The “Intersecting Lines” and “Co-ordinate Points”: Lyrical Ways of Making Connections in *Homecoming* by Alan Riach

The principle of making connections by reaching out to the variously conceived idea of home seems to be one of the crucial dynamic schemes of the 2009 collection *Homecoming* by a Scottish poet, Alan Riach (1957-). Kirsten Matthews in a chapter titled “A Democracy of Voices” in *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry* situates Riach in the group of poets “whose work sits awkwardly alongside narrow or prescriptive expectations about what Scottish poets are and what they choose to write about”. She comments on the fact that in the 1994 anthology of modern Scottish poetry *Contraflow on the Superhighway* edited by Richard Price and W. N. Herbert, Riach is grouped among writers labelled as “Informationists”, which indicates “the role of [these] poets in the international, information-driven society that is the developed world” (Matthews 2009: 75). For Matthews, the author should be seen among other poets and writers associated with Scottish universities or regional councils: Ron Butlin, Tom Pow, David Kinloch, Donny O’Rourke and Brian McCabe, while she openly states that this group is a much “understudied area of Scottish writing” (Matthews 2009: 65). The critic also points to “self-conscious intellectualism and a willingness to transverse the boundaries of language and culture” that she sees as characteristic of Riach’s creative method. She finds his

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1 His stance can be seen for example in the fact that two of his poems “Antenor” and “Sankey Hymns” are included in *The Edinburgh Book of Twentieth-Century Scottish Poetry*, edited by Maurice Lindsay and Lesley Duncan, the collection which – as advertised in the book’s front dustjacket flap – “spans the entire century”. Four of his poems are published online on Scottish Poetry Library website, three from *Clearances* and one from *The Winter Book: New Poems* (2017), the latter piece being “Ossian’s Grave” which as the information about the poem points out, “was included in Best Scottish Poems 2017”, an “online publication, consisting of 20 poems chosen by a different editor each year. … The editor in 2017 was Roddy Woomble” https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/ossians-grave/. Accessed 27.05.2019.
work “notable for its enduring concern with the nature of individual thought and experience” as well as for the “continual use of the anecdotal, conversational and the autobiographical” (Matthews 2009: 75).

By contrast, in the Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature, Riach is characterised among the group of poets “work[ing] at creative distances from Scotland’s Central Belt” (O’Rourke 2009: 210). Donny O’Rourke praises him for “warm-hearted, cultured poems that are unpretentiously allusive” and “as full of lived life as they are of art-inflected life”. He goes on to characterise the key topics in Riach’s lyrical works: “Riach’s is usually a broad brush, the impasto generous. Family, its solaces and celebrations as well as its sadness, have increasingly figured in this fine poet’s work. With this come the temptations, not always resisted, of sentimentality” (O’Rourke 2009: 211). This feature that O’Rourke terms as sentimentality should not yet be taken against the poet, but it ought to be seen as a part of his aesthetic workshop. Indeed, although Riach’s texts are featured with nostalgia for the past and tenderness in his attitude to the glocal present, his work is none the worse for that.

To fully appreciate Riach’s poetry one also needs to remember that he is a world-famous academic specialising in the Scottish Literary Renaissance, a translator from Gaelic, an essayist, and a literary critic. Being a professor of Scottish literature and culture, he knows his whereabouts as a poet and a man of letters. Graduate of Cambridge (BA in English Literature) and Glasgow (PhD in Scottish Literature), Riach is also a prolific author of academic works in the field of Scottish literary scholarship and culture studies. Bearing all this in mind, one can understand

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2 Riach worked at the University of Waikato in the years 1986 to 2000, where he was appointed Associate Professor of English. He started and popularised Scottish literature and culture studies there. Apart from the lengthy academic commitment in New Zealand, he has lectured on the subject of Scottish literature worldwide, including China, India, Poland, Romania, Australia, to name but a few of his destinations.

3 Riach has held the Chair of Scottish literature at Glasgow University since 2001.

4 His major scholarly publications comprise, among others: Hugh MacDiarmid’s Epic Poetry (1991) and Representing Scotland in Literature, Popular Culture and Iconography: The Masks of the Modern Nation (2005). Invariably focused on the grand literary figures that have defined modern Scotland, he edited The International Companion to Edwin Morgan and he is the general editor of the massive enterprise The Collected Works of Hugh MacDiarmid. His engagement in culture also shows in his cooperative effort, for example he co-edited Landmarks: Poets, Portraits and Landscapes of Modern Scotland with Alexander Moffat and Ruth Nicol. Arts of Independence and Arts of Resistance are the result of his further cooperation with Moffat; while The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature stemmed from working with Ian Brown. Not just a critic and a literary theoretician, he also translated Gaelic poems: Praise of Ben Dorain by Duncan Ban MacIntyre and The Birlinn of Clanranald by Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir. On top of that he exceeds the boundaries of literature with his journalism, making a regular presence in The National as an essayist, commenting on a range of topics of Scottish literary and cultural identity. All this makes him a writer much aware of the contemporary Scottish poetic and literary phenomena, their international sources and cross-cultural connections.
the intriguing, dynamic and sometimes subversive concept of Scotland as more than a geographic location and more than a strictly defined nation. The concept of home that he develops in his poems is not so obvious as it relies on constant expanding of the poetic vision with elements that broaden the view and create connections.

The poet evidently uses *Homecoming* to debate his own stance and his own roles connected to the issues of family, work and ultimately Scottishness, all understood as dynamic concepts involving movement and return. To be able to see the poems’ strategy of personal reflection in full light we need to see the coordinate points of the artist himself. The poet was born in Airdrie (Lanarkshire) but he can be named as a citizen of the world, which shows in his cosmopolitan poetry, with the texts taking the reader around the world to New Zealand, China, Mexico, Switzerland and other places. He has been writing all through his mature life, which has resulted in publication of six volumes of poetry: *This Folding Map* (1990), *An Open Return* (1991), *First and Last Songs* (1995); *Clearances* (2001), *Homecoming* (republished twice but first appearing in 2009), *The Winter Book: New Poems* (2017). The first three collections were published when he was based in New Zealand, which has earned him the name of a New Zealandese poet as well. The experience of being far away clearly contributed to opening up the well of poetry for this author and for this volume. O’Rourke sees this external perspective as a “distinctive allure” of Riach’s viewpoints in his poetry (2009: 211). *Homecoming* is an attempt to probe the personal, (trans-)national, Scottish and universal conditions of poetic perception. This is the volume that bridges the New Zealand experience with the memories of the Scottish childhood and brings them forwards to the time of return to homeland, encompassing also many new travels away from home.

