008 to 2013 and is co-editor of Carysfort's forthcoming essay collection *Devised Performance in Irish Theatre: Histories and Contemporary Practices*.

Identity is a Production that is never complete... Signifiers in the works of Pat Ahern, Founder of *Siamsa Tíre*

Dr. Sharon Phelan

There is something, a “gluaiseacht” stirring in all of us! ... A “gluaiseacht” shaped in the countryside of our hearts; a countryside that we can go back to, that can sustain us, nourish us, vision us, and motivate us, a countryside that houses our memories...

Pat Ahern

Cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, states that “identity” is a “production” that is never complete. Founding director of *Siamsa Tíre*, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, Pat Ahern, concurs. He states that “cultural identity is constantly evolving, changing. To identify and understand our culture we must understand the processes.” His view of “being Irish” is neither fixed, nor does it reside in the past. It is a “feeling”, a “*dúchas*”, a “sense of being ourselves.”

This paper will explore the notion of “identity” in the works of Pat Ahern. It will focus on his final production with the company - *Ding Dong Dederó: Forging the Dance*. Ahern’s production was an amalgam of many folk theatre essentials - native traditions and art forms, theatrical practices, developing styles of performance and the dedication of community cast members. The fact that over ninety people performed in *Ding Dong Dederó*, including performers from Ahern’s first production with *Siamsa, Fadó Fadó* (1968), reflected the significance of Ahern’s works.

Ding Dong Dederó was interpretable on differing levels. On one level, it told the story of Molyneaux and his successors - as they devised and performed their steps at different times in their lives. On another level, it told the story of the North Kerry dance tradition - the composing, perfecting and performing of the “step”, the original movement style. On a final level, the production was philosophical. Although the dancers were dead, their work would be carried on at *Siamsa Tíre*.

In his productions, Pat Ahern operated on Nancy Stein’s highest level of storytelling. There, specific features cannot be used to define the works. Instead, they are interpretable from philosophical perspectives and are exclusive to the contexts from which they emerge. Pat Ahern was a pioneer. He adopted the role of “Hooks Academic”, when he “re-wrote himself”, and the Irish folk culture, using the stage as his page and traditional music, song and dance, as instruments of expression.

Biography

Dr. Sharon Phelan is conference organizer. She lectures in performing arts and cultural theory at the Institute of Technology, in Tralee, Co. Kerry. She also worked as full-time Artistic Director at the *Ionad Culturtha* in Ballyvourney, County Cork and as full-time performer with *Siamsa Tíre*, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland. In 2012, her EU funded dance performance ‘Womanhood’ was performed at Krakow in Poland.

In education, Sharon also worked full time with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Curriculum Development Unit (Department of Education). There, she devised arts syllabi, provided in-service for teachers delivering arts syllabi and was Advising Extern Examiner in dance.

Sharon has published internationally, focusing on theatre and dance from cultural and educational perspectives. In 2014, her peer-reviewed book, 'Dance in Ireland: Steps, Stages and Stories', was published by Cambridge Scholars Press. Another book is forth-coming: it focuses on dance from all-inclusive perspectives.

Current areas of interest include post-graduate supervision in folk culture and folk dance and the use of distance learning in Irish dance with the NDLR. Sharon also serves as Executive Board member of the ISTR, as National Facilitator in dance for the Department of Education and as Extern Examiner in the Arts for the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, (HETAC), at under-graduate and at post-graduate level.

Judgement Day: Neoliberalism and Irish Theatre History

Professor Lionel Pilkington

There is cause for hope. While under attack from the relentless marketization of all public services, the humanities (and theatre and performance studies especially) occupy an increasingly central position in articulating critical, anti-capitalist modes of thinking and resistance. This paper proposes Walter Benjamin's 1940 essay 'On the Concept of History' as a starting point for reconsidering Irish theatre and performance history in the context of a neoliberal capitalism for which the actor-performer is a paradigmatic figure. Specifically, this paper will argue that Benjamin's essay helps us to detect some of the ways in which past performance phenomena (including theatre) reveal forms of agency that may be seen as alternative to, or running athwart, capitalist norms. Furthermore, given the extent to which the Irish theatre project is dominated by a narrative of secularizing modernization, Benjamin's insistence that remembrance has a redemptive, religious quality offers a particularly valuable and challenging way of thinking about Ireland's cultural history not as a march of progress, but as a repertoire of possibilities demanding restitution.

