

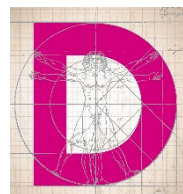
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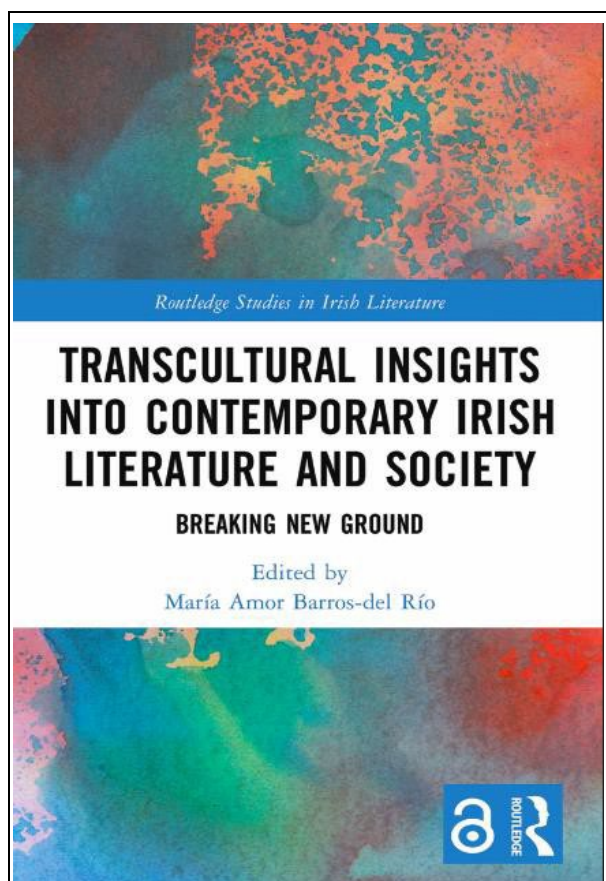


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**BOOK REVIEW: *TRANSCULTURAL INSIGHTS INTO
CONTEMPORARY IRISH LITERATURE AND SOCIETY: BREAKING
NEW GROUND***

RESEÑA DE LIBRO: *TRANSCULTURAL INSIGHTS INTO
CONTEMPORARY IRISH LITERATURE AND SOCIETY: BREAKING
NEW GROUND*

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Transcultural Insights into Contemporary Irish Literature and Society: Breaking New Ground, edited by María Amor Barros-del Río, is a book published by Taylor & Francis Group in 2025. The editor of the book and the contributors are tenured academics from different universities around the world.

This book is a well-curated compilation of critical essays of canonical Irish Literature. The main goal is to be a unique exchange of intercultural dialogues written by several tenured professors from different universities around the world. The volume applies a dedicated transcultural lens to Irish Literature and Society. Through a diachronic approach, the book examines the transcultural patterns from the 20th century to present days. The introduction to the book is written by the editor María Amor Barros-del Río, professor of English Studies at the University of Burgos, and secretary of the Spanish Association of Irish Studies (AEDEI). In the introduction, Barros-del Río presents a theoretical manifesto for the transcultural shift in Irish Studies. As a result of globalisation, Ireland underwent a process of transformation that led to migration flows, exchanges of ideas, and technological expansion, all of which contributed to the phenomenon of multiculturalism. Taking into account Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the 'contact zone' and the question of the idea of 'the New Irishness' as "fixed and immutable" (xix), Barros-del Río establishes the thesis of this book, presenting Irish identity as a fluid and transcultural exchange. Barros-del Río argues that literature is the primary source of social change in Ireland and, with this book aims to provide a critical tool for students and 'Break New Ground' through transcultural dialogue.

The book is structured in three parts and a Coda. Each section contains a series of essays that follow the chronology of the topics covered in the book. The first part entitled "Texts that Blur Frontiers: The Island of Ireland and Beyond", comprises three essays that analyse literary works which demonstrate that Irish identity is not a fixed concept, but instead, a fluid conversation occurring both at home and across the world. The first essay is written by Mariana Bolfarine and is entitled "Transculturality and the Ghost of Roger Casement in *Ulysses*, by James Joyce." Bolfarine blurs the frontier between nationalism and globalism and looks at how Joyce's *Ulysses* employs the figure of Casement's ghost to connect Irish struggles and identity to global human rights and colonial critiques in Africa and South America. The second essay, titled "Censorship and the Poetry of Cícaran Carson and Marin Sorescu: A Transcultural Reading," author Shannon Kuta Kelly blurs the frontier between geographies, as it compares the "frontier" of Northern Ireland during the Troubles with the "frontier" of life under a communist regime in Romania. "Transculturality and Seán Dunne's Translation of Russian Poetry," the title of the third essay and written by Stephanie Schwerter, blurs the frontier between languages. By translating poets like Akhmatova or Pasternak, Dunne shows that an Irish poet can find home in the words of someone from a completely different era.