Dedicated to Edwin Morgan, called “maestro”, the collection is varied in style and genre, trying to render the diversity of the Scottish experience of the world. It is marked by a way of looking that seeks for connections and, perhaps, a way of transposing the forward-looking stance of Morgan that Riach so much admired (Riach 2014a: 16). Liz Lochhead – a renown Scottish poet, who succeeded Edwin Morgan as the Makar in the years 2011-2016, writes in her Preface to the volume:

5 An Anthology of New Zealand Poetry in English (2002 [1997]) includes four of Riach’s poems from *An Open Return* collection: “The Blues”, “The seabirds are dying”, “At Spirits Bay, the Empty Sea” and “Waldo Waved his Knife”. The Introduction to this book suggests that Riach’s poetry renders “the sense of New Zealand as part of the Pacific, drawing into itself many cultures and experiences” (Bornholdt, O’Brien and Williams 2002: xxxiii). He is also included in a selection of specimens of New Zealand’s poetic creation titled 121 New Zealand Poems (2005). Issue 10 (1995) of Poetry NZ: An International Journal of Poetry and Poetics, devoted to the island poetry, contains fourteen of his poems.

6 In “Homecoming: An Introduction” Riach notes that in 2001 Morgan was the sole survivor of the generation of major Scottish poets, the group that Riach knew personally. Edwin Morgan died in 2010, and as the collection was published in 2009, he had a chance to read the poems, offering a generous review, now printed on the back of the book cover of *Homecoming*. He described the volume as “… lively and intelligent… wide ranging, adventurous, often witty …”.

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This collection abounds in images of arcs, arches, bridges, of the great curving transits round the orb of the world modern life affords us, of borders crossed, shadow-lines traversed, connections made” (Lochhead 2014: 5). The principle of connecting, re-uniting, binding, finding the intersecting lines of experience is very strongly present in Riach’s volume. It provides its raison d’être. Transition is established through many thematic nuclei present in the poems and it is highlighted through the poetic language that uses figurative and aesthetic patterns.

The semiotic aspect of making connections is far from idealisation, it is often realised in a way that is appreciative of the cultural space despite its possible flaws. Such senses can be seen in the stanza ending the poem “February Morning: Traffic” that describe the lyrical ego’s weekly routine of commuting to work. In the passage quoted below one can see clear appreciation of the Scottish cultural and natural landscape despite its possible flaws:

– From Ayr to Glasgow, green to grey,
the traffic curls and curves away,
crowded, in flightpaths, like birds in endless patterns in the sky
moving in folds and lines and currents, sweeping it all away,
the grime in the air, the soot and charcoal blacks are washed
to the borders of the visible: river, backyards, buildings,
city, mountains, this horizon’s rim
and still you can see it, see it, even now,
‘that old loveliness of earth that both affirms and heals’ (Riach 2014b: 170)

The final line – incorporated here on the rights of a quotation is the voice of the other, distinguished by italics. It comes from the resolution of Hugh MacDiarmid’s striking, aesthetically provoking poem “Two Memories”, where the grim vision of “fresh blood [that] scares sleeping cows” is contrasted with the vision of a “flight of wild swans” (MacDiarmid 220). Using this line Riach transposes the issue of personal perception of aesthetic patterns onto the universal level of experience.

The poem is dedicated to the Chinese watercolour painter Chan Ky-Yut (b. 1940), based in Canada, with whom Riach cooperated on “Four Momentary Poems”. The two artists worked to create an intermedial artistic project combining visual representation and the poetic word. Rather than the Scottish context, the opening of the poem celebrates the world. One can note the technique of spanning realities through the universal landscape of signs. Expressing senses through allusions to colour arcs and mist clouds visible in Riach’s poem is an ekphrastic allusion to the technique of watercolour painting used by Ky-Yut:

The arc of the rim of the sun comes up
Above the farthest line, the nearest mist –
the sky is not more various, the sea
less careless of constraint

... into the colours the winds make, the forms clouds’ shadows move upon. (Riach 2014b: 169)

*Homecoming* is the body of work that reveals a Scottish humanist, intellectual, writer, and a citizen of the world who is very conscious of what he is doing, how he is doing things and why he is doing them in the particular, sometimes not the most obvious, ways. In the voices of his lyrical egos, he remains at once distanced to this world and very much engaged, always presenting some array of independent views. An indication of that sort of multiple consciousness occasioned by literature, that also becomes a kind of assertion of autonomy, can be seen in the “Preface: The Moment Before” to *Arts of Independence*:

All arts work for independence. They represent things, actions, relations of purpose and power. We learn from them and act, according to our deepest dispositions and our conscious choices, made in the air of wherever it is we inhabit, in observation only of whatever rules we choose and know that we wish to obey, or whatever it is we choose and know we should destroy. … Literature, painting, music, architecture – all the arts – are the most essential outward forms in which we make distinct our own humanity. (Riach and Moffat 2014)

In turn, in the chapter “The Herald Manifesto”, this idea of the pre-eminent role of aesthetic type of writing is developed further:

There is only one argument for Scottish independence: the cultural argument. … The arts – music, painting architecture, and, pre-eminently literature – are the fuel and fire that makes imagination possible. … Why should literature be pre-eminent?

Apart from experience of life itself, it’s our best way to understand other people most deeply. Everyone is alike: we all share desires, frustrations, needs, predilections, but every one of us carries the cultural significance of our individuality, upbringing, birth, geography, languages, skin colour, social preferences, habits and beliefs. (Riach and Moffat 2014)

This delicately touches upon the issue of Scottish independence and its cultural justification, without being overbearing.

