

# The Languages of Transnationalism: Translation, Training, and Transfer

IN THE FLOWS and connections that are central to transnational studies, language is a conduit that facilitates transfers; it allows for the movement of ideas and people across national and linguistic boundaries. In the case of transnational Irish Studies, foreign languages have been both bridges and barriers: bridges in that they allow access and interaction with non-Anglophone worlds, but also barriers because Irish Studies has generally shied away from non-English-language investigations. The degree to which transnational Irish Studies has remained Anglophone, even when purporting to be global in nature, is striking.<sup>1</sup> Irish interactions with Australia, America, Canada, and Britain have, for obvious reasons, dominated Irish transnational studies, while connections with European and non-Anglophone countries have historically received little attention.<sup>2</sup> In this article I wish to examine exchanges outside of the English-language domain in nineteenth-century Ireland in order to highlight important alternative dialogues that existed beyond the dominant English narrative. To illustrate these trends I will use two case studies of multilingual Irish transnationalism from the nineteenth century. The first focuses on translation activity, and the second investigates the study of modern foreign languages in this period. Both will serve to illustrate the

1. For example, Cian T. McMahon's recently published work *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840–1880*, is a study of twenty American and two Australian newspapers.

2. For a lengthier discussion on the neglect of Europe by historians of Ireland, particularly for the nineteenth century, see the introduction by Barr and O'Connor in Barr, Finelli, and O'Connor, *Nation/Nazione*. See also Heffernan et al. and Whelehan on the possibilities for greater integration of modern Ireland into the European context.

currents and circuits between Ireland and Europe that existed in the period and offer new perspectives on an Irish transnationalism that traverses not just national but also linguistic borders.<sup>3</sup>

## TRANSLATION AND TRANSFER

In the context of Irish Studies translation offers a paradigm for the study of transnational trends and can highlight the European movement of people, ideas, and texts across borders. Translations from European languages published in Ireland in the nineteenth century offer a powerful example of transnationalism at work in a non-Anglophone context while also providing a significant metric for transnational transfer.<sup>4</sup> The publication of translations shows a desire to disseminate them, and it is therefore a most obvious indicator of the movement of ideas. Transnationalism regularly features in translation studies, as the existence of transnational trends in history, culture, and society cannot be ignored by those who study language movements across borders. Translation has long been viewed as a way to help understand hybrid cultures, transnational worlds, and globalized trends.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as it responds to local needs while at the same time engaging with international trends, translation can help to overcome the binary between the national and the international as well as the tensions between them that scholars often perceive to exist. It is telling that the earliest known use of the term “transnational” was in an 1862 lecture on proximities and connections in languages by the German linguist Georg Curtius, while the first use of the term in English came in 1868 with a *translation* of the quotation from Cur-

3. For the purposes of this essay I will limit the discussion to European languages and will not treat the place of the Irish language in Irish transnational discourse. The mediation of the transnational experience through language is currently a vibrant research area that offers many new perspectives, especially in the application of emerging studies of translanguaging to the Irish-speaking emigrant.

4. Hofmeyer maintains that one key methodological challenge in any practice of transnational history is how one deals with circulation and how one tracks the movement of objects, people, ideas, and texts (Bayly 1450).

5. This has particularly been the case since the cultural turn in translation studies; at that point, rather than deal with issues of fidelity to the original, scholars came to examine how translations are cultural products and cultural imports. See, for example, Bassnett and Lefevere, *Translation, History, and Culture* and *Constructing Cultures*.

tius that “every language is fundamentally something transnational” (Akira 1047). But while scholars have highlighted the role of translation in the interaction between cultures, this framework has not been given as much attention by historians, nor has it made a significant crossover to a more general audience (Rundle 232–34).

