

Forging Ahead Irish Studies in Brazil

Avançando os Estudos Irlandeses no Brasil

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Abstract: *This article retraces the trajectory of Irish Studies in Brazil from its early beginnings in the 1970s to its present consolidation within national and transnational academic networks. Drawing on personal and institutional recollections, it examines the establishment of the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo and the foundational role of the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies (ABEI). The essay reflects on the creation and transformation of a field that has evolved through imagination, dialogue, and collaborative crossings. It discusses how Latin American scholars have contributed to decolonizing Irish Studies, internationalizing higher education and forging interdisciplinary bridges between the Humanities and other fields. The article concludes by proposing different strategies for sustainable institutionalization and reciprocal global exchanges that promote a comprehensive internationalization of Irish Studies in the twenty-first century.*

Keywords: *Irish Studies; Internationalization; Latin America.*

Resumo: *Este artigo percorre a trajetória dos Estudos Irlandeses no Brasil desde o início na década de 1970 até a atual consolidação em redes acadêmicas nacionais e transnacionais. Com base em memórias pessoais e institucionais, o artigo analisa a criação da Cátedra de Estudos Irlandeses W. B. Yeats na Universidade de São Paulo e o papel fundamental da Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses (ABEI). Este ensaio reflete sobre a criação e a transformação de um campo que evoluiu por meio da imaginação, diálogo e trocas colaborativas. O texto discute como*

pesquisadores latino-americanos contribuíram para a decolonização dos Estudos Irlandeses, a internacionalização da educação superior e a construção de pontes interdisciplinares entre as Humanidades e outros campos. O artigo conclui com a proposta de diferentes estratégias para a institucionalização sustentável e trocas globais recíprocas a fim de promover a internacionalização abrangente dos Estudos Irlandeses no século XXI.

Palavras-chave: *Estudos Irlandeses; Internacionalização; América Latina.*

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

“He wishes for the cloths of heaven”
by *William B. Yeats*

The first readings of Irish writers as an undergraduate in the 1970s and postgraduate in the 1980s awakened my imagination of Ireland in a time when the flow of knowledge took months to cross the Atlantic and reach far away countries. Letters, postcards, photocopies, books, library loan services and expensive phone calls built our bridges with the Irish literary and academic world and kept alive the dreams of learning more about Irish culture. It took time to embroider the cloths of knowledge about the island and its history, literature and art, and construct a site to share and multiply it. Today, various ways of communication, virtual seminars, lectures and online meetings, e-books, and a rich cultural diaspora motivate the crossings. The initial sparks blowing out of dreams lightened the road of Irish Studies in Brazil, and it was precisely the poem by William Butler Yeats that opens this article that inspired us to name the Chair of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo.

In a previous essay, “Why Ireland and Irish Studies in South America?” (2021),¹ I focused on the development of a growing interest in Ireland and its literature in non-English speaking countries across the Atlantic from a Brazilian perspective. Munira Mutran wrote about the beginnings of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo and, as she said, we have

been working together since then, first as a Master's and Doctoral postgraduate student, until nowadays as professor and coordinator of the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies. In this article I will add my recollections to her reminiscences and use the blacksmith forge as a metaphor of the present state of the art, to conjure up a fruitful dialogue with Ireland looking towards the beauty and newness of the transcultural cloths that will be embellished by the future crossings.

Why has Ireland been in the focus of non-English speaking countries? Irish writers have been part of the syllabus of English Literature in the educational system worldwide. The Irish Renaissance, led by W. B. Yeats and his generation's legacy, the sharing of a similar past of colonial experience, in conjunction with the Irish emigration history to faraway lands, awoke the interest of South American scholars. Though the Irish in South America have not been in the scope of Irish historians and cultural or literary critics till the turn of the century,² Latin American scholars have been researching the Irish presence in their region since the second half of the twentieth century, whose results should be inscribed on the global Irish agenda.³

Artworks have always been notable for their engagement with society and “for their prophetic reading of the forces at work in their time” (Kiberd 4). The fact that a cultural revival came first and encouraged the Irish political revolution, and that the nineteenth-century emigration of thousands of Irish men and women helped shape modern Latin America, have inspired Irish Studies at the crossroads of literature, history, and culture. This once national and artistic intensity in Irish artworks opened up new paths to be trodden by researchers who are interested in studying the present and speedy transformations in Ireland.

