

**The Animal in Ireland, Real and Imagined: An International and Interdisciplinary Symposium**  
**University of Würzburg, 21-23 February 2024**  
**Abstracts & Bios (as of December 10, 2023)**

**Abstracts**

**Keynote 1:**

**Martín Veiga, University College Cork, Ireland:**

**“Nonhuman Animals and Posthuman Restitution in Contemporary Irish and Galician Poetry”**

Awareness of the need to enhance the quality of the often complex –and traditionally asymmetric– interactions between human and nonhuman animals has increased in recent years and has perhaps accelerated in the face of the fast-paced environmental deterioration heralded in the context of the Anthropocene. Both the social sciences and the humanities have come to terms with the urgency of creating new vocabularies to refer to this unprecedented catastrophe that has compromised the future of the world as we have known it. Some responses propose discourses and practices that decentre anthropocentric views by recognising the agency of nonhuman animals and restoring their damaged centrality. Following my previous participation in research projects related to ecofeminism and the animal trope, I am currently involved in a new project on posthuman intersections in Irish and Galician literatures. Some of the work carried out as part of these research projects constitute the background to my lecture, which proposes the discussion of representations of human and nonhuman animals in several case studies of contemporary Irish and Galician poetry. The lecture claims the necessity to develop an empathetic posthumanism that is based on interspecies solidarity and that moves from sustainability towards restitution.

**Keynote 2:**

**Kathryn Kirkpatrick, Appalachian State University, NC, USA:**

**"Animal Poetics and Climate Crisis"**

Ireland's National Biodiversity Data Centre reports that 20% of the species assessed in Ireland are currently at risk in this era of the sixth mass extinction brought on by climate crisis. Given the existential threat to all sentient beings, what *is* the role of literary studies in the changing environmental, social, and political climates we all find ourselves living in? This talk explores my own attempts as an Irish studies scholar at creative and scholarly intervention. Amitav Ghosh contends that the enlightenment human subject constructed against the backdrop of a stable climate will not be able to fully address climate crisis. Rather Ghosh, like Vandana Shiva, urges us to retrieve and cultivate other ways of knowing, including a renewed appreciation for the uncanny. As part of an exploration of how we might make meaning differently, I bring together my practices as a poet and a scholar to apply an Animal Poetics to Irish (and sometimes Irish-American) poetry in order to move beyond anthropocentric and human exceptionalist perspectives. Employing poetry's associative, intuitive, and premodern ways of knowing, animal poetics addresses imagined and real Irish animals by taking cues from the actual fox, the actual hare, the actual bear. I'll discuss my work, past and present, following particular species – foxes, rabbits and hares, and now bears – through selected Irish and Irish-American poems, attending to the challenges of following a methodology that crosses national borders and decenters the human as sole agent and maker.

## Panel 1: Lyrical Encounters with Irish Animals

**Jessica Bundschuh, University of Stuttgart, Germany:**

### **“Enchanted Encounters with Eamon Grennan’s ‘Double-Life Creatures’ in *Plainchant*”**

The encounters in Eamon Grennan’s *Plainchant* (2020) with nonhuman subjects—from hares, seals, mares, cows, and lambs, to butterflies, wasps, spiders, ticks, ants and houseflies – lead to unpredictable, multispecies partnerships. Grennan populates his prose poems, situated in Connemara, with a cast of ‘companion species’ dominated by an abundance of coastal birds: larks, starlings, sparrows, gannets, nightbirds, chaffinches, swallows and sand martins, which demonstrate an otherworldly sensitivity for their environment. As the title *Plainchant* suggests, Grennan merges here ‘plain’ and everyday speech with a Joycean epiphany or ‘chant,’ akin to birdsong. In one isolated rendezvous after another, this community of “double-life creatures” (14) emerges fleetingly from Grennan’s narrow columns of poetic prose with justified margins that vary in width in response to the first line, such that the idiosyncratic motions of each nonhuman companion in the ‘real’ world determine the poet’s typography.

These one-on-one encounters in verse project a mood of enchantment, a quality Rita Felski celebrates as “soaked through with an unusual intensity of perception and affect” to offer “rapturous self-forgetting rather than self-shattering” (55). Herein, subjects give into a blurred “sense of autonomy and control” that often transforms into a triadic dialogue in the company of fellow writers, like Elizabeth Bishop (alongside seals) and Samuel Beckett (with endangered birds). On multiple occasions, Paul Celan joins the speaker as a co-witness of blackbirds, wrens and finches and Celan’s epigraph – “*You’re there / with a splinter / of life.*” – establishes the volume’s overarching tone. In “With Ant and Celan,” “this tiniest mite of an ant” literally walks across Celan’s typographic presence to “inspect with its ant feelers ... each resonant syllable of each word” (47). Ultimately, Grennan’s doubly-observed nonhuman companions in *Plainchant* (borrowing from Robert Frost’s pattern in “Two Look at Two”) model for readers a practice of intoxicating enchantment that heightens the present moment.

**Eóin Flannery, University of Limerick, Ireland:**

### **“When Species Meet: Animal Encounters in the Poetry of Ciaran Berry”**

In her 2007, *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway deals with the longstanding problems raised by myths of human exceptionalism. Eschewing the blunt dualisms that have contoured much rationalist thought and that underpin historical, and extant, socio-cultural hierarchies, Haraway insists that ‘all mortal beings [...] live in and through the use of one another’s bodies’ (Haraway 2007, 79). The porosities implicit in Haraway’s arguments span the physical and the affective, as she alights upon a host of exploitation across species boundaries. And it is in the context of her aforementioned point on the deeply historical and deeply embedded mutualities of the human and the nonhuman that Haraway’s work strikes a useful initial keynote to our analyses of a selection of poems by Ciaran Berry. Berry does not explicitly invoke global warming, pollution or environmental justice in the works scrutinized, the ways in which they attend to the relationships between signifier and signified; human history and natural history; and the intimacies of individual encounters with the natural world and with animals make his works vital eco-poetic interventions. At times Berry’s work is deeply personal and rooted in specific recollected moments of interaction with the natural world, but this does not lapse into a static sentimentality; rather, Berry’s work acknowledges the distance between representation and reality while remaining aware of the indelible links between human and nonhuman ecologies, including animals such as crows, elephants, hares, and birds of prey. Specifically, we will address a series of poems including: ‘Cold Pastoral’ from his 2008 collection, *The Sphere of Birds*, and ‘Polar Bear’ and ‘Darwin in the Galapagos’ from the later volume, *The Dead Zoo* (2013).

