

**Pearse Hutchinson Conference, Maynooth University, 14 May 2015**

**ABSTRACTS**

**“This flaring loveliness of the fluent sea”: Pearse Hutchinson’s early poetry**

**Dr Philip Coleman**

Although he did not publish his first collection of poems in English (*Tongue without Hands*) until 1963, at the age of 36, Pearse Hutchinson published several poems in the 1940s, in particular, that throw light on his later development in a number of respects. Only one of these poems (‘The River’) was published in slightly revised form in *Tongue without Hands*, but none of the others was subsequently collected. The trajectory of Hutchinson’s career from 1950 onwards – when he first visited Spain and Portugal and left Ireland to live for the best part of the next two decades in 1951 – is of central importance to an understanding of his artistic development. In this lecture, however, I will go back to the period before Hutchinson emigrated to examine the value and significance of the early poetry, with particular reference to poems published in magazines such as *The Bell*, *The Irish Bookman*, *The Capuchin Annual* and *Irish Writing* in the 1940s. Reference will also be made to some of Hutchinson’s uncollected reviews from this period, as well as material from the Pearse Hutchinson archive at Maynooth University.

**“The soul that kissed the body”/ “An tAnam a Phóg an Corp”**

**Professor Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin**

Pearse Hutchinson’s engaging account of his return to Irish in the 1950s introduces his bilingual volume of self-translated poems, *The Soul that Kissed the Body*. He connects the rediscovery of the language with his escape from the limitations of mid-century Ireland, and the poems in *Faoistin Bhacach* reflect that struggle. They also, with their insistence on paradox and contradiction, their balancing of sexual concealment and openness, demonstrate how writing in Irish enabled him to explore the contradictions in his own temperament and the society around him. I want to show how the structure of the language itself made it suitable for some of his favourite themes and obsessions, and I’ll conclude by examining the importance of translation into and out of Irish in his work.

**“In all this variety: Unity” : Bioegalitarian Intimacy, Rosi Bradotti’s Nomadic Theory and Bracha Ettinger’s Transconnectedness in the poetry of Pearse Hutchinson**

**Fiona Gault**

This paper takes its starting point from the exploration of poetry that resides in liminality, between identities. Pearse Hutchinson’s work embodies a universalism that not only deals meticulously and intimately with the nuances of minority voices and the experiences embedded within but moreover, I will argue, his work develops a new methodology of being through communing and coemerging with numerous subjectivities, being at once outside and in. Furthermore, by traversing the boundaries between language, gender, place and nationhood, I believe Hutchinson’s work demonstrates a new and valuable epistemology rooted in copresence . I will demonstrate how Hutchinson’s holistic approach to his art

offers a fresh and revolutionary mode of cultural inclusivity. For this analysis I will be focusing on a small, representative selection of Hutchinson's poetry. I will employ Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory which proposes the deterritorializing of stable identities through transitory copresences and espouses a positivity of difference in contrast to the defence of the authority of the past. Braidotti focuses on a "biocentred egalitarianism which requires us to synchronise the perception and anticipation of togetherness, of our shared, common condition." Alongside this I will be engaging with Bracha Ettinger's concepts of transconnectedness, borderlinking and co-emergence, as a line of thought to understand the mechanisms and the implications of Hutchinson's work on the subject as a multiplicity, a process and becoming.

### **The House that Pearse built: opening the Hutchinson Archive Hugh Murphy and Ciara Joyce**

In late 2013 agreement was reached with the estate of the renowned writer Pearse Hutchinson to permanently deposit his archive in the Library at Maynooth University. While this will lead to a variety of provisions, such as an annual bursary and colloquia, at the centre of the whole project is the archival collection, in breadth and content, every bit as extraordinary as the man.

One of the central roles of an academic library and archive is to support research, teaching and learning - and in the Hutchinson Archive, Maynooth University acquired a collection that will reward research, not just from the literary angle, but from historians, sociologists and more. The archive, which Declan Kiberd has called *'an alternative cultural history of Ireland'* is incredibly dense and diverse, allowing a researcher chart the development of a poet's craft, but also showing aspects of life in Dublin and beyond in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland. An archive of this size and diversity brings with it both challenges and obligations, this talk, given by two members of Library staff will:

- Outline the Library's rationale for acquiring this collection,
- Place it in the context of our collections
- Explore the potential of the archive
- Provide an overview of its contents, with some notable highlights

### **Two young men: Identity and belonging in Pearse Hutchinson's Poetry Dr Ed Madden**

Irish gay writing, especially before decriminalization, is almost inevitably transcultural in reference and transnational in scope, as queer forms of identity and belonging seem to depend on cross-cultural influences. Read against this work, Pearse Hutchinson's poetry—marked as it is by transcultural expansiveness, translingual generousities, and rhizomatic and peripatetic energies—seems both to exemplify and to exceed a transcultural paradigm of sexual identity formation. Using Hutchinson's "Two Young Men" as a touchstone text, an

comparing his work to the poetry of Frank McGuinness and Padraig Rooney, this essay will examine representations of gender and sexual identity in Hutchinson's work.

### **Reading Nature in Pearse Hutchinson's Late Poetry**

**Dr Lucy Collins**

In the course of his writing career Pearse Hutchinson's poetry showed an increasing engagement with the aesthetic and moral obligation of close observation. Nowhere is this more evident than in his treatment of the natural world, especially of its ordinary details, made extraordinary by the act of poetic witness. In this paper I will explore the evolving presence of nature in Hutchinson's work and consider its relationship to the transformative role of art.

### ***'unspilled at the angled brim'***

**P. J. Kavanagh in conversation with Vincent Woods**

In a public conversation with Vincent Woods, P.J. Kavanagh will discuss his friendship with Pearse Hutchinson, and share his memories of their time and experiences in Barcelona, London, the Cotswolds and various parts of Ireland. Kavanagh will recall his first meeting with Hutchinson, described in vivid detail in his memoir 'The Perfect Stranger', and recount how together they organised the first public readings of Catalan poetry in Barcelona under the Franco government. They will discuss Pearse Hutchinson's poetry and its influence on Kavanagh and his work, and Hutchinson's role in introducing Kavanagh to many Irish writers and literary landscapes.