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Introduction

"No universo da cultura o centro está em toda parte"
(Miguel Reale)

In July 2002 the University of São Paulo became the centre of Irish Studies for a few days by gathering a hundred and seventy nine delegates from twenty-one countries for the International Conference IASIL 2002. The monument of the clock in the central square of the *campus* witnessed the event and made real the words engraved on its circular ground evoking the image of the infinite and the universal without any privileged directions: "In the cultural universe the centre is everywhere" (Miguel Reale). The debate included different critical backgrounds and views from various parts of the world thus enriching the field of Irish Studies.

Clock Square

This Special Issue of *ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies* is a selection of papers presented at the conference, entitled "Interrelations: Irish Literatures and Other Forms of Knowledge". The articles follow interdisciplinary approaches to the study of texts and deal with issues and arguments about the relationship of Irish literary narratives and the visual arts, music and social sciences; displacements; readings of documents of the self, drama, fiction and poetry; and cultural translation.

The ideas discussed were reflections of the artist´s conception of the monument built in two parallel *lâminas* (plaques??) which are linked by um travamento de escadas até o topo where the clock is. The world of Humanities represented in six panels on one side and the world of Science in the other six panels on the opposite *plaque(?)* symbolize the intertwined *(estreitas? Fortes?)* integration forming the dynamic spirit of the University.

Interrelations

Interrelations: Blake and Yeats

Rachel V. Billigheimer*

Abstract: *Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. The Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the* Spiritus Mundi*, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.*
Dance, symbolizing destructive human passions which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of both poets. Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of A Full Moon in March. *In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal roles of the Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. These archetypal images are related through their role of prophecy.*
Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism, the binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Interrelations: Blake and Yeats[1]

Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. Blake's Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the *Spiritus Mundi*, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.[2]

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For Yeats and for Blake, the conflicts between the worlds of Innocence and Experience are the fundamental element in their poetic views of artistic creativity. Yeats' Great Wheel comprising twenty-eight lunar phases and Blake's twenty-seven phases of historical thought are each seen to encompass cycles within cycles, which move forwards by the movement of conflicting forces. Thus the whole historical development of civilisation and individual experience is based on the archetypal pattern of conflict.

In Yeats' play *The Hour Glass* the wise man must in frenzy "dance in the dream" (CPI 1977, 239-40) on perceiving the hawk of abstraction and ill-omen repeatedly swooping downwards. The loud laughter and the hysterical scream are symbolic of civilisation's loss of control through the decaying centre of cyclic progression. Dance, symbolising the destructive passions of humanity which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of Blake. The dance of Los at the conclusion of *Night the Fourth* of *The Four Zoas* symbolises humanity's Fall from Eternity into the physical existence of the Circle of Destiny as he enters the passage of history. The tragic Orc-Urizen cycle begins:

> The bones of Urizen hurtle on the wind the bones of Los
> Twinge and his iron sinews bend like lead and fold
> Into unusual forms dancing and howling stamping the Abyss.
> (FZ, IV; Erd 338).

The opening scene of Blake's *Night the Fifth* of *The Four Zoas* depicts the Fall of man from the world of imagination symbolised by Albion's dance of destruction. Having fallen into the cycles of reason and passion in Nature, his "centre cannot hold" and he disintegrates into the dance of madness:

> Infected Mad he dancd on his mountains high ánd dark as heaven
> Now fixd into one steadfast bulk his features stonify
> From his mouth curses ánd from his eyes sparks of blighting
> Beside the anvil cold he dancd with the hammer of Urthona
> (FZ, V; Erd 338)

In Blake's *Jerusalem* we meet the tragic dance of death-in-life. The Giants symbolise the primitive character of physical man, as shown in the cruel practices of Stonehenge depicted in the poem. In this allegory Blake describes the wars of Napoleon "Over France & Germany: upon the Rhine & Danube" (J, 3: 68, 46; Erd 222)

> [...] the Human Victims howl to the Moon & Thor & Friga
> Dance the dance of death contending with Jehovah among the Cherubim.
> The Chariot Wheels filled with Eyes range along the howling Valley
> In the Dividing of Reuben & Benjamin bleeding from Chesters River