**Zosia Kuczynska, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom:  
“Queering the Animal in Contemporary Irish Poetry”**

Although animals have long been ubiquitous in Irish poetry, there is an emerging tendency in the contemporary queer Irish lyric whereby creative practitioners are consciously engaged in queering animal forms. This paper examines the work of three contemporary queer Irish poets—Anna Loughran, Gail McConnell, and Padraig Regan—as three distinct examples of the queering of the animal, with particular emphasis on sea creatures. Whilst all three can be read in the context of what is generally regarded as a ‘trend’ of LGBTQ+ artists writing about the sea and its denizens, I suggest that each engages with this particularly ‘fashionable’ literary ‘moment’ in ways that are fundamentally rooted in their own queer creative praxis. Underpinned by current thinking on queer poetics and recent scholarship on the animal in contemporary poetry, this paper asks how these poets’ queer(ed) animals emerge from their own sense of what it means to write queerly. Focal points for discussion will include the framing of queer lyric selves in Anna Loughran’s ‘The Seahorses at Exploris’; the relationship between Gail McConnell’s gender-non-conforming ‘Cuttlefish’ and the poetics of queer parenthood; and the framing of nature and the animal as a constructed category in Padraig Regan’s still lives and seafood dishes, with particular emphasis on their evocation of a dancing squid rice bowl in ‘Katsu Ika Odori-Don’. In so doing, I hope to move towards an understanding of how contemporary queer Irish poetry navigates its relationship not only with a past poetic tradition of writing the animal but also with the emerging queer poetics of the present moment.

## Panel 2: Imagined Animals

**Kathleen Costello-Sullivan, Le Moyne College, NY, United States:**

**“Being human never did... any good’: Disability and Empathy in Sara Baume’s *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*”**

Sara Baume’s 2015 debut novel, *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*, has been much commented on for its “portrait of the human mind” and concomitant exploration of loneliness, abuse, and despair as it follows the journeys of social outcast Ray and his adopted dog, One-Eye. As Orsolya Szűcs argues, “By spending time with this weird creature, Ray also learns a new mode of experience and starts to view the world animate and inanimate in a peculiar new detail, gaining a beauty that he was unable to find in human society.” Despite the second-person narrative of the novel, however, Ray’s perspective does not occur in isolation; rather, through his observations, the reader is also able to observe the independent moods, desires, and responses of his dog companion throughout the novel.

Taking One-Eye’s agency as a starting point, this analysis argues that *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* challenges the purported focus on narrowly human society as an end unto itself. Arguing that “community is only a good thing when you’re a part of it” (266), Ray despairs; however, his myopic focus on human society is belied by the quality time he spends with One-Eye, the empathetic connection he shares with him, and the camaraderie they enjoy together. While the novel does explore the cost and suffering that human societal exclusion can cause, then, it also proffers an alternative. *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* ultimately argues that a more inclusive society, recognizing non-human as well as human subjects, can provide a healthier and more nurturing alternative grounded in reciprocity, trust, and respect.

**Dilara Yilmaz, University of Kiel, Germany:**

**“Irish Animals in the Anthropocene: Nonhuman Voices in Contemporary Irish Literature”**

Just as Irish cultural identity has been closely intertwined with the domestic or farm animal, the island’s wildlife has long been a distinct presence in Irish literature. Recent fiction by contemporary (often emerging) writers put an entirely new and more prominent emphasis of the nonhuman as narrator. Indeed, in novels and short fiction by authors such as Sheila Armstrong (*Falling Animals*, 2023) or Frances Macken (*You Have To Make Your Own Fun Around Here*, 2020), among others, we often encounter a voice that we cannot immediately place only to realize soon enough that it is that of a nonhuman character. These animals native to Ireland, such as seagulls, seals, crows, and others, offer a new perspective on the Irish Anthropocene. While not portrayed as having significant agency and not appearing as a protagonist of any kind, nonhuman characters (which I deliberately label as such) portray a distinct nature-culture dichotomy - and often conflict - in an Irish context, while commenting on wildlife’s (conflicted) relationship to human agents in the Irish landscape and (so-called, but arguably absent) wilderness. Nonhuman voices not only observe, but also criticize the human interaction with nature by (grotesquely or ridiculously) displacing human characters and emphasizing their inadequacy in natural surroundings.

**Franca Leitner, University of Mannheim, Germany:**

**“Haunting Humans? Animals in Tana French’s *In the Woods* (2007) and *Broken Harbour* (2012)”**

In his monograph *Writing Animals: Language, Suffering, and Animality in Twenty-First Century Fiction*, Timothy Baker claims that “non-human animals haunt the peripheries of contemporary fiction” (1) – while mostly remaining on the fringes, the fictional animals are ever-present, ‘haunting’ the human world. This claim also applies to the works of contemporary Irish crime writer Tana French, in particular the first and fourth book in her Dublin Murder Squad series, *In the Woods* (2007) and *Broken Harbour* (2012). While animals seldomly play a prominent role in crime fiction – notable exceptions such as the murderous orang-utan in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” aside – they feature prominently as haunting entities in French’s work.

In *In the Woods*, the question is raised whether the unsolved disappearance of two children in a densely wooded area might have been caused by a large, 'monstrous' animal. In *Broken Harbour*, a family is seemingly threatened by a rodent that has found its way into the attic of their newly bought home. And yet, I will argue that while initially perceived as potential threats or dangerous predators, neither in *In the Woods* nor in *Broken Harbour* it is the animal that is posing a threat. Instead, as so often in Irish literature, the animal in French's novels can be read as "a vehicle for the expression of pain and confusion" (O'Connor 172), representing the suffering natural world in Ireland. The novels reveal that the threat ultimately does not lie with the actual animals, but with the metaphorical animal of the Celtic Tiger and the human-made economic system. The haunting presence of the animal can thus be read as a stark critique of the ongoing destruction of natural spaces in what was known to be the 'Green Island' – Ireland.