In recent years cultural-studies scholars have also embraced the transnational, leading to significant work on world literature and global cultures. Following the important impetus to this field provided by Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters* and by Franco Moretti in “Conjectures on World Literatures,” most national literatures have experienced a transnational turn (Jay 1–2). In a long tradition that stretches back to Goethe’s *Weltliteratur*, these developments have explored rich cultural veins that Jahan Ramazani in his book on transnational poetics describes as various ways of “vivifying circuits of poetic connection and dialogue across political and geographic borders and even hemispheres, of examining cross-cultural and cross-national exchanges, influences, and confluences” (xi). The field of cultural studies has long accepted the need to understand and investigate literatures that traverse national borders and authors who defy categorization under national literary categories.<sup>6</sup> As literary scholarship has actively been debating the notion of world literature over the last thirty years, the place of translation in these global flows has been brought to the fore by scholars such as Lydia Liu, Emily Apter, and David Damrosch.<sup>7</sup> The realization that much transnational literature relies on translation has increasingly highlighted the importance of viewing global flows, circuits, and exchanges through the prism of translation. Comparative literature, postcolonial studies, diaspora studies, and world-literature studies have regularly theorized a transnationalism in dialogue with translation, as can be seen, for example, in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha. Through migration, travel,

6. Indeed, Irish cultural commentators and critics have long been aware of the transnational dimensions to Irish cultural developments.

7. Apter, for example, in discussing the “translation zone,” argues that she wishes to explore an “intellectual topography that is neither the property of a single nation, nor an amorphous condition associated with postnationalism, but rather a zone of critical engagement that connects the ‘l’ and the ‘n’ of transLation and trans-Nation” (Apter, *Translation Zone* 5).

interactions, influence, and networks, cultures are “translated” into new, often hybrid forms in a transnational flow of ideas, practices, and people.

#### TRANSLATION IN IRELAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Many of the scholars mentioned above understand translational forces as a metaphorical process of cultural change stemming from displacement, emigration, and movement in personal and communicative systems. Although the notion of translation in a metaphorical sense can be very suggestive, particularly in a postcolonial context, I wish instead to look at the material presence of translations in Ireland and the processes involved in their transfer. In general terms it is possible to identify a strong and consistent commitment to translating texts from European languages into English in Ireland in the nineteenth century. The activity was particularly prevalent from the 1830s to the 1860s, and it involved translators from all religious backgrounds and political persuasions. Both the *Nation* newspaper and the *Dublin University Magazine*, for example, consistently contained translations, and major publishers in Ireland during this time, such as James Duffy and Henry Gill, featured them in their catalogues. An article in 1862 on “Translators and Translations” published in *Duffy’s Hibernian Magazine* spoke of the “great impulse” that had been given to translations into English in previous years (467).

Joep Leerssen has pointed out that in cultural consciousness-raising, all nations in Europe are each other’s immediate neighbors and therefore open to dense patterns of mutual influence and exchange (“Nationalism” 564–66; “Viral Nationalism” 257–59). The translation of nationalist tropes and revolutionary imagery from European poetry by Irish translators is a particularly visible element of such interlocking networks. Of special interest here are the translations produced by the Young Irelanders that were published in the *Nation* newspaper, a corpus that reveals how transnationalism can be present even during overtly nationalist processes. These translations allowed for a move away from British cultural hegemony to access texts and ideas from other sources. Thus, in an early edition of the *Nation*, John Blake Dillon explained why the paper would be going to considerable expense and effort to publish translated texts:

The literature of the Continent has been hitherto a sealed book to the Irish public. The sayings and doings of the people on the other side of the English Channel are as completely unknown to us as to the inhabitants of New Zealand. Some of the greatest works that have ever seen the light have, within the last few years, been published in Germany and France; and we are utterly ignorant not only of their contents but of their very names. There are many reasons why we should regret this ignorance of foreign literature. It may be stated as a general truth that the more intimately acquainted the people of any country are with the sentiments, the actions, and the condition of their neighbours, the more aspiring, the more liberal, and the more intolerant of oppression that people will be. . . . It should be recollected that we have no literature of our own—none, at least, to which we have access. Foreign literature or no literature, for some time at least we must have; it is the alternative which the policy or the barbarity of England has left us. (*Nation* 22 Oct. 1842)

Foreign languages and translations gave access to different narratives that provided an alternative to British hegemony and were recognized by contemporaries as transnational options for national narratives. Indeed, languages themselves had been caught up in nationalist discourse since Fichte and Herder argued for their centrality to a notion of national identity, but they also furnished opportunities for diversity and alterity by enabling access to new ideas. Although the importation of these thoughts aided the creation of national boundaries, their very presence nonetheless signaled reduced insularity—an important concern in an island country.