Brazil has not had a significant inflow of Irish immigration, neither in the past nor in the present. Settlement patterns were sporadic and more geographically concentrated in Argentina and the levels of a re-emigration from Brazil to other destinations were high since the mid-1500s. Keeping this in mind, this article will tackle three main contemporary issues: what is the role of Irish Studies within the local educational system and its impact for future studies in times of global economic and political uncertainties, fears, and instabilities? What are the implications of this field of research within the Humanities in a decolonizing age? Which are the strategies for its consolidation on an institutional level?

Irish Studies in Brazilian Higher Education

Since the end of last century, the aim of Latin American universities has been to improve the quality of learning and to increase social inclusion to attend national and regional needs. More recently, their target has been to construct a Latin American knowledge network that could identify itself and interact with world knowledge. Ireland has become the centre of world interest in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries since the War of Independence, followed by the political consequences of its partition, Civil War, the ensuing political instability and violence of the Troubles. This continued as the Republic's economy transformed from the "doom and gloom of the 1980s to the roaring tiger of the 1990s" (Keogh 411). Currently, it faces challenges within the European Union due to Brexit's impact on the Irish border. From a parallel viewpoint, Brazil has also been under the world's lens due to its political and economic instability. This includes disputes over Amazonian natural resources, accusations of violence against indigenous communities, dispersed immigrant populations contributing to national development, and a history of internal conflicts, coups, and dictatorships. In a mirror-like dynamic, Brazil is economically and politically the reverse of the coin as it experiences the devastating effects of repeated crises of democracy. Social, historical and intellectual intersections and parallels exist in the political configurations of our times and motivate collaborative academic studies to create theoretical crossovers and understand wider conjunctures within the global situation.

When we started Irish Studies in Brazil we were linked geographically to the Embassy of Ireland in Portugal until the establishment of an Embassy in Brasília in 2001. Ironically and understandably, due to economic reasons and the lack of a significant Irish community, the Irish diplomatic representation followed the colonial system considering Portugal and Brazil united through its language. Since the 1980s, Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations on Irish literature have explored the work of various Irish writers of fiction, drama and poetry in the Postgraduate Programme at the University of São Paulo. Later, other paths have been trailed, such as Irish theatre, literature of the Irish diasporas; Irish-Latin American Migration Studies, Irish-Brazilian/Irish-Argentinean historical connections; Irish filmography and translation studies – for example, the reception of James Joyce, George Bernard Shaw and Samuel Beckett, a cartography of Irish immigration and Irish women in South America, the production of Irish theatre on the Brazilian stage, itinerant exhibitions and film festivals,

including a national screening of Irish films during the pandemic on an online platform of the government of the state of São Paulo and dramatic readings.⁴



Film festivals at Cinusp. Source: W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies.



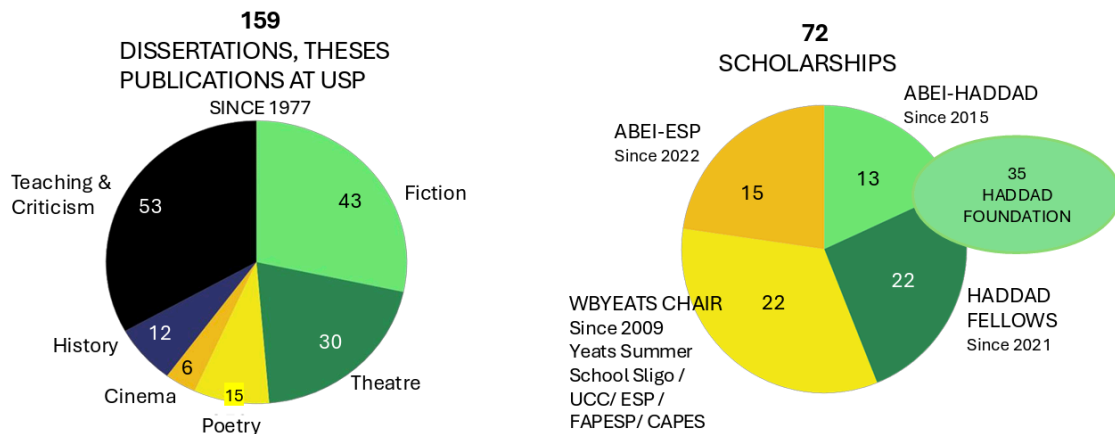
“Entanglement”, art exhibition by Rita Duffy at Centro MariAntonia (USP), 2024.
<https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/exposicoes>

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and comparative studies open up the field of Irish Studies. As a result, the Postgraduate Programme at the University of São Paulo has generated 67 multipliers who are now professors at various universities in 13 Brazilian states, introducing their own students to this field of research. Moreover, Bloomsday has been celebrated in 16 Brazilian cities.⁵