The Giants & the Witches & the Ghosts of Albion dance with
Thor & Friga, & the Fairies lead the Moon along the Valley of Cherubim
Bleeding in torrents from Mountain to Mountain [...]
The Cities & Villages of Albion became Rock & Sand Unhumanized.
(J, 3: 63: 9-18; Erd 214)

Crazy Jane, Yeats' social outcast, reaching towards the consummation of her life symbolised by the top of life's mountain, lying "stretched out in the dirt" and having "cried tears down" (CP 1969, 391), had "danced heart's truth". (295) Broken in body and in mind she paradoxically symbolises the completely human. The poet's symbolic female Crazy Jane, now old and demented, has achieved the wisdom of truth. She has undergone the whole process, to "fumble in a greasy till" (120) and suffer in "that most fecund ditch of all" (267), and "some foul sty". (294) Possessing wisdom through her wrecked body and mind, she dances Albion's dance of Eternal Death through which Albion will ultimately be perfectly reintegrated. Through this interpretation of the dance Yeats agrees with Blake that man must lose himself in order to find himself and become whole again. Crazy Jane at the end of her life, looks back on the dancers who are still participating. She dreams the process of the dance which is symbolically the sexual act and sees the participants killing each other as they dance, for their love is founded on hate.

Yeats had remarked about fifteen years earlier in 1917: "'sexual love', which is 'founded upon spiritual hate', is an image of the warfare of man and Daimon" (Myth. 1974, 336) We may attribute the source of this poem to Yeats' dream in which he describes:

> [...] strange ragged excited people singing in a crowd. The most visible were a man and woman who were I think dancing. The man was swinging round his head a weight at the end of a rope or leather thong, and I knew that he did not know whether he would strike her dead or not, and both had their eyes fixed on each other, and both sang their love for one another. I suppose it was Blake's old thought "sexual love is founded upon spiritual hate".
> (L 1954, 758)

Harold Bloom points out, however, that in Yeats' reference to Blake's idea that sexual love is founded upon spiritual hatred, Yeats failed to see that Blake was not referring to love between men and women, but between Albion and his Sons or between what man was before his fall, and the Zoas or warring faculties into which he has broken up after his fall. (Bloom 1970, 404) On a Freudian level, however, sexual love can be seen as an Oedipal revulsion from the natural affections inherent in all men. (404) The pertinent passage in Blake, can be interpreted on both levels, sexual or spiritual; the protagonists are morally bound by 'iron chains':

But Albion fell down a Rocky fragment from Eternity hurld

By his own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in every Man
Into his own Chaos which is the Memory between Man & Man

The silent broodings of deadly revenge springing from the
All powerful parental affection, fills Albion from head to foot
Seeing his sons assimilate with Luvah, bound in the bonds
Of spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love as iron chains.
(J, 3: 54, 6-12; Erd 203)[3]

Both Blake and Yeats knew that love and hate were co-existent. However, in maintaining that hate is the basis of sexual love, Yeats accedes to the Blakean antithesis that proclaims the states of Innocence and Experience, depicted in the *Songs* and in the prophetic poems, as being dependent on each other. Eli Mandel, however, maintains that Blake fails to give a coherent structure of Experience when he asserts a far-reaching predominance of the primacy of art over life. (Mandel 1966, 17) Yeats, on the other hand, has come to affirm life as the basis for art. In describing the places of "joy and love as excrementitious", Blake discloses a rejection of the Female Will and a yearning for the state of perfection:

The Man who respects Woman shall be despised by Woman
And deadly cunning & mean abjectness only, shall enjoy them.
For I will make their places of joy & love, excrementitious.[5]
Continually building, continually destroying in Family feuds.
While you are under the dominion of a jealous Female
Unpermanent for ever because of love and jealousy.
You shall want all the Minute Particulars of Life.
(J, 4: 88, 37-43; Erd 247).

In Yeats, the "place of excrement" is itself the "heavenly mansion" (CP, 294)

"Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul: [...]
"[...] Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent."
(CP, 294-5)

As the old and broken body denotes wisdom and the "place of excrement" the centre of love, the "fury and the mire of human veins" (CP, 280) in "Byzantium" ultimately becomes the creative force of the immortal legacy of human endeavour

symbolised by the golden bird. In Yeats' series of poems dealing with Crazy Jane we may see a strong affinity with Blake in the view that religious and moral institutions, representing, reason, tradition and law, forbid a fully liberated expression of the sensual life and prohibit a perfect union of the physical with the spiritual. The spiritual values of the Church are revealed as malevolent and hypocritical as they forbid a full expression of life in the physical world. Yeats, however, accepts the sufferings of human existence for their own purpose in life itself, whereas for Blake experience is the transitional process to spiritual redemption. Both Blake and Yeats, embrace those who are social outcasts, for example the beggar and the harlot, and in fact expose the truth of their love amid misery that condemns the institutions through which they have been rejected on social, moral or religious grounds.

