
AIGNE
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College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, Ireland

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Editorial
Environments of Change
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"How does one revive a journal?" and "what does it entail to run a peer-reviewed online postgraduate journal?"—questions that the new *Aigne* Editorial Team had to deconstruct and explore when we decided to bring the journal back to life in 2017. *Aigne*, which was founded in 2010, had not published an issue since 2014 when we came on board. In April that year, an initial group of twelve PhD students from different departments at University College Cork met to discuss what this process of reviving, running and redefining a journal could look like and how we could realise it.

As part of this process, we thought about changes that we could make as part of its re-launch. One of these was to move the journal platform from the UCC website to the universally-used Open Journal System (OJS) platform in order to streamline the process of producing the journal through the use of this one portal, which now houses archived issues of *Aigne* along with this current issue. While there were some technical difficulties in the process of transferring over to OJS, we are happy to have everything easily accessible to readers now on our website. Another new development was the decision to publish one yearly issue that incorporated articles stemming from the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS) Annual Postgraduate Conference here at UCC as well as those received from our themed Call for Papers. This allowed us to expand upon our chosen theme with the addition of new sections ("Creative Pieces" and "In Conversation") that offer a departure from the traditional sections of academic articles, book reviews and event reports. Moreover, we celebrated *Aigne*'s relaunch with a photo competition, the winner of which was to grace the cover of the 2018 issue. Participants were asked to engage with the 2018 theme and the Editorial Board were sent a variety of spectacular images which explored this theme through diverse means. In the end, Grace Claro's "Dark Leaves" was selected by the committee as the winner. Grace's image, which evokes ideas of nature, mathematical fractals and psychological ink-blot tests, was chosen for its distinct engagement with multifarious aspects the theme of Issue 7, and was judged by the editors as housing deceptively complex ideas in a strikingly simple form. We hope that the addition of the photography competition and our two new sections makes *Aigne* more dynamic and engaging for a wider audience.

Once we had learned about and adhered to all the formalities and formal procedures, the creative part of being an editor soon traded places with administrative and organisational matters: brainstorming sessions to find a fitting theme for the first issue, drafting Call for Papers and redesigning the *Aigne* website and logo were among the next steps we had to take as a team. Inspired by the fast-paced, ever-changing times and the political roller coasters we live in, it felt only natural that the first theme-based issue after *Aigne*'s hiatus since 2014 would be about change and soon we settled on "Environments of Change". In every regard, we felt that our world is undergoing a period of accelerated change which can be attributed to a number of different developments such as technological advances, the ubiquity of social media and smartphones, the acceleration of global warming, with its resultant environmental disasters, as well as the major political upheavals such as Brexit and the growth of white nationalist movements across the globe. We were anticipating that contributions to this first issue of *Aigne* would engage with these and other changes that create constantly shifting and unstable contemporary environments. Thus, we asked academic and creative authors to reflect on this climate of economic, political and environmental uncertainty, and to address the impact on and outcomes of these and other major changes in our contemporary world. The aim of this issue, then, is to offer a series of academic and creative pieces which engage with "Environments of Change" in challenging and diverse ways.

In the first section of this issue, we are happy to publish three articles by scholars from different departments within CACSSS. First, Estefanía Muñoz Gómez, in "Language teaching and translation training: A case of (ir)reconcilable differences?" suggests that while the debates surrounding the relationship between language teaching and translation are by no means new, they remain topical, given the global nature of current social, political and economic networks. Muñoz Gómez argues that the value of translation in the language classroom continues to be commonly framed as a tool to assist the language learning process. Her article presents an overview of the traditional divide between these two assumed forms of translating and encourages reassessing the assumptions underlying the theoretical concepts of communicative and translation competence. Commenting on the specific context of Ireland as an example of skill supply and demand imbalance, Muñoz Gómez calls for a greater focus to be placed on the translational nature of multilingual communication as the needs for cultural and linguistic mediation continue to grow and evolve in an increasingly technologically driven market.

Next, Anne Mahler, in her article entitled "'In an orgy of violence': Deconstructing hypermasculine identity in Todd Strasser's *Give a Boy a Gun*", focuses on the construction and performance of masculine identity in American high schools, extending existing

discussions surrounding the motives of high school mass shooters. She puts toxic, hegemonic, masculine gender performances and their potential to traumatise subordinate masculinities at the centre of her article's analysis. The basis for Mahler's analysis is Todd Strasser's young adult novel *Give a Boy a Gun* (2000) which was inspired by Columbine and the first school shooting book to be published after Harris' and Klebold's rampage. Mahler argues that in *Give a Boy a Gun*, in the context of school shooting fictions, the performance of toxic, hegemonic masculinity is a key component of the shooter's motivations in literature, which has the potential to cause chronic trauma that manifests itself in a hyperviolent and hypermasculine school shooting.

Third, Shelbi Macken's article, "Identity in protracted displacement: Exploring identity of Palestinian and Syrian refugees living in Lebanon", explores how changes in environment influence identity construction. Macken compares the fragmented and layered identity performances of displaced Palestinian and Syrian refugees, particularly in terms of their relationship with their national identities and the political, religious and gendered dynamics of this. This article suggests differences in the levels of social cohesion amongst Palestinian and Syrian refugees, offers further avenues for research and provides a framework for understanding and evaluating the complexity of displaced identity development.

The second section of this issue of *Aigne* is dedicated to a variety of creative pieces which all respond to the theme "Environments of Change" in different ways. "Creative Pieces" opens the journal up to practice-based fields within the Arts, including creative writing, photography and video works and invites contributors to engage with our theme through these media. The addition of this section sees the inclusion of a short story by Lucy Creedon entitled "At Once", two photos by Grace Claro, one of which also is the cover image for this issue, and a poem, "Munster landscape", by PhD candidate Yairen Jerez Columbié. It is our hope that these pieces will invite additional, diverse reflections on this theme and that readers might be inspired to consider their own creative responses.

The third section of this issue is "In Conversation", which includes two interviews. Dr Graham Allen (School of English) and Dr Martín Veiga (School of Languages) took some time to talk to us about our chosen theme for this issue, elaborating on how "Environments of Change" affects their work and how they hope their work will impact our changing environment. Allen, who discusses both his teaching and poetry, reminds the reader that "the opposition between nature and the human, that has been such a foundational one throughout human history, has collapsed. This has huge implications and it is the job of the artist and the poet to describe them and address them". Veiga, discussing his work as a poet, affirms that "the poetry of meditation, a reflective attitude towards the world, helps [him] counteract these

hurried processes of transformation [i.e. technological and economic] of the past 30 or 40 years". The full interviews of Allen and Veiga, found in this section, allow for a broader conversation and reflection on topics emerging from the theme "Environments of Change".

In the fourth section, a wide range of Irish and international scholars present their book reviews of a variety of new academic literature that was published in 2017 and 2018. Marina Durnin from the Department of German at UCC reviews *Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Film and Media* by Jason Lee. Andrew Kettler from the Department of History, University of Toronto, discusses the *Digital Resistance in the Middle East: New Media Activism in Everyday Life* by Deborah Wheeler while UCC alumni Pádraig Collins, now an active member of the Royal Town Planning Institute in London, reviews *The Barcelona Reader: Cultural Readings of a City* by Enric Bou and Jaume Subirana (eds.). In Issue 7, we have also included a book review in Irish, written by Malachy Ó Néill from the Department of Modern Irish, Ulster University, discussing *An Underground Theatre: Major Playwrights in the Irish Language 1930-80* by Philip O'Leary. Ó Néill's piece is followed by a review from Marija Laugalyte, Department of German/Department of Digital Humanities at UCC, who engages with *Hysterical! Women in American Comedy* by L. Mizejewski and V. Sturtevant (eds.). Next, Creative Writing PhD candidate Niamh Prior, School of English at UCC, reviews *The Kick* by Richard Murphy, while Nataliya Shpylova, Slavic and Eastern Languages, Indiana University, analyses *Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority* by Ruben Borg, Paul Fagan and John McCourt (eds.). Finally, Ian Kennedy, Department of English at NUIG, takes a look at Sorcha O'Brien's new book entitled *Powering the Nation: Images of the Shannon Scheme and the Electrification of Ireland*.

The final section of this issue of *Aigne* includes three academic event reports by Craig Neville, Niamh Murphy and Yen-Chi Wu, all PhD candidates at UCC, on different academic events (conferences and symposiums) that were held in 2017–2018. These events, which took place across Europe, incorporated several disciplines: Irish Studies, Literatures, Galician Studies, Languages and Social Sciences. The reports featured here draw attention to the highlights of these events, discussing innovative and interdisciplinary research within each area.

Issue 7 of *Aigne* offers a diverse range of responses to "Environments of Change"—in format, discipline and focus—and sheds light on an array of recent publications and academic events. Several international voices feature in this issue of *Aigne*, something we hope to expand further in future issues of the journal, broadening its scope. For now, we would like to thank *Aigne*'s Editorial Board, all of the contributors and the peer reviewers for this issue, as

well as the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences at University College Cork, for bringing this issue to fruition.

Language teaching and translation training: A case of (ir)reconcilable differences?

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Abstract

Although the debates surrounding the relationship between language teaching and translation are by no means new, they remain topical, given the global nature of current social, political and economic networks. While the value of translation in the language classroom has long been recognised, it continues to be commonly framed as a tool to assist the language learning process. Similarly, language proficiency is still widely seen as a prerequisite to the development of translation skills rather than a core element of the practice. Pedagogical translation and translation in dedicated training programmes are therefore conceptualised as fundamentally unrelated activities, a perspective which unproductively appears to ignore their common interlingual communicative objective. This essay presents an overview of the traditional divide between these two assumed forms of translating and encourages reassessing the assumptions underlying the theoretical concepts of communicative and translation competence. Commenting on the specific context of Ireland as an example of skills supply and demand imbalance, this paper calls for a greater focus to be placed on the translational nature of multilingual communication as the needs for cultural and linguistic mediation continue to grow and evolve in an increasingly technologically driven market.

Language teaching and translation training are now broadly concerned with the use of language from a communicative perspective. Language learning has greatly abandoned traditional methods focused only on formal features in order to concentrate on interaction. Likewise, as Translation Studies evolved and left behind more purely linguistic approaches in favour of cultural theories, the discipline moved to investigate translation as a multifaceted communicative act. Nevertheless, foreign language teaching and translation training continue to hold a uniquely ambivalent relationship.

Although the wider understanding of translation beyond a simple formal replacement operation has led to a progressive return of the practice to the language classroom, the attitudes of old still inform how translation is generally approached. At the same time, the institutionalisation and professionalisation of translation manifested in the creation of national and international associations, the establishment of translation departments in Higher Education Institutions, and the growing demands for translators have provided an opportunity for promoting the status of translation both as an academic discipline and as a profession. As such, translation training remains interested in distinguishing its objectives from those of translation as employed in language classrooms. Pedagogical translation and translation as presented in dedicated training programmes are therefore still seen as essentially unrelated activities, which is only contributing to perpetuate the disciplinary undermining of their

mutual dependency. As the needs for cultural and linguistic mediation continue to grow exponentially beyond the scope of the traditional conceptualisation of the profession, it is increasingly necessary to reassess the relationship between these two assumed forms of translation if we are to exploit the practice's potential to respond to current and future skills needs.

The discussion presented here is not a new one, but it is still topical. It certainly remains a pressing issue in the Republic of Ireland, home to major multilingual employers and a growing multilingual population. An increasing number of international companies in the country are in need of highly skilled specialists with language-related expertise, but seem to be having difficulties recruiting them at home (EFGSN 2016). These potential employees need not necessarily be translators by trade and, arguably, often are not. They are nevertheless professionals who will be working with and in-between languages, whether native speakers of languages other than English or traditional English and Irish bilinguals. As such, recognising the translational nature of this activity becomes crucial.

Beyond the specific context of Ireland, the question becomes a wider disciplinary one. The conflicting relationship between translation as a tool for language learning and translation training for professional practice unproductively ignores their common interlingual communicative objective. This essay reviews how language teaching and Translation Studies, more specifically translation pedagogy, have positioned themselves in relation to each other, with a view to presenting the wider implications for teaching and learning and the need for bridging this traditional divide by reassessing current concepts of competence.

1. Language teaching and translation

The rejection of translation in foreign and second language teaching stemmed from the reaction against the now widely disregarded grammar-translation method and its artificial and decontextualised materials. With the rise of the direct method, the use of learners' first language or L1 was barred from the classroom, and translation naturally suffered the same fate, at least formally. When the teaching of languages shifted away from behaviourism towards the more functional and student-centred strategies supported by the communicative approach, interaction and communication in the target language became the goals. It is therefore no surprise that the potential of L1 in facilitating second language acquisition continued to be mostly ignored.

Although the communicative approach does not explicitly stand against translation or L1 use in the classroom, teaching methods under the communicative umbrella are guided by the underlying assumption that the more target language input, the faster the learning would

occur (Ellis 2005). As a result, the discouragement of L1 use has long been the norm in many language teaching contexts, whether from a position of complete rejection or from one of avoidance. Seen from a more positive perspective, the aim is still to at least maximise learners' exposure to the target language (Cook 2001). Macaro (2009) associates this stance with what he calls the *virtual position*. The virtual position borrows from first language acquisition theory to defend that the classroom should act as a 'virtual reality' and resemble a L1 learning environment, where no other language is available. Fear of both interference and limited target language input is therefore a key motivator behind the dismissal of the L1, albeit not the only contributing factor. Theoretical developments in foreign language teaching have been widely informed by the literature surrounding English as a Foreign Language. These works often originate in multilingual settings or contexts where teachers have no access to the learners' L1, which can also help explain the preponderance of methods that rely exclusively on the target language. The interest of international publishing houses on monolingual textbooks is also influential, since these materials are cheaper to produce and can be distributed globally (Butzkamm 2003; Carreres 2014).

Providing learners with as much target language input as possible is certainly a laudable aim, but the existing gaps between theory, institutional constraints and actual classroom practice mean that this objective cannot always be reached. As a consequence, many teachers feel that an exclusive target language classroom is 'an unattainable ideal' and therefore take a maximal position (Macaro 2009). Accepting the need for maximising the target language use but recognising the impossibility of fulfilling that goal can often lead to feelings of guilt when making use of the learners' first language (Cook 2001; Butzkamm 2003; Macaro 2009). The L1 is seen as a last resort to turn to only in case of emergency, and its use is viewed by many as a failure. To confess having to fall back on the L1 becomes almost unconsciously akin to an admission to professional misconduct, despite the better judgement of teachers wanting to capitalise on the L1 for very valuable objectives such as speeding classroom management, promoting student rapport, facilitating deeper understanding and encouraging learners to make connections between their languages.

While it can be argued that the L1 never fully left the classroom, being used as above, for some years now it has been increasingly reclaimed for its pedagogical potential. A key argument against the exclusion of the L1 in the foreign language classroom is directly related to a change in the perception of both native speakers and second language learners, who are better seen as valid multilingual individuals rather than failed imitations of an ideal. As Cook (2001, p. 407) suggests, "L1 'success' in becoming native speakers is different from L2 success in becoming L2 users". Contrary to children acquiring their first language, learners

approaching a second or subsequent language do not start from a blank slate. Their learning is shaped by their cultural and social backgrounds, their experiences and knowledge of the world, their particular affective filters and their L1 identity, which is forced to negotiate with the newly developing one. Even in monolingual classes, Butzkamm suggests, "the mother tongue is 'silently' present" (2003, p. 31). He adds:

> Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. […] This foreknowledge is the result of interactions between a first language and our fundamental linguistic endowment, and is the foundation on which we build our Selves. It is the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning. For this reason, the mother tongue is the master key to foreign languages, the tool which gives us the fastest, surest, most precise, and most complete means of accessing a foreign language (p. 31). (emphasis in the original)

The return of L1 to the foreign language classroom has meant, by extension, the reintroduction of translation and the challenging of traditional arguments against it. These can be summarised as follows: translation is completely different from the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking; translation leads to interference and reinforces one-to-one comparisons; and translation restricts free composition (see Pintado Gutiérrez 2012a for a more detailed overview). As Malmkjær (1998) points out, however, translation can actually increase awareness of the differences between languages and therefore help avoid interference if properly situated and understood as a communicative activity. Since it requires careful reading, it can also encourage better comprehension at a textual, syntactic and semantic level. Translation can therefore help improve mother tongue competence and promote "a reflective language consciousness about the function of language and the relationship between language and thought, language and culture" (Zojer 2009, p. 35). It can highlight unknown elements by limiting avoidance strategies (Cook 2010), and even the long rejected practice of word-for-word or mirror translation can be used to stress formal structures and facilitate grammatical explanations (Butzkamm 2001).

There is now an extensive and ever growing body of literature dealing with the implementation of translation in foreign language teaching and learning (e.g. Malmkjær 1998; Witte et al. 2009; Leonardi 2010; Laviosa 2014). Nevertheless, pedagogical translation, i.e. translation in the foreign language classroom, is far from being understood and employed in a coherent and systematic way (Pintado 2012a). Translation may be used as a tool to facilitate explanations and understanding, as a method to enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge, or as a comprehensive exercise addressing linguistic, cultural and pragmatic issues. Nevertheless, even when the pedagogical merits of translation as an authentic communicative activity are acknowledged, its objective is still ultimately to assist the language learning

process. Pedagogical translation "does not intend to create specialists in translation but to introduce in the curriculum a practice that entails the employment of the language as a whole" (Pintado 2012b, p. 178). Learning a language through translation is seen as a completely different endeavour to learning translation: translation is a means in the former and an end in the latter (Carreres 2014, p. 124). Whatever conflicting relationship language learning and translation training may typically hold, it is at least precisely on this distinction that both fields seem to agree.

2. Translation and language teaching

Just as language teaching declares itself unconcerned with the teaching of translation, translation training remains largely preoccupied with dissociating itself from the language classroom. Although translator training takes place in varied settings, most research on the area originates from Higher Education Institutions, often linked to courses of a generalist nature that aim to introduce students to the requirements of translation as a professional activity. Language competence is seen as a prerequisite, so addressing any gaps appears to get in the way of translation teaching per se. Trainers in these programmes tend to note that, even when students are highly proficient in their working languages, they are unable to adequately respond to the demands of an authentic translation task, failing to consider pragmatic factors such as purpose and audience. As Colina (2002) explains, language teaching is negatively viewed because of students' attitudes towards translation and the expectations they hold as a result of their previous experiences in the language classroom. When translating, these manifest in the form of behaviours such as "fear of interference, lack of global strategies, tendency towards 'sign-translating' (i.e. transcoding), excessive reliance on dictionaries and the perception of translation as a language exercise" (Colina 2002, p. 7) focused on words and phrases as isolated units, as well as on grammatical correctness (Colina 2002, p. 7). As such, students are forced to "unlearn what they learnt" (Schäffner 2000, p. 144) in order to emulate professional performance.

The emphasis placed on the translation profession is understandable in the wider context of the increased vocational orientation in tertiary education, but it is also reflective of key trends in the development of Translation Studies as a self-standing discipline. This can be traced back to the second half of the twentieth century, which roughly coincided with the discrediting of translation as language teaching method (Carreres 2014). Following the more systematic study of translation, Translation Studies established itself as rich and distinct area of scholarship, moving away from fields such as comparative literature and contrastive linguistics, to which it had been restricted. From the original interest on products, researchers

started adopting interdisciplinary approaches to investigate the cognitive process of translation, and for some decades now much of their work has broadly concentrated in the figure of the translator. As the focus shifted from purely linguistic approaches to incorporate insights from cultural and social studies, the gap between translation theory and pedagogical translation widened. Distancing itself from the lingering view of translation as a mere exercise in formal replacement, the discipline evolved around the recognition of translation as a multifaceted communicative practice.

This communicative orientation matches that of most current language teaching approaches, which emphasise the use of language for communication rather than as a formal activity (Colina 2002). Indeed, by highlighting the functional and communicative nature of translation, translation scholars have greatly contributed to its judicious reintroduction in the language classroom. Nevertheless, the process of institutionalisation that came about with the growth of Translation Studies research and the subsequent proliferation of dedicated training programs at tertiary level have added to the means and end debate, reinforcing the presumption that pedagogical translation is a fundamentally distinct phenomenon, and therefore does not lie among the discipline's key concerns.

It could be argued that this view has undoubtedly played a crucial role in raising the status of translation as a complex linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural object of study and a highly-skilled but often underrated occupation. However, what the division between translation as an aid to the language learning process and as the goal of instruction appear to overlook is that, independently of the objective, it is one phenomenon that both assumed forms of the practice are dealing with. As communication landscapes evolve with advances in information technologies in an increasingly interconnected world, the demands for linguistic and cultural mediation also change, making it the more relevant to identify the core of an individual's ability to communicate successfully in multiple (and in between) languages.

3. The elusive concept of competence

It is generally taken for granted that the language classroom does not prepare students to work as professional translators, and that translation training includes far more than language classes. Ultimately, language learning is said to aim at developing communicative competence, while the stated goal in translation training is translation competence. How do these two concepts differ?

Although there is no clear consensus on the definition of *communicative competence*, the most widely used model today is based on that of Canale and Swain (1980), which is comprised by grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. Following the

work of Hymes (1972), these four interrelated dimensions move beyond the knowledge of language systems to include notions of adequacy and acceptability. Competence is therefore measured in relation to the ability to express, interpret and negotiate meaning, and it is achieved through meaningful interaction (Lee & Van Patten 1995). Language learners are seen as active participants in communication, capable multilingual individuals rather than defective native speakers. Since they cannot but bring along their prior cultural and linguistic background, it follows that the process of meaning negotiation and interpretation associated to communicative competence in a second or subsequent language is by nature translational: "For the successful language learner, bilingual knowledge is always implicated in monolingual use, and it makes little sense to think that one can exist without the other" (Cook 2010, p. xx).

Translation is then not only "a key skill that any language learner wishing to achieve well-rounded competence in the L2 should aim to develop" (Carreres 2014, p. 130). Bilingualism is by definition a prerequisite to translation. On the basis of that idea, Harris (1976) defines the bilingual speaker as a 'natural translator'. At the heart of this concept is the idea that bilingualism and translation, whether spontaneous or professional, "are connected at a very fundamental cognitive level" (Shreve 2012, p. 1). Associating the knowledge of two languages to the ability to translate, however, does not tend to be well received among translation scholars, since translation is seen to require a unique set of skills that call for different mechanisms of activation and selection (Shreve 2012).

This set of skills is referred to as 'translation competence', an umbrella term widely used to encompass a combination of both procedural and declarative knowledge, as well as traits of a more psychological nature. As such, despite being many and varied, most theoretical models of competence in the Translation Studies literature take language competence to be just one of the components that make up the ability to translate, although they differ in the number and nature of the remaining subcompetences (cf. Schäffner 2000; Neubert 2000; PACTE 2003; Kelly 2005; Göpferich 2008). This is where the key problem lies: once translation competence is framed as more than language competence, there is virtually no end to the amount of potential additions (Pym 2003). The dominant models cover similar areas: language, culture, domain specific knowledge, research, transfer and a combination of personality and cognitive dispositions like memory, attention, curiosity, motivation, or perseverance. Many of these could be labelled as transferable or soft skills, the development of which is now in the agenda of most Higher Education Institutions, independently of the field of study. While their inclusion can be useful from a pedagogical perspective, it begs the following question: if the concept of translation competence is meant

to define concretely the ability to translate, to what extent is it theoretically sound to include skills that are broadly applicable to every graduate?

Even if consensus on a concrete number of subcompetences were to be reached, their nature is still up to interpretation. This is very clear in the case of language competence, where the different definitions appear to suggest varying understandings of language and communication. For example, Neubert talks about "proficiency in both the mother tongue and the foreign language or languages, knowledge of their grammatical and lexical systems and awareness of their changing nature and of their conventions" (2000, p. 3). For Schäffner it is linguistic competence, "knowledge of the linguistic systems of the languages concerned in the translation process" (2000, p. 146). PACTE presents the language component as bilingual sub-competence: "predominantly procedural knowledge needed to communicate in two languages. It includes pragmatic, sociolinguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge" (2003, p. 58; 2011, p. 33). Kelly makes the move towards communicative competence but nevertheless distinguishes it from textual aspects, including "active and passive skills, and awareness of textual and discourse conventions" (2005, p. 32). Göpferich, in turn, does use the term "communicative competence" (2008, p. 115; 2011, pp. 59–60), common in language teaching.

The value of these multicomponential models is in their potential application to curriculum design in translation training programs. Nevertheless, the conceptual confusion that they evidence should not be underestimated, since the manner in which the various areas of competence are defined can lead to relevant differences in the framing of training needs and objectives. In addition, with the summative view of competence associated with these multicomponential models comes also the risk of the compartmentalising of skills as separate elements which need to be mastered before translation competence can be developed. The question then becomes one of degrees of competence. Is it possible to calculate an overall level of competence based on each of the different subcompetences? What level of each subcompetence would need to be achieved? Robinson asks himself very similar questions:

> Is it enough to have profound and extensive experience of one or more foreign languages? If so, is it enough to have been exposed to that language or those languages in books and classrooms, or is it experience of the culture or cultures in which it is natively spoken essential? How important is rich experience of one's mother tongue(s)? And how rich? […]
>
> Alternatively, is extensive experience of a certain subject matter enough, if the translator has a rudimentary working knowledge of at least one foreign language? If so, does that experience need to be hands-on practical experience of the field, experience of the objects and the people who handle them and the way those people speak about the objects? Or is it enough to have experience of books, articles, and coursework on that subject matter?

> […] would it be enough for a competent professional translator from Spanish and Portuguese to have heard a little Italian and own a good Italian dictionary in order to translate a fairly easy and routine text from the Italian?
>
> One answer to *all* of these questions is: Yes, in certain cases. (2003, pp. 98–99).

The issue is particularly relevant in the case of language competence. As discussed before, it is often taken for granted or only dealt with for remedial purposes: "Translation classes must strive to minimize this interface between the two [language study and translation practice] and shorten it in order to focus on translation as such" (Dollerup 1994, p. 121). However, the general assumption that translation trainees need a high level of language proficiency in order to develop translation skills is now being challenged, and authors like Schäffner (2000, 2004) are stressing the benefits of developing some form of translation competence or translation awareness along with language competence. As Berenguer puts it, "if language teaching is translation oriented, much time can be saved in the translation class" (1996, p. 10). Even if the aim is not to train future translators, translational skills can still help build students' critical understanding of the structural and functional underpinnings of language as a complex system.

Given the range of roles and tasks associated with translation as a communicative operation between languages and cultures, a solid theoretical concept of competence cannot be derived from models that attempt to be fully comprehensive. Translators do not just translate, and translation is not their exclusive realm either. Robinson stresses that "a good translator is someone who has never quite experienced enough" (Robinson 2003, p. 99), but what multicomponential models seem to describe is an ultimate translator who has optimised their competence. They represent "a transcendental ideal translator" (Pym 2003, p. 487). A certain parallelism can be seen here with the ideal 'native speaker', now dethroned, and perhaps a similar future should be advocated for this ultimate translator. The growing preference for terms like mediators, language professionals and language service providers also points in that direction and acknowledges the diverse professional intercultures surrounding translation in the technological age (Pym 2002, p. 21).

