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Contents

Keynote Speakers	5
<i>Brian Ó Conchubhair</i>	5
<i>The Polish Origins of Irish-Language Modernist Fiction? Joseph Conrad & Pádraig Ó Conaire</i>	5
<i>Diarmuid Ó Sé</i>	7
<i>Centre and Periphery in Irish dialects</i>	7
Oral Presentations.....	8
<i>Sabine Asmus</i>	8
<i>The early concept of the Celtic colour term ‘glas’ and its later development</i>	8
<i>Aleksander Bednarski</i>	9
<i>Sanctuary of the Metaphysical: Art in Christopher Meredith’s Shifts</i>	9
<i>Maria Bloch-Trojnar</i>	9
<i>A corpus-based perspective on the formation of passive potential adjectives in Irish</i>	9
<i>Anna Cisło</i>	11
<i>Three Basket autobiographies and the semiotics of their first editions</i>	11
<i>Elis Dafydd</i>	11
<i>The Ienctid yw ‘Mhechod Saga</i>	11
<i>Marlena Gawlik</i>	12
<i>Irish Language Policies as Reflected in Contemporary Irish Poetry in Irish and in English</i>	12
<i>Katarzyna Jaworska</i>	14
<i>A devoted spiritual guide or a passionate rebel? The intimate struggle in selected works of R. S. Thomas</i>	14
<i>Katarzyna Jaworska-Biskup</i>	15
<i>Medieval Welsh law – periodisation and characteristics</i>	15
<i>Miriam Elin Jones</i>	16
<i>The Other Other Other: Women and Welsh-language feminist science fiction</i>	16

Mélanie Jouitteau	17
<i>A syntactic portrait of Standard Breton</i>	17
Aleksandra Kędzierska	18
<i>The Great Wars of Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)</i>	19
Katarzyna Labuhn	19
<i>The pronoun as a cross-linguistically variable category, illustrated by Welsh pronouns</i>	19
Robert Looby	20
<i>You, Me and Your Man, Flann O'Brien</i>	20
Breandán Ó Cróinín	21
<i>A Portrait of the Artist in Late Modern Munster Irish</i>	21
Mark Ó Fionnáin	22
<i>The Final Frontier – The Irish Language in Sci-Fi and Fantasy</i>	22
Pádraig De Paor	23
<i>The Poetics of Not Being Sick: Aspects of Seán Ó Riordáin's idiom</i>	23
Pawel Tuz	23
<i>The Welsh language in education: from the 19th century until the present day</i>	23
Kinga Uszko	24
<i>Featuring Welsh noun compounds – a corpus study</i>	24
Till Vogt	25
<i>Early attempts to describe the syntax of Lower Sorbian and Breton</i>	25
Alyce von Rothkirch	26
<i>Dragon Red in Tooth and Claw: Nature, Morality, and Wildness in Niall Griffiths' Sheepshagger</i>	26
Ielyzaveta Walther	27
<i>A comparative overview of major literary trends in Wales, Lusatia and Donbass</i>	27

Keynote Speakers

Brian Ó Conchubhair
University of Notre Dame

The Polish Origins of Irish-Language Modernist Fiction? **Joseph Conrad & Pádraig Ó Conaire**

The Polish-British writer, Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, [aka Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)], is widely regarded as one of the greatest novelists to write in the English language. Born into the szlachta, a hereditary class in the aristocracy on the social hierarchy in the Polish Ukraine, Conrad came of age in a divided nation with four languages, four religions, and a number of different social classes. His parents' early deaths led him to France and a career as a merchant seaman that took him around the world. These formative maritime experiences in the West Indies and the Congo subsequently informed his most famous novels: *Almayer's Folly* (1895); *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896); *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897); *Lord Jim* (1900); *Youth* (1902), *Typhoon* (1902), *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911). WB Yeats's acceptance of the 1923 Nobel prize for literature came as a bitter blow to Conrad, whose growing renown and prestige among writers and critics had fostered his hopes for the award. In 1924, the year of his death, Conrad declined a knighthood as well as offers of honorary degrees from Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and Yale universities.