Local research by independent and academic scholars have highlighted the contribution of Irish nineteenth-century travel writers and diasporic Irish to Brazil. These include Marion, Michael and Edward Mulhall, who settled in Argentina and travelled across Brazil, writing about the richness of its lands; William Scully, the editor of the *Anglo-Brazilian Times* in Brazil (1865-1884), who promoted Irish immigration in his Letter to the Irish Clergy (n° 41, Year II, Rio de Janeiro, 9 Oct. 1866); Irish engineers and scientists connected the world by submarine telegraphic cable; Irish writers and philosophers, such as Jonathan Swift and Edmund Burke, were translated in Brazil; references to or traces of Irish authors have also been discovered in regional Latin American newspapers and narratives. Several critical, literary and history books have been published since the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶ Literary manuscripts, relevant historical documents and nineteenth-century newspapers of the Irish community in South America demand urgent digitization to be accessed and studied by a larger number of researchers who will complete the cartography of Irish Studies.⁷

The founding of *The Brazilian Association of Irish Studies* (ABEI) in 1989, with its yearly Symposium of Irish Studies in South America since 2006 and the Irish Studies Forum since 2011, as well as the establishment of the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo in 2009, have forged the present and future of Irish Studies hand in hand.⁸ Similarly to Seamus Heaney’s poem “The Forge” (2009), ABEI and the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies have been shaping together raw materials and new potential with their respective publications, organizations of symposia, courses and exhibitions not only in Brazil but also in Argentina (since 1997), Chile (2018), Peru (2021) and Mexico (2025). In 2022, as the result of the expansion of Irish Studies into neighboring countries, an Alliance of Chairs of Irish Studies in Latin America was created, with partner universities agreeing to host ABEI symposia. Three universities -- UNLPam (Argentina), USP (Brazil), and UNAM (Mexico) -- have offered a transnational undergraduate course every year since 2023. Academic exchange agreements with Irish universities have promoted joint-projects and publications, and the W. B. Yeats Chair has hosted Brazilian and foreign researchers with renewed interests that inspire

connections with Ireland and other countries within the fields of Humanities, Science and Technology. To build a bridge between Science and Arts (STEAM), scholarships have been established for postgraduate and undergraduate research and mobility. These scholarships offer students the chance to conduct on-site research, participate in IASIL Conferences in Ireland and other countries, and attend courses at Irish University Summer Schools. Notably, the ABEI/Haddad scholarships and the Haddad Fellowships for MA studies at Trinity College Dublin are also significant.⁹



210 Irish guest speakers: Professors and writers since 1983



11 Irish State Visits: 3 presidents: Mary Robinson, Mary McAleese & Michael D. Higgins; Taoiseach 'Bertie' Ahern & 7 Ministers.



National & International Research Networks

1. Irish Literature (since 1977)
2. From Ireland to Brazil: Critical Texts [2006-2008] (since 2006)
3. Irish Immigrants in South America; Roger Casement in Brazil [1996-2006] (since 1996)
4. SPeCTReSS – Cultural Trauma in Irish Literature: Emigration, Easter Rising, Civil War, Independence War, The Troubles [2014-2017] (since 2014)
5. Crises of Democracy: Cultural Approaches [2018-2019] (since 2018)



233 USP events: courses, lectures, exhibitions, webinars, international & national conferences, streaming of films and documentaries, theatre, music.

Heaney’s poem “The Forge” has also inspired the coordination of the Chair since its establishment in 2009:

All I know is a door into the dark.
Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting;
Inside, the hammered anvil’s short-pitched ring,
The unpredictable fantail of sparks
Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water.
The anvil must be somewhere in the centre,
Horned as a unicorn, at one end and square,
Set there immovable: an altar
Where he expends himself in shape and music.
Sometimes, leather-aproned, hairs in his nose,
He leans out on the jamb, recalls a clatter
Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows;
Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and flick
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows.

I have been observing attentively the external world of Irish Studies and compared it with the interior of our forge where the absence of an Irish-Brazilian community is “silently present”, while a growing consolidated academic interest in Irish literature has “set there immovable”. Metaphorically, when we were moving forward to an act of creation shaping and refining aesthetic perspectives and discovering new contents, I asked myself: how can the results of our research in Irish-South American Studies (and more broadly, Irish-Latin American Studies) be part of an alchemical process of refining a world knowledge network in times of globalization when government policies and, consequently, university policies, are reducing not only funding but also discrediting Humanities? How can we decolonize Irish Studies and renew the links with Irish institutions opening “doors into the dark” to enhance our understanding on the ways of living?

