

Institution: St Mary's University College
Unit of Assessment: 36: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Title of case study: Counterrealism in Modern and Contemporary Irish Literature and Film
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study focuses primarily on Dr Keith Hopper's work on Flann O'Brien and Neil Jordan. It demonstrates his re-evaluation of modern and contemporary Irish writers and filmmakers, combined with his accessible exploration of the interfaces between fiction and film. Hopper's research focuses on formally innovative texts which challenge the dominant conventions of Irish and international realism. This impacts on the public understanding of Irish culture through Hopper's extensive print reviews, as well as his public lectures for adult education and non-academic audiences. Based at the St Mary's Centre for Irish Studies (CIS) since August 2012, the impact from research undertaken in 2012-13 draws, unsurprisingly, on his already established research. As an essayist, editor, broadcaster and speaker, Hopper has a proven commitment to adult education, online and distance learning, and the public dissemination of Irish culture.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research relates to three overlapping, ongoing projects: (i) Hopper's long-standing work on Flann O'Brien; (ii) his more recent doctoral work on Neil Jordan; and (iii) his interdisciplinary work on adaptation studies.</p> <p>(i) Hopper has published three book-length works on Flann O'Brien, on whom he is a recognised world authority. The revised 2nd edition of his monograph, <i>Flann O'Brien: A Portrait of the Artist a Young Post-modernist</i> (Cork: Cork UP, 2009), reconfigures O'Brien as a highly subversive writer, and identifies <i>The Third Policeman</i> as one of the earliest examples of post-modernist fiction.</p> <p>In 2011, Hopper co-edited a special Flann O'Brien centenary issue of <i>The Review of Contemporary Fiction</i> (Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press), which includes essays by scholars from Ireland, Britain, the US, the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Singapore and Australia. It was awarded the International Flann O'Brien Society Award for Best Book, 2011-12.</p> <p>In 2013, during his tenure as Research Fellow at the CIS, Hopper co-edited <i>The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien</i> (Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press). This anthology features an inclusive selection of O'Brien's short stories (written under several pseudonyms), as well as his final unfinished novel. It also includes new translations of stories originally published in Irish and other previously unpublished pieces.</p> <p>Hopper has published numerous essays on O'Brien, including a chapter in <i>Literature and Ethics: Questions of Responsibility in Literary Studies</i> (New York: Cambria Press, 2009) and an article in <i>Printed Project 12: Virtual Fictional</i> (Dublin, July 2010). His forthcoming publications include the lead chapter in <i>Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies</i> (Cork: Cork UP, 2014). This research links in with CIS colleagues Dr Richard Mills and Dr Anne Goudsmit, who both work in the area of modern and contemporary Irish writing.</p> <p>(ii) Hopper's work on Neil Jordan centres on his DPhil dissertation (awarded February 2013). This will be published by Oxford University Press in 2014 under the title <i>Imagining Otherwise: Neil Jordan's Fictions and Films</i>. Much has been written about Jordan's film work, although his fiction has been less well served. While this monograph does examine Jordan's films, the primary focus is on the literary texts. Jordan's counterrealist fiction is considered in terms of the Irish literary tradition, and in the broader context of Irish politics and history.</p> <p>Hopper has also published numerous articles on Jordan, including, most recently, an article in</p>

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Litteraria Pragensia (December 2012) and a chapter in *Shadows of the Gunmen: Violence and the Modern Irish Experience* (Cork: Cork UP, 2008). This research links at CIS to Prof Lance Pettitt, who has also written on Jordan's films and non-realist film-work of Thaddeus O'Sullivan and John T. Davis.

