

# Colloque SOFEIR Irish Exceptionalism

Université de Strasbourg

26-27 Mars 2026 • MISHA



## Irish Exceptionalism

Société Française d'Études Irlandaises (SOFEIR)

26-27 March 2026

University of Strasbourg

MISHA (Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences sociales et des Humanités d'Alsace)  
5 allée du Général Rouvillois, 67000 Strasbourg

### Thursday 26 March

9h00: Welcome

9h30: Conference opening

9h45-10h45, salle de conférence: **Keynote talk: Fionna Barber (Manchester School of Art)**  
“Irish Art as Exceptionalism’s Other Story”

10h45-11h00: Coffee break

### 11h00-12h45: Session 1

#### Panel 1A, salle de conférence: Questioning Irish Exceptionality

**Guy Beiner** (Boston College): “An Inquiry into the Exceptionality of Irish Memory”

**Michael Cronin** (U. Maynooth): “What is an ‘Irish writer?’”

**Dara McWade** (Queen's University Belfast): “The Irish Bildungsroman: Exceptional or representative?”

**Rym Lina Mohammed-Azizi** (U. Mulhouse): “The Irish Short Story anthologized: Lucy Caldwell's intentional exceptionalism”

**Geraldine Higgins** (Emory University): “‘Seamus Heaney Lived Here’: Tourism and Irish Literary Exceptionalism”

#### Panel 1B, salle de la table ronde: Ireland: a Global Exception?

**Julien Guillaumond** (U. Clermont-Auvergne): “Small But Powerful: Exploring Ireland’s Exceptional Influence On The World Stage”

**Danielle Jefferis** (U. Maynooth): An Exceptional Border? The Irish Border and the Logics of State Violence

**Amanda Crabb** (Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts): “The Exceptionalism of the Irish Immigration Reform Movement”

**Marie Renault** (U. Rennes 2): “Ireland “at the head of the Celtic world”? When Irish Pan-Celts crossed paths with Irish and Celtic nationalists”

**Dobromiła Kasprzyk** (Jagiellonian University): “Ireland in the Polish Anti-Imperialist Imagination, 1870-1914”

12h45-14h00: Lunch buffet

## 14h00-15h30: Session 2

### Panel 2A, salle de conférence: Artistic Exceptions

**Deirdre F. Brady** (Mary Immaculate College): ““Knocking on the Door”: Irish P.E.N. Exceptionalism in the International Realm”

**Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin** (Concordia University Montréal): “Carignan: Irish Musical Exceptionalism in Québec”

**Axel Klein** (Frankfurt am Main): ““A nation lacking its own art music”? Irish perceptions and misconceptions about ‘classical’ music”

**Taylor Still** (U. Rennes 2): “Creative Agency, Cultural Claims: Youth Arts, Education and Irish Exceptionalism”

### Panel 2B, salle de la table ronde: Poetry

**Maryvonne Hutchins-Boisseau** (U. Strasbourg): “Listening to the wind, listening to the tide... Derek Mahon’s Music of the Spheres”

**Charles I. Armstrong** (U. Agder): “Exceptions and Examples: Vona Groarke, W. B. Yeats, and Irish Poetry”

**Dane Holt** (Trinity College Dublin): ““A Lost Authority?”: Some Elegies for Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)”

**Fanni Fekete-Nagy** (Eötvös Loránd University / UPázmány Péter Catholic University): “Exceptional Ekphrasis: Representations of Angels in Medbh McGuckian’s Poetry”

15h30-15h45: Break

### 15h45-17h00, salle de conférence: History Roundtable

Karina Bénazech Wendling (U. Lorraine), Géraldine Vaughan (U. Lille), Claire Dubois (U. Lille)

### 17h50-19h00, salle de conférence: SOFEIR AGM

Moderator: Hélène Lecossois (U. Lille)

### 20h00: Conference dinner at Maison Kammerzell

16 place de la Cathédrale, 67000 Strasbourg

<https://www.maison-kammerzell.com>

## Friday 27 March

### 9h15-11h00: Session 3

#### Panel 3A, salle de conférence: Comparative Perspectives

**Kenneth L. Shonk** (U. Wisconsin-La Crosse): “Ireland’s share of this business’: Irish exceptionalism and Tanzania’s national development, 1975-1979”

