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CHAPTER FOUR

INTERCULTURAL MASCULINITIES
IN THE CONTEMPORARY IRISH THEATRE

CHARLOTTE MCIVOR

This chapter surveys shifting representations of masculinity, race, ethnicity and interculturalism in Irish theatre in the past twenty years. Theatrical responses to post-1990s inward migration to Ireland have been consistently focused on male protagonists, with the earliest wave of new plays focusing on African asylum seekers, refugees and migrants of multiple national origins, with a more recent turn to the Eastern European male experience in Ireland. The majority of playwrights addressing these experiences have been white, Irish-born, male playwrights, with the exception of artists and companies such as Bisi Adigun, the founder of Arambe Productions, Ireland's first African-Irish theatre company, actor and playwright George Seremba, British-based Inua Ellams and Polish Theatre Ireland. The last five years have seen the strong emergence of Eastern European theatre artists working in Ireland, including the companies Polish Theatre Ireland and 50% Male Experimental Theatre, as well as freelance artists including Alicja Ayres and Mirjana Rendulic. The Dublin Theatre Festival even featured a Polish theatre strand in 2010, although primarily composed of visiting Polish, rather than Polish-Irish, companies.

In the period from the mid-1990s to the present, Ireland experienced unprecedented levels of inward migration and financial wealth and the subsequent economic crash and a return to high emigration patterns. Yet the reversal of inward migration did not lead to the departure of all recent migrants, even as Irish-born workers trebled their emigration numbers between 2001–11. The question of who can be considered an 'Irish' man (or woman) is more open than ever as the 2011 census revealed that an unprecedented seventeen per cent of the population is non-Irish-born and that 'Between 2006 and 2011 the number of non-Irish nationals increased by 124,624 persons, or 29.7 per cent, from 419,733 to 544,357.' Migrants

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had been drawn to Ireland arguably by the short-lived but intense prosperity of the Celtic Tiger economic boom, as well as the accession of several new member states to the European Union in 2004 and 2007, including Poland and Lithuania, which have contributed the most sizable portion of Ireland's Eastern European minority ethnic community. The 'new Irish,' as they are named by Bryan Fanning (Fanning 2009, 145), are a diverse group of more than 196 nationalities, with the largest minority ethnic groups including Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Nigerian and Romanian migrants, while Indians are cited as one of the other fastest-growing groups. Following the 2008 economic crash, emigration levels have risen and inward migration has slowed, but increased social diversity will be a lasting legacy of the Celtic Tiger period. In 2009 twenty-four per cent of all births were to mothers born outside of Ireland.

The persistent theatrical trend of focusing on migrant male characters goes against both the numerical realities of post-Celtic Tiger migration trends and the gendered focus of debates over the 2004 citizenship referendum. Popular support for the 'yes' position in the citizenship referendum was driven by anxiety about migrant women coming to Ireland expressly to give birth and overwhelming hospital maternity services, claims that were later proved to be unfounded. Ronit Lentin, Robbie McVeigh, Bryan Fanning, Eithne Luibhéid and others have repeatedly emphasized the passage of the citizenship referendum as the decisive moment in cementing what they perceive to be Ireland's broadly antagonistic policies on migration. More recently, debates over female migrants have been subsumed within EU-wide and transnational controversies regarding sex trafficking, which has given rise to another set of popular narratives that criminalize migrants while continuing to cast them as victims. Migrant men are less invisible in the trafficking debates, where they are frequently cast as the pimps and traffickers driving this industry.

Over the course of the 2000s, the number of female migrants to Ireland remained consistent with, or slightly higher than, the total number of male migrants, with 30,100 men and 29,000 women documented as newcomers in 2001, as compared to 20,100 men and 22,300 women arriving in 2011. This balance of experience remains unrepresented in Irish theatre. Instead, in plays such as Donal O'Kelly's *Asylum! Asylum!* (1994), Eithne McGuinness' *Limbo* (2000), Roddy Doyle's *Guess Who's Coming for the Dinner* (2001), Ken Harmon's *Done Up Like a Kipper* (2002), Ronan Noone's *The Blowin of Baile Gall* (2002), Bisi Adigun and Roddy Doyle's *Playboy of the Western World: A New Version* (2007, 2008) and Paul Kennedy's *Put Out the Light* (2010), male migrant characters from the

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Republic and the North vie for literal space and/or leave to remain in the Irish household and nation through direct confrontation with white, Irish-born males. The masculine bias in this genre of theatre reflects larger institutional issues in the Irish theatre, where women's work, particularly as playwrights, is frequently less visible. Nevertheless, the interplay between Irish and 'other' masculinities that comes into focus here provides a valuable opportunity for reflecting on shifts in Irish masculinities vis-à-vis race and ethnicity post-Celtic Tiger. In many cases, however, these shifts reiterate rather than seriously problematize divisions between minority and majority ethnic groups, exposing the gendered limits of Irish aspirations to a reinvigorated social and aesthetic interculturalism post-migration.

