





Editorial: “Response: Reflection and Action”

 **Natasha Dukelow** and  **Shruti Rajgopal**

School of History, University College Cork

Responses are an innate and constant part of every interaction, reaction, thought and decision. They weave through all aspect of our lives, often without us recognising them, as they happen automatically or unconsciously. The previous volume of [Aigne \(10, 2024\)](#) explored interpretations of the theme “Encounters”. The theme of the present volume, “Response: Reflection and Action”, can be understood as a continuation of this focus: first we encounter something, then we respond to it.

A response is comprised of two connected elements. The first is a moment of reflection, whether conscious or subconscious, reactive or contemplative, and the second is an action, or the decision not to act, that follows. These processes can take many forms. They can agree and reinforce, or they can challenge and pull something apart and they can reshape or extend the ideas that they engage with. Responses operate across all levels of experience, from the personal to the global, and intersect with political, educational, cultural and other spheres.

In the continually evolving landscapes of scholarship, politics and personal and national identity, with geopolitical tensions compounding an ever-increasing sense of urgency, the ability to respond thoughtfully, reflect critically and act decisively is more than a mere intellectual exercise. It is an essential principle (or at least should be) for engaging with knowledge and society. To respond to something, we first need to notice what calls for our attention. It is that moment of noticing that inspires ideas or presents challenges or opportunities. Reflection is a key part of the process, where we pause and examine what we have noticed. Action translates thought into impact, whether through research, teaching, policy or community engagement. It is the bridge between knowledge and change, demonstrating that scholarship is not just about understanding the world but shaping it too. As such the theme of this volume invites us to consider how our work,

individually and collectively, can move beyond observation toward active contribution.

With the theme “Response: Reflection and Action”, the eleventh volume of *Aigne* continues the journal’s tradition of publishing thematic volumes, a practice that began with its inaugural issue. It is not our intention for the theme to be overly restrictive, nor for it to discourage potential authors from submitting their work simply because it may not fit neatly within that theme. Rather, the purpose of selecting a theme is to provide inspiration and direction for potential responses to the call for articles.

The selected theme takes on another layer of meaning, as the creation of this volume exemplifies the very process captured by its title. The calls for submissions invited responses, and in doing so encouraged contributors to reflect on what they might submit and to act to do so. The high number of submissions in this volume represents the strength of the response. The concepts encapsulated by each element of the theme (response, reflection and action) cover a wide range of ideas and perspectives, and this is reflected in the contributions.

In a broader sense, *Aigne* itself is a form of response to a need within the College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (CACSSS) at University College Cork—one that arose from the initiative of CACSSS [postgraduate students](#) who, in reflecting on their needs for a peer-reviewed outlet for their research and professional and scholarly development, took action to establish the journal in 2010. A similar response occurred in 2017, when the journal was revived by [another cohort of postgraduate students](#), leading to the publication of [Aigne volume 7 \(2018\)](#), the first since 2014. By continuing to respond to this ongoing need, the journal provides a platform for open access research dissemination for postgraduate and early career researchers worldwide, while providing its editors with valuable experience in writing, editing and the broader editorial process.

Each cycle of *Aigne* brings together an editorial board drawn from multiple areas of research within the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. This board curates a collection of articles, book reviews, event reports and creative submissions that reflect the variety of research within CACSSS and the wider scholarly community, while aiming to appeal to a wide readership both within and beyond the College. While *Aigne* prides itself

on serving the global postgraduate community, it also plays an important role at the local level.

This volume showcases the active and interconnected community of postgraduate researchers within CACSSS. As demonstrated by the contributions gathered here, *Aigne* editors—who are members of CACSSS—appear in different sections of the volume, either within submissions or as authors. A number of our editors participated in the annual CACSSS Postgraduate Research Conference, as evidenced in the conference event report also published in this volume, which was authored by three members of *Aigne*'s editorial board who shared their research at the conference. Several of those documented in that event report also have work published in this volume, underlining a symbiotic relationship between the conference and the journal that is hoped will continue. Other contributors are familiar as they have published in past volumes and it is hoped that many more will contribute to future ones.

The present volume is a wonderful testament to the vibrant and interdisciplinary community that *Aigne* is fortunate to be a part of and to the role it plays in nurturing that community by bringing together postgraduate researchers from different backgrounds as editors and publishing research from a variety of disciplines.

This volume follows *Aigne*'s conventional sectional structure and contains the usual offering of peer-reviewed articles, book reviews, event reports as well as creative pieces. We are also pleased to (re-)introduce a section dedicated to contributions originating from the Annual CACSSS Postgraduate Research Conference.