**Maureen DeLeo, University of Galway, Ireland:**

**"Tá mé ag caint leis na fáinleogaibh/I am talking to the swallows': Animals in Patrick Pearse's Short Fiction"**

Patrick Pearse, the Irish educationalist, writer, and, later, revolutionary, was described by his younger sister, Mary Brigid, as being 'most at home' among three things: children, animals, and flowers. Such a portrait of Pearse, who was one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, is at odds with the image of him as a blood sacrifice-obsessed nationalist. Even as he became entrenched in militarism, however, he continued writing about and caring for these three things. His bilingual boys school, St Enda's, held classes on animal and plant care so the boys would become well-rounded men attune to the environment.

Animals appear throughout Pearse's literary canon. 'Eoghainín na nÉan (Eoghaneen of the Birds)' was published in his first short story collection, *Íosagán agus sgéalta eile* (1907) and it revolves around a little boy's love of birds, especially swallows. Pearse's animals are used to convey positive things, like the swallows delivering Eoghainín from a physical death or at the end of 'An Gadaí (The Thief)', when an animal product is given to show the thief's appreciation for not being punished. Animals can also be used to convey layers of morality, like in 'An Gadaí', but especially in 'An Deargdaol (The Black Chafer)' (1916). This story takes its title from the devil's coach horse black beetle (*Ocypus olens*), or the black chafer, and it is closely associated with folklore and Christianity. Taking place in Connemara, a priest banishes a woman and gives her the title 'An Deargadaol', erasing any memory of a human identity and replacing with that of a negatively viewed animal, one which is considered to be cursed. This paper aims to demonstrate the ways in which Pearse's animals are used to reveal information about how people engage with themselves and their secular and religious communities.

### Panel 3: The Economy of the Irish Animal

**Christian Huck, University of Kiel, Germany:**

**“The Cow that Drank all the Water”**

The cow is probably the one animal most associated with Ireland. From the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, i. e. *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*, to Kerrygold butter, cows play a central role in Irish mythology, history and marketing. The CfP cites John Connell’s best-selling memoir of 2018, *The Cow Book: A Story of Life on the Family Farm*, as the last in a line of works ‘respectfully honouring the nonhuman animal’ in Irish culture with ‘warm familiarity’. So how come that the first Irish secret agrarian society, the eighteenth-century ‘Houghers’, articulated their *social* protest through the practice of maiming cattle? In my talk I want to explore the inter- or intra-relations between Ireland’s most famous animal, and the effects the breeding of said animal has on the Irish landscape and its human population. More specifically, I will focus on the consequences the creation of a cow-friendly environment, for social, political and economic reasons, has on hydrological conditions. My central argument is that the draining of Ireland, which was propelled by the concentration on pastoral agriculture, led to a form of destitution among small-scale farmers which expressed itself in a final act of desperation: *the killing of a cow*, the symbol of power and suppression. In the event, cattle farming survived the attack; the poor farmer did not. More generally, my paper suggests to understand animals as entangled within (agri-)cultured environments, and thus as part of, and actors within, social and economic power coordinates.

**Selina Guinness, Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire, Ireland:**

**“Farm Yard to White Cube: Livestock Process in Contemporary Irish Visual Arts”**

In Spring 2022, the Royal Hibernian Academy held a group show of seven Irish female artists whose expanded practice explicitly engages with agriculture, primarily focused on livestock enterprises. ‘A Growing Enquiry: Art and Agriculture, Reconciling Values’ restocked the visually over-saturated Irish landscape with the material commodities of agricultural life. A fertiliser spreader, a wire tractor, and various by-products of the meat trade – wool, tallow, straws for collecting bull semen – featured among the exhibits.

This paper is informed by my own experience of farming sheep and writing about them. It investigates how the restaging of pastoral systems in gallery spaces disrupts post-Arcadian, and implicitly patriarchal, stereotypes of Irish rurality. In the performance and sculptural works of Orla Barry, Maria McKinney and Katie Watchorn, the farm animal serves as a modernised labour unit that produces a highly gendered sociology of care. The four green fields grazed by Irish livestock are mapped, funded and circumscribed by the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. In response to these three artists, this paper considers how a reinvigorated sense of the pastoral needs to resituate the ‘Irish’ animal in this supra-national economic territory, and outlines implications for future [agri] cultural identities.

**Laurent Daniel, University of Southern Brittany, Lorient, France:**

**“The Hare, the Greyhound and the Sport of Coursing”**

Coursing, where two greyhounds are released onto a live hare, is the responsibility of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Indeed, according to Heather Humphrey (Minister for Arts and Heritage, 2015), it is “part of the heritage of many rural communities”. However, it is not so much the sport as the hare that earns it this privilege. Indeed, in order to organise its yearly event, the local club has to obtain the right to net and keep hares from the Minister in order to be able to train them to flee in a straight line towards the escape and judge which of the two greyhounds unleashed on her on the day of the knock-out competition is the fastest. However, the greyhound and its sports also have heritage value. Imported by the English, like the concept of modern sport on which the GAA has built its popularity, the killing of hares by greyhounds is not unusual in Irish folklore and has high symbolic value in Celtic mythology. It was mainly in the culturally authentic south-west of Ireland that the sport of the British elite developed at the end of the nineteenth century and acquired its own

specific shape. At the time of writing, the Republic of Ireland is the only western democracy and even country in the world where live-hare coursing is carried out to any significant extent under the aegis of a duly recognized national club acting as keeper of the stud book for all greyhounds in Ireland by Act of Parliament.