4. The ability to translate

Although for the most part language learning and translation training both care about language use as communication, traditional notions of translation as a grammar and vocabulary exercise still have an effect in shaping attitudes towards the practice. In turn, translation training distances itself from the aims of language learning, and understandably

insists that language competence alone is not sufficient to translate. But the assumption being made when contesting the relationship between bilingualism and translation tends to be related exclusively to quality and professionalism, ignoring the ability ingrained in "natural translators". In Pym's words:

> Just as everyone can sing, be it badly or well, so everyone who knows more than one language can translate, to some degree. However, not everyone is paid to sing opera, and not all translators are at the pinnacle of the translation profession. The difference between the various levels may partly be due to training—we train people not just to translate, which they can already do, but to translate well, perhaps for a specific purpose, market, or technological environment (2011, p. 313).

In this context, the distinction proposed by Kiraly (2000) between translation competence (producing acceptable texts) and translator competence (joining different communities like users of languages and new technologies or experts in technical fields) becomes meaningful. Since purposes, markets and technological environments are in constant flux, what seems to be common to all scenarios is ultimately the ability to successfully negotiate meaning through adequate interaction. A view of competence based on decision-making and problem-solving seems better suited to respond to this objective and the fragmented reality of the practice. Pym puts forward a minimalistic approach to competence consisting just of two joint elements:

> The ability to generate a series of more than one viable target text (T1, T2 … Tn) for a pertinent source text (ST);
> the ability to select only one viable TT from this series, quickly and with justified confidence (2003, p. 489).

This can be considered above all a concept of 'translating competence'. Even with no clear source text present, this model could be still applied to a view of communicative language competence from a translational perspective. The value of this definition is in its holistic, top-down take on competence that allows for a wider understanding of translational activities, making it more suitable for the current context of constant technological advances, but also more adaptable to future changes and needs. Without rejecting the need for developing more specific skill areas like subject domain knowledge or the use of tools and resources for future professional translators, this less considered alternative understanding of competence highlights the more instrumental role that these aspects of the curriculum play in the core ability to translate (Pym 2003, p. 494). This view is in line with Bernardini's (2014) distinction between training and education, and matches her call for the prioritisation of awareness, resourcefulness and reflectiveness independently of the professional sector. Such a conceptualisation of competence advances an approach which is sensitive to market needs but not reliant on immediate, utilitarian goals, and which focuses on the long-term flexibility that will make for a successful language professional today and tomorrow.

Conclusion

The protracted nature of the means and end debate is ultimately, in a way, a question of words. What is meant and understood when discussing translation? The traditional rejection of translation in language teaching has to do with a narrow interpretation. Similarly, what does bilingualism and language competence mean? For many in Translation Studies, and in translation training in particular, it is only a prerequisite for translation rather than the core element of the activity. In and of itself, this also demonstrates a particular understanding of translation, related almost exclusively to translation as a professional career. Translation is certainly a loaded term, a contentious space that dominant competent models seem to be trying to contain and demarcate almost against the reality of the global marketplace. How we as scholars, practitioners and instructors understand translation and language competence, how we define these concepts and how we make them explicit to both learners and employers has important repercussions for the kind of profiles in which professionals can recognise themselves, and the kind of skill sets that employers set out to find.

In the case of Ireland, where the demand for professionals with language skills is not relinquishing and the supply is in a continuous flux, these debates are more pertinent than ever and must consider the particularities of an officially bilingual and increasingly multilingual nation, defined at the same time by the advantages and disadvantages of an international lingua franca. Educational efforts towards increasing language skills have to be supported by a clearer understanding of skills needs, objectives and outcomes. These, contrary to the perspectives sometimes unconsciously presented in generalist training programs, are constantly evolving. A more meticulous disciplinary dialogue is necessary to ensure that learners, whether in the language or in the translation class, are directed to the bigger picture of linguistic and cultural problem-solving.

Although with its own characteristics, the Irish context appears nonetheless to be indicative of the dynamic needs of today's interconnected, information-based economies. Linguistic and cultural mediation are a daily reality and, without a wider look at translational forms beyond those carried out by professional translators, a great deal of translating may remain unexplored and unguided. As Cook suggests, "in multilingual, multicultural societies [...], and in a world of constant cross-linguistic and cross-cultural global communication, there are reasons to see translation as being widely needed in everyday situations, and not as a specialized activity at all" (2010, p. 109). This does not mean transforming the language classroom into a classic translation classroom. Similarly, it does not mean doing away with specialised translator training nor bringing Translation Studies back under the wings of Linguistics or Second Language Acquisition. Such an approach would certainly not favour

the elimination of traditional views of translation as an exercise in vocabulary and grammar testing which cloud the key role of translation as a form of communicative language use. There will always be a need and a place for linguists and language experts, as well as for all-round professional translators, translators by trade. But for any efforts to be fruitful, translation training must not forget that the translation profession is not a stable whole, and translation is commonly carried out by many different language users in many different contexts. Likewise, language teaching cannot just see in translation a tool, but has to engage with learners as multilingual speakers who develop communicative competence through a meaning negotiating process that is translational at its core.

The return of translation to the language classroom is a positive development because it demonstrates the recognition of its pedagogical and affective benefits, but also because it provides more realistic objectives for language teaching: learners become valid L2 users instead of failed native speakers. Nevertheless, the question remains whether it is still realistic for Higher Education Institutions to teach with natural bilinguals in mind, as it often seems to be the objective derived from the dominant communicative approach, or whether the aim should be openly directed at the production of multilingual experts instead. If the aim is the latter, however, it seems that translation can play a vital role in making the connections between languages explicit, may it be at a word-for-word structural level or at a functional communicative level. This becomes especially relevant as the ideas of native or near-native proficiency are being increasingly challenged, and bilingualism ceases to be equated with full mastery of a distinct linguistic system and is rather understood as the use of multiple languages at different levels and in varied communicative contexts.

From the point of view of translation, the objective of teaching cannot be blindly built around an ideal competence as previously discussed. With the changing nature of the translation profession and the wider presence of translation in the global workplace, it is only to be expected that a model of competence that aims to account for *everything* that translators need to know and do is inexorably destined to lag behind developments in the market. It will never be comprehensive in any meaningful way, and may bind otherwise highly-skilled language experts to a limiting perception of their professional identity. Teaching cannot ignore that translation can take many forms. A positive step is the challenging of the idea that full language proficiency is necessary to start developing translation competence, although it is an assumption that still runs deep within the discipline and is ingrained in the dominant models of competence that inform much of what happens at curricular level. Authors like Li (2001) have stressed the need to rethink and properly tailor the language component in translation courses, but there is still a dearth of studies that directly deal with the teaching of

languages for translators-to-be. Assuming that proficiency must come first and translation later while detaching itself completely from how that proficiency is attained and the role that translation plays in that process is no more than a vicious circle. As mentioned above, students are faced with having to unlearn previously acquired ideas about translation and language competence, and this will continue to be the case if languages keep being conceptualised as a separate tool that needs to be learned before being able to understand the tricks of the trade, instead of being taken as the very essence of the activity.

Language teaching and translation pedagogy have a complicated relationship, but their differences are not necessarily insurmountable. As disciplines, language education and Translation Studies have their own history, frameworks and paradigms but also share approaches and common questions. Both disciplines may stand strong independently but cannot ignore each other. They have an unavoidable connection and face similar challenges ahead, such as assessment, teacher training and the pedagogical implementation of new technologies. More than a decade since Colina (2002, p. 17) was asking already for greater cooperation, translation has progressed in making a place for itself in the language classroom, although her hopes for full integration in the curriculum have not been fully realised yet and research on the interface between the two fields is still relatively limited. There is clearly a lot that they can still learn from one another by talking not just about how to use translation in the classroom in a beneficial way, or about how to better teach language so that translation trainees can develop an awareness of pragmatic and textual features more effectively. It is at the level of the fundamental theoretical concepts that the dialogue must occur for real progress to be made towards the common underlying objective of developing the ability to communicate in and between languages and cultures.

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"In an orgy of violence": Deconstructing hypermasculine identity in Todd Strasser's *Give a Boy a Gun*

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Abstract

In April 1999, after months of planning the most destructive rampage school shooting in US American history, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed thirteen people and themselves at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. In the aftermath of the shooting, different theories for the shooter's motives and inspirations emerged, reaching from Goth culture and hard rock music to first-person shooter video games; and authors started to literarily engage with the phenomenon. Focussing on the construction and performance of masculine identity in American high schools, this article extends existing discussions surrounding the shooters' motives, and puts toxic hegemonic masculine gender performances and their potential to traumatise subordinate masculinities at the centre of its analysis. The text serving as a basis is Todd Strasser's young adult novel Give a Boy a Gun *(2000) which was inspired by Columbine and the first school shooting book to be published after Harris' and Klebold's rampage. It is argued that, in the context of school shooting fictions, the performance of toxic hegemonic masculinity is a key component of the shooter's motivations in literature, which has the potential to cause chronic trauma that manifests itself in a hyperviolent and hypermasculine school shooting.*

After months of planning the most destructive rampage school shooting in US American history, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold entered their high school in Littleton, Colorado in April 1999, heavily armed with semi-automatic weapons and explosives. During their rampage they killed twelve students, one teacher and ultimately themselves. Columbine was the unprecedented peak of a string of high school shootings in the second half of the 1990s. Although it has been exceeded as the deadliest school rampage shooting in the United States in recent years, it is one of the first of these incidents which received full media coverage and therefore gained notoriety. It "has come to stand for a category of offense, the school shooting, and Harris and Klebold for a type of criminal, the school shooter" (McWilliam 2015, p. 184). In the aftermath of the shooting, mainstream media, politicians and academics joined the debate about why Harris and Klebold went on such a rampage. Different theories emerged, and blame was put on various interests of the shooters including Goth culture, hard rock music and first-person shooter video games.

Brooks Brown, friend of shooter Dylan Klebold and co-author of *No Easy Answers: The Truth Behind Death at Columbine* (2002), however, focuses on the dynamic between students of Columbine High School prior to the shooting.

> If a guy was acting in the Columbine drama program, he was immediately labelled a 'drama fag.' Not only was he not playing sports—which was what all normal guys were supposed to do at Columbine—but he was into that fine arts

> crap! The bullies found whatever weakness they could and went after it. I was a wuss because I wasn't in sports. I was gay because I liked theatre (p. 61).

Aside from Brown, other students also came forward and shared their story. Evan Todd, a football player who was wounded in the school's library—where most of the fatalities occurred and Harris and Klebold shot themselves—comments on his perception of the school and the shooters. In an interview with *Time Magazine* eight months after the shooting, he recalls:

> Columbine is a clean, good place except for those rejects, […] Most kids didn't want them there. […] Sure, we teased them. […] It's not just jocks; the whole school's disgusted with them. They're a bunch of homos, grabbing each other's private parts. If you want to get rid of someone, usually you tease 'em. So the whole school would call them homos, and when they did something sick, we'd tell them, 'You're sick and that's wrong' (Todd in Gibbs and Roche, 1999).

From two opposing perspectives, Brown's and Todd's statements illustrate the level of hostility against students—not just the shooters—who do not fit into what was considered status quo behaviour. Supporting Brown's description of Columbine High School as a hostile place for students who did not fit into the mainstream, Todd underlines the role of bullying in the students' discourse and, even after the shooting, views homosexuality as a disease which contaminates the school environment, using a highly homophobic rhetoric to insult the shooters. Todd raises the question of what role masculinity plays in American high schools and which consequences might occur if the students do not stick to what is perceived as the status quo in terms of masculinity.

This article focuses on the construction and performance of masculine identity in American high schools in the context of rampage school shootings; more specifically, it analyses how masculinity is enacted in high school environments and how this is represented in literary treatments of Columbine. The text serving as a basis of this analysis is Todd Strasser's young adult novel *Give a Boy a Gun* (2000) which is based on the 1999 shooting, and the first rampage school shooting book published after Harris' and Klebold's rampage (Bodart 2016, p. 61). I argue that each shooter fails to perform according to the standards of hegemonic masculinity, before they transform their identities and form one hypermasculine unit that claims back control through the means of physical violence. It is only through this temporary alliance that both can attempt to escape their roles as emasculated outcasts before committing suicide and being overpowered, respectively.

Narrated by several different and often counteracting characters, the epistolary novel *Give a Boy a Gun* tells the story of Brendan Lawlor's and Gary Searle's fictional rampage at Middletown High School and the events leading up to it. Strasser does so by using an unconventional narrative style. Much like traditional epistolary novels which are introduced

by frame narratives or even fictional publisher notes, Strasser frames his narrative by the introduction of Denise Shipley, journalism student and, as it is revealed at the end of the novel, one of the perpetrators' stepsister. Her collection of interviews, e-mail and chat exchanges, journal entries and suicide notes is an attempt to make sense of the tragedy that shook the small town of Middletown, both for herself and for the community. A multitude of narrators, from the perpetrators, their families, victims and teachers gives different angles and tries to paint a comprehensive picture of the attack, much like it is done in the aftermath of real rampage school shootings. Since this is achieved through completing analepses, the voices of the perpetrators are only heard posthumously, through their suicide notes and online exchanges. All of these narrative tools create a realistic atmosphere and serve as a leeway to open up discussions which are furthermore supported by Strasser's extensive use of paratexts. On almost every page of the novel, studies and quotes from real newspaper articles reflect on subjects like gun violence or the influence of video games as they are mentioned in the narrative. And whilst other fictional treatments of school shootings usually have one main protagonist, *Give a Boy a Gun* is one of the few novels that tries to capture the dynamics between two shooters instead of just one.

Literary critics, however, have been hesitant to engage with the young adult novel (YA). Reviews of the text have been scarce and relatively mixed. On the one hand, Joni Richards Bodart calls the novel "choppy, and […] potentially […] confusing" (2016, p. 62), and *Publisher's Weekly*'s review characterises it as "scattered and disconnected", with the epistolary format detracting "from the central drama" (2000). On the other hand, *Kirkus Reviews* points out that "the multiple points of view create empathy for a wide range of characters and enhance the book's in-your-face reality", calling it "[i]mportant, insightful, and chilling" (2000). Devon Clancy Sanner in his review for the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* finds that "*Give a Boy a Gun* provides excellent material for critical inquiry by students, educators, parents, and the public at large" (2002, p. 547), reinforcing its ability to spark discussions among adolescents and adults alike. The few scholarly analyses that have engaged with the text primarily focus on how it can be used in the English classroom. In her journal article "Politicizing Young Adult Literature: Reading Anderson's 'Speak' as a Critical Text" (2003), Janet Alsup reads the novel, among others, with an eye to its use by English teachers, suggesting that reading it in class "can be an ethical as well as intellectual process, and as such it can assist adolescents in coping with their tumultuous lives" (p. 159). Candida Gillis, looking beyond the mere topical potential of the novel, emphasises how it can be employed to teach multi-voice and multi-genre writing to an adolescent audience and argues that this 'untraditional' narrative form reflects ever-shifting adolescent identity (2002, p. 52).

None of these analyses, however, have so far commented on the relevance of masculinity to the novel, the performance of adolescent masculinity by the protagonists Brendan and Gary, or the significance of hegemonic masculinity and its performance in a high school environment.

Only a few literary scholars have so far explored the application of masculinity studies on YA fiction; however, a rise of studies on the subject at the end of the 2000s is noticeable. Thomas W. Bean and Helen Harper, in their article "Reading Men Differently: Alternative Portrayals of Masculinity in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction" (2007), address the subject both on a content and narrative level and conclude that YA fiction offers "more complex renderings of boys' lives, address[ing] the effects of enforced hegemonic masculinity, l with the female protagonist, disrupt[ing] the connection between males and the performance of masculinity" (p. 11). Helen Harper explores the construction of adolescent masculinity in her analysis "Studying Masculinity(ies) in Books About Girls" (2007), examining literary adolescent masculinity in YA fiction written for and about girls, and noting that, although they have their limitations, YA texts offer

> more complex renderings of gendered identity in the lives of female and male adolescent characters, address […] the effects of enforced traditional masculinity, and productively, if only momentarily, disrupt […] the connection between sex and gender in ways that allow for engagement with alternative notions of masculinity (p. 508).

Rolf Romøren and John Stephens observe that

> [c]haracters who narrate or focalize [YA] novels which thematize masculinity are not usually represented at the outset as already interpellated within a particular masculine schema, but their actions and attitudes tend to instantiate a particular schema by the text's point of closure (2013, p. 223).

This is particularly true for YA fiction dealing with a rampage school shooting, as this is often used to reinforce a particular type of hypermasculine behaviour.

All these studies stand at the beginning of a new branch of literary gender studies whose scope is the application of masculinity studies to literary texts, especially to those targeted at an adolescent audience. Hypermasculinity, in this context, is understood as "the exhibition of stereotypic gendered displays of power and consequent suppression of signs of vulnerability" and an "exaggerated presentation of masculinity" (Spencer et al. 2004, p. 234) which, in this example, includes displays of exaggerated physical violence and emotional detachment. In that respect, the rampage school shooting as performance of hypermasculinity can be considered toxic, as it endangers lives of students and teachers. As "hegemonic masculinity actually does refer to men's engaging in toxic practices—including physical violence" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 840), a rampage school shooting might

furthermore be regarded as direct reaction to the performances of hegemonic males and their influence on the perpetrators' decision for a hyperviolent revenge crime. This article therefore exclusively focuses on the relations between adolescent males. In the following, I examine the concept of hegemonic masculinity as defined by R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt and its performance in American high schools as studied by J.C. Pascoe. Based on these theories, further analyses illustrate how the masculine identities of both protagonists are challenged throughout the novel, discussing the roles of physical and verbal harassment as well as the protagonists' relationships with girls, all of which have an impact on their masculine identity and how it is perceived by other students. The last part is concerned with the reaction of both shooters and how they subsequently decide to overcome their public images by becoming co-offenders and forming a hypermasculine union which allows them to take lethal revenge.

Just like in any other social environment, gender and masculinity in American high schools are fluid concepts that are negotiated and performed according to the socio-geographical context of the school and of the students. One of the most influential concepts to assess masculinity and how it is enacted, is R.W. Connell's and James Messerschmidt's concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity attempts to explain power relations and gender roles, especially between men. Connell's and Messerschmidt's theory consists of four main elements: first, it assumes that even though there is only one male sex, a variety of different masculinities exists. Looking at these different masculinities in relation to each other, secondly, it can be observed that they are in a hierarchical order. Third, hegemonic masculinity is on top of this hierarchy. Fourth, other masculinities which are valued as lesser, depending on how close they are to hegemonic masculinity, either benefit passively from hegemonic masculinity, or are suppressed by it (2005, p. 832). This theory acknowledges the differences between men and how they perceive and enact their own and other's masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity therefore embodies "the currently most honoured way of being a man" (2005, p. 832) and supports gender inequality—not just in regard to weakening femininity, but also other masculinities that are not in line with the predominant notion of what it means to be 'masculine'. Unlike female gender performance which has been widely explored in feminist studies, scholarship on this kind of male gender performance has only recently become the focus of scholarship.

What is perceived as the dominating perception of masculinity differs according to the environment in which it is enacted. Variables such as age, cultural background or social status play a crucial role in the establishment of a society's hegemonic masculinity. Learning about gender norms in a society starts in the family home and is continued throughout school.

Messerschmidt even goes so far as to argue that "school is the primary place where gender is learned and reinforced" (2013, p. 46). It therefore plays a pivotal role as a place of grievance or humiliation if standards of masculinity are not met by an individual. In their observations about the student culture in US American schools, Wooden and Gillam define hegemonic masculinity in the school environment as "built largely of aggression, athleticism, competitive success, and emotional isolation" (2014, p. 60). In other words, physical strength is valued over emotional strength and mental well-being. The lack of attention to mental health is compensated with a detachment of emotions. The result is a toxic environment in which every emotional struggle undermines adolescent males' efforts to publicly embody hegemonic masculinity.

Understanding masculinity as a power structure also implies the idea that positions in that hierarchy can be contested and need to be validated in order to stay on top. As illustrated by the introductory quote by Evan Todd, verbal harassment by the adolescents who represent hegemonic masculinity occupies a central place in this process. C.J. Pascoe in her field study on masculinity and sexuality in high schools finds especially that "homophobic teasing often characterizes masculinity in adolescence and early adulthood" (2011, p. 53). In addition to physical dominance, the hegemonic male establishes his power through verbal aggression against peers representing alternative masculinities. As a result, Jessie Klein summarises, "boys who are denied full male privileges and status […] feel pressured to demonstrate extreme male behaviour to overcompensate for their diminished social position" (2013, p. 48). The question of which form this "extreme male behaviour" might take is partly answered by the way it is provoked: "[g]iven that such interactions question, undermine, and/or threaten one's masculinity, only contextually 'appropriate' masculine practices can help overcome the challenges" (Messerschmidt 2004, p. 111). "Engagement in assaultive violence" (Messerschmidt 2004, p. 111) therefore is perceived as an appropriate way to counteract the public humiliation and degradation in front of peers.

Published in 2000, Todd Strasser's *Give a Boy a Gun* addresses the "epidemic of school shootings" (Kellner 2015, p. 19) in the late 1990s and makes the complex subject accessible for readers of young adult fiction. Although it received mixed reviews at the time of its publication, the novel is still considered influential in YA literature (Bodart 2016, p. 62). In the Author's Note, Strasser expresses his concerns that subjects like "murder […] and various other immoral or criminal activities" (2000) increasingly become a topic for younger audiences. However, Strasser does not just strongly advocate gun control[1], he also addresses

[1] The public debate about gun control has not lost any of its relevance since Strasser published the novel in 2000. Whereas defenders of gun culture refer to the Second Amendment to the US Constitution which states that "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" (Constitution of the United States 1791), a

the subject of adolescent masculinity in American high schools in his fiction and picks up on the issues addressed by the researchers mentioned above.

Strasser builds the characters of his two protagonists through both direct and indirect characterisation, setting a contextual framework, and answering the question why Gary and Brendan are at the lower end of the social hierarchy of their high school. Brendan is initially described as popular, before his family moves to Middletown and he transfers to Middletown High School. Being taken out of his social environment has a traumatising effect on Brendan: He turns from a popular athlete into a quiet outsider who has trouble adjusting to his new school (Strasser 2000, pp. 26–28). In addition to problems with adjusting to a new social environment, he also deals with temper and anger management issues throughout his childhood and adolescence (Strasser 2000, pp. 19–20), a character trait which is also reflected in the impulsive way he reacts to bullying.

Whilst Brendan is the more impulsive of the two shooters, Gary internalises most of his issues and withdraws into himself. His childhood and adolescence have been fundamentally shaped by his parents' divorce in which he has been "caught in the middle" and used by his mother as a means to get more money (Strasser 2000, p. 13). After his parents separate, Gary's father disappears from Gary's life. Gary struggles immensely with his father's absence, but neither his mother, nor a psychotherapist, is able to help him overcome the breakup of his family and the loss of his father. He is left with an "overprotective" mother who tries to take the roles of both mother and father, and no masculine role model. His withdrawn and shy demeanour, which can be interpreted as a symptom of his depression, as well as his weight, make him an easy target for bullies. As a result, both Brendan and Gary experience physical and verbal harassment which questions their masculinity.

Physical harassment is a common occurrence at the fictional Middletown High School. According to one student, "anyone who wasn't big and strong and on a team got it" (Strasser 2000, p. 37), or, as Brendan puts it, "[T]he athletes are the dominant males" (p. 47). They exhibit the hegemonic masculinity during breaks, after school, and even in class where their status as football players keeps them from being punished. As one of the characters, recalls after the shooting, they acted "like they ruled the school" (p. 100). Brendan especially is a victim of constant physical aggression. He "got it worse than the other kids", presumably because his anger management issues lead him to react to the aggression directed towards him (p. 46). For Brendan, even small gestures towards girls, like holding a door open for a popular cheerleader, have grave consequences. Since this is perceived as a deliberate provocation and

growing number of citizens demands tighter gun control laws. Through highly successful lobbying work by the National Rifle Association (NRA), however, politicians have been very hesitant to modernise laws (Rushe 2018).

not a polite gesture, he is beaten up by a football player who "smash[ed] him like a wild animal" (115).

In his account of the events leading up to the shooting, Brendan's friend Ryan recalls a pivotal event when a group of football players "held [Brendan] by the ankles and dunked his head in the toilet. It was all over school in no time" (Strasser 2000, 61). Conflicts like these on school grounds should have consequences for the aggressors who physically abuse and degrade Brendan, but even teachers reinforce the students' culture of physical aggression and ensure the athletes' place on top of the social hierarchy. They either support it passively by looking away, or actively by encouraging the behaviour, for example by deliberately pairing physically domineering football players with physically weaker students in gym class (Strasser 2000, pp. 39–41). This does not just add to the feeling of emasculation, it also increases a sense of injustice among the students harmed in the process. That teachers cannot be regarded as confidants who have the best interest of all their students in mind, is another problem Jessie Klein addresses in *The Bully Society*. She observes that "[a]dults too often exacerbate rather than mitigate such difficulties" (Klein 2013, p. 133). In other words, teachers rather add to the hostile environment which leads Brendan to perceive the school as a place of constant humiliation and consequently as a place to execute revenge. The choice of guns as weapons is not arbitrary either. Neither Brendan, nor Gary are physically able to control the football players who bully them. Guns are therefore an easy way to exert power and "out-man" those who harass them.

Masculine dominance, however, is not just enacted through physical harassment, but is also expressed in oversexualised conversations among male teenagers, for example locker room talk. J.C. Pascoe argues that "adolescent masculinity is understood […] as a form of dominance usually expressed through sexualized discourses. […] Boys […] assert masculine selves by engaging in heterosexist discussions of girls' bodies and their own sexual experiences (2011, p. 5). In pro-actively discussing their sexual experiences with girls, male teenagers stress their heterosexuality and therefore negate the possibility of being homosexual or being perceived as such. Not joining these conversations even if having the experience, according to Pascoe, has the same effect as not being experienced at all. In regard to expressing their heterosexuality, Brendan and Gary therefore display what Kimmel and Mahler call "inadequate gender performance" (2003, p. 1440).