One of the ways of asserting Scottish independence to be found in *Homecoming* is the sample of translating an act of a seminal English drama by William Shakespeare into Scots. By the act of translation Riach negotiates the connecting points between the media of two languages, creating intermedial correspondences and bridges (cf. Schlumpf 2011). He is also aware that a new dramatic-poetic world arises in the process of translation. The text is published in *Homecoming* as the second piece
of the poetic sequence “Right Here,” and it is titled “Opening Hamlet” with a telling subtitle “after Shakespeare.” On the level of meta-fictional commentary such titles indicate that this is not just a translation but a transposition of Shakespeare’s Hamlet Act I Scene I into Scots. This serves asserting that Scots is not just a language variety but an independent linguistic reality. Rendering the opening scenes from the Elizabethan drama is a kind of manifesto of Scottish independence achieved through the cultural identity of the language, the thing postulated by MacDiarmid, whom Riach knew personally. This act of translating makes the salient English dramatic work resound with distinctly Scottish voices, creating very strong polyphonic, intermedial effect:

B. Wha’s there?
F. Naw, but, answer me. Haud and unfauld yersel’!
B. Lang live the King!
F. Barnardo?
B. Aye!
F. Fegs, but ye’re here oan yir time.
B. I’ th’ howe-dumb-deid. Awa’ tae yir kip, Francisco. (Riach 2014b: 105)

Riach engages in disseminating culture, along with its identity overtones, by transposing senses from one medium (of one language and one work of literary art) to another (a different language and a fragment, part of a larger poetic sequence). Translating the time of midnight into “howe-dumb-deid” makes the Lowland Scots for “the dead of night” get symbolic overtones in the context of “awa’ tae yir kip.” This is also a figure of homecoming but transposed.

Homecoming celebrates various shades and aspects of being and understanding oneself as the Scottish citizen immersed in the global and local world. The whole poetic volume seems oriented on probing the lyrical ego’s paradigms of thinking in the context of the problem, after all traditionally a very Scottish one, of (re)turning home from the cosmopolitan positions. This is the way of identifying oneself in the exotic, often very far-away settings.

The volume Homecoming is subtitled New Poems 2001-2009, which shows the texts in the context of two issues. On the personal level it corresponds to the time when Riach returned home in 2001, bringing his Southern-Pacific family and New Zealand home back to Scotland, that he had left ten years previously as a bachelor. This explains why in many poems he constantly reaches into his renewed perception of Scotland. The issue of perspective on home is complicated by the fact that some of the poems were written earlier, before leaving the Southern Hemisphere. Additionally, the lyrical ego of the poems is often a travelling man, adopting all sorts of geographically distanced points of view to consider not just the world around but also himself in this world. The self is here grasped from the perspective of many returns, very diverse acts of reaching home.
However, the dating of the poems also indicates that they can be inscribed into what was happening at the time in Scotland. On the national level, the year 2009 was hailed by the Scottish Government as the “Homecoming Scotland” year,\(^7\) in celebration of Robert Burns’ 250\(^{th}\) birth anniversary. This was an institutional encouragement issued for the Scottish diaspora worldwide to appreciate their national heritage, to travel back home or to reconnect with their sources in some way, the commemoration holding many artistic as well as cultural events. The poems fit well into this initiative because of the global and glocal themes they undertake but also through the diverse intermedial poetic approach of which we will see some more samples below. Many poems are dramatic in quality by giving insight into particular situations, even particular dialogues rendering the Scottish experience of home abroad and homeland as abroad.

A salient example of this process of mapping out identity in a personalised glocal way happens in the poem titled “Where?” The focus is on dual geographical and emotional identification of homeland. Scotland is seen from the perspective of a New Zealand home marked by the presence of a child. The dialogic principle organising the poem highlights the intersecting lines of the child’s – the lyrical ego’s son’s – responses that get coordinated through the lyrical ego’s, the father’s, questions:

At three James points to the map and I ask him, “Where do Nana and Grandpa live?”
“In Scotland,” he says, and points to it. “They are Scottish.”
“And where do Grandma and Grandpop live?”
“New Zealand,” he says, and looks across the world, and points to it. “In Whangarei,”
“And where do we live?”
“In New Zealand.”
“But we are Scottish too,” he says … (Riach 2014b: 26)

Home is here glocal as it is made of the Northern Atlantic and South Pacific components which mark the coordinate points of understanding oneself through the perspective of little James. The conversation with the son is for the lyrical ego a way of probing the complex global and at the same time local identity of the next generation. Scottish identity is debated and probed here, with the resulting reinforcement of the global aspect of Scottishness. The connections that are thus established form some arcs of movement. Thinking, feeling and memory span the world and create connections as aeroplanes do, which is also represented by the small-scale movement of the child learning to walk between the family members, the Scottish grandmother and the New Zealand mother:

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\(^7\) The initiative named as Homecoming Scotland was repeated in 2014, when Riach’s *Homecoming* was republished for the second time.
He's been there twice, started moving, crawled, fast, from standstill to speed that first visit, and then before we left, a few steps, hesitant, from his grandmother's hands to his mother's (Riach 2014b: 26)

This is evidently the father questioning his own identity in the context of his family complexities. The space in which the conversation happens is that of New Zealand, but the vectors of memory and identity constantly reach out to the lyrical ego’s homeland. This is why the planes overhead are acknowledged to “fly over / in different directions, all of them [are] heading one way.” This is again uttered firmly in the voice of the son, not the father, the adult only provokes the response: ““Where is that plane going?’ I ask him. / No hesitation, certainty impatient … ‘To Scotland”’ (Riach 2014b: 26). Scotland of this poetic, dialogic exchange of ideas is a dynamic concept which is much broader than just a place, being connected to people, to one's sources and to family history.

The concept of home as a dynamic phenomenon was earlier expressed by Riach in his essay “The View from the South Pacific”, published in Spirits of the Age: Scottish Self Portraits: “If home is something you leave it’s also something you make” (Riach 2005: 331). This shows home as a crucial universal topos as well as a man-made reality that becomes intimate. Home is an identity-asserting sphere that one can define oneself against. Such understanding of this central motif and its bonds permeates this mature collection of poetry. Throughout its varied poems the lyrical ego reveals a tendency for self-conscious probing of his sources and influences. He tries to consider them on many personal and abstracted, generalised levels so as to provoke an analogic, dynamic – distanced and involved – stance in the reader.

