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IRISH STUDIES

Burns Visiting Scholar, Spring 2019 Semester



Professor Patrick Lonergan

Boston College is pleased to welcome Professor Patrick Lonergan as Visiting Scholar in Irish Studies for the spring 2019 semester. Patrick Lonergan is professor of drama and theatre studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and has written or edited 11 books on Irish drama. These include *Theatre and Globalization* (winner of the Theatre Book Prize in the United Kingdom in 2008), *The Theatre and Films of Martin McDonagh* (2012), and *Theatre & Social Media* (2015). A new history of Irish theatre since 1950 will be published in early 2019 by Bloomsbury. Professor Lonergan is currently working on a book about Shakespeare and the Modern Irish Theatre.

He is a director of the Galway International Arts Festival and an editorial associate of *Contemporary Theatre Review*. He sits on the editorial boards of *Irish University Review* and *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*. For Methuen Drama, he is editor of the Critical Companions series, which has published new books on such dramatists as Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Carol Churchill, David Henry Hwang, and Sarah Ruhl. The series has also published works on topics including disability theatre, prison theatre, and the British and American stage musical.

At NUI Galway, Professor Lonergan is academic leader of the digitization of the archives of the Abbey and Gate theatres, a project to create the world's largest multi-media digital theatre archive. He has lectured on Irish literature at many venues internationally, including recently in Princeton, Florence, Florianopolis (Brazil), Wroclaw, and Tokyo. In 2018, he was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy. While he is with us at Boston College, Patrick will teach a class on theatre and globalization.

*Visit our website
www.bc.edu/irish
for upcoming news, events,
and event details.*

40 Years

of Irish Studies at Boston College: the Dalsimer Lecture Celebrates Kevin O’Neill

Irish Studies was founded at Boston College by Adele Dalsimer and Kevin O’Neill in 1978. We marked this occasion during the course of our annual Dalsimer memorial lecture, which was especially dedicated to Kevin O’Neill, who is still a very active member of the Irish Studies faculty. Professor Mark Doyle of Middle Tennessee State University, a student of Kevin’s, gave us a wonderful lecture on Asian and African immigrants and visitors to Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was entitled, “Black and Brown amidst the Orange and Green: towards a multiracial history of Ireland.” It was a wonderful BC Irish Studies occasion, focusing on important scholarship, making it available to a large audience, and welcoming back those who have been part of our journey over the years. At the beginning of the evening, Vera Kreilkamp spoke about Kevin O’Neill. What follows is an edited extract of her remarks.

Kevin O’Neill came to Boston College in 1977 after his Ph.D. studies at Brown University. The following year, Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts hosted a major traveling exhibit of Celtic art, *Treasures of Early Irish Art*, first organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NY. Borrowing items from the National Museum of Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy, and Trinity College, the MFA exhibition featured the big stuff: acknowledged masterpieces of Ireland’s medieval “golden age” of visual art. Astonishingly, it included two volumes from the Book of Kells, the eighth-century Ardagh Chalice, and the Tara Brooch, pieces that will almost certainly



Kevin O’Neill



Adele Dalsimer

never travel from Ireland again in our lifetime. As a young Irish social historian, Kevin was asked to be on the MFA’s planning committee. During his second year at the University, as he and Adele Dalsimer began thinking about teaching Irish Studies courses together, they conceived of the idea of a BC night at the museum. The MFA event was enormously popular with faculty, administration, and alums, arguably setting the stage, Kevin suggests, for future institutional support of Irish Studies by the University’s administration and the city’s prosperous Irish American community. The exhibition seemed to have persuaded Boston’s upwardly mobile Irish Americans that their own cultural heritage was now fully respectable and was, in fact, finally being celebrated by Boston’s most elite arts institution.

I’m concentrating today on Kevin’s role in initiating, supporting, and sustaining an openness to multiple voices—and will end my remarks by circling back to his role in Irish visual arts, the subject with which I began. Interdisciplinarity, as Kevin O’Neill saw it, meant breaking down authoritarianism in the academy through the encouragement of diverse points of view and the querying of fixed disciplinary hierarchies. The new Irish Studies Program’s openness to many voices rapidly incorporated not just history and literature but also Irish language study, Irish music—and included a long collaboration with the McMullen Museum through (at this count) nine Irish visual arts exhibitions.

I came into the program peripherally in its early years when Adele and Kevin asked me to participate in teaching one of their fabled co-taught interdisciplinary courses. It was an astonishing experience. In these years, Kevin's commitment to hearing many perspectives had led him to invite controversial speakers to Boston College, some of whom generated protests warranting police presence. This tense atmosphere at packed campus events was new for me; coming to a lecture might well mean witnessing the explosion of differing points of views during question and answer sessions that drifted into political harangues. Social historian Kevin initiated invitations to Gusty Spence, the loyalist leader of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force, who had bragged of assassinating local Catholics. Other loyalists visited—David Irvine and Billy Hutchinson as well as the Unionist leader David Trimble. At one lecture I attended, angry NORAID protestors tried to drown out the voice of an Irish historian opposed to IRA tactics.

