Bożena Kucała
Uniwersytet Jagielloński

Under Irish and Foreign Skies: Home, Migration and Regrexit

The results of the 2016 referendum, rather than concluding the debate on the UK's relations with the European Union, fuelled numerous controversies as well as confronted both the UK and the EU with a host of practical issues connected with Britain's withdrawal, one of them being the thorny question of the Irish border. The continuing disagreements over the Northern Ireland protocol show that, despite the end of the official negotiations, not everyone considers Brexit to be "done." Meanwhile, the expanding volume of political, sociological, economic and historical analysis of Brexit virtually amounts to a new academic discipline of "Brexitology" (Oliver 2019), with its own lexicon.[1] Tim Oliver observes that the discussion of Brexit concerns not only the British exit from the EU, but is primarily a discussion about contemporary Britain itself (1–2). Commentators agree that a key factor in the referendum was the question of national identity and attitudes to immigration. Graham Taylor stresses the decisive role of the English vote (as is well known, England and Wales voted Leave whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland voted Remain)—Brexit, in his opinion, "was underpinned by the emergence of an increasingly politicized form of English nationalism,"

---

1   Apart from the word "Brexit" itself, a number of Brexit-induced neologisms have been coined, such as "breferendum," "Brexiteer," "Brexitology," or "regrexit"—a blend of regret and Brexit (Lalić-Krstin, Silaški 5).

shaped, among others, by "a set of cultural grievances and anxieties generated by increasing levels of EU immigration and an opposition to multiculturalism and cosmopolitan social liberalism" (106). Russell King points out that already several years prior to the referendum the British government had committed itself to creating a "hostile environment for immigrants" (853). Anti-immigrant sentiments intensified before and after the vote; EU nationals in the UK—who, in legal terms, exercised their right to free movement—became "visible" and were labelled as immigrants (King 853). In particular, East European workers were scapegoated for a variety of problems and anxieties experienced by the native population (King 856).

This article is underpinned by the assumption that Brexit is not only about Britain; it is also, indirectly, about contemporary Ireland, Irish identity, and migration from and to Ireland. Due to the range and intensity of bilateral historical, political, economic and cultural relations, the impact of the British referendum is much more profound in Ireland than in any other EU member state (Gilmour 47); as Andrew Gilmour claims, "[n]o issue in peacetime has preoccupied the Irish elite and public to the same extent" (35).

The article examines selected literary responses to the questions of identity, home and migration in the Irish context. The selection is based on the assumption that Irish identity is inextricably intertwined with migration. In the words of Mary Gilmartin, "Ireland as a place is shaped by its contemporary and historic experiences of migration, in ways that are both material and symbolic" (163). The Irish stand out as a nation the vast majority of which live outside the country of their origin (Murray 2). However, since the 1990s the long-established trend of emigration from Ireland has been paralleled and counterbalanced by immigration into Ireland, with the flow of people into the country consistently outnumbering those leaving it (cf. Gilmartin, White 3). Following Ireland's accession to the European Union and the years of the Celtic Tiger prosperity, the country underwent "a dizzying and fundamental transformation" to the present modern state, which itself has become a destination for waves of migrants from both Europe and other continents (Bourke, Faragó xvii–xviii).

What follows aims to offer a comparison of the representations of migration in selected parallel and nearly contemporaneous collections: *Changing Skies* (2014), an anthology of stories by writers of Irish descent which address the experiences of Irish migrants to Britain, and two volumes of poetry by writers of foreign extraction residing permanently or temporarily in Ireland: *Landing Places: Immigrant Poets in Ireland* (2010) and *Writing Home: The 'New Irish' Poets* (2019). Collectively, the texts appear to substantiate the view that national identities may be hybrid, malleable and adaptable. However, the results of the

Brexit referendum indicate the prevalence of opposing tendencies in the UK. The last section surveys Irish writers' responses to Brexit and their shared regret that it is inimical to the processes of cultural integration. Whereas literary texts do not normally serve as evidence in scholarly investigations of social and political changes (*pace* New Historicists), literature and its study, as Robert Eaglestone contends in his Introduction to a recent volume of essays on Brexit-related literature (or BrexLit[2]), "play a crucial role in our thought about how we live as individuals and as communities because of its deep involvement with personal and communal identity" (2).