Biography

Lionel Pilkington is Personal Professor of English at NUI Galway. He is the author of *Theatre and the State in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Cultivating the People* (Routledge, 2001) and of *Theatre & Ireland* (Palgrave, 2010), as well as various essays on politics and performance in the Irish context.

Grotesque Worlds in Contemporary Irish Drama:

Mark O'Rowe and Enda Walsh

Dr Ondřej Pilný

Part of a larger project that examines the use of the grotesque in contemporary drama in English, this paper juxtaposes the grotesque worlds of three monologue dramas by Mark O'Rowe – *Howie the Rookie* (1999), *Crestfall* (2003), and *Terminus* (2007) with those created in the work of Enda Walsh from *The Walworth Farce* (2006) up to *Ballyturk* (2014). Its principal focus is on the nature of audience engagement that these worlds may solicit, particularly as regards the various ethical issues that arise in all the plays under discussion.

Biography

Ondřej Pilný is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Centre for Irish Studies at Charles University, Prague. His publications include *Irony and Identity in Modern Irish Drama* (2006), a critical edition of J.M. Synge's works in Czech translation (2006) and seven edited collections of essays. He has translated into Czech plays by J.M. Synge, Brian Friel, Martin McDonagh and Enda Walsh, and Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*.

A victim or survivor? The transformative power of language in dealing with those affected by sexual assault and rape in contemporary Irish culture

Carole Quigley

This paper comes from a wider dissertation that focuses on the ways in which women are both empowered and disempowered in contemporary Irish theatre and culture. This paper specifically deals with the power of language to transform the performance of lived experience in the context of women who go through sexual assault and rape. Both of the words 'victim' and 'survivor' may be used to describe anyone who has experienced violence of this nature but this paper will discuss how and why these two words can have both empowering and disempowering effects on the person involved. It will examine how these two words are not to be used lightly and flippantly, but instead, their understanding is crucial within the study of sexual assault and rape. It will look particularly at how transformative and healing the process can be for the person attacked to move from thinking as a victim to believing that they are a survivor. It will consider these terms in relation to the representation of those assaulted in contemporary Irish media and society, remarking on the destructive influence of 'rape culture' and 'victim blaming'. It will touch on the increased number of sexual assaults and rapes in Irish universities and how these are key issues intrinsically linked with the performance of feminisms in contemporary Irish society and culture today.

Biography

Carole Quigley is a first year PhD student in the Department of Drama, Film and Music TCD. She completed an M.Phil. in Theatre and Performance at TCD in 2014, and an undergraduate B.A. in English with Drama at UCD in 2013. Her main academic interests include the representation of feminisms and femininities on the contemporary Irish stage the empowerment of women in Irish culture.

RE-THINKING over Occupy Gezi with the Analogy of Performance

Melike Saba AKIM

In May 2013, a group of environmentalists camped out in Gezi Park so as to prevent its possible demolition. This small protest to guard woodland turned into a massive occupy movement against the government after perpetual police intervention that caused deaths. During the protests, a lonesome performance artist/protester, Erdem Gündüz, made an inspiring protest for many by standing silently in Taksim Square for hours, which soon ended up subsequently by many people who took up the similar stance. Considering *Standing Man* protest in particular, my aim in this presentation is to seek the experience of *Occupy Gezi*'s subversive/transformational potential on public. After Victor Turner's observations on the liminal / liminoid phases, the following question appears on performance studies: Are liminoid phases seen in modern industrialized societies instead of liminal ones, therefore liminoid performances, purely reinforce the cultural givens, or are they potentially capable of subverting these givens? On the one hand, the outline of my presentation seeks an answer to this question by considering occurrences prior to / post *Occupy Gezi* in Turkey. At this stage, definition of 'event' by Alain Badiou as well as 'democracy paradox' and 'dissensus' concept by Rancière will be the reference points. On the other hand, considering *Standing Man* performance in particular, the concept 'silence' as a subversive political activity will be emphasized by basically re-thinking over Wittgenstein's tribute to silence