Encouraging many voices demands care and judicious oversight. Kevin's more than 20 years of co-administrating the program revealed such characteristics. But, if always careful and deliberate, he was never afraid to call the University out when an argument needed to be made. He successfully petitioned BC's then-president Father Monan to stop a BC alumnae group from awarding Margaret Thatcher the honorary Ignatian medal not long after the hunger strikes.

Kevin and Adele, co-founders of Irish Studies, began the process of encouraging many voices by teaching through sustained interdisciplinary debate in their classroom. This setting needed no police protection, but the drama of controversy became high—most certainly when W. B. Yeats or the contexts explaining the *Playboy* riots became Kevin's focus. Adele and I had emerged from undergraduate and graduate training dominated by New Critics largely excising political and historical contexts as irrelevant to the study of texts; Kevin's quiet questioning of such formalist readings was revealing—and sometimes infuriating. But we were learning too. Working with Kevin hastened changes in my relationship to literature and later to visual art—changes that mirrored those just beginning in these fields through the arrival of new historicism as well as gender and postcolonial theory.

I want to conclude by circling back to Kevin and visual art. In retrospect, I realize that hosting *Treasures of Early Irish Art* was an important but relatively safe way for Boston's most respectable art institution to highlight Ireland's cultural history. So I'll turn to another exhibition of Irish visual art, the eighth one by Boston College's McMullen Museum, mounted in 2012—a good 34 years after the founding of the Irish Studies Program and the MFA exhibition. This far riskier and arguably more innovative undertaking involved Kevin directly, not just tangentially. The first line of the catalogue of *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story*, by the museum's director Nancy Netzer, announced his shaping role:

The conception of this exhibition arose from an email message in 2007 when historian Kevin O'Neill sent Vera Kreilkamp his review of Claudia Kinmonth's *Irish Rural Interiors in Art*. The two began discussing how, through an exhibition at the McMullen Museum, they and their colleagues might build upon Kinmonth's discovery of many previously unknown paintings depicting Irish rural life in homes, schools, shops, and medical dispensaries.

The Inside Story, which Kevin convinced me to take on as co-curator, looked at a world intimately involved with his scholarly interest in Ireland's tenant farmers, cottiers, and landless laborers and their material culture—long dismissed as fit subjects for representation in the Irish fine arts establishment. My co-curator and I spent years tracking down objects to display, since so many had been absent or hidden away in nineteenth- and twentieth-century museum inventories. And it is this making visible a rural or “rustic” or “popular” material culture, ignored by an Ascendancy arts establishment, that characterizes so much of Kevin's truly innovative interdisciplinary work in art and history. His scholarship and teaching alert us to new ways of unpacking a nation's visual heritage by looking more closely at familiar images to understand how they have silenced or elided or misrepresented non-Ascendancy lives and by calling attention to previously ignored objects that amplify the voice of a hidden Ireland.

Boston College-Ireland

Professor Vera Kreilkamp receives an honorary doctorate from the National University of Ireland

On October 11, 2018, Vera Kreilkamp, from the Boston College Irish Studies Program, received the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, from the National University of Ireland at a ceremony in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin. We congratulate her on this well-deserved honor. What follows is an edited extract from the citation read on that occasion by Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama Margaret Kelleher of University College Dublin, also a BC alum.

Vera received her B.A. in English from Wellesley College, her M.A.T. in English from Harvard University, and her Ph.D. in English from City University of New York. Her PhD work resulted in a highly influential monograph, *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*, and, over her distinguished career, she has given us incisive scholarship on Ascendancy fiction, the relationship of fiction and empire, and individual Irish writers such as Somerville and Ross, Aidan Higgins, and Elizabeth Bowen.

She collaborated closely with the late Professor Adele Dalsimer and with Professor Kevin O'Neill in the development of Boston College's Irish Studies Program. In 1996, she co-curated with Professor Dalsimer the art exhibition *America's Eye: Irish Painting from the Collection of Brian P. Burns*, which was shown at Boston College, Yale University, Washington, DC, and Dublin. This proved to be the first of a series of landmark Irish-themed art exhibitions put together by Professor Kreilkamp with colleagues from the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College and accompanied by catalogues edited or co-edited by her. These works have been truly transformative in sharing knowledge and fostering appreciation of Irish visual culture and Irish material culture.