In the novel, this becomes specifically apparent when analysing Gary's relationship with his girlfriend. Although he has dated a girl for two years, he is still the victim of ridicule because he does not engage in these over-sexualised discussions. His girlfriend describes the moment when they are caught by a group of athletes in an emotionally—not physically—

intimate moment: "I wanted to die. Gary did too. […] It was like they'd just stuck a knife in his heart. Sometimes Gary and I could escape into that world where no one bothered us or laughed or made fun. But it never lasted long" (Strasser 2000, p. 34). Gary's relationship does not fit into the picture of the oversexualised discourse that is part of hegemonic masculinity, so even though he has a girlfriend, he is still considered inferior. Brendan's dating life is only rarely discussed in the novel. He is not described as going on dates and it is only once that he shows an interest and makes an advance towards a girl. The girl, however, is Allison, Gary's girlfriend, who strongly refuses his advances (Strasser 2000, pp. 92–93). Nobody else witnesses his failed attempt, but Brendan, arguably, perceives it as emasculating nonetheless. The rejection therefore fuels his need to assert his masculinity in a different way.

This emasculation is further underlined by the severe verbal harassment both Brendan and Gary experience. This harassment especially centres around homophobic insults. Pascoe's study found that "[h]omophobia is […] a central mechanism in the making of contemporary American adolescent masculinity" (2011, p. 53). In an oversexualised discourse in which masculinity is measured according to experience with girls to establish oneself as high as possible in the 'pecking order', it serves as a means to support heterosexual norms.

Strasser implements this verbal bullying in addition to physical harassment. A friend of Brendan's summarises the general sentiment at the school:

> [y]ou see this guy, and he just sneers at you and says, 'Hey faggot.' Thing is, to him it's nothing. Two seconds later he's probably forgotten he even said it. But it's burned in your brain. It's a permanent scar. A week later, you're still asking yourself […] Does anyone think you're a faggot? Maybe you are a faggot and you don't even know it (Strasser 2000, p. 50).

This name-calling serves two purposes: first, it strengthens the image of bullies as superior; second, it causes the bullied to permanently question their masculine identity. On the one hand, by insulting peers with homophobic terms, the hegemonic male asserts his own heterosexuality. He metaphorically kills two birds with one stone: degrading and humiliating his peer whilst also dissociating himself from any kind of homosexual thoughts or practice. He therefore strengthens his status at the top of the school hierarchy by threatening to unmask others as feminine (Kimmel 1994, p. 215). On the other hand, he causes an identity crisis within the bullied. Here, the homophobic insult does not necessarily result in the victim questioning his sexuality. It rather draws on the question of how his own masculinity is perceived by peers (Kimmel 1994, p. 215). Brendan and Gary themselves are both called "faggot" (Strasser 2000, p. 47) on various occasions throughout the narrative. This does not necessarily mean that they are perceived as homosexual. It rather shows how traits which are stereotypically perceived as feminine are assigned to their characters. This practice is integral to the power structure in American high schools. It establishes a social order which does not

only favour the alpha males and excludes other masculinities, but also creates a hotbed for violence as it causes the bullied to assure their masculinity, not just to themselves but also to those questioning it publicly. One account illustrates how football players violently enact their top spot at the social hierarchy at Middletown High school and how this behaviour is endorsed by teachers (Strasser 2000, pp. 38–41).

After this incident, Denise Shipley, the fictional collector of the material which forms the narrative, starts to add more accounts by the future perpetrators. These fictional chats and e-mail exchanges recount anecdotes about public humiliation of Brendan and Gary from their perspective and sheds light on how angry and out of control it makes them feel. Here, the author's choice to not implement journal entries or other private writings from the future perpetrators, but rather communication with each other and some of their closest friends, reinforces the idea that both still hide the majority of their actual emotional response and, especially in Brendan's case, rather display anger as appropriate masculine response. Thus, they already practice performing the type of hegemonic masculinity they aspire to embody. Even though their accounts are still negotiated through their public personas (Strasser 2000, p. 41 ff.), the reader nevertheless gets an insight into their minds and thoughts, and from that point forward, both protagonists are given a stronger narrative voice.

Accounts from Brendan's and Gary's antagonists are contrasted with a larger number of accounts by characters who reflect and attempt to understand their behaviours instead of entirely opposing them, and, most importantly, by Brendan and Gary themselves. Reports about physical abuse are balanced with writings of the shooters who swear to take revenge on their bullies. The phrasing of these writings becomes increasingly violent over time. "We talked all the time about getting back at the jocks. For every time they called you a faggot. For every time they bodychecked you into a wall. […] We would tie them up and use pliers to pull their fingernails off. We would gouge their eyes out and castrate them" (Strasser 2000, p. 70). Especially the last part which recalls to the reader the image of medieval torture practices which counteract the constant torture they had to go through. The mentioning of castration implies the idea that the future perpetrators want to take their bully's masculinity, therefore emasculating the dominant males and replacing them at the top of the hierarchy. Torture fantasies quickly turn into death threats. In an e-mail, Brendan writes that he "will kill every friggin' one of them. It's gonna be Columbine all over again, only better. Harris and Klebold did it right. Blow the friggin' school, then blow yourself away" (Strasser 2000, p. 71). Here, Brendan directly references the Columbine High School shooting and its potential to serve as a blueprint for further shootings and as inspiration for his own plans. Hyperviolent revenge inspired by Harris' and Klebold's rampage appears to be the only way for Brendan and Gary

to gain back control over the situation and redefine their challenged masculine identities. Since "[v]iolence is often the single most evident marker of manhood" (Kimmel 1994, p. 215) and both shooters feel let down by authority figures, other non-violent options to ease their pain are not considered.

Even though Brendan and Gary react differently to the issues they face, they do not plan to act on their grievances on their own and therefore become co-offenders. Two years prior to their rampage, Brendan and Gary get to know and start to influence one another. As one of their class mates recalls, "[w]hatever the dark thing in Brendan was, it started to come out in Gary, too. […] the two of them together…I don't know, they just fed off each other" (p. 77). Whilst Brendan becomes considerably more aggressive, Gary withdraws into himself and internalises his pain. However, they follow the same goal, namely to end the harassment and gain back control over their social lives. Yet, neither of them has the ambition to take revenge by themselves. Together, the idea of complementing each other and 'feeding off each other' becomes essential. In criminological terms, this dynamic is called accomplice offending, or co-offending, a type of crime that "involve[s] more than one offender" (U.S. Department of Justice 2005, p. ii). As Lisa Stolzenberg and Stewart J. D'Alessio point out, co-offending is regarded as "the dominate form of criminal offending among juveniles because of the enhanced salience of peer pressure during adolescence" (2008, p. 65). In other words, juveniles are more likely to commit violent crimes with a co-offender instead of by themselves. For example, Brendan and Gary complement each other during the planning process: whereas Brendan attains the guns necessary for their rampage by stealing them from his neighbour (Strasser 2000, p. 140), Gary builds "well constructed [sic] and intricate" pipe bombs that serve as booby-traps for doors (Strasser 2000, p. 103) to keep their hostages trapped and under control. What Stolzenberg and D'Alessio describe as "enhanced salience of peer pressure", however, needs to be re-evaluated in the context of the novel. In Brendan's and Gary's case, it is rather the idea of achieving their personal goals by executing an attack that, as lowest common denominators, satisfies both Brendan's desire for revenge and Gary's suicidal thoughts. As one of the accounts of the day of the shooting reads,

> Gary might have been thinking about killing himself. Brendan never struck me that way. It was like he was too angry to do that. He wanted to get too many people. But if you put them together, you can almost see the idea coming to them. Deciding to do themselves in, but going to school and taking as many of those guys with them as they could (Strasser 2000, pp. 119–120).

Brendan and Gary therefore enable each other not just in regard to their skills, but also mentally. Having an accomplice who holds the other accountable, makes it less likely for them to abandon their plans. Furthermore, the noticeable absence of any discussion of a

backup plan which takes into account that one of them would withdraw from their scheme suggests that their union is crucial for the execution of the shooting.

With a revenge crime that involves heavy firearms and bombs, they substitute both their lack of physical strength with weapons and, therefore, for the duration of their rampage, re-invent themselves as a hypermasculine, almost god-like entity. Here, it is worth pausing and returning to the physical descriptions of both perpetrators. Gary is described as "sort of chubby" (Strasser 2000, p. 126), while Brendan is characterised as an "average-size, thin kid" (p. 18). Physically, they are distinctively different, and inferior, to the image of hegemonic males at Middletown High School, namely the football players who are bigger and more muscular (p. 30). Physical constitution and especially the display of muscles, according to Alan M. Klein, is "about more than just the functional ability of men to defend home and hearth or perform heavy labor; muscles are markers that separate men from each other" (1993, p. 16). Muscles therefore are an important bodily indicator where an individual is placed in the gender hierarchy and how he is able to perform as hegemonic male. Brendan and Gary's choice of a rampage school shooting as an act of revenge is therefore an infallible solution to their physical inferiority. Their choice of guns as the weapons of assault does not just ensure absolute physical dominance over the hostages by making the missing muscles futile, they also serve as a phallic symbol which displays the shooters dominance, playing into the "cliché that the gun is a penis symbol as well as a weapon" (Connell 2008, p. 212). Katz notes that "[g]uns are an important signifier of virility and power and hence are an important part of the way violent masculinity is constructed" (2003, p. 357), and Stange and Oyster add that guns also serve "a symbolic function that exceeds any practical utility. It has become the symbol par excellence of masculinity: of power, force, aggressiveness, decisiveness, deadly accuracy, cold rationality" (2000, p. 22). Because of these connotations, "it seems logical that men could use them to perform masculinity" (Stroud 2012, p. 217). Brendan's and Gary's choice to re-invent their masculinities is therefore practical as well as symbolic. It means that, without changing their physical appearance, the two of them are able to control all the popular students and teachers at the school dance, although being outnumbered thirty to one (Strasser 2000, p. 131). Instead, it is enough to add semi-automatic guns in a transhuman, prosthetic way. With that, they mix two performances "that are particularly problematic in combination: (1) a hyper-masculine one of aggression, strength, and dominance, and (2) a transhumanist one where the human pursues perfection through science and technology (Keeling 2012, p. 134). The outcome is the perfected process of aggression and dominance, a deadly combination. Brendan and Gary counteract the football players' physical dominance with

artificial means and, therefore, place themselves on top of the social pecking order, meeting and exceeding the standards set by their bullies.

Brendan's and Gary's strategy therefore results in their ultimate god-like ability to decide who, including themselves, will be killed and who will survive the attack. Thus, they have ultimate control and turn the school dance into their own 'night of judgement'. Empowered by their firearms, they have the rest of the, predominantly popular, students entirely at their mercy. This becomes especially apparent when looking at their choice of the school dance as the time of their attack since, traditionally, only "the popular kids [are] at the dance" (Strasser 2000, p. 120). Gary makes sure that his girlfriend Allison is not endangered by picking this event, whereas Brendan calls one of his friends to tell her not to attend. She recalls that

> he asked me if I was going to the dance that night […] because he'd noticed that I was getting friendly with some of the […] 'popular' girls. I assured him there was absolutely, positively no way I was going. And then he said he was glad, and that he'd always liked me (Strasser 2000, p. 119).

While they spare certain students, they also target certain individuals, specifically the school's headmaster and Sam Flach, the football player who is portrayed as Brendan's main bully. Both represent the social groups that they feel most wronged by, namely the bullying football players and the teachers who enabled this behaviour by not intervening (Strasser 2000, pp. 152-153).

How fragile their union is, however, is exposed when Gary realises that his girlfriend is also trapped in the school's gym. Despite his precautions, she is in the group of students that they take hostage (Strasser 2000, p. 19). It forces Gary to re-evaluate the situation: "Gary wanted to talk. Brendan said there was nothing to talk about. They'd chosen their path. So Gary goes, 'Things have changed.'" (p. 156–157). While Brendan and Gary appear as one unit when entering the gym, this disagreement seriously jeopardises their union and brings their differences to light. Whereas Gary seems to be more open to the idea of compromising parts of their plan to guarantee Allison's safety, Brendan views her as collateral damage. This poses an irreconcilable conflict of interest which causes Gary to commit suicide earlier than planned. As soon as Brendan is on his own between the hostages, football players overpower him and beat him into a coma (p. 173). With this violent act, the athletes restore themselves at the top of the known gender hierarchy which has temporarily been challenged by the shooters.

Brendan and Gary ultimately unsuccessfully redefine their identities as hegemonic males by overcompensating for their physical shortcomings through the use of firearms, and through exerting power over those who emasculated them. As Douglas Kellner argues when analysing school shootings from Columbine to Virginia Tech, "motivations for the shootings

may vary, [however] they have in common crises in masculinities" (2012, p. 497). Ultimately, the shooters do not just attack their bullies, but also the broader social system, and show that the construction of a masculine identity can indeed be a life and death matter in American high schools.

The role adolescent masculinity plays in motivating rampage school shootings has become a more prominent area of research, both in analyses of real attacks and their cultural representations.[2] By analysing how masculinity is enacted in high school environments and how it is represented in Strasser's *Give a Boy a Gun*, this article raises awareness for the interwoven issues of how hegemonic masculinity is enacted in American high schools and how disenfranchised adolescents who are not part of this enactment can reside to hyperviolent and hypermasculine behaviour to voice their grievances. The idea that boys learn that "violence [is] the only acceptable form […] of emotional expression allowed them" (Kimmel 2008, p. 54) and at the same time, that "violence is not only an acceptable form of conflict resolution, but one that is admired" (Kimmel 2017, p. 75), creates a highly futile breeding ground for ideas centred around hypermasculine revenge. Kimmel and Mahler come to the conclusion that "masculinity is the single greatest risk factor in school violence" (2003, p. 140). Not being perceived as masculine enough by their peers and being exposed to homophobic insults and physical aggression therefore adds to Brendan's and Gary's perception of not being in control and to their need to take revenge.

That this revenge is unsuccessful shows, however, how dominant the system of hegemonic masculinity among adolescents is. Just like at Columbine High School, things return to the way they were before at the fictional Middletown High School. Collective and individual trauma is now part of this community's identity; however, the social hierarchy appears to be unchanged. As seen by the homophobic and nonreflective statement by Evan Todd, ideas of social hierarchy are so deeply engrained in students like him that even a life-threatening situation like the shooting cannot change their views and behaviours. In fact, this attitude is also mirrored in the novel: injured football player Sam Flach addresses the idea of forgiveness and concludes: "[d]id I do anything that a thousand other guys at a thousand other schools haven't done? [...] I'm not forgiving them. Ever." (Strasser 2000, p. 177). He normalises his behaviour by hiding behind the broader social system and fails to re-evaluate his values. In that regard, *Give a Boy a Gun* accurately represents the persistence of the adolescent gender hierarchy and therefore reinforces existing power structures. Calls for

[2] See for example: Lindner, K.E., 2014. *Rampage Violence Narratives: What Fictional Accounts of School Shootings Say About the Future of America's Youth.* Plymouth: Lexington, 2014. Or: Kimmel, M. and Kliff, C., 2015. "There Is a GunMAN On Campus": Including Identity in Mass Shooting Discourse. In: B. Agger and T.W. Luke, eds. 2015. *Gun Violence and Public Life.* New York: Routledge. pp. 176–185.

changes in attitudes subside whilst social hierarchies, in general, remain unchanged: what Columbine shooter Eric Harris calls a "revolution of the dispossessed", fails (Gibbs and Roche 1999). What remains, however, are new, negative role models for disenfranchised youths who turn to school shooting subcultures that, enabled by a variety of social media platforms, engage with and hail rampage school shooters (Daggett 2015, pp. 46–47). A fruitful discussion about healthy gender and social relations, however, is still in its infancy.

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Identity in Protracted Displacement: Exploring Identity of Palestinian and Syrian Refugees Living in Lebanon

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Abstract

Since the onset of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, over 5 million Syrians have been displaced globally, with no clear end in sight for the ongoing conflict (UNHCR 2017a). Syrian refugees are now worried they will be facing a situation similar to that of the Palestinians living in displacement in Lebanon for over 50 years as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict (United Nations 1951). Currently, almost 1.5 million Palestinian and Syrians are seeking refuge in Lebanon, representing over a quarter of the total Lebanese population. In a country that is recovering from its own civil conflict, the surge of displaced Syrians, in addition to the resident Palestinian refugee population, has led to increased tensions between the Lebanese host and refugee communities. Increased labour competition, housing prices and pressure on limited resources have, in particular, contributed to this polarisation. Feelings of uncertainty for the future and a loss of identity are pervasive within the displaced Syrian population in Lebanon as they attempt to navigate survival in a new environment. In Syria, individual identities are highly influenced by religious, ethnic and tribal identities. Through civil war, these salient identities have become challenged and fragmented, pressuring displaced Syrians to continuously shape and reshape their identities in response to factors such as the ongoing conflict at home and the local landscape of displacement, as well as the global narrative environment currently beleaguering Syrian refugees. In contrast, Palestinians displaced in Lebanon have undergone multiple identity transformations throughout their protracted displacement, which are echoed in a culmination of active local and global Palestinian identities. Through reviewing literature surrounding the Palestinian and Syrian displacement, this paper seeks to provide a framework for understanding the intersectionality and complexity of identity development and the means by which this transformation affects refugee communities living in protracted displacement.

Introduction

After the 2011 uprisings, millions of Syrians fled to neighbouring countries for safety. March 2017 marked the sixth year of the Syrian Conflict, still, at the time of writing, without a clear end in sight. Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan host the world's highest populations of Syrian refugees. Lebanon currently has the highest percentage of Syrian refugees per capita. With around one million Syrian refugees scattered throughout various regions of Lebanon, the Syrian refugee population comprises almost 25% of the inhabitants in Lebanon (UNHCR 2016; 2017b). Without official camps set up for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, many are scattered throughout residential areas in the Bekka, North Lebanon and Beirut/Mount Lebanon regions of the country (UNHCR 2017b). Many refugees who fled Syria without documentation have sought refuge in the official Palestinian Camps in Lebanon to avoid

deportation, as these camps are not patrolled by Lebanese authorities (Parkinson and Behrouzan 2015). Within Lebanon, Syrian refugees have been given minimal rights and have been discouraged from integrating into Lebanese society (Thorleifsson 2016). Both inside and outside of the camps, Syrian refugees face numerous barriers in access to paid labour, housing, safety, medical assistance and education (Norwegian Refugee Council 2014).

Limited access to education, risks to safety, isolation and early marriage are some of the challenges that are faced by Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. The ability for Syrian refugee youth to attend Lebanese schools, for example, is very limited due to many schools being tied to political party membership. Furthermore, while Syrian children are able to attend part-time education in Lebanese schools (Parkinson 2014), safety concerns while travelling to school act as a large barrier for many. This is especially true for females, who report experiences of real or perceived risks to safety when outside of the home (International Rescue Committee 2014; Hassan et al. 2015; Yasmine and Moughalian 2016). This has led to a large number of young girls not continuing education and being kept within the home. Early marriage of adolescent girls has increased compared to rates prior to displacement due both to an inability to attend educational institutions and an overwhelming lack of physical and/or financial security for unmarried women (Cherri et al. 2017; International Rescue Committee, 2014; Hassan et al. 2016). This is typically done in hopes that marriage will provide young females with physical and financial security. However, this comes with issues of isolation as studies report that girls who have been subjected to early marriage have an increased risk of becoming isolated within the home (Cherri et al. 2017).

In addition to the challenges outlined above, Syrian refugees face increasing competition with locals in their host country. In a country that has been recovering from its own past civil conflict, the surge of displaced inhabitants has also had a large effect on Lebanese society. Rights to work are limited for refugees within Lebanon and many jobs that are acquired by the refugees are grossly underpaid. Lebanese citizens have reported that their ability to financially support themselves is being affected by the low wages afforded to refugee workers by employers (Christophersen et al. 2013; Thorleifsson 2016). Issues such as this have led to increased tensions and polarisation between the two populations (Christophersen et al. 2013; Midgley and Eldebo 2013; Thorleifsson 2016). Common Lebanese discourses about Syrian refugees include labelling Syrian women as promiscuous and "husband stealers" (Thorleifsson 2016, p. 1079), blaming Syrian refugees for the lack of paid work and housing (Thorleifsson 2016) and bullying of children by Lebanese classmates and school teachers (DeJong et al. 2017). This polarisation between Syrian refugees and the

Lebanese populations, along with the lack of social rights afforded to Syrian refugees, can have important effects on certain aspects of psychosocial wellbeing such as identity.

Collective identities evolve over time due to pressures acting upon them from, for example, the ways in which the group is viewed by others, or from constraints such as social rules and governmental policies. At the same time, these collective identities have the ability to bring people together to shift social norms and influence local, national and global policies (Ertorer 2014; Hopkins 2008; Phinney et al. 2001). Within diaspora populations, retaining a collective ethnic identity while trying to simultaneously adjust to the host culture can be difficult (Tint et al. 2017). Identity, according to Human Needs Theory (Burton 1990; Danielsen 2005), is a universal human need and can aid in psychological wellbeing (Çelebi et al. 2017; Jetten et al. 2012; Luckyx and Robitschek 2014; Phinney et al. 2001). Having a strong sense of a collective identity, therefore, can be of particular importance for those who have experienced conflict. Idenitity theorists Stets and Burke (2014) also explain how verification of certain identity meanings allows for one to feel valuable to their group and contributes to an individual's self-worth and self-esteem. Further research shows that a strong sense of identity is beneficial for psychosocial wellbeing and that a collective identity can serve as a protective factor against psychological disorders, such as PTSD and depression, in times of rupture (Çelebi et al. 2017; Jetten et al. 2012; Phinney et al. 2001; Smeekes et al. 2017).

Recent studies have identified that Syrian refugees living in Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon are experiencing feelings around a loss of identity and social cohesion due to displacement (Çelebi et al. 2017; Hassan et al. 2015; Kira et al. 2017; Yasmine and Moughalian 2016). While certain studies state that Syrian refugees are feeling a loss of identity, deeper exploration into the psychological processes of this phenomenon is currently under researched. However, there is a long history of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, whose shifting identity researchers have been able to record through their years of protracted displacement. Palestinians have been living in official refugee camps in Lebanon for over 60 years without being allowed to integrate into Lebanese society (Farah 2012; Fincham 2012; Haddad and Jamali 2003; Hanafi 2010; Thorleifsson 2016). Much like Syrian refugees, Palestinian refugees have been given minimal rights within Lebanon. However, over the years, there has been an evolution of a strong local and global Palestinian identity despite the long term yet systematically temporary nature of their displacement (Farah 2012; Fincham 2012; Holt 2010). This raises questions as to how Palestinian refugees have a strong collective national identity that supports feelings of cohesiveness while Syrian refugees are reportedly feeling a loss of community and a lack of a cohesive collective identity (Çelebi et

al. 2017; Kira et al. 2017; Yasmine and Moughalian 2016). By looking at how Palestinians living in a similar context have constructed and reconstructed their collective Palestinian identity over long term displacement through a sociocultural framework of transitions, it can be seen more clearly how identity in protracted displacement evolves. This will be done by first outlining a sociocultural framework of transitions, which will then be used to examine Palestinian refugees' utilisation of symbolic resources in identity construction, a mode of inquiry which can "[offer] new access for investigating processes of change in people's lives" (Zittoun 2007, p. 347). These processes will then be compared to what is known of the Syrian refugees within Lebanon. Political and gender intersectionalities, for both Palestinian and Syrian refugees, will also be explored through a sociocultural psychological perspective. Through this, questions are formulated for further study into Syrian identity that may help us understand the identity needs of those living in crisis and can serve as a basis for participatory social action.

Sociocultural Framework of Transitions

Both Syrians and Palestinians have experienced ruptures due to being forced to flee from their home countries. Sociocultural psychologists view ruptures as initiating a psychosocial transition process through which an individual comes to re-define their position within the world. In sociocultural literature, ruptures are defined as experiences "that substantially question a person's daily life or current routines" (Zittoun et al. 2013, p. 262), which "requires new ways of handling one's daily reality… and do[es] not allow a return to the initial state" (ibid.). In response to these ruptures, transitions are made in which one comes to a new state of being. According to Zittoun (2008), three interdependent processes make up all transitions: acquisition of new knowledge and skills, sense making and changes to identity. The focus of this paper will be mainly on the changes to identity; however, because these processes are interdependent, theories of sense-making and knowledge acquisition will be interwoven.

One of the most influential components in shifts to identity, as a part of the transition process, is the meaning-making process, during which one is able to define oneself within the present in relation to both past experiences and ideas of the future (Zittoun et al. 2013). These meaning-making processes are constantly taking place as individuals move through their lives and develop. Through the use of semiotic and symbolic resources, individuals are able to better understand their self and others within their social worlds. Semiotic resources are grounded in culture (Zittoun 2009). They are objects that have a meaning which is available to anyone in a community, assuming that access to such resources is not restricted. The

meanings of these resources are taught by both formal institutions, such as schools and religious centres, and informal institutions, such as family and peer groups (Zittoun and Gillespie 2015). Meanings given to and taken from these signs are not fixed and are constantly evolving as one develops and as their social world changes (Zittoun et al. 2013). Typically, semiotic resources occur in the form of signs, which are objects that act upon the mind of the individual and represent objects or ideas outside of their physical form (Gillespie and Zittoun 2010; Zittoun 2009). Signs are given meaning through development and discourse with those individuals in a given social environment.

A semiotic resource becomes symbolic when it moves outside of its socially shared meaning and is used by an individual as a reminder or initiator of a meaning that is personal and significant (Zittoun 2009). People who have experienced ruptures are more likely to utilise these shared semiotic resources as symbolic resources to aid the transition process (Zittoun 2007) by "turning the unfamiliar into manageable environments" (p. 344). Ruptures that come from relocation, as in the case of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, can result in a loss of certain parts of physical and social environments that once contained signs that provided stability to identity (Zittoun 2007; Zittoun and Cerchia 2013; Zittoun et al. 2013). These could include trinkets, food or music, but meaning-making can also be tied to larger things such as a house or land (Zittoun et al. 2013). Physical environments that once contained semiotic resources which helped to reinforce an ethnic or national identity may not be as readily available in situations where one has been forced to flee from their homeland into unfamiliar territory.

The camps in Lebanon can be viewed as an incubator for a Palestinian national identity. Many living within the camps have a very strong sense of what it means to be Palestinian (Farah 2012; Fincham 2012; Turan 2015). In the camp, there are signs which evoke an imagined space of Palestine that has lived on throughout decades of displacement. In various places in the camps, the Palestinian flag and other symbols are displayed, acting as a reminder for the camps' residents of their "Palestinianess" (Fincham 2012, p. 122). Graffiti that tells stories of a lost homeland and that conveys hope for a reclamation of what was lost similarly adorns the camps. These physical representations act as a confirmation that the collective Palestinian identity still exists (Turan 2010). However, the few Palestinians that were allowed to integrate into Lebanese society and live outside of the camps do not, reportedly, feel these same strong ties to Palestine (Farah 2012). Farah (2012) found evidence of a shift in identity to be a mixture of Lebanese and Palestinian for those living outside of the camps and further found that this group does not evince a strong desire to return to a land that they have never known.

