Proseminarium 2BA: Voices Across Generations: Irish Women Writers and their Works

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This seminar investigates the contributions of three generations of contemporary Irish women writers, tracing their evolution over the last decades of the 20th century and the first twenty years of the 21st century. The authors, whose work will be selected for further reading, have redefined Irish literature and explored themes of identity, family, gender, and power in a rapidly changing Ireland. Each of the generations tackles topics such as personal freedom in relation to societal expectations and Irish Catholicism. The pioneering voices of the 1980s and 1990s, included Edna O’Brien and Mary Morrissy, who broke barriers and laid the groundwork for modern Irish women’s literature. The second generation, represented by Anne Enright and Evelyn Conlon, traversed the intersection of the personal and the political in a globalized Ireland, broadening the thematic preoccupations of present-day literature. The youngest writers, including Louise O’Neil, Louise Nealon and Megan Nolan engage with contemporary issues including social media, mental health, and sexual politics. Their works resonate with millennial and Gen Z audiences. The goal of the seminar is to acquaint the students with the role of women writers in shaping Ireland’s cultural identity during moments of significant social and political change, including the marriage equality referendum. Our discussions will be based on short stories and excerpts from novels.