To name a couple of examples, the 1997 exhibition *Redressing Cathleen* was trail-blazing in the diversity and artistic excellence of the featured work by contemporary Irish women artists and also in the sophisticated perspectives on their work provided in



Vera Kreilkamp with Margaret Kelleher
— photograph by Susan Kennedy, Lensmen

the accompanying collection of essays. In 2012, *Rural Ireland: The Inside Story* involved multiple lenders and works of art and artifacts from two continents. Listing just some of the partners underlines the rich collaborations built by Professor Kreilkamp. These include the National Library of Ireland, the Crawford Art Gallery and University College Cork, the National Museum, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, the Naughton Gallery at Queen's University Belfast, and the National Folklore Collection at University College Dublin. This exhibition decisively challenged assumptions that nineteenth-century Irish art consisted mainly of landscapes or portraits of an elite population and its houses. Instead, it showed audiences that both local and visiting painters repeatedly chose to depict Irish country people, small tenants as well as strong farmers, in their domestic surroundings. It also made visible, and here I draw from Professor Kreilkamp's own words, the "aesthetic sensibility apparent in household arrangements of even the poorer rural interiors where occupants used cracked dishes, pot lids, and hanging fishing nets and clothing to adorn their small living spaces."

This was followed by another acclaimed exhibition, *Making It Irish* (2016), celebrating the Arts and Crafts Movement, curated by Professor Kreilkamp and Professor Nancy Netzer. The publications that accompanied these exhibitions are truly themselves enduring material artifacts, testimony to Professor Kreilkamp's unique interdisciplinary intelligence,

and they also serve as textbooks for pioneering cross-disciplinary courses which she has spearheaded at Boston College.

For many years, Professor Kreilkamp has served as co-editor of *Éire-Ireland*, the internationally acclaimed journal of the Irish American Cultural Institute, and she has made it a leading forum for Irish Studies globally. In this context, she has mentored very many scholars with characteristic generosity, and she has championed new fields of research within Irish cultural studies, literature, and the fine arts. Irish visitors to Boston and Cambridge have known the warm hospitality (intellectual and practical) that she extends to the wider community of Irish writers and scholars, and Irish studies as an international field of inquiry has benefited hugely from her work as innovator, visionary, and tireless organizer.

Boston College Irish Studies Series with Clemson University Press

Established in 2000, Clemson University Press, Clemson University, South Carolina, is a dynamic new publisher of scholarly monographs and edited collections. It has a strategic partnership with Liverpool University Press in the United Kingdom.

It has recently concluded an agreement with Boston College to publish a Boston College Irish Studies series. The Irish Studies faculty at Boston College constitute the editorial board for the series. The function of the board is to recommend works to Clemson, which will then take them through its own appraisal process to decide on publishing.

This interdisciplinary series will publish monographs and edited collections that reflect the research strengths traditionally associated with Irish Studies at Boston College. It will highlight the rare editions and manuscript collections of the Burns Library. It will also be open to a notion of Irish Studies that is capacious and open to comparative study with other cultures. We welcome inquiries from potential contributors to the series.

James H Murphy
Director of Irish Studies
Boston College



Emma Donoghue at Boston College: History and Fiction

On Saturday, December 1, 2018, Boston College welcomed award-winning Irish novelist Emma Donoghue to the campus, where she spent an hour “in conversation” with our current Burns Scholar Ciaran O’Neill before an audience in Devlin Hall. Her long list of acclaimed works include her 2010 novel *Room*, which was turned into a film in 2015. More recently, she has published *The Wonder* (2016), the story of a “fasting girl” in 1850s Ireland.

The event with Ms. Donoghue came at the end of a one-day conference on history and fiction. The conference drew in speakers from Boston College, both faculty (Aeron Hunt, Maia McAleavey, and James H Murphy) and graduate students (Megan Crotty and Alicia Oh). In addition, we welcomed the participation of scholars from other universities such as Lindsay Janssen (University College Dublin), Patrick R O’Malley (Georgetown), and Paige Reynolds (Holy Cross).

The John J. Burns Library of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Archives

Sounds of Mid-20th Century Irish America: Irish Traditional Music in Boston and New York

Burns Library's Irish Music Archives is delighted to announce that a significant trove of unpublished, open-reel audio from the 1950s and 1960s has been digitized and described by the Boston College Libraries, and can be requested for listening in the Burns Library Reading Room. With support from a CLIR Recordings at Risk grant, sound recordings from two collections, *James W. Smith Irish Music Recordings* and *Joe Lamont Irish Music Recordings*, can be accessed at the library, facilitating the study of traditional Irish music in mid-twentieth century Boston and New York.