The central aspects of this artistic strategy are directly revealed already in the Introduction to Homecoming which challenges the reader to be encompassed in the author’s perspective by the use of the first-person plural point of view. The author asks in a binary, reader-oriented but also self-referential, way: “What are our co-ordinate points, the moments and places from which the poems arise?” Having asked this, he instantly offers an indefinite, lyrical answer: “They are found in the cross-hairs of our telescopic sights, the intersecting lines of moments and occasions that occur without manufacturing, that have no forward-plan, methodology or strategy, other than intuitive …” (Riach 2014a: 19, emphasis added). This is informing the reader how to read the poems, provoking the addressee to immerse themselves in the aesthetics of these intersecting lines of recurring motifs and patterns, looking for moments of hierophanic poetic insight.

The reader is encouraged to appreciate the minute and the grand aspects of vision, as well as to yield to the much foregrounded sensory aspect so as to pave the way

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8 The essay first appeared in In Scotland, no 4, Summer 2001.
to the intuitive element, not just in the poems but in their effect on him or her. All this is done through very deliberate, serious and playful, intellectually intricate poems with varied poetic patterns. These texts employ phenomenologically-focused, phonetically orchestrated forms to render the individual experience in a kind of processual way. The effect is that they not only force one to mentally cognize, but also take the reader into the poetic world of the described phenomena through the multi-sensory rendering of experience. The immediate surroundings are fused in his poems with the cultural elements, and the cognitive reactions they provoke that reach far and wide beyond the atmosphere of the moment, situating Scotland or the Scottish lyrical ego in the global cultural heritage. The speaker in his poems is always the wandering glocal man who is ready to pause and take in the moment, and who is endlessly open to cognizing the world with its multiple sensory stimuli, the diverse cultural aspects of life, while remaining quintessentially one of his nation.

Many poems are connected into sequences, with their titles coordinated by numbers, sometimes with symbolic overtones. The opening part of the collection is a poetic sequence titled “Seven Preludes”. Seven is used here as a sense-suggesting number, deriving its significance from the Biblical tradition. It connotes fullness, completeness, perfection, inscribed in the fact there are seven days of creation, during which God is said to have created everything. The word preludes suggests texts which establish some sort of opening, anticipation of key topics for a later exploration. The first poem of this sequence is titled “On the Island”. The identification of the island as New Zealand at a particular point in time is facilitated by the use of the proper name Matakana, along with the date 1988, which corresponds to the time when Riach was starting his home in the Southern Hemisphere. The text tells of some particular night-time journey home which is difficult because of all-encompassing darkness, but which is aided by being guided by some unspecified person addressed directly as “You”:

You were there in that
dark night, starless,
after the blaze of inside,
the long road home was not
to be seen in that blackness (Riach 2014b: 23)

This person, the addressee of the lyrical ego, is never directly named in the poem. However, he is evoked through his presence as a figure who speaks: his voice is heard and his contour is seen against the darkened landscape:

Your voice was a nearness, a guide
I had to keep close to, to keep
to the road. The fields on either side –(Riach 2014b: 23)
This way of affirming the helper gradually changes into a lament. The voice of the other is soon revealed as a case of imagining somebody absent, deceased, but coming to life through the poetic word. The lyrical evocation has the healing power:

And here, long after your death,
that there was that gradual way –
to find a way of seeing in that dark, … (Riach 2014b: 23)

The liminal night-time denotes this being an emotional landscape that helps the lyrical ego to deal with the loss while confronting his bereavement. The returning home is tentatively represented as establishing a new life despite the loss: “that there was that gradual way – / to find a way of seeing in that dark” (Riach 2014b: 23). Loss is thus connected to a new way of seeing as suggested by the end of the poem.

Being the first of the “Seven Preludes”, the text introduces some key motifs for the whole Homecoming volume: (1) the principle of crossing some landscape which becomes a channel for confronting emotions and for heightened metaphysical perception; (2) using the figure of the other (a person, a voice, a memory of oneself) to provide a different vantage point or points; (3) the device of intimate (re)connecting with the place both through its sensory impact and its abstracted connotations. What is also repetitively used further on in Homecoming is the fact that in this poem the lyrical ego questions and probes the power of words and their semantic adequacy. In “On the Island’ he states: “it wasn’t the words. There wasn’t any meaning to them” (2014b: 23).

Just as in the opening poem of “Seven Preludes”, also in the other texts of this volume some apparently carefree settings get loaded with emotional impact and semiotic clues. Riach creates and plays with some “possible worlds”, some parallel systems of modalities that encompass various possibilities based on temporal issues, epistemic questions, existential problems or relationship ties, to name but a few. Many poems use intricate though unobtrusive patterns, such as: negation, ellipses, clashing of senses, and abstract senses imposed upon the mundane reality. Riach employs them to ponder on the concealed meanings of the lyrical ego’s existence and his internal constitution. He is as a poet well-aware of the lyrical power of engaging the reader in the poetic feeling and he aims for depth of insight therein. The poems are thus a way to reach understanding or a better view. We can see this in the passage from “On the Island’:

And gradually
the light began to allow me
to see your shape, against the island’s rim,
the ocean beyond –(Riach 2014b: 23)
The poem is revealed here as the quasi-cognitive device of reconnecting. As a dynamically developing text, it becomes a way through the layers of feeling and memory. It creates emotional coordinate points at the moment of loss. There are, however, no definite answers in this poetic world.

