Keynote Speaker

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Abstract

Rigour or Vigour? Disciplinarity in Irish Studies
Irish Studies is always presented as an interdisciplinary venture. But what are the stakes of interdisciplinarity in the field? What sort of interdisciplinarity is it? What is its history? What is its relation to multi-disciplinarity, and post-disciplinarity? How do disciplinary modes in Irish Studies relate to international institutional and structural shifts in the humanities and social sciences? What underlies the values that cleave to it and the language it deploys? Interdisciplinarity, like ecumenism or credit unions, tends to attract reflexive and universal approval. Both university management and humanities academics tend to speak of it as a desirable method. But the recent history of Irish Studies reveals friction and even hostility when disciplines (such as cultural studies and history) encroach upon one another. This lecture seeks to address the collusions and the collisions between the disciplinary lines within Irish Studies and thereby to delineate promising pathways for the future of the field.

Biography
Rónán McDonald took up the inaugural Australia Ireland Fund Chair in Modern Irish Studies at the University of New South Wales in April 2010, where he is also the Director of the John Hume Institute of Global Irish Studies. He was educated at University College Dublin and the University of Oxford and has published widely in the field of Irish Studies, especially modern Irish literature. Rónán is also interested in modern criticism and theory and the intersections of literature with ideas of ‘value’.