**Aimée Dion** (U. Laval): “‘Nos gloires passées et futures’: Exceptionalism and “lieux de mémoire” in French Canadian and Irish WWI Posters”

**Nathalie Sebbane** (U. Sorbonne nouvelle): “Beyond Irish Exceptionalism: the incarceration and instrumentalisation of women and children in a comparative perspective”

**Annalisa Ciano** (U. Bologna): “Inventing Irishness: Eugene O’Neill, Bragaglia, and the Fabrication of Irish Exceptionalism in Fascist Italy”

**Evi Gkotzaridis** (U. Versailles - Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines): “The Elusive Middle Path. A Comparative Analysis of the Colonial Past of Cyprus and Ireland”

#### Panel 3B, salle de la table ronde: Unsettling Irish Exceptionalism

**Marine Galiné** (U. Reims Champagne-Ardenne): “The open wounds of trauma: Irish folklore and folk horror cinema”

**Audrey Robitailié** (Institut Catholique de Toulouse): “Iarlais, Síofra, Changelings: Subversive Characters in YA Literature”

**Auxiliadora Pérez Vides** (U. Huelva): “Emerald Noir and Cultural Uniqueness in John Banville’s Crime Fiction”

**Rachael Sumner** (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz): “Challenging the Concept of Irish Exceptionalism in Prophet Song (2023) by Paul Lynch”

11h00-11h15: Coffee break

11h15-12h15, salle de conférence: **Keynote talk: Niamh Wycherley (U. Maynooth): “Inclusivity over exclusivity? Understanding Ireland’s medieval past in the 21st century”**

12h15-13h30: Lunch buffet

### 13h30-15h00: Session 4

#### Panel 4A, salle de conférence: A Postcolonial Exception?

**Andre Angeline** (New York University): “Exoticizing the Self: Orientalism and the Making of an Irish Identity”

**Nour Harzallah** (U. Picardie Jules): “Irish exceptionalism: an exceptional ex-colony with a peculiar post-primary education system (between 1960 and 1980)”

**Sandrine Uwase Ndahiro** (U. Maynooth) & **Dr Sean Aldrich O’Rourke** (U. Limerick): “‘I am your way out’: Sinners and the Ambivalence of Irish Solidarity”

**Annabel Barry** (U. of California, Berkeley): “All Promise and No Pay: Lady Gregory and Melatu Uche Okorie”

### Panel 4B, salle de la table ronde: Society and Politics

**Timothy J. White** (Xavier University): “The End of Exceptionalism in Irish Politics and the Emergence of Left-Right Partisanship”

**Anne-Sophie Brian** (U. Bourgogne-Europe / U. Lorraine): “Sinn Féin: a transnational exception?”

**Luca Bertolani Azeredo** (Scuola Superiore Meridionale): “Migrants in a Divided Land: Italian Communities and the Making of Modern Ireland”

**Geraldine Vaughan** (U. Lille): “Nineteenth-Century Ireland – an Exceptional Island of Awakened Catholics and Protestants?”

15h00-15h15: Break

### 15h15-16h45: Session 5

### Panel 5A, salle de conférence: Northern Exceptions

**Florian Kolusniewski** (U. Toulouse): “Continuity and Liminality of paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland”

**Chloe Doherty** (U. Sorbonne Nouvelle): “Assessing Power Sharing’s Durability in Northern Ireland’s Post-conflict State Thirty Years after Good Friday Agreement”

**Lara Cuny** (U. Lyon 3): “Language acts in the British Isles: the Identity and Language Act (Northern Ireland), a comparative perspective”

**Nuzha Moritz & Romane Stock** (U. Strasbourg): “Linguistic Landscapes and Cultural Identity in 1990s Northern Irish Media”

### Panel 5B, salle de la table ronde: Contemporary Perspectives on Irish literature

**Lea Sinoimeri** (U. du Littoral Côte d’Opale): “(Un)exceptional Matters: Essay writing in Ireland today and Sara Baume’s Handiwork (2020)”

**Martine Pelletier** (U. Tours): “How exceptionally Irish is Friel’s Dancing at Lughnasa? A challenge from Corsica”

**Rosario (María del Rosario Casas Coelho)** (U. Burgos): ““Transculturality and Transnationalism in Colum McCann’s selected novels”

16h45, salle de conférence: Closing remarks