For Riach, the concept of home is connected primarily to one’s origin, marked by the presence of the close, dear people who are accessible through memories, even if they are long gone. This is clear on the personal level, in the quasi-autorial subjective lyrics. The feelings seem dispersed but they can be reached and re-united with the moment of experience by the lyrical means, with the poems creating the space of encounter. Many texts invite and occasion the possibility of seeing oneself against the experience of the renewed presence of the dear ones. The second poem of “Seven Preludes” makes this very clear. Its title “October 1st, 1988” as well as the dedication “Oh father, father gone among –” (Riach 2014b: 24) suggest instantly the genre of threnody. It remembers the dead father through recollecting the things which are stated to be no longer there. There is the principle of negation at work again, as in the previous poem: “There is no harbour … no sunlight” (Riach 2014b: 24). Such a way of remembering suggests that these two elements used to be a normal reality, and that they used to define the father when he was alive. Further on affirmation precedes negation. Evoking some crucial identity-defining topoi, like a bridge, prepares the ground for denying it in the poetic way: “the span of the bridge is not there” (Riach 2014b: 24). The idea of the bridge is shown by the semiotic and syntactic means – it is first introduced in the positive way ‘the span of the bridge’, and then it is dissolved in the countering of the statement “is not there”. The principle of absence is linked to the particular date – supposedly the date named in the title of the poem. There is a line that refers back to it “Absence is a fixed date”. Ultimately this turns out to be a time in memory, not in the reality of the speaker’s life. The poet’s voice is then transformed into the plural “we” while it is not clear whom this “we” comprises: “… Desire / is what we’ll have to plan for now”. The further elements which are named as missing, “no big ships and no-one there to pilot them” (Riach 2014b: 24), bring to the foreground the topic of navigating, and being a sort of guide, the topic used already in the first poem of the collection.

The problem of navigability and ability to visit places is also developed in the poem “By Doubtful Sound”, which evokes the long narrow sound in the South Island of New Zealand. This is described as a location visited by the lyrical ego on a cruise with his love. The description of the situation occasions posing questions of the ability of crossing space and getting out. The Pacific shore evokes in the lyrical ego some

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9 This is an autobiographic poem, as many in Riach’s ouevre. His father James Alexander Riach used to be a sea captain, a navigator, a sea pilot and a great storyteller. In 2013 a book of his stories The Captain’s Log: From Conway and Clan Line to Trinity House, was published with an afterword by Alan Riach. A crucial part of his contribution are also some poems of Alan Riach related to his father.
associations with Europe, as foregrounded by naming “The Alpine slopes above” (Riach 2014b: 27). The space is considered on many levels, including the physical and the emotional. It is described as it appears from the deck of a ship, but it is also suggested to hide some mysterious connotations of feeling visible when considering the relationship that occasions the journey. The visits made by the lovers to the New Zealand locations opportune reminding the reader of the history of these places – there is a suggestion of the narrative of the Doubtful Sound and its naming by Cook – the explorer who did not choose to go there on his island exploration. The poem also evokes a parallel story of Doubtless Bay. The relationship of the lyrical ego is also examined in terms of choices taken and not taken, which yet remain in the folded, understated form:

Let’s shuffle the deck.
My love and I will look
Upon each other on the beach
At Doubtless Bay, these
Summer months, December
Through to March: only
Glad at moments we can
Spare, to take what necessity
Gives, to remember
Roads not taken,
By Doubtful Sound. (Riach 2014b: 27)

What strikes one here on the compositional level is the poetic choices suggested as taken and ultimately not taken. This can be shown through the fact that the natural syntactic organisation that the reader is made to expect, is constantly broken by line organisation. The discrepancy is made palpable by the principle of capitalisation used at the beginning of each line. If one tried to read out the lines as they are organised, giving prominence to line structures by intonation, the semantic component would be unsettled. The text necessitates navigating its compositional signals and renouncing certain options induced by its organisation. This principle of possible yet rejected choices thus works as an experimental, self-referential factor.

Many poems of the collection are slightly experimental while they seem very unobtrusive, being often based on seemingly natural prose rhythms and structures. At the same time their poetic quality emerges from their deeply lyrical focus. With each subsequent poem “The Seven Preludes” go ever deeper into the realms of dream-like imagery so as to offer a response to the experience of loss or disconnecting. The search that the lyrical ego embarks upon is that of looking for identity-asserting figures. “Dream Poem” is focused on the maternal grandfather. The poetically told story is that of remembering the home visited in the poet’s childhood, which entails seeing oneself as the much younger person. There is a vision of the grandfather
emerging from his garden shed in a place that is directly identified with the Scottish village of Calderbank. The mimetic effect comes out of parenthetically enumerating the contents of the shed, with the long list of amassed objects working in an aesthetic way as well:

He emerged from his shed (he was in it for hours
Through the night, enclosed in a nest of planks and beams, planes
And drills and saws and shelves and drawers of oddments,
Garden tools and implements). I'd sit on the roof as a boy, squat. (Riach 2014b: 25, emphasis added)

What is important is that despite the veneer of conversational style often used in the poems, the text reveals very deliberate structures. The repetitive use of consonant clusters with /l/, /r/, /d/ and /s/ renders the phonetic effect of garden-shed sounds. The poet clearly invites the reader into the poetic world by leaving space for interpretation – the use of elliptical, contracted poetic utterances serves this purpose, among others.

The sense of the moment brought back to life in memories is crucial here. Although the lyrical ego acknowledges the grandfather’s death in the second line of the poem “I haven’t seen him since he died”, the deceased relative comes through this lengthy list as if alive, he emerges from the profusion of poetic detail, with the vision textually enhanced also through the phonetic orchestration of lateral, plosive and fricative sounds. The fact of the grandfather being framed through the garden shed is textually paralleled by enclosing this part of the poem into parenthesis. The boy’s unusual position is marked as well, he is shown to “squat / Or hang from the edge” (Riach 2014b: 25). This indicates the boy’s singular perspective on the grandfather but also becomes the principle of observing the boy, whose behaviour is likened to that of an animal. He is evidently represented as the little one, not yet fully established in the adult world but curious enough to seek for his own view. There is a contrast created between his agile, free-spirited movement and the effort of the grandfather that involves pushing the loaded wheelbarrow. What links them is the liminality of their position – grandfather is in the shadow and the boy is upside down on the edge of the roof.