“A door into the dark”: Irish Studies in the Age of Globalization

Given Brazil’s vastness, there has always been a significant effort to integrate Irish Studies scholars who have graduated from USP and other universities’ Postgraduate Programs. The thematic project I coordinated “From Ireland to Brazil: Critical Texts” (2006-2009), funded by FAPESP (São Paulo State Research Funding Agency), aimed to construct, firstly, a national

knowledge network. This knowledge has been shared with specialists and the general public through extra-mural courses, the publication of books, and the organisation of exhibitions and events. Various symposia have provided the interaction opportunities among colleagues of border countries and guest speakers from other European, Canadian and American Associations and Centres, such as AEDEI, IASIL, SILAS, CAIS, EFACIS, and ACIS. Exchange agreements with some of their universities were signed within a growing institutional process of internationalization. These double-way border-crossing activities between diverse national systems of higher education have established strong links between Irish partner universities and the University of São Paulo, where the W. B. Yeats Chair is based. The Chair has prioritized the continuity of tradition and the intergenerational transfer of skills: “Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting; Inside, the hammered anvil’s short-pitched ring,/ The unpredictable fantail of sparks/ Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water” (Heaney 1969).

The initial “fantail of sparks” subsequently extended to universities in neighboring countries. The first international joint project, “Las Américas e Irlanda: Estudios culturales y traducción” [The Americas and Ireland: Cultural studies and translation] (2007-2014), was developed with Prof. Maria Graciela Eliggi from Universidad Nacional de La Pampa, Argentina. This collaboration followed her co-hosting the second ABEI Symposium in Buenos Aires in 2007 and postgraduate courses I have taught at her institution since 1997. Professor Eliggi has spread academic activities on Irish Studies in her country and co-hosted additional ABEI symposia in Buenos Aires (2009), Santa Rosa (2013) and Córdoba (2015), inviting other leading universities to join her efforts. She also led the foundation of the Association of Irish Studies of the South (AEIS) following ABEI’s model and became its first president. Some books published by the W. B. Yeats Chair were translated into Spanish within that former project – for example, *Roger Casement in South America* (2012), the result of a collaborative work with the historian Angus Mitchell, which was published in Brazil in 2010 and led to the recent publication of the translation of *16 Lives. Roger Casement* (2025) into Spanish by the Chair Edna O’Brien and Colum McCann established at her university after W. B. Yeats Chair’s model.

The “hiss when a new shoe toughens in water” is heard when the W. B. Yeats Chair also joined two challenging international and interdisciplinary research networks led by Professor Jane Ohlmeyer from Trinity College Dublin: “SPeCTReSS – Social Performance, Cultural Trauma and the Reestablishing Solid Sovereignties” (2014-2017), funded by the European

Commission Marie Curie Foundation; and “Crises of Democracy through the Prism of Cultural Trauma” (2018-2019), funded by US Mellon Foundation within the global network of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI).¹⁰ SPeCTReSS was a four-year transnational consortium that facilitated scholarly exchanges between nine prestigious universities. The consortium focused on exploring cultural trauma and national identities across various national and regional contexts. Its aim was to demonstrate how arts and culture reflect societies experiencing profound and traumatic stress. As part of the initiative, 27 early and senior researchers participated in workshops and delivered courses at USP. Concurrently, 14 early and senior USP researchers traveled to European universities to present their work. A central inquiry of the 18-month Crises of Democracy Global Humanities Institute (GHI) project was: “What factors globally are enhancing the appeal of populist and authoritarian governance over democratic approaches?” An open online syllabus¹¹ and publications shared the transdisciplinary knowledge and skills developed over the course of both projects and disseminated the results in institutions and to wider society.¹²

Two important new projects are being developed this year to commemorate the 50 years of relations between Ireland and Brazil from a literary and interdisciplinary perspective: this special issue of *ABEI Journal*, Vol.1, 2025, idealized by ABEI, and the “Joyce - Guimarães Rosa: An Encounter”, designed by the W. B. Yeats Chair. The latter’s aim is to bring the two outstanding authors together due to the highly experimental nature of their masterpieces, their revolutionary use of language, and the subversion of conventions in their fiction. Two events have already taken place at Trinity College Dublin and at University College Cork, with the shared support of the Embassy of Brazil; two other events, a video and an exhibition, will occur in Brazil in 2025. This also exemplifies the dual benefit of connecting diverse knowledge, fostering a productive dialogue between distinct perspectives.

