development of modern Irish poetry. This study challenges the attempt present within such criticism to arrest, stabilize, and diffuse the threat multiple alternative histories and understandings of texts would pose to the formation of any singular pyramidal canon. Offered here are detailed close readings of the recent work of some of the most established and high-profile Irish poets, such as Paul Muldoon and Medbh McGuckian, along with emerging poets, to foreground an alternative critical methodology which undermines the traditional canonical pursuit of singular meaning and definition through embracing the troubling indeterminacy and multiplicity to be found within contemporary Irish poetry.

Did the ancient Israelites perform rituals expressive of the belief in the supernatural beneficent power of the dead? Contrary to long held notions of primitive society and the euhemeristic origin of the divine, various factors indicate that the ancestor cult, that is, ancestor veneration or worship, was not observed in the Iron Age Levant. The Israelites did not adopt an ancient Canaanite ancestor cult that became the object of biblical scorn. Yet, a variety of mortuary rituals and cults were performed in Levantine society, mourning and funerary rites and longer-term rituals such as the care for the dead and commemoration. Rituals and monuments in or at burial sites, and especially the resurrection of the deceased’s name, recontextualized the dead’s lived lives for familial survivors. They served broader social functions as well; e.g., to legitimate primogeniture and to reinforce a community’s social collectivity. Another ritual complex from the domain of divination, namely necromancy, might have expressed the Israelite dead’s beneficent powers. Yet, was this power to reveal knowledge that of the dead or was it a power conveyed through the dead, but that remained attributable to another supernatural being of non-human origin? Contemporary Assyrian necromancers utilized the ghost as a conduit through which divine knowledge was revealed to ascertain the future and so Judah’s king Manasseh, a loyal Assyrian vassal, emulated these new Assyrian imperial forms of prognostication. As a de-legitimating rhetorical strategy, necromancy was then integrated into biblical traditions about the more distant past and attributed fictive Canaanite origins (Deut 18). In its final liturgical setting, necromancy was depicted as the Achilles’ heel of the nation’s first royal dynasty, that of the Saulites (1 Sam 28), and more tellingly, its second, that of the Davidides (2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24).

The story of invasive species in New Zealand is unlike any other in the world. By the mid-thirteenth century, the main islands of the country were the last large landscapes on Earth to remain uninhabited by humans, or any other land mammals. New Zealand’s endemic fauna evolved in isolation until first Polynesians, and then Europeans, arrived with a host of companion animals such as rats and cats in tow. Well-equipped with teeth and claws, these small furry mammals, along with the later arrival of stoats and ferrets, have devastated the fragile populations of unique birds, lizards and insects. Carolyn M. King brings together the necessary historical analysis and recent ecological research to understand this long, slow tragedy. As a comprehensive historical perspective on the fate of an iconic endemic fauna, this book offers much-needed insight into one of New Zealand’s longest-running national crises. The Civil War Dead and American Modernity offers a fundamental rethinking of the cultural importance of the American Civil War dead. Tracing their representational afterlives across a massive array of historical, visual, and literary documents from 1861 to 1934, Jan Finseth maintains that the war dead played a central, complex, and paradoxical role in how Americans experienced and understood the modernization of the United States. From eyewitness accounts of battle to photographs and paintings, and from full-dress histories of the war to fictional narratives, Finseth shows that the dead circulated through American cultural life in ways that we have not fully appreciated, and that require an expanded range of interpretative strategies to understand. While individuals grieved and relinquished their own loved ones, the collective Civil War dead, Finseth argues, came to form a kind of symbolic currency that informed Americans’ melancholic relationship to their own past. Amid the turbulence of the postbellum era, as the United States embarked decisively upon its technological, geopolitical, and intellectual modernity, the dead provided an illusion of coherence, intelligibility, and continuity in the national self. At the same time, they seemed to represent a traumatic break in history and the loss of a simpler world, and their meanings could never be completely contained by the political discourse that surrounded them. Reconstructing the formal, rhetorical, and ideological strategies by which postwar American society reimagined, and continues to reimagine, the Civil War dead, Finseth also shows that a strain of critical thought was alert to this dynamic from the very years of the war itself. The Civil War Dead and American Modernity is at once a study of the politics of mortality, the disintegration of American Victorianism, and the role of visual and literary art in both forming and undermining social consensus. Ludwig Wittgenstein’s On Certainty was finished just before his death in 1951 and is a running commentary on three of G.E. Moore’s greatest epistemological papers. In the early 1930s, Moore had written a lengthy commentary on Wittgenstein, anticipating some of the issues Wittgenstein would discuss in On Certainty. In this book, Avrum Stroll examines the philosophical relationship between these two great philosophers and their overlapping but nevertheless differing views. Both defended the existence of certainty and thus opposed any form of skepticism. However, their defenses and conceptions of certainty diverged widely, as did their understanding of the nature of skepticism and how best to combat it. Moore and Wittgenstein on Certainty contains a careful and critical analysis of the two philosophers’ differing approaches to a set of fundamental epistemological problems. Stroll extends their account to current issues in cognitive science and philosophy of mind.