The boy’s stance is thus vividly contrasted with that of the grandfather. The image of giving one’s power to his descendants is reinforced through establishing the relation of interfigurality\(^\text{10}\) between the grandfather and the figure of the old dying King Lear from William Shakespeare’s drama:

\(^{10}\) Wolfgang Müller defines the concept of interfigurality as the network of “interrelations that exist between characters of different texts” (1991: 101).
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… Suddenly
He reminds me of King Lear, looking at his three daughters,
Leaning over the outrolled map of Britain, holding out
A single crown, and waiting for the answer (Riach 2014b: 25)

The concept of dowry, legacy is expressed here through a combination of disparate artefacts, each suggestive of some narrative pattern. There is a single crown that suggests making choices. The mundane reality mixes with the mythical, while the uniting element is the circular shape of objects. The thing offered by the grandfather is compared to the chalice, which evokes Arthurian connotations. This modifies the common-place associations introduced by a riddle, a garden sieve used for separating compost. The movement happens in the shadow which endows the grandfather’s gestures with the sense of mystery:

He was in shadow. Deeper shadows cast by the backyard lamp
Surrounded him. He held up a riddle from where it had lain
On top of the wood on the barrow. He held it up above his head
Like a chalice. He was offering it to us, me and my uncles and aunts … (Riach 2014b: 25)

Engaging in memories serves considering the bonds of love in the family, which is reinforced and expanded into a culturally prominent narrative scheme by creating a reference to Shakespeare’s play. Giving insight into himself as a boy perceiving his grandfather, Riach realises another aspect of homecoming in this poem. It is something characteristic of this poetic volume that frequently confronts the adult and the youth perspectives to debate the formation and transmission of identity.

As can be seen from the above considerations, the word Homecoming as the title of this varied collection, evidently works in a self-referential way, indicating the crucial lines of interpretation for the reader of these very diverse poems. This central symbolic sign shows home to be an ambiguous place, a locus related to self-insight, to one’s sources and inspirations, to identity issues that can and should be read on many levels – personal, community and national. It comprises the senses of one’s calling in life, one’s origin and ultimate destination, problems of memory and remembering.

Coming home can also mean revisiting places as in the sequence of poems Orkney Postcards. The poem titled as “5 Threaded on Time” relates the lyrical ego’s memories of his previous contacts with a major Scottish poet named in the poem as GMB, which stands for George Mackay Brown, whom Riach indeed met on a couple of occasions.11 The Orkney memories are an occasion for the lyrical ego to envision himself at different phases of his own creative life. The dynamic vision of the self is also mirrored through the patterns of space. The action of navigating

11 Conversation with Alan Riach, 17th February 2016.
his way along the winding central street of the place named Hamnavoe\footnote{Hamnavoe denotes a literary location used in many works of George Mackay Brown. It is the artistic, Viking name used by the Orkney writer to refer to his home town Stromness, where GMB used to live and where Riach indeed travelled three times, which is rendered in the poem. The first visit was to get some feedback from the acclaimed representative of the Scottish Literary Renaissance concerning Riach’s early poetry.} is described in much detail, corresponding to the toils of forming one’s creative identity. The poet’s attention to the patterns of movement results in noting diverse intersections that the space is marked by:

Driving after dark through Hamnavoe at a snail’s pace, 
manoeuvring the narrow winding main street, past empty 
close-mouths, alleyways, voes running down to the sea 
where the sea’s running up: this tidal little town, on waterfront 
and hillslope, steep thin streams murmuring descent. 
Ferry, ocean, travellers, return upon their different tides and seasons. (Riach 2014b: 136)

The picture of the meandering route taken through the intersecting lines of the little town is evidently governed by the technique of inscape.\footnote{The term introduced by Gerard Manley Hopkins to denote a unique poetic landscape description. The technique features prominently in George Mackay Brown’s poetry, which Alan Riach nods to in this opening fragment.} This prepares the reader for the figurative, tidal representation of the changing self. The images of return and flow abound in what seems to be prose rhythms, while they get organised by the technique of sprung rhythm. The journey through space becomes the journey through time. The lyrical I travels so as to reach some insight into himself:

And I. 1976: That long summer’s exploration landed me, 
one afternoon, with GMB after a flurry of letters, 
this long conversation, as the gift of salmon arrived, 
and knowledge of the hesitancy needed in this given world, 
added by his kind words supporting. Then 1995: (Riach 2014b: 136)

The idea of gift giving and receiving something essential is framed within a very conversational, run-on style. It is most thrifty but also somehow “flurry” in quality. Phrase structures of this peculiar, subversive central sentence of the above passage draw attention to the text organisation. Its subject is the noun “exploration”, which provokes the reader to explore as well. The echoes made by syntactic structures are particularly vivid: “that long summer’s exploration” is reverberated by “this long conversation”, “this given world” and “his kind words”. Another pattern is created by the of-phrases: “a flurry of letters” is mirrored by “the gift of salmon” and “knowledge
of the hesitancy”. The reader is provoked to feel and explore the experience through noting the changing nature of the text.

Riach reveals himself to be influenced by other artists and other arts, creating poetry with some intermedial awareness. As was stated above, some of the poetic patterns are evidently music-focused as clear from the phonetic organisation of lines. This is sometimes highlighted through sign patterns in the texts, as in the following fragment from a poem titled “Mahler 10: Adagio”:

It starts with a touch, one finger then another, one key then another, a cadence, a chord, the sound holds on, subsides and rises, growing more intense, rising to extremity and then the hardest loneliness of all – (Riach 2014b: 29).

The principle of harmony and dissonance is here evident in the repetitions of signs (“the sound”, “a cadence”, “a chord”), structures (“one … then another”, “subsides than rises”, “growing more intense”), as well as syntactic breaking of the line organisation in contrast to the continuity suggested. The poem speaks of saying goodbye to some crucial home space – “your grandparents’ bedroom”. This happens in the context of some liminal life situation. The symbolic moment of leaving the known and the loved sphere is connected to the music of Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), a neo-Romantic Austrian composer. The piece of music evoked in the poem is the first movement of his Symphony No. 10, which is a very emotion-loaded piece, serious and tragic in effect. The fact that Riach chooses such a title is a case of intermedial overcoding the text of the poem. It endows the poem with “the second layer of meaning”, related to a particular text of created in the distinct medium of music (Karrer 1991: 122). The title here works to encourage a comparison between the poem and the musical fragment that is marked with a gradually accelerating dynamic in performance as well as a story that goes along with it. The composer wrote it in reaction to a family crisis he faced. The composition was left incomplete because of his death, that he could feel was coming. Riach takes this dynamic composition as a musical text, thus a hypotext in a different medium to reflect on the ways of transposing the emotional experience of parting. The subtitle of the poem, “Transcription for Piano by Ronald Stevenson”, points to another intermedial process of overcoding that takes place within the medium of music. It indicates yet another author involved in creating the effect – Ronald Stevenson, a contemporary Scottish-Welsh composer and pianist. The evoked musical composition is famed for its expressive, dynamic quality of reflecting on the personal emotional turmoil. It becomes a framework for poetic debating the connections and attachments that have to be faced after the experience of loss. This is a case of transposition d’art which is one of the types of literary intermediality (Rajewski 2005: 50). The resolution of the personal tensions in stanza three has the quality of a flow of musical notes:
“To occupy the air / like time, like silence, after you’ve gone, hold on / with this, like this. Like this” (Riach 2014b: 29). The significance of silence is very prominent in the above quotation, which is linked to being poised.

