

## Panel 5: Bordering and Rebordering in Ireland

Joachim Frenk

### **There's Him There: Northern Irish Border Narratives in the Works of Glenn Patterson**

After the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement of 1998, only very few in Ireland north and south will have deluded themselves about the deep scars the 30-year-conflict of the Troubles had left behind and about the continuing precarious state of the Irish border for the foreseeable future. Glenn Patterson (\*1961) was born and still resides in Belfast, and he has arguably become the go-to cultural correspondent of post-agreement Belfast, not only in Ireland and the UK but also, increasingly, on the European mainland. He is a prolific journalist, fiction writer, and professor of creative writing at the School of Art, English and Literature at Queen's University Belfast. A self-confessed germanophile, Patterson has visited a number of German educational institutions, his favourite German location being Berlin, the German city that probably most closely resembles Belfast in its partitioned and violent history. In my talk, I want to discuss some of Patterson's contributions to the Irish border debate from a Northern Irish perspective. I will discuss some articles that were published in Irish and British newspapers as well as *Backstop Land* (2019), his extended eyewitness account of the Brexit negotiations and their consequences for Northern Ireland and its border, and his latest novel *Where Are We Now?* (2020), which offers a coded comment on matters (Northern) Irish via the story of a middle-aged Belfast man in crisis.