



## Journal of the Short Story in English

Les Cahiers de la nouvelle

34 | Spring 2000

Notes on the Irish and Irish-North-American short story

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# The Journal of the Short Story in English: presentation

May 2000

Ben Forkner

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### Édition électronique

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/516>

ISSN : 1969-6108

### Éditeur

Presses universitaires de Rennes

### Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 1 mars 2000

ISSN : 0294-04442

### Référence électronique

Ben Forkner, « The Journal of the Short Story in English: presentation », *Journal of the Short Story in English* [En ligne], 34 | Spring 2000, mis en ligne le 12 septembre 2008, consulté le 03 décembre 2020.  
URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/516>

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- 1 *The Journal of the Short Story in English*, after almost twenty years, merits at least a short history of its relatively long existence. It was founded in 1982 at the University of Angers, thanks to the encouragement of Professor Philippe Séjourné, Director of the English Department, and Jean-Claude Brouillard, Chief Librarian of the University Library and Director of the University Press. The first number of the *Journal*, also known as *Les Cahiers de la Nouvelle*, was published in March 1983 (Editors: B. Forkner and P. Valette, Associate Editor: J. Devoize). From the beginning, the aim of the *Journal* has been to reach beyond a closed circle of local scholars, and solicit contributions from specialists on the short story from all over the world. We have tried to hew to this position as faithfully as possible over the years, and my own feeling is that the continuing success of the *Journal* is due primarily to this single guiding principle.
- 2 Another feature of the *Journal* has been its desire to bring contemporary short story writers themselves actively into the university forum. Guest writers have attended each of our conferences, beginning with Anthony Burgess, John Wain, and Mavis Gallant at the first conference we organized, in January 1983. Other guest writers have included Benedict Kiely, Muriel Spark, Ernest Gaines, Elizabeth Spencer, A.S. Byatt, and, recently, Grace Paley and John McGahern. Many of these writers have been interviewed in the *Journal*, along with such modern masters of the form as V.S. Pritchett, Graham Greene, and Peter Taylor, each of whom has granted us original interviews in his home.
- 3 For any self-respecting academic journal, reprints and references are often the most reliable proofs of lasting intellectual value, and in this respect alone, the *Journal* holds up well among comparable university publications. Dozens of articles have been reprinted elsewhere, in collections of short story criticism, in general reference works of modern literature, and in individual studies of a particular author. Two entire special issues of the *Journal* have been reprinted as separate volumes by academic presses in England and in the United States. And even as recently as last month, an

article in the first issue of the *Journal* was cited in the new Pléiade edition of William Faulkner.

- 4 Many members of the English section of the University of Angers have helped with the *Journal*, but during the past three years, much editorial responsibility has devolved on two of the younger members of the faculty, Emmanuel Vernadakis and Linda Collinge. Together with our two American co-editors, John Paine and Corinne Dale, they have been determined to steer the *Journal* in the right direction, and have provided the revitalizing fresh breeze when necessary. They have also been among the prime movers of our last two conferences. Emmanuel Vernadakis and Jean-François Dreyfus organized the conference (and co-edited the special issue) on the Jewish short story in 1999, and John Paine and Corinne Dale the conference on the Irish and Irish-American short story earlier this year. With able new members such as these, and with secretarial help as devoted as Yvonne Buchmann and Sylvie Esnault, there is every reason to believe that the future history of the *Journal*, however compressed on the printed page, will be a much longer story than short.