1. The Irish under Foreign Skies

It is estimated that between 1801–1921 as many as eight million people left Ireland, and another two million emigrated in the subsequent decades of the twentieth century (one quarter of this number concerns Northern Ireland) (McCarthy 15). While for many years the United States was the most frequent choice of destination, after the Second World War the majority of Irish emigrants opted for Britain (McCarthy 29), with the result that by the late 1960s the Irish constituted the largest migrant population in the UK (Wills 1). Over the course of more than two centuries, not only the geographical patterns but also the reasons for Irish emigration have changed, as has the perception of the emigrant. A recent—but a pre-Brexit—anthology published by Manchester Irish Writers, an association affiliated to the Irish World Heritage Centre in Manchester, encapsulates a variety of migrant experiences. *Changing Skies* comprises seventeen monologues, which, though fictitious, resonate with personal and familial memories closely corresponding to certain facts related to the patterns of Irish migration as well as processes of identity-formation. They present a spectrum of attitudes towards Manchester and England in general as the new home, varied degrees of cultural assimilation as well as the immigrants', or the Irish diaspora's, diverse approaches to their Irish heritage.

Manchester is among those British cities with the strongest Irish connections. As one of the leading centres of the Industrial Revolution, the city began to draw Irish immigrants from the early nineteenth century onwards, even prior to the Great Famine of the 1840s. Typically, Irish migrants came from the poor, rural population of the island, for whom the transition to a new thriving urban centre offered the prospect of an escape from poverty and an opportunity for economic betterment. As M. A. Busteed notes, the Manchester Irish

---

2   A neologism coined by Kristian Shaw (Eaglestone 16).

were involved with the life of the city yet continued to live within their own communities, and, as a result of those conflicting influences, "devised a hybrid sense of identity" (273).

The first stories invoke the dire predicament of the Irish poor in nineteenth-century Manchester. In "She's Behind You" by Eileen Holroyd the ghost of Mary Burns, who was Engels' Irish guide to the condition of the working class in England, recalls the sights she once showed to the appalled visitor.[3] Kevin McMahon's "Bass in Eirinn" directly links Irish migration to the Great Famine. While the protagonist, trapped in the oppressive industrial metropolis, misses the open fields of Ireland, the odours of the city remind him of the smell of decaying potatoes, thereby implicitly justifying his decision to leave his home. However, E. M. Powell's "Off the Streets," another story set in Victorian Manchester, ends on a conciliatory note. The protagonist, an Irish gangster turned policeman, begins to accept the city as his home and learns to assume responsibility for it.

Manchester featured prominently in condition-of-England debates in the nineteenth-century. The dire situation of the Irish working class was noted, but it was not uncommon to blame the Irish—as violent, irresponsible drunkards—for the poverty and squalor in which they lived.[4] Busteed claims that there was "a tradition of 'othering' the Irish as the foil against which the English and later the British had defined themselves" (34). The prejudice against the Irish was conflated with "anti-Catholic sentiments," which, according to Busteed, were among the "key dimensions of historic English, and later British, popular nationalism" (269).

The notion of emigration as exile enforced by economic or political factors is well established in Irish history and associated particularly with the disastrous Great Famine. The negative connotations of emigration involve the experience of losing one's home, separation from one's family and the trauma of having to adapt to a culturally and economically challenging environment. The creation of an independent Irish state in the 1920s did little to stem the outflow.

Several twentieth-century stories refer to the political context of Irish migration, especially the foundational events in modern Irish history: involvement in the Great War, the Easter Rising, the Civil War and the establishment of the

---

3   A detailed description of the living conditions in the Irish quarters of nineteenth-century Manchester may be found in Busteed 2016 (48–66).

4   The stereotype of the nineteenth-century Irish immigrant as "dirty, shiftless, belligerent and drunk" was echoed in the perception of the Irish labourer in post-war England (Wills 141), translating to a placement of the Irish migrants in the category of the "undeserving poor" (ibid. 146).

Free State. As in the case of the earlier waves of economic migration, politically-motivated departure was also a form of exile. For example, the story of Jackie as told by his wife ("The Songs He Left Unsung"[5] by Kevin McMahon) is a paradigmatic illustration of an individual's entanglement in the complexities of early twentieth-century history. Having joined the British army when lured by the promise of Home Rule for Ireland, at the end of the war Jackie finds himself demoted from the status of war hero to traitor in the eyes of his compatriots, which drives him and his family out of Ireland. The protagonist of Marion Riley's "A Child of Civil War" recollects the dramatic circumstances in which she and her mother hastily left Ireland in order to escape revenge from paramilitary organisations.