In Yeats' play, *A Full Moon in March*, the queen is a re-enactment or variant of the "staring virgin" who tore out the heart of the god Dionysus and "lay the heart upon her hand" from "Two Songs from a Play" which commences Yeats' play *The Resurrection*, while the swineherd represents the hero god. Sexual passion, violence, fertility, rebirth and resurrection are portrayed by the dramatic conflict of opposites. Passion, rage and violence are the sources of inspiration and creativity for when the virgin bore "that beating heart away" rebirth was annunciated, "Then did all the muses sing [...] /As though God's death were but a play." These opposing cycles represented by alternating male and female dominance recall Blake's symbolic description of human civilisation in *The Mental Traveller* where the perpetuation of love, passion, cruelty, violence, death and rebirth are shown to be the source of human tragedy and creativity.[4] In Yeats' *Full Moon* dramatic truth is garbed in myth. It is up to us as actors and dreamers to perceive the truth of the immortal song and dance of the eternal dancers.[5] Yeats' play is a symbolic representation of human passion. The ritual dance celebrates creative joy arising from destruction, which is the mainspring of the emotions dramatized in Yeats' theatre: "vast sentiments, the desires of the heart cast forth into forms, mythological beings, a frenzied parturition".[6]

Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal figures of the fallen Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. In her unfallen state woman is man's spiritual redeemer. Fallen, she is Vala the goddess of Nature who seduces man to destruction. Hazard Adams sees these archetypal images as related through their role of prophecy:

Ledaean goddess, epiphanic Mother of God, and ritualistic dancing girl are related images of prophecy, intimations of a new historical period. The Ledaean goddess and Mother of God also symbolize partial attainment to Godhead – "Did she put on his knowledge with his power" – and the dancing girl is the temporal image of complete spiritual and bodily equilibrium. As archetypes, all are related to Blake's "eternal female". They represent man's goal, the base of the cone opposite to his own. (Adams 1968, 220)

In Yeats' poem "The Crazed Moon" the moon represents the archetypal goddess controlling the courses of civilisations in her ritual cosmic dances. From the perfect beauty of her virgin youth, where her dance controls an ordered and flourishing civilisation, the moon waxes and wanes. Her cosmic whirls decree the pattern of the cycles of history. In the first stanza the image of the moon, "staggering in the sky", "crazed through much child-bearing" and "Moon-struck by the despairing/Glances of her wandering eye", (CP, 273) recalls the image of the first stanza in "the Second Coming", in which the loss of control of civilisation, as

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,
>
> (CP, 210-1)

is finally climaxed in the terror arousing "gaze blank", "pitiless as the sun", of the shape emerging from the controlling forces of *Spiritus Mundi*. The opening image of "The Crazed Moon" also parallels the growing hysteria in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen". The violent horses

> [...] wearied running round and round in their courses
> All break and vanish, and evil gathers head.
>
> (CP, 236-7)

This vision of growing loss of control is climaxed by the depiction of the dancers, "Herodias' daughters", the dancing goddesses of apocalypse who are here associated with frenzied cries and hysterical "great eyes without thought". As in "The Second Coming", where the rough beast will be born amongst a welter of blood and pain, in "The Crazed Moon":

> We grope, and grope in vain,
> For children born of her pain.
>
> (CP, 273)

The crazed moon, who dances the dances of conflict pertinent to Yeats' "The Second Coming", is also Blake's archetypal goddess of Nature, Vala who manifests herself in all the Daughters of Albion. In Blake's *The Book of Urizen* the birth of humanity is announced by howlings and pangs of pain.[7] This repeated birth-cry of humanity can be seen as inaugurating the historical-mythic cycles in Blake.