ARTICLES

The articles in this volume are contributed by authors from within University College Cork and beyond. Together, they demonstrate the flexibility of the theme “Response: Reflection and Action” through their varied interpretations of, and response to, it. This adaptability has also allowed scholars from various disciplines to engage with the theme, as reflected in the articles published here from education, linguistics, Slavonic and East European studies, French studies, LGBTQ and lesbian studies and archaeology/anthropology. Generally speaking, the articles presented here

can be divided into two categories: response(s) related to and within educational contexts and response(s) related to identity and conflict.

Jessica Hadden (Queen's University Belfast) offers an exploration of young people's experiences of integrated education in Northern Ireland, an educational response to societal division. Hadden examines how integrated schools articulate and enact values of respect and understanding, while identifying challenges, such as multiculturalism and online misogyny.

Aoife Hill (University College Cork) *et al.* examine reflectivity and reflexivity within Irish immersion teacher education through an action research project with in-service teachers. Focusing on the teaching and assessment of Irish grammar, the article highlights the collaborative and evolving nature of reflective practices, as well as the role of the researcher in supporting teacher's professional learning in relation to immersion contexts.

How educators respond and implement research findings in the realm of education is the focus of Eoghan Long's (University College Cork) article, which addresses the gap between educational research and classroom practice. He examines retrieval practices as a reflective and evidence-informed pedagogy. Using cognitive science, the article argues for a more thoughtful engagement with research that supports teachers as active interpreters rather than passive adopters of evidence.

While the first group of articles explore the theme in relation to educational contexts, a number of authors engage with the theme of response in relation to identity, examining how identities are formed and articulated in dialogue with social, cultural and historical forces. Emma Bódig (University of Glasgow and University of Strathclyde) argues that identity is formed relationally, and that being a woman is not an inherent state, but is a response shaped by different factors.

Shifting the focus from individual identity formation to collective organisation, Ava van Aurich (University of Western Australia) looks at the grass roots, organised response of the lesbian community, both historically and contemporarily, with particular attention to Australia.

Returning to individual identity—and, in this case, the identity of a single particular individual—Alesia Mankousaya's article (University College London) considers the confessional identity of Simeon of Polotsk

(1629–1680), a prominent Belarusian intellectual, reevaluating the available evidence.

The focus on collective identity is further developed by Roisín O’Connor (University College Cork), who investigates group identity as a responsive process through an analysis of the *Pieds-Noirs*. O’Connor analyses the factors to which that identity responds and the ways in which it is articulated and interpreted in Yasmina Khadra’s *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit* (2008) and Patrick Jusseaume’s *Non-Retour* (2021). Central to this examination is the evacuation and exile from Algeria and its formative role in shaping *Pieds-Noirs* identity. This consideration of the ways in which identity is shaped through histories of conflict and contested memory creates a natural transition to discussions of response in post-conflict contexts, which forms the focus of the following article.

The final article in this section, by Brónagh Murphy (University College Cork), considers the role of forensic archaeology and forensic anthropology in responding to the trauma of violence and in processes of restorative justice, particularly in relation to the exhumation of remains and the return of victims to their families. Focusing on the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the article shows how forensic and archaeological practices can function as responses to historical injustice and collective trauma.

This volume shows just how many ways the theme of response can be approached. Across the pieces, authors consider questions of education, identity and history. Some respond to past injustices, others to current classroom dilemmas and all of them bring attention to processes that shape response, reflection and action. Reading these articles together, the reader gains a sense of the energy and diversity of current postgraduate scholarship.

RESEARCH FROM THE CACSSS POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE

The annual CACSSS Research Conference, organised and facilitated by the CACSSS Graduate School, provides an important opportunity for postgraduate students across the college to present their research in a collegial and encouraging environment. The connection between *Aigne* and this showcase of postgraduate research is long-standing, evident from as early as [Aigne volume 2 \(2012\)](#), which noted that:

The journal publishes two distinct issues a year. The first issue is an annual release which works in collaboration with the Graduate School's postgraduate conference. All papers presented at the conference are invited to submit for peer review and the opportunity for publication. (p. iii)

This statement remained on the *Aigne* website until 2023, when we began our tenure as Editors-in-Chief, even though the editorial of *Aigne* volume 7 (2018, p. 4) indicated that the revived editorial board had decided to publish a single annual issue that incorporated articles from the CACSSS Conference. Over time, however, and with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the connection between the journal and the conference became less visible, and recent volumes focused primarily on theme-based calls for papers.

Recognising the importance of this link, we have revived the format outlined in volume 7. Five articles, developed from papers delivered at the 2025 conference and reviewed through *Aigne*'s peer-review process, are included in the present annual volume. They are included here in a dedicated section and were edited by Ella Doran (School of Applied Psychology) Gabrielle Dufrene (Department of English) Guy Gerba (Department of Government & Politics) Richard Keyes McDonnell (School of History) and Matteo Moraschini (Department of Sociology & Criminology). Future editorial boards may return to a two-issue format or continue with the current approach; what is most important is that *Aigne* continues to serve as a means for disseminating research presented at the CACSSSS Postgraduate Research Conference.

