

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

in association with the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster

Issue 5  
March 2008

SHARED  
SPACE

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A research journal on peace, conflict and  
community relations in Northern Ireland

Published by  
Community Relations Council

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Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

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*Shared Space* is a multi-disciplinary research journal addressing themes of peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland. The Journal is owned and published by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, a registered charity established in 1990. The aim of *Shared Space* is to publish current and recent academic research on the themes of peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland. While the publishers may solicit articles from those who are currently engaged in or have recently completed relevant research, approaches from others will be considered on application to the Editor.

Any views expressed in *Shared Space* are those of the authors of the articles and do not necessarily represent those of the Community Relations Council.

This special issue of *Shared Space* (issue 5) has been produced in association with the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster, under the supervision of its Director, Professor Máiréad Nic Craith.

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## Notes on Contributors

**Mary Delargy** is Research Associate for Minorities at the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster. She is researching the ‘new communities’ in the North West; firstly the representation of these communities in the public space and secondly British and Irish identity in second and third generations of these communities. Her essay ‘Teaching Multiculturalism in Three Schools in the Derry City Council Area’ was published in a previous edition of *Shared Space*. She has also published an article on the Chinese community in Northern Ireland in *Language, Power and Identity Politics* (Palgrave). A number of further essays are forthcoming.

**Philip McDermott** is a doctoral student at the University of Ulster’s Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages. He holds an MA in Peace and Conflict studies and a BA in Media Studies. His PhD explores language planning in Northern Ireland for minority, ethnic and migrant worker languages. Philip has also contributed research to a project developing an Irish language policy for Fermanagh District Council in 2004. In 2007 he was chosen to conduct research at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC. He recently published a chapter in *Language, Power and Identity Politics* (ed. NicCraith)

**Dympna McElhenny** is a part-time Staff Nurse in the Operating Department in Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Derry/Londonderry. Through exposure to the victims of violence down through the years of the conflict, she developed an interest in the causes of war, and its impact on issues of identity and culture. In 2003, she graduated with a BA in Combined Studies (majoring in History). She was awarded an MA with distinction in Culture and Identity in Ireland from the University of Ulster in 2007. Her contribution to this journal represents some of the research she conducted for her MA thesis.

**Elly Odhiambo** is Research Associate in Migration at the University of Ulster. He holds a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies. He has worked in the field of corporate social responsibility and taught Development modules in Sociology. He is also a freelance commentator in the print media. Elly is currently working on a research project entitled 'Giving Voice to New Voices: Africans in the West of the Bann'. This research study has been funded by the Community Relations Council and European Union Peace II Programme and this support is gratefully acknowledged.

**Andrea Redmond**, originally from Prince Edward Island in Canada, has lived in Northern Ireland for over twenty years. A mother of three, she has been working as a community artist and activist in Belfast and Derry. Formerly a rural development worker for Foyle Women's Information Network in Derry, she has lectured at the North West and Belfast Institutes, and Lagan Valley Education Project, an alternative school in Twinbrook. She was a community artist for *Féile an Phobail*, and has chaired various community groups. Her work with the Travellers community in Belfast on community arts projects included the creation of the first Traveller mural in Ireland. She is currently pursuing a doctorate at the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages.

**Críostóir Rowland** is a doctoral candidate at the University of Ulster's Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages. His research interests focus on the Irish Diaspora, with special emphasis on the experience of return to Ireland by emigrants, their children and other descendants; cultural confidence and the manifestation of identity amongst the Irish overseas; and the role played by citizenship law in managing the relationship between nation-states and their diasporas. For seemingly unrelated reasons, Críostóir is also keenly interested in the sociology of Australia and New Zealand.

# Introduction

## **‘Cultural Encounters’ at the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages**

The Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages (AICH) was established at the University of Ulster in December 2000 with SPUR funding with the aim to be an internationally recognised centre of excellence for interdisciplinary research on cultural heritages in an international context, with particular emphasis on the island of Ireland. The Academy brings together some thirty academic staff from a wide range of subject backgrounds in the arts, humanities and social sciences, working on the Magee, Coleraine and Jordanstown campi of the University of Ulster. It also has a number of Fellows and associate members, and a large and growing postgraduate community.

AICH is strongly committed to the local community in Northern Ireland. This is in keeping with the mission statement of the University of Ulster which aims to ‘contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the region’ as well as promoting ‘economic, social and cultural inclusion’. There are three prominent themes in our work, which catalyse the individual research interests of its members:

- Oral and Written Heritages
- Cultural Encounters
- Habitat and Habitus

These themes form the long-term research framework of the Academy. The present volume outlines some of the research conducted under the second heading. All of the essays have been written by postgraduates at the Academy, including foreign students who have been spending some time with us. Other students at the Academy include Neringa Lubinienė, a Visting Fellow from the

University of Kaunas, Lithuania, who has spent the past year researching the Lithuanian community in Northern Ireland, and Angelika Dietz, a German holding a University of Ulster Vice-Chancellor's Research Studentship, who is working with Italians in Northern Ireland.

The Academy is strongly committed to exploring notions of Britishness and Irishness beyond the traditional boundaries, and Northern Ireland is currently host to a mosaic of cultural diversity which offers many opportunities for the local community. In the past two years the Academy has been holding a number of events on the theme of "cultural encounters". I would particularly like to draw attention to the *Northbound* series of symposia (<http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/aich/nbsymposia/>) that has been organized by Dr Maria Ferrario, our Research Fellow in Heritage and Technology.

*Northbound* aims to promote the culture, support the presence, and provide networking opportunities for people and communities who have come from Europe to live, work and study in Northern Ireland. The series consists of four events over a two-year period. The first of these symposia (17 November 2006) focused on Italians in the region. Speakers included Leo D'Agostino, Italian Honorary Consul to Northern Ireland, a second generation Italian, Award winning Italian journalist Silvia Calamati, Fabio Mugnaini, Professor of European Ethnology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Siena, Italy, and Eddie McVeigh, Head of the European Commission Office in Belfast.

The second symposium, 'Baltic Neighbours: The Polish and Lithuanian Communities in Northern Ireland', was held on Friday 11th May 2007. This was an important theme as the Polish and Lithuanian communities make up more than two thirds of the estimated 60,000 people that have come from Central and Eastern Europe to live in Northern Ireland. Representatives from community groups and the Church, public officials and artists of Polish and Lithuanian descent were among the speakers invited to discuss the history of the two countries. Points of discussion included the historical and contemporary differences between these neighbouring states as well as their relations with host communities in Northern Ireland.

Northbound Three, 'Ireland and the German-speaking Countries', will take place on Friday 4th April 2008 in Belfast. Confirmed speakers include Hugo Hamilton, who will read from his autobiography *Speckled People*, and Hans Wieland, founder and director of the Organic Centre in Rossinver, Co Leitrim. The programme will also feature a number of academics from the University of Ulster who research in the field of migration.

We are grateful to the Community Relations Council for the publication of this special issue of *Shared Space* and would like to acknowledge their support of a number of our activities since the establishment of the Academy. We are also grateful to the local community groups who support our activities in so many ways. We are aware that this edition of *Shared Space* raises many questions and hope that our research programme will continue to highlight issues of significance for everyone living in Northern Ireland.

**Professor Máiréad Nic Craith** (Guest Editor)

*Director, Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages*

<http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/research/aich/index.htm>

February 2008