

From Playboys to Disco Pigs: Irish Identities on a World Stage

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Abstract: *This article examines the subject of Irish identity in contemporary Irish theatre productions, focusing a selection of plays showcased to a world audience through receiving their UK premieres at the Traverse Theatre Edinburgh during Edinburgh Fringe Festivals over the last ten years. It considers several issues around the theme of whether Irish identity is a concern in contemporary Irish theatre and, if so, why and in what ways has it been used. This is carried out by examining productions which address Irish identity directly, productions which address it indirectly and some which, apparently, do not appear to be concerned with it at all, using the latter category to discuss the question of influenced readings and interpretations.*

In May of 2009 I delivered a paper at the VIII International Conference of the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI) in Alcalá de Henares near Madrid, the theme of



Dublin by Lamplight,
Corn Exchange.
Photographer: Paul McCarthy

which was “From Local Ireland to Global Ireland: the Reality Beyond”.¹ I was extremely pleased when the organizers told me that my abstract had been accepted, if a little daunted at the prospect of presenting a paper on Irish Studies to a gathering of experts in that area of study; the focus of my work, as a researcher in Edinburgh, has been nationalism and identity, but Scottish rather than Irish. However a somewhat itinerant career prior to becoming “an academic” studying culture and identity in theory had brought me into fairly close contact with one area of contemporary Irish culture and its producers in practice: theatre.

Working my way through various theatre jobs while a design student, little did I know that I was actually carrying out fieldwork for the future. Had I gone into the theatre with this in mind, rather than working as a set-designer, I suspect I would only have found what I had gone looking for and

missed much more valuable data. To put the following article on contemporary Irish theatre even more into context then, the later objective observer was inspired by the completely and utterly subjective or even unconscious earlier participant. The primary data for this study therefore comes from the field study referred to earlier, which began in 1992, but the focus here is on a ten year period up until 2008.

For many years I have made a point of going to see most, if not all, of the Irish theatre productions that come over to the Traverse theatre during the Edinburgh Festival period (August to early September) to have their UK premieres and I have rarely been disappointed, but, since my professional subject area is nationalism, national identity and the arts, I have recently been attempting to analyse what it was about Irish work that made it stand out for me, other regular Traverse Festival visitors, and theatre professionals including the Artistic Director of the Traverse over the period studied, Philip Howard: “Was there anything in the water over there that made Irish theatre different?” After all, it has been said of the festival on several occasions that there are so many Irish productions on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and occasionally also on the Edinburgh International Festival programme, that “the Irish could almost have a festival of their own”.² Many Irish productions win one or several critics’ awards. For example, Enda Walsh’s *The Walworth Farce* won one of the most coveted press awards, a *Scotsman Fringe First*, in the first week of its run and in 2009 both Druid and Abbey Theatre companies received these “prestigious” awards for their productions of new plays by Mark O’Rowe and Walsh.³ In terms of the Traverse theatre – the “world stage” of this article’s title – on a number of occasions it has appeared as though the Irish had “taken over Edinburgh’s principal Fringe venue”.⁴

The Traverse theatre, during the Edinburgh Festival period, is argued to be representative of the international theatre audience for several reasons. The Traverse theatre, Scotland’s only theatre dedicated specifically to new writing, has an international reputation which it has gained through collaborative work and exchanges with artists from numerous other countries, touring its own productions to places from the United States, to Kosovo, to Syria. The Edinburgh International and Fringe Festivals combined make the *Edinburgh Festival* one of the biggest arts and theatre festivals in the world. Thousands of people flock to Edinburgh every year for this month long event, the importance of which was recognized by *Culture Ireland*, an Irish State Agency set-up in 2005 in order to promote “the best of Ireland’s arts and culture internationally” and to assist in the development of the country’s “international cultural relations”.⁵ For several years *Culture Ireland* was able to give financial support to eligible Irish companies which hoped to take productions to the Edinburgh Festival which the organization recognized as an “important arts market” noting that following their performances at Edinburgh, many companies received invitations to present their work at key international festivals. During the Edinburgh Festival the Traverse theatre is viewed as an essential destination not just for ordinary theatre audiences, but for critics, theatre professionals, and for programmers of other theatres and arts festivals around the world.