The articles developed from papers delivered at the 2025 conference within the current volume shine a light on research being carried out within the College by its postgraduate community and features the research of Michał Biedowicz (Department of Government & Politics), Jessica Cullen (Department of Sociology & Criminology), Graham Gill-Emerson (Department of Sociology & Criminology and School of Nursing and Midwifery), Hanke Kelber (Department of English) and Cornelius David Moynihan (School of Education). A separate editorial for the section, which has been written by the manager of this section, Guy Gerba, that provides more details on these contributions.

It is worth noting here that the 2026 CACSSS Postgraduate Research Conference will be incorporated into a new initiative: Meitheal: the

CACSSS Postgraduate Research Festival, a week-long showcase and celebration of doctoral research within the college. *Aigne* looks forward to further strengthening its collaboration with the conference and festival.

BOOK REVIEWS

The books reviewed in this volume were selected by the book reviews editors—Jordan Carolan (School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures), Darragh Counihan (Department of English), Shannon Freegrove (School of History) and Tobias Heyduk (Department of Politics)—for their relevance to the theme. Additionally, the editors received reviews from contributors who offered to review books not listed in the call, and we were also fortunate to have authors and publishers willing to make works available for review. In keeping with the journal’s broad disciplinary scope, the reviews cover a wide array of topics and subject areas, from literary and cultural studies to history, politics, linguistics, gender studies and migration. The following reviews are included in this volume:

- Shahira A. Hathout (York University, Toronto) reviews Sophie E. Battell *On the Threshold: Hospitality in Shakespeare’s Drama* (2023), published by Edinburgh University Press.
- Chloe Tetrault-Kearney (University College Cork) reviews *Syrian Stylites: Rereadings and Recastings of Late Ancient Superheroes* (2024), edited by Barbara Crostini and Christian Høgel, published by the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.
- Samavia Zia (Government College University, Lahore) reviews Fintan Drury, *Catastrophe: Nakba II* (2024), published by Irish Academic Press.
- Mariam Olugbodi (Kwara State University) reviews Juliane House and Dániel Z. Kádár, *Language and Politics: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Perspective* (2025), published by Cambridge University Press.
- Clay Darcy (Technological University Dublin) reviews Tadashi Ishikawa, *Geographies of Gender: Family and Law in Imperial Japan and Colonial Taiwan* (2025), published by Cambridge University Press.
- Sarah Meghar (University College Cork) reviews Antony Lowenstein, *The Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation Around the World* (2023), published by verso.

- Eoghan Fitzgerald (University College Dublin) reviews Chris Moore, *Kincora: Britain's Shame – Mountbatten, MI5, the Belfast Boys' Home Sex Abuse Scandal and the British Cover-Up* (2025), published by Merrion Press.
- Kathleen Coker (University College Cork) reviews Méabh Ní Fhuartháin *Heading to the Fleadh: Festival, Cultural Revival and Irish Traditional Music, 1951–1969* (2024), published by Cork University Press.
- Luke O'Brien (Dundalk Institute of Technology) reviews *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea* (2019), edited by Sunyoung Park, published by University of Michigan Press.
- Brandon Hamilton (Victory College Preparatory Academy) reviews Jan Plamper, *We Are All Migrants: A History of Multicultural Germany* (2023), published by Cambridge University Press.
- Luke Ó Donnchadha (University College Cork) reviews Mícheál Ua Ciarmhaic, *Glór ón Sceilg* (2025), edited by Máirín Nic Eoin and Mary Shine Thompson, published by Cork University Press.
- Lewis Ebert (University of Oxford) reviews Annika Lindberg *Deportation Limbo: State Violence and Contestations in the Nordics* (2023), published by Manchester University Press.

We extend our thanks to the publishers for generously supplying the review copies for this volume.

EVENT REPORTS

The event report section features accounts of different academic and intellectual gatherings. The number of reports in this volume marks a substantial increase from previous years and this likely stems from changes made to the way the journal seeks event reports. For the previous volume, the editorial board published a general call for event reports, that was publicised through our website, social media and relevant email circulation lists. While this approach was also maintained for the current volume, editors also took a more proactive approach, identifying upcoming events and directly inviting organisers (or a recommended co-organiser or postgraduate students) to submit a report on their event to *Aigine*. The

resulting high number of event report submissions is a testament to the successful implementation of this hands-on approach by our event-report editors Wei Chen (Department of Music), Raymond Jarvis (Department of English) and Charlotte Troy (Department of English). The strong representation of University College Cork-based events is also explained by this direct engagement.