Yet in the twentieth century the situation of the average Irish migrant improved; many personal testimonies reveal stories of professional and economic success (McCarthy 222). Likewise, the profile of the migrant evolved; many of those who left Ireland at the end of the twentieth century were well educated and sought better career opportunities abroad rather than an escape from domestic poverty (Gilmartin, White 1). Hence, the reasons why people have been leaving the island have gradually become more complex, and involve also positive impulses. Apart from the traditional search for material opportunities, emigrants may seek liberation from family patterns and cultural models which they find constraining; they may also be motivated by a desire for a new personal identity, which need no longer be defined only by nationality or ethnicity (Murray 6–7).

The later stories in the anthology tend to feature protagonists for whom emigration is a matter of choice. Post-WWII England offers not only more opportunities to find work, but also a more liberal lifestyle, which appeals particularly to young Irish women ("Raincoats and Riots" by Rose Morris). In parallel to the increasingly positive motives for migration, the status of the Irish immigrant gradually rises—from starving workers in the slums of Victorian Manchester, to Irish men and women setting up their own businesses in England and even owning and managing properties, instead of just building them—Joanna in Alrene Hughes' "Dreaming in Belfast" is a successful contemporary estate agent.

Whereas some immigrants are prepared to endorse England as their second home and acknowledge that by "building England for them" they are also putting down roots in the foreign land (Ann Towey's "A Man and his Shovel"[6]),

---

5   The title is a quote from Francis Ledwidge's poem "At a Poet's Grave" (1916). Ledwidge was an Irish poet and soldier, killed in action at the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917.

6   Like most stories in the volume, this one embodies a very common pattern. As Clair Wills observes, "[t]he Irish community in post-war Britain [was] most visibly represented by the Irish labourer" (112).

others continue to mentally reside in Ireland: they live in Irish neighbour-hoods, have Irish neighbours and have transplanted Irish customs overseas ("Lily's Story" by Mary Walsh, "The Duties of the Married State" by Kathleen Handrick). A recurrent motif in most stories is a sense of belonging to the Irish community, combined with a feeling of estrangement and prejudice from the English population. In nineteenth-century Manchester an Irishman was a social pariah, treated with disdain and mistrust. Twentieth-century characters tell stories of the Irish being shunned as potential terrorists during the Troubles (Kevin McMahon's "Burden"). But the twenty-first century tales convey more optimistic testimonies: not only migration but also national identity becomes increasingly a matter of choice. Also, having succeeded in England, it is possible to make a return journey and settle back in the place of origin ("Dreaming in Belfast"). Unlike in the past, emigration need not mean a radical break with one's birthplace. In the more and more diverse multicultural social environ-ment, people of Irish descent are able to embrace their hybrid identity and the duality of their heritage ("Manchester Irish" by Angela Channell). "Home" may mean both "here" and "there"; the circumstances of contemporary life blur the distinction between migration and temporary translocation.

Although there are no direct links between the monologues (like Joyce's *Dubliners*, the collection portrays characters who share their locality—albeit diachronically), an overarching plot with its own dynamics may be inferred from their chronological arrangement. From the miserable beginnings, the multifaceted tale of Irish migration develops towards a qualified happy ending: the contemporary Irish community in England is in a position to cultivate its heritage together with a sense of belonging in the new home.

2. Foreigners under Irish Skies

In recognition of the expanding international community in contemporary Ireland, Dublin-based Dedalus Press published *Landing Places*, an anthology of immigrant poets living in Ireland (2010). The anthology has been recently followed by a companion volume, *Writing Home* (2019), which the editors chose to subtitle *The 'New Irish' Poets*, to stress the immigrant writers' links with their new homeland. Numerous poems in each collection describe the phenomenon of migration, from references to specific experiences to general reflections on the process of translocation.

Some speakers (who may or may not be identified with the poets them-selves) look back to the moment of departure while intimating the causes that led them to leave their homeland. In Kinga Elwira Cybulska's "Warsaw" the

speaker, on her way to the airport, looks forward to the new opportunities that life abroad is likely to present, while already feeling nostalgic for the "exquisite greyness" and "stunning ugliness" of her native town (2010: 28). The poetry of the Nigerian-born Oritsegbemi Emmanuel Jakpa points to political persecution and violence at home as the immediate cause of emigration, which clearly amounts to exile. Alluding to Seamus Heaney's "Digging," the speaker in "Harmattan" is resigned to putting down roots since he has found himself "replanted" in "alien soil": "My pen, my spade. / I'll crack with it. / Dig with it" (2010: 74).

