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## Foreword

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## Foreword

I was genuinely honoured by the invitation issued to me by the editor of the third issue of *JOFIS*, Dr Claudia Luppino, to write a Foreword. Honoured, because Claudia has been superbly efficient in assembling and editing a fascinating panoply of essays on a topic that is germane to both French and Irish culture, namely the manner in which ‘winds of change’ affect and mould attitudes and approaches to social and literary practices. When Claudia first mooted the topic to me, I was very taken with its possibilities, being a child of the 1960s, possibly the most seismic decade in terms of the transformations it brought to bear across the world - one has only to think of events such as the Second Vatican Council, the Presidency of John F. Kennedy, the Cold War, Viet Nam, the student revolts of 1968. Claudia was thinking more along the lines of the abrupt end of the Celtic Tiger prosperity in Ireland and its replacement by a draconian policy of austerity, the ‘Arab Spring’ awakening in North Africa and the subsequent exodus from certain countries towards what they hoped would be a better future in Europe, especially France. As so often happens in these cases, the Call for Papers brought contributions that might not have been in complete conformity with the initial plan of the editor. However, she can be proud at the variety and standard of the articles that appear here and their relevance to the chosen theme.

As Director of the National Centre for Franco-Irish Studies in IT Tallaght, I am acutely aware of the importance of attracting emerging scholars in the area. A research centre cannot hope to survive if it does not have a number of graduate researchers among its cohort. This was the original idea behind *JOFIS*: it was intended to be an online journal edited *by* postgraduates *for* postgraduates. To date, I feel it has been successful in that regard. At a time when universities across the world are attempting to offer PhD students more intensive training in disseminating their research findings, in organising seminars and editing proceedings, *JOFIS* is a glowing example of how this might be achieved. Since she began working on this project, Claudia has successfully defended her PhD thesis dealing with certain themes that are germane to the work of Colm Tóibín, John McGahern and Claire Keegan, so this is really the next step in her academic trajectory. She has

*JOFIS 3*

acquitted herself extremely well in the task, as I knew she would, and I know from various versions of *JOFIS 3* that I have seen that her editorial input has been of the highest standard.

The range of material and writers covered is impressive, dealing with areas like the issue of change associated with emigration in figures such as the poets Greg Delanty and Eamonn Wall, novelists Colum McCann and Sebastian Barry, and the French Tunisian writer, Albert Memmi. Irish theatre has never been afraid to tackle change and crisis and the second section of this issue contains essays on Beckett's masterpiece, *Waiting for Godot*, Denis Johnston's *The Moon in the Yellow River* and *The Dreaming Dust* and Friel's *Crystal and Fox* and *Molly Sweeney*. The third and final section exploring images of a changing society in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century French and Irish literature tackles writers such as George Brittain, J-K Huymans, Patrick Kavanagh and certain writers of the Irish Revival like Yeats, Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde. One is struck by the range of the articles as well as by the geographical spread of the contributors, coming as they do from Europe and beyond.

My role here is not to assess or to summarise the contents of *JOFIS 3*, but rather to encourage readers to engage with the issues it raises and to see for yourselves what a worthwhile endeavour it has been. I warmly commend the editor for her excellent work and would also like to express my gratitude to my colleague Yvonne Desmond and all associated with the Arrow repository at Dublin Institute of Technology for hosting this and previous issues of *JOFIS*.

*Eamon Maher*