#### Panel 4: Joyce and Animals

**Flicka Small, University College Cork, Ireland:**

**“On the Pig’s Back”**

Of all the animals in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the pig figures the most often, either dead or alive or as a metaphor. The pig’s many parts were all used in the diet of the poor Irish, from cheeks to kidneys to crubeens (feet). However, in the “Circe” episode of *Ulysses*, Bloom is turned into a grovelling pig, hunting for truffles at the feet of his cruel master. But in this hallucinogenic chapter, Bloom is also female, the new womanly man, and her master is the madam of the brothel, Bello Cohen. The gender-fluid undercurrents and the misogyny that Joyce plays with are derived from the witch Circe in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Circe’s skills in the culinary art of herbs help her to turn men into pigs and so it is that Joyce’s Odysseus (Bloom) is subjugated, aided and abetted by the moustachioed Mrs Keogh, the brothel cook.

Juliana Adelman argues in *Civilised by Beasts* that after the Great Irish Famine (1845 -50) the concept emerged in Britain that its closest neighbour and colony lived in filth and with its pig. This reinforced the notion that Ireland, already figured as female, and on a par with animals, needed to be subjugated. Thus Bloom, in his new guise, is envisaged as a ‘thumping good breakfast’ of ham rashers, to be enjoyed by the authoritarian Bello.

This paper examines Bloom’s dilemma of being human turned nonhuman, experiencing the guilt of his human fantasies whilst enduring torture and ridicule at the hands of his oppressor.

**Maryam Najafibabanazar, University of Istanbul, Turkey:**

**“Animal Symbolism in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: A Mythological Study”**

Animal imagery and symbolism in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* might have roots in Irish mythology. This study focuses on a thorough research of the extent to which animal and non-human imagery and symbolism in two of James Joyce’s outstanding novels could have roots in Irish pagan mythology.

While there are several references to animals directly or symbolically in *Ulysses*, and interestingly enough, “each animal acts either in sympathy or in opposition to Stephen or Bloom” (Haas, 2014), this study will aim to analyze this symbolism in terms of their Irish mythical role. The focus of this study is to see if animal imagery and symbolism in Joyce’s fiction intend to take character development beyond simple non-human imagery and if this could be traced further back in Irish and pagan mythology.



## Panel 5: Animals in Myths, Legends, and Fairy-Tales

**Julianna Leibold, SciencesPo Paris, France:**

### **"Concepts of Nature and Culture in Selected Irish Fairy Tales: Selected Irish Fairy Tales as Examples of a Narrative Tradition Documenting Indigenous Learning-with and Becoming-with the More-than-human World"**

In order to elucidate the complex interactions between human, animal and nature actants, the proposed paper analyses the three Irish fairy tales *Fior Usga*, *The Salmon of Knowledge* and *The Wooing of Etain*, using Greimas' actantial model combined with Latour's Actor-Network-Theory. Taking an econarratological approach, it aims to highlight the interconnectedness between nature and culture, which shapes the narrative networks. The paper asks how the selected Irish fairy tales portray the concepts of nature and culture and in how far they document Indigenous practices of learning-with and becoming-with the more-than-human world. To answer these questions, the paper first surveys the representation of animals and nature in Irish fairy tales and examines them in light of interdisciplinary approaches to the concepts of human, animal, nature and culture. It moreover focuses on the importance of oral storytelling in the evolution of Irish fairy tales and the preservation and transmission of Indigenous knowledge. It argues that oral storytelling is a means of working against the simplification and categorisation of the nature-culture relationship by incorporating myriad experiences and democratising the discourse on the construction of the nature-culture dualism. The theme of knowledge acquisition through multispecies interactions and entanglement present in the selected fairy tales is emphasised and related to the idea of interspecies co-evolution. Overall, this research aims to contribute to a deeper appreciation of the cultural significance of Irish fairy tales, shedding light on their enduring relevance in contemporary discourse on sustainability, environmental ethics and the preservation of Indigenous knowledge.

**Síle Ní Mhurchú, University College Cork, Ireland:**

### **"Animals in the Fionn Cycle of Irish Mythology"**

The Fionn Cycle, a body of texts, lore and traditions dating from the seventh century to modern times, is a rich source for depictions of animals. The central character of the Cycle, Fionn mac Cumhaill and his warriors known as the Fianna, are characterised, often with the help of animal imagery, as thriving outside of human society. Animal-human and human-animal transformations are common in the world of the Fianna and the landscape they inhabit is defined by the presences of specific wild animals, one well-known example being the famous Blackbird of Derrycairn. The Fianna are also hunters and boast of a large collection of hunting dogs with whom they have deep emotional ties; Fionn exults in the sound of their barking as they chase deer and is delighted to see blood flowing at the end of a day's hunting. There is thus a great deal of variation in the ways in which the Fianna interact with animals.

In this paper, I will examine a selection of Fionn tales and Fionn lays which feature encounters between the Fianna and animals both domesticated and undomesticated in an effort to find out what the Fionn cycle might have to tell us about relationships between humans and animals, and how ideas about wildness and captivity are conveyed and explored. I will also consider how the imagined animals of the Fionn Cycle have been received by different types of audiences over time, responding to the many profound societal shifts that have occurred in Ireland over the centuries and especially how they might speak to us today in an Ireland where so many real-world animals are threatened by ecological devastation.

**Klára Witzany Hutková, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic:**

### **"Cats and Swans: The Symbolism of Animals in Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*... and in the Irish Folklore Tradition"**

This paper will investigate the symbolism behind Marina Carr's use of the swan and cat motifs in her play *By the Bog of Cats*... (1998), with special focus on the Irish folklore tradition. A transposition of

Euripides' tragedy *Medea* (431 BC), Carr's highly intertextual version is set in rural Irish midlands of the 1990s. It contains a plethora of references to canonical world literature, Greek and Irish myth, as well as thematising the abject status of Irish Travellers. Drawing on the collected folklore material stored at the National Folklore Collection (located at University College Dublin), this paper contextualises the symbolism of the two animals in the play.