In “The Changing Debate of Internationalisation of Higher Education”, Ulrich Teichler (2004) affirms that internationalisation “is losing ground to ‘globalization’, increasing border-crossing activities of blurred national systems which is often employed to depict worldwide trends and growing global competition” (Teichler 5). Global processes, while fluid, are influenced by economic, commercial, and communication transformations. However, there is a risk that these processes, despite their fluidity, could become anonymous. The imaginary is a constituent of globalization and, though the positive aspect of the process of globalization of higher education is a move towards global understanding, there

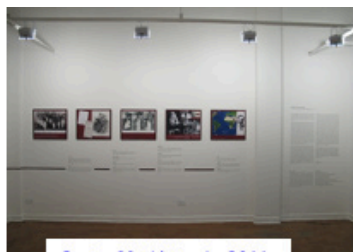
are also various risks to be avoided. To prevent the colonization of minds through a singular, homogeneous perspective, the internationalization of institutional research agendas and student curricula should foster multilingualism and a multicultural, interactive development of global knowledge and understanding. The multifaceted process of internationalization also includes various interdisciplinary dimensions in search for higher quality and for constructing a dialogical and complementary global agenda where discursive tensions fruitfully exist.

One example of a case study of Irish Studies in Brazil is transnational research that started locally in the 1990s when I was researching Irish emigration to South America. This project then evolved to be part of academic international networks. Roger Casement, one of the sixteen revolutionaries of the Easter Rising, was British consul in São Paulo (1906), Belém do Pará (1907) and Rio de Janeiro (1908). His presence was kept invisible in the global agenda and his actions have not been registered in the history of Brazil. The impact of his reports has been silenced for a long time in Ireland after his execution, till *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (1997) as well as *Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness: The 1911 Documents* (2003) were edited and published by the historian Angus Mitchell. Thus, joining common interests with Mitchell and at that time a doctoral student Mariana Bolfarine (now W. B. Yeats Chair's vice-coordinator and associate researcher), the Chair designed and hosted a larger project. In 2010, a conference in Manaus and a series of Seminars in São Paulo in 2011 were organized with a simultaneous launch of the itinerary exhibition and catalogue *Roger Casement in Brazil* (2010), published in English and then translated into Portuguese by Bolfarine and to Spanish by Eliggi, to commemorate the centenary of his trips to the Amazon when he witnessed and denounced the violence perpetrated against the indigenous people and revealed the participation of British capital in the subjugation of the natives during rubber extraction. Then, events and the launch of the first translation into Portuguese of *The Amazon Journal by Roger Casement* (co-edited with Bolfarine)¹³ were organized for the centenary of the Easter Rising. Since 2010, the itinerary exhibition has been launched in Madrid in 2012 at CasAmérica with the presence of Nobel Laureate for Literature Mario Vargas Llosa, in Barcelona (2013), Ireland (Tralee, 2013), Maputo (Mozambique, 2014), Davis University (California, 2016), Lima (Peru, 2017) with the presence of President Michael D. Higgins, and at various cities in Brazil and Argentina during these fifteen years. In 2020, the Brazilian filmmaker Aurélio Michiles finished a joint project with the Chair, a documentary based on Casement's Amazon Journal, *Secrets from Putumayo*, with Stephen Rea as the voice of Roger

Casement and interviews to Irish historian Angus Mitchel, Brazilian writer Milton Hatoum and indigenous leaders of the region.



[Museu de Manaus, 2010](#)



[Centro MariAntonia, 2011](#)



[Casa América, Spain, 2016](#)



[Tralee Library, Ireland, 2016](#)



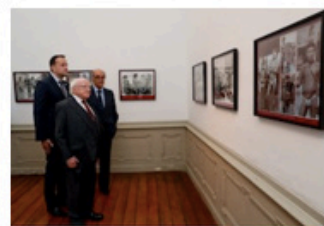
[Banco do Brasil, Brasília, 2016](#)



[Universidade de São Paulo, 2016](#)



[Museu do Estado do Pará, 2016](#)



[Casa Inca Garcilaso, Lima, Peru, 2017](#)



[Cine SESC, São Paulo, 2020](#)

Voices from the present reinterpret descriptions of the past, decolonizing the imperialistic vision of progress and stressing Casement’s denunciations over those made by local journalists or foreign explorers who lost their lives in the region, such as the French naturalist and photographer Eugène Robuchon and the Peruvian journalist Benjamín Saldaña Rocca. Casement wrote about the danger of not returning alive when he entered the River Javari, a region that in June 2023 Bruno Pereira, a Brazilian Indigenous expert and Dom Phillips, a British journalist and longtime Guardian contributor, were killed on the Amazon’s Itaquiá River while returning from a reporting trip to the remote Javari Valley region. In this way, the transnational research helped to retrieve Casement into the national and global history of human rights and the impact of his actions is now inscribed on the global Irish agenda. Moreover, the present situation of the region that has lately called the attention of the global

media, can be widely and better understood from different transnational and global economic and geopolitical perspectives within the Atlantic world context.