This paper begins with a brief exploration of Conrad's attitudes toward Ireland and the Irish Revival before pivoting to consider Conrad na Gaeilge/the Gaelic League promotion of Conrad as an exemplar for emerging Irish-language writers given his commercial and literary success in creating popular fiction in a language that he acquired in later life. The paper details Conrad's relevance for Irish-language writers such as Seosamh Mac Grianna (1901-1990) – who translated several of his

works for An Gúm, the State publishing house in the 1930s and 1940s – before offering a detailed consideration of Conrad’s seminal role in the fiction of Pádraig Ó Conaire (1882-1928), the leading Irish-language writer and critic of the period 1900-1930.

Born in 1882 in western Galway, Ireland, Ó Conaire spent his adult years in London as a civil servant in Ministry of Education. It was in London, the metropolitan center, that he joined the Gaelic League and expanded his literary and cultural horizons. London was also where he wrote his most famous short stories – including ‘Nóra Mharcais Bhig’ which appeared in his 1909 collection of the same name, *Nóra Mharcais Bhig agus sgéalta eile* and his remarkable modernist novel, *Deoraíocht* (1910). The paper will argue that Ó Conaire’s creative work not only draws heavily on Conrad’s earlier work but it provided critical plot and stylistic devices and strategies that would prove essential in Ó Conaire’s development as a writer seeking to cultivate Irish-language fiction along contemporary European lines. In conclusion, this presentation will argue that some of the pre-eminent prose of the Irish-language revival in fact may be Polish.

Diarmuid Ó Sé
University College Dublin

Centre and Periphery in Irish dialects

Differences between central and peripheral areas have been a recurrent theme in dialectology. A much-cited article by Henning Andersen discusses some examples from Polish, among other languages. In his *Irish dialects and Irish-speaking districts* (1951) Brian Ó Cuív distinguished between a ‘coastal region’ and a ‘central region’ in Co. Cork, and remarked that some of the features of the coastal area were also to be found at the western end of the Dingle Peninsula in Kerry. I elaborated considerably on these suggestions in an article which appeared (in Irish) in 2002. In preparing a new book on the dialect geography of Irish I have revisited the centre vs periphery distinction in Munster, adding many linguistic features to those which I had previously cited. I have also had to reassess some of what I said earlier about the role of maritime contact. There is considerable evidence for the coastal spread of linguistic features in Irish, and Brian Ó Curnáin has put forward (in 2012) a map of 15 coastal isoglosses in Ulster, Connacht and Munster. However, doubts may be raised when diffusion is supposed to have occurred between areas which are non-contiguous, and perhaps rather distant from one another. Some suggestions about coastal contact between Clare and West Kerry which I adopted from Eric Hamp now seem to me to require revision. In general, the dialect geography of Munster supports the traditional observation that peripheral areas can be relic areas in which recessive features persist. The origin of many of the innovative features of coastal Munster is however less clear.

Oral Presentations

Sabine Asmus

Szczecin University/ Leipzig University

The early concept of the Celtic colour term *glas* and its later development

The aim of this paper is to trace the development of the meaning of Irish and Welsh *glas* from its earliest incarnation as a core lexical item of the Insular Celtic languages to its modern-day use. It looks firstly at the possible earliest etymology of the word ‘bright’ and its subsequent uses in relation to nature, especially in relation to those realia which change their (bright) colour(s) naturally, e.g. sea water, depending on the clouds mirrored in it, or the sky itself. Both realia are further linked to the senses denoting ‘re-appearance’, ‘re-growth’, ‘young’.

With developing colour terminology in Insular Celtic, moving away from a 4-colour system, the semantic range of *glas* becomes specialised in both Irish and Welsh. First, we look at its meaning of ‘green’, which also covers the sense of ‘natural’, ‘fresh’, ‘young’, ‘shiny’ and ‘grey’. The component ‘young’ developed further in both Irish and Welsh and covers the general idea of ‘young plants’, but also ‘young people’ etc., and, in Welsh, even that of time. As ‘young’ in a diminutival meaning can also be understood in derogatory terms (diminishing), we can show a whole range of such uses in Irish, but which are much stronger in Welsh, where *glas* can become a diminutive proper, i.e. a lexical morpheme.