Irish interculturalisms as aspiration and disappearing act

Theatre and performance studies has primarily considered aesthetic interculturalism as, in the words of Patrice Pavis, the use of 'hybrid forms drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas' (Pavis 1996, 8). Ireland's adoption of interculturalism as a keyword of social policy theoretically denotes a full-scale reformation of Irish society, where 'interculturalism is proposed as a way of encouraging dialogue, curiosity and integration between *cultures* as a corrective to multiculturalism's propensity towards separatism and parallel cultural existences' (Titley et al. 2010, 38). Irish social interculturalism expands the possibilities of theatrical or aesthetic interculturalism. It does so by enabling the sustained transformation of a national imaginary and performance repertoire through theatricalized experiences of everyday life as well as the aesthetic. Instead of performance forms being traceable to 'distinct cultural areas', Irish social and aesthetic interculturalism premises that performative moments of everyday or aesthetic encounter between majority and minority ethnic groups can expose the multiplicity of culture at the level of the individual or the group rather than confirming individuals or groups as belonging to one discrete identity.

Interculturalism, as used in Irish social policy and aesthetic contexts, has attempted to bypass stereotypes of multiculturalism that assume this approach sediments cultural differences by working instead to enable dynamic interactions between majority and minority ethnic groups. In doing so, Irish policies of interculturalism seek to make possible a more flexible and inclusive model of accommodating diversity in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. I have argued elsewhere that in Ireland

interculturalism as used in government and social policy describes practices aimed at using the occasion of inward-migration to work towards mainstreaming services for new and pre-existing minority communities; addressing root causes of poverty and exclusion such as racism and environmental facts; increasing awareness of diversity among the Irish population through media, arts, and sports events; and equalizing participation in civic and social activities. (McIvor 2011, 313)

These comments regarding Irish social interculturalism, however, reflect a pre-2008 period of response to migration post-Celtic Tiger. The continuing recession has resulted in huge cuts to social services across the board, and government support for the sector known briefly as the ‘race relations (interculturalism) industry’ (Lentin and McVeigh 2006, 3) has been drastically reduced. Therefore, the practical attainment of these goals through the development of sustainable infrastructure is considerably more limited despite the continually increasing numbers of non-Irish-born residents. The traces left by attempts at Irish aesthetic interculturalism in the theatre chart the evolution of these ideals of social interculturalism as imagined rather than entirely practical or practiced possibilities.

Romance and the Irish racial state

The earliest wave of plays addressing migration to Ireland could almost all be grouped within the migrant romance genre, although, of course, exceptions remain. Plays in this subgenre include Donal O’Kelly’s *Asylum! Asylum!* (1994), Roddy Doyle’s *Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner!* (2001), Jim O’Hanlon’s *Buddhist of Castleknock* (though the romantic partner in question here is female and South Asian) (2002), Ken Harmon’s *Done Up Like a Kipper* (2002), Roddy Doyle and Bisi Adigun’s *Playboy of the Western World: A New Version* (2007 and 2008) and Paul Kennedy’s *Put Out the Light* (2010). The two plays under discussion in this section – Donal O’Kelly’s *Asylum! Asylum!* and Paul Kennedy’s *Put Out the Light* – were written in 1994 and 2010. They are united by their conceit of romance narratives as the central plot device that diagnoses Irish relationships to racism and prejudice, both individual and infrastructural. They also appear at key points in Ireland’s evolving relationship to migration and cultural diversity; the early days of the Celtic Tiger and post-crash, where the experience of increased racial and ethnic diversity had theoretically been normalized but funding and support for intercultural initiatives had been cut. When *Asylum! Asylum!* premiered in 1994 on the Abbey’s Peacock stage, Ireland’s procedures for processing and accommodating asylum seekers and refugees were nascent, and it was

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the first play to address asylum seekers and the issues of migration broadly in Irish theatre. *Asylum! Asylum!* comments both on the paucity and inefficiency of Irish legal procedure as well as the blatant institutional and individual racism exacted against incoming asylum seekers. *Put Out the Light* indicts the routine invisibility of racism within post-Celtic Tiger Irish society and considers its psychological effects on migrants and minority ethnic groups who have little tangible recourse legally or culturally.

