Article:
O'Hanlon, K (Cover date: January 2021) The Case for Irish Modernism: Denis Devlin at the League of Nations and 1930s International Broadcasting. Modernism/Modernity, 28 (1). pp. 157-180. ISSN 1071-6068

https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2021.0001

The Case for Irish Modernism: Denis Devlin at the League of Nations and 1930s International Broadcasting

In September 1935, the League of Nations Assembly was hastily convened to discuss the ongoing Abyssinia crisis, with Italy's belligerence making war seem increasingly likely. On 3 September, the Irish delegation to the League departed from Dun Laoghaire on the morning mail boat to London en route to Geneva, the city where, as Susan Pedersen writes, 'internationalism was enacted, institutionalised, and performed', with 'a genuinely transnational officialdom' functioning as 'its beating heart'.[i] The delegation was headed by Éamon de Valera, President of the Executive Council (head of the Irish government) and Minister for the Department for External Affairs. As Michael Kennedy writes, the delegation had Cabinet backing for de Valera's full support for the League's efforts to mediate a solution.[ii] In the role of secretary to the delegation was the poet and diplomatic cadet, Denis Devlin (fig. 1). Devlin was among the 'youngest generation' of Irish poets, modernists such as Thomas MacGreevy and Brian Coffey, in whom a year earlier their fellow modernist and friend Samuel Beckett located 'the nucleus of a living poetic in Ireland' in his August 1934 essay in *The Bookman* 'Recent Irish Poetry', a blistering attack on the 'antiquarians' who followed the poetic line of the Irish Revival.[iii]

On 4 October, two days after Italy invaded Ethiopia, de Valera addressed the nation a day later than scheduled on Radio Athlone (known as 2RN prior to 1933), in which he conceded that all hopes for a League-sponsored peaceful resolution to the crisis were now gone. Several hours earlier on the same station, Devlin, de Valera's most junior diplomat in the delegation, delivered a talk on Irish poetry, 'A Reply to F.R. Higgins', in which he waded into the controversial debates surrounding modernism and revivalism by responding to an earlier series of radio talks by Higgins, a close associate of W.B. Yeats and one of the leading proponents of an anti-modernist, post-revivalist 'racial consciousness' in Irish poetry in English. De Valera's

delayed address on the Abyssinia crisis and Devlin's defence of modernist poetry airing on Radio Athlone on the same night emphasises the cross-fade complexity of Irish modernism's radiophonic mediation, as well as its inextricable situatedness within national and transnational political contexts.

As this article explores, Devlin's involvement in international broadcasting against the backdrop of the September 1935 session of the League has a curious and significant place in the history of Irish modernism.[iv] While the centrality to modernism of what Timothy Campbell calls 'the radio imaginary' has been firmly established thanks to pioneering scholarship in the field, Irish modernism's broadcasting context, with notable exceptions, has not been extensively investigated, studies tending in the main to focus on major figures such as Yeats, and the BBC rather than Irish radio.[v] This article recovers Radio Athlone's role in the 1930s international mediascape as a central, fertile site for debates about Irish revivalism versus modernism, debates which also had echoes in the political intrigue surrounding the direction and legitimacy of the station's state-mandated role as a transmitter of what Richard Pine calls a specifically 'Irish-Ireland' collective consciousness.[vi] While the civil-service staffed, state-controlled origins of the radio station take centre-stage in Pine's authoritative history, by the mid-1930s it played a central role in relaying Irish national identity to international listeners, an identity which was the discursive, debated subject matter of many of its broadcasts. Following the direction of 'archival modernist studies', this essay reconstructs the 'radio imaginary' of these debates in the absence of surviving recordings, weaving the rich and conflicted dynamics of Irish modernism as they emerge in all their historical density (an important corrective to recent nuanced scholarly accounts that unwittingly reproduce conservative dismissals of the historical validity of modernism). By carefully reconstructing Irish modernism's archival traces, this article re-situates competing statements on Irish poetry by modernists and their opponents within the full context of delivery.

The contemporaneous case for Irish modernism as made by one of its most intriguing voices, the diplomat-poet Denis Devlin in his October 1935 talk, further clarifies the case today for the categorical and critical value of Irish modernism (and modernism *tout court*) in contemporary scholarship, which has recently been questioned. The most strident critical intervention in this regard comes from Edna Longley in her study *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (2013), in which the rap-sheet against modernism includes the assertion that its post-hoc 'hegemony' only gained currency in the 1960s Anglophone academy, while the emphasis in New Modernist Studies on a plurality of modernisms instead of a tidy, overarching definition provokes Longley to suggest that 'modernism' is a term of almost meaningless woolly incoherence that critics would be better to jettison.[vii] Leaving aside the fact that problems of historical, and therefore by definition "post-hoc" categorisation bedevil any major cultural-aesthetic complex (Longley's preferred substitution, 'modern', is an obvious example, with Symbolism and Romanticism also curiously unproblematic terms in her book), the underexplored archival traces of the original debates in the 1930s between revivalists and modernists, broadcast internationally on Irish airwaves, challenge Longley's assertions, which have been formed in no small way by critical legacies of post-revivalist gatekeeping and canon-formation. These reconstructed debates bring into focus a generation of Irish poets discernibly modernist in position and often identified as such by contemporaries. Nevertheless, these radio broadcasts were disseminated and made accessible in contexts that do not privilege a simple narrative of literary debate, or recapitulate an overly-crude binary contest between revivalism and modernism. Rather, the surprising transnational cultural and political subtexts of broadcasts on Irish poetry are brought into striking relief, presenting Irish modernism's radiophonic mediation in all its finely-grained complexity.

A 'single partisan review'? The "younger generation" and Irish modernism

The background to Devlin's broadcast talk defending Irish modernism situates it as one intervention within a noisy, richly-variegated ongoing cultural conversation which has not yet received concerted scholarly attention, a fact that obscures the actual state of play of modernism in 1930s Ireland. Edna Longley's scepticism regarding the historical validity of Irish modernism is not an isolated viewpoint. The charge is made with elegant concision in Seamus Heaney's remark in an interview with Denis O'Driscoll: 'it was a single partisan review [from Beckett…] that foisted this fantasy of a "tradition" of Irish "modernist" poetry on us'. Heaney goes on—somewhat incoherently in light of this—to assert that the work of these fantastical "modernists" is of period interest only.[viii] Beckett's obstreperous 1934 essay 'Recent Irish Poetry' was certainly a significant and influential apparition in the cultural politics of Irish literary life; on 31 August 1934 in a letter to Thomas MacGreevy, a year before his own radio defence of modernism aired, Devlin mentions the 'storm' raised by Beckett's essay: 'it appears Yeats was furious; it appears that Clarke is vindictive by nature and will pursue Sam to his grave […]'[ix] Appearing under the pseudonym André Belis, the essay famously divided Irish poets into the 'antiquarians' and 'others': those content in 'delivering with the altitudinous complacency of the Victorian Gael the Ossianic goods', and those aware of 'the new thing that has happened[…] namely the breakdown of the object, whether current, historical, mythical or spook'.[x] Austin Clarke was seen as antiquarian-in-chief, the primary target of Beckett's far-ranging animus, excoriated for hawking the 'fully licensed stock-in-trade from Aisling to Red Branch Bundling'. Beckett risked antagonising the notoriously litigious Clarke to sue for libel by inferring that his formalism compensated for a 'deeper need that must not be avowed'.[xi] By contrast, the younger Irish poets that "Belis" enumerates as having eschewed the path of the 'antiquarians' include Beckett's friends Brian Coffey, Thomas MacGreevy, and Devlin, although Beckett himself is conspicuously absent from the roll-call.

It is one of the ironies of literary history that conservative, nothing-to-see-here-folks dismissals of Irish poetic modernism (exemplified in the respective positions of Longley and Heaney) have been unintentionally reproduced by the nuanced, pluralistic accounts of modernism in recent scholarship that fall under the aegis of New Modernist Studies. In her article on Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry', Sinéad Mooney has challenged the 'shorthand' tendency to read the essay in terms of a 'straightforward binarism' between 'a cloying and conventional revivalism opposed by a reactive poetic modernism predicated upon modernist rupture'. Instead, Mooney argues for a recontextualisation of the essay within its original appearance within the special 'Irish number' of *The Bookman*, and more broadly within contemporary cultural debates. One of the main thrusts of Mooney's reappraisal is to challenge the extent to which Beckett's piece can be seen as a 'coherent critical stance'; her article resists its commonplace status as a modernist manifesto, a shot across the bows of the complacent walking corpse of the Celtic Revival and its progeny. [xii] Following earlier critics such as Alex Davis and J.C.C. Mays, Mooney points out the deformations and irascible exaggerations to which Beckett subjects the contemporary literary field, suggesting that the essay is not so much a statement as a 'precipitate in prose'—an idiosyncratic Beckettian mimesis of inchoate ideas of modernist rupture rather than a definitive statement on these. Mooney's article appears to complement (by implication at least) recent trends in scholarship on Irish modernism. Anthony McGrath makes a comparable claim for Beckett's resistance to essentialism, emphasising the 'tenuous terminology' of the review essay, and arguing that Beckett is uninterested in aesthetic argument as 'socio-cultural discourse'.[xiii] In 'Against Irish Modernism: Towards an Analysis of Experimental Irish Poetry', Francis Hutton-Williams seems to echo Longley in describing the concept of Irish modernism as 'industry-driven', a term rendered inutile through too-capacious application, and in any case belied by what he sees as the failure of modernism to thrive in the conservative clerisy of the Free State.[xiv] While these recent contributions to Irish

modernist studies have usefully problematized the binary of modernism versus revivalism/Celticism, Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry' is still isolated as a *sui generis*, iconic and lonely declaration of modernist tenets—however complex that declaration is ultimately found to be, or 'shorthand' scholarly abuses of it to be lamented.

