

Jamie Canavan

National University Ireland, Galway, Ireland

'I don't have an axe to grind with anyone. I just want to tell my story':

Pre-conceptions and anxieties from interviewees affected by childhood trauma in Irish State Care

From the late 1990s to recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the neglect and abuses that occurred in institutional care in 19th and 20th century Ireland. The state has formally inquired into child abuse in its industrial school and reformatory school system and there is an ongoing inquiry into the abuses faced by women and infants in its mother and baby homes. With this increase of awareness, victims who have shared their stories have become a part of a collective narrative of abuse and maltreatment from church and state authorities. My PhD examines the history of Irish foster care. This aspect of state care can, in some ways, be considered separate from the lattice of institutionalisation. However, formerly fostered children feel connected to the nationwide narrative of abuse. I am performing oral history interviews with a range of people who were affected by or involved in the foster care system. It became immediately apparent that the majority of formerly fostered adults are coming into the interviews with an awareness of the existing narrative of abuse. There is a clear trend of interviewees wishing to separate themselves from the victimhood and blaming rhetoric. While there is a desire across the board to share details about difficulties in childhood, there is also a shared sense of guilt and anxiety about placing blame on any certain people or structures. This paper will examine why there is this shared sense of guilt about detailing mistreatment in childhood, how these preconceptions and anxieties affect the content of the oral history interviews, and how this connects to larger discussions about memory and identity.

Spyridoula Pырpyli

Dr Museologist, Greece

Poverty, child labor and education. The Evening school of Panaitolikos football team for working children: memories of its ex-pupils from 1940s to 1960s

In Agrinio, a city of Western Greece, Panaitolikos Sports Club was founded in 1926. According to its articles of association, Panaitolikos was founded as a Club for Sports and Promotion of Education and Learning and from its very beginning, besides football activity, Panaitolikos established an Evening School for poor working children. It was the first and only time that a football club in Greece founded an educational structure, and even though the founders of Panaitolikos Sports Club were distinguished members of the local community, the pupils of this school were impoverished children, often orphans. This evening school, where thousands of working children completed their primary school studies, functioned for 57 years (1926-1983).

Two years ago I started a research regarding this evening school, collecting its ex-pupils' testimonies on same. First, I interviewed the oldest ex-pupils I found, born in the late 1930s and subsequently those born in the 1940s and 1950s. These people, all men, went to the Evening School of Panaitolikos from 1940s to 1960s. Their memories and narrations provide interesting information referring to: aspects of child labor at the time and descriptions of the adults cruelty the discrimination against them in comparison to the other children of regular schools the economic, educational and social information about the life of lowest classes in Greece, aspects of social class and social injustice the children experience in respect of the historical (German occupation, Civil war, Post War Greek historical frame etc) and political context of their time the way social gender was constructed under those economic and social conditions.

By exploring the role of this exceptional school as far as social integration is concerned within the local community, we will try to outline an image of life and society of the time through the eyes of its most underprivileged children.

Joséphine Métraux, Ruth Ammann

Independent Expert Commission (IEC) Administrative Detention, Switzerland

Scientific communication of the IEC: at the crossroad of personal narratives, science and public memory

Similar to the uproar on systematic mistreatments in catholic children's homes coming to light since 2002, administrative detention became a major topic in the Swiss public sphere in 2008. People concerned by such measures fought for public recognition. In 2014, the Swiss Confederation installed an Independent Expert Commission on Administrative Detention (IEC) to scientifically investigate the phenomena commonly applied to adolescents and adults up to the 1970s and only abolished in 1981. Working not only with historical sources, but also with contemporary witnesses (oral history), our work for the commission deals with Memory and Narration on different levels of reflection. On the one hand, we analyze oral history testimonies collected by the IEC amongst victims and work out the narrative process of these memories, creating thereby a new scientific narration of those personal experiences (cf. Ruth Ammann, Nr. 1250). On the other hand, we are responsible for the scientific communication of the IEC.

The scientific communication of the IEC relies on the understanding of history as 'argument without end' and constant social process. Therefore, through our website, we present the whole research process and make it visible and understandable. Consequently, we develop a new form of narration, which is going to influence the historical memory of Switzerland. Scientific narration as well as narratives of former victims are used to explain the history of administrative detention to a broader audience. Thus, we ask questions about the creation of memory and narration from a present point of view. One of the goal of this process oriented scientific communication is also to bring back the history to the victims. The audiovisual presentation for the IOHA (15-20 min) would include extracts of video interviews conducted with victims as well as wider reflexions on the creation of narration and memory in a public history discourse.

