

Editorial: “Encounters”

Natasha Dukelow and Shruti Rajgopal

School of History, University College Cork

The present volume of *Aigne* marks a significant milestone in the journal’s development. As the tenth volume of *Aigne*, it stands as a testament to the dedication of the postgraduate editors from the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS), as well as the support from the college itself. The journal highlights the cumulative achievements of all those who have contributed to date, as well as the postgraduate students who founded and sustained it. Since its revival in 2014, *Aigne* has continued to grow in prominence, showcasing the research and writing of scholars, including postgraduate and early-career researchers, from University College Cork and beyond.

While our previous volume explored experiences of liminality and transition—the in-between spaces—this volume proceeds forward to identify the source and the ultimate destination. As a result, the theme “Encounters” was chosen to recognise historic, socio-political, utopian and dystopian exchanges between groups or individuals. Encounters serve as pivotal moments of connection, conflict and transformation, shaping our understanding of the world and ourselves. Whether through cultural, historical, or personal lenses, encounters challenge established norms, ignite new ideas and reveal underlying power dynamics. This volume explores the rich and varied dimensions of encounters, examining how they disrupt, redefine, or reinforce boundaries in literature, film, history, music and everyday life. Each contributor engages with the theme of “Encounters” in unique ways, and from diverse scholarly backgrounds, resulting in the rich array of topics presented in the current volume. In addition to the peer-reviewed articles, book reviews and event reports, this volume continues the tradition established by the journal’s 2014 revivers (Caroline Schroeter and Loretta Goff), by featuring a selection of creative pieces, allowing for submissions that extend beyond purely academic contributions.

A recurrent theme that emerges across the six featured articles is the encounter between tradition and change—the tension between the past and present, and the power struggles inherent in that dynamic. These articles collectively explore the subversion of societal expectations and the challenge to traditional norms caused by different kinds of encounters. In the first article, Rachel Gough explores how the presence of ghosts in narratives can disrupt power structures, assessing the extent of this disruption and whether these structures recover

by the end of the story. Gough effectively applies this approach to Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Pablo Larrain's film *Spencer* and the BBC's mockumentary *Ghostwatch*, offering a compelling piece. This is followed by Sandra Costello's consideration of melodrama in *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002) and *Sinners* (2002), which seeks to establish whether these films effectively challenge the historical narrative through which we encounter the past. Costello provides valuable insight into the genre's role in fostering a productive discourse on Ireland's Magdalene institutions and the complicity of the Irish state.

The third and fourth articles explore encounters within the framework of ethnic and racial dynamics, while also addressing the tension between power and oppression that arises within these interactions. In the third article, Beth Aherne provides a thoughtful examination of how apocalyptic encounters in Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) and Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018) decolonise Indigenous family structures. Aherne also expands the study of family within the science fiction genre, moving beyond traditional Western narratives and the nuclear family model to incorporate alternative family forms. This is followed by Marija Laugalyte's investigation of the concept of racebending in JAY-Z's music video for "Moonlight" (2017), to explore how race-difference recastings can challenge whiteness beyond superficial diversity. It argues that while racebending does not fully decolonise the entertainment industry, it serves as an important practice for addressing racial politics and offering reparative readings of culturally significant works.

This volume's theme is further developed in the fifth article, where the encounter between modernity and tradition—particularly the threat that modernity poses to the established order—is explored. Luke O'Brien analyses Korean director Kim Ki-young's *The Housemaid* (1960), situating the film within the broader societal concerns of mid-twentieth-century Korea, a period marked by rapid modernisation and Westernisation. He focuses particularly on the anxieties surrounding the destabilisation of the patriarchal Korean family and the social ills associated with modernisation, as reflected in Kim Ki-young's film. Following this, in the sixth article, Mengwei Zhang explores the idea of "Encounters" through the interaction between two prominent Chinese musicians during China's Republican era: Nie Er (1912–1935) and Xiao Youmei (1884–1940). Zhang examines the ideological tension between these figures, reflecting broader debates about modernity and tradition in China's music culture. While both musicians aimed to modernise the nation, they differed significantly in their approaches. The article reconstructs their encounter, revealing Nie's nuanced stance on Western music and Xiao's advocacy for progressive change. The piece illustrates how encounters between modernity and tradition can simultaneously challenge and uphold power

structures, contributing to the broader themes of resistance and transformation examined in this volume.

The books reviewed focus on recently published academic texts, which engage to varying extents with the theme of “Encounters”. The reviewed publications cover topics such as philosophy, morality and mobility:

- Andrew Kettler reviews Hiroki Azumi’s *Philosophy of the Tourist*, translated by John Person (2023), published by Urbanomic.
- John Twomey reviews Trevor Mowchun’s *Metaphysics and the Moving Image: “Paradise Exposed”* (2022), published by Edinburgh University Press.
- Charlotte Waltz reviews Bryan Fanning’s *Public Morality and the Culture Wars: The Triple Divide* (2023), published by Emerald publishing.
- Brian de Ruiter reviews *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Modernity*, edited by Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg (2023), published by Amsterdam University Press.
- Chara Charalambous reviews *Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture*, edited by Chiara Giuliani and Kate Hodgson (2022), published by Routledge.

In addition to the articles and book-reviews, two event reports are featured, both contributed by authors who attended international events in 2023. Dilek Öztürk Yağcı discusses the “Urban Imaginary — Exploring Our Urban Futures” summer school in Lisbon, which encouraged participants to envision sustainable urban landscapes. Ellen O Sullivan reports on the 16th Annual Feminist Theory Workshop held at Duke University, where scholars engaged in critical discussions on feminist theories and their applications. These events exemplify the theme of “Encounters” by fostering meaningful exchanges across diverse academic communities.

Finally, the last section of this volume showcases a diverse array of creative pieces that respond to the theme of “Encounters” in unique ways. These submissions explore the theme through various mediums, including visual art, poetry and prose. Each piece invites readers to engage with the concept of “Encounters” from different perspectives. The creative section opens with the description of the image that has been selected for the cover of this volume. This cover image was created by one of our editors, Richard Keyes McDonnell, to whom we are extremely grateful. The poems featured are: ‘Mac Fheidhlimidh’ by Cáit Pléimíonn, ‘Rain’ by Niamh Meaney, ‘One Winter in Genova, I was Somebody Else’ by Lucy Holme and ‘Figure’ by Marie O’Brien. The prose contributions are ‘Grace in Motion’ by Janie Schipper

and ‘In Through the Ears’ by Josh Wagner. Together, these works offer a rich exploration of encounters through diverse voices and forms.

As a parting note, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our editors and contributing editors, who are listed on the colophon above. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who lent their time and expertise to the creation of this volume—authors, peer reviewers and our entire team!