In *Asylum! Asylum!* and *Put Out the Light*, the romances are set against the background of the Irish legal system, although the legal cases under consideration are remarkably different. In *Asylum! Asylum!*, Joseph Omara comes to Dublin from Uganda to seek asylum due to torture and military intimidation, while *Put Out the Light*'s Kenneth Tamunda, a Kenyan migrant (who may or may not be a former asylum seeker) is on trial for the murder of his Irish ex-partner, Siobhan. This conceit of linking legal and romantic stories allows O'Kelly and Kennedy to consider the work of romance as tied up with the operations of what Ronit Lentin calls the 'Irish racial state', following David Theo Goldberg. She argues 'The racial state is a *state of power*, asserting its control over those within the state and excluding others from outside the state' while appropriating 'difference through celebrations of the multicultural' (Lentin 2007, 612). In *Asylum! Asylum!* and *Put Out the Light*, encounters with the Irish racial state play out through conflict between males primarily, with women as supporting romantic players. The African male protagonists must test themselves against antagonistic Irish-born male foils who are presented in the recurring roles of doubling as both representatives of the legal system, and romantic rivals and/or new potential family members.

The collapsing of the state into the personal in these plays problematizes claims that intercultural encounters at the individual or community level that seek to 'facilitate dialogue, exchange, and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds' (Meer and Modood 2012, 182) can obviate the structural inequalities of the state in its support of migrant or minority ethnic communities. *Asylum! Asylum!* and *Put Out the Light* conclude instead with the ejection of their migrant protagonists from Irish society through deportation and incarceration. These endings dramatize 'the existence of hostility, xenophobia, and fear in Irish responses to the diasporic communities'. (Villar-Argáiz 2014, 7). O'Kelly's use of the romance formula in *Asylum! Asylum!* puts the legal entanglement of Joseph Omara, a Ugandan asylum seeker, and Mary Gaughran, as his lawyer, as primary to their later romantic relationship. They are brought together by Mary's brother Leo, who is an Irish immigration official

frightened of Joseph pressing brutality charges after a rough encounter in the interrogation room. He believes his sister will be the solution to his problem, but her meeting with Joseph sets in motion a series of events that will transform not only Mary and Joseph but Leo as well.

As *Asylum! Asylum!* unfolds, the audience is purposely left unsure as to whether Joseph is telling the truth. Joseph rather slowly reveals over several scenes the extent of his own torture at the hands of police in Uganda and forced role in the murder of his own father. Brian Singleton argues that the character of Joseph fits very neatly 'into the national narrative of the African immigrant: a problem-causer, and a protagonist to force the white Irish audiences to question themselves' (Singleton 2011, 141). But Joseph is not the only protagonist who forces a critical eye back onto the audience. The play's treatment of competing masculinities vis-à-vis the face-off between Joseph and Leo (who has the support of Irish and European legal systems) focuses critical attention not only on Joseph as outsider but on what the nature of being an 'insider' within the Irish system actually means. Leo, too, is on trial in this play as an Irish-born male who substitutes blind allegiance to Irish and European immigration law for honour while mistreating his family and those whom he is supposed to serve. Unquestionably, the brutalization of Joseph ultimately enables Leo's transformation, with very few benefits to Joseph in the long run, but Leo's failure as a man within a family context due to his anger and lack of compassion forces a critical examination of Irish masculinity. *Asylum! Asylum!* measures Irish-born masculinity in relationship to an individual's ethical encounters with the 'other,' in this case Joseph as an asylum seeker. Joseph's participation as a deserving 'other', however, must be legitimated through his confirmation as a victim of demonstrable oppression and not a 'chancer', as Leo disparagingly calls him throughout.

Joseph's body is both subject to, and associated with, violence from his first appearance in *Asylum! Asylum!*, and it is these scenarios that are meant to establish the audience's identification with this character as well as differentiate him from Leo. The play's climax comes with Joseph's surprise deportation through 'Operation Sweep' (ibid. 153) during Leo's temporary absence. An immigration officer offers the chance to have it done quietly if Joseph does not resist, otherwise he will be treated as a category-A deportee, which means men 'bursting into your father's house with five officers, a body belt, mouth tape and binding, pinning the Ugandan to the floor, parcelling him up, taking him to the airport and strapping him to a seat on a plane back home' (ibid. 154). This threatening visual image is not entirely followed through with theatrically, although Joseph is handcuffed and the body belt and gaffer-tape binding is shown.

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The extremity of Joseph's asylum case is indeed intended to give the evidence to grant him leave to remain. But Joseph seemingly can only exist as a viable protagonist in proximity to the audience's compassion, and this requires physical proof of violence done to the body. Compassion gives him a viable existence, while compassion is what Leo, too, must gain in order to redeem himself.