In Modern Welsh, the default meaning of *glas* is ‘blue’ whilst in Irish the focus on ‘green’ or ‘grey’ was retained, depending on its referent. In the discussion section of the paper, it is also shown that those scholars who claim that *glas* is merely a ‘grue-category’ ignore the development of Insular Celtic colour terminology from a 4-colour to a multi-colour system during the Old Irish and Old Welsh period, when the need for exact colour denotation arose in society.

Aleksander Bednarski

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Sanctuary of the Metaphysical: Art in Christopher Meredith's *Shifts*

Christopher Meredith's novel *Shifts* is one of the classic examples of Welsh realistic fiction. Published in 1988 and set in 1977, it tells the story of several characters against the backdrop of the declining South Wales steelwork industry. As observed by Richard Poole in the afterword to the Seren Classics edition, the workers and their families are "suspended in a grimy and morale-sapping limbo", yet they seem to be affected by a more general crisis of meaning and a lack of perspectives, sense of belonging, and any form of spiritual fulfilment.

In this paper I examine the novel's visual elements, such as the recurring motif of the window, the panoramic view, photography and painting, and argue that they may be read as reflections of the characters' often unrealised yearning for rootedness, a religious dimension and stable meaning. Building on the theory of ekphrasis, I demonstrate how the scene describing the welders' cabin, in which a reproduction of one of Salvador Dalí's painting hangs, can be read as a figure for the metaphysical in a world dominated by ruthless economics and materiality.

Maria Bloch-Trojnar

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

A corpus-based perspective on the formation of passive potential adjectives in Irish

This paper demonstrates that a quantitative frequency analysis of the data (Baayen 1992, 1993) from the New Corpus for Ireland (Nua-Chorpas na hÉireann) can shed new light on certain problems inherent in the purely qualitative analysis of passive potential adjectives proposed in Bloch-

Trojnar (2016). The range and status of *so-* and *in-* derivatives (including derivational doublets) are discussed on the basis of their semantics, distribution and frequency. It is concluded that both *so-* and *in-* should be regarded as exponents of potential or objective adjectives in Irish. The respective derivatives show no marked differences in token frequencies, which does not allow us to classify one or the other as being more entrenched or less productive, since in both we find a comparable proportion of high and low frequency items. A corpus analysis allows us to establish that the range of *in-* derivatives is expanding at the expense of *so-* derivatives, but this expansion has not yet reached the systemic level of productivity restrictions. The semantic and syntactic constraints on the rule do not allow us to disjunctively specify the exact domains of the prefixes. In the class of transitive verbs *so-* shows a preference for verbs of motion, while *in-* for verbs of measure, transfer of possession, judgement verbs and SE verbs. Another piece of evidence in favour of subsuming *so-* and *in-* under one WFR is that the negative prefix *do-* attaches indiscriminately to *so-* and *in-* formations.

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Anna Cisło
University of Wrocław

Three Blasket autobiographies and the semiotics of their first editions

By the end of the nineteenth century, due to the process of Anglicisation, English in Ireland had become for most people the primary medium of spoken and written communication. Hardly anything was published in Irish and so, when the language revival movement sought to restore the Irish book, not only did creative writers have to be found but also the lack of standards and norms in printed Irish had to be addressed. When the revivalists' attempts did bear fruit, the physical book in Irish became a rich collection of signs offering assistance to political separatism, the new book's typography evidencing the national parallelism approach, and its content and graphic design supporting the process of national identity formation. This paper will discuss the context for the emergence of autobiographies by Tomás Ó Criomhthain (1856-1937), Muiris Ó Súilleabháin (1904-1950) and Peig Sayers (1873-1958), three inhabitants of the Great Blasket Island, and the semiotics of their first editions, which appeared in the early years of the Irish Free State in the nineteen twenties and thirties: it will interpret the signs contained therein and will address the question as to what extent they were symptoms of the era in which they were created.