Nevertheless, Mooney's insistence on the need to contextualise Beckett's essay within 'contemporary cultural debates' is crucial, and it is hoped that this article makes a decisive contribution in that direction. Such a contextualisation, I would argue, actively militates against downplaying the contemporary valence of modernist affiliations for Irish writers, whether positively or negatively construed. It is significant that most scholarly works dealing with Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry' neglect to examine Austin Clarke's snide, indirect response, 'Irish Poetry To-Day', published in *The Dublin Magazine*'s 1935 spring issue, in which he strongly implies that the poetic innovations of 'the so-called modernists' are an Anglocentric dead-end, best avoided and redirected into a native scholastic mentality and experiments in assonance.[xv] Despite the sneering qualifier ('so-called'), and the suggestion that yesterday's radicals are today's conservatives, Clarke's oblique response to Beckett's piece accepts his antagonist's distinctions, and entrenches the rift between his own poetics and those espoused by the younger innovators. Without a denser historical picture of the many-sided aspects of this debate, recent scholarship within Irish modernist studies comes near to unwittingly replicating a tendentious dismissal of the historical validity of modernism.

Even critics such as David Wheatley, sympathetic to the discernible aesthetic departure of Irish poetic modernism, question the extent to which the modernists constituted an 'abiding *esprit de corps*' in the 1930s.[xvi] By contrast, Susan Schreibman has emphasised the manner in which Irish modernists Beckett, Devlin, George Reavey, Thomas MacGreevy, and Brian Coffey 'sough each other out, read, published, promoted, and reviewed each other's work'.[xvii] One of the tuning words in Beckett's review is 'generation': within 'the youngest generation'

of poets, his immediate peers, there is 'the nucleus of a living poetic in Ireland'.[xviii] Roy Foster's masterly account of the 'way a generation is "made" in *Vivid Faces* describes the upheavals of the Easter 1916 protagonists as something akin to a 'family romance'. By the mid-1930s, the conservative aftermath of the revolutionary period and what Foster describes as 'the national project of restabilization (and clericalization)' cast these revolutionaries as the forces of political and cultural reaction against which Beckett was railing.[xix] As Austin Clarke astutely notes in 'Irish Poetry To-Day', the supposedly 'new discovery of natural rhythm and speech' among the younger poets was the subject of a critical study two decades earlier by Thomas MacDonagh, executed signatory of the Proclamation of the Republic (and father of Donagh MacDonagh, a younger contemporary of Coffey and Devlin at University College Dublin, also a poet).[xx] In a compelling phrase, W.J. McCormack fleetingly touches upon the implications of Clarke's own poetic innovation, referring to Clarke and Beckett as 'modernists of conflicting generations'.[xxi] At any rate, the generational aspect of Irish modernist poetry as it emerged in the 1930s, perhaps because it seems too obvious, has not received the attention it merits.

In a December 1930 lecture to the Economic and Literary Society of the Municipal School of Commerce in Cork entitled 'Modern Irish Poetry', the manager of the Abbey Theatre, Lennox Robinson, gave a nuanced account of the contemporary literary field that is acutely alert not only to successive generations, but units within generations; of the 'youngest generation', he delineates three units: the first 'following orthodox English models' (R.N.D. Wilson and Monk Gibbon), the second deriving its inspiration 'from Gaelic' (Clarke and Higgins), and the third which was inspired by 'the most modern English, French and American forms' (Geoffrey Phibbs and MacGreevy).[xxii] The 'most modern' group (which Devlin was associated with) was routinely castigated by the second group; Higgins, in a 1939 Dublin Literary Society lecture, described unspecified 'younger poets' as has having 'forgotten their heritage […] led away by the fashion of cosmopolitanism.'[xxiii]

Yeats, in his BBC broadcast lecture 'Modern Poetry' on 11 October 1936, broached the 'young revolutionist' poets of England influenced by T.S. Eliot, 'the most revolutionary' poet that Yeats recalls in his lifetime; curiously, he detects no such deleterious modernist influence on Irish poetry, which has been able to resist the satiric realism and impersonal philosophy of Eliot due to its 'still living folk tradition'.[xxiv] Yeats's ostensible lack of awareness in his broadcast of the existence of young Irish modernist poets operating outside this 'folk tradition' (and, as shall become clear, devotees of Eliot as opposed to Yeats) contradicts Devlin's correspondence with MacGreevy from the mid-thirties, which report, for instance, Yeats telling Constantine Curran, 'I don't understand these young men' when Curran showed him some of Devlin poems.[xxv] From the mid-1930s, press notices and reviews within journals and newspapers ranging from international, national, and local distribution levels, consistently refer to the 'modernistic' note of Devlin's poetry. For instance Joseph Maunsel Hone's description in his March 1935 'Letter from Ireland' in *Poetry* praising Devlin for having 'aroused an interest that has not been confined to the modernistic school and the anti-celticists', a contemporary transatlantic notice which usefully anticipates the nuance and dialectic emphasised in recent scholarship in Irish modernist studies while nevertheless implying a commonly-understood binary between 'celticists' and 'the modernistic school'.[xxvi] Similarly, an essay by the Listowel writer Bryan MacMahon in *The Kerry Champion*, 28 December 1935, lauds Devlin as among those who has given 'native ideals and native traditions that injection of modernism which marks our progress before nations' (an aesthetic criterion that I would argue needs to be read in the context of Ireland's confident foreign policy under de Valera).[xxvii] In a striking emblem of Irish modernism's recognisable cultural cachet and departure from the *status quo ante* in 1930s Ireland, in February 1935 Devlin attended The Nine Arts fancy dress ball thrown annually in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin; among the usual pirates, sailors, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and—in a sign of the political times—a substantial swathe of "coloured

shirts", Devlin, sending up his own reputation, appeared in the guise of "Modern Poetry" (what his costume looked like is a tantalising bait to the imagination).[xxviii]

Set against this vibrant, often fractious cultural conversation, Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry' emerges as something quite remote from Heaney's pejorative description of it as a 'single partisan review' foisting a fictional tradition of modernism on unsullied Irish folk traditions; rather, the essay encroaches on cultural and socio-political debates already in motion, complex rather than settled, inflected by inter-generational differences. Charting specific voices within that nexus of controversy evinces an inchoate, but discernible Irish modernist position, one that was being articulated, disputed, and refined in the very heat of these debates staged across newspapers, little magazines, in lecture halls, university clubs and societies, pubs, and on the airwaves. Beckett's essay is an eminent, but far from isolated example (as it often has been in contemporary Irish modernist studies, to the obfuscation of Irish modernism's origins), and needs to be treated as existing within a *sorites* of polemical-critical disputation.

'An attack on Yeats and all his followers': debating Irish modernism on the airwaves

International broadcasting via Radio Athlone was one significant, if understudied arena for these debates; Roibeárd O'Faracháin, who was appointed Talks Officer in 1939, was a poet with modernist sympathies and a frequent contributor to its poetry output prior to taking up the post.[xxix] Denis Devlin was also a frequent contributor to Athlone's programmes, broadcasting talks on modern poetry at least four times between 1933-1936. On 4 October, the *Irish Independent*'s radio programme listing, which was subtitled 'Address by the President' in reference to de Valera's much-anticipated speech on the League's failure to resolve the Abyssinia crisis, carried the following notice: 'at 7.40 p.m. Mr. Denis Devlin will defend the young poets against the recent criticisms of Mr. F.R. Higgins. Mr. Devlin, who is an M.A. of

the National University, has just returned from Geneva, having accompanied President de Valera to the League session.'[xxx] A week earlier, an intriguing feature of the regular column 'The Microphone' in the *Sunday Independent* gave a fascinating account of 'the gradual evolution of the Irish Broadcasting Service from a static institution to a living entity', with the columnist providing their own suggestions regarding the unexplored possibilities for the radio short story, and warnings about good 'microphone manner'. The feature recommends that radio listeners tune in to Devlin's talk, 'one of the younger Irish poets […] he is showing much promise, and much more is likely to be heard of him in the future.'[xxxi] Devlin's 4 October 1935 'A Reply to F.R. Higgins' talk defending Irish modernist poetry gives an insight into just one skein of the highly-charged cultural debates between (and within) Irish literary generations of the mid-century.

