

## Exploring the Transnational Neighbourhood: Integration, Community, and Co-Habitation

A conference of the UCD Humanities Institute, University College Dublin in collaboration with The Institute of Modern Languages Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London.

24-26 June 2019

Global mass migration on an unprecedented scale; dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean by refugees who are fleeing persecution and warfare; the loss of family and friends; the loss of home; the challenge of integrating the arrivants/ arrivantes; and conflicting notions of identity and belonging: these are some of the transcultural predicaments of the globalisation processes of the 21st century coming to a head in the local encounters of urban (and rural) neighbourhoods. Whereas Singapore's Holland Village, London's Brixton and Berlin's Kreuzberg have grown into trendy multi- and transcultural neighbourhoods coined by creativity and a newly affluent cosmopolitan class, others seem troubled by disenfranchisement, discord, and/or feelings of social dislocation, with Molenbeek in Brussels and the Clichy-sous-Bois banlieue in Paris being perhaps the most notorious examples. While Clichy-sous-Bois gained notoriety during the highly mediated 2005 street riots, Molenbeek was labelled a breeding ground for Islamist terrorism after the bombings in Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016.

Transnational neighbourhoods are frequently depicted as the 'other' and – as Gillian Jein notes – a 'deviant terrain'. However, voices from within often emphasise different perceptions and have the potential to challenge and counter discourses emerging in the context of the rapid rise of populist right-wing parties across Europe that aim to reinstate or "protect" ethnic nationalism, Christianity as the dominant religion, a national language and organic culture, ancestry and lineage, and membership in a dominant ethnic or racial group as the bases for national membership. The current political debate is highly polarised, binary and often dominated by quantitative arguments concerning the number of refugees, and the social, economic and political impact of their integration.

Against this backdrop, our conference seeks to shift focus by exploring transcultural encounters in the urban neighbourhood. We posit that the urban neighbourhood is a social microcosm that allows for a more nuanced discussion of transculturality as lived practice. The urban neighbourhood is local but not provincial; it is a fluid space in which various temporal and spatial axes intersect; it is the locus where diverse trans/cultural practices can engender togetherness as well as differences and conflict. It is the contact zone where disparate cultures meet in often highly asymmetrical relations, fostering processes of hybridisation, creolisation and neoculturation. The neighbourhood is open to the type of multi-scalar perspective that, according to Ann Rigney, avoids entrapment in a binary discourse.

The French street- and community artist JR's work provides an example of how artistic reflections can highlight these positive dynamics, intervene in political discourse and help shape perceptions of transnational neighbourhoods. His 150m<sup>2</sup> fresco *Chroniques de Clichy-Montfermeil* (2017), for instance, not only charts the 2005 riots and encompasses 750 portraits of the neighbourhood's ethnically diverse population, but also interweaves it with France's revolutionary past by quoting Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1786) and *Tennis Court Oath* (1794) as well as Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), thereby transgressing conventional concepts of identity and belonging.

The urban neighbourhood lends itself to a broad multi-perspectival and interdisciplinary exploration of transcultural practices. We invite papers from a broad range of disciplines and fields, including urban geography, urban planning, architecture, memory studies, film studies, visual and performance arts, contemporary literary studies, cultural studies, sociology, practice-based research and linguistics.

Possible lines of investigation include:

- 1) Theorising the Transnational/Transcultural Neighbourhood
  - The role of space/time
  - Notions of belonging/attachment

- The dynamic of inclusion/exclusion
- Transculturation/Hybridisation/Creolisation
- Porosity/Enclosure
- Proximity/Distance
- Intimacy/Enmity
- Vernacular styles

## 2) Multi-Scalar Perspectives on Integration and Conflict

- Case Studies of social inclusion through education, training and youth work; preventing and combating discrimination, gender-based violence, racism and xenophobia
- Case studies of conflict, social exclusion, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and violence
- The role of civic organisations and local government in promoting/hindering integration
- The role of social clubs/sports clubs

## 3) Built Environment, Social and Art Practice

- Transcultural community formation and the built environment
- The role of “small scale” local areas and buildings such as bus stops, playgrounds, corner shops, cafés, local libraries
- The role of “large scale” areas and buildings such as parks, squares, schools, shopping malls, civic buildings, monuments
- Practices of co-inhabitation/contact and segregation in the neighbourhood
- Performance of age, class, gender, race and sexuality in the neighbourhood
- Case studies and examples of transcultural art and performance practices in neighbourhoods

## 4) Literary and Filmic Representations of Transcultural Neighbourhoods

- Close readings of individual texts, films, works of photography that feature the transnational neighbourhood
- Representations of religion, gender, class and race
- Analysis of a transnational “poetics” of place
- “Transcultural” literary and cinematographic techniques
- The comparative analysis of literary texts that feature transnational neighbourhoods
- Multi-lingualism in literature and films
- Transgressive performances in literature and films
- Representation of the backlash against the transnational neighbourhood in films and literary texts.

Please send an abstract of approx. 250 words and a short biographical note of about 50 words to: [m.rocalizarazu@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.rocalizarazu@bham.ac.uk), [britta.jung@ucd.ie](mailto:britta.jung@ucd.ie), and [stephan.ehrig@ucd.ie](mailto:stephan.ehrig@ucd.ie)

Deadline: 10 January 2019

Conference Organisers:

Prof. Anne Fuchs, UCD Humanities Institute, University College Dublin ([anne.fuchs@ucd.ie](mailto:anne.fuchs@ucd.ie)); Dr. Godela Weiss-Sussex, IMLR, University of London/King’s College Cambridge ([godela.weiss-sussex@sas.ac.uk](mailto:godela.weiss-sussex@sas.ac.uk)); Dr. Britta C. Jung, IRC Postdoctoral Fellow, UCD Humanities Institute, University College Dublin ([britta.jung@ucd.ie](mailto:britta.jung@ucd.ie)); Dr. Maria Roca Lizarazu, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Birmingham ([m.rocalizarazu@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.rocalizarazu@bham.ac.uk)); Dr. Stephan Ehrig, IRC Postdoctoral Fellow, UCD Humanities Institute, University College Dublin ([stephan.ehrig@ucd.ie](mailto:stephan.ehrig@ucd.ie)).