Elis Dafydd
Bangor University

The *Ienctid yw 'Mhechod* Saga

My paper will give a brief overview of the novel *Ienctid yw 'Mhechod* (*Youth is my Sin*) by John Rowlands, which caused uproar in the literary and religious circles of Wales when it was first published in 1965, as it portrayed a minister of religion's extra-marital affair with one of his

congregation. I will explain why this novel was so ground-breaking at the time and how different it was to other novels published during the same period.

John Rowlands, who was a central figure in Welsh literary life for over half a century, first came to prominence in the early 1960s as the author of a series of novels which created shock waves in a literary scene still hostage to a morally and aesthetically conservative Calvinist legacy. It was *Ienctid yw 'Mhechod* that created the biggest stir because of its explicit sexual scenes. It was entered into the Prose Medal competition in the 1964 National Eisteddfod (an annual cultural festival) and came second. Though praised for its style and its author's ability, the novel was shunned in favour of Rhiannon Davies Jones' more traditional historical novel about a 13th century nun.

I will go on to give an account of the novel's tumultuous journey through the press where the managing director of the publishing house refused to publish it on moral and religious grounds, and resigned when he found out that the press's owner had ordered it to be printed anyway.

When published, the novel was met with uproar from religious and literary circles and it gained Rowlands the status as an *enfant terrible*. I will conclude my paper with an account of those reactions, which resulted in the whole affair having, to this day, an infamous reputation in Welsh literary culture.

Marlena Gawlik
Szczecin University

Irish Language Policies as Reflected in Contemporary Irish Poetry in Irish and in English

When Ireland gained its independence in 1922, the Irish language had been replaced by English in most areas of the country. The then authorities took measures to maintain the Irish that was still spoken on and to revive the language in the remaining parts of the Irish state. This included active language policy encoded in law. Consequently, Irish became the first official language of the Republic of Ireland, protected by

various regulations, and an official working language of the institutions of the European Union. Having said that, at present approximately 40% of Irish population have Irish to a varying degree. In fact, even those who claim to have no Irish, know and use pieces of Irish vocabulary on a regular basis. Thus, even though the Irish people may be reluctant to speak their national language on a larger scale, it is still an important marker of their national identity and is considered substantial in its symbolic and culture-forming role. For all these reasons, the language has been protected and also celebrated by the Irish literati who have made it a recurring theme in Irish poetry, both that composed in Irish and that created through the medium of English. Since poetry as an art can be said to represent a personal experience embodying problems important to a larger collective, in this paper I will analyse selected poetic works of leading contemporary Irish authors in order to shed some light on the effectiveness and efficiency of the longstanding political endeavour to stabilise the Irish language. This paper comprises some of the research I have done for my PhD thesis of the same title that is still in progress.

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Katarzyna Jaworska
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

A devoted spiritual guide or a passionate rebel? The intimate struggle in selected works of R. S. Thomas

This paper aims to depict the highly tangled bond between the priest and his God as reflected in the poetry of R. S. Thomas, an intellectual with an impenetrable relationship with the Lord.

The analysis of selected poems aims to reflect upon some elements of the 'quarrelling with the God' motif in the cleric's poetry. Even if not a case of psychomachia, Thomas's poetry undermines the stereotypical image of a clergyperson being a religious bedrock for his parishioners. Additionally, some elements of metaphysical poetry might be observed in the works of the Welsh poet, namely paradoxes and 'discordia concors', and which allows for a further exploration of the topic.

Undoubtedly, this spiritual leader offers an extremely demanding path to God, yet does not promise any straightforward answers for the needs of contemporary Christians. In this vision of faith, Job remains unrewarded and the Angel of God fails to refrain Abraham from his sacrifice.