As Radio Éireann and its forerunners did not acquire recording capabilities until 1936, these live transmissions were essentially ephemeral.[xxxii] Nevertheless, archival enquiry and the tremendous resources afforded by the online database Irish Newspaper Archives sheds light on Devlin's talk and its immediate contexts. Devlin alludes to the broadcast in a letter to Thomas MacGreevy, 5 October 1935:

> I don't know whether you may have listened to 2RN [sic] last night (i.e. the 4th instant) and heard my marvellous recitation of your Nocturne of the Self-Evident Presence. It ran: '…Mr. Thomas McGreevy, an Irishman, who has been most incomprehensibly neglected.' I was delivering an attack, in answer to FR Higgins, on Yeats and all his followers. Are you pleased? I am glad to have got the chance… [continued on 22 October]: my broadcasting you has really been of benefit, many people have enquired about you.[xxxiii]

While the recording itself is lost, a hitherto unidentified, untitled handwritten script is among Devlin's papers in the National Library of Ireland.[xxxiv] Devlin's letter to MacGreevy, quoting the exact form of his introduction to a reading of MacGreevy's poem 'Nocturne of the Self-Evident Presence' as it appears in the untitled script and the letter's description of the broadcast as a response to F.R. Higgins, firmly supports the identification. While Clarke is the main focus of Beckett's animus in 'Recent Irish Poetry' (later satirised as 'Austin Ticklepenny' in Beckett's novel *Murphy*), Devlin's broadcast is a direct response to an earlier series of radio talks by F.R. Higgins entitled 'Irish Poetry of the Past Thirty Years'. Virtually unknown today, Higgins was a friend of Clarke and a disciple of Yeats, appointed managing director of the Abbey Theatre in 1935. An energetic, forceful commentator on Irish culture and the contemporary literary scene, newspaper notices and reviews show that he delivered public lectures and penned newspaper articles on such topics as 'Business Men and Poets' (the Dublin Rotary Club, 30 May 1934), the philistinism of the Free State government (opening remarks made at an exhibition of work by Harry Kernoff, Daniel Egan Galleries, Dublin, 30 November 1934), and 'The Poet and Modern Life' (*The Irish Times*, 30 November 1936). His lecture to the Blackrock Literary and Debating Society, 3 November 1934, 'Poetic Hysterics in Ireland', is among the earliest of his attacks on 'internationalists of no racial abode' and ephemeral French-fashions co-opted by Ireland's young poetic 'charlatans'.[xxxv]

When Higgins is remembered, it is usually for his BBC radio debate with Louis MacNeice, 11 July 1939, in which he asserts the superiority of Irish poetry to English poetry, owing to its being attuned to a 'racial rhythm'.[xxxvi] Like his mentor and collaborator Yeats, Higgins clearly grasped the implications and potential of the medium, especially in terms of staging in real time a venerable Irish mode—an argument.[xxxvii] On 22 October 1935, nearly four years earlier than the famous MacNeice debate, Higgins had appeared on Radio Athlone in a 'microphone debate' with Maurice MacGonigal of the Royal Hibernian Academy, with Higgins critiquing

the contemporary state of Irish visual art, and MacGonigal defending; MacGonigal later contributed illustrations to Yeats and Higgins's revived Broadsides series, published by the Cuala Press (showing how fluid some of these coteries could be).[xxxviii] Higgins understood his radio work as existing within a holistic cultural field, of a piece in propounding a variegated, yet coherent aesthetic vision as his work at the Abbey, the Broadsides, his numerous lectures, public talks, and interviews, and indeed, the volatile conversation of Dublin pubs.[xxxix] Examining his September 1935 broadcast series 'Irish Poetry of the Past Thirty Years' reveals the immediate catalyst to Devlin's defence of modernism.

The Irish Times 'On the Wireless' radio programme listings describes these broadcasts as 'a series of talks on Anglo-Irish Literature'.[xl] Higgins's first talk aired on Radio Athlone on 6 September 1935, with the second and third parts broadcast on 13 and 20 September respectively. As with Devlin's reply, it appears Higgins's talk was broadcast live and not recorded; however, several of Higgins's lecture notes, talks and broadcast scripts have been preserved and are held with his papers at the National Library of Ireland, although it would seem that only a script of the second talk from the series has been preserved. As Emilie Morin has shown with regards to Yeats, the 'contours' of Higgins's 'radiophonic work' may be pieced together using programme listings and reviews in the Irish press, in particular *The Irish Times*.[xli] A review of Higgins's first talk which appeared the following day in *The Irish Times* reports it at length:

> Speaking of 'Irish poets during the past thirty years', [Higgins] mentioned only five—"A.E.," Padraic Colum, Seumas O'Sullivan, Miss Alice Milligan, and the Ulsterman, Mr. Joseph Campbell, on whose worth he laid a special stress […] 'This Irish poetry,' Mr. Higgins concluded, 'is vital and pungent with earth. Irish poetry is always close to the earth and to those who are of the earth. In that intimacy our poetry is richly alive,

> and so different from English verse of to-day, which is a poetry long depressed from long residence in the lawn and in concrete areas of towns, where human beings appear as the inmates of their own zoological gardens.'[xlii]

The Irish poetry that Higgins prizes is of the countryside rather than the city; in fact, in he pointedly seems to embrace Beckett's backhanded, if sincere compliment in 'Recent Irish Poetry', that his verse has 'a good smell of dung'.[xliii] These poetic qualities are politically-inflected; as well as championing poets from the north among his quintet, the agricultural features of the Irish poetry Higgins praises are pitched as constitutionally opposed to the features of 'long depressed' English poetry. Higgins's poetic is conspicuously concerned with Irish writing in English, minimising the significance of the Irish language (as opposed to Irish "racial" identity, which is crucial for Higgins). In these respects, his talk occupies a fine balance within the cultural and political landscape of 1930s Ireland: his rejection of urban modernity as inherently English is reminiscent of de Valera's famous 1943 St. Patrick's day broadcast, which also aired on Radio Athlone (by then known as Radio Éireann): a bucolic fantasy of the nation comprising 'cosy homesteads […] fields and villages […] joyous with the sounds of industry'. At the same time, Higgins's negligible regard for poetry in Irish is at odds with the linguistic cultural consciousness that de Valera desired to inculcate, a belief that although Anglo-Irish literature contained 'much that is of lasting worth', it was 'far less characteristic of the nation' than work produced in the Irish language.[xliv]

While Higgins's prescriptions in the talk are emphatically shaped by Yeats and the Anglo-Irish slipstream of the Revival, he is not naïve or complacent; he heaps scorn on the 'Irish "songsters"' of the turn of the century, in stridently macho language: 'their verse threw a feminine glamour over cottage cults' (expressions of approbation in gendered terms are germane to both the revivalists and their modernist antagonists). Higgins's disavowal of the

"songsters" of the late stages of the Celtic Twilight may be a strategic concession to the modernists in an attempt to shake off his reputation as a sub-Yeatsian versifier, but like Clarke's vexed negotiations of Yeats's influence, it is no less compelling for that, suggesting that not only modernists had to negotiate the problematic legacies of Yeats and the Revival.

The first talk in Higgins's series nevertheless mounts a veiled attack on modernists, Denis Devlin in particular: 'the poetic rushlights died out, and with the cries of battle the poetic blackbirds took wing. Today some of those blackbirds are roosting in Government departments', going on to suggest that the purer strain of his earthy quintet were rising above those blackbird 'warblings'.[xlv] This vituperative personification seems to blur a *locus communis* of Irish poetry, the blackbird, with its ostentatious cubist cousin in Wallace Stevens's 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' (first published in 1917), a modernist symbol *par excellence*.[xlvi] The clerical blackbird 'roosting' in a bureaucratic department of the Free State is almost certainly Denis Devlin, who had left a junior 'demonstratorship' lecturing post in the English department at UCD to enter de Valera's Department of External Affairs early in 1935.

While the veiled personal attack doubtless stung Devlin into his broadcast response, his letters to MacGreevy reveal that Higgins was Devlin's longstanding *bête noire*. In the 31 August 1934 letter to MacGreevy from within the eye of 'storm' raised by Beckett's essay, Devlin complains: 'Consider Higgins. An estimable man soft-breathing gentle cow… content to see poetry as a job… He experiments in decking out a carcase [sic]'.[xlvii] The correspondence between fellow 'moderns' Devlin and MacGreevy, set alongside Higgins's 'blackbirds' slur and Devlin's broadcast riposte, are neglected historical traces brought to light by a 'post-archival' turn in modernist studies scholarship in terms of access and digitisation: they serve to flesh out the cultural debates of Ireland in the 1930s, and the divisive lines of battle between urban modernists and rural 'antiquarians' (who tended to congregate in Dublin, in Higgins's

case periodically retreating to a cottage in Mayo to 'gather local "atmosphere"', according to a 1930 interview in *Western People*).[xlviii]

At the same time, however, an over-crude dichotomy fails to emerge, as glimpsed in Austin Clarke's references in 'Irish Poetry To-Day' to Thomas McDonagh's prosodic experimentation two decades prior to modernism, and Higgins's distancing of his position from 'cottage-cult' Twilight "songsters".[xlix] Consequently, scholarly recovery of just some strands of the arguments surrounding Irish modernism (beyond the shibboleth of Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry') proves it to be no feverish fiction of 1960s academic minds (*pace* Edna Longley), but a distinct, if varied and inchoate aesthetic-cultural discourse, tied to a specific group within a specific generation; such a recovery entails no loss of the nuance or complexity that recent scholarship has emphasised.