Biography

Melike Saba Akim was born in Istanbul, 1984. She is a freelance dramaturge and PhD candidate pursuing her doctorate degree in Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy at Istanbul University. She obtained her BA degree from the same department and MA degree in Comparative Literature from Yeditepe University. Her main research areas are drama/performance relationship and texts-in-performance. She has currently been writing her dissertation about anti-narrativity in drama after historical avant-garde.

From Memory, Myth and Ritual in *Text* to Memory, Myth and Ritual in *Performance*: Performer Challenges Character in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*

Dr. Rayla Tadjimatova

The theme of this conference opens up an opportunity to discuss dynamics in the established traditions of perception and staging Brian Friel's play. The *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1991) was, actually, written in the last century, so its transit to the contemporary rehearsal room will inevitably face a cultural environment that differs from the one in 1991 Ireland. Moreover, the possible participants of rehearsals would have grown up into or gone through cultural transformations that the Irish society experienced during these last twenty four years. How do these transformations effect the perception of the play? How do they inform and enrich our engagement with the well-known text? How these transformations may manifest themselves in the rehearsal process? Friel's play is a fine example of the topic 'Memory, Myth and Ritual' in *text*. How memory, myth and ritual could be created in contemporary live *performance* of the canonical text? This paper argues that these tasks could be achieved by considering, for example, the role of 'emphatic connection' as a more preferable than more traditional 'affective memory' in the rehearsal work of performer on his/her character. Moreover, the idea of performing a living character as an object may move performance towards its ritual essence.

Biography

Rayla Tadjimatova is originally from Uzbekistan where she was trained on Stanislavsky and Vakhtangov actor training and directing techniques. After finishing the State Institute of Theatre Arts she worked as actress, actor training teacher and director. In Ireland, she completed MA at UCD and started teaching at UCD and at UCC (2010-2012) modules on Vakhtangov's acting and directing techniques. She currently completed her PhD program at UCD and defended her thesis *Re-considering Vakhtangov: Theatrical/Fantastic Realism as a Model for Agency*. She is involved in teaching a number of modules for undergraduate and postgraduate students at UCD.

Loyal to a Fault: Commemorating the UVF Centenary

Dr. Kurt Taroff

On 20 April 2013, several hundred men and women in vintage uniforms marched through the centre of Belfast to the cheers of up to 10,000 onlookers to commemorate the centenary of the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force. Formed in 1913 by Edward Carson, the UVF was prepared to take up arms against the British Army to prevent the passage and enforcement of Home Rule in Ireland. With the onset of World War I, in a demonstration of their stated loyalty, Carson pledged the UVF to the war effort, where, as the 36th Ulster Division, they suffered heavy losses in the Battle of the Somme, a sacrifice that has become embedded in the mythology of Protestant Northern Ireland. It is this history, at least according to organisers, that the marches of 2013-14 are celebrating. Complicating this narrative of noble sacrifice is the re-birth of the UVF as an illegal paramilitary organization during the Troubles.