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Katarzyna Jaworska-Biskup **Szczecin University**

Medieval Welsh law – periodisation and characteristics

Medieval Welsh law has been the topic of many research papers. The publications concerning Welsh law include: a) sources documenting the legal history of Wales, b) English editions and translations of Welsh law, c) commentaries on specific areas of Welsh law, d) literary reflections of Welsh law. The scholars of Cyfraith Hywel, including lawyers, historians and literary scholars, have proposed various, sometimes dissenting, ideas on its development and major characteristics. One of the frequently raised issues is the impact of Romanisation and Normanisation on Welsh law. This paper discusses the development, as well as basic characteristics, of medieval Welsh law as represented by legal, historical and literary texts. The analysis encompasses such research methods as: a) the investigation of literary texts, i.e. prose-tales, histories and pseudo-histories, b) a comparative vivisection of Welsh laws in terms of their similarities with and differences from Roman, Irish and Scottish laws, c) an examination of other data, e.g. archeological and linguistic findings.

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Miriam Elin Jones
Aberystwyth University

The Other Other Other: Women and Welsh-language feminist science fiction

Women, minority language speakers and science fiction (especially in a Celtic literary tradition) are often portrayed as Other to mainstream and/or canonical values. This paper examines the unique situation of being a Welsh-speaking female science fiction author; a role where three marginal positions are combined into one. Here, we explore the challenges facing these authors – of which there are only four in the whole modern Welsh-language literary tradition – and offer a feminist reading of their work.

Whilst also presenting a brief overview of the development of Welsh-language science fiction and introducing how women are presented in prose by male authors, this paper discusses the unique themes discussed by Welsh-speaking female science fiction writers. There is space to question why no female writer ventured to a science fiction world until 1991, and what are the challenges facing these writers, compared to male authors, authors of other genres and authors using other languages?

Following a traditional portrayal of woman-as-nation in the works of prominent authors Islwyn Ffowc Elis and R. Gerallt Jones, works by Mari Williams, Eirwen Gwynn, Lleucu Roberts and Fflur Dafydd react to those

portrayals and better represent the problems of the modern woman. Whilst Williams and Gwynn mainly adhere to patriarchal images of women, with sympathy leaning towards the white male characters unable to comprehend the collapse of traditional roles, Roberts and Dafydd present a different viewpoint, both challenging the reversal of those roles and presenting a new future.

Mélanie Jouitteau

French National Centre for Scientific Research

A syntactic portrait of Standard Breton

The characterisation of Standard Breton with respect to the traditional varieties is a much debated topic. On the one hand, dialectological studies concentrate on prosody, phonology and lexicon, and typically claim that the traditional dialects are too different from one another for cross-communication, and that Standard Breton is opaque for traditional speakers ('xenolect', Jones 1995, 1998). Syntax is typically not addressed. On the other hand, syntacticians claim that dialectal differences barely affect syntax (Stephens 1982) or fail to address the issue, hence considering it irrelevant.

I adopt the working hypothesis that Standard Breton is one dialect among others (Hornsby 2005) and propose to sketch its syntactic profile by contrast with traditional varieties. I review the syntactic arguments of the debate (Avezard-Roger 2004, Hornsby 2014), and provide new ones from the syntactic microvariation database ARBRES (2009-2017). I present some cases of syntactic variation across traditional dialects. These features have never or rarely been reported and described, and are consequently ignored or considered ungrammatical in Standard Breton. Next, I inventorise the syntactic features unique to Standard Breton, that are never or seldom represented in the traditional dialects. I conclude by discussing transmission and the potential development of the Standard (Timm 2005, Kennard 2013). I show syntactic evidence of language attrition in the schooling system, but also the cross-generational transmission of rare dialectal facts in the speech of young speakers, even in poor contact situations.

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Aleksandra Kędzińska
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

The Great Wars of Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)

Encouraging one to reach out for *The Complete Poems of Francis Ledwidge* (1997), the editor wrote on the cover "Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917) is one of the most important 20th century Irish poets, his pure lyric voice exciting the universal admiration of Irish writers and readers alike and earning him a place with W.B. Yeats and Patrick Kavanagh as the best and most admired of our modern poets."

Sadly, even twenty years later, with a new edition of his works just released (*Francis Ledwidge Selected Poems*, edited by Dermot Bolger) Ledwidge is still virtually unknown to a wide readership. Hence, in the

year which marks the centenary of his death, I would like to discuss his uniqueness as a Great War poet. This paper will focus on the poems representative of the three fronts on which he fought, the Balkans, Gallipoli and France.