Higgins's attack on Irish modernism and the 'blackbird' slander did not go unnoticed by Devlin thousands of miles away in Geneva, in spite of the busy and demanding session of the League of Nations. Emilie Morin has drawn attention to the European reach of Irish radio programmes in the mid-thirties:

> from 1934, Radio Athlone began to broadcast at a new wavelength, used by other European stations working on low power, and the signal, weather permitting, could reach mainland Europe, providing access to its news and broadcasts; how regularly James Joyce and Samuel Beckett might have availed of this opportunity in Paris is anyone's guess.'[l]

It is beyond doubt that Denis Devlin tuned in from Geneva. The delegation had left Ireland on 3 September, three days before Higgins's first talk was broadcast, not returning until the 1 October by which time the series had ended, meaning that Devlin must have listened to it while

working alongside de Valera, arranged the broadcast of his riposte with the programmers at Radio Athlone, and perhaps even begun to draft it while the League was still in session. Dr. T.J. Kiernan, who had been appointed by de Valera earlier in the year to as Director of Radio Athlone, had been seconded from the Department of External Affairs; it is quite possible that Devlin arranged his own talk and de Valera's broadcast to the nation in the same passage of communication with Kiernan and the station programmers.[li]

As his letter to MacGreevy announcing the broadcast and his recitation of the latter's poetry in the course of it shows, Devlin clearly saw his 'attack on Yeats and all his followers' as an act of solidarity with the modernist poets of his generation, a fact corroborated by Samuel Beckett's mention of the broadcast (and Devlin's role in de Valera's civil service) in a letter also to MacGreevy, 8 October 1935: 'I trust Devlin was kind to us. I fear he has hooked onto Dev a little late in the day.'[lii] Beckett's allusion to de Valera probably refers to the fact that Devlin's father, the publican Liam Devlin, was a prominent supporter of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and former intelligence officer in the I.R.A., whose licensed premises on Parnell St was the unofficial headquarters of Michael Collins and "The Squad" during the War of Independence; the assassination of Collins in 1922 was blamed by many Treatyites on de Valera's refusal to accept the Treaty. Devlin's view of de Valera was probably formatively shaped by his family's role in Civil War politics: much later in 1956, by which time he was Ireland's minister to Italy, Devlin published 'The Tomb of Michael Collins', which recalls hearing the news of Collins's death as a schoolboy in the Jesuit-run Belvedere College (the setting for another alumnus James Joyces's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*) the same afternoon as a lesson on Walt Whitman's elegy for Lincoln.[liii]

The script of Devlin's broadcast, presented with my annotations in the 'Appendix' to this article, is a compelling archival trace that provides suggestive points of departure for further study into the emergence of Irish poetic modernism in the 1930s and its relationship to radio

broadcasting; its key topics, which overlap substantially, may be summarized as: modernist poetic form and subject matter, language, anti-Romanticism, and internationalism (including transnational politics and the international mediascape).

'Poetry […] come down into the streets': Modernist form, questions of language, and anti-Romanticism in Devlin's broadcast

When Devlin speaks in the broadcast of the 'technical innovations in modern poetry', the two key elements are its expanded, urbanite vocabulary 'having come down into the streets long ago' and dealt with the psychic shocks of the Great War (a significant indicator of its impact on Irish consciousness), and most importantly, its embrace of *vers libre*: 'Poetry is not to be strangled and noosed in rhymes.' Devlin had studied at UCD under Roger Chauviré, an expert in French modern poetry, who stressed in public lectures and his scholarly writings the excitement of French poetry's freedom from 'antiquated restrictions' and its 'hygienic' anarchy.[liv] Although seemingly aware of the significance of free verse to Irish modernist poets (disparaging Devlin and others as 'minor *vers libre* poets'), Edna Longley's preferred designation 'modern poetry' obscures this important characteristic; for instance, in *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, Matthew Arnold asserts that rhyme is the *sine qua non* of 'modern poetry' in distinction to classical poetry.[lv] Clearly, Devlin's usage of 'modern poetry' is quite distinct from that of Yeats or Higgins, for whom rhyme, established metres and rural or folk subject matter were important distinguishing features of Irish modern verse. Devlin's script cues three readings of modernist poetry by an American, Irishman, and Englishman respectively: Hart Crane, Thomas MacGreevy, and T.S. Eliot. The associative metaphor favoured by each of these poets, and their emergence out of a post-Symbolist branch line of modernism, as well as the internationalism they represent (in comparison to Higgins featuring

exclusively Irish poets) further inflect the urban, free-verse characteristics of the modernism Devlin espouses.

The second feature of Devlin's broadcast is its political aspect. Whereas Beckett's animadversions in 'Recent Irish Poetry' are arguably only latently political and national, in Devlin's 'A Reply to F.R. Higgins' broadcast these qualities are explicit, remarkable given Devlin's junior role in de Valera's diplomatic corps. One of the complex strands of these debates on 1930s Irish modernism, of interest to postcolonial and Celtic studies and not yet resolved among scholars, is the question of language. Against F.R. Higgins's idea of 'racial consciousness'—nebulous and potentially viciously nativist in one sense, yet welcoming what R.F. Foster terms 'the special contributions by the Anglo-Irish to Irish culture'[lvi] in another—Devlin asserts that language is what defines a national literature as opposed to any other quality. In a deliberately provocative statement designed to inflame Higgins and other Anglophobic poets who nevertheless wrote almost exclusively in English, Devlin asserts in the broadcast script that Irish poetry as Higgins portrays it 'could be called in fact a regional movement', a comment that requires careful interpretation.

In his August 1934 letter to MacGreevy, Devlin asserted, 'I have no sympathy with the attempt to build up an Irish literature in English. Lucan is a Latin poet.'[lvii] His broadcast a year later rejects not only Higgins's implicit argument for the superiority of Anglo-Irish literature to literature in Irish, but also the slippage in attributing to poetry written by Irish poets national or even racial identity, manifested in a vitalistic connection with the soil and supposed thematic and technical divergences from the "urban" poetry of England, attributes echoed by Yeats in his BBC radio talk a year later. Devlin's position vis-à-vis language in his broadcast reply was informed not only by his exposure to French and German at UCD, the Sorbonne, and a brief studentship in Munich during the early 1930s, but by a collaborative undertaking with fellow UCD graduate Niall Montgomery to translate modern French poetry into Irish, hailed as a

'notable experiment' by *The Irish Press* when the poems first began to appear in the modernist journal *Ireland To-Day* in 1937.[lviii]

Devlin, in an allusion to Daniel Corkery's 1931 study *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* that would have been clear to listeners, concurs with 'students of the Irish language' in critiquing the presumption of Anglo-Irish writers (and any Irish poets who write exclusively in English) to speak on behalf of some hypostasised image of the national character, but he rejects the homogeneity, cultural philistinism, and sectarian identity politics that he implies underlines such a critique, admonishing the typical 'Irish-Ireland' position: 'I do not think it possible to distinguish one nationality from another by drawing up categories of emotions or ideas which should be nature to one and foreign to the other.' Devlin was almost certainly aware of the short-lived fate of the Irish language periodical *Humanitas*, edited by the cultured Catholic priest Pádraig de Brún, who urged an outward-looking engagement of Irish Gaelic with the humanistic achievements of European literature. Corkery, from within *Humanitas*'s own pages, had savaged this Gaelic internationalism in rabidly xenophobic terms, which wounded de Brún and rang the death knell of the magazine.[lix] De Brún was a key influence on Devlin's interest in both modern European literature and Gaelic; the priest's niece Máire Mhac an tSaoi, another poet-diplomat, asserts that Devlin asked for 'Father Paddy' on his deathbed, adding that de Brún's rehabilitation has yet to follow that of Devlin, MacGreevy, and other modernist poets he influenced.[lx]

His reservations about Irish-Ireland Gaelic language activism notwithstanding, Devlin's conclusion is that literature in English written in Ireland since Yeats has been, properly-speaking, a mimicry of the imperial Other it purports to hate, and that the 'unhappy flame' of what there is of a 'national quality' of Irish literature must be guarded from ambling down the well-trodden path of Higgins and his confreres, instead finding its own language. Devlin's attack on 'Yeats and all his followers' is therefore conducted upon politicized discourses about

language. In what is presumably a much shorter draft version of this script found elsewhere among his papers titled 'An Answer to F.R. Higgins', he is even more forthright in defining the factional and personal contours of his antagonists, referring sarcastically to Higgins's 'very charming discursive account of a literary movement' which is already in 'the second part of its history, its uncertainties and then its renewed vigour', with Higgins 'active in its inner politics'.[lxi] In the draft, Devlin refers to the 'belief and habits that formed that generation', once again conducting the debate along generational lines.

It is easy to see how Devlin's subtle argument regarding the status of Irish literature in English, one that has correspondences to (as well as significant differences from) later positions such as that outlined in Thomas Kinsella's essay 'The Divided Mind', would have been open to misinterpretation. The provocation that Irish poetry, if not written in Irish, might be 'a regional movement', coming from a junior diplomat in de Valera's administration, seems reckless. It bears mentioning that in his 1960 reminiscence 'Of Denis Devlin: Vestiges, Sentences, Presages', Brian Coffey felt the need to assert '[Devlin] was quite unwilling to accept the idea of an Irish poet related parasitically or in some symbiosis of province and capital city to the London scene. Certainly not.'[lxii]

The third important theme that emerges in the broadcast script is that, as with Beckett's renunciation of the 'Irish Romantic Arnim-Brentano combination' of Standish O'Grady and Samuel Ferguson, leading luminaries/forerunners of the Revival, Devlin excoriates the poetic line of Higgins and his associates as neo-romanticism. Unlike Beckett, however, Devlin's anti-romanticism is explicitly theological in cast; he excoriates the post-Revivalists' romanticism as a product of their purported 'Rousseauistic belief in the sinlessness of man'.