Social institutions, such as schools, religious institutions or communities, typically act as structuring frameworks for identity and meaning within the social context (Assman and Czaplicka 1995; Zittoun et al. 2013) and, in times of conflict and forced displacement, these influential social elements can be lost or weakened. During times of rupture, objects, social bonds or meanings tied to a certain identity (i.e. gender, race, profession) can create continuity for that particular identity. Zittoun et al. (2013) state that this would allow other identities or meanings tied to multiple identities to shift and evolve. Cultural signs become increasingly important here through allowing one to make meaning of a new situation while also creating stability for other identities during periods of transition. Through institutions within Palestinian camps, there is a binding of the past with the present in order to construct what it means to be Palestinian (Fincham 2012); this is mainly an identity that is tied to struggle and resistance. Fincham (2012) outlines how schools and other institutions within the camps are named after famous villages where massacres occurred, reinforcing the identity of a persecuted nation. These institutions act as "facilitating environments" (Turan 2010) for a collective identity, where meanings of identity are transmitted within and across generations. In addition, stories are passed down through families about the villages that they came from and what life was like in Palestine (Fincham 2012; Holt 2010; Turan 2010). Even though they have never been there, children three generations after initial displacement can describe in detail what the village looked like or how people lived their lives in Palestine (Holt 2010). The transmission of stories throughout generations ties their meaning of being Palestinian to these imagined spaces which are not constrained by time.

Considering how these camps have served as a space for the transmission of cultural signs for a Palestinian national identity, it leads one to wonder about the Syrian experience; because Syrian refugees are scattered throughout different areas in Lebanon, are there spaces available within their community in which cultural signs are displayed to reinforce feelings of 'Syrianness'? In addition, semiotic and symbolic resources serve as a way for individuals to distance themselves from their current experiences in order to create new meaning. This distancing happens through the ability to reflect on past experiences and how they relate to the present, while also considering how this will orient one in the future (Zittoun et al. 2013). Symbolic resources assist in this process by allowing an individual to engage reflectively, either consciously or subconsciously. The use of symbolic resources relies on certain abilities to call upon memories and images within the environment (Zittoun 2007). These memories must be connected with one's conscious and unconscious thoughts while also being in touch with experiences in the real world. Researchers who use a Life Story Model to explain identity formation (McAdams 1988; McLean 2005; Pasupathi et al. 2007) also find that

memory of past experiences helps to create meaning in what is being experienced in the present and helps to form imagined futures. When one has experienced traumatic events, as in the case of many Syrian refugees, the ability to call upon specific memories which would help to make meanings in the current situation may be hindered (Lacapra 2016; Cote and Levine 2014). Many Syrians in Lebanon have experienced traumatisation through both the war and subsequent forced fleeing of their home and may have experienced further trauma from either their living conditions in Lebanon or from hearing tragic news of loved ones that have remained in Syria (Kerbage and Marranconi 2017). These ongoing traumatic experiences restrict their ability to distance themselves from their current experiences (Lacapra 2016; Zittoun et al. 2013). Thus, there is a limited ability for them to enter into an imagined space and create meaning from their experiences in order to reconstruct a fractured identity (Cote and Levine 2014; Lacapra 2016; Zittoun et al. 2013).

This inability to enter into an imagined space is exacerbated by the yet unclear future of many Syrians living in Lebanon. These refugees are unsure whether they will be able to return to Syria, if they should attempt to integrate into a host community that is discriminatory towards them or if they should try to resettle in a different country (Jazairi 2015). Individuals act in their present world in expectation of certain potential futures to become manifested (Zittoun et al. 2013). These actions depend on the ability to imagine these futures as being real and enter into this imagined space, an ability that may be hindered by the experience of traumatic events and an inability to envisage the future due to ongoing legal and political uncertainty.

Intersectionality of Identities

Through social processes and the use of cultural resources such as signs, a person comes to define themselves as belonging to different groups. This is something that is learned through interactions with the environment and others (Adams and Marshall 1996; Hopkins and Reicher 2011; McLean 2005). Group identity is not singular. An individual can have various identities, but those which are most salient are dependent on the social and contextual factors that one experiences at given points in time. It is through processes of self-categorization and social comparison (Stets and Burke 2000; Tajfel 1982) that individuals are able to position themselves within different social groups as they develop. When one is born, he or she is ascribed certain social identities such as race, gender or ethnicity (Stets and Burke 2000; 2014). At first these social identities or categories may only have meaning through claiming membership. However, through development, the meaning ascribed to a certain identity evolves through interacting with others enacting that same identity. This is what Stets and

Burke (2014) have defined as a group identity. For example, at a young age, through sign usage in the form of customs, music and food, Palestinian youth are taught what it means to be Palestinian. Additionally, sociocultural psychologists discuss how, in development, one discovers what something is by concurrently discovering what it is not (Zittoun et al. 2013). Through this process, Palestinian youth are able to distinguish themselves and other things in the world as being Palestinian through not being something else. For example, 'this tradition is Palestinian because it is NOT Lebanese' or 'I AM Palestinian because I am NOT Israeli'. Through the understanding of what is and is not, one is able to position oneself within the world through the meanings given to these constructed definitions. These meanings then act upon a specific social identity which may reinforce or confirm membership of a specific group (Stryker 1968; 2000; Stryker and Burke 2010).

Zittoun and Gillespie (2015) describe how individuals move through social positions throughout development. While moving through these different positions, however, past experiences are not discarded but are layered within an individual's psychological world. They explain how people have both proximal and distal experiences. Proximal experiences are those that are lived in the present moment, while distal experiences are those that were once proximal experiences in the past but are still being utilised. Although one may be in a certain proximal experience, multiple distal experiences may also be active at the same time. These experiences can create conflict with each other in an individual's psychological world as one experience may be fundamentally different than another. Zittoun and Gillespie (2015) use the example of a parent who was once a child themself and currently needs to discipline their own child. Their past experience of being a child conflicts with their current need to be an authoritative figure. This concept of layered experiences can translate into the concept of the intersectionality of identities and the layering of the multiple identities which one may possess at any given point in time. As demonstrated by the example of the parent, at a given point in time one may be experiencing a specific aspect of his or her identity that is dominant, but there are also multiple other identities that are still active on the peripheries. These multiple 'distal' identities may conflict with the current dominant active identity. For example, while one may identify with a larger group identity such as nationality, he or she may also belong to other groups which may compete with each other, such as a religious or political affiliation, or a gender. Within the larger group identities of being Palestinian or Syrian, there are multiple political or religious identities which may have more salience than a collective national identity. The ways in which these different identity layers interact with each other has consequences for which identity is more salient at any given point in time. How this intersectionality affects shifts in identity for Syrian refugees adjusting to a life in

displacement is a question that should be explored further, as it could offer insights into processes of integration and facilitating social cohesion.

Identity theorists also discuss these multiple identities in terms of salience hierarchies (Stets and Burke 2000; Stryker 1968; 2000; Stryker and Burke 2010). Identity theory explores salience as a function of commitment: the more people one knows who share the same identity, and the stronger his or her bonds are to the others in that group, the more salient the identity will be (Stets and Burke 2000). In addition, identities need to be confirmed by others within the group. This identity verification interacts with self-esteem and the process can be cyclical. The greater salience an identity has, the greater the need for verification. If an identity is verified by others, it will result in increased self-esteem and strengthen the salience of the identity (Stets and Burke 2000; Stryker and Burke 2010). If an identity is not confirmed in certain situations or conflicts with roles required by other identities, the salience of that specific identity or the conflicting identities may decrease.

There are two major political parties to which Palestinians living in refugee camps have loyalty towards (Fincham 2012; Schanzer 2008). The Fatah is a party that carries the belief that the future state of Palestine should be a secular state. Hamas believes that this future Palestine should be an official Islamic state. The parties' differing visions of what the Palestinian state should look like in the future creates tensions within the wider Palestinian community (Fincham 2012). Within the camps, this promotes differing views of what it means to be a true Palestinian. However, despite the internal differences between different groups of Palestinian political parties, they are still able to unify under a strong national identity with meanings of persecution and resistance (Turan 2015). This could be due to the fact that certain meanings of Palestinian identity and political identity are shared between the two identities. Therefore, performing behaviours to verify one identity will also verify the other and will not necessarily create conflicts between the meanings tied to each identity (Stryker and Burke 2010). However, identifying as Palestinian may not be as salient for minorities such as Palestinian Christians. A major site of transmission of Palestinian identity is also tied to religious social institutions such as Mosques and many, therefore, view being Palestinian as being part of an Islamic state (Fincham 2012). Those who do not identify as Muslim may rather be integrated into Lebanese society than be tied to a nation in which they are marginalised. This phenomenon can be explained by Identity Theory. Palestinian Christians' social ties may be greater with other Christians than with Palestinian Muslims, creating more commitment to a Christian identity than a Palestinian identity (Stryker 1968; 2000; Stryker and Burke 2010). As stated above, the greater commitment one has toward an identity, the greater the need for verification of the identity (Stryker 2000). Because the wider

narrative of being Palestinian is tied to being Muslim, role behaviours associated with a Christian identity may not, therefore, be verified by others holding a Palestinian identity that is tied to being Muslim. This may, then, be an indication of the decreased salience of a Palestinian identity for those who would rather integrate into their host community than fight for a Palestinian state.

Findings from Palestinians in Lebanon are also relevant for Syrians living there. The situations are comparable in a number of ways. For example, Syria and Palestine are both religiously and ethnically diverse (Phillips 2015). Despite their diversity, Syria's constitution identifies Syria as being a member of the Union of Arab Republics (Jazairi 2015), creating tensions between Syria's many ethnic and political sects. Furthermore, the civil unrest in Syria has arisen as a result of fighting between these different groups. This has, since the Arab Spring Uprisings of 2011, resulted in deep mistrust between many of those groups who once lived together in the same communities (Hasan et al. 2015; Salm 2016). Many refugees have been displaced due to fear of persecution because of their real or perceived association with certain political or religious groups. Being persecuted for belonging to a certain group may act to verify a particular political or religious identity (Tajfel 1982), thereby making it more salient. This conflict between groups may be a contribution to reported feelings of lost identity and social cohesiveness between Syrian refugees while in displacement, as political and religious ties may be more salient at this point in time than the more encompassing identity of being Syrian (Hassan et al. 2015).

Gender

Studies completed with Palestinians living in Lebanese camps (Fincham 2012) have identified family structures as one of the main institutions for identity development. Women's roles are important to discuss in terms of identity development because in many different contexts women are viewed as the "carriers of culture" (Phinney et al. 2001, p. 504). In many Middle Eastern countries, women pass down culture and national identity through traditionally domestic roles such as through the preparation and serving of food, or through raising children. Among those in the camps, Palestinian women were once given the title of "mothers of the nation" (Fincham 2012, p. 128), relaying the expectation to bear as many children as possible in order to keep the Palestinian nation alive. This greatly restricted them to a space only within the home through the responsibilities of bearing and raising the future representatives of Palestine. However, Palestinian women have become important in creating a strong Palestinian national identity through passing on cultural narratives through generations (Holt 2010). Through the experience of other ruptures within displacement, such

as uprisings in the camps and a significant loss of male leadership during certain time periods, Palestinian women's identities shifted from more passive, homebound roles to active ones, giving these women greater influence throughout different social institutions and allowing them to have a strong voice in the shared Palestinian identity of suffering and resistance.

Currently, many displaced Syrian women are experiencing isolation and are constricted to the home (Boswall and Al Akash 2015; International Rescue Committee 2014; Wells et al. 2016). In addition, many young Syrians are limited in their access to Lebanese educational institutions (Parkinson 2014; Parkinson and Behrouzan 2015). Due to safety concerns and early marriage, females are more likely to be kept from attending schools (International Rescue Committee 2014). Zittoun et al. (2013) speak about limits to identity changes, one of which is access to knowledge. Through being able to learn new information or ways of thinking, one is able to shift certain aspects of particular identities as he or she absorbs what they have learned into the sense of self and understanding of who one is. If access to knowledge is limited, it restricts the ways in which one can come to understand the world and make meaning of what one currently knows or has experienced in the past. In times of transition, this knowledge is needed in order to make meaning in a new social context. Hindered from being able to acquire new knowledge or skills by being restricted from learning new trades or attending educational institutions, it is possible that Syrian refugees (more specifically women) are limited in their ability to make new meanings of who they are in their social world. Furthermore, before displacement, community was something that largely contributed to meanings of identity for Syrian women (Boswall and Akash 2015). In a new context, in which safety outside of the home is questioned and isolation is typically the answer, meanings for women around their own identity may be going through transition. This transitional process for women, as seen with Palestinian refugees, may also have implications on the wider Syrian national identity.

Conclusion

Palestinian and Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are facing a liminal situation in that they are unable to return to their homelands. While Palestinian refugees have been living in displacement for over sixty years, strong Palestinian identity continues to exist, tied to a land that once was Palestine. The Syrian crisis, however, is still relatively recent and the effects of an uncertain future on the identity of displaced Syrian refugees is under researched. Within a sociocultural framework, it can be theorised how Palestinians have come to construct a strong national identity within the context of protracted displacement. This, in turn, suggests certain means by which researchers can try to understand why Syrian refugees living in a similar

context have reported feelings of a lost identity. By situating the study of identity transitions within a sociocultural framework, questions are uncovered which point towards developing a greater understanding of the processes of identity reconstruction in the context of being forced from one's country with no clear indication of when, or if, one will be able to return.

Through the use of cultural resources, Palestinians have been able to reconstruct and project a national identity of struggle and resistance in the Lebanese camps. Syrian refugees living in Lebanon are scattered throughout different areas: both urban and rural neighbourhoods and in the camps that were established for Palestinians. Taking this into consideration, it cannot be assumed, in this paper, that there is a lack of collective spaces for Syrian refugees to display signs of 'Syrianness' that would reinforce a feeling of social cohesion and collective identity while in displacement; however, some studies have indicated this (Cherri et al. 2017; Hassan et al. 2015; Kira et al. 2017). Further research could explore the places and settings in which Syrian refugees feel like their collective Syrian identity is most salient, along with the meaning-making processes that create such spaces. Individually, people may have brought objects from Syria with them to remind them of home, but these cultural resources may not have crossed the boundary of private to public, semiotic use. It would be beneficial to understand what cultural artefacts are currently used by Syrians in displacement to symbolise their identity on an individual level. By knowing what meaning-making, symbolic resources the displaced Syrians currently have access to, researchers could better understand the relationship between their present space (i.e. displacement in Lebanon) and the ability to enter into an imagined future through the mediation of signs. Discovering these semiotic and symbolic resources that are important for Syrian refugees would be consequential in understanding their shifting identities while in displacement and how these support psychological wellbeing. For Palestinians, this occurs within the camps, but the transmission of national identity does not need to be constricted within an isolated space. While having a strong sense of national identity is protective for psychological disorders such as severe depression and PTSD (Çelebi et al. 2017; Jetten et al. 2012; Phinney et al. 2001; Smeekes et al. 2017), the creation of highly politicised identities resulting from segregation of host and minority communities could lead to further conflict (Saab et al. 2017; Simon and Klandermans 2001). Social institutions that promote identity and contain cultural resources that interact with identity transitions can be present throughout communities. Educational and religious institutions as well as family and peer groups are sources of meaning-making that influence identity (Hopkins and Reicher 2011; Zittoun et al. 2013). The following question, then, needs to be answered: what social institutions, through which meanings of identity are strengthened, are most important to Syrians?

As stated above, identity is not singular and there may be many different layers of identities that compete with an overarching Syrian national identity. The mistrust of those with loyalties to particular political, ethnic or religious groups – a mistrust planted in Syria – may travel with the refugees to Lebanon. This battle for identity salience could act as a hindrance to social cohesion within the wider Syrian refugee population. Studies that reported Syrians feeling a lack of collective identity and social cohesion (Çelebi et al. 2017; Kira et al. 2017; Yasmine and Moughalian 2016) did not further explore what factors were contributing to these feelings. Consequently, an exploration of how salient political and religious identities are for Syrians living in displacement is the next step for understanding if these competing identities are factors that contribute to feelings of lost social cohesion between Syrian refugees.

Lastly, gender is an important aspect to take into consideration when understanding the intersectionalities of identity. As women in many contexts are viewed as being the "carriers of culture" (Phinney et al. 2001, p. 504), they play an important role in transmission of identity and the narratives surrounding identities in transition. The isolation of female Syrian refugees is something that cannot be ignored when trying to grasp the dynamics of a loss of social cohesion in a culture that is closely tied to community (Boswall and Al Akash 2015). Understanding how women's roles have shifted during displacement and how that affects their understanding of themselves within their new surroundings, has many implications as to the type and effectiveness of the assistance they receive from humanitarian programmes. Therefore, it is of consequence to explore how Syrian women who are now experiencing isolation are able to currently make sense of their situation in displacement and how it will shift meanings surrounding a collective Syrian identity.

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Creative Piece

At Once

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Abstract

We become more anxious as we fabricate environments for ourselves over which we lose control. Landscapes of the familiar, mapped by relations and routines, shift and are unsettled by alterations that we introduce through our own interference. Without seeking to make these changes or their causes explicit, this story tells of lives already irrevocably altered and increasingly consumed by a sense of threat and (environmental, technological and emotional) crisis, and by memories that have thus been buried or wiped.

Each morning, I hang upside-down on a trapeze swing that my father bought for me when I was a small child. Each year, my father shortened its strings, so that I could use it even as I grew taller. Originally, it hung outside, but it is an indoor swing now. My father hung it from the centre of the ceiling in the largest room in the house, where a light had once hung. He had to elongate the strings, because the ceilings are so high. The room looks larger than it is in reality. I think this is because of the mirror that faces me as I swing. It seems as though this mirror is unreachable, as if it can be seen for miles but could only be touched if you were to make your way through a long tunnel that separates you from the mirror. I know, of course, that a tunnel could not actually exist in a room like this. I know that a room like this could not possibly be that long. Anyway, this illusion of distance is countered by the claustrophobic grey walls. It only seems this big because of the lack of furniture, anyway. It is abnormal for something to appear to be so big and so small at the same time. It is probably just the blood going to my head.

We moved to my father's mother's house after she passed away. Her husband died before that. It is just the three of us here: my father, my mother, and me. Every day, my father leaves in the morning and returns in the evening. I do not know where he goes, I have never asked. As for my me and my mother, we never go anywhere. We stay inside.

We are as familiar with our own daily routine as we are unfamiliar with that of my father. We wake early, and the day is long. My swing is intended for exercise. After waking, I hang. My mother prepares food as grey as the walls, as the skin I wash, as the tub I wash in. After eating, we clean the entire house, although it is rarely dirty. Then, we retire to our designated seats in what I like to call the Old Living Room. It used to be my grandmother's living room, but now there is nothing 'living' about it. The furniture set is old, too. Worn and tattered. An ugly browned-peach colour. I sit on the sofa across from my mother's armchair.

My father's armchair, to the left of my mother's, completes the circular set-up. Mostly, we read. I read. My mother sits down holding a book that slowly becomes loose in her hand, which gradually droops with the weight, as she stares vacantly at some fixed point on the wall for hours. Although we are rich in books, she has read each one of them more than once. I am beginning to think I am nearly there. It is getting harder to find a 'new' one when I visit the library. The library is at the front of the house and bookshelves filled with books paint its walls from floor to ceiling. Perhaps I am so used to seeing their spines every day that I mistake this for having read them. I usually have gotten through a minimum of three by the time my father gets home. This may seem excessive and it depends on the number of pages. In all honesty, my definition of 'reading' is now skimming my eyes over the lines, regardless of whether I am taking anything in or not.

Because there is nothing left to talk about, we are more or less silent until my father arrives home. By right, we should have another meal eaten before he comes, but our hunger has left us by now. My father prepares our second meal. For him, we force food and conversation.

Find below an example:

My father: (munching heartily on grey) I have to say that my cooking is getting better by the day! (to me) Whose is better, mine or your mother's?

Me: (feigning contemplation) Hmmmm. *That* is a hard one. I think that maybe *hers* was better yesterday, and *yours* is better today.

My father: (tickled) Well, what can I say? (winking and nudging me theatrically) I'm a natural! (to my mother) I've brought more home, so you have all day tomorrow to practise so that you can beat me next time!

My mother: (beaming) Brilliant, thank you! I'll be able to do lots of practise, so that I can be the winner!

(General laughter and applause)

It does vary from time to time, though. Find below another example:

My father: (chewing grey wholeheartedly) I have to say, my cooking is improving by the day! (to me) What do you think, mine or hers? (gesturing his knife in my mother's direction)

Me: (feigning contemplation) Hmmmm, tricky. I think that maybe *yours* was better yesterday, and *hers* is better today.

My father: (in exaggerated disappointment) Oh, well (using his arms to fake-bow to my mother). I'll have to get more, so that I can be crowned victor!

My mother: (with non-specific wit) Not if I get there first!

(General laughter and applause)

After, we retire to our designated seats and read. Sometimes, if my father isn't too tired, we play cards on the table in the centre before going to bed. Cards are my favourite. Only what needs to be said is said during cards.

It goes on like this until I come across a book in the library that is unlike the others. At first glance, it appears to fit in with the rest of them – a small, yellow hardback with a thin, red spine – nothing unusual about that. I am almost embarrassed to admit it, but I am always drawn to the books with thinner spines. I sometimes like to imagine myself bringing one around with me in my pocket. This one had to be one of the thinnest in the library. No wonder I hadn't noticed it before amongst the larger ones. I absentmindedly flick through it from back to front. The pages are slightly yellowed around the edges and the print is large and bold. In fact, there are only a few words on each page. There are even some illustrations; nearly all of them are of a young boy and girl, both with black hair. When I reach the first page, I stop dead. *Handwriting.* It reads:

To you on your birthday,
Your first real reading book!
Lots and lots of love from,
Granny and Grandad. XXX

There are also numbers inscribed on the top right-hand corner of the page. I realise that this is probably the date, but it doesn't mean much to me. I shut the book and drag my index finger across its squeaky, plastic cover. I then hold my left hand facing palm-up, and let the book sit there happily. *So light.* I open it again, read the inscription, and turn the first page slowly. I place my index finger on the first word (something I never do) and –

It hits me more intensely than anything before this ever had. An image of the same book in smaller hands. My hands. Another pair of hands, bigger and belonging to arms that rest lightly on my young shoulders. A larger, older index finger is placed on the same first word and –

Before I can understand what I have seen, it is gone. I try to preserve details as they slip away from me. A woman's hand, I think, with a gold ring on the index finger. *My father's mother.*

I hurriedly stuff the book under my shirt, into the elastic waistline of my trousers. I grab another one from the shelf and turn to leave the room. My mother is standing in the doorway, watching me. I realise that I must have been gone a while. We exchange a glance for a moment too long, before I walk straight past her, back to the Old Living Room.

I sense a change in my father. At times, it is not as though the change is taking place within him, but as though he is emulating a change that is bigger than he is. He certainly acts

differently these days; I cannot tell whether this is good or bad. His mood never settles long enough for me to know. He is manic, frantic almost, full to the brim of an energy that the three of us have not known for a very long time. And even then, it is not *that* sort of energy. It is a pumped up, artificial, HD version. He never tires, he never sleeps anymore. He looks stronger, a strength that is almost too much for his body to contain. I would find it almost ridiculous, laughable even, if it weren't so unsettling.

A change has taken place within me, too, ever since the day in the library. Before, I did not want to know where my father went every day, what he did, and why my mother and I didn't go. Maybe I was afraid to know. The longer something has been left unanswered, the more daunting it becomes, but now, I am hungry. Ravenous, even, to find out.

I hold the book in my hands now. I am sitting on the sofa, staring at my mother, who stares past me. Does she know? Does she know that things can be good *and* bad, big *and* small, old *and* new, happy *and* sad like my memory?

'That book was given to you by my parents', she mutters.

'W-what?' I am shocked that she has spoken.

She nods to the book. Sheepish, I let it fall to my lap. Of course she knows I took it. She knows I was watching her as well – now, and this whole time. She must have been watching me, too.

My face burns with embarrassment. I had replayed the memory in my head again and again, and it wasn't even about the right person. There are so many questions that I want to ask my mother now. Instead, I hear myself telling her that I want to go outside. Hesitantly, she rises from her seat and walks out of the Old Living Room, into the dark hall, towards the front door. Petrified, I follow.

We are outside. Air, fresh air, is sucked through every pore of my skin. It is freezing. It is wonderful. I look to my mother and see that her eyes have begun to well. They harbour a feeling that I have never recognised before this moment. I do a 360-degree turn, slowly taking in my surroundings. Houses, there are so many houses. Rows and rows of houses that seem to go on for miles. I squint to try to make out the smallest house, the one that is furthest away, but it is too dark and I accept that for now the houses will have to fade into nothing instead. There is but one light besides the one in our house, and this comes from the house directly to the left of ours. A word that I have not uttered, one that has not even crossed my mind for years, spills out of mouth.

'Neighbours', I smile.

My mother smiles back and we are laughing. We laugh for a long time. I laugh so much that I have to bend over, clutching my sore stomach with my right hand, holding our garden wall

with my left for support. I feel light and carefree, and I know that my mother feels the same. Although out of practice, the ability to share a moment of happiness returns to us like an old friend. This is hastily interrupted by our doubled anxiety. Without either of us saying so, we know that seeing us outside would upset my father. Despite this, we do not go back. Instead, our legs lead us towards the house next door. The light draws us in. It is deliciously tempting. I wonder excitedly what we might find, who we might find. I begin to remember words. They compete for first place in my heart as each one makes it jump and spin more than the last. Girl, boy, friend, enemy, teacher, lover, old friends, best friends, sisters, brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles and cousins and babies and dogs and—
Father.
'What are you two doing?'
To anyone else, he would have seemed shocked and angry. Perhaps my mother and I are the only two people in the world who immediately recognised his pain and guilt. Neither of us answer. He stands on next door's front step, we on the path leading up to it.

The light from the house-next-door disappears and with it goes the silence. In its place emerges a loud and aggressive vibration. I am almost grateful for the disruption. My father, as though never before upright, jolts into a stiff and rigid posture. He storms towards us, through us, then past us. We dumbly pace behind him as he runs through our open front door. All the while, he drums his temple repeatedly with his index finger, as if prompting himself. Our house is different now too. It is vibrating, shaking and even swaying slightly. My mother and I are not used to this type of movement, and it takes us much longer than my father to reach the Old Living Room. I am stunned by the sight that awaits. There are two figures lying on the couch. They are not moving. I let out a shriek, but my mother slaps her hand to my mouth.
'They're alive', she whispers through gritted teeth.
She is right. I don't know how she knows; I don't know how I know—if they are breathing it is so slight a movement that it is invisible to us – but they are definitely alive. The way their bodies fall over themselves, slumped and hunched over. The way their heads are rested on their own laps assures me that, rather than having been killed, they have been shut down. The curling of their fingers, despite the limpness of their arms and hands –
Her index finger. The gold ring.
Realising who they are, I am filled with a mixture of relief and horror. I look to my father, who is now extremely agitated, spurting gibberish about keeping them in one place.