Katarzyna Labuhn
Szczecin University

The pronoun as a cross-linguistically variable category, illustrated by Welsh pronouns

The Classical Latin description of a pronoun, still frequently cited and taught, states that a pronoun stands for a noun or a name, depending on a translation of the definition itself. Most grammar books redefine this term and include a functional classification of pronouns, hopefully suitable for the language they describe. This paper focuses on the classification of pronouns in the modern and historical grammar books for the Welsh language.

Since a significant amount of research is done via English linguistic tools, the descriptions present in the resulting publications strictly follow the patterns found in the English language. Even Welsh language sources, especially the modern ones, tend to present an English-language-based analysis, regardless of the etymology of some lexemes and the structure of the Celtic languages.

This paper shows the inaccuracy of the function-based pronoun systematisation in Welsh. By analysing the etymology and syntax, a new classification is proposed, where some words previously described as pronouns fall into different classes and the categories within the class of pronouns itself are divided according to their syntax-driven character. There is an urgent need for a proper grammatical description of pronouns in the surviving Celtic languages, to preserve their original character and prevent their theoretical Anglicisation.

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Robert Looby**The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin****You, Me and Your Man, Flann O'Brien**

Many of Flann O'Brien's Cruiskeen Lawn pieces have a dramatic form. This is often an overheard conversation with occasional interjections from O'Brien but sometimes, too, it is a conversation between "you" and, for example, the "Dublin man." In such cases O'Brien takes on the role of an off-stage participant in the exchange, as when he remarks: "Observe the unique Dublin dual number in full flight." In this role he is like the author of stage directions.

Turning to the plays and teleplays, the stage directions in *Faustus Kelly* describe a character as having "a thick western brogue, upon which sea-weed could be hung," while in the dramatis personae of *A Moving Tale* the Agent is described as "An appalling savage with the flattest of Dublin accents, a depraved gurrer."

This article will attempt to reconstruct the author that is implied by such comments (“sea-weed”, “gurrier”) and relate him (or her) to the persona adapted by Flann O’Brien in his Cruiskeen Lawn column for the *Irish Times*, which he signed Myles na gCopaleen. O’Brien wrote, in a Cruiskeen Lawn piece entitled “Dramatis Personae,” that theatre-goers are “usually weak-minded folk, so that some plot is necessary.” The present article will also examine the addressee of O’Brien’s dramas (“you” in the newspaper columns; the audience in the plays) and try to order the communicative situation created by these off-stage participants.

Breandán Ó Cróinín
University of Limerick

A Portrait of the Artist in Late Modern Munster Irish

The autobiographical novel *An Gealas i Lár na Léithe* by Pádraig Ó Cíobháin, a writer from the West Kerry Gaeltacht, proved to be something of an instant classic following its publication in 1992, and was received enthusiastically by the Irish language reading public. Indeed, the poet and novelist Liam Ó Muirthile (1997: 192), writing in the *Irish Times* in that same year, went so far as to remark that *An Gealas* contained ‘passages of writing which surpass any prose written in either Irish or English [...] published in Ireland in a long time.’ The scholar and critic Gearóid Denvir, in an important article on Ó Cíobháin’s early work (1995: 19), praised the novel as being far from ‘a pseudo-romantic backward look at times past, but rather a realistic and largely unsentimental depiction of the personal internal odyssey of a young person growing up, and of the personal and community circumstances which influence him’. To mark the re-issuing of *An Gealas* in this its 25th anniversary year, this paper will look in particular at the influence of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* on the West Kerry writer and will also focus on the linguistic virtuosity of *An Gealas* which shows Ó Cíobháin’s work to be able to withstand comparison, on more than one level, with that of his illustrious predecessor.