Sally Swartz

n/a, Australia

Re-telling trauma: the work of the narrative writers at Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Established in 2013, Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse delivers its final report in December 2017. The report comprises 20 or more volumes and appendices and also includes a DVD containing nearly 4000 written narratives. These tell the stories of individual survivors of child sexual abuse, who came forward to share their personal histories with commissioners in private sessions. With the survivors' consent, writers employed by the commission then listened to the recorded audio of the private testimony, transcribed it and reshaped the material into a de-identified story of about 1000 words. These narratives were referenced throughout the RCIRCSA's final report, will be published online and form a significant part of the commission's legacy.

This additional step in the commission's work was seen as a way to both honour survivors who chose to have their stories told in narrative form and, in the vividness of their own words, convey to the wider world the nature and impacts of their experience. Collectively, the narratives are part of the RCIRCSA's effort to bear witness to the trauma of institutional child sexual abuse.

Sally Swartz was one of the narrative writers at the RCIRCSA. In this presentation she will discuss their role as secondary witnesses to the stories of trauma shared in private sessions and the decisions made in the course of transforming the private oral testimony they heard into written narratives shared with the public. She will explore the thinking that shaped how writers told and represented survivors' stories – the language used, the structure, what is told or silenced – and some of the issues that arose, and consider the contribution of the narratives to the commission's broader project of restoring dignity to survivors and building new understanding in the community of their experiences.

Shabina Aslam

University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom

Bussing Out : the experiences of migrant children in Bradford (U.K) 1962 – 1976 and education.

'Bussing Out' focuses on a hidden history that affected ethnic minority children who came to the U.K in the 60's and 70's.

'Bussing Out' was a Department of Education (D.E.S) policy advising local authorities to disperse migrant children from urban inner city schools into schools in outlying areas. The reason for this was racially motivated; because the 'immigrant' children were from South Asian and West Indian colonies.

In 1963 the Education Minister Sir Edward Boyle went to Southall, to Beaconsfield Road School, to address complaints by white parents that immigrants were swamping their schools. He reported back to Parliament:

"I must regretfully tell the house that 'one school' must now be regarded now as irretrievably an immigrant school. The important thing is to prevent this happening elsewhere."

One in every five ethnic minority child was taken from their community and dispersed to a school in an outlying, white area. This hidden history played a vital role in shaping modern day Bradford.

This paper will engage with the work of Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy to create a postcolonial theoretical framework to better understand the oral histories collected of adults who were 'bussed' as children. Exploring the oral histories for narrative as well as identity formation against a background of colonial discourses and an emergent Black-Britishness. Perceptions of migrants have altered many times since the end of WW2, due to the end of Empire, the development of 'race relations' and the refusal of Black people to assimilate into British society. Instead, preferring to think of themselves as having a distinct identity: "Black-British" "British-Asian".

How evident is any of this in the oral history form? Or are the interviewees performing a mediated, 'hyperreal' version of the past? Theorising Black history is an opportunity to explore these questions of a 'history from beneath'.

Seija Jalagin

University of Oulu, Finland

Autofiction as a Source of Difficult History

This paper will focus on an autofictional novel by a now deceased lay writer. In his novel *Vallien sisällä, vallien ulkopuolella* Timo Tervonen writes about his childhood in Kyminlinna refugee centre in Southeastern Finland where his family spent several years in the 1930s. The original manuscript from early 1990s was published as an edited novel version by Karjalan Sivistysseura in 2015.

Tervonen's text is the only testimony of the everyday life and encounters of staff, East Karelian refugees and occasional visitors at the refugee centre. It has no narrative plot but is rather a compilation of incidents that the young boy witnessed. Yet, it is narrated as a fiction.

The value of the narrative lies in its oral history character that has recorded the power structures in the refugee management apparatus and the control by state authorities over vulnerable, stateless refugees.

In this presentation I will compare the published novel and the manuscript, and in particular, discuss the parts that have been left out of the published version. They contain cases of abuse and violence, among other things, that cannot be found in the official archives of the State Refugee Aid Centre (in Finnish National Archives, Helsinki) or in the written memoirs of the Finnish staff in Kyminlinna.

The central question I am looking for to answer is: How to utilise the autofiction as a source material for historical research, particularly the difficult and painful history? Could it be that it is more truthful to the actual history of the refugees than the archived documents that seem authoritative and neutral, or the memoirs of more prominent contemporaries than the refugee boy and his family?