In the fallen vision, Blake's Daughters of Albion bring war to mankind through a sado-masochistic ritual dance:

[...] the Daughters of Albion Weave the Web
Of ages & Generations, folding and unfolding it, like a Veil of Cherubim
And sometimes it touches the Earths summits, & sometimes spreads
Abroad into the Indefinite Spectre, who is the Rational Power.

Then All the Daughters of Albion became One before Los: even Vala!
And she put forth her hand upon the Looms in dreadful howlings
Till she vegetated into a hungry Stomach and a devouring Tongue.
Her Hand is a Court of Justice, her Feet: two Armies in Battle
Storms & Pestilence: in her Locks: & in her Loins Earthquake
And Fire, & the Ruin of Cities & Nations & Families & Tongues.
(J, 3: 64, 2-11; Erd 215)

Los asks, "Art thou Vala the Wife of Albion [...] All quarrels arise from Reasoning" (J, 3: 64, 19-20; Erd 215).

However, while Blake deplores the possessive or fallen Female Will, Yeats on the contrary, exalts it. To Yeats, joy and even exultation are born from suffering and tragedy. While Blake subjugates the life of the senses as ancillary to spiritual freedom, Yeats demands its full involvement as a means to attaining a transcendent reality. Blake's Urizen represents both dogmatic religion and materialistic reason. The first is superseded by the Christian religion of love while the second must be fought by imagination. Yeats' circle images denoting love, imagination and eternity are contrasted with Blake's circle images of Selfhood, constriction, reason and materialism in the world of time.

Both Blake and Yeats criticise the unliberated woman. (Cf. Billigheimer 1986 Female) In Blake the woman of moral tradition and religious chastity is associated with the obstruction of the imagination by materialistic reason and is characterized by the fallen vision:

The Building is Natural Religion & its Altars Natural Morality
A building of eternal death: whose proportions are eternal despair
Here Vala stood turning the iron Spindle of destruction
From heaven to earth.
(J, 3: 66, 8-11; Erd 218)

In Yeats as depicted in *Full Moon* the virgin is associated with sexual violence and cruelty, symbolically controlling man's destiny. Her liberation signifies the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation through the contrary forces of love and war within a tragic world view. In the mythic views of Blake and Yeats the dance is symbolic of woman's control in sexual and psychological conflict as well as of love's fulfilment reaching inspiration and vision. It poetically conveys the Female's eternal control and caprice in her relationship with her male counterpart divining and determining man's destiny. Both poets, through the archetypal vision of the Female, aim to communicate a

world view beyond rational boundaries. While in Blake woman's subjugation of man as she controls his destiny through the fallen vision is a preparatory stage to his spiritual freedom, in Yeats woman frenetically carries out her prophetic role of inaugurating the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation while signifying the attainment of a transcendent reality. While in Blake's fallen vision she brings "war" to humanity, in Yeats she ushers in a new era of an essentially tragic vision of history. In both poets, through biblical and romantic allusion, woman is associated with the terror and destruction which is linked to the origin of the Sphinx and the *femme fatale* and final redemption through inspiration.

Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of *A Full Moon in March*.[8] In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. (Cf. Billigheimer 1999 Dance.)

In the symbolist tradition the exemplary act is the individual's contemplation of his own mind, described by Denis Donoghue as "like Mallarmé watching himself in a mirror in order to think. (Donoghue 1977, 166) In Yeats, this intense act, constrained from everything extraneous, is symbolised by the artist's mind moving within its own circle bound by time and space and is embodied in the dance. The dancer, with her natural body, and sensuous movements, communicates with the metaphysical world by mentally annihilating her external surroundings and focusing the full intensity of her concentration on her own image. In "The Symbolism of Poetry" Yeats maintains that to reach "the hidden laws of the world" we should cast out the "energetic rhythms" of the external world of practical action and "seek out those wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination, that neither desires nor hates, because it has done with time, and only wishes to gaze upon some reality, some beauty. (E & I,163) Though her mental contemplation the dancer imbibes the metaphysical into her sensuous body and unites the worlds of time and eternity through her whirling movements in her contemplated, imagined circle. Yeats recalls Symons' reading of Mallarmé's Hérodiade, the virgin goddess who could separate herself from the physical world through the inner contemplation of her own image:

> So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart,
> And all about me lives but in mine own
> Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,
> Mirroring this Herodiade diamond-eyed.
>
> (A 321)