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Mark Ó Fionnáin

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

The Final Frontier – The Irish Language in Sci-Fi and Fantasy

There have been very few sci-fi/fantasy works produced in Irish, apart from several translations over the years such as *The War of the Worlds*, *Foundation* and *Game of Thrones*, and the occasional piece of native writing to be found here and there if one searches for it. It is a genre that has been lacking ever since the Gaelic Revival, and this has resulted in Irish lagging behind both Scottish Gaelic and Manx, as Gaelic has recently produced its first sci-fi and fantasy novels, and Manx its first fantasy. This leaves Irish, in relation to its sister languages, relegated to the margins of a genre which is itself considered to be on the periphery of the literary canon. But this does not mean that the language itself has been neglected. If Irish-language writers have paid scant attention to the genre, non-Irish-language writers have not ignored Irish, and there are references to it, and words in it to be found in various foreign texts. The aim of this talk is to give a brief look at some of these texts – sci-fi, fantasy and other – to examine what use has been made of Irish in creating other worlds, and to see how successful it was.

Pádraig De Paor
Trinity College Dublin

**The Poetics of Not Being Sick: Aspects of Seán
Ó Ríordáin's idiom**

Seán Ó Ríordáin (1916-77) was, arguably, the greatest Irish language poet of the 20th century, and certainly the most influential. Forty years after his death, it is fitting to reassess his work and, indeed, reassess aspects of the dominant readings of his work to date. In this paper I will argue that Ó Ríordáin's personal idiosyncratic idiom, including a cluster of sometimes misunderstood words, e.g. 'peaca' [sin], 'geanmnaíocht' [chastity, purity], 'drúis' [lust, concupiscence], 'paidir' [prayer], make more sense when read as part of what I will call his 'poetics of not being sick'.

Pawel Tuz
Szczecin University

**The Welsh language in education: from the 19th century
until the present day**

Being a medium of everyday communication for a significant part of the population of Wales, the Welsh language was not entirely absent from education in the first half of the 19th century. However, the 1847 Report of the Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales was a convenient reason for the ensuing Anglicization of education, which was best exemplified by the 'Welsh-Not(e)' penalties for pupils. The 1944 Butler Education Act facilitated the gradual re-introduction of Welsh into schools and nowadays every pupil in Wales has to attend Welsh classes. Nevertheless, the present situation of the language is substantially different from what it was in the 19th century.

The primary aim of this paper is to examine how the position of the Welsh language in education has evolved over the last 200 years. The second aim is to juxtapose these findings with the changes in the number of Welsh speakers over the same period. The third issue approached in this text is whether there has been any correlation between the changing status of Welsh in education and the number of speakers thereof, or whether the current situation of Welsh results from some other factors. To answer these questions, the author employs the concept of language policy, as defined by Bernard Spolsky, who contrasts overt language policies with covert ones and who acknowledges the importance of both governments and informal groups of citizens as language policy makers.

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Kinga Uszko
Szczecin University

Featuring Welsh noun compounds – a corpus study

It is beyond a shadow of a doubt that compounding is a complex phenomenon combining both semantics and morphology. In the case of Welsh, any analysis is further complicated due to the lack of any handbook on compounding concerning that language. Therefore, the following paper aims to present the results of a data analysis based on a collection of compounds compiled by Stefan Zimmer in his *Studies in Welsh word-formation* (2000). Zimmer provides four main categories of compounds which are based on Sandhi terminology, that is, iterative compounds (āmredita), copulative compounds (dvandva), determinative compounds (karmadhāraya and tatpuruṣa) and exocentric compounds

(bahuvrihi). These are further subdivided based on the semantic relationship between the components of the compounds. Although a variety of examples is provided by him, both noun and adjective compounds, for the purposes of this presentation the scope of analysis is limited to noun compounds. The presentation also aims to investigate the features of noun compounds such as mutation, stress pattern and others as visible in the collected data. Finally, an attempt is made to construct a list of features of proper noun compounds which would help in differentiating between proper compounds and noun phrases in Welsh.

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Till Vogt
Leipzig University

Early attempts to describe the syntax of Lower Sorbian and Breton

This paper presents the results of research on the oldest grammar books of Lower Sorbian and Breton, paying particular attention to the word-order features displayed there.