Identity or representations?

To say that we are looking at or for something called Irish identity is, rather obviously, a misnomer on several counts: there is no one essential or all encompassing Irish, Brazilian, Spanish or any other national identity and few undiluted *cultural* identities. Each nation or culture, obviously, comprises thousands of individuals bringing different variations into the mix before we even take into account personal histories and experiences. As with any culture, Irish beliefs about Irish identity have been influenced by events, histories, visual images and the shifting interpretations of these over time, that have been made available and broadcast over centuries and this applies to stereotype images too. What we and some of the plays used here are actually looking at then, are representations.

Whether Irish or any other cultural identity, we have to consider whose representations of Irish identity we are actually talking about: in this case, representations produced by the Irish, or by *outsiders* or non-Irish. These cannot genuinely be separated as each has had some level of influence on the other as none of us is immune to received images, regardless which side was responsible for them in the first place. Ideas, beliefs and representations of Irish identity have been influenced by the Irish, by Irish exiles (the diaspora being a huge and influential element) and by those with whom the country has shared relationships, whether voluntarily or imposed, for example, with the English then British. Such events and histories contribute to the narratives passed among a people then made available to future generations and, moreover negative influences, such as the latter (diaspora and colonization) are also and perhaps particularly important in terms of stimulating voices within and about a culture, resisting disempowering representations or subverting “inferiorist”⁶ and *stereotypes*. None of these many different influences, real or myth, personal or shared with an “imagined community”⁷, are miraculously suspended by playwrights, directors, actors, or audience members (even those of us who harbour the conceit that we are objective as academics) and theatre is a mix of the planned and the “unplannable for”. Each individual in a theatre audience is a participant in a unique event: each performance is unique; the experience of the same audience member watching the same production is, as for the actors on stage, different from one performance to the next. This is not merely due to the more intangible or unquantifiable elements in operation when groups of unknown individuals come together; modern theatre develops through performance and in response to audience.

To look at or *for* (discussed later) national identity in theatre is therefore a slippery business, but this study acknowledges both the “fuzziness” of national identity as a subject and the non-static and unfixable nature of theatre. However blurred the line between local beliefs about national identity, national stereotypes and received ideas generated, arguably, by outsiders, distinctions can be and are frequently made. In an attempt to manage this study and the data used in it I have imposed a crude framework grouping a number of Irish theatre productions under the three headings: “Outsider

stereotypes and national myths”, “Up close and universal”, and “Beyond national identity”. The selection of plays represented includes several written by the same playwright, Enda Walsh reflecting the number of Walsh’s plays which appeared at the Traverse over the period examined, a number disproportionate to that of plays by any other Irish playwright. Testimony as to why this should be the case may perhaps be found in the many references to, if not comparisons that have been made between his work and that of Beckett, Pinter and, even, Shakespeare by both theatre critics and academics.⁸ The first section includes two productions that directly and deliberately address notions of Irish identity as a subject: what the Irish have believed to be representative of their national identity (*Dublin by Lamplight*) and outsider notions of Irishness (*Stones in His Pockets*). The next introduces two productions in which national identity is less the subject, but in which it is used either as a prop by characters or as a signifier of any local (*The Walworth Farce* and *The New Electric Ballroom*). The final section refers to a number of productions in which, while unarguably Irish to non-Irish audiences in particular, the subject Irish identity might appear not to be a concern, but which for a consideration of the “finding” of Irishness in a work (*Terminus*, *Bedbound* and *Disco Pigs*).

Outsider stereotypes ...

As introduced earlier, national stereotyping is something people all over the world are both subject to and, often, collude with. A writer may set out to question a culture and society, but audiences are not guaranteed to recognise that this is his/her intention. Even the work of writers such as Brian Friel can be transformed by audiences who want to consume them as nostalgia. It is not being suggested, even remotely, that the play discussed below should be thought of as on a par with Friel, but it has been used here for it directly addresses the romanticisation of a culture and identity at the same time also illustrating not only how outsider stereotypes operate, but also acknowledges that they are used by both outsiders and locals. As suggested earlier, there is a relationship between received notions of Irish identity and the stereotyped themselves.