David Dwan has compellingly explored Rousseau's bogey-man status for modernism, particularly within the pages of T.S. Eliot's *Criterion* where the overt political ramifications of his assault on romanticism were aligned with a horror of 'Rousseau's familiar gospel: the denial

of original sin'.[lxiii] Eliot's influence on Devlin, Coffey, and MacGreevy cannot be overstated; Devlin sent poems to *The Criterion* in January 1934, receiving a polite rejection in May, and among his papers there is an appreciation of Eliot's work written in French, probably a lecture delivered at UCD before he left to join the Department of External Affairs.[lxiv] The two later met during Eliot's visit to Dublin in January 1936, with Devlin and Constantine Curran showing the modernist master around a memorial exhibition for George Russell.[lxv]

Given the fact that Devlin presumably began to draft his response to Higgins while the League was still in session, its references to Rousseau, the 'self-proclaimed "Citizen of Geneva"', seems a significant comment on the anthropological assumptions of democratic process fundamental to the League's operations, as I shall draw out later.[lxvi] Devlin's profoundly Eliotic emphasis on original sin in the broadcast, also quoting from Eliot's unfinished sequence *Coriolan* (with its modernist emphasis on political chaos, poetic collage, and collapse of poetic diction into a jumble of high and low registers) resonates with a modernist preoccupation that fixated such figures as Charles Maurras, T.E. Hulme, and Jacques Maritain; it is worth noting that Devlin's debut on Irish radio on 17 January 1933 was a talk on 'The Christian Reaction in Modern French Literature.'[lxvii] That said, the exact tenor of his anti-romanticism and cynical appraisal of human moral behaviour might also owe something to the secular scepticism of Montaigne, on whom he completed his M.A. thesis at the Sorbonne: one of the main charges he brings against romanticism in the broadcast is that it is 'disgusted with the world around it'. At any rate, the question of an intellectual, European Catholic sensibility in the work of Devlin (and Coffey and MacGreevy) owes an enormous deal to Eliot.[lxviii]

The 'informational field': Irish modernism, transnational politics, and the international mediascape

The final point to be made about the broadcast is its context within what Christopher Morash calls 'an informational field': transnational lines of communication constituted by journal and newspaper circulation, the telegraph, and perhaps especially, radio waves.[lxix] As Damien Keane has posited, this 'international media economy' not only dramatically entangled questions of Irish national self-determination within 'institutional footings that no longer recognised [an] opposition' between national and paranational, but had specific consequences for cultural debates, not least the persistence of dichotomies between which agents could oscillate—literary autonomy versus literary nationalism, cosmopolitanism versus localism.[lxx] We might well add: revivalism and modernism. As Keane writes:

> In Ireland, with its especially close and mutually determinative relationship of literary and political activity, these relational contests were most intensely waged around the very classification of 'literary' versus 'political' communication, for this porous and shifting boundary was what was at stake in the emergent and evolving structure of the 'informational field.'[lxxi]

This 'field', Keane emphasises, is mediated, not composed of discrete monads of information, but rather part of a 'complex entanglement' whereby reception and experience at the point of access are crucial, information as composite, fluvial. Devlin's broadcast is one thread in a tangled skein of literary controversy and cultural politics which, in the last analysis, cannot be separated from the interpenetration of modernism, new media, and national/transnational communication. Nowhere is this clearer than in the particular details of the timing and programme scheduling of Devlin's talk, the circumstantial delay of de Valera's address to the nation meaning that it aired later the same night on the same station as a defence of modernist poetry by the secretary to the Irish delegation, Devlin, emphasising modernism's 'complex

entanglement' in the international mediascape and (trans)national politics. Analysis of de Valera's broadcast alongside Devlin's is instructive.

Michael Kennedy has traced the origins of neutrality as a cornerstone of Irish foreign policy to de Valera's gradual disillusion with the League of Nations, coming to a head in the crisis talks during September 1935. Kennedy argues that de Valera's broadcast on 12 September to the United States from Geneva over the Columbia Broadcast System is a 'mish-mash' of his own persistent faith in the League as a valiant, unprecedented effort to conduct international affairs 'by reason and justice' with the reservations held by his senior diplomats, Francis Cremins, Permanent Representative at Geneva, and F.H. Boland, head of the League of Nations section in the Department of External Affairs.[lxxii] Initially effectively alone within the delegation in his full support for the League, a new tone began to creep in to de Valera's performances in Geneva; in the 12 September broadcast, he acknowledges that the League is a 'precarious and imperfect instrument', and closes with a threat that the only alternative to it is 'a return to the law of the Jungle. What philosophy of life can make us believe that man is necessarily condemned to such a fate?'[lxxiii] In his speech on 16 September to the Assembly, the tone is markedly gloomier:

> To-day, however, the cynic is our teacher. He is whispering to each of us, telling us that man in the long run is only a beast, that his duty is determined and his destiny ruled by selfishness and passion, that force is his weapon, that victory rests with the most brutal and that it is only the fool who credits such dreams as were uttered here.[lxxiv]

What is striking about both the broadcast to the U.S. and the speech to the Assembly several days later is de Valera's repeated motif, a resistance to the notion of man as 'a beast' abandoned to 'the law of the Jungle', even as the rhetoric of both performances reveals an increasing lack

of confidence that reason and justice will prevail over this Hobbesian 'philosophy of life', as he calls it in the 12 September broadcast.

De Valera's evolving political philosophy vis-à-vis the League has surprising correspondences with the anti-romantic modernism espoused by Devlin in his broadcast. As with other small states, Ireland had set great store on the League since its inception in 1920, seeing in it, and not the Commonwealth, the natural direction of its foreign policy, 'an international podium' for its aspirations towards independence, and no less importantly, the mechanism for achieving a peaceful world-order, what Desmond FitzGerald, Minister for External Affairs from 1922 to 1927 (and incidentally, a modernist poet associated with Imagism) called 'the conscience of the world as a whole'.[lxxv] De Valera considered the Covenant of the League to be 'a solemn pact', and both his hopeful, if beleaguered emphasis on the ideals of international co-operation and the foundation of the League itself ultimately derive from the anthropological optimism of the Enlightenment, that human affairs could be ordered by reason and justice, as glimpsed in Immanuel Kant's speculations on 'a league of nations' in his 1795 essay, 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch'.[lxxvi] This positive anthropology also fed into Romantic nationalism in the 19th and early 20th century, shaping Fenianism and the politics of the Easter 1916 generation. De Valera, so often read as a conservative moulded by Catholic social teaching, during the 1930s espoused a modern, outward-looking foreign policy consonant with Enlightenment values in its optimistic view of human nature and deontological emphasis on the League's Covenant as binding, priorities which resonate not only with Rousseau's emphasis on human goodness, but also his frequently overlooked commendation of 'the "denaturing" of humanity through the collective institution of rational laws'.[lxxvii]

So resituated within the 1935 crisis session of the League and his role as secretary to de Valera, and read within the 'cross-fading' composite mesh of transnational radio broadcasting,

it becomes clear that Devlin's defence of modernist poetry was disseminated in contexts that do not privilege a narrative of binary debate between literary revivalism and modernism, but a discourse with subtexts profoundly embedded in questions of political philosophy and international relations. In a phrase strikingly reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu's formulation 'habitus' to describe ways of being that are formed by collective and individual agency within a given cultural *milieu*, Devlin attacks as a Rousseauistic 'habit of mind' the revivalists' neo-romantic denial of the limits that are placed on human progress by 'the many vilenesses' of the 'soiled' heart.[lxxviii] A range of factors beyond the influence of Eliot and French intellectual thought may be seen as informing Devlin's condemnation of this 'habitus': in marked contrast to de Valera, the seasoned *realpolitik* of senior colleagues in the diplomatic service, Cremins and Boland, who had experienced the League's inefficacy first-hand during the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931; the palpable inevitability of the slide to war that permeated the September session (Devlin's broadcast pointedly mentions the 'destructive terror of masses of men') ; and finally, Devlin's personal animosity towards de Valera's political idealism, coloured by familial reminiscences of its consequences during the Civil War.