Leo reappears at the moment of Joseph's deportation, but he has been transformed by witnessing the petrol bombing of a hostel full of immigrants in Berlin. Through the flames in Berlin, Leo believes that he glimpses an apparition of Joseph's father and watches him disappear in flames, bringing the mirroring of himself and Joseph to its furthest conclusion. When he asks his chief why they let it happen, the chief's answer is 'Because fear is the only deterrent . . . Fear is the only thing they understand'. Although *Asylum! Asylum!* clearly aligns itself against this position, ironically the same bottom line is used as logic for the audience's sympathies. The repeated lengthy descriptions of violence against Joseph and other participants in his story in Uganda are meant precisely to strike fear into the heart of Irish audiences, to jar them into realising that by refusing to listen, they, too, may be complicit in similar violences. The suffering body of the asylum seeker remains the only one worthy of sympathy, even as it is the one that is continually rendered the most suspect and consistently legislated against. *Asylum! Asylum!* stages the institutional racism of not only the Irish state but EU policy more broadly, but it does so at the expense of casting Joseph as a catalysing agent for this critique rather than as a full protagonist.

Paul Kennedy's *Put Out the Light* revises the archetype of William Shakespeare's *Othello* to tell the story of Kenneth Tamunda, a Kenyan migrant to Ireland slowly driven mad, first by the experience of racism in the legal system and his daily life, and then by jealousy. The combination of these pressures pushes him to escalating acts of violence that conclude with the murder of his ex-partner, Siobhan. *Put Out the Light* is Kenneth's subjective account of what led him to the murder of Siobhan, but the motive for the crime is not just jealousy but, rather, the escalating and targeted racist pressure of the Irish legal system that puts increasing psychological pressure on his personal relationships. The story begins with Kenneth being pulled over by a garda named Sean McCarten who accuses him of driving while intoxicated, which is untrue. This encounter sets the stage for an escalating series of conflicts between McCarten and Kenneth, but also Kenneth and Irish society at large. Although Kenneth produces his insurance papers at the station the very next day and in person to McCarten, McCarten denies ever having received them and serves

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Kenneth with a summons to appear in court. Over the course of waiting for this hearing, Kenneth becomes increasingly incapable of dealing with routine daily incidents of racist harassment that include being asked if the pet store where he works carries ‘gorillas’ (Kennedy 2010, 19) and being called a ‘fucking nigger’ (ibid. 21) on the street.

The playwright is fully cognizant of the plot’s resemblance to Shakespeare’s *Othello*, as the title is a direct reference to Othello’s speech before he kills Desdemona (Shakespeare 1994, 852). Kenneth the character and Kennedy the playwright invoke *Othello* as a self-conscious act that anticipates how the narrative of this case will be framed and understood by the Irish media and public. Jealousy of Siobhan’s gay male friend, Finbarr, and Kenneth’s exacerbation of jealousy through the actions of others, such as McCarten, does drive the plot forward in *Put Out the Light* as in *Othello*, but this is only one thread of the story, one source of Kenneth’s mounting anger. The catalyst is his treatment by McCarten. McCarten’s dislike of Kenneth is indicated as strongly racialized, as he tells him at their first meeting: ‘You’re all the same you lot’ (Kennedy 2010, 4).

Put Out the Light is ultimately not a play about the taboo or fetish of interracial desire or even the human capacity for excessive jealousy, but a play that forces focus onto the psychological costs of racism as a daily and lived experience in Ireland. In June 2009 the Irish increase in racist crimes was identified as the third highest in the EU: overall, ‘between 2000 and 2007, reported racist crimes in Ireland increased by 31.3 per cent’ (Smyth 2009). Furthermore, fifty-four per cent of sub-Saharan Africans living in Ireland reported discrimination due to their ethnic or minority status in the 2009 European Minorities and Discrimination Survey carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. In 2011 ‘75% of the racist incidents reported to ENAR Ireland’, a national network of anti-racism NGOs, ‘involved racist violence and crime’. The ENAR (European Network Against Racism) also notes in the same report that ‘There is mounting concern by NGOs, including those working in the area of migration and integration, that Gardaí may be practicing ethnic profiling’. However, they also record that ‘it is widely held that official records fail to adequately record the extent of the problem. Under-reporting is an international issue and one that must be addressed also in the national context.’

Put Out the Light plays on these statistics and *Othello* to call into question how the racialization of violence or racialized violence functions as an invisible current within Irish society, operating as the darker side of aspirations to social interculturalism. This play does not really concern the

murder of Siobhan, but, rather, the framing of the case not just from Kenneth's perspective but the perspective of a wider public. Kenneth names himself another *Othello* because that is the most legible archetype he can access and make understood to an audience, even if the narrative does not exactly fit. Or rather, his story makes visible the racial undertones arguably operating in Shakespeare's original and that certainly have been highlighted in contemporary productions of the play. Kenneth's greatest struggle nevertheless remains making legible his traumatic experiences of racist harassment. He speaks with a lawyer who advises him to take a case against McCarten for racial harassment in advance of the murder trial. Kenneth imagines this scenario:

Me ... the murderer ... moaning and groaning because I had to pay a three hundred euro fine ... And this upset poor little me ... and I became unhinged? ... and I went on a rampage and beat up a guy on the street and I killed my ex girlfriend ... all because of a little ole three hundred euro fine. (Kennedy 2010, 36)

None of this condones Kenneth's act of violence against his female partner, a responsibility that the character himself repeatedly accepts. Rather, Kennedy's play points to the slipperiness of racism as a formal charge in the first place, let alone as an alibi for a serious crime. He anticipates the reporting angle of his case in the Irish media: 'And the newspapers ... God knows what they'll say ... that I came to this country, that I was given hospitality and asylum and a job ... that I was possessive and jealous and even "primitive" perhaps' (Kennedy 2010, 1). Kenneth can only imagine coverage that positions him as a dependent on the Irish state by drawing on the experience of specific public attitudes about migrants – especially asylum seekers – that applied to both men and women. But the personal attributes he cites at the end are connected most directly to racialized stereotypes regarding his masculinity and sexuality. This is a play about racism and legal and social infrastructure that identifies how antagonistic Irish-born and migrant masculinities negotiate and define the relationships between these infrastructures.

Put Out the Lights positions Irish-born men as Kenneth's constant antagonists: from McCarten to Finbarr to the young man whose shouted slur leads to a physical altercation with Kenneth. These Irish-born men represent a range of subject positions. These include McCarten's privileged position of authority as a garda, Finbarr's queer, middle-class, urban flexibility and the working-class identity of not only the young man Kenneth ultimately attacks but also the other young man identified with some working-class markers in the police station ('a tight haircut ... a

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dirty tracksuit') (ibid. 3) who mouths the words 'black bastard' (ibid.) at Kenneth after his initial arrest. Finbarr remains one of the few characters who do not exhibit any kind of racism, indirect or otherwise, against Kenneth, even as reported from Kenneth's own perspective, which is quite sceptical of Finbarr. Kenneth's conflict with Finbarr arises from jealousy due to his closeness with Siobhan and their later living arrangement. Kenneth's perhaps latent homophobia comes up several times in the course of the play as he refers to him as 'A really funny guy./ Not like anyone I would have known back home' (ibid. 8), but his conflict with Finbarr arises primarily from his confusion about whether to regard him as a romantic rival. Finbarr is the only person who ultimately reconciles with Kenneth, although he witnesses Siobhan's murder in his apartment. He wants to see Kenneth in prison in order to 'tell him that Siobhan loved him' (ibid. 37) and of his plans to marry his boyfriend after the trial. Idealistically, their dual minoritarian subject positions (black and queer) might be seen retroactively as providing a lost opportunity for affinity that could have been mutually supportive throughout. Yet Kenneth's subtle revelation of his own homophobic hesitations, as well as Finbarr's own self-interest and lack of engagement with Kenneth's legal travails prior to Siobhan's death, identifies the complexity of their own identities as ultimately interrupting their chance for connection.

In their recasting as Othello and Cassio, Kenneth and Finbarr stage the complex formation of what Singleton refers to as 'subordinate masculinities' (Singleton 2011, 8) in contemporary Irish society; their experiences are, nonetheless, far from equivalent. Masculinities are always forged more broadly through a process that operates not only in 'terms of symbolic identity but also as socially relational' (ibid. 8) and the relational aspect of masculinity Kennedy emphasizes most is racism as a lived daily behaviour and experience of Irish-born and migrant men living in Ireland. For McCarten and the others, asserting their authority becomes a reflex that translates to both acts that clearly register as hostile ('black bastard') and more subtle acts of intimidation (McCarten's targeting of Kenneth). The overdetermined 'fact' of Kenneth's blackness, to paraphrase Frantz Fanon, ensures, as Singleton observes, that 'African masculinities in Ireland are marked almost exclusively by colour as sign of "non-national" status that masks their social and economic potential' (ibid. 151). *Put Out the Light* presses audiences to question seriously the relationship between state and individual violence as Kennedy indicts the Irish racial state as no less violent for its practised invisibility. Yet Siobhan – even more so than Kenneth – ends up the casualty of *Put Out the Light's* portrayal of the interdependent relationship between antagonistic Irish-born and migrant

masculinities. This gendered outcome is not substantially interrogated in *Put Out the Light*. If Kenneth's complexity resists him being recast entirely as Othello, Siobhan does not escape her stock recasting as Desdemona as convincingly.