Stones in His Pockets by Marie Jones (Lyric, Belfast) is not representative of the Traverse theatre’s usual fare, being a work that Philip Howard, the theatre’s Artistic Director at the time, admitted, could not be described as particularly “challenging”.⁹ However, it proved to be as popular with Edinburgh Festival Fringe audiences as it had been in Ireland and would be in the future with many other audiences for similar reasons: it was enjoyable, endearing, and very funny, carried by superb performances by its cast of two who played all fourteen characters in the play. The main two characters, Charlie and Jake, get work as extras playing stereotype “Oirish” locals in a Hollywood movie which “shows how the Irish responded to being dispossessed of their land in the past” but, says Patrick Lonergan, “the irony that [Marie] Jones reinforces is that the company making [the] movie is dispossessing the Irish of their entitlement to define their own

identity in the present”.¹⁰ In his 2009 book Lonergan’s focus is *Globalisation*, therefore he highlights the point that the play is analyzing “the mass media’s presentation of national identities for global consumption”: “throughout the action, [Jones] illustrates the discrepancy between appearance and reality in the representation of Irishness . . .” (for example, when the film producers in the play complain that the cows and some of the villagers don’t look “Irish enough”). But the playwright also shows how many of the locals are “complicit in, and beneficiaries of, their own exploitation”¹¹, another situation in which the Irish are not alone. An alternative and, perhaps, more positive way of describing this might be to credit the stereotyped as exploiting the myopia of “the other”. Either way, those represented are not, necessarily, the passive recipients many academics would believe.

Broadcasting reductive and inferiorising stereotypes of others’ identities is not, of course, new to the global age. Communication is obviously much faster now, but cultural stereotyping and caricaturing occurred in the days when “global mass media” meant print.¹² In effect it is the reach of the modern mass media, of which the stereotype is the stock-in-trade, which has made audiences more experienced consumers, choosing whether and when to be passive recipients of the images broadcast to them. The characters in *Stones in His Pockets* are shown, ultimately, to “take control of the narrative”, but while tapping into “the frustration that local communities feel with mass culture” Lonergan suggests that the play’s success is due, in part, to its representing some of the stereotype images it purports to be challenging.¹³



Dublin by Lamplight, Corn Exchange. Photographer: Paul McCarthy

... national myths

Some of the Irish companies from whom spectacular writing or innovative approaches will now be expected by Traverse festival audiences employ techniques developed elsewhere, for example, American *Story Theatre* style as used in the next production. The director of Dublin's Corn Exchange theatre company, Annie Ryan, is also American. It is debateable whether such factors diminish *Dublin by Lamplight's* Irish credentials, but Ryan claims that the company started with the technique, and then "thought what they wanted to do a play about".¹⁴ The play was then devised with the company by writer Michael West in 2005: a tragicomedy employing Commedia dell'Arte style thick make-up and choreographed exaggerated movement to tell counter-running tales of love, death, politics and art. A slap in the face of a revered story of Irish history and identity, this satire is set in the iconic year of 1904 which saw the appearance of the Abbey Theatre and Sinn Fein, and in which Joyce set *Ulysses*. While two of its characters, a thinly disguised Yeats and his patron, Lady Gregory, struggle to launch the "National Theatre of Ireland" with *The Wooing of Emer*, "a heroic drama about a mythical Irish princess", outside, real people are killing and being killed for the nationalist cause.¹⁵

Dublin by Lamplight "celebrates the romantic stories Ireland tells about itself, and the traditions of the nation's theatre, while simultaneously debunking them", looking at how Irish culture has fed off the period "sometimes naively romanticising it"¹⁶ but, according to Director of Corn Exchange, Annie Ryan, while playwright Michael West had "really wanted to write something about Yeats, the whole period of setting the [Abbey] Theatre up in 1904" the play was born out of the question, "What does Irish Identity mean nowadays, when we have people from all over the world?".¹⁷ So, we have a writer and a group of people building a play and production around the notion that once upon a time "the Irish people" had a strong sense of national identity, one of the myths we imagine about identity when we're in a situation that makes us think about it at all: that is, that people in the past were surer about theirs. In this instance and for this particular group of artists at a particular moment in time, national identity was indeed an issue and the catalyst to increased immigration into Ireland.