The second part of the book is entitled "Transcultural Writers and Global Entanglements" and contains three other essays that address contemporary writers who treat diversity and hybridisation as a result of transnational encounters and physical borders. The first essay of this second part, is named "Social Borders and Contact Zones in Leland Bardwell's *Different Kinds of Love*." Burcu Gülüm Tekin examines Leland

Bardwell's short stories as an act of 'contact zones,' Pratt's concept; as a space where different cultures and marginalised groups meet. The essay centers on how Bardwell breaks the social borders of 20th century Ireland and creates a new, transcultural version of "Irishness." The fifth essay is entitled "Contested Boundaries and Uncharted Entanglements in Evelyn Conlon's *Moving About the Place*" and is written by Melania Terrazas and María Amor Barros-del Río. This text focuses in Evelyn Conlon and the concept of mobility. Conlon's female characters emigrate to Australia or London, as a way to escape Ireland's restrictions. The last essay of this second part is written by professor at the University of Coruña, David M. Clark. Entitled "Transculturality and Ken Bruen's Crime Fiction," this essay explores how Ken Bruen entangles the American hard-boiled fiction in a place such as Galway. A sense of connection to American jazz culture and film noir is more predominant than with Irish culture.

The third part of the volume is entitled "Irish Social Diversity and Contemporary Literature in Dialogue" and contains four essays that focus on Ireland's current ethnic and racial diversification and the way that instances of hybridisation, diversity and assimilation are depicted in literature (Barros-del Río xxiii). The first essay of this part is entitled "Transcultural Practices, Teenage Pregnancy and Abortion in Irish Young Adult Literature" and it is written by Iria Seijas-Pérez. This essay looks at Young Adult (YA) novels like Claire Hennessy's *Like Other Girls* and Moira Fowley-Doyle's *All the Bad Apples*, "two novels that portray teenage efforts to access abortion in pre-Repeal Ireland" (Barros-del Río xxiii). "Migrations in Times of Referendums. Transcultural Negotiations in Donal Ryan's *Strange Flowers* and Oona Frawley's *Flight*: "Why Ireland?... Don't Go to England," corresponds to the second essay of the book. Margarita Estévez-Saá, analyses *Strange Flowers* by Donal Ryan, and *Flight*, by Oona Frawley, two novels that explore how migration is depicted in the context of Brexit and the 2004 Ireland's Referendum on Citizenship. Asier Altuna-García De Salazar contributes the third essay, entitled "Negotiating Second-Generation Transcultural Irishness: Susan Ryan's *The King of Lavender Square*," which highlights Ireland as a multicultural hub that has given rise to a second generation of Irish people who are redefining the meaning of Irish identity. Finally, the last essay of this volume is titled "Resistance and Activism in Queer and HIV/AIDS Irish Theatre" and it is written by J. Javier Torres-Fernández. This essay addresses four Irish theatre productions through a transcultural lens in a diachronic way: first, Declan Hughes's *Digging for Fire* (1991); second, Sebastian Barry's *The Pride of Parnell Street* (2007); third, Philip McMahon's *Once Before I Go* (2021); and fourth, Panti Bliss's *If These Wigs Could Talk* (2022) (Torres-Fernández 158). The author argues how Irish queer theatre has been influenced by transcultural traits from the American panorama.

The final part of the book is a Coda, a separate, concluding section that completes the text. Entitled "The Past, the Present and the Wonderful, Worrisome Future: Transculturalism, Memory and Crisis in Irish Studies" and written by Gerry Smith, this chapter reflects on the past and the present of Irish Studies and "suggests potential modes of re-orientation" (Barros-del Río xxv). The Coda serves as a final checkpoint for the volume, as Smith cautions scholars to utilise transculturality to address real-world

problems such as social injustice and the climate change crisis, as it is a powerful tool for comprehending contemporary Ireland.

I strongly believe that *Transcultural Insights into Contemporary Irish Literature and Society: Breaking New Ground*, clearly encompasses the essence of transculturality across all aspects of Irish literature and society. In addition to serving as a means of broadening the reach of Irish literature in educational settings. This book provides a new cross-cultural perspective on Irish literature and society. I highly recommend this book to students and academics interested in modern Irish literature, as it can serve as a reference book, as well as to readers of Irish authors who wish to understand the social context that inspires their novels.