The UVF commemorations of 2013-16 constitute a complex performance of Loyalism, time, sacrifice, control and resistance. Utilising Rebecca Schneider's work on re-enactment and the non-normative chronotope, this essay will explore how such commemorations "are more than 'mere' remembering but are in fact the ongoing event itself, negotiated through sometimes radically shifting affiliation with the past as the present" (32). Ultimately, I will suggest that the UVF parades, rather than simply retracing the past, represent a highly conscious performative act of laying claim (both symbolically, as well as in a palpably physical, geographical sense) to a still heavily contested present. In remembering 1913, the marchers of 2013 rejoin a fight over "Home Rule," extending through metaphor the paramilitary skirmishes of the Troubles of the 1970s-90s, using symbolic memory as a weapon on the less familiar battlefield of polite politics.

Biography

Kurt Taroff is a Lecturer in Drama at Queen's University Belfast. His primary area of research concerns Nikolai Evreinov's theory of Monodrama and its manifestations in music, theatre, and film, both before and after its composition. He is also currently serving as co-investigator for "Living Legacies 1914-18, From Past Conflict to Shared Futures," a First World War Commemoration Centre funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK. He has published in the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, *Forum Modernes Theater*, and *The Arthur Miller Journal*, among others.

From the back porch to the stage: Cherishing the living tradition of African-American blues in contemporary performance

Donnacha Toomey

As argued by Canadian philosopher of communication theory Marshall McLuhan “*All new technologies bring on the cultural blues, just as the old ones evoke phantom pain after they have disappeared*” (McLuhan, 1968). Many contemporary performers demonstrate that blues as a musical form nonetheless has stood the test of time and technological advances. African American blues is above all else, a performance music. Traditionally, as a genre it was performed instinctively as *field hollers* or on *back porches* before moving to public platforms such as *sukey jumps* and *juke joints*. This work argues predominantly that when self accompanied, contemporary blues performers succeed in captivating new audiences through the integration of traditional stagecraft and progressive participatory techniques. Drawing on musical examples, interviews and personal experience of the author this paper examines how artists cherish the living tradition of the blues through devotion to their delivery style in particular. The current work considers how artists perform *within themselves* while at the same time borrowing from pioneering blues musicians incorporating techniques such as improvisation, call and response and foot stomping. It explores how they find their *musical voice* to communicate feelings and emotions to a live audience with authenticity. It is argued that rehearsals are not always critical and that the efficacy of the blues narrative develops during the performance itself and continual mediation between performers and the audience. Finally, it suggests that an integral part of the performance is influenced by the performer’s environment and the concept of a *scenius* (Eno, 2009) is considered to establish how the ‘*personal lives and cultural experiences intertwine in the creation of musical works*’ (Mio, 2005).

To support these findings the author will present a live performance demonstrating his approach to contemporary blues in the form of “*Reasons*”, a four minute original composition in G Minor. The song will be self-accompanied on acoustic guitar drawing on the *rhythmic phrasing* of Leadbelly and Mississippi John Hurt while incorporating the *open string drones* associated mostly with traditional folk music.

Biography

Donnacha Toomey is a Media and Broadcasting Lecturer at the Institute of Technology, Tralee. Prior to this, he worked as Production Co-ordinator at Ireland’s cultural and arts radio station RTÉ Lyric FM. Toomey has been a musician for most of his life having produced a number of critically acclaimed recorded works including *Reasons* (2005), *Carnival of Colours* (2009) and *Level Crossing* (2012). He is currently completing a Ph.D. at the University of Limerick entitled *The influence of Prosumer Culture on the craft of song writing-An artist’s research and practice*.

The Dublin Jewish Dramatic Society: Tradition? Transition? Transformation?

Dr. Shelley Troupe

This presentation is the beginning of a project that aims to document the productions of the Dublin Jewish Dramatic Society (DJDS), an amateur theatre that was active between the 1920s and the 1950s. Amateur theatre in Ireland was a tremendously important social movement in the middle decades of the twentieth century; and, until recently, amateur theatre was the main training ground for theatre professionals in Ireland. In addition to recording the DJDS' production history, the study's immediate goal is to answer the following question: how did the Dublin Jewish Dramatic Society's productions serve as a means of expression for the Irish Jewish community's experiences and concerns and how, if at all, did those concerns change during the company's lifetime? The company's performances coincided with important events, which occurred within Ireland and internationally and which shaped both Irish history and Jewish history. The Society's main period of activity began in 1925 after the end of both the Anglo-Irish War in 1921 and the Irish Civil War in 1923. Generally, the DJDS produced annual productions throughout the Second World War and before and after the formal establishment of Israel in 1948. In effect, then, the project seeks to consider the importance of tradition, transition, and transformation to the DJDS' productions in their historical contexts.