The process of internationalisation of European universities is now an unquestionable fact, at least for the mobility and the internationalisation of studies with the aim of finding points of confluence and intersectionality, which address common issues to rethink their impact and reshape the theoretical and political debate from multiple viewpoints. While Heaney uses the anvil as an “altar/ where he [the blacksmith] expends himself in shape and music”, institutions of Higher Education tackle new challenges in their international agendas shaping multidimensional knowledge and means to integrate the global rhythm. They recall past agendas, sometimes with nostalgia, as in the poem: “He leans out on the jamb, recalls a clatter/ Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows”. However, they are on alert to avoid the risks of imposing a homogeneous knowledge and the erasure of differences and ideological conflicts of their locality. This decolonial awareness forms the background that frames a multiple-way mobility of teachers, research staff, and students, as well as the internationalisation of institutional research agendas.

Irish Studies Towards the Future

*[...] Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and flick
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows.
Seamus Heaney*

Since the 2000s, ABEI and the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies have fostered since a circular academic globalization – universities, centres and associations from different countries are in multiple interdependence (Canclini 1999); but how can institutions revert the local knowledge to the Irish world and bring the global Irish knowledge to the local?

European scholars and university administrators used to promote an institutional internationalization supporting symmetrical academic exchanges for the construction of a complementary global knowledge through research networks. However, Latin American institutions have not received a positive double-way signal strong enough to gain a visible academic space in those countries. The hegemonic academic global centres tend not to accept the idea of signing asymmetrical agreements because institutions in Asia or Latin America are not highly qualified in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) or the Times Higher Education

(THE) World University Rankings. Therefore, what are the strategies that Irish Studies scholars could adopt to resist this global trend? Would these strategies be successful enough to establish a double-way exchange without depending on individual scholars as it is happening now? How can South American universities become more transnational?

World university rankings have different methods to evaluate their institutions considering research and discovery, employability and outcomes, learning experience, global engagement, sustainability; or, teaching, research environment, research quality, industry, international outlook. However, they fail to consider the country's economic or political contextual circumstances. In Brazil, the collaboration with Irish universities has been an important component of international strategic aims. In the last years the University of São Paulo has strengthened significant partnerships with Trinity College Dublin, Limerick University, University College Cork, NUI Maynooth, University College Dublin, where an agreement included the development of a project on Brazilian-Portuguese language teaching, and more recently with NUI Galway, due to the generous support of Irish colleagues that have been at USP and participated in the co-supervision of our postgraduate students' research. Equally important are the connections with Irish Studies Associations like AEDEI, IASIL, and SILAS, among others previously noted. But will this first stage of co-operation be continued by other colleagues of the affiliated institutions in the future?

Links are based on personal contacts and research affinities. However, it is important to have a strategy to build up institutional continuity independently of these personal links. In non-English speaking countries, strategies are essential. The University of São Paulo created new learning spaces to encourage interactions among students and faculty. The Intercultural International Centre promoted the creation of "Corners" from countries whose main universities are special partners in different fields of research, mobility and academic exchange. The corners were built with the support of Consulates and Embassies and the university's human capital, through its Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes and Centres; they offer various activities fostering the principles of transversality to promote academic international opportunities and the construction of a solid cultural knowledge.¹⁴



Ireland Corner at USP. Source: W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies.
<https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/inauguracao-do-ireland-corner>

Therefore, I suggest five actions that would allow the institutionalization of Irish Studies in a double-way sustainability:

- Promotion of multilateral alliances with international projects that enhance interdisciplinarity and the transversality of knowledge dealing with the concept of how different spaces can intersect. Thematic projects of research and teaching, including the foreign language of the partner country, may generate agreements that later can make a multilateral educational impact.
- The creation of double-degree courses (undergraduate and postgraduate levels), which are complementary, or rather supplementary, can result in joint-publications and the consolidation of an intercultural and transnational knowledge.
- Transnational online and hybrid courses will allow postgraduates to create their own networks through joint research and then a double-way teaching internships in the partner institution to share the results of their research and be co-supervised by specialists of the host institution.
- Transdisciplinary integration, specifically within STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) fields, is a further challenge for institutional Irish

Studies.

- The creation of stronger links between the embassies and consulate generals of partner countries with Ireland and vice-versa, to renew the Reader Programmes abroad or support a Centre of Studies of their own country at the partner university.