I am struggling to keep conscious now. I feel my panic rise up from the ground, numbing my legs, bursting in my stomach, the burning remnants creeping up my throat. My body is soaked with perspiration that is both hot and cold. The vein in my head throbs and

becomes too huge for the skin that is plastered tightly across my skull to hold. Questions about my father, about my home, about my whole life up to and especially including this point.

Questions about my father.

I am scared to look at him, afraid that his face will bear the answers.

My mother's hand is still pressed to my mouth. I push it away now and run to my grandparents. I spread my arms over them both, in an attempt to hide and protect them. I feel myself shake and roar and spill tears of grief. I look up and see my father's face flash with anger. He paces to the kitchen. Still wailing, I look to my mother, expecting her to echo my distress. Instead, placid as ever, she lowers herself to her armchair and stares back at me. Before I can say anything, my father returns holding a gas canister and a box of matches. I watch in horror as he pours the gas over the table in the middle of the room before asking me to set it alight.

Knowing somehow that to refuse is futile, I ask him if I can walk over to the same side as my mother before I do so. That same flash of anger strikes his face again. No longer needing to wait for a response, I rush to crouch beside my mother. She remains calm as my father sets fire to the table. I realise that she is not even looking at the flames, but beyond them. My gaze follows hers to a fixed point on the wall.

'It's a lovely view, isn't it?' she says, to nobody in particular.

'It really goes on forever, or at least it seems like it from here! I don't know which I prefer, the water or the mountains'.

For a split second, I am rendered mute in confusion. I look to my mother, who throws me a meaningful glance, and then back to the blank point on the wall.

'Y-yes, it really is b-beautiful out there', I try. The flames grow bigger and bigger. My face is hot.

'Don't be ridiculous', spits my father. 'I had the windows knocked out and the holes cemented over years ago, when we moved in. When my mother died'.

'I don't know', my mother responds instantly, 'I just know I'd love a dip in that water, wouldn't you?' she turns to me.

Hopelessly following her lead, I nod. 'Definitely', I say. 'What I could really do with right now is a swim'.

My father stumbles back into his armchair. He is sobbing now. I turn to kneel beside him as the flames encroach. His tears are illuminated by their light.

'Well, I'm staying here', he manages eventually. 'In my home', he adds, 'with my family'.

My horror melts away and I see my father. A man who has loved, and lost, and feared, and gotten all three of these things very muddled. A man who is scared of what might happen, and so will not let anything happen at all.

I look into his eyes. My mother kneels now too.

'Please come with us', I whisper. 'You cannot spend the rest of your life with two sleeping parents'.

He gets closer and closer, further and further away.

Lucy Creedon is currently in her Final Year of an Undergraduate Arts degree at University College Cork. She is doing a Major in English with a Minor in Art History. Her areas of interest include Modernism, Critical Theory, Film, Photography and Creative Writing.

Winner of the 2018 Aigne Photo Competition: Identity (Re)Construction and Embodiment

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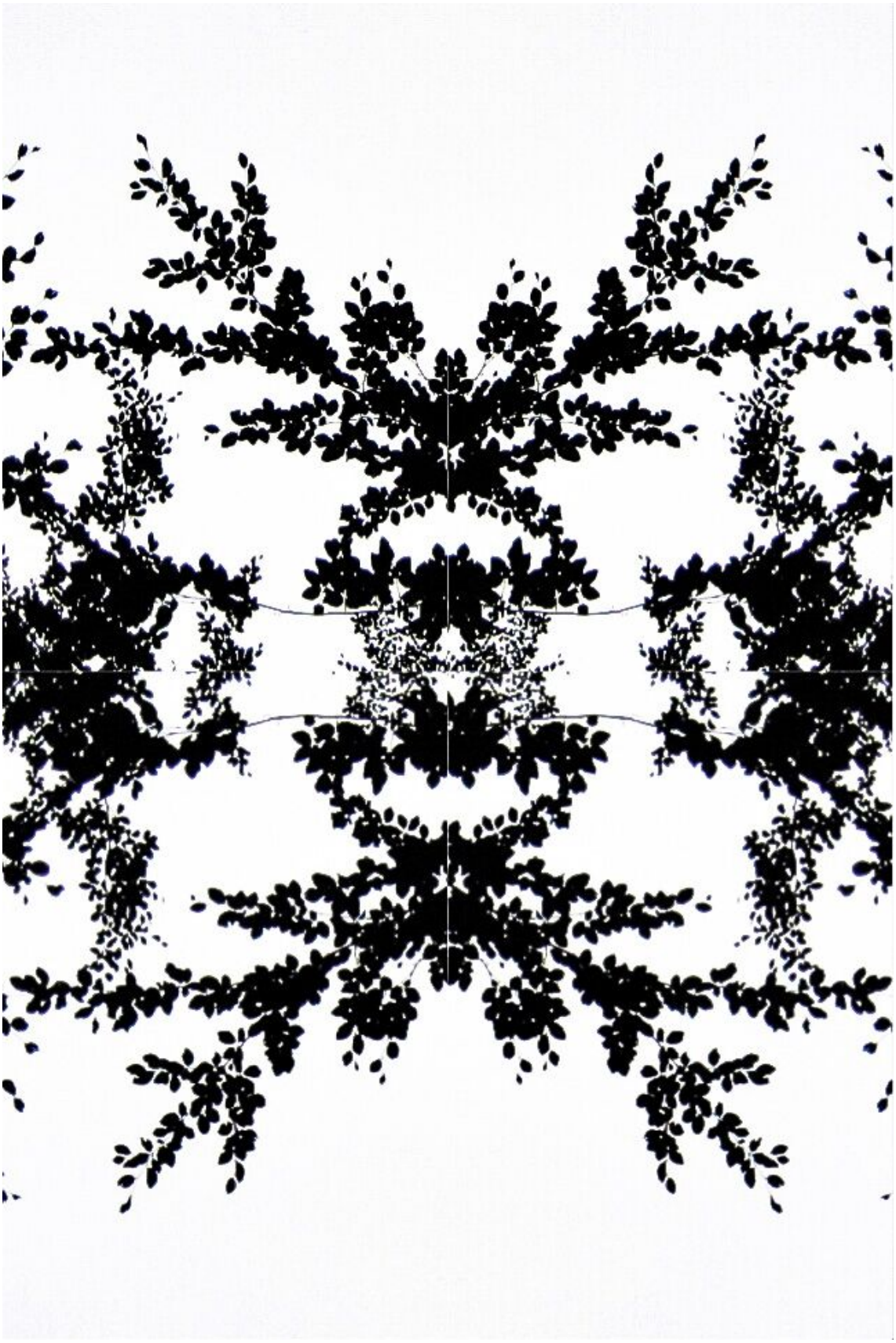
When contemplating the title "Identity (Re)Construction", I decided that identity itself was too abstract and subjective a concept for me to fit its depiction into a simple portrait. Therefore, I chose to digitally alter my raw images and 'construct' them into designs much more malleable and interpretable.

Image 1 – A Leafy Canopy in Killarney: Drawing from nature, the original image which features in this design is of a leafy canopy in Killarney National Park, edited and divided into fractals. I was influenced by Jackson Pollock's artistic method of painting into such fractals. The stark monochrome design, to me, resembles images used by psychologists, in which patients see a multitude of figures and meanings. This, to me, resembles the construction of identity through personal growth and interpretation of experience.

Image 2 – Unnamed: This image harkens back to Andy Warhol's style of pop art. The main image is a dried skeleton of a leaf; its veins are still visible. The bare natural state of the leaf fused with a bright colour palette of blues, oranges and reds is as malleable and subjective to the viewer's impression of identity itself.

Grace Claro is a second year Arts student, majoring in History of Art and taking a minor in English. She is an event photographer with UCC Societies and has worked on fashion shoots for vintage sellers in Kerry. Alongside her BA, she is also doing a level 7 evening course in Fine Art Photography at CIT Crawford. Her portfolio is viewable online at https://gracefelisa.myportfolio.com.



Creative Piece

Munster landscape

Yairen Jerez Columbié
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I use my tongue like a horse
to lick sugar from the hands
of long gone venerable skeletons.

Lying on the ground
I see through the grass
one, two, three, four legs and more
in the narrow path
coming back from the place
where the weeds grow high
amongst the tombstones.

Sometimes I turn my heavy neck
to look behind
towards the noisy road
of the full-mouthed empty eyes.

I warned you: I use this tongue like a horse.

Yairen Jerez Columbié is a teaching assistant and PhD Candidate in Hispanic Studies at University College Cork. Her research interests include circum-Atlantic transcultural realities, critical theory and environmental humanities and communication.

In Conversation

Graham Allen
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Poets of the Anthropocene

The definition of the Anthropocene involves the fact that we (us humans) are nature. Nature is no longer the opposite of human culture, human art, human technology, human desire. (...) Nature is now the most political of subjects, and it is a subject in which we can no longer hide from ourselves.

Q. How does the idea of 'environments of change' affect your work (at either macro or micro levels), and how does living in changing times impact your creative production?

A. This is a potentially huge question, as you know. In terms of my academic 'work', I might respond to the question/theme by referring to the manner in which universities have been changing over the past ten or so years in Ireland. I remember, during the period I was Vice-Head of CACSSS, attending a management meeting which was discussing various policy documents. I will never forget the first sentence of one of these documents, which read: "Change is a constant". It is an amusing example of oxymoron, of course. But it is also a statement that rather profoundly summarises contemporary life in the university sector, and I would imagine in every department of public and commercial life. This is not the right forum for me to go into any sustained analysis and critique of the ubiquitous and omnipresent forces behind that idea of 'change'. But I will say that I deeply believe that there are things we must defend as professors, scholars and students (thinking of those terms in all their many senses). One of these is teaching. There are signs, within this arena of constant change, of a down-grading of teaching. Again, no one is directly responsible for this. The forces at work are general, social and cultural, epochal even. But in an environment in which successive governments have decreased the funding of undergraduate students, it is no wonder that we would begin to register a certain refocussing away from teaching towards more lucrative sources of revenue. In such a situation, we must remind ourselves again and again that as a university we stand or fall on the quality of and our collective commitment to teaching. Not just the kind of teaching that brings visible results; in an environment of constant change we need to reaffirm our commitment to those aspects of teaching and learning that are difficult to evaluate, or even invisible or essentially incalculable. The postgraduate scholars, who do a good deal of the university's teaching, have clearly a huge part to play in this regard.

You asked about my ‘creative production’, and although I regard teaching as an essentially creative art, I cannot help but also think of my writing, academic but also perhaps more centrally my creative work as a poet. As far as academic ‘creative production’ goes I am currently researching and composing a monograph on how teaching relates to monsters (understood as all those things and events dominant society would erase and efface). I have already covered the context for such a project. As far as my poetry is concerned I have grown ever more concerned with the question of how poetry might respond to climate change and the human impact on the natural environment. Anybody who thinks about poetry almost inevitably thinks, at least in part, of nature poetry. Attending poetry readings and poetry launches, and reading the latest works by poets I know and many I do not know, I am often struck by how dominant nature poetry, in all its varieties, still is in the Irish poetry scene. Of course, there is also a strong tradition of what we might call political poetry in Ireland, and great poets like Yeats and Heaney and Boland can be seen to combine the two strands in brilliantly innovative ways. Yet that still leaves a question for me, which can be expressed in many different ways. Let’s put it like this: what should the poet do now that we live in the Anthropocene and have woken up to the fact that humans are responsible for creating the sixth mass extinction event in the history of the planet?

The World Wildlife Organization last week announced that human activity (farming, industrial production, urban living, and so on) was responsible for reducing animal life on the planet by 60% in the last four decades. The destruction we are unleashing upon the biosphere, in which we ourselves exist, shows no signs of relenting. Indeed, it frequently appears that modern techno-capital societies just do not know how to respond to the catastrophe unfolding. Will there be any life left on the Earth in fifty years’ time? In such a catastrophic situation, notions of sustainability (well-meaning as they may be) are just not adequate. It is not a continuation or a slight reduction (of fossil fuels, of deforestation, of plastic and chemical pollution) we need, it is a wholesale change in the way we run human societies, human markets, human production (in every sense of that phrase).

Q. You mention the huge impact humans have on the Earth nowadays; how would you like your creative work to impact the environments of change that we live in?

A. The question can be formalised: what is the role of the poet in the Anthropocene? or, and artists and poets would often not particularly discriminate between these two questions, what would constitute a viable aesthetic response to the Anthropocene? The question on one level sounds ludicrous. Surely we do not need poetry here, we need an almost inexhaustible string of brilliant inventions and solutions to a mounting array of apparently insurmountable problems. But Yeats and others found poetry and art important during the Rising, the Civil War, and more recently the Troubles. Milton when faced with turbulent times responded through poetry. So did Wordsworth. So did Shakespeare. It is a feature of human beings that they will no doubt go on trying to record and make sense of their situation even right up to the very end. And desperate as the situation is, there is still some hope that we are not yet facing the end.

How poetry and the other arts usually address the problems they confront is to reimagine their traditions within the current, challenging climate. This, it seems to me, must therefore involve a rethinking of nature poetry now that it has become clear that the human world is the driving force in nature. The definition of the Anthropocene involves the fact that we (us humans) *are* nature. Nature is no longer the opposite of human culture, human art, human technology, human desire. The opposition between nature and the human, that has been such a foundational one throughout human history, has collapsed. This has huge implications and it is the job of the artist and the poet to describe them and address them. To give one example, traditional nature poetry has often been favoured by those who wish to keep the realm of poetry separate from the realm of politics. Surely, such logic runs, we are outside of the muddy, ever changing world of politics when we are writing or reading poems about daffodils or bird song or sunsets beyond quiet fishing villages? Not any more, I am afraid. Not in the period of the Anthropocene. Nature is now the most political of subjects, and it is a subject in which we can no longer hide from ourselves.

Poetry of course has little effect in the world. Its ‘impact’ is negligible. But I do believe that, along with all the other arts, it allows those who engage with it to expand and readjust and refigure the way they think. Personally, I find the current changes to the environment (a very mild way of referring to environmental catastrophe!) overwhelming. I find it difficult to get my head around even the basic facts and statistics and reports. It all seems so appalling, and it can also feel that no one has an answer to the problems we now face. But we cannot hide our heads in the sand, and poetry forces me to look, register, and try and describe what I see. There are a series of consequences, for example, that people seem

reluctant or even unable to express: a terrible sense of loneliness as the animal world dies around us; a haunting sense of uncertainty about the future; an anxiety about the immediate future leading people to build walls and revert to old certainties. These consequences, and many others like them, are worth expressing in art, in poetry. A commitment to such expression is perhaps the only 'impact' I can authentically seek.

In Conversation

Martín Veiga
Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, University College Cork

Laura Linares (translator and interviewer)
Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, University College Cork

The pace of creation

We need to create a time capsule where life moves at a slower pace, a refuge from the frantic rhythm of day to day life. A time for reflection and inner though, that benefits deeper levels of communication.

Q (GAL). Como afecta a idea de 'contornos de cambio' o teu traballo (en termos macro ou micro textuais), e que impacto ten vivir en tempos cambiantes na túa produción artística?

Q (EN). How does the idea of 'environments of change' affect your work (at either macro or micro levels), and how does living in changing times impact your creative production?

A (GAL). O mundo está en constante mutación, a vida cambia de maneira permanente e en moitos casos os procesos creativos responden a eses cambios de maneira directa, mentres que outras nin sequera é unha escolla consciente que eu faga como creador, senón que veñen dados por certos cambios ou certas transformacións sociais, vitais, etc. Resulta moi difícil resumir unha pregunta coma esta. Un exemplo destes 'contornos de cambio' sería o da revolución tecnolóxica, que obriga ao mundo a estar constantemente reinventándose e reformulándose, e aos individuos a seguiren ese paso un pouco incesante e interminábel de continuo cambio. Existe unha tiranía máis ou menos tácita da tecnoloxía segundo a cal parece que para estar no mundo temos que seguir o seu ritmo. Eu rexeito isto, estou frontalmente en contra da obriga de ter que seguir co avance tecnolóxico do mundo, nin sei onde nos ha levar. Isto parece regresivo: non defendo vivir na Idade Media nin nos Séculos Escuros, nin o regreso a un mundo rural escurantista, pero si que me resisto a aceptar esa ditadura constante de termos que darlle a benvida cos brazos abertos a todos eses cambios. Non sei se como consecuencia disto, pensando nesta conversa sobre o cambio e a transformación, non sei se por iso, ou por unha evolución da miña carreira creativa, cada vez, falando de poesía agora, cada vez interésame máis a poesía que se deu en chamar 'da meditación', que é unha liña poética moi ampla, con moitas ramificacións moi diferentes, tradicións diferentes…, que presenta a poesía como un proceso de reflexión, de pensamento,

estético, e dalgunha forma eses procesos que son sobre todo interiores, para min formúlanse como aspectos contraditorios ou opostos a esa revolución tecnolóxica da que falo. É unha especie de refuxio, de espazo para a reflexión, onde o tempo discorre con máis vagar. Poño o exemplo da revolución tecnolóxica, pero tamén poderiamos falar da transformación que o impacto brutal do capital, do capitalismo está tendo en todo. É a economía a que lidera, a que nos abre todos os camiños, que é algo ao que eu tamén me resisto; paréceme aberrante. A poesía da meditación, a actitude reflexiva respecto ao mundo axúdame a contrarrestar eses procesos de transformación tan precipitados que se están a producir nos últimos trinta ou corenta anos. Isto lévame preocupando un tempo, pero isto non quere dicir que eu sexa un tipo primitivo que non está en contacto co universo, senón que estabelezo certos límites e renuncio a estar en certos foros, en certas redes, malia o risco de ficar illado ou nas marxes de certas conversas. Asumo ese risco dende a crenza de que na marxe non se está mal de todo e para poder asumir certa distancia vital do continuo fluxo de novidades —malia gustarme estar informado. Penso moito nisto arredor da poesía porque eu, como comentei moitas veces, escribo en galego pero non vivo en contacto co meu idioma. Esta distancia, que pode ser problemática e que de feito xa o foi para moitos autores, que lles resultou prexudicial non estar en contacto directo co idioma, a min permitiume maior liberdade. E iso gústame.

Esta distancia, que non se produce só con respecto ao tecnolóxico senón tamén en máis facetas, é clave para o meu proceso creativo. Permíteme rescatar un miolo de tempo interior, de tempo mental, que é propio. E é aí onde podo pensar, onde xorde a escrita. É un tempo que se opón á vida real, á vida diaria que transcorre un pouco freneticamente. Hai que crear unha especie de cápsula do tempo, onde a vida ten que transcorrer un pouco máis de vagar porque senón é todo demasiado atropelado. Andamos moi ás présas, e iso non beneficia a comunicación, que atopa obstáculos. Certa comunicación precisa calma, un ritmo máis lento para que se produza. Nós somos profesores e sabemos que a comunicación ten que atopar o seu lugar, o seu ritmo. Non quere dicir isto que teñamos que ir vivir a un mosteiro ou a unha illa deserta, pero é imprescindíbel atopar eses espazos.

A (EN). The world is in constant mutation, life is forever-changing, and creative processes, in many cases, respond directly and consciously to these modifications. At times, however, my responses are not necessarily conscious decisions that I make as a creator, but are rather triggered by social and life changes and transformations. It is very difficult to summarise a question such as this one in a few words. An illustrative example of the 'environments of change' is the technological revolution, which forces the world to be constantly reinventing and reformulating itself, and individuals to follow this incessant and never ending pace of constant change. There is a somewhat tacit tyranny of technology,

according to which it seems that we must follow its pace in order to be in the world. I reject this. I am frontally opposed to the obligation to follow the global technological development and not even sure where it is taking us. This might seem regressive: I am not defending a return to the Middle Ages or the Galician *Séculos Escuros*, nor do I promote a regression to an obscurantist rural world, but I do resist accepting this perennial dictatorship of having to receive these transformations with open arms.

I am unsure of whether it is as a consequence of this personal position or as part of the evolution of my creative career as a poet, but as time goes by, I have become ever more interested in a poetry that has been called 'of meditation', a very broad poetic positioning, with many different ramifications which all present poetry as a process of reflection, of thought, that presents poetry as a process of reflection, of mainly inner processes, which for me are formulated as contradictory or opposed to this technological revolution I was mentioning. It is a kind of refuge, a space for reflection in which time moves more slowly. I have focused on the technological revolution, but we could also discuss the transformation that the brutal impact of capital, of capitalism, has on everything. Economic interests lead the change, opening all of our paths and routes, and I also resist that; in fact, it seems abhorrent to me. The poetry of meditation, the reflective attitude towards the world, helps me to counter these hurried processes of transformation of the past thirty or forty years. This has been a concern of mine for some time: again, this does not mean I am a primitive person disconnected from the universe, but I feel the need to establish certain limits and reject being in certain fora and networks that would interfere with my time to do other activities, even if I have to risk missing on conversations or being at the margins of certain exchanges. It is a risk that I take from the belief that life in the margins is not all that bad, as well as in order to get some distance from the constant stream of latest news—as much as I like being informed. I have thought much about this in relation to poetry, as I write in Galician but do not live in contact with my language. This distance, that can be problematic and has in fact been so for many authors, has given me more freedom, which I like.

This distance is key for my creative process: it is not only related to technology but also to other aspects of life. It allows me to rescue a little bit of inner time, of mental time, of a time that is mine. It is there that I can think, where writing begins. It is a time opposed to 'real life', to the frantic rhythm of day to day life. We need to create a sort of time capsule where life moves at a slower pace. Our lives are too frantic, and this speed does not benefit communication, it rather hinders it. Certain types of communication need patience, only happen at a slower pace. As teachers, we know that communication needs to find its place, its

rhythm. We do not necessarily need to move to a desert island or go to a monastery, but it is essential that we find those spaces.

Q (GAL). Falas da relevancia que para ti ten a poesía da meditación e da necesidade de mudar o ritmo de vida, e no teu teu último traballo creativo, *Diario de Crosses Green*, hai moito de observación. Que importancia ten para ti a observación, sobre todo da contorna, nestes tempos de cambio?

Q (EN). You talk about the relevance of the poetry of meditation, of observing one's environment and of changing our lives' pace, and observation seems to be a key part of your latest creative work, *Diary of Crosses Green*. How important is observation (particularly of the environment) for you in these times of change?

A (GAL). A min, igual que sempre me interesou a poesía da meditación como etiqueta ampla, sempre me interesou o que en inglés se chama nature poetry *ou* landscape poetry*, na que a vida natural acada un protagonismo central. Xa de neno interesábame a observación empírica, os paxaros, etc. Antes do* Diario de Crosses Green*, o meu libro* Ollos de Ámbar *(2005) utiliza a ollada como elemento central. O mundo que se expresaba naquel libro expresábase a través dunha ollada, a ollada da poesía. No Diario de Crosses Green isto acada unha importancia maior. O diario no sentido estrito da palabra está baseado na observación diaria, minuciosa, detallada dunha contorna moi específica. Unha precisión case topográfica desa observación: nalgúns casos invitación ao poético mais noutros precisión case notarial da realidade circundante que estaba aí.*

A ollada nese sentido… A cuestión do cambio, da transformación en Diario de Crosses Green *ponse en funcionamento desde o primeiro poema no que se enuncia o que vai pasar, "estou nun balcón mirando o mundo". Pero logo ponse en marcha de maneira case sistemática. O punto de vista é case sempre o mesmo, desde o que se observa, e o mundo cambia, está en constante transformación. Utilizamos o río como metáfora do cambio, unha metáfora moi antiga, pero en realidade tamén é a vida mesma a que flúe, transcorre a diario e non só de xeito metafórico. Esta contradición entre a miña postura de observador e o cambio constante é un pouco o que mencionaba antes desa cápsula do tempo: observar o cambio. Inevitabelmente participo del, porque estou dentro da vida diaria, pero tamén o observo dende a distancia. O punto de vista é un pouco parecido, de observación da transformación da realidade en algo poético, de tradución da realidade. Hai tamén moito escrito sobre iso, a poesía como tradución da realidade. Traducir a poesía as sensacións que o mundo che comunica, que che transmite.*

A (EN). In the same way that I have always been interested in the poetry of meditation in broad terms, I have also been interested in what is called nature or landscape poetry, in which natural life takes the centre stage. When I was a child, I was already interested in

empirical observation: looking at the birds, other animals… Prior to *Diary of Crosses Green,* my book *Ollos de Ámbar* (2005) uses the idea of the gaze as the central element. The world in that book was expressed through a gaze, the gaze of poetry. This acquires even more importance in my latest work *Diary of Crosses Green.* The diary sections, strictly speaking, are based on the daily, rigorous, detailed observation of a very specific environment. There is an almost topographic precision in this observation. The idea of change, of transformation in *Crosses Green* performs itself, it starts on the first poem, which states what's going to happen. I am on my balcony, looking at the world: I observe, and the world changes, it is in constant transformation. We use the river as an old metaphor for change, but in reality life itself also flows, passing by every day, not only metaphorically. This contradiction between my position as an observer and constant change is what I was referring to when I mentioned the time capsule: observing the change. Taking part in it, inevitably, because I am part of life, but also observing it from a distance. That viewpoint, observing reality, transforming it into poetry is an act of translation in a way. Much has been written about it, poetry as a translation of reality. Translating the sensations that the world transmits, communicates, creates in you, into poetry.

Q (GAL). Falando de tradución, o *Diario de Crosses Green*, escrito orixinalmente en galego, acaba de saír en tradución ao inglés. Como experimentaches ese proceso, que non deixa de ser de cambio tamén?

Q (EN). Speaking of translation, the *Diary of Crosses Green*, originally published in Galician, has just been published in English translation. How did you experience that process, which is also a process of transformation?

A (GAL). Diario de Crosses Green *é o primeiro libro meu que se traduciu enteiro. Foi un proceso novo que me abriu os ollos, a través do cal eu aprendín moito da miña propia escrita. Tiven a sorte que Keith Payne é un excelente tradutor, poeta e escritor, e unha persoa cunha gran versatilidade e amplitude de rexistros lingüísticos en inglés. Eu deille toda a liberdade para as traducións, pero había cousas que lle preguntaba e que levaron a debates do proceso e á creación de distintas versións dalgúns versos ou pasaxes mentres afinabamos e buscabamos a solución final. Keith Payne foi quen de ser 'fiel' tanto á letra como ao espírito dos meus poemas; mantívose próximo aos poemas sen perder a creatividade e a imaxinación; é un tradutor moi imaxinativo. Mantivo un equilibrio extraordinario entre, digamos, as dúas obrigas. Entre a obriga da fidelidade e a obriga de crear algo que é diferente, que é seu, é propio. Iso é algo que me gustou moito, a transformación, a viaxe da miña voz, que era miña, ás traducións. Eu leo os meus textos, que son meus, e para min son todos meus. Non sei como os entenderá unha lectora allea, como percibirá a miña voz. É*

como se tivese máis voces na tradución de Keith, máis modulacións, tons diferentes… Eu leo a tradución de Keith e a música cambia moito. O cambio, esa distancia do meu poema á súa tradución foi un proceso realmente fascinante.