Several poems portray migration as a condition of displacement, resulting in a lack of belonging. "Immigrants lose their minds in crossing … When belongings are eventually sent on / they are never unpacked / for fear of what is broken," writes Joseph Horgan in "Imperial Road" (2010: 70). "Astray on Irish paths / I whistle a tune of homesickness," complains the speaker in "Irish Paths" by the Romanian-born Mirela Nicoleta Hincianu (2010: 65). A Pakistani immigrant in Yameema Mitha's poem is grateful for the safety that Ireland offers and "the gracious green" of the country, yet knows that, shaped by a different culture, she will never belong there (2019: 108).

"Belonging," if the migrant manages to achieve it, is an ongoing process rather than a fixed condition; it is negotiated through simultaneous detachment from and attachment to places (Gilmartin, White 7). Without alluding to specific circumstances and relying on metaphors borrowed from nature, Nicola Geddes (originally from Scotland) depicts migration as a long process of leaving one home and learning to accept another: "I saw that I am the tree that grew away from its roots / but I grew on, reaching into the peaty soil by the castle ("Native," 2019: 48). The speaker in Shaiyon Merkel's "Holi" is another migrant who makes an attempt to fit in. Although secretly resenting the local people's mistakenly homogenising treatment of Asians, he is prepared to play his part: "All this, for Ireland, I will do … and cry—*Hare Vishnu, Hare Éire*" (2019: 103).

Whereas the landscape of the new home may be seen as peculiar to Ireland and thus foreign, it may also be perceived as a timeless ground (in both a literal and a metaphorical sense), capable of merging human experiences across different cultures. The refugee in "Behind Tara Hill" by the Angolan-French poet Landa Wo hears the spirits of his ancestors calling out to him from the historic Irish site (2010: 220–221). In a similar vein, "the child of the earth" in "Mwana WeVhu" by Kaysie Kandiwa (from Zimbabwe) learns to claim the soil of Éire as her own. Metaphorically growing into it, she also recognises the affinity of her body with the land of her ancestors: "I am a skin-walker of my own lineage" (2019: 58).

However, moving from a universalising to a specific context reveals typical difficulties in adaptation. Polish-born Bogusia Wardein's "From the West Coast" is a description of Irish life from the defamiliarising perspective of an outsider (2019: 174–175). Eduard Schmidt-Zorner contrasts the official Irish policy of openness ("*Céad Míle Fáilte*, a successful marketing trick") with the occasional mistrust and resentment experienced by foreigners in daily situations (2019: 159). A foreign accent is one of the external markers of otherness. In Sven Kretzschmar's "Upon Arrival in Dublin" the foreigner's speech is probably responsible for his difficulty in finding a place to stay: "with English too good for a foreigner / and not good enough to be Irish" (2019: 66). Even an immigrant who can boast "Irish passport, Revenue, Hiberian, Bank of Ireland, / Áine and Saoirse, holiday house in Wicklow" fails to qualify as "local" (Kinga Olszewska, "Site for Sale," 2010: 144). Several writers recount instances of prejudice against people of different races (Oritsegbemi Emmanuel Jakpa, "Birthday Party," 2010: 71–73; Suzzanna Matthews, "Teaching English, at Spencer Dock," 2019: 69–71).

When the "New Irish" poetry is read alongside the Manchester Irish Writers' collection, a considerable thematic overlap is revealed between them. Nevertheless, because the two poetry volumes refer to contemporary experiences, it is impossible, unlike with the *Changing Skies* anthology, to sketch a line of evolution in the representation of migration into Ireland. What is clear, however, is that the number of foreign-born writers as well as the diversity of their cultural backgrounds testify to the great transformation which Ireland has recently undergone: "from a poor, peripheral country on the edge of Europe with a conservative culture dominated by tradition and Church," into "a global, cosmopolitan country with a dynamic economy" (Kitchin v).