The earliest known grammar of Lower Sorbian is a manuscript in Latin completed by the Protestant priest Jan Chojnan (1616-1664) in 1650 and retained in the Sorbian Cultural Archive in Budyšin/Bautzen. Chojnan used a terminology and structured his grammar similarly to ancient and contemporary grammars of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Notably, he hardly presents any syntax, claiming that Lower Sorbian syntax ‘follows the often mentioned pattern of Latin and German’.

The first Breton grammarian was the Jesuit priest Julien Maunoir (1606-1683) who published his printed grammar, written in French and including paragraph titles and other parts in Latin, in Quimper-Corentin in 1659. Its structure, as well as the terminology he uses, resemble those known from ancient and contemporary grammars of French and Latin, especially the Latin grammar written by the fourth century grammarian Aelius Donatus.

Chojnan and Maunoir both lived in late Renaissance time and apparently wrote their grammars according to the traditions known at that time. This paper substantiates the hypothesis that they imposed grammatical features of Latin, French and German on Breton and Lower Sorbian, respectively.

Alyce von Rothkirch
Swansea University

Dragon Red in Tooth and Claw: Nature, Morality, and Wildness in Niall Griffiths’ *Sheepshagger*

Niall Griffiths’ *Sheepshagger* (2001) is a novel about mythology and national identity in contemporary Wales. It is also about the contrast between wild nature and civilisation. Ianto, a character central to the novel but living on the margins of human society, is a wild child, a Welsh Kaspar Hauser, whose affinity with other animals shows him to be on the side of nature rather than culture. By the end of the novel he has killed three strangers in an unprovoked attack, a vivid example of the unpredictability of the wild, of nature “red in tooth and claw”. His friends

are quite justified in killing him in retribution and to prevent further attacks.

Is that really it?

Recent research in Animal Studies, in cognitive ethology, and in related fields has shown that the interpretation of nature “red in tooth and claw” is a human projection, which conveniently reduces the capacities of other animals to an instinct-driven struggle for survival and supremacy, which, in turn, helps to underscore the apparently elevated position of the human as a species apart, the only species capable of complex culture, intelligence, and morality. Instead, animals display a rich variety of complex social behaviours, which serve to underline Darwin’s insight that the differences between human and non-human animal capacities are differences ‘in degree but not in kind’.

Taking findings from animal studies, animal morality and cognitive ethology as a theoretical framework, I propose to read Ianto’s behaviour not so much as an expression of his wild, untamed animal nature, but as a pathological, twisted misrepresentation of animal lives, which, paradoxically perhaps, shows him to be the human animal he is. In the end, it is not nature that is amoral, but the human capacity to prey on its own species, which is ultimately destructive – on a personal and on a larger, symbolic level.

Ielyzaveta Walther
Leipzig University

A comparative overview of major literary trends in Wales, Lusatia and Donbass

In the 20th century, Wales, Donbass and Lusatia each experienced a major industrialisation of coal mines. Coal mining made these regions prosperous; it created work for thousands of miners and people in other services, but at the same time it was very dangerous for the ecosystem and the health of these people. The Miner became a symbol of the working class, and as a result, the literature of these three regions was,

and continues to be, heavily influenced by the topic of mining, which will be shown in this presentation.

In Donbass, Eastern Ukraine, coal mining shaped the face of the modern ethnic landscape. Peasants, refugees and outlaws from Russia and central Ukraine moved there in the hopes of getting a job in the coal mines and starting a new life. In Soviet times, these miners were respected and celebrated, which is well mirrored in prose literature. It is important to note that the 'writing miner' has been celebrated since the beginning of the 20th century, and is still celebrated today.

Mass lignite coal extraction in Lusatia started at the beginning of the 20th century, but intensified during the time of the GDR (German Democratic Republic 1949-1990). Mining provided jobs for hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern Germany but, at the same time, destroyed the living area of the Sorbian minority. As a result of this, there is only limited prose literature available there, although the miner himself was celebrated in society.

South Wales in the 20th century was known as one of the biggest exporters of anthracite coal. Around 250,000 miners were employed in Wales up until the 1930s. Having thus a large impact on the miners' literature in South Wales, plenty of short stories and novels, written in both English and Welsh, describe the conflicts between mine owners and miners calling for better working conditions, safety underground and proper payment.

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