In total, twelve event reports are featured in this volume, which, except for that written by Brian de Ruiter (Brock University), were all written by authors affiliated with University College Cork. A separate editorial has been written by Charlotte Troy, who served as manager of this section. The reports included in this volume show only a snapshot of the conferences and other scholarly activities taking place at University College Cork, and further afield, as well as the active role that CACSSS researchers play in organising, presenting and engaging with research dissemination opportunities.

CREATIVE PIECES

Like the event reports, this volume received strong response to the creative section, with an equally high number of submissions published here. When the journal was revived in 2017, the editorial board introduced new sections, including the “in-conversation pieces”, which were interviews with faculty members, and a dedicated section for creative submissions. While the “in-conversation” pieces did not continue beyond the first volume in which they appeared, the creative section has endured and has become a carefully curated space that includes short-stories, poems, flash fiction and images.

The creative team—Aoibhínn Callaghan (Department of Asian Studies) Kathleen Coker (Department of Music) and Gianmarco Balzani (Creative Section Manager)—has gone through a meticulous process of not only editing but considering how well each submission engaged with the volume’s theme. Gianmarco has provided a separate editorial for that section, which reflects details of the editorial approach taken. The creative works included in this volume are:

Photo-Competition Winner

- ‘Looked Down One Day About Three Years Ago’ by Peter Mac Donnachadha (University College Cork), which was selected as the winner of *Aigne*’s photo competition and is featured as the cover image for the present volume.

Poetry

- Peter Mac Donnachadha — ‘The Edge of Saturday Night’
- Cornelius David Moynihan (University College Cork) — ‘Land Untouched’
- Kieran Fionn Murphy (University College Cork) — ‘Parallel War’
- Written by Mairead Kinsella, Zoë Rush, Jeanne Spillane; and facilitated by Emer Fallon (The *Neart na Machairi* project) — ‘Shades of Maharees’
- Athira Sanal (NSS Hindu College Changanassery) — ‘The Art of Letting Go’

Short Stories

- Rajarshree Bhattacharjee (Independent Author) — ‘Birdsong’
- Emma Soye (Queen’s University Belfast) — ‘Pomegranate’

Photography-Based Submissions

- Peter Mac Donnachadha (University College Cork) — ‘The Round Table’
- Peter Mac Donnachadha (University College Cork) — ‘The Service Area’
- Clay Darcy (Technological University Dublin) — ‘The Year of the Piano’
- Natasha Dukelow (University College Cork) — ‘Reflections on the River Lee’
- John Morrow (University College Cork) — ‘Through the Lens of Community: An Annotated Photo Essay of the 2025 Ballydehob Jazz Festival’

These creative contributions show the ways in which response can be creatively expressed. They offer perspectives that complement the scholarly work presented elsewhere in the volume.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume has the highest number of submissions published by *Aigne* to date. Such an achievement is no small feat and thanks and commendations are owed to everyone who has been involved in the process. Firstly, we would like to thank the authors, book reviewers, event reports and those who submitted creative pieces for their work. Our gratitude is owed to our peer reviewers, who gave freely of their time and expertise. We also wish to acknowledge the support of the CACSSS Graduate School, particular Dr Barry Monahan—who has provided a foreword for this issue, for which we are also very grateful—and Karen Coughlan, for their continued support of the journal. *Aigne* is also indebted to the UCC Library and its staff for hosting the journal online and providing technical support. We would particularly like to thank Donna Ó Doibhlin (Research Services) and Hardy Schwamm (Head of Research Services) for their broader support of [journals at UCC](#) and for fostering a collaborative community of journal publishing. We are especially grateful to Donna for her work in organising Open Access Week 2025, where some of our editors presented on *Aigne* to others involved in UCC journals and in turn learned from them. We also owe a great deal of thanks to Paul Davidson (Library Systems & Service Support) for his unfailing assistance, extensive knowledge and readiness to resolve issues and find solutions. Without these institutional supports, *Aigne* could not continue to thrive. Finally, we are very grateful to the members of our editorial board, listed in full on the page following the title page, as well as to those who contributed to the editorial process for a part of the cycle (Laurence Counihan, Melanie Daly, Vassileois Varelas, Megan Wilson) whose enthusiasm, commitment and hard work has led to the fruition of the eleventh volume of *Aigne*.

One of the biggest (and most frequently recurring) challenges faced by any postgraduate-led initiative, such as a postgraduate journal like *Aigne*, is ensuring that momentum and volunteer members are kept up from one year to the next, as postgraduate students transition out of their posts. Such inevitabilities pose perennial challenges. *Aigne* has already been revived once before after a hiatus. Seven years since this revival, we hope that a firm footing has been established for the journal's continued work. After nearly three years in our positions as Editors-in-Chief, it is time for us to

transition out of these roles. We wish our successors every success, and it is our hope that the *Aigne* will continue to grow and serve the UCC CACSSS community and postgraduate and early career scholars worldwide.