

**Canadian Association for Irish Studies  
2024 Annual Meeting**

**Irish Ages: Time & The Anthropocene**

**University of Galway, June 5-7 2024**

*“That double-headed monster of damnation and salvation — Time.” ~ Samuel Beckett*

*“No preacher is listened to but Time, which gives us the same train and turn of thought that elder people have in vain tried to put in our heads before.” ~ Jonathan Swift*

Understandings of time, age, ages, and the human activities that have shaped our historical and contemporary environments are important underpinnings for numerous disciplines across Irish Studies. Irish poets, authors, filmmakers, and musicians have created countless musings on childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and death. Geologists and geographers have highlighted Ireland’s significance within a variety of ecological ages, and nowhere is this more urgent than in our present era, the age of the Anthropocene, wherein these observations intersect with a realization that the distinction between human beings and our natural environments has become a porous and ever-shifting border. The importance of acknowledging time factored heavily into the recent Decade of Centenaries commemorations across the island of Ireland and the diaspora, with various political consequences and cultural emphases based on either the passage of time or its continuing sense of immediacy. Social activists, environmentalists, politicians, and engaged citizens often cite time as a key factor in advancing their respective desires for change, continuity, or reform. The question of time and its relationship to the environment seems to always return to its effects on humanity rather than how humanity affects it. Reconfiguring this relationship to admit the impact of human development across/through time is to take the first steps toward framing the Anthropocene in Irish studies. Irish habitats and ecosystems tell stories about how we live *as a part of them* as much as those same authors, filmmakers, and musicians tell stories *about* them. As an island, Ireland is particularly sensitive to the relationships between time and human activity. Is the loss of Irish worlds an inevitable outcome of human interference in the Anthropocene Age? In such an age, can Irish studies imagine futures where urgency to achieve a new equilibrium between humanity and the natural world, bound as it is by time and space, can be clearly and meaningfully articulated?

Through the broadly-defined theme of “Irish Ages: Time & The Anthropocene,” the Canadian Association for Irish Studies invites paper and panel proposals for the 2024 CAIS Conference, to be held at the University of Galway from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, in concert with the Fourth Galway Conference in Irish Studies. Potential paper topics include but are not limited to:

- Ireland’s evolving physical and cultural landscapes
- Depictions of time in Irish culture and literature
- The changing human environment: urban and non-urban
- Conceptions of age and time in Ireland and the Irish Diaspora

- Space, time, and Ireland's climate
- Ireland and childhood/boyhood/girlhood/youth
- Age and Irish migration
- Intergenerational time and the tracing of "Irish roots"
- The place of time in theorizing colonialism in Ireland
- The challenges of periodization across disciplines in Irish Studies
- Memory studies
- Ireland and gerontology
- Historical geographies of resource use in Ireland
- Artistic/photographic representations of Irish age(s) and the environment
- The changing roles and impacts of the Irish Diaspora across time and place
- Ireland and geological ages
- Periodizing economic and social transformation in Ireland
- Time's effect on economic contexts and notions of social class in Ireland

We also seek papers from any aspect of Irish Studies and strongly encourage graduate student submissions. We accept individual papers or panels (three papers and a chair) in English, Irish, or French. Conference highlights will include a workshop on "alternative academic pathways" and graduate skills, as well as a field trip to Coole Park, an Irish-language film evening, a special presentation on the Kerby A. Miller Collection of Emigrant Letters and Memoirs, and the traditional CAIS end-of-conference banquet. Plenary keynotes will be given by Maureen O'Connor (University College Cork), Mark McGowan (University of Toronto), and Frank Ludlow (Trinity College Dublin).

Please send submissions to [caisgalwayconference2024@gmail.com](mailto:caisgalwayconference2024@gmail.com) by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Proposals should include a title, 250-word abstract for each paper submitted, a brief biography, and an email address for future correspondence.