An example of this last proposal became a reality in Ireland. The Guimarães Rosa Lectureship at University College Cork promotes the teaching of Brazilian language and culture while UCC is the first application centre of the Celpe-Bras Exam in Ireland. Celpe-Bras is a certificate of proficiency in Portuguese for foreigners, awarded by Brazil's Ministry of Education. Moreover, in 2023, the Haddad Fellowship Foundation created the Haddad Assistant Professor Grant in Literary and Cultural Translation for a Portuguese-speaking scholar to research, teach, and supervise Brazilian students at Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Studies, also promoting Brazilian research and translation topics. Learning language, literature and culture can motivate Irish students to participate in academic exchanges complementing their studies at Brazilian universities.

These actions may seem rather utopian, I would argue for the importance of transgressive utopian thinking to foster a kind of creative thinking that moves the wheel of innovative alternatives for Irish Studies to achieve the aim of independent institutionalization and play a protagonist role in the global and multilateral agendas of higher education.

“To beat real iron out, to work the bellows”

In conclusion, a comprehensive internationalization of Irish Studies, envisioned through Félix Guattari's concept of transversality (*apud* Cole & Joff 2018), offers the potential for the field to establish its own parameters and affirm the unique contributions of all individuals within the group. In other words, it is an active commitment within one's singularity “to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise” (Hudzik 2011). If we apply a comprehensive internationalization to an Irish Studies research network in the Alliance, and with Irish and other universities, we will be able to decolonize knowledge and counterbalance the risks of academic globalization; the reconfiguration of the relations established within the educational system is necessary to undermine the totalising power of global forces on local life. Irish Studies should remain

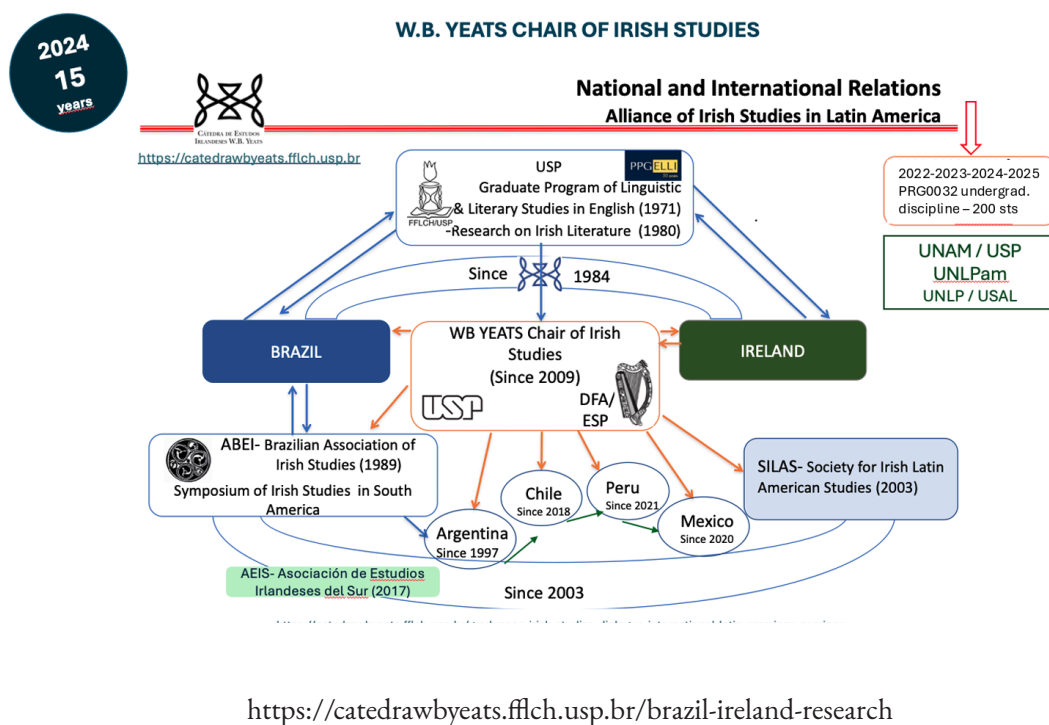
open to global interactions in research, teaching, and staff and student mobility, in multiple directions, to increase close academic relationships with other Centres and Chairs within Ireland and beyond its borders, to achieve an academic network of multilateral dimensions.

International partners are key to creating a comprehensive academic environment. The growing physical presence of scholars developing Irish Studies at USP with the hope of attending joint courses with partner institutions and (still an unrealized desire) to have the opportunity of achieving a joint degree with an Irish university in the near future, reveal a great effort to improve a bilingual proficiency and a rising curiosity towards Irish language and culture in the various fields of research. The increase in articles accepted by joint publications represent an important recognition of the quality of knowledge production in non-English speaking countries.