Even though the portrayal of the country from an immigrant's point of view does not always reflect the fabled Irish "one hundred thousand welcomes," the editors of *Writing Home* profess the intention to applaud the "new linguistic and cultural threads being woven into the fabric of Irish life." The influx of people that Ireland is seeing nowadays is represented as a novel and welcome development: "More than anything, we celebrate 'arrival' itself, in a country that is perhaps more used to commemorating departure and loss" (Boran, Enyi-Amadi xvii). From the Irish perspective, the impulse to modify the sense of what constitutes Irish identity arises not only in response to the familiar process of emigration, but also from the experience of intercultural encounters at home—a phenomenon well known in Britain, but relatively new in Ireland.

3. After Brexit, Regrexit—Irish Writers' Views

Brexit added an unexpected twist to the stories of migration. The results of the referendum impeded the flow of foreign nationals into Britain, thus halting a trend which used to be taken for granted as an integral part of the process of globalisation. Many EU nationals living in the UK decided to leave, due to ethnic abuse or intimidation, and "being forced to re-assess their sense of belonging in a post-Brexit climate" (Taylor 108). The British-Nigerian writer Ben Okri comments: "It seems to me that the whole discourse on Brexit was conducted in code. 'Immigrant' was code for all perceived foreigners. 'Getting our country back' was code for turning back the clock" (52). London-based poet Craig Dobson confesses that he now feels estranged in his own country, and concludes his poem "Brexile" (2019) by declaring: "a part of me's already gone." Opinion polls in Britain indicate a slight drop in the original support for Brexit. Several polls conducted between November 2020 and January 2021 showed 54% support for Remain and 46% for Leave (Curtice 2021). However, even some Remain supporters accept that Brexit is "done and dusted" so would not vote in favour of reversing it. John Curtice concludes his analysis by stating that "voters as a whole still emerge as being almost equally divided between those who would like to be back inside the EU and those who would not" (2021).

While Brexit remains a deeply divisive issue in the UK, in Ireland there is widespread resentment against it. Since joining the Union in 1973—together with the UK— Ireland has supported European integration (Gilmour 36). Ireland appreciates the tangible economic and political benefits of its EU membership, one of which is a shift from bilateral to multilateral international relations, which is also "a shift from the claustrophobic to the expansive—and liberating for a small state with a large neighbour" (Gilmour 48). Prior to the referendum, Irish politicians openly voiced their conviction that the Leave vote, for a number of reasons, would be detrimental to Ireland. As part of their pro-EU campaign, several Irish ministers addressed the Irish diaspora in Britain (including Manchester), urging the eligible Irish to take part in the vote. Subsequently, the Irish government openly expressed its disappointment with the results (Gilmour 44–45).

Among Irish writers anti-Brexit attitudes appear universal. *The Irish Times* carried out two surveys among approximately twenty leading Irish (and Northern Irish) writers, most of them residing in the UK, asking for their reactions to Brexit—one in 2016, immediately after the results were announced, and the other three years after the event. The responses were uniformly critical of the pro-Brexit campaign, the emerging long-term consequences of the vote, the way the negotiations were being conducted and the issue of the Irish border

was being (mis)handled, as well as of the xenophobia that Brexit had unleashed. Even though the Irish diaspora was not the main target of the anti-immigration rhetoric, the Irish can easily identify with those who have been categorised as "other" in England. Immediately after the referendum, John McAuliffe from the Manchester Irish World Heritage Centre commented on the startling disruption to the process of multicultural integration:

> "Where are you from?" is how conversations began that morning. "I'm from here." And, of course, "I'm from Kerry," or Mayo, or Tyrone or Dublin, an easy doubleness to which we had become more and more accustomed. But the question many Irish people in Britain will be asking this week, having seen the country they work in tilt and move: where do we go from here? (Doyle 2016)

With her Irish accent, Catriona O'Reilly acknowledges an affinity with Eastern European migrant workers:

> Being Irish in a place like Lincolnshire puts one in an odd position: one is less visible than, say, a Polish or Lithuanian national, but an Irish accent is frequently commented on. … The Irish have enjoyed "special status" in Britain since the foundation of the State, but many of us born since 1973 readily identify as European and feel solidarity with our fellow Polish and Lithuanian emigrés. (Doyle 2016)

Some writers remark on a paradoxical reversal when comparing Britain and Ireland. London-based Eimear McBride reveals that her move to Britain was motivated by a desire to escape Irish provincialism and immerse herself in British multiculturalism; however, Britain has now become "mean, narrow and unwelcoming" (Doyle 2016). In the words of Michael Foley, England is in danger of becoming "the new Ireland, patronised as stubborn, deluded and hopelessly out of touch with the world" (Doyle 2019). For Vona Groarke, Brexit led her to finalise her decision to move from Manchester back to rural Ireland (Doyle 2019). According to Tony Murray, the author of *London Irish Fictions* (quoted in this article), the sense of distress following the referendum was felt on both sides of the Irish Sea: "Most Irish people in Britain, like our cousins in Ireland, are deeply shocked by what has taken place here in the last few days" (Doyle 2016).