Carr's *Medea*, the 'barbarian' sorceress of the Classical tradition, becomes Hester Swane, a local woman with Traveller heritage. She opens the play by dragging a dead black swan across the stage, her life supposedly tied with that of the swan. The animal is symbolically embedded in the narrative, as well inhabiting the local landscape more generally. While the presence of swans often evokes the Children of the Lir legend, many versions of the *mélusine* legend, thematically closer to the *Medea* myth, also feature this animal. Carr's version of the blind seer Tiresias, a grotesque cat-like human figure called Catwoman, is in turn associated with cats, and thus tied very closely to the central element of the landscape, the Bog of Cats. Cats appear in the Irish folklore tradition as liminal animals, to the extent that they belong both inside and outside of the house. The symbolism of both animals, especially in relation to the two female characters, will be discussed in this paper along with the tradition of the *cailleach* figure. The paper will thus investigate the cultural legacy attached to these animals, as well as the implications for interpreting Carr's play.

## Panel 6: Animalizing the Irish

**Dieter Fuchs, University of Vienna, Austria:**

### “The Animalised Irish and the Early Modern Discourse of the Wetnurse”

This paper focuses on the prehistory of nineteenth century WASP misrepresentations of the Irish as beast-like beings. It will show that, among other aspects, animalistic anti-Irish othering procedures may be traced back to sixteenth century misrepresentations of Hibernian wetnurses as animalised creatures, whose 'brutish' disposition corrupts the 'humanity' of the English aristocratic babies they are entrusted with.

In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1595/6), Edmund Spenser states that, whereas the milk produced by Irish wetnurses fosters the unruly passions of the infants' bodies in an 'effeminizing' manner, their 'uncivilized' Gaelic idiom corrupts their mental capacities. In this context, three aspects of humanist phallogocentrism have to be taken into account: first, the early modern one-sex model-induced belief that the fully-fledged masculine man created in the Biblical father deity's image represents the norm of being 'human'; second, the belief that it is the ability to speak a 'civilized' language comparable to the Jahwitic father deity's tongue speaking the world into being, which distinguishes humans from other creatures; third, the claim that masculinity attributed to mental capacity and the divine power of the word (*logos*) is constantly challenged by the effeminate principle of the body's unruly passions.

Spenser's anxiety that the English children's human disposition is challenged by their Irish wetnurses is foreshadowed in a sonnet written three years after the beginning of the Tudor Conquest: the Earl of Surrey's "From Tuscan Came My Lady's Worthy Race" (c.1537), which features the Tuscan-English adolescent Geraldine raised by an Irish wetnurse. Although the cultural topography of England and Tuscany is mentioned in detail, Ireland vaguely referred to as "[t]he western isle" rather than by its name escapes cultural representation. Born in a place of nature rather than culture, the (non-)description of Geraldine's unnamed and silenced wetnurse is reduced to the bodily if not to say animal function of the lactating breasts she presents to the English girl as a feeder: "[f]oster'd she was with milk of Irish breast." This diet imbues the girl's body with the animal passions of the "lively heat" of "[t]he western isle" rather than the "ghostly<sup>1</sup> food" for thought available in England: God's pentecostal 'gift of tongues', or *logos*. As Geraldine's human disposition is challenged in this way, the de-humanizing influence of her Irish foster-mother has to be compensated by the 'civilized' counter-world of the English Court of Henry VIII - the phallogocentric sphere of humanist culture, where the divine power of the word - which was in the beginning and spoke the world into being - is articulated by way of a 'civilized' language reflected in the poetic genre of the sonnet.

**Teresa Dunne, University of Galway, Ireland:**

### “Masculine Animality in Liam O’Flaherty and Pádraic Ó Conaire's Fiction”

Aggressive masculinity is often associated with animalistic qualities, “an idea of *maleness* with which the Irish were also often associated: brutishness, violence, savagery.” (McDonald 73) This gendered animality was part of a racialising discourse that saw the Irish as an inferior race of ‘white apes’. Depictions of animal-like qualities in the male characters of Liam O’Flaherty’s fiction are therefore described as “playing into the hands of those who held stereotypical images of the Irish such as appeared in *Punch*.” (Starr 228) Conversely his animal short stories are often considered the pinnacle of his literary talents providing sensitive portrayals of the non-human animal experience.

Animals were also at the centre of many of Pádraic Ó Conaire’s short stories, including the beloved ‘M’Asal Beag Dubh’ (My Little Black Ass) which recounts the tale of an anthropomorphised donkey. While characters such as Micil Ó Maoláin a disabled man working as a sideshow performer, in Ó Conaire’s novel *Deoraíocht*, are framed as bestial by those around them. Instead of facilitating fear and alienation in the reader, access to Micil’s internal world serves to elicit empathy for his plight in much the same way that O’Flaherty and Ó Conaire’s animal stories give the reader access to the pain and suffering of non-human animals.

Although constructions of Irishness and more specifically Irishmen as animal-like was intended to remove their agency and police what was considered their excessive (feminine) emotions, Ó Conaire and O'Flaherty, use animalistic framings to extend compassion towards men whose agency has been taken away from them. Just as these authors explore the subjectivity of non-human animals in their work, they also reclaim Irishmen's agency as postcolonial subjects, and indeed human-animals, with natural responses to brutalising experiences.

## Bios

**Jochen Achilles** is an Emeritus Professor of American Studies at the University of Würzburg and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Mainz. His book publications include studies on Sean O'Casey and Sheridan Le Fanu. He is the coeditor of several essay collections, among them two studies focusing on the concept of liminality: *Liminale Anthropologien* (2012) and *Liminality and the Short Story: Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Writing* (2015). His numerous articles reflect his research interests, which include liminal cultural identities, the American short story, African American and Irish drama.

**Ina Bergmann** is an Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Würzburg, Germany. She is a co-founder of Irish Studies Würzburg (ISWÜ). She has held fellowships with the Rothermere American Institute (RAI) at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute (TLRH) at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens at San Marino, CA, USA. She is the author of two monographs, *And Then the Child Becomes a Woman: Weibliche Initiation in der amerikanischen Kurzgeschichte 1865-1970* (Winter 2003) and *The Nineteenth Century Revis(it)ed: The New Historical Fiction* (Routledge 2021), the (co-)editor of nine volumes of essays and special issues of journals, among them *Liminality and the Short Story: Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Writing* (Routledge 2015), *Cultures of Solitude: Loneliness – Limitation – Liberation* (Lang 2017), *Intermediality, Life Writing, and American Studies: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (de Gruyter 2018), and *History in Stories: The Irish Past and the Challenges of the Present* (Lang forthcoming) as well as a frequent contributor to peer-reviewed journals and international book projects.