#### AN EXCEPTIONAL NATION?

One of the chief contributions that translations can make to a national story is their challenge to the notion of exceptionalism. Nineteenth-century nationalism liked to focus on unique national heritage and originality, but in reality there were many common tropes and trends in European nationalism in this period, and translators were particularly aware of these communalities. Leerssen has identified transnational trends and links in European nationalism that belie attempts to argue for the exceptionalism of any given country in the grips of nationalist upheaval (“Irish Cultural Nationalism” 170–87). The sentiments circulating in Europe at this time were so similar that

it was possible for cultural mediators to translate and disseminate verse from France, Italy, and Germany with a distinctly national impact in mind. The publication of translations of European patriotic verse in the *Nation* newspaper points to the easy transfer of literary verse between countries despite the seemingly paradoxical national uniqueness proclaimed in such works.

To give but one example, when the translation of a poem from the Italian poet Vincenzo da Filicaia was published in the *Nation* on 29 April 1843, it bore the title “To Prostrate Italy,” but after the word “Italy” appeared the parenthetical aside, “read Ireland.” Such an addition suggests a perceived transferability of national sentiments and a notion that national literature could be interchanged between countries through translation. Thus, when Filicaia mourned the fate of Italy, it was deemed to be equally applicable to Ireland:

The fatal light of beauty bright with fell attraction shone,  
Fatal to thee, for tyrants be the lovers thou hast won!  
That forehead fair is doom'd to wear its shame's degrading proof,  
And slavery's print in damning tint stamp'd by a despot's hoof!

Indeed, the paper had previously noted that “Filicaia’s divine hymn to Italy was circulated through the press here with the proper names altered, and passed as the wailing of an Irish bard” (*Nation* 25 Feb. 1843). The affinity was deemed to be so close that the two countries were interchangeable: The poetic tropes expressed in the poem of the downtrodden country, under the hoof of tyrants and suffering because of its “fatal gift of beauty,” proved popular in Ireland, and Filicaia’s imagery was transported to an Irish realm in the hope of cross-fertilization and inspiration.

Such patriotic poetry regularly traveled across borders in this period. Irish translators such as “Speranza” (Lady Jane Elgee) and James Clarence Mangan translated German revolutionary poets like Georg Herwegh and Ferdinand Freiligrath, while the French poet Pierre-Jean de Béranger was an unlikely but dominant presence who, according to Michèle Milan, provided a “decisive model of political resistance and cultural national representation” (“For the People” 81). Other transfers included Petrarch’s patriotic poem “Spirto Gentil,” translated by the Young Irelander Martin Mac Dermott in 1847, and the writings of Alphonse de Lamartine. The entanglement of na-

tionalism at this time can be gleaned from the constant acts of transfer. For example, de Lamartine was regularly translated into English by Irish poets, and the Frenchman was allegedly inspired by the example of the *Nation* to found his own paper, *La Patrie* (Andrews 58). De Lamartine's poetry was also translated into German by Herwegh, whose own poetry was translated in Ireland for publication in the *Nation*. This appropriation and domestication of transnational ideas resulted in an interlinked Europe of many nations proclaiming their uniqueness. These entangled histories in the nineteenth century were able to surmount language barriers through the medium of translation and active cultural mediators.

Translation flows could work in both directions and were not merely the inward importation of European themes in the nineteenth century. There were also Irish exports, as the example of Thomas Moore's *Melodies* demonstrates. Moore's publication was translated into many European languages and was embraced enthusiastically in countries as diverse as Italy and Poland. The Irish were aware of this movement, leading to a greater appreciation of the work at home. The *Nation* reported: "[Moore's *Melodies*] bear translation. They not only have appeared in every European language, but they supplied the Poles with three most popular revolutionary and national songs during the last war" (*Nation* 29 Oct. 1842).<sup>8</sup>

The European links of Irish nationalists have not always been immediately obvious: Young Ireland's connections with Europe have been questioned and examined and their proximity to European nationalist ideology (especially Mazzinism) has been the subject of debate (Huggins; Costigan). I would argue that the translation activity of many Young Irelanders demonstrates strong and active links with Europe, particularly with France and Germany, and also an awareness of developments on the Continent. Through their commitment to publishing translations in the *Nation* and also in their choice of texts, we can see the steady influence of European nationalism on Young Irelanders and can situate developments in Irish cultural nationalism firmly in a European paradigm. An analysis of translations published in the *Nation* in the 1840s and 1850s shows the continuous