Obviously, Irish writers also share a deep concern about the future of the island of Ireland now that borders have been re-established and the fragile

peace process in Northern Ireland has been undermined. David Wheatley[7] has responded with a poem which, by his own admission, was inspired by the immediate association he made between the results of the referendum and the story of a grotesque and disgusting incident in a Northern Irish town:

> … the bustit sewage
> tanker fornenst the diamond
> in Crossgar the week of
> the vote randomly
> spraying clabbery glar
> and shite everywhere
> not much of a metaphor ("Flags and Emblems")

The tenor of this scatological metaphor, or "not much of a metaphor," is bluntly obvious: it will be hard for people on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea to escape the fallout from Brexit.

Another sense in which Brexit is also very much about Ireland is its impact on the evolving concept of Irish identity. It is estimated that within a year after the referendum, about 17,000 British nationals applied for citizenship in another EU country, many of them choosing Ireland (Wood, Gilmartin 230). Martina Evans, an Irish writer based in London, expressed her amazement at this astonishing outcome of Brexit: "I never thought I'd see the day when Irish passports would be all the rage in London!" (Doyle 2016). Research conducted among the applicants revealed a new type of motivation for claiming a connection to Ireland—apart from a genuine family link to the country, applicants pointed to practical factors: the benefits of holding an EU passport. Therefore, in many cases this new Irishness is synonymous with "pragmatic cosmopolitanism" (Wood, Gilmartin 230–231). Paradoxically, Brexit, which to a large extent was driven by a desire to define national identity within narrow, ethnicity-based criteria, also seems to have reinforced a counterbalancing tendency, namely towards a concept of a fluid identity, which may be inclusive to the point of becoming transnational.

---

7 David Wheatley is a Dublin-born Irish poet, critic and lecturer at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

| Works Cited

Boran, Pat and Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi, eds. *Writing Home: The 'New Irish' Poets*. Dublin: Dedalus Press, 2019.

Bourke, Eva and Borbála Faragó, eds. *Landing Places: Immigrant Poets in Ireland*. Dublin: Dedalus Press, 2010.

Busteed, M.A. *The Irish in Manchester c.1750–1921: Resistance, Adaptation and Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Curtice, John. "The Strife Is O'er; the Battle Done?" What UK Thinks: EU website, 4 Feb. 2021, https://tinyurl.com/pc5v6um8. Accessed 15 March 2021.

Dobson, Craig. "Brexile." *Bollocks to Brexit: An Anthology of Poems and Short Fiction*. Ed. Ambrose Musiyiwa. Leicester: CivicLeicester, 2019. 95.

Doyle, Martin. "'UK Was Groomed': Irish Writers Throw Book at Brexit." *The Irish Times* 27 June 2016, https://tinyurl.com/y68nvfc3. Accessed 15 March 2021.

---. "Brexit Is Aggressive and Dangerously Nostalgic. The UK Is in for a Brutal Chastening." *The Irish Times* 29 March 2019, https://tinyurl.com/27hhrcyv. Accessed 15 March 2021.

Eaglestone, Robert. "Introduction: Brexit and Literature." *Brexit and Literature: Critical and Cultural Responses*. Ed. Robert Eaglestone. London: Routledge. 1–6.

Gilmartin, Mary. *Ireland and Migration in the Twenty-first Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

Gilmartin, Mary and Allen White, eds. *Migrations: Ireland in a Global World*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. Irish Society Series.

Gilmour, Andrew. "Ireland." *Europe's Brexit: EU Perspectives on Britain's Vote to Leave*. Ed. Tim Oliver. Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2018. 35–49.

Hughes, Arlene and Kevin McMahon, eds. *Changing Skies*. London: PublishNation, Kindle ebook, 2014.

King, Russell. "Everyday Europe: Immigration, Transnational Mobility and the 'Wicked Problem' of Brexit." *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 13:1 (2020): 842–863. *ProQuest One Academic*.