Gender trouble

The last two plays under consideration here are Owen McCafferty's *Quietly* (2012) and Polish Theatre Ireland's production of Radoslaw Paczocha's *Delta Phase* (2013). Both plays feature Polish or Polish-Irish protagonists, but neither focus on the legal or infrastructural circumstances of migration. Instead, they critically assess masculinity within the context of Irish bar culture, and in the case of *Quietly* at the intersection of national histories of conflict and more recent experiences of migration. McCafferty's *Quietly* casts a Polish barman, Robert, living in the North as a supporting player in the meeting and potential reconciliation of two Northern men affected by the violence of the Troubles. Paczocha's *Delta Phase* in a translation by Polish Theatre Ireland artistic director Anna Wolf rather obliquely transposes a Polish play to an Irish setting and features three lads on a wild night out gone wrong. While *Quietly* reproduces many of the familiar gendered conventions of previous experiments in Irish intercultural theatre, *Delta Phase* offers a different model of intercultural fusion that forces critical reflection not only on migration and cultural diversity but on the gendered tropes of Irish theatre more broadly.

McCafferty's *Quietly* revolves around the confrontation between Ian, a former member of the Ulster Volunteer Force, and Jimmy, a man whose father Ian killed in a bombing when they were both sixteen. They are now fifty-two, and meet in the same bar where the bombing occurred, on the occasion of Poland playing Northern Ireland in a 2009 World Cup qualifier. Robert's Polishness cements his otherness to the painful memories shared between Ian and Jimmy, as he cannot even share in broader cultural memories of the Troubles as he was not living in Ireland at the time. Seething xenophobia and threats of future violence against migrants pervade the play through Robert's perspective, as his partner and the mother of his young child repeatedly urges him through text message to take a taxi home from work for safety due to tensions raised by the match and attacks on another bar in town. The play ends with 'kids on the street' banging on the bar shutters and shouting 'three-two – three-two – fuckin polish bastard – dirty smelly fuckin bastard – go back to where you come from and shite in the street you fucker – polish wanker' (McCafferty

2012, 55), while Robert stands alone in the bar with a bat.

While the particular intimidation of Robert can be tied explicitly to the context of the match, his interactions with Jimmy before Ian's arrival are telling. Jimmy tells Robert that 'we're not very good with foreigners' (ibid. 18). While Jimmy tells Robert that he won't support the Northern Ireland team because 'this place hasn't looked after me as well as it's looked after you' (ibid. 13), he shifts to identify with a Northern Ireland 'us' versus the Poles living in the area a few lines later. Jimmy defends this shift, stating 'like it or not it's still us' (ibid. 15), implying that Robert cannot be implicated within the same Northern Ireland 'us'. Jimmy's refusal to accept Robert as part of an expanded Northern Irish community functions as emblematic of his refusal to move beyond the trauma of his own past. *Quietly* suggests that tensions over migration to Northern Ireland continue cycles of violence and intimidation laid in place by the Troubles. It does so by placing new violence in the former setting of past trauma in the play's final moments, and by the very fact of Robert's ancillary physical and dramaturgical presence. Robert's presence and story do not advance the plot of *Quietly*, but, rather, offer a series of counteractions that dramatize the gulf between the lived experiences of minority and majority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. When Robert communicates that he has heard the entirety of Jimmy and Ian's conversation, Jimmy responds, 'you were meant to – no point in it just being me and him – has to be someone there to pass the story on' (ibid. 53). Robert's assigned role in passing the story on confirms his role as a support rather than participant in the story of *Quietly* as a whole, but his designation as future storyteller in a local context implies a begrudging assimilation into the life of the community. It is telling, though, that the audience of this play will have to wait for a future play to hear Robert not only tell this story but any story at all. The only background the audience receives for Robert's life is basic facts about the circumstances of his migration, and a series of text-message exchanges between himself and his Northern Irish partner and Polish lover, who threatens suicide after feeling abandoned by him after migrating. In this, he stills fares better than the entirely silent and unseen women.

Robert's offstage women in *Quietly* join the women with more secondary or offstage roles in *Asylum! Asylum!* and *Put Out the Light*, bearing out the pattern that plays about migration in contemporary Ireland prioritize conflicts between men as most representative of the experience of increased cultural diversity. In her review of *Quietly*, Emilie Pine comments on the play as reproducing 'the glaring absence of women in too many narratives of the Troubles' (Pine 2012) as the pivotal women in

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Jimmy's and Ian's lives do not get names or onstage time either, but, rather, exist only in the stories told by the men. In this, plays about or concerning migration continue to reproduce established Irish dramaturgical patterns concerning the history of the Troubles and of the modern Irish nation state as necessitating male protagonists with women cast as mothers, wives and girlfriends, if at all. When *Put Out the Light* dramatizes the psychological effects of racism as arguably leading to murder, Kennedy forces a consideration of institutional racism as an invisible and dangerous force, but it is a female character who ends up taking the weight of the violence as opposed to any of the male perpetrators of the actual abuse. Polish Theatre Ireland's production of Radosław Paczocha's *Delta Phase* casts a woman in a more central onstage role at the intersection of multiple theatrical traditions and dramatic settings through the conceit of the play's transference to an Irish context with Polish and Irish actors. This approach permits the play to speak more subtly to the gendered dynamics of migration that are ostensibly silenced in the other works through their unmarked but blatant focus on the encounter between antagonistic masculinities as the measure of social adjustment to cultural diversity.