**Jessica Bundschuh** is a Lecturer in English Literatures & Cultures at the University of Stuttgart. Her publications have appeared in *Review of Irish Studies in Europe*, *Études irlandaises*, *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment*, *Poetics Today*, *The Paris Review*, *EFACIS: Interfaces and Dialogue and Literary Matters*, with a chapter on Irish poetry in performance in a 2023 volume on *Poetic Forms*. She has a PhD in English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Houston and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Maryland. Her current research project is on the Irish prose poem.

**Moya Cannon** is an Irish poet. She has published six collections of poetry. Her *Collected Poems* (Carcanet Press, Manchester) was published in 2021 and a new collection, *'Bunting's Honey'*, is forthcoming from Carcanet Press in 2025. She has been a recipient of the Brendan Behan Award and the O'Shaughnessy Award and was Heimbold Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Villanova. She is a member of Aosdána, the state-supported affiliation of Irish artists. In her poems, history, archaeology, pre-historic art, geology and music figure as gateways to a deeper understanding of our mysterious relationship with the natural world and with our past. *Ein Privates Land*, a bilingual selection of poems with German translations by Eva Bourke and Eric Giebel, was published by Offends Feld Press in 2017. Bilingual selections of her poems have also been translated into Spanish and Portuguese. She was born and grew up in Co. Donegal, Ireland, studied history and politics at University College, Dublin, and International Relations at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. She spent most of her adult life in Galway and now lives in Dublin.

**Kate Costello-Sullivan** is a Professor of Modern Irish literature and the former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY. In addition to a number of articles and book chapters, she is the author of the monographs *Mother/Country: Politics of the Personal in the Fiction of Colm Tóibín* (2012) and *Trauma and Recovery in the Twenty-first-Century Irish Novel* (2018), as well as editor of two critical editions, J. Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (2013) and Norah Hoult's *Poor Women!* (2016). Kate has served as President of the American Conference for Irish Studies, North

American Rep for IASIL, and has served since summer 2018 as the (first female) Series Editor of the Syracuse University Press's Irish line. Her current research focuses on representations of the nurturing parental body in Irish literature, and she has two book-length, co-edited collections forthcoming.

**Laurent Daniel** is a lecturer in English with the department of Applied languages at the University of Southern Brittany, Lorient, France. He is the current Dean of the faculty of Arts. His main research interest is in the British Isles and sports. He has edited *L'art et le sport* (Atlantica, 2009) and published *Des lévriers et des hommes : de la Grande-Bretagne à l'Irlande* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013), a book on greyhound coursing from 16th-century England to 21st-century Ireland. He has also published quite a few papers on the GAA.

**Maureen DeLeo** is a final year PhD student in the School of English at the University of Galway. Her research examines the use of female national allegories in Patrick Pearse's literary canon. In March she is co-organising a session of Fráma Eile, an in-person and online bilingual seminar series hosted by the Centre for Irish Studies at Galway, with Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha on Pearse's nature poetry. She has previously published on Yeats' use of the tarot in 'The Wild Swans at Coole' and has a forthcoming article in Shirley Jackson Studies. She holds a diploma in Irish with honours and is currently studying for a B2 qualification (An Diplóma sa Ghaeilge B2).

**Teresa Dunne** is a PhD candidate at the University of Galway, Centre for Irish Studies. Interested in issues of gender, national identity and the bilingual study of Irish literature, the working title for their thesis is "Dead Men Talking: Masculinities and Literary Representations of Death in Post-independence Ireland." Her doctoral research is funded by the Irish Research Council and is supervised by Ant Ollamh Louis De Paor.

**Maria Eisenmann** is Professor of EFL Teaching at the University of Würzburg, Germany. She is a co-founder of Irish Studies Würzburg (ISWÜ). Her research interests lie in the fields of Irish Studies, global education, (digital) media literacy as well as teaching literature including individual differences. She has published widely in the fields of critical environmental literacies as well as digital and literary literacy in the EFL classroom.

**Eóin Flannery** is Associate Professor of English Literature in the Department of English Language and Literature at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. He was the Peter O'Brien Visiting Scholar in Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia University, Montreal in 2022. He has published over 60 scholarly articles and book chapters, and he is the author of 5 books: *Form, Affect and Debt in post-Celtic Tiger Fiction* (2022); *Ireland and Ecocriticism: Literature, History, and Environmental Justice* (2016); *Colum McCann and the Aesthetics of Redemption* (2011); *Ireland and Postcolonial Studies: Theory, Discourse, Utopia* (2009); and *Versions of Ireland: Empire, Modernity and Resistance in Irish Culture* (2006). He has edited special themed issues of journals such as the *Journal of Ecocriticism*, *Postcolonial Text* and *Irish Studies Review*. His current research projects include a study of the career and work of Eugene McCabe, a book entitled, *Sounding the Contemporary in Irish Poetry*, and, with Eugene O'Brien, a co-edited volume of *Études Irlandaises* on contemporary Irish poetics.

**Dieter Fuchs** is Associate Professor for Literatures in English and Cultural Studies at the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Vienna. He received his doctorate from LMU Munich, with a PhD thesis on James Joyce and Menippean Satire supervised by Hans Walter Gabler. His second book on *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy* appeared in 2022. Dieter is Director of the Vienna Centre for Irish Studies founded by Werner Huber and head of the Vienna Irish Studies and Cultural Theory Summer School. In addition to his Vienna employment, he also works as a regular visiting professor at the University of Ljubljana where he teaches block seminars and functions as external PhD committee member. He is also part of the advisory board of *Acta Neophilologica*.

