

Caitriona Mary Reilly  
'Postfeminism and Contemporary British and Irish Theatre'



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The original proposed (and current working) title for my PhD thesis is 'Postfeminism and

Contemporary British and Irish Theatre'. The aim of the thesis is to identify the progression

of feminism and how contemporary society is now in a postfeminist, globalised state through

the historiography and dramaturgical analysis of plays and performances.

There has been a backlash within feminism in the past few years and it is this backlash which has provoked the question of how relevant feminism is in contemporary

cultures. The term postfeminism does not mark the end of feminism but rather a continuation

and a new phase in the feminist debate. Within postfeminism new issues are raised relating

to gender identity. Through this thesis I wish to identify the new challenges and obstacles

which face current and future feminist debate both locally (for example in Irish society) and

in an international context. I believe that there is still a need for the feminist argument, one

which looks to the future opportunities of women within the 'local and the 'global''<sup>1</sup> due to

the inequalities that still exist between men and women in many cultures.

The PhD thesis is a continuation and expansion of the research and study established within my MA dissertation. The dissertation, 'Postfeminism and Contemporary Irish Theatre', identified three women playwrights (Margaretta D'Arcy, Marina Carr and Stella

Feehily) whose performative and dramatic material documented the advancement and changes of contemporary feminisms and how these have led to a postfeminist, globalised

Ireland. The aim of the PhD thesis is to continue to identify other female playwrights whilst

<sup>1</sup> Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris, 'Feminist Futures and the Possibilities of 'We''', in *Feminist*

*Futures?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1-16 (p. 3).

<sup>2</sup>

also acknowledging other practitioners. Unlike the MA dissertation which only focused on

contemporary Irish theatre, the PhD thesis aims to compare Irish theatre within a global

context. Through a comparative analysis the thesis will compare how the progression of

feminism in Ireland has greatly differed to elsewhere. In a global context Ireland's postfeminist state may be considered either as being long overdue in a contemporary, globalised climate or reveal itself to be proof of Ireland as a progressive and modernised society.

I graduated with First Class Honours in Drama from Queen's University Belfast in 2010. I was the first recipient of the Michael Barnes MA Scholarship and completed my MA

in Drama and Performance at QUB in September 2011. I have been awarded DEL funding

which has allowed me to proceed as postgraduate research student at QUB.