Delta Phase was translated from Polish by Polish Theatre Ireland's Polish-born artistic director Anna Wolf and Irish-born company member John Currihan, and co-directed by Currihan and Irish-born Liane O'Shea. *Delta Phase* recounts a night out gone wrong for Misiek, Mastodont and Liszaj that ends in senseless violence. They meet up at a bar called The Legend with each other and a bartender named Justyna to watch the Lech–Wisła match. Tension escalates after they take acid and Justyna gives them a lock-in with another blond, male patron on the condition that they do anything she says. Their high intensifies and the three men enter a state they refer to as the 'delta phase'. In the midst of this, the owner of the bar reappears, and Misiek beats him to death after the owner comes after them with a hurley, later attacking and killing the other blonde man as well as raping Justyna. The three men try to blame the crime on Justyna, and still high, return home, where they are apprehended by police the following morning.

The names and many references are Polish (as in the name of the sports teams playing the match), but Irish slang and references also abound in the translation (the phrases 'knackery' and 'for fuck's sake'; the hurley as the murder weapon). Polish-born Kasia Lech, who is also a company co-founder, is the only Polish actor in the show, and the male parts are played by Irish-born actors Lloyd Cooney, Finbarr Doyle and Jason Duff. Wolf shares that when Paczocha came to see the production, he 'didn't' actually

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like that we didn't change the Polish names. He said that the actors were struggling with pronouncing the Polish names but that was the idea'. Lech adds, 'We live in Dublin and we speak English with different accents, like a Polish accent or a Dublin accent. We try to mime the soundscape of the society. This society has all those accents.' Wolf's embrace of the 'struggle' and Lech's invocation of the 'soundscape of the society' pushes Irish audiences to consider the intersections between experiences of Polish and Irish people in daily life as well as in the theatre. By leaving the audience unsure as to where the play is set, Polish Theatre Ireland's *Delta Phase* calls into question who actually speaks with an Irish accent today, while forcing recognition of the parallel struggles facing Polish and Irish young men regarding anger, alcohol and a sense of purpose in, albeit differing, national and migrant contexts.

The intersection of frustrated masculinity with aggressive violence and excessive drinking strongly recalls the work of Irish-born playwrights Mark O'Rowe, Conor McPherson, and Martin McDonagh. Of O'Rowe and McPherson, Singleton argues that in their monologue plays

the men represented form very much a muted group in themselves, confined to a non-discursive and inverted self-loathing, whose alcohol dependence both permits them to cope with their subordinated position, but ultimately causes their self-destruction. (Singleton 2011, 71)

This analysis maps onto *Delta Phase*, where the lives of the three men appear to revolve around each other, drink, sport and unsuccessfully pursuing women. Their loss of control on acid leads to their destruction. *Delta Phase*, however, does feature a female character, as opposed to the plays of O'Rowe and McPherson, where the male characters 'erase the embodiment of women on the stage and reconstruct them according to their own narrative authority' (ibid.). In *Delta Phase*, it is Justyna's testimony in court that ultimately convicts the trio. The men often literally passed her body around among themselves in Currivan and O'Shea's staging of the play, but it is the men's projections onto her and their use of her body that is ultimately indicted as distorted. Unlike Siobhan, her testimony ultimately carries the most weight.

Delta Phase is not a play about migration. But it is the work of a company that is pioneering approaches to collaboration between Irish-born and migrant artists. Its presentation of a Polish play in an Irish context also forces critical reflection on the gendered gaps in the work of contemporary, canonical, male, Irish playwrights. Polish Theatre Ireland's evolving body of work demonstrates how the practice of Polish and Irish artists (and audiences) are always reshaped through their interactions with

one another, rather than migrant artists or characters needing permission to appear as subordinate characters who will one day carry the story of their nascent participation forward on their own terms. Polish Theatre Ireland demonstrates how intercultural theatre in Ireland might make use of intersectional models of influence in the reinvention of the Irish nation post-migration. In doing so, the dramaturgical formula of ambivalent encounters between the Irish-born male protagonist and his 'othered' double might be more thoroughly supplanted. This would make possible not only inclusion of more female characters (and artists or playwrights) in their own right (although this is sorely needed) but a more multi-perspectival and intersectional analysis of gender as a contingent social identity at the intersection of multiple influences and lived realities.