Dr **Selina Guinness** (IADT, Dun Laoghaire) is Lecturer in English (Irish Writing) at IADT, Dun Laoghaire. *The Crocodile by the Door*, a memoir about farming sheep in the Dublin Mountains, was shortlisted for the UK Costa Book Awards and the Bord Gais Energy Irish Book Awards in 2012. She is the editor of *The New Irish Poets* (2004), and with Jared Curtis, co-edited *The Resurrection: Manuscript Materials by W.B. Yeats* for The Cornell Yeats series (Cornell University Press, 2011). Her current research interests are focused on contemporary narrative practice at the interface between auto-fiction and the visual arts, with a particular emphasis on materiality, landscape and agricultural practice.

**Anne-Sophie Hornung** is a potential PhD candidate at the department for American Studies at the University of Würzburg, Germany. After her B.A. (English and American Studies/Music Pedagogy), she received her M.A. in English-Speaking Cultures and Music Pedagogy in 2023. She's currently researching for a PhD project in the field of American Musical Theatre, likely focusing on contributions of the Irish diaspora to the formation of the genre in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to explore the social and cultural negotiation of identities both on- and offstage.

**Christian Huck** is professor of English and American Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Kiel, Germany. His research interests lie in the fields of (Irish) Cultural Studies, Popular Culture and Digital Media. Publications include *Das Paradox der Mytho-poetik: Dichtung und Gemeinschaft in der irischen Lyrik – Yeats, Heaney, Boland* (2003); *Fashioning Society, or, The Mode of Modernity: Observing Fashion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2010); *Wie die Populärkultur nach Deutschland kam. Geschichten aus dem 20. Jahrhundert* (2018); *Digitalschatten. Das Netz und die Dinge* (2020). He has recently created a multimedia online introduction to the study of culture: [www.cultural-studies.org](http://www.cultural-studies.org).

**Kathryn Kirkpatrick** is Professor of English at Appalachian State University where she teaches environmental literature, animal studies, and Irish studies from an ecofeminist perspective and where she co-directs the animal studies minor, a multidisciplinary program she helped to found. Kirkpatrick has published essays on class trauma, eco-feminist poetics, and animal studies, focusing particularly on the work of Dublin poet Paula Meehan, and her monograph on Meehan's work, *Enraptured Space*, is forthcoming from West Virginia University Press. She is co-editor of *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture* (2015), which includes her essay on the representation of foxes in Somerville and Ross's Irish PM stories. As well as a scholar and editor, Kirkpatrick is the author of seven collections of poetry, including three recipients of the NC Poetry Society's Brockman-Campbell award, *The Body's Horizon* (1996), *Our Held Animal Breath* (2012), and *Her Small Hands Were Not Beautiful* (2014). *The Fisher Queen: New & Selected Poems* (Salmon, 2019) received the NC Literary and Historical Society's Roanoke Chowan Poetry Prize.

Dr **Zosia Kuczyńska** (she/her) is an independent researcher specialising in contemporary Irish writing. Her postdoctoral research on the literary archives of Brian Friel was carried out at University College Dublin and was funded by the IRC. Her monograph, *Brian Friel's Models of Influence* (2023) is published with Palgrave Macmillan. Her work has appeared in *Irish University Review*. She is a contributor to the *Routledge Companion to Drag* (2024). She is part of the New Voices in Irish and Scottish Studies initiative at the University of Aberdeen. She is the creator and curator of the digital exhibition *Don't Anticipate the Ending* at the Museum of Literature Ireland, which showcases her collaborative research on the Brian Friel Papers with dancer-choreographer Jessie Keenan and performance-maker Robbie Blake. She is the author of two poetry pamphlets with the Emma Press and is a featured poet in *Queering the Green: Post-2000 Queer Irish Poetry* (2021).

**Camille Lavoix** is a PhD candidate in Environmental Humanities, her project is entitled "Re-imagining the West Sudanian Savanna" and seeks to "unsafari the savanna" through anglophone and francophone literature. Her research is at the intersection between African literatures and ecocriticism. She teaches at the English department (Literature and Cultural Studies) of the University

of Würzburg. Camille was previously a journalist and contributed to various media such as Le Monde, El Pais, Arte, and the BBC. She is the author of several books in French (stories, poems, non-fiction) about more-than-humans ranging from baobabs to ants, for children and adults.

**Julianna Leibold** is currently doing her master's degree in Environmental Policy at the SciencesPo in Paris. Her presented paper is the thesis she submitted to acquire her bachelor's degree in Language, Literature and Culture, with the subjects English, Sociology and Politics, from the Justus-Liebig-University in Gießen. It is inspired by her semester abroad in Ireland, where she studied at the University College Cork. Her research was furthermore motivated by her work as a student assistant at the interdisciplinary research institute ICAR3R, where she worked for two years during her studies. She mainly assisted the literary research for and the editing, translation, and submission of articles on the human-animal-nature relationship. In addition, she co-translated and supported the editing of Katharina Ameli's monography "Multispecies Ethnography: Methodology of a Holistic Research Approach of Humans, Animals, Nature, and Culture".

**Franca Leitner** is a PhD candidate in Irish Studies at the University of Mannheim. She graduated from the University of Freiburg with an M.A. in British and North American Cultural Studies in 2022. Her PhD dissertation will focus on the representations of precarity and homelessness in contemporary Irish fiction of the post-Celtic Tiger period.

**Síle Ní Mhurchú** is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Modern Irish, University College Cork. Her research interests include the Fionn Cycle, the study of Irish manuscripts and Irish love poetry (na dánta grá). She is particularly interested in the Fionn lays, narrative poems about Fionn mac Cumhaill and the Fianna, and has published a number of studies on this topic. She is co-editor of *The Gaelic Finn Tradition II*, a collection of essays on the Fionn Cycle, published in 2022 by Four Courts Press, and is currently working on a monograph on the poetry of the Fionn Cycle.

**Jennifer Meier** is a research assistant and lecturer at Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg. Her research is focused on inter- and transcultural learning, cultural studies, and historical didactics in the EFL classroom, with a particular emphasis on textbook research. She graduated with state exams in English, Spanish and Philosophy, and is currently working on her doctoral thesis titled "Typically British? A diachronic-imagological analysis of British national stereotypes in English textbooks in the 20th and 21st century." Her research aims to examine the evolution of national stereotypes over the past two centuries and their use in modern English teaching, with the goal of enhancing cultural learning and making it more global.

