

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

# Phenomenal!: Joyce, the Epiphany, and Irish Paralysis

Dr. Gabriel Quigley (American University, Washington D.C.)

Thursday, February 12, 5:30 pm in H-232



James Joyce coined the secular use of the term “epiphany,” which critics have understood to mean a moment of sudden insight or realization. My presentation challenges this longstanding psychologistic definition by demonstrating that Joyce’s concept of the epiphany anticipates what later philosophers refer to as “the phenomenon.” This phenomenological rather than psychological interpretation of the epiphany illuminates Joyce’s aesthetic and metaphysical commitments, but it also has political stakes: against the colonial stasis imposed by imperial administration, Joyce’s works demonstrate that Ireland is the site of radically contingent, phenomenal events that undefine its subjugation.

Dr. Gabriel Quigley (PhD., New York University) researches global modernism, philosophy, and postcolonial studies. His work appears in *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd’hui*, *French Studies Bulletin*, *Derrida Today*, *Critical Inquiry*, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, and *Journal of Modern Literature*; he is the co-editor of *Beckett Ongoing: Aesthetics, Ethics, Politics* (Palgrave, 2024).