Kitchin, Rob. Series Editor's Foreword. *Migrations: Ireland in a Global World*. Ed. Mary Gilmartin and Allen White. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. Irish Society Series. v–vi.

Lalić-Krstin, Gordana and Nadežda Silaški. "From Brexit to Bregret." *English Today* 134:2 (2018): 3–8, https://doi:10.1017/S0266078417000530.

McCarthy, Angela. *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921–65: 'For Spirit and Adventure'*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

Murray, Tony. *London Irish Fictions: Narrative, Diaspora and Identity*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012.

Okri, Ben. "When Writers Fall Silent, Something Has Gone Wrong in the Mood of a Country." *New Statesman* 31 March 2017: 52. *Academic Search Ultimate*.

Oliver, Tim. "Brexitology: Delving into the Books on Brexit." *International Politics Reviews* 7:1–2 (2019): 1–24. *ProQuest One Academic*.

Taylor, Graham. *Understanding Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2017.

Wheatley, David. "Poetry in the Age of Brexit." *The Irish Times* 23 June 2018, https://tinyurl.com/epb5w7jy. Accessed 16 March 2021.

Wills, Clair. *The Best Are Leaving: Emigration and Post-war Irish Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Wood, Patricia Burke and Mary Gilmartin. "Irish Enough: Changing Narratives of Citizenship and National Identity in the Context of Brexit." *Space and Polity* 22:2 (2018): 224–237.

| Abstract

Bożena Kucała
Under Irish and Foreign Skies: Home, Migration and Regrexit

This article analyses literary reflections on the process of migration both from and to Ireland in selected contemporary short stories and poems. *Changing Skies* (2014), an anthology of stories by Manchester Irish writers, represents a wide spectrum of the Irish migrant experience. Although traditionally perceived as a country which has sent waves of emigrants to other parts of the world, recently Ireland has itself become the destination and adopted home for thousands of immigrants. The second part of the article discusses how foreign writers residing in Ireland view the questions of home, identity and migration in two companion volumes of poetry. The concluding section surveys a sample of Irish writers' reactions to the process of Brexit, which is redefining migration, home and identity both in Britain and on the island of Ireland, and is causing widespread regret in the Irish community that the tendency towards greater diversity, mobility and heterogeneity has been halted.

Keywords: Irish migration; Irish writers in England; immigrant writers in Ireland; national identity; Brexit

| **Abstrakt**

BOŻENA KUCAŁA
Pod irlandzkim i pod obcym niebem: dom, migracja i regrexit

Artykuł analizuje literackie refleksje na temat procesu migracji z Irlandii i do Irlandii w wybranych współczesnych opowiadaniach i wierszach. *Changing Skies* (2014), antologia opowiadań autorstwa irlandzkich pisarzy z Manchesteru, przedstawia szerokie spektrum doświadczeń irlandzkich migrantów. Choć tradycyjnie postrzegana jako źródło fal emigracji, Irlandia ostatnio sama stała się celem dla tysięcy przybyszów. Druga część artykułu omawia kwestie domu, tożsamości i migracji w dwóch pokrewnych zbiorach poezji reprezentujących twórczość zagranicznych pisarzy osiadłych w Irlandii. Końcową część stanowi przegląd wybranych opinii irlandzkich pisarzy na temat Brexitu, który wymusza przedefiniowanie pojęć migracji, domu i tożsamości zarówno w Wielkiej Brytanii, jak i w Irlandii i wywołuje wśród irlandzkiej społeczności ubolewanie, że tendencje do większej różnorodności i mobilności zostały zahamowane.

Słowa kluczowe: irlandzka migracja; irlandzcy pisarze w Anglii; pisarze-
-imigranci w Irlandii; tożsamość narodowa; brexit

| **About the Author**

Bożena Kucała is an Associate Professor at the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Her research interests include contemporary British and Irish fiction, historical fiction and the neo-Victorian novel. Main publications: *Intertextual Dialogue with the Victorian Past in the Contemporary Novel* (2012), co-edited books: *Writer and Time: James Joyce and After* (2010), *Confronting the Burden of History: Literary Representations of the Past* (2012), *Travelling Texts: J.M. Coetzee and Other Writers* (2014), *Powieść brytyjska w XXI wieku* [The British Novel in the 21st Century] (2018).
E-mail: bozena.kucala@uj.edu.pl
ORCID: 0000-0002-9882-9305