8. The intersections between Irish and Polish nationalisms have been examined in Healy.

presence of translation work in the newspaper, peaking in the years just preceding the 1848 rebellions. In the 1840s 36 percent of the translations were from German; 31 percent from French; 18 percent from Irish; 9 percent from Italian; 2 percent from Latin, and 4 percent from other languages. These figures provide an indication of the influential European cultural trends and models that made their way to Ireland, and serve to highlight the languages and literatures that were in circulation. These links also underline the importance of viewing Ireland's situation not as exceptional but rather as part of a European phenomenon.

The translational activities in nineteenth-century Ireland were disruptive and provocative. They challenged literary heritage and its ownership and introduced new voices and trends. Translation contests ethnocentrism and forces questioning about the exchange of ideas and the development of alternative narratives and spaces. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha argues that translation does not happen between stable and distinct cultural spaces but instead occurs in a "third space." This third space, which exists when two or more individuals or cultures interact, offers disruption and renewal, challenging homogeneity and perceived continuity. Through translation, appropriation, and reinterpretation, cultures can gain new meanings and relevance across temporal and geographical flows. As both Edward Said and Bhabha have suggested, new cultural forms emerge in the interstitial and the liminal, a blended novelty that exists in the intersections between people, cultures, and nations. The study of transnationalism and Ireland, particularly the area of translation, allows for the opening up of a third space where transcultural exchanges can take place.

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Another hidden history in Ireland that a transnational lens brings into greater focus is the knowledge and study of foreign languages in Ireland in the nineteenth century. Most studies of language in nineteenth-century Ireland focus on the fate of the Irish language and the challenges it faced.<sup>9</sup> Yet modern foreign languages had a

9. See, for example, the recent publication by Wolf.



strong presence in Ireland in this period, and these language abilities provided people with the opportunity to transcend national boundaries and become transnational individuals. It was only because of the foreign-language skills of many individuals that there was a strong tradition of translation in Ireland in this era. Language skills often built on the movement of people as they traveled to the lands where they acquired their languages, and these skills subsequently facilitated the transmission of ideas and cultures.

Universities in Ireland offered tuition in modern foreign languages throughout the nineteenth century. Trinity College Dublin was ground-breaking in the British Isles for its decision in 1776 to introduce two chairs in modern languages, one in French and German and another in Italian and Spanish (Raraty 53–54; Salvadori 13). There were objections at the time to the presence of foreign languages, as they were deemed to be inappropriate for university education and more suited to the arenas of dilettantism and travel. With time, however, they came to be seen to have a utilitarian function that was very pertinent to a wide variety of disciplines. When Charles Williomier, professor of German in Trinity College,<sup>10</sup> neglected his duties and allegedly failed to give a lecture for ten years, a protest was printed claiming that his dereliction of educational activities was depriving people of instruction in “a most important branch of public education.” The complaint also asserted the utility of learning modern languages for all types of students, especially the poorer pupils for whom learning a language was “an accomplishment which would materially promote their success in life” (*Freeman’s Journal* 28 July 1838). By the middle decades of the nineteenth century the acquisition of languages was presented as an important aspect of education that could enhance studies and allow for greater employment opportunities. Thus the Queen’s Colleges embraced modern languages from the start. As O’Neill has revealed, in 1846 the board of presidents and vice-presidents of the planned colleges recommended that two of the twelve professorships at each institution be allocated to modern languages, and that the subject should be part of the curriculum in all years. The board stated, “For a community busily occupied with practical science, with commerce, with agriculture, and with manu-

10. Williomier held the post from 1802 to 1841. See Raraty 60.

factures, the study of modern languages should hold an important place” (“Modern Languages” 360). Though its recommendations were not fully implemented, and though the exposure to foreign languages was diluted in favor of the classical languages, French, German, Italian, and Spanish were taught in all of the colleges, subject to the availability of lecturers. Languages had to be studied in the first year and were held to be important for arts, medicine, law, and engineering. The Catholic seminary at Maynooth concentrated on Irish and French for its language curriculum, while the Catholic University of Ireland had modern-language professors among its original appointees when that institution opened in 1854.