Devlin's implicit critique of de Valera's political philosophy that I argue is a notable texture of his broadcast talk, and the ways in which his diplomatic role comes into contact with his anti-romantic literary modernism, may be glimpsed in two poems that allude to the League. 'Anteroom: Geneva' was first published in *The New Republic*, 28 October 1940 in a version titled 'Antecamera: Geneva 1938'.[lxxix] The poem captures the war-clouds gathering at the 1938 Assembly, de Valera's 'swan-song at the League'.[lxxx] It features a diplomatic 'Cadet, poor but correct' unctuously bullied by the 'General Secretary' (perhaps Sean Lester, Deputy Secretary General of the League) into keeping 'private letters' about the economic distress of citizens from 'the President', presumably de Valera, who had been newly-elected President of the

Assembly. The poem's examination of 'well-mannered Power' ends with a gnomic image of collusive prosperity, diplomatic impotence, and paralysis:

> Their mutual shirtfronts gleamed in a white smile
> The electorate at breakfast approved of the war for peace
> And the private detective idly deflowered a rose.[lxxxi]

Devlin's "jump cut" technique, with each line carrying a not-quite-consecutive image, blends French Surrealism with the surreality of the late 1930s news cycle. The Munich Agreement was signed on the 30 September 1938, with Italy, France, and Britain capitulating to Germany's plans to annex the Sudetenland, and the League frozen out of the power-brokering.[lxxxii] Devlin's poem seems to imply that the dismal failures of the League to secure peace were compounded by de Valera's neglect of domestic prosperity during the Anglo-Irish Trade War, content to play the statesman on the world stage.

The poem 'Old Jacobin' is another coded censure of de Valera, evoking 'bitter watercress' in the Shannon of de Valera's Limerick in its early drafts. First published in 1942 as 'Fugitive Statesman' in *Calendar, An Anthology* by James A. Decker's Prairie press, and with a draft title 'Robespierre at Charenton' among Devlin's papers, the poem is a dissection of the Romantic revolutionary, a child of the doctrines of the Enlightenment, with its haunted speaker trying to pacify his tortured soul 'as though I had never sinned'; in the Jacobin's self-exculpation, Devlin yet again associates a denial of human sinfulness with Romanticism. The poem blurs de Valera's culpability for the Civil War ('The time I signed away the men I loved') with the politics of The Terror, depicting its 'Old Jacobin'/de Valera as a narcissistic revolutionary drunk on abstractions, and, as in 'Anteroom: Geneva', neglectful of economic hardship at home while playing world leader in the 'drama' of the League:

The ghosts of children without bread and milk

Thronged my threshold; their fathers

Wept without tears.

I shouted in the Assembly; the deputies

Blushed in the drama. They knew and I

The Goddess Reason's treasonable trance.[lxxxiii]

Devlin's anti-romantic dismissal of the 'treasonable trance' of the First French Republic's 'Cult of Reason' is a wink at de Valera's persistent belief throughout his participation in League sessions, 'shouted in the Assembly', that human affairs might be ordered in accordance with justice, as his more cynical 'deputies / Blushed', Devlin included; the taint of demagoguery—a familiar line of attack by de Valera's enemies domestic and British—belies contemporary descriptions of his quietly precise and ethically-charged delivery.[lxxxiv]

Devlin worked closely with de Valera at Geneva in 1935, including helping to prepare his international radio addresses; as secretary to the delegation, he wrote on de Valera's instruction to the latter's secretary Kathleen O'Connell in Government Buildings, Dublin, enclosing a typed copy of the 12 September speech to the U.S. It seems likely that Devlin's role included acting as amanuensis for de Valera's speechwriting, as several drafts of the September 1935 speeches among de Valera's papers appear to be in Devlin's hand.[lxxxv]

As Michael Kennedy writes, the 'perspiration and expertise' of the Department of External Affairs ensured that de Valera's performance was an 'ensemble piece'.[lxxxvi] Against the backdrop of the almost imperceptible recalibration that de Valera's foreign policy underwent during the September 1935 session as he prepared to distance Ireland from the League, Devlin was an industrious member of the delegation, writing to MacGreevy that he sometimes worked

from 7.30am to midnight.[lxxxvii] In his limited leisure time, however, he must have relaxed by tuning in to Radio Athlone, perhaps surprised by Higgins's coded personal attack, then arranging his response with T.J. Kiernan, and perhaps even beginning to draft it with the League still in session.

Back in Ireland, De Valera's speech to the nation aired on Radio Athlone some hours after Devlin's talk, conceding in the aftermath of Italy's invasion that the 'slight hope […] hostilities in Ethiopia' would be thwarted by League intervention were 'now gone'. While his speech finishes by reiterating his theme throughout the session that the League, albeit in need of reform, offered the best hope that 'human society can be ordered according to reason, and is not doomed to remain forever subject to brute force', the broadcast poses the question 'whether, *human nature being what it is* [my italics], there can ever be a League of Nations'.[lxxxviii] Whereas his speeches in session merely raise the bestial 'law of the Jungle' rhetorically as an unthinkable alternative to a world-order based on human reason, political realities had brought home to de Valera the limitations placed on collective security by 'human nature being what it is', a philosophical anthropology by no means distant from Devlin's modernist insistence several hours earlier in response to Higgins that 'the heart of man is soiled.'

In the letter to McGreevy the day after his broadcast, Devlin describes feeling 'a fool broadcasting rimery during a war', adding 'I am very pro-Italian. I do not much care for being the ally of savages', a reference to the impending sanctions against Italy which de Valera had announced.[lxxxix] Such repellent views chime with racist and reactionary Catholic opposition within the country at large, but also evidence the complicated interaction of Denis Devlin's experience of the League's last days at Geneva, the 'cross-fade' radiophonic field in which Irish modernism and Irish foreign policy were disseminated and overlapped, and the political subtext of Devlin's Irish modernist anti-romanticism.[xc] Alex Davis notes that Devlin's posting to Mussolini's Rome as secretary to the Irish legation from 1938 to 1939 apparently modified

his ‘pro-Italian’ sentiments, later dedicating his elegy for de Valera’s antagonist Michael Collins to the anti-fascist writer Ignazio Silone.[xci]

Post-archival recovery of these neglected traces of cultural debates about Irish modernism, historicized in all their discursive density, cautions against twin perils, of either reaching for over-simplistic binaries, or ceasing to attend to the complex reality of modernist declarations in 1930s Ireland. Seen in its original broadcasting context and with Irish diplomacy at the League of Nations in the background, Devlin’s broadcast defence of the young vanguard of Irish poetry encapsulates the national and international dynamics of Irish modernism and its constituencies, its forms embedded in new media, and the political and philosophical wellsprings of its aesthetics and politics enmeshed not only in twentieth-century responses to the Enlightenment, but also in more immediate impulses, Irish international relations in the inter-war years.

Appendix

This ‘Appendix’ presents Devlin’s broadcast script. I have made minor amendments of punctuation to aid the sense, and retained elisions and substitutions where I believe the revision is significant. Devlin read three poems (or extracts from poems) during his broadcast; I have given his cues as they appear in the script.

‘A Reply to F.R. Higgins', the script of a broadcast by Denis Devlin on Radio Athlone, 4 October 1935

Poetry must state the obvious clearly: it must now describe the horrible circle that is closing round the mind. Particular grief [and] joy are of no interest when set against the destructive terror of masses of men.[xcii] Poetry must live in that terror and manoeuvre mankind into a path of escape, but escape with honour.

Quote 'Hart Crane'[xciii]

Our poetry is ~~moral~~ candid and indifferent and our prophet is Isaiah. dating from the time when, 50 years ago, W.B. Yeats, impatient of the literary salons of London, returned to this country for good and decided to give it a literature. This literature, written nevertheless in English, was to create the imagination of the Irish people, and express for it its character & sentiment in the same important way in which English poets have done it for their own country. It was to be Irish literature.

Gradually, objections began to make themselves heard. Students of the Irish language itself protested there was no resemblance between Gaelic poetry and the poetry of the Celtic Twilight. Gaelic poetry, they said, was concrete and hard, humourous and always close to reality and the vague aspiration, the indecisive colouring, the cultivation of a distinguished private melancholy, the unusual botany and foreign tapestry, which made up the subjects of the poetry of Yeats and his followers, could by no means be said to reflect the mind of the Irishman. This poetry was the expression of a small group living in Ireland but separated from the mass of the people by religion & by love of a foreign culture. Their literature should, it was said, be called Anglo-Irish. In fact the bitterness, the aloofness and the self-torture which were in Swift and in Anglo-Irish writers of the day, must have been due to their feeling of exile from both England & Ireland and to the equal attraction with which these countries tore them apart.

But the Anglo-Irish have defended their claim to the expression of Ireland. They point out that the Celtic Twilight is long since past, that it was killed in fact from within by the poets themselves, that Yeats abandoned it and that later writers, Colum and Higgins & Stevens [sic], are as clear spoken and close to the earth as could be ~~imagined~~ desired.[xciv] They might add, if they wished, that the charges of dreaminess and cloudy language could be brought against Gaelic poetry itself. I mean the aisling of the 18th century. The particular language used does not matter, they say: an Irishman writing in English is making Irish literature.

It is here that I agree with those who object to the Anglo-Irish school though I find both their reasons and their conclusion incorrect. Their reasons because I do not think it possible to distinguish one nationality from another by drawing up categories of emotions or ideas which should be nature to one and foreign to the other. In French and German poetry there is evidence, for instance, of the feeling of the divinity of nature just as in English; and the same thoughts and judgements occur to all men in endless repetition. What makes the difference between one poet and another is language; for language is nothing else than the means adopted by the will to prove that a new personality wishes to distinguish itself from the inchoate mass of men who accept gregariousness. So what divides one literature from another is language. If we were to take some particular sentiment as for instance Honour and to inquire how it was celebrated by the poets of two different countries, we should see how obviously the complexion of the sentiment was found to be different simply because the language is different.