Up close and universal

Unlike *Dublin by Lamplight*, the following two plays are less concerned with the stories Ireland tells itself than with the stories the characters use to either hide from the truth or reassure themselves of the inevitability of their fates. Both feature characters that constantly replay stories about their pasts, and while representations of Irishness are employed in both, literally by the characters in the first play, these are studies more of personal than national or cultural identities. In *The Walworth Farce* "instead of engaging with reality outside" a father has hidden himself and his two, now adult, sons away from the world in their grubby London flat, making them repeatedly play out an

absurd fantasy about life “back home” in Ireland. The threesome act out a “nostalgised” story of Ireland as an innocent and happy family home:

BLAKE. When we came here as little kids you could still smell Ireland from our jumpers... you could smell Mammy’s cooking, couldn’t you? It was roast chicken that last day and it was a lovely smell, hey Sean? And I think we might have come across on a boat ... (*Prompting SEAN, smiling.*) Go on.

BLAKE *holds SEAN’S hand.*

SEAN (*continuing*). And despite the sea and wind, the smell of Mammy’s cooking and that chicken was still stuck in the wool of our jumpers.¹⁸

Dinny, the father, would keep this “surreal state of affairs” going forever, arguing that he is keeping Sean and Blake safe, but his story hides them all from an ugly truth about the past and once Sean is beginning to doubt how dangerous the outside actually is. This and a real outsider’s interruption of their manic routine “sends the play-within-a-play” off the rails with terrifying repercussions.¹⁹

Both the Traverse theatre and Druid Theatre (Galway) had hoped that Walsh’s *The New Electric Ballroom* would play as a companion piece to *The Walworth Farce* for the 2007 Fringe, but the company were unsuccessful in winning the funding required to give both plays their UK premieres together. In *The Walworth Farce* Dinny has created a fun-filled nostalgic story of home and hearth in Ireland to keep himself safe from what really happened there. In *The New Electric Ballroom* the characters, again, repeatedly go through a ritual acting out of a story. This time three sisters working at the canning factory in an Irish fishing village act out a story from the two older sisters’ youth based on their teenage desire and devastation at the hands of “the Roller Royle”, the handsome crooner who sings at the dancehall, *The New Electric Ballroom* in the 1950s; on the opportunities for a different life that had seemed possible then; and on the hurt, betrayal and consequences of one fatal night with “the Crooner” which, instead, trapped them (like the village’s other inhabitants) in unchanging, dead-end lives. Breda and Clara force younger sister Ada to become part of their purgatory. Any hope (through a romance with the local fishmonger) is snatched away from her just as she is about to reach out to it.

As with *The Walworth Farce*, *The New Electric Ballroom* is about the power of the stories and myths we tell ourselves. In both of these plays the characters act-out - play and replay “stories” about their lives. Unlike Dinny’s fiction in *The Walworth Farce*, Breda and Clara’s story in *The New Electric Ballroom* is based on a truth, but they cling to theirs as punishment and penance, this time to keep the younger sister “safe” in it with them as they once made the mistake of thinking there could be another bigger world outside their small closed-off one, and have been determinedly paying for it ever since.

Both plays are dark comedies “played lightly”²⁰, the contrast between what’s happening on the surface and what lies behind the characters’ myths about their lives, is what makes one (*The Walworth Farce*) disturbing and slowly terrifying and the other (*The New Electric Ballroom*) deeply moving and tragic. Both, also, can be and are very easily and obviously described as “Irish” in that *The New Electric Ballroom* is set in an Ireland that is small town, and closed off from “the outside world”, or “local” (so, in that sense, traditional), and while the action in the second takes place in a flat in London’s Walworth area, the life the characters act out and want to believe in is set in a romanticised nostalgic version of back home in Ireland with the Mammy and the *craic*, also uses a representation of from the repertoire of the traditional.