If we want to create a self-sustained field of Irish Studies, we must consolidate an international academic environment in our institutions capable of creating human resources, plural and highly qualified Higher Education population, and research that will make the difference in the transnational and global world of today. Metaphorically, we should “Beat real iron out, to work the bellows” not only with other universities but also with national and international bodies to do all we can to ensure continued transnational and transversal interactions as fully as possible in the challenging times ahead.

*When shall the stars be blown about the sky,
Like the sparks blown out of a smithy, and die?
Surely thine hour has come, thy great wind blows,
Far-off, most secret, and inviolate Rose?*

“The Secret Rose”, by W. B. Yeats



Notes

- 1 This is an updated article partly based on an essay published in *Estudios irlandeses*. Issue 16, March 2021, pp.196-204. Special thanks to the editors for allowing the reproduction of parts of it. Changes and additions have been done to deepen Brazil-Ireland academic relations. <https://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/2021/03/why-ireland-and-irish-studies-in-south-america/>
- 2 The exception is Patrick O’Sullivan’s edition of the first volume of the series *The Irish World Wide, Patterns of Migration* (1992) which includes Patrick McKenna’s article “Irish Migration to Argentina” (pp.63-83). Thomas Murray published in 1919, in New York, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* which was republished by Cork University Press and Corregidor in 2012.
- 3 In Brazil, Fernando Basto (1971) wrote about the Irish mercenaries in Taperoá; Laura Izarra on the *Irish diaspora in South America* (1994, 2002); Angus Mitchell on *Roger Casement in the Amazon* (1997, 2002); Miguel Alexandre de Araújo Neto (2003) on the Anglo-Brazilian Times; Oliver Marshall publishes an extensive research in English, *Irish and Irish- American Pioneer Settlers in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (2005); Edmundo Murray on the Irish emigration to Argentina (2006). Other publications follow such as Izarra’s *Narrativas de la diáspora irlandesa bajo la Cruz del Sur* (2010); Mariana Bolfarine’s *Between ‘Angels and Demons’: Trauma in Fictional Representations of Roger Casement* (2018); Aurélio Michiles’s documentary *Secrets from Putumayo* (2020).
- 4 <https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/mostras-de-cinema>; <https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/ciclo-de-leitura-de-teatro-irlandes-contemporaneo>
- 5 See the Brazilian trajectory of Irish Studies in the introductions to *Irish Studies in Brazil* (2005), *A New Ireland in Brazil* (2008) and in the *ABEI Journal* 21.2 which celebrates 30 years of the Brazilian

Association of Irish Studies and 10 years of the WB Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at USP. <http://revistas.fflch.usp.br/abei/issue/view/255> . Updated data of theses, dissertations, publications and research can be found at <https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/>

- 6 See Peter O’Neill’s bibliographical data in this ABEI Journal edition.
- 7 The National Library in Rio de Janeiro has microfilms of *The Anglo Brazilian Times*. The newspaper was published in Rio de Janeiro between 1865 and 24 September 1884. It was a political, literary and commercial newspaper published during a difficult diplomatic international crisis involving the governments of the British and Portuguese empires. Other newspapers in Argentina covering news on South America: *The Southern Cross* (1875 till present), *The Standard* (1861-1959), *Fianna* (1910-1912), *The Irish Argentine* (1888-1889). These newspapers published many sketches, short stories, and poems by Irish and Irish diasporic writers, revealing the different cultural, ideological and political aims of their editors.
- 8 Special thanks to the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland/ Emigrant Support Programme and the University of São Paulo for the joint agreement of academic cooperation. See data 1977-2024 collected for the exhibition of the XIX ABEI Symposium of Irish Studies in South America. <https://www.abeibrasil.org/> ; <https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/>
- 9 <https://www.haddadfellowship.com>
- 10 The SPeCTReSS research network had a double-way mobility of 27 experienced and early researchers from nine leading universities <https://spectressnetwork.wordpress.com/about/>. The GHI network has a double-way mobility of 14 scholars <https://www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/media/news/articles/2018-08-03-CHCI.php>
- 11 <https://crisesofdemocracy.home.blog/syllabus/>
- 12 <https://www.livrosabertos.abcd.usp.br/portaldelivrosUSP/catalog/book/949>
- 13 Translated by Mariana Bolfarine (coord.), Mail Marques de Azevedo, Maria Rita Drumond Viana. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2016.
- 14 <https://internationaloffice.usp.br/new/centro-intercultural/>
- 15 <https://internationaloffice.usp.br/en/index.php/the-usp-international-intercultural-center/>

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