A (EN). *Diary of Crosses Green* is the first book of mine that has been translated in its entirety. This new process opened my eyes and led me to learn much about my own writing. I had the great luck of working with Keith Payne, who is an excellent translator, poet, writer and versatile person with a huge capacity to manage different linguistic registers in English. I gave him plenty of freedom for the translations, but I did ask him questions that developed into discussions of the process and the creation of different versions of specific lines or sections while we were tuning in, searching for the final solution. As a poet, he has a great sense of rhythm, and it was a great experience to see my voice travel and be transformed in the translations. It was fascinating to see how different his versions sound. Keith was able to be 'faithful' to the word and the spirit of the poems; he was able to stay close to the original while being creative and imaginative, in an extraordinary balancing act between the two core 'tasks' of the translator: loyalty to the source and the creation of a work that stands in its own right, that is also his work, his creation, in a way, as the translator. I wonder how the reader will understand the poems, how my voice is perceived in the translation. It feels like I have more voices in Keith's translations than in my originals, more register modulations, different tones. I read Keith's translation and the music is very different. That change, that distance from my poem to his translation, was a really fascinating process.

Book Review – *Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Film and Media,* by Jason Lee. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018. 200 pp. €95.

Marina Durnin
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More than 70 years after the defeat of Nazism, right-wing ideas once again appear to be omnipresent. In his publication *Nazism and Neo-Nazism in Film and Media*, Jason Lee argues that Nazism and neo-Nazism are at the centre of Western media culture and have become a significant point of reference in the means by which the West builds, judges and discusses identity. Central to these developments, according to Lee, is the continuous reworking of conceptions of Nazism and neo-Nazism in film and news media which contributes to the normalisation of right-wing ideas in mainstream culture.

The introductory chapter outlines two movements linked to neo-Nazism. Firstly, Lee examines the phenomenon of football hooliganism, whose gangs display a similarly fragmentary organisation structure to European neo-Nazi groups. Lee then turns his attention to white separatists in the United States in order to highlight neo-Nazism's propensity towards both violence and celebrity culture. Throughout, Lee focuses on right-wing voices mainly from the UK and the US, concentrating for the most part on concerns over anti-Semitism in the British Labour party and on the appeal which Trump has for right-wing groups in the US. Lee thereby assumes the reader to have considerable understanding of both contexts and clearly offers an Anglo-centric perspective on the perceived rise in right-wing attitudes in politics and media. The examples of film and television productions discussed in the subsequent chapters are also mainly from the UK and US, but also see the important inclusion of some relevant examples from Germany. The complexity of (neo-)Nazism in Germany, however, is not illuminated.

Chapter two considers several examples of film and television representations of both Nazism and neo-Nazism, examining the various understandings of these movements which they may relate to their viewership. Lee's attempt to give this chapter a historic dimension is hardly achieved by his short overview of 1970s 'Nazisploitation' films. This section offers little new insight and only sketchily makes the contentious claim that, based on similarities of voyeurism and fascination, every film about Nazism, including, for instance, those on the History Channel, can be considered Nazi pornography. Without further differentiation, however, this contention is overreaching. Despite his somewhat eclectic selection of films, this chapter yet offers some new and pertinent analyses of filmic productions such as *The*

Reader (Stephen Daldry, 2008) and *NSU German History X* (3 episodes, 2016). The latter, for instance, is perceived to frame neo-Nazism as the only choice for young people, even romanticising the movement as a form of rebellion, thereby not only justifying the appeal of right-wing extremism but also providing a promotional platform for its ideology.

Chapter three continues with an analysis of the German comedy *Look Who's Back* (David Wnendt, 2015), touching on interpretive approaches to this complex film as well as aspects of the debates surrounding comedy representations of Nazism more generally. Unfortunately, spatial constraints in this chapter limit a more thorough exploration of the multi-layered relationship between Nazism and comedy.

While the first two chapters essentially provide a survey of a small selection of recent film and television representations of Nazism and neo-Nazism, chapter four is probably the central chapter in this book because it presents a philosophical consideration of the role of the media in shaping and informing mainstream culture. Here, Lee argues that the media informs our moral reference system not merely by the way Nazism and neo-Nazism are framed but by embodying many aspects of (neo-)Nazism in their own operations: the media relies on violence to attract consumer attention and also serves as a form of "theatre of distraction" (p. 100). Moreover, the media picks up on and promotes ideas of the occult which were not only part of Nazism but have in fact always played a role in mainstream culture. Most importantly, the rhetoric of demarcating an outsider threat is another practice that is in parallel with (neo-)Nazism, and one which should be familiar to the reader because it can be readily observed in Western media and society.

The book aims to offer a transnational perspective on neo-Nazism in film and media. Indeed, chapter five argues that neo-Nazism is a transnational phenomenon by giving a brief overview of right-wing movements across the globe from Taiwan and Turkey to South Africa and Peru. Lee also briefly discusses the phenomenon of international 'Nazi hunters', especially relevant in the context of Latin America, and the plethora of video games in which Nazism serves as backdrop. The latter can, however, only be said to be popular in Western markets, particularly in the US and in Europe and not, for instance, in Asian markets. As mentioned above, the majority of this publication is, in fact, about the UK and US contexts; consequently, the fifth chapter appears somewhat disruptive to the book's overall structure.

The concluding chapter again emphasises points made in chapter four, primarily that Nazi rhetoric can be found in mainstream media and culture, noting, for instance, that the framing of people in receipt of welfare benefits as a burden to society harks back to Nazism's core value of hard work. Moreover, online and social media facilitate the networking of neo-Nazi groups and the promotion of their ideas, creating a sense of larger numbers and greater

influence, which, in turn, is utilised by filmic and news media to create and perpetuate a culture of fear. A prominent example used here, again, is Donald Trump and his appeal to right-wing groups, further supporting Lee's argument that right-wing thought is, in fact, mainstream and not located at the fringes of society.

While the reader may associate many of the ideas expressed in current political discourses with Nazism and now neo-Nazism, it is important to note that these ideas are actually much older than Nazism. Consequently, when Lee hints at the question of whether we all have the innate potential to be a Nazi, the question is really one of terminology. Right-wing ideas expressed by any group can be called Nazi, fascist or racist, but simply ascribing right-wing ideas of any kind and form to Nazism or neo-Nazism may be a generalisation which could serve to minimise the scale of what is essentially a philosophical problem of humanity. Moreover, this is symptomatic of the sensationalist use of the term, which ultimately contributes to the linguistic normalisation of Nazism. What is missing from the outset of the book, therefore, is a more structured discussion of the difficulty of defining neo-Nazism and a reflection on the issue of calling just any form of right-wing ideas part of neo-Nazism. As a result, terminology of racism, anti-Semitism and (neo-)fascism are used in a seemingly undifferentiating manner throughout this publication.

Overall, Jason Lee presents an extremely timely contribution to media studies and offers important reflections on the relationship between media and politics in times of Brexit and Donald Trump. The book will be enjoyed by media scholars from the US and the UK or anyone who has been following American or British media coverage of the countries' political landscape over the past few years.

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Book Review – *Digital Resistance in the Middle East: New Media Activism in Everyday Life,* by Deborah Wheeler. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017. 209 pp. £19.99.

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In her brief new monograph, *Digital Resistance in the Middle East: New Media Activism in Everyday Life* (2017), Deborah Wheeler asserts that the more diffusive the internet becomes throughout the Middle East, the further transformations will occur within fields of citizen agency, conceptions of personal worth and power relations between the people and the state. Most of Wheeler's study relies on a belief that new media diffusion will inherently create a more liberal and empathetic society. As such, Wheeler often references Western notions of fellow feeling, the long revolution and the public sphere in order to support her assertions of the progress of new media. To illustrate these arguments, Wheeler applies Middle Eastern case studies to consistently proclaim that the individual subject is empowered by new media at a discursive level, granting them increasing freedom from state hegemony.

In this discursive conflict, the Middle East represents a battle between dynamic rulers and what Wheeler portrays as a common underclass of the ruled. However, applying this fundamentally generalising structure may misinterpret what much of the Middle Eastern underclass desires from their political leadership. Because her ethnographical work focuses on those willing to talk to her at internet cafes and in classrooms throughout the Middle East, Wheeler may be accessing a distinct population that is already willing to communicate across cultural boundaries. Still, because of the qualitative and quantitative rigor applied throughout the edition, many scholars of new media diffusion will find value in Wheeler's monograph. Meanwhile, scholars of Middle Eastern politics will find a fresh understanding of inter-state and inter-class dynamics and an interesting attempt to map the new contours of rapidly changing public spheres.

Wheeler initially explores how broadening access to new media contributed to separate incidents of resistance within the Middle East from 2004 to 2010. Focusing on the pressures created by fear, need, resistance and revolution in the construction of new media events, Wheeler centres her first chapter upon non-activists, looking at how the common person uses the internet. She begins with fear, looking at how alarm was stoked to foster a resistance to the establishment of early iterations of the internet during the 1990s. Wheeler explores these fears through fieldwork she performed in Kuwait in 1996 and 1997, where

some religious voices trumpeted the idea that all televisions, VCRs and computers should be destroyed in public burnings. Wheeler explains later, through summaries of her fieldwork in Egypt and Jordan from 2000 to 2005, how many of these fears of Western new media declined due to the economic needs of Middle Eastern states.

Chapter two describes the rise of different forms of shared resistance that were necessary to create the Arab Spring through an examination of public perceptions about the internet. The chapter focuses on fieldwork that Wheeler completed while in Egypt, mostly from 2004 to 2013. Compared to earlier research in Egypt of 2000, which often showed deep class concerns and popularly-spread fears of the West regarding internet usage, Wheeler found in her later ethnographical inquiry that increased knowledge of the internet changed public discourse in considerable ways. Wheeler's interviews with internet café users suggest that many of those accessing new media believe that freedom of opinion, employment options, international communications and access to education all increase with internet access. These populations were willing to explore the dangers of Tahrir Square because new media increasingly provided knowledge about corporate corruption, state repression of individuals and the abuse of labourers.

The following chapter looks at Jordan, describing how the broad social coalitions that created minor uprisings in 2011 and 2012 were informed by new media diffusion. From 200 internet café interviews in Jordan in 2004, Wheeler discovers how earlier discursive changes informed later resistance. *Digital Resistance in the Middle East* represents Jordan as a fractured society, one replete with diverse value systems that are held together by a charismatic leader. The expansion of the internet in Jordan was often guided by King Abdullah, who instituted the construction of publicly accessible internet centres called 'Knowledge Stations' in nearly all the villages of his kingdom. These stations, often manned by youths with some allegiance to the monarchy through public sector employment, have been important in expanding labour opportunities and communication for Jordanians throughout the Middle East. Because of this initial royal support for new media, the government was situated to quell significant political resistance through assertions of fresh and modern forms of legitimacy that portrayed Abdullah as a progressive and digitally-engaged guardian of the nation. Wheeler's interviews in Jordan offer that, even with the monarchy's skilful deployment of rhetorical tools, the Jordanian public sphere is yet alive with new media narratives of change, progressively resisting a state where freedom of press is curtailed, corruption grows, labour rights diminish and both the realities and perceptions of personal freedoms are reduced.

In the fourth chapter, using Kuwait as a case study, Wheeler argues that monarchical leaders, especially those in the Arabian Gulf, will have to accelerate the rhetoric and implementation of reforms to continue to suppress the resistance that arises from increased access to new media. Kuwait enjoys a high level of internet usage, which supports a population that is pushing for reforms in domestic spaces and agitating against larger state politics. However, unlike the charismatic leadership that has heretofore kept Jordan relatively stable, the Sabah monarchy in Kuwait relies on older forms of tradition to perpetuate ideas of legitimacy and, like in Jordan, has resisted exploring spaces of new media that might improve beliefs about the monarchy. Wheeler toured Kuwait in many research trips from 1996 to 2014 and found that an underclass of internet agents, often young and female, is priming for resistance, even as the state continues to construct compliance through a broadly applied rhetoric of deference that defines age as a legitimate symbol of status and moves aggressively against internet activists who speak out against oil corruption, lacking political freedom and harassments of the press.

The penultimate chapter takes a more theoretical turn, exploring the case studies of the edition through structural analysis of the processes that lead to anti-authoritarianism from new media diffusion. These include how various groups operate outside of the state's control in order to disclose corruption in Turkey and Egypt, expand interpersonal diplomacy between Israel and Iran and create social webs to support Saudi Arabian female drivers. The last chapter offers a reading of the emergence of individual risk-taking that developed due to new media after the rise of repression in Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait. Here, Wheeler acknowledges the fears of the cyber-pessimists, detailing how state actors make new media engagement increasingly risky through employing corporate hackers to ferret out activism, torture many of those captured and murder those deemed threatening to state legitimacy.

Wheeler concludes with her constant assertion that new media diffusion liberalises Middle Eastern discourse. Still, because she defines battles over internet usage in structural terms, whereby the state is attempting to control a rebellious underclass, Wheeler may be circumventing discussions regarding elements of an underclass in many Middle Eastern nations that is not so simply insubordinate, but often desires autocracy, not least as a means to attack and critique the West due to the historical allocation of puppet leaders and the perceived decadence of Western culture. The pessimism from many analysts of the Middle East, which Wheeler often derides, does not solely rely on whether the state will be able to repress resistance from new media sources. Rather, cynicism also proceeds from the contention that the liberalising publics which Wheeler finds in her analyses may not be the singular or dominant voice of the Middle Eastern underclass. Only intermittently does

Wheeler reveal how contrasting pressures of autocracy, misogyny, Islamism and hate emerge from the very underclass that also contributes to the intensification of new media democratisation analysed throughout *Digital Resistance in the Middle East*.

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Book Review – *The Barcelona Reader: Cultural Readings of a City,* by Enric Bou and Jaume Subirana (eds). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017. 464 pp. £25.

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When Cerdà drew up his plans for Barcelona in the 19th Century, he envisaged a place where street and person were inextricably intertwined and where permeable neighbourhoods would allow spaces to became places and thereby encourage a new culture of interaction amongst their communities (Soria y Puig 1999). This is the concept on which urbanists base their modern perceptions of Barcelona, along, perhaps, with the popular images of the Catalan colours of Barcelona F.C., or the infamous image of Freddie Mercury serenading the world at the 1992 Olympics. However, this urban spectacle offers much more than Las Ramblas and Camp Nou. As Bou and Subirana's reader shows, Barcelona is a historied and dynamic city, whose story has roots in the nation state, football, language, film and more. For residents, Barcelona may be encapsulated in the unique social structure of the aforementioned localised neighbourhoods, and the tourists which may both sustain and threaten them. Barcelona's ancient and recent past is scrawled on its well-planned, geometric thoroughfares and plazas; the barest of walls, street corners and squares all tell a story which stretches from Ancient Rome to the recent glories of the Olympic Games. A cultural feast for both visitors and residents, the city is captured with depth and precision in *The Barcelona Reader*.

Bou and Subirana's reader is an ambitious attempt at conceptualising a complex urban area; however, from the outset, they appear to be ticking all of the obvious boxes. The compartmentalised and thematically laid out table of contents gives the reader an *amuse-bouche* of what is to come, as if one were exploring the food stalls of Le Bouqenegra market before making a decision on what to indulge upon for the main course. In this case, the offerings are correspondingly disparate and numerous: crime, film, graveyards, football, politics and governance and just about everything in between. Bou and Subirana's stated aim is to produce an up-to-date English representation of Barcelona as a city and a place (p. 3), an aim that those with an interest in Barcelona, for urban, spatial, cultural and socio-political reasons, not to mention those frequenting as a tourist, will surely qualify as achieved. The prize offered by this reader is the discovery of Barcelona as more than the urbanist's model, as more than the sandy beaches and planned neighbourhoods, more than the startling diversity in food, architecture and people. Bou and Subirana's reader digs below the surface to reveal

the real city, a discovery which satisfyingly complicates this model image. Issues surrounding political decision making, immigration, tourism and the ostensible crisis of the authentic are among the most salient topics explored.

It can be difficult for any text to cater to both casual and academic readers, a difficulty further complicated by the differences in terminology and theory inherent to adjacent, but ultimately distinct, specialities such as planning, cultural and urban geography and the social sciences. This reader is intended, however, for all, as Subirana and Bou state in their introduction, and succeeds in being a mostly jargon-free insight into the city which is suitable for both lay and academic audiences. This accessibility is, perhaps, its main achievement. Those who study and read about cities, people, places and spaces are particularly well catered to and the extensive bibliographies provide roadmaps for further reading.

Robert Davidson's essay, "Barcelona: The Siege City", opens *The Barcelona Reader* and describes a city in a crisis of the 'inauthentic'. The titular siege is not of a military bent, however, but a postmodern one, waged by the spectre of the 1992 Summer Olympics. In preparation for the Olympic games, Barcelona underwent much regeneration, mainly along its seafront. This physical regeneration was paired with a massive advertisement campaign which was intended to sell the city to those millions sitting at home. This legacy, initially welcomed due to the tourism and economic benefits, is now viewed by many as a blight on a city. Davidson argues that the legacy of the Olympics obscures the authentic and traditional with picturesque 'branding', a commodification which, he maintains, has leached the city of its identity and culture. Consider, for example, the polarisation present even in the stereotypical images used to sell the city: the manmade beaches of imported sand, a sea of selfie-sticks bobbing through the city's historic Las Ramblas, and the ever-present queues surrounding and obscuring La Sagrada Familia. Davidson suggests that the city "is becoming a zombie" and that it has, now, "finally been drained of its authenticity" (p. 41). This raises questions haunting not just Barcelona, but perhaps all world cities: in the age of unparalleled tourist, who is the city for?

The concerns that Davidson opens the reader with are not easily shaken off. Nevertheless, the reader does serve to alleviate greater fears in relation to the authentic, largely through showing one where it is still to be found. For this reviewer, familiar with Barcelona in both personal and academic contexts, the most successful of these perspectives came from perhaps the most surprising of the authors: Irish novelist, poet and journalist Colm Tóibín. Tóibín's chapter, of all the chapters, brings the book together, acting as a welcome break for the casual reader, but providing more than enough content for those studying the

socio-cultural elements of the city. Tóibín compares the people of Cataluña not to the Spanish (unsurprisingly), but, for their manner and dialogue, to the Irish.

Writing in the style of a *flaneur*, Tóibín flaunts a uniqueness in his detail and dialogue and draws the reader into a distinctly local account of the people and their mannerisms that is yet filtered through the perceptions of an outsider. Place, it is contended, can be rewardingly evoked from the everyday interactions of its peoples (Cresswell 2009). Tóibín's interactions with the people of Cataluña provide this insight into the everyday ways of the citizens of Barcelona and its hinterlands and will be of particular interest for those who study the interactions between people and place. Tóibín's, a perspective that works so well in an Irish context, works, too, for those from Cataluña (Bou and Subirana 2017).

The concept of place, studied closely today by the scholars such as Cresswell, Holloway and Hubbard, is a re-emerging area of investigation in spatial and human studies (most notably in geography). Subirana's own chapter engages this concept through an investigation of street naming, or "toponymy" (p. 80). This provides a novel and particularly detailed take on Barcelona: its people, their sense of place and their history. Street naming, in this instance, is used to disseminate Catalan history to younger generations (p. 77). Place is a powerful tool and has allowed those who take note of the signs above their heads to walk through the pages of history, making a living archive of the city. It also provides legibility in planning terms and a connection to the past for the people of Barcelona. For those interested in the idea of place, Subirana provides an interesting take on how Barcelona thereby conveys a sense of identity and belonging to past, current and future generations (Bou and Subirana 2017).

Overall, the reader provides an in-depth study of Barcelona, from its crimes and graveyards, to its grand streets, to the questions of authenticity and tourism, to the showcase of the 1992 Olympic games. This is a reader that achieves its raison d'être, covering a broad range of specialities and topics for just about everyone. Ultimately, *The Barcelona Reader* succeeds in capturing the true essence of the city.

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Book Review – *An Underground Theatre: Major Playwrights in the Irish Language 1930–80,* by Philip O'Leary
Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2017. 350 pp. €50

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Seachas leabhar luachmhar Phádraig Uí Shiadhail (1993) is beag atá foilsithe sa ghort seo a thugann faoin dúshlán léargas a thabhairt ar an stair chasta – thuas seal, thíos seal – a bhaineann le drámaíocht na Gaeilge le breis agus céad bliain anuas. Tá Philip O'Leary tar éis seasamh isteach sa bhearna bhaoil anseo agus aird ar leith aige ar an leathchéad bliain idir 1930 agus 1980. Cuireadh go mór le tuiscint phobal na Gaeilge ar dhrámaí na tréimhse seo le beathaisnéis Thomáis Mhic Anna (2000) agus le foilsiú na ndrámaí féin – *Drámaí Thús na hAthbheochana* (2008), mar shampla, ach cuirtear carn maith feola ar chnámha na tuisceana sin i saothar úr Uí Laoghaire.

Is saothar ilghnéitheach uileghabhálach é seo, *An Underground Theatre: Major Playwrights in the Irish Language 1930–80*, ag údar atá sáite i ndrámaíocht stáitse na Gaeilge le tamall fada dá shaol. Creideann sé go daingean i ndraíocht an domhain seo a bhfuil an oiread sin ceana aige air agus labhraíonn sé faoi mhórphearsana na drámaíochta Gaeilge mar bhaill dá lucht aitheantais, mar chairde, mar chomrádaithe agus mar leathbhádóirí.

Tá clú leitheadach ar Mhac Uí Laoghaire mar scoláire de chuid litríocht na Nua-Ghaeilge agus ar an chritic a bhaineann le litríocht na hAthbheochana agus an tréimhse ina diaidh. Tá saothair éagsúla foilsithe aige maidir le prós na tréimhse céanna agus tá an ghrinnléitheoireacht amhlaidh anseo – córasach, léargasach agus údarasach. Tugann sé faoin dúshlán seo le cur chuige cróineolaíoch ar mhórimreoirí na drámaíochta Gaeilge ó aimsir na hAthbheochana ar aghaidh. Tá tábhacht nach beag ag baint leis an tréimhse a chaith an t-údar mar stiúrthóir ar an cheardlann samhraidh a bhíodh ag Coláiste Bhostún in Amharclann na Mainistreach idir 1991 agus 2002. Ar an dóigh sin, tá cosúlachtaí is dócha idir saothar seo Uí Laoghaire agus beathaisnéis a mheantóra in Amharclann na Mainistreach, Tomás Mac Anna (2000). Cé gur fairsinge i bhfad cur chuige agus cur síos Uí Laoghaire níor dhochar an dá théacs a cheadú in aon anailís ar an tréimhse seo.

Cúigear fathach de chuid dhrámaíocht na Gaeilge san fhichiú haois atá faoi chaibidil i ndáiríre: Máiréad Ní Ghráda (1896–1971), Séamus Ó Néill (1910–81), Eoghan Ó Tuairisc (1919–82), Seán Ó Tuama (1926–2006) agus Críostóir Ó Floinn (b. 1927) – cúigear a aithníonn an t-údar mar bhunchloch chanóin na drámaíochta Gaeilge sa tréimhse seo. Cuirtear tús leis an imscrúdú sa bhliain 1930 nuair a cuireadh na chéadiarrachtaí ag Ní Ghráda agus Ó

Néill chun ardáin – fiú más iarrachtaí ar leibhéal na bprintíseach a bhí iontu! Baineann an turas drámaíochta seo an leathchéad de bhlianta go dtí 1980 ach cuireann an t-údar eireaball leis an scéal le hachoimre de mhórimeachtaí na drámaíochta Gaeilge sa tréimhse dhá scór bliain ó shin i leith. Tá plé ilghnéitheach ar fáil ar gach leathanach bunaithe ar thaighde sa ghort, ar thaithí phearsanta agus ar chritic chomhaimseartha na ndrámaí céanna.

Tugtar aitheantas ar leith i dtús an leabhair (pp. 2–12) do dhrámadaóirí na hAthbheochana a thug faoin mhúnla nua seo i gcumadóireacht Ghaeilge: de hÍde, an Piarsach, Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, Pádraic Ó Conaire, Peadar Mac Fhionnlaoich, Liam Ó Flaithearta, Piaras Béaslaí, Gearóid Ó Lochlainn, Séamus de Bhilmot, Labhrás Mac Brádaigh, Breandán Ó Beacháin, Uaitéar Ó Maicín, Siobhán Ní Shúilleabháin agus cumadóirí eile. Ach mínítear go soiléir an réasúnaíocht i dtaca leis an chúigear seo de atá roghnaithe aige don mhionscrúdú ar mhaithe le léirmheas a dhéanamh ar stair dhrámaíocht na Gaeilge ina mbeadh ciall den chomhthéacs chultúrtha agus léirithe san am (p. 21).

Tá an t-údar dílis do chuspóir agus do *rationale* an tionscadail – drámaíocht na Gaeilge a léiriú mar ghluaiseacht bheo (más dofheicthe féin) le breis agus céad bliain anuas: *The goal throughout has been to show that theatre in Irish has been a living if often invisible art form, with its companies, venues, prizes, and, of course, critics* (p. xiii). Pléitear fosta suímh agus ionaid na drámaíochta mar ba chóir agus aird ar leith ar ghluaisceacht na drámaíochta Gaeilge sa phríomhchathair mar aon le móriarrachtaí na gcathracha agus na mbailte eile – ardmholadh don Taidhbhearc agus do mhuintir na Gaillimhe – agus léirítear ann an tábhacht a bhain le heagraíochtaí ghluaiseacht na drámaíochta, An Comhar Drámaíochta, Aisteoirí Átha Cliath, Aisteoirí Ghaoth Dobhair agus go leor leor grúpaí eile. Tá tagairtí iomadúla do gach léiriú (is cosúil!) a rinneadh de na drámaí éagsúla ó cheann ceann na tíre agus foinsí náisiúnta, réigiúnda agus áitiúla ceadaithe ar mhaithe le gach blúirín eolais dá bhfuil ar fáil. Is cur síos téagartha é seo ar gach gné de dhrámaíocht na Gaeilge sa tréimhse áirithe seo.

