

IASIL Japan Newsletter

2014 No. 2

The Japan Branch of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

September 2014

1. IASIL Japan Conference 2014, Waseda University

As has been announced, IASIL Japan Conference 2014 will meet on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October at Waseda University. Please find enclosed the programme, the synopses, as well as the reply postcard, which we ask you to fill in and return to us. The poster of the conference designed by a member is available at the IASIL Japan website. Students who are non-members are eligible for free attendance to the conference by showing their ID and registering their name at the reception.

The reply postcard must reach the office no later than 27 September 2014.

2. Waseda University Symposium

The IASIL Japan Conference 2014 is organized in coordination with Waseda University, where the symposium "The Age of Centenaries: a Century of Irish History and Literature" will be held on Friday 10 October. All members are welcome.

Venue: 4th floor, Building 11, Waseda Campus

Time: 14:50 - 17:30

Chair: Kazuo Oikawa

Panelists: Shigeo Shimizu, Fintan O'Toole, Anne Fogarty, Hiroko Mikami

3. Payment of annual membership fees

If you have not already paid your membership fees for 2014, please do so by the end of September, as the journals will be distributed to paid-up members at the conference. This of course applies to non-paid fees for past years as well. Payment details are available at the IASIL Japan website.

4. Report of IASIL 2014, University of Lille, France

The 2014 IASIL Conference took place in Lille, at the Université Sciences Humaine et Sociales – Lille 3 from 14-18 July. The theme of the conference, 'Embodying/disembodying Ireland', was taken in varied directions by speakers over the packed five day series of panels and plenaries. Clóna Ní Ríordáin's opening Plenary Lecture on Monday 14 July concerned 'How

anthologies of Irish poetry constitute and embody the nation', and this was followed on Tuesday 15 July with two intense morning sessions, with panels on 'Early Modern Ireland', 'Staging Revolution', and 'Visual Arts and Oral Testimony', and a roundtable discussion on 'The Body in Pain in Irish Culture', featuring Fionnula Dillane, Margaret Kelleher and Emilie Pine, who discussed 'the trans-historical aesthetics that inform representations of trauma and the body in pain in Irish culture across genres from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, and how these debates inform research-based teaching.' The second set of morning sessions covered 'Ireland & Modernism', 'Contemporary Theatre', 'Trauma & Traces', and the first panel devoted to the main thread running through the entire conference, 'Remembering WW1'. The location of this year's conference so near to some of the battlefields brought a special charge to proceedings throughout the week.

The theme of the body was prominent in the plenary lecture by Lisa Fitzpatrick, 'The Vulnerable Body on the Irish Stage', and in the afternoon sessions, which included a panel on 'Prison Narratives' chaired by guest speaker Declan Kiberd, and which had particular focus on imprisoned women (Louise Henaff) and on hunger striker, Bobby Sands, with the body examined as site of resistance (Stephen John Dilks; Fiona McCann). A very full day ended with well-received poetry readings by the special guests Paula Meehan and Theo Dorgan, who went on to provide a lively and engaged presence throughout the conference.

The morning sessions on Wednesday 16 July continued to probe the breadth and depth of the conference theme, with sessions devoted to James Clarence Mangan, 'Gender and the North', 'Intercultural Exchanges', and 'Irish-English Exchanges', featuring papers on Patrick McCabe, Paul Muldoon, Translation, Heinrich Böll's *Irish Journal*, Trollope, and Thackeray, among others. The day's session ended with a fascinating look at 'Old age, old gaze: shreds of sympathy for the ageing body in contemporary Irish literature' by Carle Bonafous-Murat. The afternoon was taken up with organised visits to the marvellous Piscine de Roubaix museum, the Palais des Beaux-Arts, and 'Vieux Lille', part of the splendid series of activities provided by the organisers throughout the conference.

The panels on Thursday 17 July were equally wide-ranging: 'The Theatricalities of Irish Cruelties', 'Gothic and Fantastic', and sessions devoted to Sebastian Barry, Joyce, Friel and Carr, and Yeats. Lucy McDiarmid's plenary lecture presented moving accounts of the experiences of women involved in the 1916 Rising, and examined how the physical anxieties and discomforts related in these accounts reflected the larger social world of women in early twentieth century Ireland. The afternoon panels featured the second devoted to 'Remembering

World War 1', and also the second panel of the conference devoted to Yeats, which was chaired by IASIL Japan member Andrew Fitzsimons. There were also panels on 'Contemporary Poetry', with a Japanese contributor, Tetsuya Suzuki, who looked in his paper at the work of Heaney and Longley, 'Modern Theatre' and the 'Contemporary Novel'. The playwright Colin Teevan ended the day's sessions with an hour-long talk in which he reflected on his relations with 'Irishness'. The evening's social event was a trip to Gare St. Sauveur to see a concert by the band Lame Squid who played a lively set of traditional Irish music.

The final day opened with panels on Sinéad Morrissey, featuring IASIL Japan member Naoko Toraiwa, Beckett, 'Masculinities', Famine Narratives, and 'Violence, Trauma and Troubles', which featured papers on Kevin Barry (Joanne O'Sullivan), Child Abuse (Niamh Campbell), and the Aftermath Project (Anne Goarzin). The late morning session saw panels devoted to 'Irish Drama Outside Ireland', including Peter Kuch's wonderful examination of *The Hibernian Father* and nineteenth century Irish Australia, and to 'Disappearing Bodies on the Stage', which was principally devoted to Beckett. Due to a change in the programme two panels had to be combined and so Ciaran O'Neill's splendid examination of 'Conflict in Poetry Beyond Ireland' which focused on Ciaran Carson's *Breaking News* and its treatment of the Crimean War, featured alongside Anne Cormican's fascinating work on 'Bodies at War' in William Orpen and Sean O'Casey, and Michael Pierse's paper on 'Class in Irish Writing of the First World War'. After the splendid open-air lunch, there was a magnificent, funny and moving re-rendering of *The Brother*, a one-act play based on the work of Flann O'Brien, adapted and performed by Gerry Smyth and David Llewellyn. The day and the conference itself came to an end with Declan Kiberd's lecture 'War Mysticism: Samuel Beckett, Simone Weil and C.S. Lewis', which covered a wide field with Professor Kiberd's typical sweep and verve.

The conference banquet was held in the small town of Lens, an hour's bus journey from Lille, and amid the wonderful food and drink there was time for poems and songs from, among others, Declan Kiberd, Matthew Campbell, Andrew Fitzsimons, Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos, and a show-stopping performance by Alexandra Poulain, one of the organisers of the whole event. After the conference many members went on the post-conference tour of the Somme and Paris.

Unfortunately, due to scheduling, only three representatives from Japan could attend this year's conference, but the IASIL Executive expressed the hope that the return to a later date for next year's event will mean many more members from Japan will be able to attend. IASIL 2015 will be held at the University of York 20-24 July 2015, when the theme will be 'Reconciliations' and the plenary speakers Maire Ni Mhaonaigh, James Chandler, Eve Patten, and Hugh

Haughton.

Andrew Fitzsimons
Gakushuin University

5. IASIL 2015, University of York, UK

IASIL will hold its annual conference at the University of York on Monday 20 to Friday 24 July 2015.



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