So it seems to me that this Irish or Anglo-Irish poetry of the last 30 years is properly to be called English poetry. With some differences of course: Yeats is not Swinburne, nor Stevens Blake; but those differences are no deeper than what might be expected to come from 2 provinces of the English language. The movement could be called in fact a regional movement. How could it be otherwise, when so much of the accidentals of our life are English; think of our clothes, our speech, our way of walking, our trams, our schools, our absurd and imitative

adoration of Shakespeare, our reaction to foreigners, ~~our pitiful adoption of American~~ our emotional life arranged by the cinema. Certainly we have a national quality; but it is as yet an unhappy flame, it is the naked will which has found no clothes to fit it. And unless it finds its language, it will burn on simply relative to that which it hates—"consumed by that which it is nourished by."[xcv]

It is a melancholy reflection and one which should have the attention of Englishmen that, in return for their depriving us of our goods, we have not turned the other cheek, all that is asked of a saint, but have loaded England with a present of the kind to please her most, we have enriched her literature.

And now what is the nature of the body of literature which Mr. Higgins proposes as a tradition to be worked upon & continued by future writers? Mr. Higgins nowhere disengages the general features which are common to the poets he discusses; but they can be noted from a study of his terms of appreciation. The movement, then, in a word seems a neo-romantic one; its themes are those of the romantics with a different mythology. It is disgusted with the world around it but it abandons the argument and creates the Land of Heart's Desire.[xcvi] Finding that the human heart cannot live there it falls down to earth again and makes songs of deception — disillusion is the accepted word — disillusion in all its tempers from the wistful to the bitter. Even among the poets who write of the living world, the actual countryside which they know thoroughly, Higgins & P. Colum, the type of melancholy is the same. All this verse swings about in a sort of battledore & shuttlecock between a fairyland to which we have no right and a section of reality conceived by the romantic poet as drab. But reality is wider than the disappointment even of a noble mind; and the heart has other movements than the cultivation of private joys and sorrows. What gives most irritation in reading their poetry is the repeated mishandling of Beauty. They all have freedom of that city and they continually assert their claim with more or less arrogance. The habit of mind at the back of this is, of course, the

Rousseauistic belief in the sinlessness of man. There is a line of poets which has had eyes open enough and conscience enough to see that Beauty is not our possession by any natural right; that the heart has many vilenesses to account for, that the heart of man is soiled.

Poetry speaks with a different voice now having come down into the streets long ago. After the Great War, and that is an old story, everything was called in question; people doubted whether they felt or thought. The defenders of the old order were horrified; but instead of recognizing the attacks of a fundamental kind which were thrown at them, they attended only to the slight surface signs of change. This may explain the fury with which the technical innovations in modern poetry were attacked. Free verse was barbarous and unmusical, the use of words which the hand & brain had long made a comfortable part of our emotional life — words like train and lamppost [sic] — this use was said to break the rules. What rules? Poetry is not to be strangled and noosed in rhymes. All and any words are at the disposal of the poet, if he cannot use them so much the less poet he.

Here is a poem by Thomas McGreevy [sic], an Irishman who has been most incomprehensibly neglected. It will illustrate how words considered commonplace shine in all their strength when used in a new rhythm.

Quote “Self-Evident”[xcvii]

But do you not agree that such quarrels about vocabulary & technique are futile in face [sic] of the anger & distress of our world? A poem is still pleasurable if it touches our contemporary life somewhere.

Quote “Triumphal March”[xcviii]

[i] Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations", *American Historical Review*, 112, no. 4 (2007), 1112.
[ii] Michael Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations, 1919-1946: International Relations, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996), 205.
[iii] Samuel Beckett, 'Recent Irish Poetry', *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (London: John Calder, 1983), 75-76.
[iv] I have learned a great deal from Damien Keane's remarkable book *Ireland and the Problem of Information: Irish Writing, Radio, Late Modernist Communication* (Penn: Pennsylvania University Press, 2014) which dedicates a chapter to the intertwining forces of technological breakthroughs in radio transmission and the 1935 crises of internationalism at the League. Keane mentions Devlin in passing, and this article draws out his role in that international mediascape.
[v] Timothy C. Campbell, *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi* (Minneapolis and London: Minneapolis University Press, 2006), xiii. For major studies of radiophonic modernism, see Debra Rae Cohen et al. (eds), *Broadcasting Modernism* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), and Matthew Feldman et al (eds)., *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). For works dealing with modernism at the BBC and/or broadcasting by Anglo-Irish writers including Yeats, see Aasiya Lodhi and Amanda Wrigley (eds), 'Radio Modernisms: Features, Cultures and the BBC' 24, no. 1 (June 2018), Ian Whittington, *Writing the Radio War: Literature, Politics and the BBC, 1939-1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 335-403, Emilie Morin, 'W.B. Yeats and Broadcasting, 1924-1965', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 35, no.1 (2015), 145-175, and Emily C. Bloom, *The Wireless Past: Anglo-Irish Writers and the BBC, 1931-1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27-63.
[vi] Richard Pine, *2RN and the origins of Irish Radio* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 173.
[vii] Edna Longley, *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35-44. Longley has expanded her critique in '"A bucket of Benedictine": Louis MacNeice and the problematic category of Irish modernism', a paper given at a major recent conference on Irish modernism, 'Joyce to Beckett', Magdalene College, Cambridge, 22-23 March 2018.
[viii] In *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*, ed. Dennis O'Driscoll (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 239.
[ix] Denis Devlin, letter to Thomas Mac Greevy, 31 August 1934, Thomas MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/5.
[x] Beckett, 'Recent Irish Poetry', 70.
[xi] Ibid., 72-73.
[xii] Sinéad Mooney, 'Kicking Against the Thermolaters: Beckett's "Recent Irish Poetry"', *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 15., no. 1, 29-30, 36.
[xiii] Anthony McGrath, 'An Agon with the Twilighters: Samuel Beckett and the Primacy of the Aesthetic', *Irish University Review*, 42, no. 1 (April 2012), 6-23.
[xiv] Francis Hutton-Williams, 'Against Irish Modernism: Towards an Analysis of Experimental Irish Poetry', *Irish University Review* 46, no. 1 (April 2016), 20-37.
[xv] Austin Clarke, 'Irish Poetry To-day', *Reviews and Essays of Austin Clarke*, ed. Gregory A. Schirmer (Gerrards Cross, Bucks: Colin Smythe, 1995), 56-62.
[xvi] David Wheatley, 'Samuel Beckett: Exile and Experiment', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Poetry*, ed. Fran Brearton and Alan Gillis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 146.
[xvii] Susan Schriebman, 'Irish Poetic Modernism: Portrait of the Artist in Exile', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Poetry*, 132. Schriebman's essay draws attention to the

exclusionary tactics of the post-Revival poetry establishment (attacks on *Finnegans Wake*, James Stephens' mooted anthology, the foundation of the Irish Academy of Letters).

[xviii] Beckett, 'Recent Irish Poetry', 75-76.

[xix] Roy Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923* (London: Penguin, 2015), 1-30, 116-117.

[xx] Clarke, 'Irish Poetry To-Day', *Reviews and Essays*, 60.

[xxi] W.J. McCormack, 'Austin Clarke: The Poet as Scapegoat of Modernism', in *Modernism and Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s*, ed. by Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 81.

[xxii] 'Modern Irish Poetry: Lecture By Mr. Lennox Robinson', *Irish Examiner*, 22 December 1930, 9.

[xxiii] 'Modern Apathy to Poetry', *Irish Independent*, 25 February 1939, p. 11. Higgins returned to this theme time and time again; for the anti-semitic overtones and racialized metaphors of his discourse, see Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambride: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 77. I am grateful to Dr Morin for drawing my attention to this connection.

[xxiv] 'Modern Poetry: A Broadcast (1936), *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats Vol. V: Late Essays*, ed. by William H. O'Donnell (New York: Scribner's, 1994), 89-103.

[xxv] Devlin, letter to MacGreevy, 26 May 1934, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/4.

[xxvi] Joseph Hone, 'Letter from Ireland', *Poetry*, 45 (1935), 331-35.

[xxvii] Bryan McMahon, 'Poetry, Whence and Whither?' *Kerry Champion*, 28 December 1935, 3.

[xxviii] '600 Dancers at Nine Arts Ball', *Evening Herald*, 23 February 1935, 2.

[xxix] See for instance O'Farachain's broadcast 'Modern Poetry—A Review of Recent Verse', *The Irish Press*, 9 July 1936. Devlin broadcast the second installment in this series.

[xxx] 'To-Day's Radio Programmes', *Irish Independent*, 4 October 1935, 4.

[xxxi] 'The Microphone', *Sunday Independent*, 29 September 1935, 5.

[xxxii] See Pine, *2RN*, 157.

[xxxiii] Devlin, letter to MacGreevy, 5 October 1935, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/7.

[xxxiv] 'Untitled essay on Irish poetry in English and Irish', Devlin papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 33,800. James Matthew Wilson briefly discusses this piece, referring to the script in a footnote as 'what seems to be an unpublished essay on Irish poetry'. See Wilson, 'Late Modernism and the Marketplace in Denis Devlin's *The Heavenly Foreigner*', in *Irish Modernism: Origins, Contexts, Publics*, ed. Edwina Keown and Carol Taaffe (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), 161.

