

***'The Fettered and the Free': A look at J.G. Farrell's great post-1918 novel 'Troubles' featuring Ireland, Britain and the comedy and the tragedy in between.***



A study morning with

**Dr Richard Moore**

Friday, 1st March 2019

from 10-1 p.m.

William Elder Building,  
Castlegate, Berwick,  
TD15 1JT

Sam Jordisan in *The Guardian* called *Troubles* "a work of genius" and "one of the best books" of the second half of the 20th century.

The plot concerns the dilapidation of a once grand Irish hotel in the midst of the political upheaval of the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921). The crumbling 'Majestic' is clearly a metaphor for the state of the British Empire but the story is by no means an anti-British tract. The novel includes much humour and a wealth of brilliant psychological interest, crossing the political barriers to end in a magnificently dramatic climax.

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During the study day we shall tease out the merits of the novel and learn more about its enigmatic author. We shall also relate it to other works steeped in this troubled period, especially Sean O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman*. What we shall find is that amid terror there is laughter and amid tragedy hope. We shall also find wit in abundance and structural skills worthy of the very greatest of masters.

To understand something of the novel's context it is a help to know a little of the political background. One of the wonders of *Troubles* is that it includes so much humour and such a wealth of brilliant psychological interest, crossing the political barriers and building up to a magnificent climax. In the approach to this we have glimpses of the furious conflict between supporters of Independence and those accepting the terms of Home Rule.

*Troubles* was well-received upon its publication. It won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and the Lost Man Booker Prize, was adapted into a made-for-television film in 1988, and in 2010, was hailed as 'a work of genius' in *The Guardian*. "Had [Farrell] not sadly died so young," Salman Rushdie said, "there is no question that he would today be one of the really major novelists of the English language."

**The cost of the lecture is £9, including refreshments.**

**All are welcome and no previous knowledge is assumed.**

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(*Troubles*)