Biography

Shelley Troupe teaches at Maynooth University and the National University of Ireland, Galway. She holds a PhD from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and formerly served as an arts administrator in New York City. Her chapter, "From Druid / Murphy to *DruidMurphy*" is forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*. She is currently completing a monograph that investigates the ongoing relationship between Tom Murphy and Druid Theatre.

Traditional Performances and Forces of Cultural Transformation/Obliteration?

Dr. Ngozi Udengwu

Ndubuisi Nnanna

Ikechukwu Erojikwe

As part of their attempt at cultural assertion and revival, African Theatre scholars turned attention to indigenous traditional festival performances. Insisting that these are forms of theatre in their own rights, these scholars did a good job of describing and documenting them for posterity. Quite a big body of work was produced on traditional festival performances in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Those works served and are still serving as great reference materials for performance and theatre studies. However, while the written documents on these performances still exist, the festivals and their performances have virtually disappeared. This situation poses a pedagogical problem. Consequently, the questions that drive the present study include: what are the factors that are responsible for the disappearance of traditional festival performances? What are the causes and consequences of these disappearances? Is there a necessity for the revival and preservation of traditional performances? These writers are aware that cultural performance practices shift in content and form in order to accommodate new exigencies in society, but how does one teach indigenous performance forms to one's students without the performances? In this study we intend to revisit a number of well documented hitherto very popular festival performances from selected communities in Nigeria with a view to determining the changes that they have undergone over the years; what necessitated those changes and the implication for the cultural identity of the communities.

Biographies

Ngozi Udengwu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; the author of *Contemporary Nigerian Female Playwrights: A Study of Ideology and Themes*; and also a Fellow of American Council of Learned Societies.

Ndubuisi Nnanna is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Ikechukwu Erojikwe is a PhD candidate in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The Popular Theatre Tradition in the plays of Enda Walsh

Dr. Ian R. Walsh

In his landmark essay 'Entertainment and Utopia' Richard Dyer using the example of musicals argues that entertainment functions as escapism by offering 'the image of "something better" [...] that our day-to-day lives don't provide'. He identifies this utopianism' of entertainment as being contained 'in the feelings it embodies' presenting the spectator with 'what utopia would feel like rather than how it would be organised'. In this research paper I will locate how the popular theatre traditions of the ventriloquist and music hall double act are fundamental to an understanding of the dramaturgy of Enda Walsh's plays. The escapism offered by performance as entertainment is presented repeatedly as a deadly pursuit by Walsh in his dramas and yet in the skill and exuberance that is demanded of actors in the enactment of his plays he cultivates a feeling of utopia in the audience. I contend that Walsh draws on the tradition of popular entertainments as a dialectical dramaturgical device that enables him to interrogate the efficacy of performance in relation to its contradictory dystopian and utopian effects. I will examine Walsh's breakout play *The Ginger Ale Boy* in relation to this contention and argue that this early piece in its use of the performance strategies of variety entertainments serves as an adaptable dramaturgical model that can be identified in his subsequent works.

Biography

Dr. Ian R. Walsh is a Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the NUI Galway. He has a PhD from University College Dublin where he taught full time from 2010-2014. Ian has published widely on Irish theatre in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections. In 2012 his monograph *Experimental Irish Theatre, After W.B Yeats* was published by Palgrave Macmillan. He has recently co-edited with Mary Caulfield *The Theatre of Enda Walsh* for Carysfort Press and is working on his second monograph entitled *Popular Irish Theatre*. He has been a Theatre Reviewer for *Irish Theatre Magazine* and RTE Radio 1 and has also worked as a Theatre Director.