Some other techniques can be noted in the poem “At Chambésy”, the title of which instantly reveals a particular geographic location in Switzerland, confirmed by description of the view for the cosy veranda of some home. The opening prepares a contrast between the static, calm lake-bound landscape and the increasingly dynamic insight into the ferociously dynamic view towards the mountain tops:

From the veranda,
in the early evening light and with binoculars,
...  
The lenses tune the silence.
...

The high icefields, the sounds
that would be there, creaks, sharp cracks, the clash of pick
for handhold, foothold. The scale of it:
and arching amphitheatre of rugged ice,
a stroll across a snowfield could take a day, eternity,
a long time in a life of hours, to be on the edge. (Riach 2014b: 70)

The principle of indirect, mediated perception through the magnifying lenses of binoculars works to prepare grounds for the further impression of quasi-direct cognition. The clash functions not just on the level of described elements but on the level of evoking multi-sensory perception. The combination of impressions coming from the sense of sight, hearing and prioperception makes the observing lyrical I (and the reader who adopts his focalisation) become engaged with the mountain landscape. Imagining the sounds that are expected to be heard in such a place is accompanied by an attempt at achieving the sensory stimulation of the implied reader through the sound organisation of the poem. This shows in the passage that gives a close-up view of mountain slopes represented through their irregularities: “… creaks, sharp cracks, the clash of pick / for handhold, foothold” (Riach 2014b: 71). The effect is heightened with repetitions and variations of sounds used in the poem: of the initially and finally positioned /k/, enhanced by the hissing /ʃ/, and the liquid and voiced variations of /nd/. The use of /ld/ in “handhold” and “foothold” echoes the /kl/ of “clash.” The sense of jarring techniques used in the poem also comes to the foreground in the ultimate revelation that it is only a fit of intellectual exercise: “And our sedate enquiries, sketching: / A delicate triangulation, balanced” (Riach 2014b: 71).

A momentary home setting is the frame that some poems use to render a liminal experience of contact or reaching understanding. Some temporary places of stay are often connected to some acts of pausing on a journey that is both verisimilar
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and also gets redefined in an existential or epistemological way. In the poetic sequence *Five Poems from Istanbul*, the description is very much focused on being there, with the speaker experiencing the sensory impact of the place and people. However, already in the first poem of the series titled “Love Poem: Missing You” we get to know that it is a story of a presence as much as of an absence. Although this love lyric celebrates the person who transforms the place into some sort of oriental palace of earthly delights, the paradoxical resolution is that the person is not there:

As a new moon she steps down the marble staircase,
the mint pashmina bound
around her throat, tossed back,
a rising trail
buoyant, in the air
of laughter and light.
...
It's only that you are not here
that makes the virtues and the facts
of all you are seem, wishfully, near. (Riach 2014b: 72)

This quality of being very near on the cognitive side is developed in the second poem of the sequence “Chilling out in the breeze in Zekeriyakoy”, which describes a time of resting on the terrace of a luxurious Istanbul villa. The lyrical ego’s pensive mood leads to showing emotional immersion into the core of experience, which happens both on the physical and in the epistemological levels. The reader is lured into considering the external in the context the internal:

… and I am letting the hillside forest
run like a comb through my mind
and the slow act of swimming begins:
I'll change and walk down the stone steps and path
to the pool where the boys are still yelling and jumping
and the noises too, will sift out things, and
there will be one simple dive
that takes us into a blue light
under the surface again, relaxed, not
East or West but deep in the silent centre, … (Riach 2014b: 73)

The nature, the axes and the dynamics of movement are crucial in this text. The sensory plenitude occasioned by the motif of swimming used in the second half of the poem corresponds to the dynamic activity of the lyrical ego’s sight in its first part. The eye movements coincide with the smooth yet jerky, sky-zipping dashing of the house martins, the device that serves to render the paradoxical tumult of experience coming at the apparently peaceful moment. The dynamic impact
of space corresponds to the impact of thought, which is not just individual but it is made glocal, comprising the near and the far, “not East or West but deep in the silent centre” (Riach 2014b: 73). The poetics of combination and sequential piling up of impressions, with their innermost points of impact, is applied on the level of composition as well. This meandering twenty-two line poem is made of a single sentence that starts with a poised locus on “On the wooden chair” and ends with the dynamic image of “splashing around” (Riach 2014b: 73).

We can see from the above examples that the lyrical ego in these poems is a citizen of the world, a Northern man placed in all sorts of geographic and cultural vortex points. This is so also in the poem titled “Helsinki”, which renders the rush and the energy of the modern cosmopolitan urban space by means of the global directions:

Crosswinds, cold currents, forest of crowds,
moving like tides coming in from the East
in the air, from the West and the South,
in the sea, and the spine of the North
attaches the mind to its root, touches the earth as it opens the judgement of eye
and measuring wisdom, intelligent breath,
rocks, water, trees, naturally – (Riach 2014b: 78)

The lyrical ego is a Northern man which shows in his way of perceiving that he is poised even when most engaged on the emotional and sensory levels. In the above passage this is directly uttered from the fourth line onwards “The spine of the North / attaches the mind to its root …”. The inner self gets moved by and figuratively represented by the landscape constituents: “rocks, water, trees, naturally”. The crisis points of the Northern visitors are generalised as the universal constituents of human experience: “Nature compelled them too, and no elite escapes / encounter with the idle wind that tears the broken branch away, / the roof from the house, the old man from his family” (Riach 2014b: 78). The image of the house broken by the elements is resolved in the statement of the role of art that redeems and satisfies: “As mind and art through people make shapely their reality, / inhabiting their preferences: / flags, music, nation, resistances, form” (Riach 2014b: 78). Art is here commented upon as the varied medium that stems from and organises the human mind, making people understand the choices made.