In *The New Electric Ballroom* the characters, almost an entire community, are trapped in staying and being “local”: going through the same routines, having the same conversations with the same people over and over again and again. But, neither of these plays need be set in Ireland. The old clichés about art hold true: focussing on the local talks to us about universal experiences, an issue returned to after considering some plays in which Irishness is neither the subject (as in *Stones in his Pockets* and *Dublin by Lamplight*) nor, a factor in but not germane to the characters’ situations, as in the last two Walsh plays.

Beyond National identity

Irish identity was not a point of reference in Abbey Theatre’s “Fringe First” Award-winning *Terminus* (written and directed by Mark O’Rowe, author of *Howie the Rookie*, 1999) which had its UK premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2008.

Terminus uses three actors who deliver three monologues which briefly overlap as the actors hand over to the each other throughout the performance. Gradually connections between these characters become apparent. One is an ex-teacher who walks into violence in an effort to make up with a stranger for letting-down her own daughter. The younger woman wants her world to end with the end of her relationship. The third, male character has sold his soul to the devil in order to fulfill his desire. The stories range, therefore, from the reality of the street – an underworld of casual violence and inhumanity – to fantasy (as the lost soul flies through the streets killing to feed his devil).

At the beginning of *Bedbound*, written and directed by Enda Walsh, a wall crashes to the floor revealing the play’s two characters, father and daughter, and the claustrophobic location of this tale. All of the action takes place on a grubby single bed in a tiny room where the polio-stricken daughter has been walled-in all her life “like a fairy-tale princess”.²¹ From the opening, and relentlessly through to the end of this hour long torrent of words, this production was a mesmerising and jaw dropping experience for audiences, as “like watching a dam burst”.²² The father, Maxie, a rage-filled braggart in a faded suit always on the edge of explosion into violence or heart attack:

talks in frenetic spasms about his murderously determined struggle to become cock-of-the-walk in the Cork and Dublin furniture-dealing business.

Littered in his wake are the steaming remains of dimwitted colleagues, his marriage and his polio-stricken daughter. Shame at himself and her condition has caused him to turn their house into a maze of partitions at whose centre she is literally walled-in.²³

Maxie seems to have the advantage in this tortured relationship, but as they repeat their endless routine of trying to fill the gaps that exist between them with words, we begin to question who really holds the power.

Disco Pigs was Walsh's breakthrough hit which had its UK premiere at the Traverse in 1997. Again, it features characters with a "twisted dependency" who live in their own "hermetically sealed world", and language, the characters' own private language: a mangled mixture of Cork dialect, baby talk and animal noises, is one of the ways Pig and Runt, two Cork teenagers, maintain their distance from the realities of the outside, adult, world.²⁴

Each of these last three plays, *Terminus*, *Disco Pigs* and *Bedbound*, are urban and contemporary in their settings with little or no harking back to stories of Ireland's past or imagined. Near the beginning of *Bedbound* we hear Maxie, as an ambitious 15-year-old "berating his fellow country-men with the need to "drag their priest-ridden, second-rate country" into the 20th [sic] century. This character and play could be interpreted as representing Ireland, a "postcard from the front line of Ireland's sudden lurch into rampant late-20th-century consumerism" (the Celtic Tiger era):

but it's a postcard so shredded through Walsh's nightmare vision that what emerges is less a social document than a brutal Punch and Judy show in which the hidden violence of a society and way of life rushes to the surface.²⁵

So, apart from their setting did non-Irish audiences find Irishness in these productions and, if they do, is it really there, or could this be more to do with their approaching Irish plays and productions with that in mind? "Branding" is a word so closely related to the rise of consumerism in the West that Lonergan applies it to Irish theatre:

to see a play that is branded as "Irish" does not mean that we encounter a work that literally originated in Ireland itself. It means that we consume a work that accords with our predefined notions of Irishness. It is not important that the work be Irish; it is important instead that ... it seems Irish.²⁶

Even those commentators who did not rate Walsh's work as highly as most at the time of these productions noted the influence of Samuel Beckett, but surely both Beckett and his legacy are international.²⁷