A similar emergence of this utilitarian view of languages and their centrality to the educational curriculum can be witnessed in the secondary-school system, particularly from the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Advertisements for schools in the press and in religious directories reveal that modern languages were a central aspect of the curriculum for Protestant and Catholic schools, for boys and girls, and for city and rural establishments. Ennis School (Springfield House), for example, advertised in 1849 that in its establishment, “young gentlemen are prepared for the university, Catholic colleges, the learned professions, and mercantile pursuits. Modern languages form part of each boy’s business on every day” (*Cork Examiner* 27 May 1849). Lismore College in County Waterford also provided tuition in French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and claimed that its facilities were equal to what could be obtained on the Continent. In fact, educational opportunities for multilingualism were not limited to Ireland. The strong tradition among Irish Catholics of sending their children to Europe for education continued in the nineteenth century (O’Neill, *Catholics of Consequence* 12). In this context Irish students gained proficiency in at least one foreign language. Clerical students also followed a long tradition of training abroad, and those who went to Rome or Paris returned to Ireland with advanced language skills acquired in the classroom and by spending much of their time immersed in the language of the country (O’Connor, “Translating the Vatican” 451, 459; O’Neill, *Catholics of Consequence* 193).

Social mobility was offered as an enticement to language acquisition, and the students’ attainments were considered a mark of refinement, class, and education. The Portarlington Educational Institu-

tion, “exclusively for the sons of gentlemen,” advertised that owing to the closure of continental schools in 1848, it had hired a professor of modern languages; pupils were therefore able to avail of “the advantages of the best English and continental schools upon very moderate terms” (*Leinster Express* 21 July 1848). An advertisement in the *Freeman’s Journal* for Messrs. Costello’s Classical, Commercial, French, and Italian School in Dublin’s Great Brunswick Street described the French language as “an accomplishment always considered necessary to complete a refined education, and which is now indispensably so to persons intended for the learned professions as well as those who engage in commercial pursuits” (*Freeman’s Journal* 29 Oct. 1843). Exams for the British civil service, the East India Company, and the Post Office contained tests in language abilities, and these exams in turn drove a market in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Schools also drew attention to the necessity of language skills among candidates for the army entrance examination and recommended that youth intended for the higher departments of commerce should perfect themselves in at least one foreign tongue as “a matter of the utmost importance” (*Belfast News-Letter* 5 Feb. 1880).

Convent schools, generally run by female religious orders that had come to Ireland from the Continent in the nineteenth century, also had a strikingly strong commitment to foreign languages, and some conducted their daily affairs entirely in French. For example, the Sacred Heart of Mary Convent in Lisburn, Co. Antrim, advertised in 1875, “As French is the language generally spoken in the convent, the pupils will have the advantage of learning to speak it fluently and with the purest accent” (qtd. in O’Connor, “Revolution” 38). Immersion in French was also a leading feature of the St. Louis convent boarding school in Monaghan town, where the senior classes were conducted almost entirely in that language. Prayers and gospels were also learned in French (O’Connor 38). Even schools that used English as the main working language often encouraged a multilingual approach by offering modern languages (generally French and Italian) as a main subject, along with English, history, geography, writing, arithmetic, needlework, music, and drawing. The employment of native speakers was a point of pride, as evident in an 1845 advertisement for the Convent of the Faithful Companions of Jesus at Laurel Hill in Limerick that drew attention to the fact that French and Italian were taught by

natives of France and Italy (*Cork Examiner* 30 Oct. 1845). With the linguistic training they received, it was not unusual to hear of pupils reciting dialogues and scenes from Italian, French, and English poets or completing parsing exercises in composition and arithmetic in each of the three languages, as did the students of the Loretto Convent in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, at a final performance in 1857 (*Nation* 15 Aug. 1857). In the same year pupils in Mount St. Joseph's Collegiate Seminary at Clondalkin in Dublin read and translated passages from Greek and Latin authors "with a style and finish quite delightful to hear." They followed these readings with dialogues and recitations in French, Italian, German, and Spanish that showed a grace and fluency "unexampled in our experience of scholastic exhibitions" (*Nation* 11 July 1857).