'Changing the Situation': Laughter, Event, and Panti's Noble Call

Dr. Eric Weitz

This paper will draw upon laughter-related thought by sociologist Michael Billig in conjunction with Slavoj Žižek's formulation of Event to examine ways in which Irish drag artist Panti addressed the aftermath of her alter-ego Rory O'Neill's appearance on RTE, during which he suggested certain journalists and a Catholic lobbying group were homophobic because of their opposition to the Marriage Equality movement. Panti's 10-minute speech from the stage of the Abbey Theatre amounted to a unique, once-off performance, which quickly went viral on the internet, bringing up interesting issues of humour and spectatorship in today's YouTube society. At the same time it offers a chance to analyse the astute deployment of humorous utterance for discursive effect in a live situation for which the balance of political opinion could not have been predicted. The title of the paper comes from a speech in Trevor Griffiths' *Comedians*, in which the fictional comic Eddie Waters suggests that, 'a true joke, a comedian's joke, has to do more than release tension, it has to *liberate* the will and the desire, it has to *change the situation*'.

Biography

Eric Weitz is an Associate Professor and Head of Drama at Trinity College Dublin, teaching courses in Acting and Comedy, among others. His latest edited collection of essays is titled, *For the Sake of Sanity: Doing things with humour in Irish performance*. He wrote *The Cambridge Introduction to Comedy*, edited *The Power of Laughter: Comedy and Contemporary Irish Theatre*, and has contributed articles and essays to a number of collections and journals, including *Performance Research*, the *Irish University Review* and the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* as well as the *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*. His contribution to Palgrave's *Theatre & series, Theatre & Laughter*, will be published later this year. He serves on the Executive Committee of the International Society for Humor Studies, and on the boards of two socially engaged theatre companies, *Smashing Times* (Dublin) and *Collective Encounters* (Liverpool). He also tap dances.

Bird Men: Performing and Understanding Chineseness between Orientalism and Occidentalism

Wei Zheyu

This paper discusses the play *Bird Men* (1993) by Beijing People's Art Theatre, a modern fable featuring the community of the Beijing people who keep birds as a hobby. Set in a park where the bird keepers gather to spend their leisure time, the "bird men" phenomenon is observed and studied through the Western lens of two intruders of the park: Richard, the UN inspector investigating "the living environment of birds in China", and Paul Ding, the Chinese psychiatrist who was educated overseas and returned to offer treatment of "mental illness" to the "bird men". This play reveals the conflict between the "traditional" aristocratic Chinese and "modernised" industrialised Western cultures, begging the question of who possesses the power to define "civilisation" and "savagery" and whether one culture is entitled to "transform" the other to become "civilised". Adopting the perspective of post-colonial studies, the paper examines the epistemologies reflected in the play, according to which the East and the West used to understand each other— Orientalism (Edward Said's famous idea) vs Occidentalism (the corresponding term which Xiaomei Chen coined), and questions the possibility for representing "Chineseness" in a globalised discourse named, ruled and disciplined by the Western thinking. Moreover, taking the cultural-historical and politico-economic contexts of *Bird Men* into account, the paper also interrogates the elitist anthropological methodology of studying and interpreting "Chineseness", and demands a space for the "subaltern" (in Spivak's sense) to speak.

Biography

Wei Zheyu received his B. A. degree in Sun Yat-sen University and M. A. in Nanjing University in China, both in English Language and Literature. Co-funded by Trinity College Dublin and Chinese Scholarship Council, he is currently a PhD student based in Department of Drama in Trinity College Dublin. His doctoral research offers a study on how contemporary Chinese experimental theatre, has been engaged with the trend of globalization in the past two decades (1991 to now), developing new forms of theatre aesthetic and dramaturgy as well as new marketing and operation modes.

NOTES