

IASIL JAPAN Newsletter

2011 No. 3

International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

August 2011

1. Report for 2011 IASIL Conference at Leuven

2011 IASIL Conference was held from 19 July to 22 July in Leuven, Belgium. The city Leuven is known as the university town with rich culture, history, and good foods in the country. The venue, Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe, testifies Belgium's strong Catholic connections with Ireland, which goes back to the mid-sixteenth century.

The conference theme was "Conflict and Resolution in Irish Literatures" and it started with a keynote lecture by Margaret Harper from University of Limerick on Yeats's *A Vision*, followed by 132 papers and 4 more keynote lectures. Titles and topics ranged over wide varieties: Land War Fiction, Beckett's Stylization of Conflicts, Contemporary Irish Poetry, Aesthetics of Redemption, Early Twentieth Century Theatre, Women Writers, Social Realism in Contemporary Irish Film, Translation of Conflict, Contemporary Northern Irish Drama, Memory and Violence, Crime Fiction, Joycean Solutions to Conflict, Gender and Conflicted Identities and more. Noticeably, members of IASIL Japan actively contributed: Kiminori Fukaya, Eishiro Ito, Tetsuko Nakamura, Soichiro Onose, Fuyuji Tanigawa, Naoko Toraiwa, Yuri Yoshino, and Kazuhiro Doki.

Actually, because of the human as well as natural disasters in Tohoku area, IASIL members from all over the world had been very much concerned about the situation of Japanese members and were greatly delighted that not a few members could attend the conference. At the AGM on the last day, Secretary of IASIL Japan read a letter of gratitude from President Masami Nakao, who could not attend the conference, and was greatly appreciated. In the following banquet, he was specially awarded in the status of representing IASIL Japan with books about Irish Franciscans and Leuven because, as Dr. Hedwig Schwall, Chief Organizer of the conference, said, "Japanese people are so resilient in spite of the terrible disaster." The exchange became an impressive reminder of the strong ties among IASIL members. The full text of the President's letter is quoted below:

2. Letter of IASIL JAPAN President

12 July 2011

Dear IASIL members,

On behalf of all the members of IASIL JAPAN, I would like to convey to you my sincere gratitude for the friendship and sympathy the members and friends of IASIL showed through the numerous kind messages sent to us after the unprecedented disaster that took place on March 11. In the confusion after the event, which seemed to change the lives of so many of us, how encouraging it was to be assured of these strong human ties, regardless of physical distance.

We were soon glad to find that all IASIL JAPAN members in the region were safe, but there are a number of us with friends and relatives who lost their lives or homes. One member reports that she was not affected personally, but that as her institution became a refuge for those who lost their residences, she is currently spending most of her time helping them out with their daily lives.

After four months, the recovery efforts are proceeding, and at the same time, we are beginning to realize the wide connotations of the tragedy and of its causes, both natural and human. As people studying literature and history, we cannot but question our own standpoints in the whole picture. IASIL JAPAN, through its primary function of pursuing in the studies of Irish writing, will also become a forum for such exploration.

I regret not being able to come to the beautiful city of Leuven to join you and thank you in person, but we are still finishing the last part of the semester in my institution. However, I am confident that the conference will again be a lively and fruitful one, as is always the case with IASIL, and I hope very much to see you next year in Montreal.

With kindest regards,

Masami Nakao,
President,
IASIL JAPAN

3. Reports from Members

Sharing “Conflict and Resolution” in a Friendly Atmosphere at the IASIL Conference in Leuven Tetsuko Nakamura (Nippon Medical School)

The 35th IASIL Conference began on July 18 in the cozy atmosphere afforded by one of the modern auditoria (once a seventeenth-century chapel) at the Leuven Centre for Irish Studies, located around the corner from Leuven’s *Oude Markt*. Following the opening ceremony, during which Ambassadors Tom Hanney of Ireland and Jonathan Brenton of Britain humourously referred to the conflicts and resolutions between their two countries, a series of rich and stimulating academic exchanges on this theme occupied the next four days.

As amply demonstrated in the last keynote lecture, “The Literatures of Belfast”, delivered by Eamonn Hughes, the theme of “Conflict and Resolution” has long permeated every historical and cultural aspect of Ireland and is certainly a key feature of Irish literature. Hughes traced the literary representations of conflict and resolution between Catholics and Protestants back about two hundred years, allowing us to grasp how this essential feature of Irish literature has been passed down from one generation of Irish writers to the next. Other studies presented at the conference showed that the anxiety, suspicion, grudges and trauma experienced in times of change and instability have also been constant and powerful topoi in Irish literature.

Because of the smaller number of papers presented (about 130, or 100 or so fewer than at last year’s Maynooth Conference), the number of concurrent sessions was held to four or five. This meant that participants with similar interests were able to gather together repeatedly, allowing for coherent discussions in an intimate atmosphere. IASIL Conferences are characterised by friendship and understanding, which encourages researchers to give presentations on work in progress so that they can receive suggestions for further research, as was certainly the case with some of this year’s Japanese participants. The 2012 Montreal Conference will provide us with an opportunity to share our thoughts with far more North American scholars as well as with those from other parts of the world.

A Thought on Keynote Lectures

Fuyuji Tanigawa (Konan Women's University)

I attended the IASIL International Conference held in Leuven, Belgium from 18 to 22, July, 2011. The host institute was the six-hundred-year-old Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, better known as the Irish College, Louvain. It is the very place where the *Annals of the Four Masters*, a great classic in the Irish language, was compiled.

The conference program was “Conflict and Resolution in Irish Literatures”, and the titles of keynote lectures are: “Gaelic Exiles in Louvain in the Early 17th Century”, “Symbols and Text: Flags and Territory in Northern Ireland”, “The Historic Roots of Communal Conflict in Ireland and What Might Be Done to Address Them”, and “The Literatures of Belfast”. These are full of information and suggestions, showing Gaelic poets' handwriting, real flags of paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, murals in Belfast, and Belfast in writing. The first of these lectures was Margaret Harper's “The Clock Has Run Down and Must Be Wound Up Again: Yeats's Violent *Vision*”. She started her lecture with the clear proposition “Yeats was a theorist”, and then gave evidences in the comparison between the *Vision* 1925 version and the 1937 version. This procedure seemed highly deductive, extraordinary for an archaic literary student like me, and marvelously impressive.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT :

If you find “UU” under your name on the envelope, it means that your 2009 & 2010 membership fees have not been paid. The names of those who have not paid membership fees for three years will be automatically deleted from our list, and then we stop sending newsletters to them. To keep your “good-standing” status is quite easy: please pay 2009, 2010, and 2011 membership fees!

Our information of bank account is following.

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SWIFT CODE: BOTKJPJT

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Beneficiary's Account No.: 3788295

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