Yeats attempts to model his symbolic dancer of the theatre on Mallarmé's Hérodiade. Mallarmé's virgin princess Hérodiade opposes the natural flow and changes of normal life by her concentrated, icy frigidity. Her opposition to the normal motions of life is the projection of what Mallarmé believed to be the character of the poet. Hérodiade embodied the three major aspects of poetry as put forward by Mallarmé,

angelism, hermeticism and narcissism. Narcissism, as exemplified by Hérodiade speaking to her mirror, is considered to be by far the most significant aspect for the poet. Hérodiade's beauty is symbolic of the poet's inner world of beauty. As she contemplated her beauty in her mirror she reaches a oneness of being with her narcissism. Hérodiade not only seeks her self-image in isolation but also desires the acquaintance of her beauty and chastity with the actual world in order that she will be deeply involved in the full experience of life and its mysteries. The myth of the basic urge to self-destruction, believed to be repeatedly submerged by forgetfulness, is here realised as being at the root of creation and of the basic conflict in love, divine love and artistic creation. In order to create, the poet must first experience self-destruction and must break away from his solipsistic state of narcissism and, like Hérodiade, seek self-unity with the world of experience. In Dante's *Inferno* this transformation is shown by the circle of thieves being punished by having their bodies changed to serpents or intertwined with a serpent. In Blake, man's knowledge of the actual world is attained by his progression through the Eyes of God cycles where he is subject to error. Hérodiade does not merely unite the subjective with the objective. She transcends this state to a condition removed from the actual world, somewhat akin to Blake's vision of the Higher Innocence. Since pleasure and pain are inseparable the most important aspect of Hérodiade's beauty is the romantic equation of beauty and death, sadness and danger which also come to be allied with physical suffering and torture. (Cf. Fowlie 1970, 135-6) On the one hand we have the drama of hermeticism, that of Hérodiade's search into the inner occult world of poetry, and angelism, experience liberated from life by hieratic symbolism, while on the other hand we see this harmony shattered by cruelty and sexual violence, which in Nietzschean terms is expressed by the counterbalancing of Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies.

While in his drama Yeats sought to exalt human passions, in the dance he sought to unite the abstract and symbolic and physical movement and action. In his early work the dance is associated with a supernatural world and mystical cosmic forces. Later we see the dance representing the apocalyptic meeting point of the natural and supernatural. In his late middle and last poems the dance symbolises the passions and vicissitudes of the physical world. Finally in his late drama the dance represents the transcendent phase of a higher, more complete self-fulfilment of joyous ecstasy reached through suffering and tragedy. This vision of life's completeness achieved through conflict places a great emphasis on the meaningfulness of the sensuous life. Blake, whose task was "to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes/Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity, (J, 1:5, 18-9; Erd 147), presents the dance of Eternal Death, through the twenty-seven Churches of history, as a spiral ladder to the eternal city, the spiritual sun symbolising "the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic Inspiration/To build the Universe stupendous: Mental forms Creating". (M, II: 30,19-20; Erd 129). In both Blake and Yeats, however, dance is in part seen to represent the eternal conflict between life and art, time and eternity and the natural and the supernatural. While in

Blake dance is used to symbolise life in its intensity, in Yeats the moment of vision is ultimately realised amid the violence of the highest form of passionate abandonment, by embracing the world of tragedy as the basis of art. This is symbolised in the ritual dance.

In Yeats' *Last Poems*, in direct contrast with Blake, he embraces the tragic conflicts of the physical world and finds his own transcendence in the world of time. The cycles of "tragic joy", in contrast to Blake's Eyes of God cycles which are fulfilled only as a preparation for Eternity, summon men to a firm acceptance and brave endurance of a substantially tragic vision of history. While, to Blake, Eternity is the ultimate deliverance from the constricted vision of the fallen cycles, Yeats' Eternity is contrastingly constituted out of the cycles of historical time.

