

Panel 11

Intermedial Narratives: Bodies and Voices

Reconfiguring Theatre Narratives: Intermedial Bodies in Joseph O'Connor's *Ghost Light* (2010) and Anne Enright's *Actress* (2020)

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Theatre's collaborative, performative and decadent features are at once a source of acute tension and a creative catalyst for novelists. This paper examines how Joseph O'Connor's *Ghost Light* (2010) and Anne Enright's *Actress* (2020) "novelise" theatre, using it as the ontological and practical locus of desire. By applying "theatre-fiction" (Graham Wolfe, 2019) as a frame of analysis, the paper investigates how this intermedial genre can enrich and explain the meaningful overlaps, transmutations, and differences within and across the various forms. Specifically, within the context of Irish theatre – often dubbed a "writer's theatre" – O'Connor's novel exhibits an endless fascination with the male-playwright-genius and his muse, capitalising on voyeuristic desires to peer into these figures' private lives "behind curtains." The novel appropriates the scandal-ridden theatre scene, narrating the story from actress Molly Allgood's perspective. By contrast, Enright's *Actress*, written in tandem with the #MeToo movement that spotlighted women's sexual exploitation in theatre, critiques the violation of female bodies and artistic prowess. The genre of theatre-fiction allows for a unique questioning of female autonomy in theatre, writing, and the broader arts landscape. The mother-daughter/theatre-novel parallel unveils the magic of theatre in innovative ways.

Biography

Moonyoung Hong is Assistant Professor in the School of English at the University of Hong Kong. She is author of *Tom Murphy's Theatre of Everyday Space* (Routledge, 2025) and co-editor of *The Irish Pub: Invention and Re-Invention* (Cork University Press, 2025).