To conclude, the coordinates of a point in maths are two numbers that define the position of a point on the plane of two dimensions, while to coordinate means also to bring into a harmonious relationship. There are many such co-ordinate points in Riach’s poetry and two of them clearly dominate: the personally perceived Scottish aspect and the universalised human stance, both revealed in some telescopic symbol-oriented insights into particular moments of experience. The Scottish element is most often represented here against the global one, while the common
human dimension is defined against the self of the lyrical ego. The speaker in the poems constantly strives to understand and explain his and his family identity. He attains this through probing the complex intersecting lines of his personal, glocal (local and global) experience as it connects with the experience of other people and other cultures. This involves going into the layers of memory that reveal some details of family as well as national history (as in “Wallace Triptych”). The insight is always attained in connection with some exploring movement, either real or imaginary, undertaken in the landscape.

Bearing in mind this dynamic concept of home and of the self, one can grasp the multiple intriguing points made through the ambiguous personal (or individual) and universal (or even archetypal) lines of thinking and feeling that are to be found in this liminal collection. The numerous intersecting lines of motifs and patterns create salient vertices. The maze of relations draws attention to fundamental vertex points of identity, the lines that meet create new perception of the Scottish home space. This is the space of encounters as well as departures, the dynamics of which is embedded in diminishing and growing distances. Importantly, the imagery of intersecting lines allows one to see points of contact, where two or many separate entities meet. This sort of mapping is the core of Riach’s poetic method. The discussed collection celebrates poetic language for rendering separation and connection, for testing the ways of becoming involved, and for being distanced so as to become involved again.

References


Five Important ways to maintain pilot ladder to avoid accidents or loss of life at sea. Q2) How often should operational checks on navigation equipment be done? A2) Regularly, when preparing for sea & entering port. Q3) If possible a vessel’s position should be plotted by bearings of. What is the best way to determine how the overshoot is on your ship? A18) Do a 20/20 degrees zig-zag manoeuvre. Q19) What is the correct definition of a bollard? A19) A remedy which the mooring lines are made fast. Q21) You are approaching a port when you see three flashing red lights in a vertical line at the entrance. What does this indicate? A21) Serious emergency all vessels to stop or divert according to instructions. Q22) What is the fog signal for a vessel which is engaged in towing? The "Intersecting Lines" and "Co-ordinate Points": Lyrical Ways of Making Connections in Homecoming. Alan Riach uses the collection of poems titled "Homecoming" to debate his own stance and his own roles connected to the issues of family, work and ultimately Scottishness, all understood as dynamic concepts involving movement and return. more. Alan Riach uses the collection of poems titled "Homecoming" to debate his own stance and his own roles connected to the issues of family, work and ultimately Scottishness, all understood as dynamic concepts involving movement and return. To be able to There are four absolute coordinate points that intersect all realities. These coordinate points also act as channels through which energy flows, and as warps or invisible paths from one reality to another. They also act as transformers, and provide much of the generating energy that makes creation continuous in your terms. Click to expand And in Session 12 December 1998 the Ĉ’s define an inter-dimensional window. Prove that these two lines intersect and determine the point of intersection. Proof. We have. Then if and intersect we must have such that. From the second equation we have which implies . Plugging this into the first equation we then have which implies . Point out an error, ask a question, offer an alternative solution (to use Latex type \texttt{latexpage} at the top of your comment): Cancel reply. Archives. Archives. Select Month June 2016 (12) May 2016 (142) April 2016 (150) March 2016 (156) February 2016 (145) January 2016 (155) December 2015 (155) November 2015 (150) October 2015 (155) September 2015 (150) August 2015 (155) July 2015 (155) June 2015 (50). If you are having trouble with math proofs a great book to learn from is How to Prove It by Daniel Velleman
There are four absolute coordinate points that intersect all realities. These coordinate points also act as channels through which energy flows, and as warps or invisible paths from one reality to another. They also act as transformers, and provide much of the generating energy that makes creation continuous in your terms. Click to expand. The subordinate points also serve in a way as supports, as structural intensification within the unseen fabric of energy that forms all realities and manifestations. While they are traces or accumulations of pure energy, there is a great difference between the amount of energy available in the various subordinate points, and between the main and the absolute points. Click to expand 3D Coordinate System. Find the Intersection of the Line Perpendicular to Plane 1 Through the Origin and Plane 2. To find the intersection of the line through a point, perpendicular to plane. and plane. This set of parametric equations represents the line through the origin that is perpendicular to. Substitute the expression for. and. The "Intersecting Lines" and "Co-ordinate Points": Lyrical Ways of Making Connections in Homecoming. Alan Riach uses the collection of poems titled "Homecoming" to debate his own stance and his own roles connected to the issues of family, work and ultimately Scottishness, all understood as dynamic concepts involving movement and return. Alan Riach uses the collection of poems titled "Homecoming" to debate his own stance and his own roles connected to the issues of family, work and ultimately Scottishness, all understood as dynamic concepts involving movement and return. To be able to Everyone knows how irritating the noise made by a mosquito, by a painful reaction to its bite, can be. It is astonishing that so is known about why mosquitoes are drawn to or driven away from people, given level of distress and disease caused by these insects. We know that the most effective chemical protecting people against mosquitoes is diethyltoluamide, commonly shortened. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line. There is an example at the beginning. Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet. Example: 0. The list aims to make the reader aware of. is available that is stimulating, rewarding and inspiring. The samples studied were intersecting graphic lines made by popular writing instruments (e.g. ball point pens and fibre tip pens) in different combinations, and intersections in which one line was made by an ink jet printer and the other by various writing materials (ballpoint inks and fluid inks). Raman spectra were obtained using Foster & Free-man. The effects of the writing pressure of the intersecting strokes and of the rubbing force on the success rate of the technique are described. The relative chronological sequence of intersecting gel pen ink lines and laser printed marks has been determined using optical methods. The proposed technique is able to obtained 3D profile in non-invading way.