Is í Máiréad Ní Ghráda atá chun tosaigh sa Chúigear Cháiliúil seo ag Mac Uí Laoghaire. Bean cheannródaíoch go smior, oide, craoltóir, drámadóir agus gramadóir. Ultach ina dhiaidh sin, Séamus Ó Néill agus scríbhneoir ildána eile – úrscéalta agus gearrscéalta, drámaíocht agus iriseoireacht, tráchtaireacht agus cumadóireacht. I dtaca le hEoghan Ó Tuairisc de, tugann an t-údar léargas suntasach ar an chaidreamh chasta a bhí ag Ó Tuairisc leis an Ghaeilge féin agus an t-éadóchas a mhothaigh sé maidir le dul chun cinn na drámaíochta Gaeilge in Éirinn an Bhéarla. Feictear dúshlán síceolaíoch an fhoghlaimeora i gcás Uí Thuairisc agus an streachtailt féiniúlachta idir ‘Eugene Watters’, an cumadóir Béarla agus ‘Eoghan Ó Tuairisc’, an scríbhneoir Gaeilge. Ar ndóigh, ba mhór an tionchar a d’imir

cúrsaí staire ar dhrámaí Uí Thuairisc – mar an gcéanna lena chuid filíochta agus lena chuid próis – agus ocht ndráma Gaeilge ar fad a chum sé. Ansin, Seán Ó Tuama; scoláire, critic, file, drámadóir, léachtóir agus acadúlaí de chuid Chorcaí. Agus an cúigiú duine den chúigear, Críostóir Ó Floinn – ball den Aosdána mar gheall ar a chuid éachtaí i mbun filíochta, drámaíochta agus scríbhneoireachta i gcoitinne. Is é nathán cáiliúil Uí Fhloinn a spreagann teideal an leabhair, an meafar a d'úsáid sé sa bhliain 1967 agus Féile Drámaíochta an Oireachtas á hoscailt aige in Amharclann na Péacóige a bhí suite 'faoi thalamh' Amharclann na Mainistreach: 'Is oiriúnach an mhaise é gurb é áit ina bhfuilimid ag cruinniú chun na Féile seo ná an catacóm seo faoi thalamh' (p. 304).

Feictear éabhlóid na drámaíochta (mar scáth ar éabhlóid phobal agus shochaí na hÉireann) i bhfoirm achomair i dteidlíocht na gcaibidlí: *Unlikely Iconoclast* (Ní Ghráda), *A Northern Voice* (Ó Néill), *A Theatre of Ideas* (Ó Tuairisc), *Knocking down Old Walls* (Ó Tuama) agus *Questions of Conscience* (Ó Floinn). Ar dhóigh, léirítear aon dul chun cinn (nó a mhalairt) atá déanta ag bunadh na tíre seo trí phriosma na ndrámadóirí agus trí thionchar a gcuid saothar.

Bhí an saothar seo ag teastáil ó aos na drámaíochta Gaeilge le tamall fada agus is fearrde sinne é. D'fhéadfaí a rá, áfach, go bhfuil bearna le líonadh go fóill agus miongscagadh de dhíth ar dhrámadóirí eile an fhichiú haois agus ar a saothar: Breandán Ó Beacháin, Piaras Béaslaí, Gearóid Ó Lochlainn, Eoghan Mac Giolla Bhríde, Seán Mac Mathúna, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Antaine Ó Flatharta, Liam Ó Muirthile, Darach Ó Scolaí, Celia de Fréine, Micheál Ó Conghaile, Aodh Ó Domhnaill, Joe Steve Ó Neachtain, Alan Titley agus drámadóirí eile nach iad! Táthar ag dréim le saothar eile de chuid Uí Laoghaire go luath – comhfhiontar le Brian Ó Conchubhair ar Chanóin na Drámaíochta Gaeilge chuirfeas go mór arís eile lenár gcuid eolais agus tuisceana ar an tséanra seo (agus ar na seoda laistigh de) i gcomhthéacs na Gaeilge. Nára fada uainn an saothar sin.

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Book Review – *Hysterical! Women in American Comedy*, by L. Mizejewski and V. Sturtevant (eds).
Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017. 472 pp. €30.75

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Edited by Linda Mizejewski and Victoria Sturtevant, *Hysterical! Women in American Comedy* (2017) comes at a time in which tired and degrading stereotypes of women are still pervasive, but also at a time in which the feminism which criticises such is not only a legitimate discourse but a popular one (p. viii–ix). It is, likewise, a time in which "the female comedy auteur is increasingly visible but still a minority in a male-dominated field" (p. 27). The title, *Hysterical!,* exemplifies this double-edged moment. On the one hand, it reiterates the pathologisation of women's expression and the refusal to stay silent. On the other hand, the authors repurpose the word so as to break through the silencing of women's voices and to move towards a frank discussion of their embodied experiences that are so often shrouded in myths (p. 2).

Though not exhaustive, *Hysterical!* expands on and updates feminist scholarship on female comedians, starting with the silent film era and ending with comedian-authored television series, often including descriptions of their origin stories and the development of their careers. The book includes discussions of comedians that are already widely written about, such as Roseanne Barr and Mae West, but also adds analyses of less studied comedy pioneers such as Fay Tincher, Fanny Brice and Carol Burnett. In this way, the collection aims to eliminate the widespread amnesia around women comics which lead to assertions such as that of Christopher Hitchen's in *Vanity Fair,* who proclaimed to know in 2007 "Why Women Aren't Funny". It also critically celebrates present-day comedians and their negotiations of feminist discourses.

Structured chronologically, the beginning chapters start with silent film era comedians. Kristine Brunovska Karnick's and Joanna E. Rapf's chapters look at Mabel Nomand and Fey Tincher respectively, examining how these comedians straddled changing popular conceptions of femininity. At this time, the New Woman image, based on the suffragette movement, class struggle and an interest in sports and physical activity, was being replaced by new ideas of femininity tied to the 'Modern Woman'. This new "pleasure-seeking, consumerist ideal" (p. 36), hinging on a growing commodity culture and culminating in the figure of the Jazz Age flapper, emphasised "wealth, fun, and adventure" (p. 36) and actresses

who began to embody this ideal embraced a new chic fashion and the short bob haircut. Feminism was no longer about voting and education for this new brand of femininity, but about consumerist behaviours. Both authors observe that even though films featuring the new femininity of the Modern Woman were becoming generally more popular, where Normand and Tincher were concerned, contemporary audiences preferred to see them in more physically demanding comic roles aligned with the energetic spirit of the New Woman. The draw towards these individual New Woman stars was not enough, however, to counteract the more general popularity of new, more physically passive images of femininity bound to the rise of the beauty culture that was a prominent part of the new commodity landscape. Karnick and Rapf contribute the decline of both comedians to this and to the increase in narrative-based feature-length comedies that, aligning with middle-class tastes, were seen to be creating a more respectable name for Hollywood, unlike the slapstick one/two-reel short films that Normand and Tincher starred in.

Many of the chapters focus on the female comedian as an outsider figure. Bambi Haggins' considers how Moms Mabley set the scene for Wanda Sykes, observing the intersectional identities both comedians operate from—black, female and gay—and how both "speak truth to power" (p. 207) as they reveal and educate about how racism inflects their lives. In the chapter on Margaret Cho, Rebecca Krefting tracks the comedian's career that began in television and stand up, allowing her access to a mainstream audience and enabling her to earn a living and make enough money to, later in her career, target a more marginalised audience and move her output into more niche mediums such as books, screenplays, blogs and podcasts. This allowed Cho to become more daring in her 'charged' humour aimed at inspiring political action and uniting marginalised identities into a community. Krefting argues that Cho's embodiment of the outsider figure creates a safe comedy space where marginalised people, who are often the butt of the joke, feel a sense of belonging.

Chapters on comedians authoring contemporary television series in the 21st century, as well as how these authors relate to discourses of feminism in mainstream media, include discussions of Tina Fey and Lena Dunham. Julia Havas looks at how Tina Fey rejects any clear alignment with feminism while focusing on critiquing gender relations through her authorship and performance. In contrast, Maria Sulimma looks at how Lena Dunham firmly identifies herself as a feminist but is summarily criticised and policed because of this identification. Havas notes that, though Fey has been celebrated as a feminist writer and performer, her grotesque bodily performances as the character Liz Lemon in later seasons of *30 Rock* (2006–2013) led to a backlash in which her feminism began to be questioned. Ironically, this was due to her not fitting expectations of restrained feminine behaviour, which

exposed the limited understandings of feminism in mainstream media. Additionally, Fey's proclivity to question sexism as well as feminism further positions her as a nuanced comedian that the media struggles to pin down. Sulimma, writing about Lena Dunham, focuses on how Dunham's series *Girls* (2012–2017) is a text which is received by audiences through a filter of the paratexts that makes up Dunham's star persona: principally interviews, podcasts, her book and her social media presence. These paratexts have muddled the text and the creator, spurring audiences' harsh criticism of *Girls* on feminist grounds (though Dunham never claims the show to be feminist) which has been incorporated into Dunham's star text as the unruly feminist girl that gets things wrong. Thus, Sulimma makes the novel argument that Dunham's comedy does not only include what she produces but also how she is received by audiences.

On the whole, *Hysterical!* is an insightful collection on these female comedians and includes further work on Lucille Ball, Lily Tomlin, Whoopi Goldberg, Ellen DeGeneres and Sarah Silverman. The introduction includes a comprehensive history of the main works and theories of feminist studies of comedy and the early chapters usefully indicate where one can easily find rarer footage of 20th century female comedians' work online. Unfortunately, though some chapters cover comedian's engagement online, the collection does not look at women comedians whose fame was founded and exists primarily on platforms such as YouTube (for example, Jenna Marbles). This platform and its stars will need to be explored in any subsequent collections to reflect the expanding channels through which women enter comedy. In addition, it does not include any discussions of trans women comedians, such as Patti Harrison, which would also necessitate an expansion of the introductory material that rests on the female body as the origin of women's exclusion from comedy. Nevertheless, *Hysterical!* is and will be of benefit to any scholar studying women and humour and especially for star studies scholars that focus on funny women.

Marija Laugalyte is a final-year Ph.D. candidate with particular interests in television, the representation of gender and technology. Based in University College Cork, her research focuses on contemporary US television's representation of working women in relation to technological changes of the 21st century. She holds a master's degree in Film Studies and a B.A. in English and French.

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Book Review – *The Kick*, by Richard Murphy
Cork: Cork University Press, 2017 (Originally published in 2002). 384 pp. €19.95.

Niamh Prior
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Planter Stock

We're putting off the day they'll pull us down
And fell our prickly monkey-puzzle tree
That lords it over the heather in our garden
Standing up to wind and rain off the open sea.

We love the watercolours curlews paint
With iodine on a quill down a glen's throat;
Deplore the weather's poor mouth complaint;
Wear fuchsia tweed, an ancient ivy coat.

Can't you eat rabbit? Does it make you sick
To find your father's gun-shots in your meat,
Or touch a trout he's caught? You ought to like
Wearing an Eton collar; you look sweet.

All the roots that would pack inside a tea-chest
Came home when we retired from the Far East.

(From Richard Murphy's 1985 collection *The Price of Stone*)

The Kick, a memoir of the poet Richard Murphy, is written without the use of chapters; one scene rolls into another, especially in recounting his childhood, in keeping with the filmic snapshot-like nature of such memories. In his early years, he was brought up by a nanny, whom he describes with as much affection as any close relative, and, at the age of eight, was sent to preparatory boarding school. Much of his childhood was spent living in different countries to his parents, though he never bemoans this—it was simply how it was.

The narrative of his childhood moves from one location to another. His time in Ceylon, where his father was colonial Mayor of Colombo, contrasts with the wildness of

living in Co. Mayo, where he and his siblings ran around barefoot, rode donkeys and raised their own farm animals. This, in turn, is so very different to his time in Canterbury Cathedral Choir School, where he was so homesick for Ireland that he brought with him live shamrock and peat to burn on the fire.

Like a golden thread throughout the story of Murphy's life, the reader can trace the development of his interest in literature, moments that indicate his eventually becoming a poet. We feel like detectives picking up clues, from poems Nanny or his tutors introduced him to, to his first efforts at writing sonnets as a teenager. There is also a thread, through the first half of the book, of Murphy trying to figure out his sexuality, during which we, as readers, are as confused as he is. He reveals details of this exploration in a way that seems more matter-of-fact than confidential. Indeed, throughout the book, the Murphy we are presented with is one who is neither hero nor villain of his own story.

As a young man, Richard Murphy lived in Oxford, London, Greece and Paris (where he attended the Sorbonne), but he was always drawn back to Mayo and the islands off its coast. The allure of a simple and rustic life by the sea could not be beaten by all the literary circles of cities or the exoticism of Ceylon, the Bahamas or Rhodesia, where his parents lived. In later years, as an established poet, he taught in many American universities including Iowa and Princeton, returning always to the west of Ireland for his summers.

One intriguing aspect of this memoir is the insight it provides into the life of the gentry in Ireland. He describes his family when he was a child as, "an Anglo-Irish family, isolated under the aegis of a Protestant clergyman, on a remote demesne in neutral Éire dominated by Roman Catholic priests and threatened by German invasion" (p. 55). His descriptions of the Irish landscape are rich and clear. We get the impression of a man who identifies himself completely as Irish and feels a deep love for his home country and warmth towards its many walks of life.

On account of his colonial background, Murphy could never quite escape being somewhat of an outsider, even in his native country. As an adult, Murphy was known by one of his neighbours as the divorced protestant with the British accent. He paints for us a picture in which he was often viewed by those more 'Irish' than him as the posh, bumbling Anglo-Irish man. It is perhaps this obligatory detachment that allowed his poetry to deeply explore Irish heritage and landscape in both an objective and tender way. Murphy further gifts us with an insight into the birth of some of his poems such as "Grounds", which he wrote about his divorce, and the "The Battle of Aughrim", which took him years to write and for which he collaborated with Seán Ó Riada who wrote music to accompany it.

Murphy was witness to things that most readers would know only as historical events; he recalls how, in 1940, he and his siblings were made to gather around the wireless to listen to George VI speak to the empire. He tells us of how, on his way to school, he used to cycle past Letterfrack Industrial School, "passing the unfortunate orphans, felons and homeless boys imprisoned [there]" (p. 36). This memoir is not just a history of one man, but of the world in which he lived from the 1920s to the current day. He explains, simply and accessibly, the geographical, historical and political circumstances that surrounded him, such as Rhodesia becoming Zimbabwe, Irish Travellers, the Troubles and The Sri Lankan Civil War. Through these explanations, which, for context, are integral to his story, Murphy gives us a history lesson that does not feel like a lesson at all.

The original title of this book was *The Kick: A life among writers* and fittingly so. It is brimming with famous writers—T.S. Eliot, Bowen, Kinsella, McGahern, MacNeice, Ó Faoláin, O'Driscoll to mention a few—brought to life by Murphy's descriptions of his interactions with them. He details the enviable tradition in the 1950s, 60s and 70s of written correspondences, introductions and invitations to fellow artists to come for visits and stay with each other (sometimes for months), in a way that, these days, has been decimated by technology.

Through Murphy, we meet so many poets and are gifted with glimpses into their personalities, along with physical descriptions of them, such as this image of Robert Lowell: "As we talked his arms floated in front of him in a circle like a ring fort with a small gap for words to flow in and out between the fingertips" (p. 284). Phillip Larkin, Douglas Dunn and Theodore Roethke all stayed with Murphy in Ireland, as did Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, into whose lives we get an especially good look. The book is studded with gems of anecdotes about poets, their quirks and behaviours. For example, at Murphy's inaugural reading of "The Battle of Aughrim", Larkin (with whom he had lunch most days during his time in Hull) switched off his hearing aid, fell asleep and snored.

Meeting poets in Dublin in 1950 was easy. All you had to do was "go to McDaid's off Grafton Street and you would find Kavanagh drinking there with his disciples" (p. 113). At the tender age of twenty-three, having just begun work as a poetry reviewer, Murphy did just this. He introduced himself to Kavanagh and, in the course of conversation, asked where he could purchase one of his out-of-print books. Kavanagh said he would get a copy for him and meet him later that day. Murphy handed over the ten shillings it would cost. He did not see Kavanagh again for five years.

We get the impression of Murphy as a man who often leaned on the side of safety, books and a quiet life when others around him were racking up life experience. During his

time at Princeton, “a janitor, who was black”, invited him to a party where he “could have whatever [he] wanted. ‘Some dudes,’ he said, ‘dig broads and other dudes dig dudes. Who cares? Come to Trenton, we can drink a few beers and talk a bit of miscellaneous” (p. 281). Murphy did not dare go. Instead, he stayed in his office and reviewed a poetry book. The reader cannot help but think this anecdote is a poor substitute for the story that could have been had he gone to the party. Murphy, however, expresses no regret or any other feeling about it; he just tells it as it was.

Murphy gives only the mildest hints at his emotions surrounding experiences, even traumatic ones such as his father’s death. Perhaps this way of writing is in keeping with advice many poets would give, to just say what happened and avoid sentimentality. “My heart sank” (pp. 287), is as much as he says about unexpectedly meeting the man his wife had had an affair with years before. But there comes afterwards the poetic crafting of an image in which he describes the man as sitting, “sandwiched between two married women” (p. 287). Similarly, recounting the interview for his Oxford scholarship at which C.S. Lewis, whom he held in awe, asked him a question, he wrote, “the sofa turned upside down in mid-air with the balding top of C.S. Lewis’s head a foot above the floor until the end of my answer” (pp. 80). It is, after all, through showing, not telling, that poets convey their feelings; the memoir may not be so lacking in emotion, then, as it would at first seem.

The Kick is a memoir written in comprehensive detail, packed full of people, places and stories, spanning nearly a century. What at first appears a challenge to the reader—the length and depth of the book—becomes a pleasure as it builds a richly textured and as full a reading experience as possible of one poet’s life.

Niamh Prior’s work has appeared in journals including *The Penny Dreadful*, *Southword* and *The Stinging Fly*. Her poetry has been shortlisted or highly commended in competitions including The Patrick Kavanagh Award, Cúirt New Writing Prize and The Dermot Healy Award. She was the overall winner of the 2016 iYeats International Poetry Competition. She is currently completing a PhD in Creative Writing at UCC, funded by a scholarship from the Irish Research Council.

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Book Review – Subverting Authority with Authority

***Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority*, edited by Ruben Borg, Paul Fagan, and John McCourt.**

Cork: Cork University Press, 2017. 300 pp. €39.00.

Nataliya Shpylova-Saeed
Indiana University

The concept of authority is inseparable from reading strategies: in addition to political and ideological power, authority has aesthetic value. Postmodern aesthetics complicates this interaction with authority by questioning and subverting the relevance of authoritative guidance. *Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority*, a collection of essays edited by Ruben Borg, Paul Fagan, and John McCourt, illuminates the hazy boundaries of the concept of authority by engaging with multivalent readings of Brian O'Nolan's fluid oeuvre that invites the overlapping and collaboration of diverse genres and contesting philosophies and ideologies.

Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority responds to the critical tradition that views O'Nolan as a postmodern literary figure situated in opposition to modernism. Without rejecting O'Nolan's uneasy relationship with modernism, the collection offers a broader range for considering the writer's experiments with writing and reading, which provide opportunities for defining various discourses of authority. Taking this all-inclusive perspective, the collection further advances the conversation not only about the literary legacy of O'Nolan, but also about the tensions that modernism and its successor –postmodernism – stimulate. While theorising the subversion of authority, this collection presents O'Nolan's writing in light of constant change and shifting centres, revealing fluid artistic masks that signal the writer's attempt to navigate language and literature as a network to establish the self as a negotiator.

In their introduction, the editors stress that *Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority* "highlights O'Nolan's clowning with bureaucratic, religious and scientific powers in the sites of the popular, the modern and the traditional in both national and international contexts" (p. 8). This embracing formulation reflects the writer's multifacetedness and lays the basis for the volume's ambition to engage with the subversion of authority at different levels. Consisting of three parts, the collection investigates O'Nolan's relationship with authority from the standpoint of language, culture and literary/textual traditions.

The first section, "'neither popular nor profitable': O'Nolan *vs.* The Plain People", nuances how O'Nolan's negotiations with ideas of the popular inform multiple tensions in his work. With her essay, Carol Taffe reintroduces the notion of the popular as complicating the textual levels of O'Nolan's writing, refining the understanding of how the popular facilitates the subversion of authoritative discourses. This conceptual framework creates space for the consideration of popular phenomena highlighted by Maebh Long, who brings attention to O'Nolan's negotiations with stereotypes of the Irish. Catherine Flynn analyses how O'Nolan's responses to international politics revolve around rhetoric and language manipulation. Although the popular is primarily represented by cultural interactions and permeations, Maria Kager presents a compelling investigation of O'Nolan's bilingualism, which to some extent attests to and informs the fluidity of the writer's oeuvre. Katherine Ebury offers another route that is worth considering: the collaboration of literature and physics, entailing the subversion of the authority of science. In addition to outlining a conceptual framework, this section is an opportunity to establish various ways in which the authority of dominant discourses is traced and undermined.

The second section, "Mixed links: O'Nolan *vs.* his peers", situates O'Nolan's writing in the shifting continuum of various literary dialogues shaped by contemporary events. Dirk Van Hulle reads Flann O'Brien alongside Joyce and Beckett, revisiting the relationship between modernism and postmodernism. In this regard, the collection effectively recasts O'Nolan's reputation as a postmodern writer. This section outlines O'Nolan's in-between status that marks the writer's engagement, accompanied either by frustration or aspiration, with both modernist and postmodernist proliferations. In his essay, R. W. Maslen traces the echoes of James Stephens's *The Crock of Gold* in O'Nolan's *The Third Policeman*; Ian Ó Caoimh re-evaluates the authority of biography and autobiography in Ó Nualláin studies. Ronan Crowley highlights O'Nolan's wrangling with traditions, on the one hand, and his inherent connection with the past, on the other. According to Ronan Crowley, O'Nolan's employment of pseudonyms aligns with elements of the Irish Literary Revival. Crowley argues that this action "should be recognized as part of a dialectic internal to the broader Revival" (pp. 134–35), which is understood as a platform "to question and problematise notions of originality and authority, authorship and community" (p. 135). The second section not only diversifies the routes for the investigation of O'Nolan's relationship with authority, but also serves as a forum for subverting critical authority. The contributors convincingly reveal the haziness of authority as a key element for reading, writing and critiquing, thus opening up critical space for revisions and for textual replenishments of O'Nolan's writing.

The third section, "Gross impieties: O'Nolan *vs.* the sacred texts", discusses O'Nolan's creative and subversive interaction with sacred texts, which advances the contributors' ambition to reveal the writer's multiple masks and his aspiration to liberate writing from authoritative control, be it through traditions or stylistic patterns. Louis De Paor investigates how O'Nolan undermines the authority of Early Irish literature, turning it into material for recycling. While pointing out elements that gesture towards O'Nolan's grounding in versatile traditions of the past, Ruben Borg, argues for the consideration of modernist engagements as part of the writer's elusive style. Alana Gillespie brings attention to the aesthetics of gaps revealed through O'Nolan's texts that establish not only disruption with traditions via defiance and subversions, but also continuity which is reflected in numerous attempts to revisit and question authoritative stories and histories. The essay by Dieter Fuchs nuances the traditions of Menippean satire that O'Nolan exploits in order to examine the potential of traditional genres to engage with contemporary events. The closing essay by Tamara Radak represents O'Nolan's writing from the standpoint of incessant acts of reading and interpretation, underscoring writing as a fluid and mutating entity. In addition to highlighting O'Nolan's ambivalent relationship with the authorities of texts, traditions, criticism and institutions, the third section shapes the critical narrative in ways that keep the subverted authorities open to further interrogations.

Highlighting diverse aspects of O'Nolan's writing, which includes various genres and which activates numerous, at times contesting, ideologies, this volume deconstructs the critical vision that presents the writer exclusively in light of postmodernism. O'Nolan may seem to engage sarcastically with modernist aspirations; at the same time, his subversion of modernist authority is inseparable from the integration of elements which are inherently connected with modernism. O'Nolan often treats modernism playfully but his ambivalent self-positioning signals his desire not only to rebel and subvert, but also to be open and fluid. The contributors' efforts to present O'Nolan as a lively and fluid writer deserve special mention: O'Nolan's multiple pseudonyms re-emerge throughout the sections and subsections. Known for his playful attitude towards his own name, O'Nolan makes an extra effort to escape any sort of authority, even if it is his name. The collection turns this escapism into an eloquent statement.

Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority offers new ways to rediscover O'Nolan's oeuvre. Although the collection is organised around the theme of authority, at times it produces some sense of dispersion: the topic invites further explorations, whose targets remain blurry. The variety of topics covered in the collection, on the one hand, reflects the complexity and multilayeredness of O'Nolan's writing – the aspect that the contributors

aspired to reiterate. On the other hand, this variety of themes may be misleading: although ambiguous and controversial, O'Nolan was persistent in his efforts to negotiate the relationship between the individual and authority. For O'Nolan, this contest reveals not only the controversies that this confrontation potentially involves, but the individual's aspirations to celebrate imaginative freedom. *Flann O'Brien: Problems with Authority* is an excellent study of O'Nolan's literary output and it is a valuable addition to the current efforts to revisit the relationships between modernism and postmodernism. This collection will be helpful for scholars interested in Irish literature, cross-cultural interconnections, cross-literary ties and Irish-British cultural interactions. It is also a valuable source for graduate students who aspire to train themselves in contemporary literary criticism.

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Book Review – *Powering the Nation:*
***Images of the Shannon Scheme and the Electrification of Ireland,* by Sorcha O'Brien.**
Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2017. 316 pp. €29.99.

Ian Kennedy
Department of English, NUIG

In his book *The Long Revolution* (1961)*,* Raymond Williams refers to the relationship between cultural experience and the recording of that experience as "the culture of the selective tradition", which commences when those living the experience of culture select certain artistic expressions, documentary and archival evidence that embody the overall collective experiences of that time (pp. 69–71). Whenever one attempts to determine the experience of culture at a particular period and time, one's distance from the lived experience means that any analysis of that culture engages in this process of "selective tradition" (pp. 71–72). In *Powering the Nation*, Sorcha O'Brien engages in this process through her presentation and analysis of the Irish state's utilisation of Celtic imagery and ideology in its portrayal of the Shannon Scheme as both modern and yet in line with the pre-industrial tradition of Irish life. O'Brien situates the development of the Shannon Scheme firmly in the context of the nineteen-twenties free market Irish Society, embracing modernisation as it rebuilt itself following the struggle for independence. Her useful application of the work of Clifford Geertz (2000), among others, suggests that the roots of social change and modernisation in Ireland are found long before the nineteen-sixties, the decade with which it is traditionally associated. In that context, the developments narrated in this book appear as a critical stage on the continuum of Irish modernisation.

O'Brien makes good use of primary documents to illustrate both the technical and cultural story of the electrification of Ireland. The author's expertise in design history is evident through clear and captivating writing that explores its subject from the perspective of theory, technical graphics, photography, advertising, painting, philately and the popular imagery of postcards and cigarette cards. Through this exploration, O'Brien offers both the academic and general reader a snapshot of a developing nation that was open to international influence in its pursuit to cultivate infrastructure consistent with its European trade partners. This dynamic is visible in O'Brien's discussion of the tension between "Technik" and "Kultur", which brings to life a variety of historical examples of the application of German architecture to the design of the Ardnacrusha power plant (pp. 41–62).