Language is a common factor in all of these plays, standing out and, at times, punching the audience in the face and taking the breath away. In *Disco Pigs*, it is an integral part of the plot and the armour the two teenagers use to cocoon themselves from the realities of life, but that language “slams against your ear unexpectedly”.²⁸ In *Bedbound*, the characters use words in an attempt to compensate for and to bridge the gulf in their twisted relationship, and it is language of an extraordinary quality, ranging from lunatic ramblings “sometimes babbling and keening like the invented tongues of a world twisted beyond the power of ordinary speech, at other times falling clear, lucid and beautiful from the actors’ mouths.” Mark O’Rowe’s *Terminus* can be described as a performed poem and what holds this, at times disturbing, at times magical, tale together is the writer’s brilliant use of language. But is this unique to Irish writers?

Finding Irishness and finding what you look for

The Enda Walsh productions discussed here can be used to examine the finding of Irishness in a work by audiences and critics. Walsh is Irish, was brought up in and lived there until relatively recently and, since these plays come from his experience and influences, they, unsurprisingly, employ Irish references and idioms, although in *The Walworth Farce* Irishness is employed to emphasize the family’s nostalgised myth of its past. The more important factor is that Walsh’s plays were written by a writer who is fascinated by human beings and their relationships with one another. Being Irish is not the sole factor that has influenced his character, life and work. The plays discussed here - these stories or tragedies - could be re-located or transported to many different locations around the world. The same stories could take place and the same characters be imagined in almost any culture and equally, as audiences, we read into and find our own concerns, local or otherwise in what we see on stage. For example, in the decade immediately preceding the vote for devolved Government from the United Kingdom and a re-opening of the Scottish Parliament (after 300 years), it was common for theatre audiences in Scotland to see or find references, allusions or metaphors related to Scotland’s political and cultural situation in almost any work produced by artists living in Scotland, much to the amusement of some and frustration of other playwrights.²⁹

Malgorzata Semil-Jakubowicz, a well-known theatre professional and drama lecturer in Poland, has described what she calls that country’s “love-fest” with Irish theatre in recent years. Polish theatre audiences and the practitioners have been finding resonances between the Irish and Polish situations for example, similar “social problems”, a history of repression in terms of identity (religious, national and cultural) and a “romantic concept of freedom fighting” to list but a few elements.³⁰

None of these is unique to either Poland or the Irish and clearly, simply *being Irish* has become a major factor in this love affair, but another factor at work, according to Semil-Jakubowicz is that Polish theatre has traditionally looked at more “esoteric issues” whereas modern Irish playwrights look at individuals or at the human condition..

Several of Walsh's plays have been staged in Poland – Semil-Jakubowicz translated *The Walworth Farce*) and *Disco Pigs* has been staged three times. confirming, I would suggest, the cliché, but perhaps also a truism, that close examination of the human condition in almost any “local” can communicate universally.

In terms of the appeal of simply being Irish, referred to earlier, it is a fact that since the 1990s international audiences at the Traverse theatre during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival have become familiar with the work of several Irish companies, particularly Druid and the Abbey theatre, but also, Rough Magic, and Corn Exchange will now be on the list of “hot tickets”, therefore it could be argued that the branding message that influences these fairly literate and generally experienced or discerning audiences, is one that says “Irish theatre can be expected to deliver”. That brand has become respected and popular for a number of different reasons although some productions demonstrate several. These might include innovative direction, for example, Annie Ryan (Corn Exchange); the quality of the writing; the use of language; imaginative staging (Dublin company, Semper Fi's crime noir, *Ladies and Gents*, was staged in adjacent public toilets splitting the audience into two groups which saw one half of the story staged in the 'Gents' while the other half played concurrently in the 'Ladies', after which the audience had to switch places in order to “get” the full story).

None of these are elements – innovative direction, good writing and use of language; and imaginative staging – is exclusive to Ireland, but several talented playwrights, director and companies working in Ireland happened to emerge from the 1990s and this coincided with the artistic directorship at the Traverse of someone who recognised them and wanted to work with and showcase several of them. Philip Howard, the Artistic Director who might be held responsible for starting the Traverse's own “love-fest” with Irish theatre considers himself simply to have “been lucky” but, regardless of the reason, these elements all came together at the right time and the right place and, as a result, have provided unforgettable theatrical experiences for thousands of people from all over the world.