(iii) Prior to 2008, Hopper was the general editor of the of the twelve-volume *Ireland into Film* series (Cork UP, 2001-2007), which examined adaptations of Irish literary classics. Authors commissioned include internationally-renowned scholars such as Colin MacCabe, Margot Norris, Cheryl Herr, and Lance Pettitt (whose 2001 volume appeared in the series). This ongoing research on adaptation ties in well with essays by Pettitt on William Trevor (2013) and by Mills on Bernard MacLaverty (2014). Hopper's recent writing on adaptation includes an article in *Danny Boyle: Interviews* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), and a chapter on Aidan Higgins and Harold Pinter in *Aidan Higgins, the Fragility of Form: Critical Essays and Observations* (Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. [Monograph] *Flann O'Brien: A Portrait of the Artist a Young Post-modernist*. Revised 2nd edition, with a foreword by J. Hillis Miller. Cork: Cork UP, 2009. 290pp. [ISBN-13: 978-1-85918-487-5] REF2 output.
2. [Peer-reviewed article (and journal co-editor)] "A Postcard from the Homeland": Neil Jordan's *The Past* (1980). *Litteraria Pragensia* 22.44 (December 2012) [Neglected Irish Fiction issue], 75-90. Ed. Neil Murphy, Keith Hopper & Ondřej Pilný. 147pp. [ISSN 0862-8424] REF2 output.
3. [Book chapter] 'Undoing the Fanaticism of Meaning: Neil Jordan's *Angel*. *Shadows of the Gunmen: Violence and the Modern Irish Experience*. Ed. Danine Farquharson & Sean Farrell. Cork: Cork UP, 2008, 119-41. [ISBN-13: 978-1859184240] REF2 output.
4. [D.Phil dissertation] *Imagining Otherwise: Neil Jordan's Counter-Narratives*. University of Oxford. Awarded February 2013. 281pp. Available in Bodleian Library. Contracted for publication by Oxford University Press, 2014.
5. [Co-Editor] Neil Murphy & Keith Hopper. *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 [Special Flann O'Brien Centenary issue]. Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 2011. 277pp. [ISBN-13: 9781564786463]
6. [Co-Editor] Neil Murphy & Keith Hopper. *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien*. Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 2013. 168pp. [ISBN: 978-1-56478-889]

Most of the underpinning research above has been published by university presses in the UK, Ireland and the US, or peer-review journals or was part of an Oxford University doctorate, with rigorous peer-review. Non-academic reviews of *A Portrait of the Artist a Young Post-modernist* include: 'Hopper makes his point with enviable ingenuity and pervasive force. He wears his stupendous erudition and expertise lightly and writes in a style that is sheer delight... Hopper has managed that rarest of feats: a scientific study from which both the expert and the layman can profit copiously' (*Irish Times*); 'Hopper is a good explicator, his approach is illuminating and such enthusiasm is infectious' (*TLS*); 'a superb academic dismantling of O'Brien's novels' (*Books Ireland*); 'This study is impressive, even brilliant, in its scope, thoroughness, mastery, and persuasiveness' (*CHOICE Reviews Online*).

Non-academic reviews of *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien* include: 'The editors call their collection "an initial act of recovery rather than a completist project," but it comprises a significant chunk of O'Brien's scattered oeuvre' (*New Yorker*); 'The variety taken together displays a playful, sardonic voice that is charmingly self-conscious in its invention' (*Publishers Weekly*); 'a gleeful miscellany' (*Wall Street Journal*); 'The editors... have done a thorough and conscientious job' (*Guardian*); 'In so lovingly collecting and editing Flann O'Brien's widely scattered and almost forgotten short fiction, Keith Hopper and Neil Murphy have done the study of Irish literature a great

service' (*New York Times*).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Throughout his academic career, Hopper has been committed to communicating his work beyond an academic audience, and has maintained a particular interest in adult education and distance learning. From 1999 to the present he has worked as a tutor for Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE). He has taught twenty-four 10-week courses for their Weekly Public Programme Office, specialising in modern and contemporary Irish literature and film, and literary adaptation (his courses since 2008 include 'Flann O'Brien: An Introduction to his Writings' and 'Irish Writing After Joyce'). Since 2008, he has taught six week-long summer school programmes for international students on Irish literature and film. He has also written and taught a series of online programmes for OUDCE, including, most recently, 'Modern Irish Literature' (2008). Hopper has directed and lectured on three Public Day Schools, including 'Modernism and the City' (9 February 2013), "Make It New": Modernist Literature' (11 February 2012), 'James Joyce: New Perspectives' (12 February 2011).