Outside of the school system learning and using languages were a normalized part of daily life for members of a certain social class. Born into a respectable middle-class family, the writer and translator Speranza Wilde integrated languages into her studies and ultimately into her life: "I was always fond of study and of books. My favourite study was languages. I succeeded in mastering ten of the European languages. Till my eighteenth year I never wrote anything. All my time was given to study" (qtd. in Melville 20). Although Speranza's claims to mastery of ten languages must be taken lightly, she certainly was very accomplished in French, German, and Italian. In later life she learned Danish, Swedish, and Russian. In the elite world, particularly for women, languages were important markers of refinement and were part of the "drawing-room" skills, along with music. They permitted sons and daughters of the upper classes to travel and to mingle with their peers in other countries (O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence* 161–89). This facility opened up marriage opportunities. Tuition in these cases was generally offered by tutors and governesses, often native speakers of the languages. For those who could not afford in-house tuition, there was also a large industry of private schools and academies that provided instruction in modern languages. Such academies, which were often run by native speakers, offered French, German, and Italian; the newspapers of the day were littered with advertisements for such establishments.

Foreign languages were therefore widely present and highly valued in the Irish educational system, especially as the century progressed

and as these opportunities gradually expanded beyond the daughters of the elite to include middle-class pupils. The availability of tuition in foreign languages in the educational system did not necessarily guarantee proficiency, but indicators that competency was achieved by the wealthier sections of Irish society can be gleaned from the circulation of thousands of foreign-language books in Ireland and from the publication of reams of translations.<sup>11</sup> Such linguistic proficiency paved the way for transnational encounters in later years.

### TRANSNATIONALISM, LANGUAGES, AND RELIGION

In both matters discussed above, namely translation and language proficiency, it is important to highlight the input of religion in fueling and facilitating linguistic transnationalism in Ireland. It is clear that in nineteenth-century Ireland foreign languages were heavily mediated through the Catholic church. The transnational nature of the church and the preferences of priests and nuns ensured that linguistic abilities were valued as important talents intended to be accessible to a diverse section of the Irish population. James Clarence Mangan is a representative case. Although he did not attend university or, it seems, ever leave Ireland, he obtained a very high proficiency in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, thanks in part to the tuition that he received from a certain Father Graham, a priest who had returned to Dublin after time spent in Salamanca and Palermo. Moreover, most of the translations published in Ireland in this period were not literary works but rather publications serving the devotional needs of the country. Translations from French and Italian religious works were very prevalent in the book market and aimed at the promotion of individual piety and personal devotional observance. These works were on the whole translated by members of religious orders, nuns, and priests who had spent time training in Europe and had become highly proficient in European languages.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, there was an interlinking of religious and linguistic

11. Many booksellers in Dublin catered to the market for supplying books in classical and contemporary foreign languages. See, for example, Hugh Fitzpatrick's *Catalogue of Books* (Dublin: Fitzpatrick, 1816).

12. On the importance and dominance of religious translations from the French language, see Milan "Found in Translation" and "Path to Perfection."

networks that ranged from the educational connections of French convents to the Italian community of Roman alumni. Although only a small proportion of Irish people were able to avail of training abroad, the subsequent careers of these people could result in a disproportionate influence in Irish society. Paul Cullen, for example, was Ireland's first cardinal and the most influential religious figure of the nineteenth century. The product of the multilingual world of the Vatican, where he was sent for training at the age of fifteen, Cullen spent almost thirty years in Rome immersed in an international church. In one of his first letters home to Ireland he reported to his father that "one would be led to imagine that he was in the town of Babylon and not in a Roman college."<sup>13</sup> Cullen's study and eventual mastery of both modern and classical languages was hugely important to his subsequent fortunes (O'Connor "Translating the Vatican" 454–55). Students in the Irish Colleges of Rome and Paris acquired linguistic skills and the ability to move between cultures, and many also gained personal contacts with influential figures in the Vatican. The Irish religious were therefore important in language education in Ireland and in translating many texts for circulation in the country. They also furnished some of the most striking examples of multilingual attainment in Ireland in the nineteenth century. The very strong links with Rome, Louvain, and Paris for ecclesiastical training ensured that the Irish priests who went abroad became immersed in a multilingual world that they often brought back with them to Ireland and integrated into their subsequent activities as leaders, educators, and translators.

