

Summary of NCL Diversity and Inclusion Book, Film & Music Club 25.03.22

Book, Film and Music Club

Themes: The themes for the March 2022 Book, Film & Music Club discussion are: Civil unrest, national/family identity, belonging, nostalgia, emigration, anger.

Quote: “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise so I am changing myself.” Rumi – Persian Poet 13th Century

Film:

Belfast (2021)



[Belfast - Official Trailer 2 - In Cinemas January 21 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmBWNVM1blc)

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[Belfast | Buddy's Street Is Attacked By Protestants | x6 Academy Award® Nominations | Extended Clip - YouTube](#)

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The Film Belfast (2021) was discussed which evoked memories and flashbacks about prejudices and issues experienced at the time. The film also produced feelings of happiness and sadness.

The Facilitator provided an overview of the film stating that it is a semi-autobiographical account of Director, Kenneth Branagh's life. The opening scene of the film (which was viewed by staff members) gave a clear depiction of the fact that the film is seen through the eyes of a 9 year old. The audience see how all the children are playing happily in the street and the humorous

interactions between all the neighbours. In an interview with Kenneth Branagh he stated that he recalls hearing what sounded like a swarm of bees coming towards him but were in fact the approaching rioters. One can see the visible look of anguish on the character, Buddy's face when viewing the oncoming rioters. Kenneth then stated that the ground was lifted from underneath his feet, both literally and metaphorically as the pavement slabs were uprooted to help make the barricades, which left the residents having to walk on sand.

There were also memories of the 1926 General Strike, which was a subject studied at school and childhood memories of playing in the street and the sense of community that was present.

One of the film trailers includes the following "No matter how far you go, you never forget where you came from."

There was feedback that a family member from Belfast confirmed that this was a very accurate depiction of Belfast in 1969 where people had to climb over erected barricades.

There was a comment on the power of story-telling. The issue of nostalgia and belonging is quite key when talking about inclusion.

It was highlighted that childhood memories will stay with you and the importance of tolerance – which is the golden thread in humanity.

It was stated that the film shows everyday life. Even during conflict daily life continues. Children still carrying out everyday activities in the context of a wider conflict.

The actor Catriona Balfe (who plays Buddy's mother in the film) stated that "a message of tolerance is at the heart of Belfast."

Reference was made to the fact that the British Army were brought in at the start of the conflict where it was felt that the country was being invaded when viewing the planes that were flying into Northern Ireland bringing in the army.

Book/Poem:

Poem Stony Grey Soil by Patrick Kavanagh [Stony Grey Soil](#)



"In 'Stony Grey Soil' Kavanagh regrets having wasted his youth in a barbarous, bleak place. The very title, 'Stony Grey Soil' suggests a hard, harsh, dull, unimaginative world – not an ideal environment for a poet.

In this poem, Kavanagh sees himself as a victim who was deprived, deceived, lied to, cheated and robbed by his homeplace and the way of life it imposed on him. The poem is an outpouring of anger and accusations against Monaghan for what it did to the poet. The soil of Monaghan is personified in the poem in very unflattering terms. Because he is personifying Monaghan, he has to use metaphor extensively. The soil is represented as a thief, a cheat, a depriver, a liar, a burglar; it is seen as one who 'flung a ditch' on his vision; as one who weighed down his feet to prevent his flight into the world of poetic imagination."

"In harsh metaphor after harsh metaphor, he pours out a sustained and strident angry tirade against the place where he feels his youth was wasted and his potential inhibited and stunted. Monaghan and the farming way of life is a thief, 'the laugh from my love you thieved'. It is a cheat, it dealt falsely with him, 'you took the gay child of my passion and gave me your clod conceived'."

"However, the poet is unable to sustain this tirade to the bitter end and in the final three stanzas he relents and his great love for his native place surfaces at last. The accusatory 'you' occurs no more and now he is sadly reflective, almost nostalgic.."

The Poetry of Patrick Kavanagh

[The Poetry of Patrick Kavanagh – Reviews Rants and Rambles \(vinhanley.com\)](http://vinhanley.com)

<https://vinhanley.com/2016/01/06/the-poetry-of-patrick-kavanagh/>

"Kavanagh's reputation as a poet is based on the lyrical quality of his work, his mastery of language and form and his ability to transform the ordinary and the banal into something of significance. He is an acute observer of things and situations, and this allows him to make things that may seem ordinary and unimportant into something deserving of a place in poetry.

He is constantly using his work to make sense of the natural world, be it in Dublin or Monaghan. More importantly, Kavanagh is always trying to assess his own place in this world. He often approaches a poem from a point of doubt, where he is unsure about where he belongs, and uses the poem to come to a resolution."

Music:

[The Gloaming | Opening Set - Live at Royal Albert Hall - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWp-dlqOjIA)

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