The skilful use of primary documents throughout includes technical drawings which serve to outline the power structure, disagreements and debates that engulfed those working on the scheme, thus providing the reader with an in-depth understanding of the obstacles faced by its designers, builders and backers. O'Brien's discussion of the influence of Gaspard Monge on the techniques utilised by both sets of engineers and architects illustrates the ideological power struggle between Professor Frank Sharman Rishworth, on behalf of the Shannon scheme, and the Siemens architects (pp. 64–81). These professional tensions emerge in the author's account of negotiations around local contextual issues relating to rooves and building structure, the detailing of which brings what could have been an esoteric technical discussion about building plans into a fuller exploration of the professional dynamics within the international design team overseeing the project.

A topic that O'Brien continually revisits is the government's presentation of the Shannon scheme as a wholly Irish project, despite its dependence on German expertise and labour. This elision is quite evident in the discussion of the marketing strategies employed by the newly founded ESB in the late nineteen-twenties. Directed at farming, industry and the home and combining "Neo-Celtic imagery" with the progression of industrial development, this marketing campaign aimed to attract all sectors of Irish society as customers of the first Irish semi-state company (pp. 133–140). One such image features 90,000 horses driven by a Graeco-Roman styled charioteer, which, O'Brien suggests, combines the horsepower of electricity with "allegorical heroes" to evoke an image of a state that was progressively modern yet grounded in tradition (pp. 146–147).

Such imagery provides an interesting locus for O'Brien's exploration of the wider conversations around the Shannon Scheme. She connects this imagery to the fear of unemployment that may have emerged from the perception that the industrial benefits of electricity had the potential to replace unskilled workers. Adverts which sought to allay such fears depicted, for example, the American labourer at the Ford motor factory whose life was radically and positively changed by the introduction of electricity into the workplace (pp. 134–140). The exploration of the ESB advertisements demonstrates not only the gradual transition taking place in the traditionally rural nation, but the means by which this transition was directed and the fears which the prospect of an industrialising state provoked. O'Brien notes that the Shannon scheme itself employed not only large numbers of semi-skilled workers but up to 5,000 unskilled workers on the construction of the infrastructure alone (pp. 145–147).

One of the most fascinating aspects of O'Brien's book is how photographs are used to tell the story of the Shannon scheme. Chapters four, five and seven discuss the use of

photography in recording the official and unofficial account of the development of the Ardnacrusha power station and its societal impact. These photographs detail the living conditions and social bonds that Irish and German workers, living on site, experienced and formed. Photographs taken by Otto Rampf, a German worker, enabled his family in Germany to share his experience of working on the Shannon Scheme and allow us a glimpse of a worksite decidedly "messier" than its depiction in the official imager (p. 118). In O'Brien's opinion, these photographs provided "texture and depth to the Shannon Scheme, personalising it and allowing to play a background role in the personal narrative of a life, something that an official photograph is unable to do" (p. 119).

The promotion by the Irish Tourist Board of the Shannon Scheme construction site as a tourist destination is an intriguing part of the story. As well as the official photographs used to advertise the site, O'Brien explores the use of photography by general visitors at various stages of its construction. The normalisation of this tourism trend led to the Shannon scheme becoming "a national monument, a place to which it was worthwhile making a pilgrimage, like the Rock of Cashel, the lakes of Killarney or other spots on the tourist trail of Ireland" (p. 151). The exploration of the use of photography at the Shannon scheme doubles as an account of the popularity of "amateur photography... in Ireland during the early twentieth century"(p. 158).

O'Brien explores the 'legitimisation' of the Shannon scheme through the work of Sean Keating, George Atkinson and Brigid O'Brien Ganly, who painted the construction of the power plant throughout the nineteen-twenties. The context of each artist's work on the scheme is the "variety of styles and priorities of the Irish art world of the time" and the issues that surrounded them (p. 193). Their allegories, landscapes, prints and watercolours of the construction process, with the focus moving from the workers to the mechanisation of their work, illustrate the modernisation process underway within Irish society.

As an early act of the nascent Free State, the Shannon Scheme stands out as an important instance of cultural collaboration and national exchange. The images examined in O'Brien's book are examples of the lived and recorded culture of modernisation that eventually became part of the selective tradition of both the Siemens and ESB companies (pp. 113–126). This process of selective tradition is expressive of
a society's "contemporary system of interests and values" which is dynamically engaged in "continual selection and interpretation" (Williams 1961, p.72). Culture, it appears, is an intrinsic union of the contemporary and the historical. Consequently, the documents, letters, photographs, paintings and plans discussed in this book remind the reader that, in the experience of contemporary culture, the past is always present.

Ian Kennedy has worked in primary, secondary and higher education for over twenty years. He is a Doctoral Researcher at the Department of English, National University of Ireland, Galway and the Academic Writing Tutor at St. Angela's College, Sligo. His previous research included a cultural history of the Yeats International Summer School (2015) and a hermeneutical approach to a Theology of Mission (2002). His current research considers arts policy in post-war Ireland with particular attention to cultural, political, social and economic changes in this period.

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Academic Event Report

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Symposium: The Galician Interdisciplinary Studies Symposium
Venue: University of Edinburgh
Date: 8th March 2018

Hosted and coordinated by Dr María Alonso Alonso with words of welcome from Professor Robert Dunbar and colleagues from the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures at the University of Edinburgh, *The Galician Interdisciplinary Studies Symposium* took place on 8th March 2018, running parallel with a UK-wide strike by lecturing staff in relation to pay and pensions. Despite this setback and in the absence of many colleagues based in the United Kingdom, this one-day symposium continued unabated at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.

It is clear from the diversity of the panels offered at this symposium that Galicia continues to be an area rich in cultural, political and social complexity warranting continued attention from research scholars, particularly those interested adopting an interdisciplinary stance. Such approaches enable researchers to redefine interrelationships between society and language, politics and the humanities as well as Galicia's place in Spain and beyond by offering new perspectives on traditional themes and issues. Such a stance not only attracts new allochthonous researchers to the field but also demonstrates the contemporary relevance of Galician Studies and its robustness as an area of scholarship that employs paradigms and approaches more common to larger, traditional areas of study.

As a consequence of this interdisciplinary approach, the symposium achieved its primary aim of exploring how Galician Studies is engaging with newer avenues of research. This interdisciplinary stance offered professionals and students alike the opportunity to broaden their horizons through exposure to subfields of research that are distinct to their own. The diverse range of topics on offer included language planning and education, geo-history and literature, translation studies and language normalisation, explorations of Galician diaspora in literature, and archaeology and anthropology. The symposium concluded with a review of the work that has been achieved by a team of Galician and Irish researchers working in the realm of Ecocriticism; a project to which Dr Martín Veiga, the Head of the

Irish Centre for Galician Studies at UCC, has made major contributions. The symposium was less successful in accomplishing its secondary aim of reaching out to a broader audience of students and researchers beyond Galician specialists. Perhaps this was an unfortunate consequence of the industrial action in March. As such, despite the interdisciplinary nature of the symposium, there was a lack of an outsider's point of view, which perhaps would have contributed more to broadening the interdisciplinarity of the event.

The contributions on offer in the first panel focusing on language policy allowed delegates to reflect on language planning outcomes in Galicia. Since the end of the Spanish dictatorship, liberal democracy and extensive devolution have allowed the more populous linguistic minorities in the Iberian Peninsula to implement extensive language planning policies in order to codify, promote and, ultimately, ensure the perpetuity of their autochthonous languages whilst coexisting with Castilian. Despite many early successes in the 1980s and 1990s, language planning in Galicia has been fraught with difficulties to the extent that today the number of speakers is dwindling. The three papers constituting this panel offered a number of different perspectives charting the early successes and current failures of language planning policy.

My own paper, which I presented in this panel, explored the strategic role of those involved in the dubbing industry in the early 1980s as bottom-up language planners; that is, social agents that perform roles which promote a particular linguistic variety from a lowly position of authority as opposed to politicians or law makers. Dubbing is an audiovisual technique that is often associated with language planning in minority communities as a method to model, promote and disseminate a particular language variety to a community. It is a technique that is often disparaged for its potential role in censorship; nonetheless, my paper painted a very positive picture of the role of dubbing and its professional community across Galicia in the 1980s in the dissemination of the language, which was well received by attendees—many of whom remembered the series translated and dubbed in this process. The paper offered a new perspective on the different agents involved in the dubbing process in Galicia as a means to interrogate their agency. This discussion uncovered and explored the duality of their role not only as artists *par excellence* but also as strategic communicators who held a key role in the promotion of Galician.

In stark contrast to the positive image of language planning policy in 1980s television dubbing in my paper, Brais Romero Suárez (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela) dealt with the issue of the decreasing number of Galician films available in the public domain. Like dubbing for television, films produced in Galician as well as dubbed films from other languages are integral to the promotion of Galician as a dynamic linguistic variety and are

financially supported by central government. Nonetheless, in recent years, the visibility of such films in the public domain has diminished significantly. However, the sporadic, unstandardised and, often, deceptive nature of existing data related to film production and screening makes it difficult to pinpoint the extent to which Galician film availability is diminishing. Using a variety of innovative statistical analyses to triangulate varying existing evidence, this paper sought to explore the complexities of this issue, revealing two key points. Firstly, despite the fact that the film industry receives large subsidies from the regional government, detailed statistical data does not exist to evaluate the success of this expenditure. Suárez concluded that this not only fails to confirm whether public money is being used effectively to achieve these ends but also does not enable us to see to what extent the Galician government is meeting its cultural and language normalisation obligations. Secondly, Suárez pointed out that there are many grey areas concerning what constitutes a 'Galician' film demonstrating that, on many occasions, productions and projections fulfil their linguistic obligations by simply including the absolute minimum of Galician language to satisfy the rules of the financial incentives provided by the government. However, as Suárez concludes, the lack of concrete, centrally collected data means that it is difficult to ascertain whether the role of the Galician film industry to promote Galician language and culture is being successfully achieved.

The promotion and continuing existence of Galician in the public domain or, at least, within audiovisual production will undoubtedly have a wider social effect on the perceptions of the language, particularly in terms of its perceived vitality and usefulness when compared with Spanish, which is also spoken in the region. The last paper in this panel sought to address this issue. Delivered by Estefanía Mosquera Castro and Maria Montserrat Muriano Rodríguez (Universidade da Coruña) entitled "Normalizar a desigualidade" [normalising inequality], this paper explored the increasing prejudices existent in education towards the Galician language. More specifically, it considered the increasingly deep-seated conflict that exists between Castilian and Galician in schools in terms of which language students and parents felt should be studied. Also, the study revealed that there are serious training issues surrounding the linguistic competency of teachers in Galician, meaning that on many occasions students are not able to learn in Galician. Consequently, Galician is relegated solely to domestic domains. Although the methods employed in this study were not particularly innovative, the interdisciplinary nature of the symposium enabled attendees to see the interconnectedness between these different subfields of research and their wider implications for the Galician language. The panel revealed that the very future of the language, the communication channel through which much of Galician research is disseminated, is itself

under threat. The placing of these three seemingly disparate papers within the same panel enabled attendees to see that despite the early successes of language planning, the same positive outcomes, particularly on the everyday use of the language, are not long-lasting. Furthermore, it also revealed that there is a lack of region-wide statistical evidence available for the interrogation of such successes and failings and that there is a clear need for further research by national and international bodies to collect this data.

Other interdisciplinary papers that adopted innovative approaches included a geocritical exploration of 'space' in the canonical *Cantigas de Santa María* delivered by Manuel Magán Abollo (Universidad de Complutense de Madrid). Geocriticism is a form of literary theory that seeks to explore the relationships between narrative and geographic space as well as the ways in which texts refer to and transgress the external world. Abollo employed the innovative use of digital cartography; this approach seeks to triangulate geographical referents mentioned in the texts with their function and to display them visually on a digital map viewable in html. In this case, Abollo was researching the role of topographical references in texts, especially those in reference to the 'author' (or, more likely, the commissioner) of the *Cantigas*, King Alfonso X 'the Wise'. Little is known, but many have conjectured why Alfonso wrote in Galician given that he was born in Toledo in central Spain. Abollo's research sought to map out visually topographical references mentioned in the *Cantigas* in order to better understand Alfonso's relationship to these places, shedding light on why he wrote his poetry in Galician. Akin to some of the more innovative approaches seen within the field of Digital Humanities, this approach demonstrated how new avenues of research within Galician Studies can be explored through the application of new techniques. Indeed, such techniques should be of prime consideration to scholars in Galician Studies, as it ensures that the results of academic research emanating from this small, yet fruitful research community become visible and remain accessible to a wider audience.

Another presentation worthy of particular note in this panel was that offered by Xoan C. Castro (Anta da Moura) who provided a didactic overview of the Roman *Salinas* or salt pans in O Areal, an area of Vigo on the western coast of Galicia. Salt pans or salt works, are manmade, shallow ponds that are designed to extract salt from sea water through a process of evaporation. One of the fascinating aspects of this paper was how a scientific understanding of the production of salt allows archaeologists to make further historical suppositions for which there are no historical records. For example, archaeologists and historians can make predictions about the climate at this period of time based on the ideal scientific conditions for making salt. Indeed, Castro led us to question why such salt works were constructed here in the 3rd century at the extreme periphery of the Roman Empire and attributed this choice

principally to climate. This interdisciplinary approach often referred to as STEAM (the exploration of science through the arts) that is in vogue in teaching and learning pedagogy could open up new research fields, particular in Galician Studies where the importance of the environment is integral to Galician life and culture.

Indeed, representative of this interdisciplinary approach in which the role of the environment is explored through literature was the presentation made by Manuela Palacios from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. This focused on the work undertaken by the Galician-Irish research group entitled "Eco-fictions: emergent discourses on Women and Nature in Galicia and Ireland" that is funded by the Spanish government, the Galician regional government and the European Union. This project involved a number of colleagues in attendance as well as others working in a diverse range of higher education institutions, but all underpinned by their work in Galician and Irish Studies. The inclusion of this review of this research group at the end of the symposium demonstrated to other attendees, many of whom were early career researchers, the potential of interdisciplinary research within Galician Studies with colleagues from a diverse range of institutions as well as the vast array of special edition journals, creative output and public engagement that can be achieved through such work.

Overall, the major strengths of this conference were its interdisciplinary approach, the diverse array of topics dealt with in each panel and the range of innovative approaches offered by rising research in the field. The symposium showed that Galician Studies provides a space for interested researchers to explore a diverse range of themes and issues. However, it also made it saliently clear that there is a need for researchers to explore ways in which the language, culture and society of Galicia can be described quantitatively. The case for the collection of rigorous data that can be interrogated to explore not only the impact of political policy but also the changes occurring in Galician society is particularly pressing. From a personal perspective and as alluded to at the outset of this report, there is a fundamental need to engage more researchers from outside of Galicia in such events. The vast majority of delegates at the symposium were Galician and, whilst their contributions are integral to the development of Galician Studies, it is also important to use these international events to not only celebrate the true spirit of interdisciplinarity within the field but also to broaden its horizons by engaging other researchers from the wider international community.

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representation and sociolinguistic standardisation. He is also a founding member of Project DaRT, a research group at UCC exploring the concept of Translatorship in all its guises.

Academic Event Report

Niamh Murphy
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Conference: European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) Conference
Venue: Tirana, Albania
Dates: 4–6 September 2017

The annual conference of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) takes place in a different European city each year. Bringing together over 250 housing researchers from around the world, the 2017 conference took place in Tirana, Albania. The theme of the conference was "Affordable Housing for All: Redefining the roles of public and private sector". The three-day conference consisted of eight plenary sessions, five workshop sessions and a choice from a number of field trips. The workshops covered a whole range of areas related to housing including Collaborative Housing; Housing and Urban Sustainability; Housing and Family Dynamics; Land Market and Housing Policy; Private Rented Markets; Social Housing: Institutions, Organisations and Governance; and Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion. As the conference includes the presentation of hundreds of papers, just a few of the most memorable ones will be discussed in this report.

The opening session consisted of introductions, leading into the first plenary on the Albanian context of housing and urban development. This focused on the fact that self-build is the predominant form of new housing building, with extensive areas of informal housing that are currently in the process of being formalised. Through building informally during the 1990s, the people of Albania were able to address their immediate need for housing which was not being met through the underdeveloped housing market and a lack of institutional response in the form of spatial planning and social housing. This presentation was interesting as it described a very different housing context to that in Ireland, despite both countries experiencing high levels of housing need. Professor Erik Swyngedouw (University of Manchester) presented a keynote address at the following plenary which proved to be one of the most memorable of the conference. Swyngedouw's impassioned and provocative speech entitled "City or Polis? Antinomies of the Post-Democratic City", argued that we are living in a post-democratic world, with unprecedented polarisation, including evictions, housing problems and immigration in contrast to the extreme wealth of a few. However, Swyngedouw argued that since 2011 there have been signs of discontent with this situation as urban unrest has increased with movements such as Occupy and the development of left-wing parties

Podemos (Spain), Syriza (Greece) and the rise of Corbyn's Labour party in the UK. The most dramatic element of Swyngedouw's presentation was when he turned away from the audience's view a bank sponsor's board advertisement that was placed on the stage, stating that this was only right due to the nature of his presentation. This, and the other plenaries, prompted lively discussions and plenty of questions from delegates. Most notable of these were the discussions that followed the evening talk with architect Jan Gehl entitled "City for the People", based on his book of the same name. This inspiring talk focused on the transformation of urban environments, through the application of Gehl's research into the ways that people use or could potentially use the spaces in which they live and work. Most inspiring was his assertion that cities should be experienced at the speed of walking rather than the speed of a car, or other motorised transport. In other words, to Gehl people should be at the very core of urban living so that they can live in a city that is lively, safe, sustainable and healthy. This will require structural changes in the city centre such as increased cycling infrastructure, as well as widened paths and narrowed roads to increase the space for pedestrians. This prompted a lot of discussion from the delegates during the evening reception around their own cities' situation with regards to its 'liveability'.

I attended the Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Social Exclusion workshop as it is most closely related to my area of research. As a presenter, it was an opportunity to gain feedback on my research from well-known international homelessness researchers including Ingrid Sahlin of Lund University in Sweden, Lars Benjaminsen of the Danish National Centre for Research, Magdalena Mostowska of the University of Warsaw, Evelyn Dyb of the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, and Joe Finnerty of University College Cork. There was a total of 13 papers presented at the workshop which focused on a range of areas including conceptualising homelessness, the delivery of homeless services and the impact of welfare reform on housing and homelessness.

Professor Ingrid Sahlin delivered a thought-provoking paper on what the construction of the term 'the homeless' implies, and what the contrasting term 'our homeless' includes, implies and excludes. Sahlin used the analogy of Simmel's (1908) definition of 'the poor' as the group who receives assistance due to their lack of means, arguing that 'the homeless' includes only those people for whom society, municipalities and charities acknowledge a responsibility to give shelter. Through an analysis of debates in the Swedish parliament, Sahlin showed that the term 'our homeless' is used to reinforce the boundaries between those considered to be 'the homeless' and those temporarily accommodated by authorities other than those who provide homeless services. Examples of these excluded groups include asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and newly arrived migrants. Sahlin discussed how

'the homeless' are embraced with some compassion and empathy, while terms used for those who are 'othered', such as Roma, refugees, migrants and beggars, do not carry the same kind of protective imperative. Rather, the negative connotations associated with these terms are often further reinforced by combining them with phenomena such as crime, disorder and violation of property rights. According to Sahlin, through this positioning of 'our homeless' against those who are 'othered', the action demanded of the government is that they position themselves against the latter and thus make it easier for them to be evicted, removed from public and private land, expelled from the country or stopped at the border.

Another presentation which was particularly interesting was given by Dr Angela Spinney (Swinburn University of Technology, Melbourne). This research, conducted with Dr Farnaz Zirakbash, looked into the ways that homeless services identify and respond to domestic violence. As many women who present themselves to homeless services do not specifically identify themselves as experiencing domestic violence, Spinney argued that where services fail to identify them as such, the assessment of client risk and planning for client safety may prove to be inadequate. Spinney and Zirakbash argue that the utilisation of a standardised screening tool and a 'tick box' method can be useful from the female clients' perspective, which is in contrast to the perspective of some professional staff that they interviewed. The use of such a tool should help practitioners to identify situations of domestic violence. However, it is important that it also assists clients in identifying significant issues in their own lives, as well as informing them about their options and possible routes for help. Spinney discussed the patchy use of screening tools, as well as the lack of awareness of some practitioners of the benefits of domestic violence screening for service users. According to Spinney, these issues should be remedied through the incorporation of family violence conditions in service and funding agreements for homeless services. As well as this, concerns among practitioners around causing harm or uncovering needs which required additional work on their part need to be addressed through staff training and adequate referral processes.

Overall the workshop's presentations focused on a wide range of areas relating to homelessness. However, the conceptualisation of homelessness and how this impacts upon delivered services was a central focus. The ways that we decide who is, or is not, considered homeless, and how we consider the parameters of 'need', is of vital importance to potential service users. Definitions and parameters matter as they decide who is in and who is out. This is an area that was discussed by a number of presenters, including Sahlin and Spinney. Indeed, it is likely that this is a discussion that will continue in the 2018 conference.

As always, the ENHR conference proved to be very interesting and thought provoking. I would strongly recommend this conference for researchers in the area of housing

and related fields as it would be difficult to get feedback on your research from such as wide range of internationally renowned housing researchers in any other forum. It also provides you the opportunity to give other researchers feedback on their research. The ENHR 2019 conference takes place in Athens, Greece on August 27–30.

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Academic Event Report

Yen-Chi Wu
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Symposium: Irish Time? Temporalities in Irish Literature and Culture
Venue: Trinity College Dublin
Dates: 12–14 October 2017

The symposium "Irish Time?" was aptly named with a big question mark. It gathered over thirty established scholars, early career researchers and postgraduate students to explore the theme of 'time' in Irish literature and culture. The question of "Irish Time?" also attracted scholars across the globe; contributors came from Ireland, the UK, Germany, the Czech Republic, the US and Taiwan. The symposium took place in the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute, a modern building surrounded by historical ones, with the medieval Book of Kells a stone's throw away. This is an aptly-chosen venue in which to interrogate the uneven and layered temporalities in Ireland.

The two convenors, Professor Christopher Morash (Trinity College Dublin) and Professor Martin Middeke (University of Augsburg), drew out the complexities and peculiarities of Irish time in the introduction. Morash, from a historical perspective, outlined the ways in which Irish time was designated as 'different'. In the travel narratives of the Great Famine, going to the poverty-stricken areas is often compared to time-travelling to a savage time; in the colonial discourse, Ireland is often marked by its 'primitiveness', as a place lagged in time; it is not until the 1916 Irish Time Act that Ireland is synchronised by legal force with the Greenwich Mean Time. From a differing perspective, Middeke underlined the philosophical inquiries about the fluid nature of time. Heidegger, William James and Henri Bergson, for instance, all interrogated the discrepancy between the *experience* of time and the *social order* of time. Bearing in mind the cultural specificity of Ireland and the philosophical understanding of time, the symposium invited the contributors to explore the question of an "Irish Time?" over the following two and a half days.

The symposium covered a wide range of topics and cultural texts, from literature and history to music and the fine arts. The papers were neatly divided into seven panels by theme: Observing Time, Political Time, Time and Memory, Dramatic Time, Time and Place, Fictional Time, and Time and Art. It also included two brilliant keynote speeches by Professor Luke Gibbons and Professor Claire Connolly. Two cultural events—a poetry reading with Gerald Dawe and music appreciation with Roger Doyle—lightened up the

evenings. Due to the limited space, it is impossible to mention all the wonderful papers here. In what follows, I will attempt to give a (subjective) report on the highlights of the event.

Luke Gibbons's talk, "'Temporal Powers': Narrative, Foreboding, and Interwar Fiction", traces the ways in which the idea of 'foreboding' is played out in philosophical enquiries and literary productions in the interwar period. Gibbons impressively and effortlessly alludes to a wide range of works that include Joyce's *Ulysses*, Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*, lesser known works such as *An Experiment with Time* by John William Dunne, and novels by Dorothy Macardle whose *The Unforeseen* was reissued by Tramp Press in 2017 with an introduction by Gibbons. In addition to reviving forgotten works, Gibbons' talk foregrounds the extent to which the ideas of foreboding and future underlie interwar Irish fictions and thereby challenges the popular conception that post-independence Ireland was obsessed with the past.

Claire Connolly's "Lane-ism: Trollope's Irish Roads in Time and Space" brings us back to Victorian-era Ireland. Trollope worked in the postal system in Ireland for decades and acquired intimate knowledge of the Irish roads. His novels document the 'retrograding lane-ism' of Irish country roads in contrast to the nascent railroad infrastructure that signifies colonial modernity. Connolly aptly demonstrates the extent to which the material history of infrastructure helps us better appreciate the symbolic currency of roads in literary narratives. Attending to the cultural history of Ireland, Connolly indicates a fascinating approach to reading the different roads, lanes and railways in Trollope's narrative as revealing the ways in which Ireland was incorporated, temporally and spatially, into British colonial modernity.

On the first evening of the symposium, renowned poet Gerald Dawe gave a reading of his works. Specially selected for this occasion, all the poems in the collection are concerned with the issue of time. The cover photo of the collection is an oil painting by Colin Middleton, entitled "Lagan, Annadale, October 1941". In the interview with Christopher Morash, Dawe explained that he had chosen this cover because of its discrepancy from historical time. The painting depicts an everyday life in south Belfast, with pedestrians strolling on the river bank and boats sailing along the River Lagan. 1941, however, is the year of the Belfast Blitz in which German air forces bombed and destroyed much of the city. The painting thus brings out an intriguing incongruity between historic time and artistic manoeuvre that alters the scene through memory and commemoration.

The music session with composer Roger Doyle on the second evening drew our attention to the ways in which technology captures specific moments of time in music. Entitled "Time Machine", the pieces incorporate voice messages from Doyle's parents (now passed away), his son (now a teenager), and a dear friend (who has also passed) into beautiful

music. The graininess of the voice recording carries a strong sense of *time past* and registers a great emotive power.

On an unseasonably warm October Saturday afternoon, the symposium concluded with a roundtable discussion in which all the major issues of time were reiterated. The postcolonial context of Ireland, globalisation, economic expansion versus environmentalism, all point to the complicated operation of temporal politics in Irish literature and culture. This well-organised and thought-provoking symposium left me less sure of my understanding of Irish time (and with a long list of books to read). Many intriguing questions and differing perspectives were raised concerning the nature of time in the Irish contexts. But one thing I know for certain is that two and a half days are too short a time to answer the big question of "Irish Time?".

For more information and abstracts of individual papers, please see the symposium website here: https://irishtimesymposium.wordpress.com/.

Yen-Chi Wu is a PhD candidate in English at University College Cork. His PhD project on John McGahern and modernity is funded by the Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship. His research interests include Irish Studies, Postcolonial Studies and modernism.