#### LANGUAGES AND TRANSNATIONAL IMPACT

The knowledge of foreign languages and the ability to translate them allowed many Irish individuals in the nineteenth century to transcend their locality. For some this would result in transnational lives in Europe as part of an aristocratic elite. For others their language skills would bring them as administrators to various parts of the British empire. For women there were opportunities to work as governesses in Ireland and abroad; knowledge of modern languages

13. Paul Cullen to Hugh Cullen, 22 Jan. 1821, MacSuibhne 1:78.

was considered a prerequisite for these positions. Still others, such as Mangan, might never have left Ireland, but their linguistic abilities allowed them to travel through the literatures and cultures of other countries and import them for creative and artistic ends. Mangan reveled in the liberation of the unfamiliar and was able to forge links across time and geography through his language skills, providing an important impetus to Irish literature. Translations of nationalist literature published in the *Nation* demonstrate how importations from abroad could disrupt national canons and force a questioning of norms and traditions. In terms of change and effect, what was *not* translated in Ireland in the nineteenth century can be as instructive as what *was* translated. Although patriotic poetry from France was translated, contemporary French novels were not, as they were deemed too risqué for an Irish audience by translators and publishers. The strong religious influence in the learning of languages and in translations meant that Irish translations were mostly governed by the moral codes of Catholicism.

Delaney has highlighted that transnationalism aims to concern itself not just with movements, flows, and circulations but also with the effects of this movement on individuals or artifacts (88). Yet the assessment of impact can be very subjective and difficult to gauge. Take, for example, Walter Scott's assessment of the effect of travel on the Irish as recounted by his travel companion:

[Scott] mentioned a tour he had made in Ireland and remarked [on] the surprising difference which he had observed between such of the Irish as had never quitted their native land and those who had travelled. The former he described as perfect models of good humour and frankness, whereas he thought that after having visited other countries, they were apt to become suspicious and without cause to imagine themselves objects of ridicule. He believed this to be an original observation of his own. (Gell 25)

Scott may well have preferred pure and simple Irish natives, innocent and limited in their range of experiences. The reality of the nineteenth century, however, was that a greater number of Irish than ever before had much wider opportunities to enter into transnational flows, whether through travel, translation, or training. For many individuals their language skills improved their position in life and opened



opportunities that would have never otherwise existed.<sup>14</sup> For some, particularly women such as Speranza and “Eva” (Mary Eva Kelly) of the *Nation*, their language skills gave them opportunities to enter the world of letters and become published writers. Indeed, the strong and notable presence of women in transnational spaces and in the field of translation is worthy of attention and signals the importance of studying the place of gender in a transnational Ireland.

This question of the impact of translanguaging on important Irish figures will thus require further work and raise striking questions: How did study in France affect the worldview of Irish students such as Daniel O’Connell? How were their prospects in life altered? What extra dimension do we gain in our understanding of certain Irish people if we know that they worked across various languages and cultures? How did European travel and translation affect Thomas Davis’s political outlook? How did translations impact the receiving culture? The answers to these questions would require a study of each topic on its own. Nonetheless, recognition of alternative dimensions to the lives of important figures of the nineteenth century and an understanding of the transnational world inhabited by many Irish people in this period are but two important benefits that a study of the languages of transnationalism can bring.

## CONCLUSION

Although transnational studies have opened up Irish Studies, the continued dominance of Anglophone sources and topics has resulted in a reduced vision of the expanded horizons that the transnational approach can bring. Transnational Irish Studies in various instances have examined the movement of people, goods, and ideas across national boundaries, but they have been neglectful of the movement across linguistic boundaries. Traversing linguistic borders, whether through translations or in person, can alter and disrupt native ideology and artistic values; it can blur distinctions between the domestic and the foreign and can introduce transnational flows of influence. In a study of transnationalism and the history of ideas as they cross

14. See, for example, some of the career paths taken by graduates of modern languages in Queen’s College Galway in the nineteenth century as revealed in O’Neill, “Modern Languages” 364–65.



geographical and linguistic borders, translation can serve to help understand the reception and appropriation of texts. In this context translation is not merely a technical exercise in philology and word transfer but rather a culturally determined activity concerned with the pragmatics of discourse and deeply embedded in social and cultural frameworks. In the Irish context a study of the languages of transnationalism allows for an analysis of cultural mediation, translational transfer, and a heightened awareness of the hybridity and cultural forms that stem from cross-national and cross-linguistic interactions.

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