[xxxv] 'Poets Now and Then', *Irish Press*, 1 May 1934, 7; 'Exhibtion of Paintings: Mr. F.R. Higgins's Plea for Art', *The Irish Times*, 1 December 1934, 7; 'The Poet and Modern Life', *The Irish Times*, 30 November 1936, 4; 'Irish Poets of To-Day: Mr. F.R. Higgins on Hysterics', *The Connaught Telegraph*, 8 December 1934, 3.

[xxxvi] See Tom Walker, *Louis MacNeice and the Irish Poetry of his Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47-8.

[xxxvii] Several studies have investigated Yeats's mastery of the medium and its influence on his work: see Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 335-403; Emilie Morin, 'W.B. Yeats and Broadcasting, 1924-1965', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 35, no.1 (2015), 145-175, and Emily C. Bloom, *The Wireless Past: Anglo-Irish Writers and the BBC, 1931-1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27-63. I am very grateful to Emilie Morin for

drawing my attention to the November 1936 article by Higgins in the *Irish Times*, and further illuminating remarks regarding Higgins's antipathy towards Beckett.

[xxxviii] 'On the Wireless: Daily Programme Review', *The Irish Times*, 22 October 1935, 4. I am grateful to my a peer-reviewer for this point about fluid coteries.

[xxxix] Later in 1939, Higgins's next broadcast with MacNeice, 'A Literary Night Out', tried to capture something of 'the salty, sensitive, exuberant talk of the Dublin literary pub', Walker, *Louis MacNeice and the Irish Poetry of his Time*, 48-9.

[xl] 'On the Wireless', *The Irish Times*, 6 September 1935, 4.

[xli] See Morin, 'W.B. Yeats and Broadcasting, 1924-1965', 147, 156.

[xlii] 'Some Modern Poets: Characteristics of their Verse: Broadcast Talk by Mr. F.R. Higgins', *The Irish Times*, 7 September 1935, 10.

[xliii] Beckett, 'Recent Irish Poetry', 73.

[xliv] See De Valera's radio broadcast, 17 March 1943, and his speech opening Athlone Broadcasting Station, 6 February 1933, in *Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera, 1917-73*, ed. Maurice Moynihan (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), 466-69, 230-33.

[xlv] 'Some Modern Poets: Characteristics of their Verse', *The Irish Times*, 10.

[xlvi] For Stevens's links to Irish poetic modernism, see Mary Joan Egan, 'Thomas McGreevy and Wallace Stevens: A Correspondence', *The Wallace Stevens Journal* (1994), 123-145.

[xlvii] Devlin, letter to Mac Greevy, 31 August 1934, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/5.

[xlviii] 'The Poet by the Lakeside', *Western People*, 30 August 1930, 7.

[xlix] Clarke, 'Irish Poetry To-day', *Reviews and Essays of Austin Clarke*, 60.

[l] Morin, 'W.B. Yeats and Broadcasting', 149. On the entwined forces of technological advances in broadcasting and interwar radio hostilities with Geneva as a flashpoint, see Keane, *Ireland and the Problem of Information*, 20-22.

[li] The political background of Kiernan's appointment is discussed in Pine, *2RN*, 175.

[lii] Samuel Beckett to Thomas MacGreevy, 8 October 1935, in *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, Vol. 1: 1929-1940*, ed. Martha D. Fehsenfeld and Lois M. Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 284.

[liii] On Liam Devlin, see the witness statement of Frank Thornton, File No. S.89, Bureau of Military History Archive <bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie> [Accessed 30 August 2018].

[liv] 'Modern French Poetry', *Belfast Newsletter*, 14 March 1930, 13.

[lv] Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), in *The Development of Celtic Linguistics, Vol. 6*, ed. by Daniel R. Davis (London: Routledge, 2001), 159.

[lvi] See Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 235-36.

[lvii] Devlin, letter to MacGreevy, 31 August 1934, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/5.

[lviii] 'The Magazines', *The Irish Press*, 3 August 1937, 7. The planned edition of Devlin and Montgomery's translations never saw the light of day, although they appeared in some form in Jim Mays' edition of Devlin's *Collected Poems*.

[lix] See Séamus Blake, 'Seán Ó' Tuama and Irish Gaelic in the Twentieth Century', *American Journal of Irish Studies*, 8 (2011), 150-151.

[lxlx] Máire Cruise O'Brien, *The Same Age as the State* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2003), 100-101.

[lxi] 'An Answer to F.R. Higgins', Devlin papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 33,803.

[lxii] Coffey, 'Of Denis Devin: Vestiges, Sentences, Presages' (1960), rpr. in *The Poetry Ireland Review*, No. 75 (Winter 2002/3), 92.

[lxiii] Quoted in David Dwan, 'Modernism and Rousseau', *Textual Practice* 27, no. .4 (2013), 549.

[lxiv] See his letters to MacGreevy, 26 January 1934 and 26 May 1934, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/3-4, and 'Untitled appreciation in French of T.S. Eliot', Denis Devlin papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 33,808.
[lxv] Devlin is photographed with Eliot at the exhibition in the *Sunday Independent*, 26 January 1936, 11.
[lxvi] Ibid., 551.
[lxvii] 'To-Day's Programmes', *The Irish Times*, 17 January 1933, 4.
[lxviii] For the engagements of Coffey and MacGreevy with Eliot and/or 'Catholic modernism', see James Matthew Wilson, 'Brian Coffey, Jacques Maritain and *Missouri Sequence* in *Other Edens: The Life and Work of Brian Coffey*, ed. Benjamin Keatinge and Aengus Woods (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 121-138, and Rhiannon Moss, 'Thomas MacGreevy, T.S. Eliot, and Catholic Modernism in Ireland', in *Irish Modernism: Origins, Contexts, Publics*, 131-144.
[lxix] Christopher Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 96.
[lxx] Damien Keane, *Ireland and the Problem of Information*, 5, 7.
[lxxi] Ibid., 9.
[lxxii] Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 204-208.
[lxxiii] Typescript draft of de Valera's speech from Geneva to the U.S. over Columbia Broadcast System, 12 September 1935, in Éamon de Valera papers, UCD Archives, University College Dublin, P150/2804.
[lxxiv] Printed draft of de Valera's speech at plenary meeting of 16th Assembly of the League, de Valera papers, UCD Archives, University College Dublin, P150/2803.
[lxxv] See Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 13-17.
[lxxvi] Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* [1795] (New York: Cosimo, 2010), 28. For de Valera's emphasis on the League's Covenant as the cornerstone of its effectiveness, see Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 168.
[lxxvii] Dwan, 'Modernism and Rousseau', 541.
[lxxviii] See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 62-67.
[lxxix] See drafts for both poems discussed here in folder titled 'Old Jacobin: Anteroom Geneva', Devlin papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 33,763/1 (1-8).
[lxxx] Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 234.
[lxxxi] Denis Devlin, *The Collected Poems of Denis Devlin*, ed. J.C.C. Mays (Dublin: Dedalus Press, 1989), 69.
[lxxxii] Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 324-37.
[lxxxiii] *The Collected Poems of Denis Devlin*, 167-168.
[lxxxiv] See Keane, *Ireland and the Problem of Information*, 28-29.
[lxxxv] See de Valera papers, UCD Archives, University College Dublin, P150/2804.
[lxxxvi] Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations*, 223.
[lxxxvii] Devlin to MacGreevy, 5 October 1935, MacGreevy papers, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8112/7.
[lxxxviii] Typescript of President's Broadcast, 4 October 1935, in De Valera papers, UCD Archives, University College Dublin, P150/2805.
[lxxxix] Ibid.
[xc] For a study of the domestic reaction to the crisis, see Cian McMahon, 'Irish Free State newspapers and the Abyssinia crisis, 1935-6', *Irish Historical Studies* 36, no.143 (May 2009), 368-88.
[xci] Davis, *A Broken Line*, 118.

[xcii] Devlin seems to add an interlineal insertion between 'joy' and 'are of no interest': 'must be abandoned, poetry is general'. Thanks to Matthew Sperling for help decoding.
[xciii] Devlin reads three poems in the course of the broadcast. Which Hart Crane poem Devlin chose to read is a matter of speculation, however, Crane's poem 'Cutty Sark' first appeared in *transition* with an epigraph from Isaiah; both Devlin and Crane contributed to Eugene Jolas's magazine *transition*. I am indebted to this information from Francesca Bratton's doctoral thesis (Durham), 'Hart Crane and the Little Magazine'. For a comparison of Devlin and Crane, see Davis, *A Broken Line*, 59-67.
[xciv] Padraic Colum (1881-1972), F.R. Higgins (1896-1941), and James Stephens (1880-1950), poets associated with the legacy of the Irish Literary Revival.
[xcv] Shakespeare's Sonnet 73.
[xcvi] The title of an 1894 play by Yeats.
[xcvii] Thomas MacGreevy's 'Nocturne of the Self-Evident Presence' was first published under the pseudonym L. St. Senan in *The Irish Statesman* VII, no. 8 (25 September 1926).
[xcviii] T.S. Eliot's 'Triumphal March', part of his unfinished *Coriolan* sequence, was first published as Ariel Poem 35 (8 October 1931).