Indeed, in the last two years, more female migrant characters have appeared onstage than ever before. Mirjana Rendulic's *Broken Promise Land* (2013), *The Hijabi Monologues* (2013) and Wonderland Theatre's *Sylvia's Quest* (2012), written by Alice Coghlan with the company, all centred almost exclusively on experiences of female migration and/or being a minority ethnic member of Irish society. More women onstage does not ensure the smooth development of Irish aesthetic interculturalism, but it is a sign that the Irish theatre may be creeping closer to recognizing and representing those in its audience, or just beyond in the streets, for who they are, and not as a temporary plot device that retreads repetitive and narrow ground.

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Notes

- 1 Dublin Theatre Festival, 'Lost in Translation,' <http://dublintheatre.ie/wp/?tag=ulster-bank-dublin-theatre-festival> (accessed 19 May 2014).
- 2 Central Statistics Office, *Men and Women in Ireland: 2011*, <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/otherreleases/2011/Women%20and%20Men%20in%20Ireland%202011.pdf>, p. 15.
- 3 Central Statistics Office, : *Statistical Yearbook of Ireland: 2011*, <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2012/c1population.pdf>, p. 5.
- 4 *Ibid.* 33.
- 5 *Ibid.* 32–3.
- 6 Health and Research Information Division: The Economic & Social Research Institute, 'Perinatal statistics report 2009', http://www.esri.ie/news_events/latest_press_releases/perinatal_statistics_repo_3/in dex.xml (accessed 15 Oct. 2013).
- 7 See Ronit Lentini and Robbie McVeigh, *After Optimism? Ireland, Racism and Globalisation* (Dublin: Metro Éireann, 2006); Bryan Fanning, *New Guests of the Irish Nation* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), and Eithne Luibhéid, 'Childbearing against the state? Asylum seeker women in the Irish Republic', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27, 4 (Oct.–Nov. 2004), 335–49.
- 8 See the recently released European Commission-funded *Stop Traffick!: Tackling Demand for Sexual Services of Trafficked Young Women and Girls*, authored by the Immigrant Council of Ireland in partnership with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Klaipeda Social and Psychological Services Centre, Mediterra-

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nean Institute of Gender Studies and the Multicultural Women's Association in Finland, <http://www.stoptraffick.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/STOP-TRAFFICK-full-report.pdf> (accessed 20 May 2014).

9 Central Statistics Office, *Men and Women in Ireland: 2011*, 15.

10 For example, see Donal O'Kelly, *Farawayan* (1998); Charlie O'Neill, *Hurl* (2003); Bisi Adigun, *Once Upon A Time & Not So Long Ago* (2005); and Natalia Kostrewza, *More Light* (2007).

11 Ireland adopted direct-provision procedures in 2000, where individuals seeking asylum are provided with room and board, and an allowance of €19.10 per week for adults and €9.60 per child. Previously, individuals seeking asylum had been able to access the social-welfare system. Claire Breen, 'The policy of direct provision in Ireland: a violation of asylum seeker's right to an adequate standard of housing,' *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 20, 4 (2008), 611–36.

12 Donal O'Kelly, *Asylum! Asylum!*, 167.

13 The production starred George Seremba, an 'African author and playwright' who according to Brian Singleton 'cuts across much of the cultural visibility of non-white Ireland' (*Masculinities and the Contemporary Irish Theatre*, 151). After escaping from Uganda following a botched execution attempt, Seremba sought asylum in Canada and found critical theatrical success with his one-man show *Come Good Rain* (1993) that narrates his brush with death in Uganda after being outspoken in his opposition against President Milton Obote. This play toured to Ireland, and Seremba would then return first to star in a revival of O'Kelly's *Asylum! Asylum!* 'to mark the centre of the opening for Migration Studies at University College' (*Ibid.*) While pursuing an MA and PhD at Trinity, he worked professionally as an actor in theatre and television including performances at the Abbey Theatre and on RTE's *Fair City*. *Put Out the Light* would be his last major theatrical role in Ireland before he moved to the United States.

14 European Agency for Fundamental Rights, *EU MIDIS: European Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Main Results Report* (Vienna: European Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, 2009), 6, accessed May 21, 2010, http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis_mainreport_conference-edition_en_.pdf.

15 European Network Against Racism, *ENAR Shadow Report: 2011–2012 – Racism and Related Discriminatory Practices in Ireland* (2012), 35.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.* 36.

18 While the central conflict in *Asylum! Asylum!* is between Leo and Joseph, O'Kelly does end the play with Mary refusing to have charges dropped regarding her physical retaliation against Joseph's deportation. The play's closing lines imply that Mary will continue to fight for the reform of asylum law.

19 The original production of the play premiered in January 2012 at the Wyrbrzeze Theatre in Gdansk directed by Adam Orzechowski.

20 *Delta Phase*, 6–7.

21 Interview with Anna Wolf, John Currivan and Kasia Lech (Polish Theatre Ireland), Dec. 1, 2012, unpublished, digital recording.

22 *Ibid.*