Hopper's research on modern and contemporary Irish literature and film has been disseminated through books, newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV. Prior to 2008, he contributed to two TV documentaries for RTÉ (on Flann O'Brien) and Channel 4 (on Irish cinema). More recently, he contributed to two radio documentaries on Flann O'Brien for *Bookbound* (Dublin City FM, 2009), and *Arts Tonight* (RTÉ Radio 1, 2011): <http://www.rte.ie/radio1/arts-tonight/programmes/2013/0909/473230-arts-tonight-monday-9-september-2013/?clipid=1307036> [listening figures: 15,000].

Hopper has written essays and reviews on Flann O'Brien for the *New Statesman* ('With Love and Squalor' ['Critic at Large'], 15 August 2011) and the *Irish Times* ('The Balm and the Bane of the Intelligentsia', 26 March 2011), and is a regular contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement*. His influence in shaping the public appreciation of contemporary Irish literature and film is evidenced in his most recent articles for the *TLS*:

- 'No Apologies' [review of three books by Desmond Hogan] (26 July 2013), 20.
- Review of *The Scattering* by Jaki McCarrick (7 June 2013), 21.
- Review of *Shall We Gather at the River* by Peter Murphy (15 February 2013), 22.
- 'Irish Slides' [review essay of two books on Irish cinema] (16 November 2012), 31.

The main findings of Hopper's research have been communicated to audiences at cultural events, talks, and discussions at community, national and international locations. To mark the centenary of Flann O'Brien's birth in 2011, he was the keynote speaker at international conferences held in Singapore and Vienna. Several other centenary events were open to the public, including talks for the Woodstock Literary Society, Oxfordshire (December 2011), the Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith, London (October 2011), Trinity College, Dublin (October 2011), Birkbeck College, London (May 2011), and Sligo Institute of Technology (February 2010). Hopper is also a member of the International Flann O'Brien Society (Steering Committee, 2011-present).

This impact feeds into a developing network of links with cultural and community organisations in Britain and Ireland, and further afield in Europe and Southeast Asia. In June 2013, to mark the publication of *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien*, the book was launched at the Irish Embassy in Rome during the Second International Flann O'Brien Conference (this event was covered by the *Irish Times*: <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-hard-life-meets-la-dolce-vita-1.1438055>). Other recent public events include an interview with actors/directors Mark O'Halloran and Mikel Murfi at Università Roma Tre (June 2013), and a public lecture on Flann O'Brien at St Mary's University College (April 2013). In February 2013, Hopper chaired a panel on Irish literature for *Irish Writing London* at the Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith, which led to him being invited to join the Advisory Board of the Irish Writers' Festival, London.

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As part of the 2013 Irish Writers Festival, Hopper was invited to give a public lecture on Flann O'Brien at House of Commons, London (8 October 2013). (Although strictly speaking this event falls beyond the census cut-off date (31 July), the impact being claimed is evidence of Hopper's research influence on the group of MPs who sponsored the event, i.e. the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Irish in Britain, a body of considerable significance in this context.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- **Times Literary Supplement:** <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/tlssearch.do?querystring=keith+hopper§ionId=1797&p=tl> [print circulation: 30,834; readership: 100,000 worldwide]
- **New Statesman:** <http://www.newstatesman.com/fiction/2011/08/flann-brien-nolan-irish-joyce> [print circulation: 24,910; unique visitors to newstatesman.com (2012): 1.15 million]
- **Irish Times** (IFOBS award): <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/give-a-dogma-a-bad-name-1.1438669>;
- **New Yorker:** <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2013/08/books-to-watch-out-for-august.html>
- **Publishers Weekly:** <http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-56478-889-4>
- **New York Times:** http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/books/review/the-short-fiction-of-flann-obrien.html?_r=0

Individual users/beneficiaries:

- Academic Programmer and Tutor, OUDCE.
- International Flann O'Brien Society, Vienna Centre for Irish Studies.
- Director of Irish Writers' Week, Irish Arts UK.
- Chair of the Research Committee, Institute of Technology, Sligo, Ireland.