The Smith and Lamont collections capture live performances of Irish traditional music on fiddle, flute, whistle, and accordion, with occasional piano accompaniment, banjo, and vocals. Since Irish music is traditionally learned by ear, field recordings such as these are a key resource for learning about repertoire, influences, social contexts, and tune variations. In addition to the live performances, the collections contain dubs from radio and from phonograph discs.

James W. Smith Irish Music Recordings document musical gatherings at the home of James W. Smith (1929-1990) in the Allston neighborhood of Boston. Featuring some of Boston's most prominent Irish musicians of the time, the recordings also include music in homes of his musician friends and in other settings. The informal nature of the recordings captures the spirit of this evolving musical genre. The collection of open-reel tapes, 86 hours of which have been reformatted to 140 digital audio files, was donated by James W. Smith's sister Mary Smith Duffy.

Joe Lamont Irish Music Recordings include performances of Irish traditional music in the greater New York City area. A fiddle player from County Derry, Joseph A. Lamont (1905-1972) immigrated to New York City in 1926 and settled in the Bronx. Lamont was a founding member and officer of the Paddy Killoran



Reel-to-reel tape boxes, James W. Smith Irish Music Recordings, IM.M016.1991, John J. Burns Library, Boston College
— Photo by Shelley Barber

Club, a branch of the Irish Musicians Association of America. The Lamont collection features selected events of the club and performances by many well-known Irish musicians. Lamont's tracklists offer details of performers and musical selections. The collection of open-reel tapes, which the libraries reformatted to 110 digital audio files (80 hours), was donated by Lamont's nephew James Lowney.

Colleagues across the Boston College Libraries collaborated for 12 months to digitize, describe, preserve, and develop a model for in-house access to these sound recordings. For details on these and other collections in Burns Library's Irish Music Archives, we invite you to explore listings at <https://libguides.bc.edu/irishmusic/archives>.

Please use the Burns Library online contact form (<http://bc.edu/burns>) to arrange your research visit. Irish Music Librarian Elizabeth Sweeney will be pleased to respond to questions and provide additional information about the archives' holdings.

*Genius of Genre:
The Pen Names and Personas of Flann O'Brien*

Burns Library Exhibit 11 February – 8 June 2019

Flann the novelist. Myles the columnist. Brother Barnabas the playwright. Brian O’Nolan (1911-1966) wrote in many genres under many guises, in both English and Irish, confounding contemporaries with his incomparable genius and satirical wit.

Using original manuscripts, letters, books, and artifacts drawn from Burns Library’s unrivaled collection of O’Nolan’s papers and personal library, this exhibit unmask the most enigmatic and elusive literary figure to emerge from twentieth-century Ireland next to James Joyce.

The exhibit also features new and original works by Irish artists David and Eddie O’Kane, who have been creating and exhibiting Flann-inspired drawings, paintings, and animated and live-action videos at International Flann O’Brien Society conferences and other venues. An opening reception on February 12 will include a presentation by the O’Kanes and curator-led viewings of the exhibit, which will remain on display in Burns Library through June 8.

The exhibit will be complemented by podcast and iBook projects created by students from Joseph Nugent’s fall 2018 course *From Page to Pod: Making Literature Public*. The idea for the course and exhibit

developed from a daylong symposium on Flann O’Brien and podcasting that Nugent organized and hosted in Burns Library in October 2017. Nugent and Burns Librarian Christian Dupont are planning additional collaborative projects and programs based on Flann and his works.



Flann O'Brien exhibit poster artwork by David O'Kane

Save the date ...

"Lord Byron, Thomas Moore and the Cosmopolitan Reach of Irish Literature"

Byron Scholar, Professor Jonathan Gross, discusses Moore and Byron in the cosmopolitan world of early nineteenth-century London.

April 04 | 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

The survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2017: Bloodshed, Borders and Brexit

Alvin Jackson, Richard Lodge Professor of History at the University of Edinburgh

April 10 | 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Partitioning Ireland

One-day, international conference will explore the history and legacies of the decision to partition Ireland, as its centenary approaches.

April 27 | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

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BOSTON COLLEGE CENTER FOR IRISH PROGRAMS

The Boston College Center for Irish Programs is headquartered in Connolly House on the University's Chestnut Hill Campus. The Center includes BC's Irish Studies Program, the Irish Institute, Boston College-Ireland on St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, and the Burns Library's Irish Collections.

In addition to providing administrative support and program coordination for each of these units, the Center also serves as an umbrella under which any Irish-related activities on each of the Boston College campuses may obtain resource assistance.

For more information, please contact: Irish Studies at Boston College, Connolly House, 300 Hammond Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, 617-552-6396, or e-mail irish@bc.edu. See our website at www.bc.edu/irish. *Irish Studies* is edited by Joan Reilly.