**Maryam Najafibabanazar** is a graduate of English Language and Literature, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Right now, she is an Assistant Professor of English and American Literature in Halic University, Istanbul. Her MA and PhD theses were on James Joyce and Ulysses. Her PhD thesis is a comparative study of *Ulysses* and *The Blind Owl* (A modernist Persian novel by Sadeq Hedayat, a famous Iranian writer).

**Maureen O'Connor** is Senior Lecturer in the Department of English in University College Cork and the Travelling Visiting Professor in Irish Studies 2023/24 at the University of Würzburg. She is the author of *The Female and the Species: The Animal in Irish Women's Writing* (2010). She has co-edited a number of field-defining volumes, including, with Derek Gladwin, a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 'Irish Studies and the Environmental Humanities' (2018); with Kathryn Laing and Sinéad Mooney, of *Edna O'Brien: New Critical Perspectives* (2006); with Lisa Colletta, of *Wild Colonial Girl: Essays on Edna O'Brien* (2006); and, with Tadhg Foley, of *Ireland and India: Colonies, Culture, and Empire* (2006). Her latest book is *Edna O'Brien and the Art of Fiction*, published by Bucknell



University Press in 2021. She is currently writing a volume for inclusion in the Cork University Press series, 'Síreach: Longings for Another Ireland', on the topic of Animals.

**Lena Pfeifer** is a PhD candidate at the department for American Studies and the Graduate School of the Humanities at the University of Würzburg. She holds an MA in English literature and culture with a minor in philosophy from Heidelberg University, Germany. She also studied at University College Cork, Ireland, and was a visiting researcher at King's College, Cambridge, UK, and the Oslo School of Environmental Humanities, Norway. Lena's research interests are rooted in the Environmental Humanities and include fictional and non-fictional environmental writing of the 20th and 21st centuries, narratives of the Anthropocene, political theory, environmental ethics, as well as Irish literature from the 19th century to the present.

**Kirsten Sandrock** teaches at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, where she holds the Chair of English Literature and Cultural Studies. Her work focuses mostly on the early modern period, including Shakespeare and early modern travel literature, as well as on contemporary Anglophone literature and culture, including colonial and postcolonial studies. She is Vice-President of the German Shakespeare Society and author of *Scottish Colonial Literature: Writing the Atlantic, 1603-1707* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021). She is currently collaborating with Dunja Mohr on the publication of the book *The Artpolitical: Margaret Atwood's Aesthetics*, which will be published by Routledge in 2024.

Dr **Flicka Small** has lectured in Irish Literature at the School of English, UCC; Food and Creative Practice on the Post Graduate Diploma of Irish Food Culture at ACE, University College Cork; and Popular Culture at the Dublin International School of Business. Her research interests centre on the significance of food and commodity culture in contemporary Irish literature, particularly in the works of James Joyce. In 2022 Flicka was co-curator of the *Odysseys* exhibition at the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, marking the centenary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. She is also producer of the short documentary *Framed in Cork* (2020). Flicka has also published chapters in the *Atlas of the Iveragh Peninsular* and the *Reimagining Ireland* series. Flicka is Director of the inaugural Cork Bloomsday 2023 held at Nano Nagle Place, Cork.

**Martín Veiga** is a senior lecturer in Hispanic Studies at University College Cork and the director of the Irish Centre for Galician Studies. He is the co-editor of *Galicia 21. Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies*, one of the convenors of the research cluster 'Translation and Creative Practice' (Centre for Advanced Studies in Languages and Cultures, UCC), and a member of the research project 'Post-Human Intersections in Irish and Galician Literatures' (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela). His main research areas are contemporary Galician and Irish poetry, literary translation, ecocriticism, and travel writing and mobility narratives in the Iberian context. He has published extensively on the life and work of Galician poet Antón Avilés de Taramancos. His books include the monograph *Escribir na multitude: A obra literaria de Antón Avilés de Taramancos* (2014), the co-edited volumes *A Different Eden: Ecopoetry from Ireland and Galicia* (2021) and *Here and Beyond: Narratives of Travel and Mobility in Iberian Culture* (2022), and a special issue of the journal *Galicia 21* entitled 'Text, Image, Archive: Galician Literature and the Visual Arts' (2022). He has also published six award-winning poetry collections in Galician, the bilingual anthology *Alfaías na lama: poesía selecta 1990-2020 / Jewels in the Mud: Selected Poems 1990-2020* (2020), and translations of works by John Berger, Anne Michaels and T. S. Eliot, among others. In 2017, Veiga received the Premio Pedrón de Honra for his trajectory in the international promotion of Galician culture.

**Klára Witzany Hutková** is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Irish Studies (Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures) at Charles University in Prague. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on the theatre of Marina Carr and the cultural heritage of ancient Greece and is supported by funding from

the Charles University Grant Agency (GA UK). Other research interests include women prose writers and Irish folklore. Klára received a Master's degree in Irish studies from Charles University in 2021 and an undergraduate degree in Ancient history from the University of Edinburgh in 2015. She was a visiting student at University College Dublin (2021–22), Trinity College Dublin (2020–21), and Université de Bourgogne (2013–14). She has presented at international conferences and is a member of the editorial board of the student journal *The Protagonist* and editorial assistant of the journal *Litteraria Pragensia*.

**Dilâra Yilmaz** is a doctoral researcher and assistant lecturer at the Chair of English Literature at Kiel University. After obtaining a M.Ed. in German Studies, English and North American Studies, and History, she completed a subsequent Master of Arts in English and American Literatures, Cultures, and Media. Her research interests include contemporary Irish literature, Ireland's creative economy, and medial representations of neurodivergence, boredom, and disaffect. She is currently working on her PhD "Conditions of Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction Writing" for which she meets authors and other creators in Ireland's literary industry. She teaches Irish and British literary and cultural studies to undergraduates.