Notes

- 1 VIII International Conference of the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI), Alcalá de Henares, May 2009.
- 2 “It is *Culture Ireland* that has made it possible for eight Irish theatre companies to visit Edinburgh next month . . .”. Fisher, Mark. “Learn from the pluck of the Irish.” *Scotland on Sunday*. 15 July: 2006. See also Turpin, Adrian. “A Breath of Fresh Eire.” *The Sunday Times*. 28 Aug 2005.
- 3 “*Culture Ireland supports Irish Theatre and Dance at Performing Arts Showcase in Edinburgh 2009.*” Culture Ireland Press Release 5 May 2009.
- 4 “Fringe 2008 Reviews.” *The British Theatre Guide* 12 Aug. 08.
- 5 *Culture Ireland* was established in 2005 by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism comprising a board of appointed directors. *Culture Ireland Press Release* 5 May 2009.
- 6 See Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1952. London: Pluto Press, 1986.

- 7 See Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. 1983. London: Verso, 1991.
- 8 “Like Pinter’s *The Homecoming*, it explores gender and power in a disturbingly domestic setting. And like *Hamlet*, it uses a play-within-a-play to explore and celebrate the power of performance.” Loneragan, Patrick. Rev. of *The Walworth Farce* by Enda Walsh. *The Irish Times*. 22 Mar 2006.
- 9 Philip Howard, former Artistic Director of Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh. Interviewed Edinburgh Jan. 2009.
- 10 Loneragan, Patrick. *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 11.
- 11 Loneragan, Patrick. *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 9.
- 12 See Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. 1983. London: Verso, 1991.
- 13 Loneragan, Patrick. *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 12-14.
- 14 Mansfield, Susan. “Brief Encounter.” *The Scotsman* 19 Aug. 2005.
- 15 Turpin, Adrian. “A Breath of Fresh Eire.” *The Sunday Times*. 28 Aug 2005.
- 16 Turpin, Adrian. “A Breath of Fresh Eire.” *The Sunday Times*. 28 Aug 2005.
- 17 Mansfield, Susan. “Brief Encounter.” *The Scotsman* 19 Aug. 2005.
- 18 Walsh, Enda. *The Walworth Farce*. London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 2007.
- 19 Fisher, Mark. Rev. of *The Walworth Farce* by Enda Walsh. *The Herald* 23 Aug. 2007.
- 20 Loneragan, Patrick. Rev. of *The Walworth Farce* by Enda Walsh. *The Irish Times*, 22 Mar. 2006.
- 21 Gardner, Lyn. Rev. of *Bedbound* by Enda Walsh. *The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2001.
- 22 Gardner, Lyn. Rev. of *Bedbound* by Enda Walsh. *The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2001.
- 23 Taylor, Paul. “A high-pitched stream of vomit and guts.” *The Independent*, 17 Jan. 2002.
- 24 Fisher, Mark. Rev. of *The Walworth Farce* by Enda Walsh. *The Herald* 23 Aug. 2007.
- 25 McMillan, Joyce. “Postcard from the edge.” Rev. of *Bedbound* by Enda Walsh. *The Scotsman* 9 Aug 2001.
- 26 Loneragan, Patrick. *Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 217.
- 27 “a direct descendant of the work of Samuel Beckett, and is shot through with the wild-west mentality of small-town Ireland.” Gardner, Lyn. Rev. of *Bedbound* by Enda Walsh. *The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2001.
- 28 “The CillianSite” Ed. The CillianSite Collective. 14 May 09. <<http://www.cilliansite.com/extras/scripts-sources>>
- 29 Playwright David Greig. Interviewed Glasgow 20 Jun. 1997 and 17 Mar. 1998.
- 30 Semil-Jakubowicz, Malgorzata. “Irish drama – world stages”. Plenary lecture presented at the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) conference, Glasgow, July 2009.