Yeats' poetic drama and Blake's epics speak beyond rationalist boundaries. Both want to communicate with leading spirits beyond the sphere of the masses. For this reason both were charged with obscurity by their audiences. Both advocate freedom of the imagination as the means to express great emotions, the Sublime. Blake achieves this through a grand style of language, biblical allusion and the exalted nature of his subject. Through his deprecating usage of biblical allusion, he undermines the stability of biblical tradition and religious authority and "endows" or credits the individual with prophetic attributes, while at the same time attacking his inclination towards reason and dogma. The unity of humanity, denoted by the symbolic circle of the four Zoas, disintegrates since these faculties are no longer in equilibrium. Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism in its binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Blake tries to resolve the tragic vision through redemption, opposing dogmatic religion by love and materialistic reason by imagination. In his condemnation of the earthly existence based on church dogma, his circle images convey meanings which denigrate the material and rational life based on traditional authority and custom. Yeats' circle images are distinct from Blake's through their optimistic meanings and aesthetic appeal, connotative of artistic creativity and fulfilled ideals in the temporal world. Yeats in his historical view of humanity shares Blake's denigration of the rationalistic dogmatic values of "Urizen" and his exalting of the imaginative, individualistic values of "Los". In both poets the symbolic circle, the union of the individual's faculties, is continually disrupted by conflict. A unifying principle that reconciles humanity's universe is no longer available, and yet life is meaningful. Life with its continual tragedy, fragmentation and discord, counterpoised by love and passionate striving, underlies the heroic vision

of struggling humanity perpetuating the cycles of history. Yeats can accept the paradox that, although the centre of the symbolic circle has disintegrated and the circle been broken, the circle is yet whole.

Yeats' Unity of Being, the fulfilment of sensual experience merging into the transcendent symbolised by the rose, (Cf. Billigheimer 2002 Rose) the image of the circling dancer and the dance, the sphere, the consummation of love, the visionary city of art and the conflagration of the sun and the moon, likewise presents the imagination as essentially predominant, replacing, as it were, the former stability of tradition. In the event of "Urizen" dominating the faculties, humanity is dominated by fear and his imagination is thwarted. Thus Blake advocates redemption through the individual imagination. This revolutionary system of thought is followed in the twentieth century by a much greater prejudice in favour of the inevitability of scientific and material advancement, as seen especially in the Marxist view of history as a self-determining process, in Darwin's deterministic evolution and in the Freudian teaching that church authority and divine faith are illusory. With these currents, custom, ceremony and morality are weakened in significance. The individual becomes over-preoccupied with the freedom of the self and is urged to deride authority and criticise the order of society. Humanity, however, is moved to reintegration by its striving for love. Yeats, in "The Second Coming", prophesies the danger of Blake's "Urizen" disappearing from culture, when ceremony and tradition will be abandoned, morality overturned, violence and revolution become romanticised and the centre of the circle will disintegrate to permit the birth of a new cycle:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
>
> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand
>
> (CP, 211).

Key to references/abbreviations

FZ *The Four Zoas*
J *Jerusalem*
M *Milton*
CP (1933) *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1969.

CPl (1934) *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats*, London: Macmillan, 1977.
L *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, Allan Wade (Ed.). London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.
Myth. W. B. Yeats, (1959) *Mythologies*, New York: Collier, 1974.
Erd (1965) *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. David V. Erdman (Ed.). Commentary by Harold Bloom. New York: Doubleday, 1982.
EW. B. Yeats. *Explorations*. London: Macmillan, 1962.
AW. B. Yeats. (1955) *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan, 1973.
AV(B)W. B. Yeats, (1937) *A Vision*, New York: Collier, 1972.
E-Y Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats (Ed.). *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical*, v. 3. London: Quaritch, 1893.
E & IW. B. Yeats. *Essays and Introductions*, 1961; reprinted New York: Collier, 1973.

Notes

1 Adapted from Rachel V. Billigheimer. *Wheels of Eternity: a Comparative Study of William Blake and William Butler Yeats*. Dublin/New York: Gill and Macmillan/St. Martin's P, 1990, 243.
2 In Yeats' own study of Blake's symbolism in the three-volume edition of Blake's works with detailed commentaries and essays, *E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic and Critical* (1893), the section most relevant to their inter-relationship, "The Symbolic System", was carried through by Yeats.
3 In their comment to *Jerusalem* 4, 88, 36-50 where Los' Spectre rejoices at the discord between Los and Enitharmon, Ellis and Yeats remark on "the strange paradox, continually recurring in Blake, that sexual love springs from spiritual hate.". (E-Y II, 250).
4 Morris Dickstein in "The Price of Experience: Blake's Reading of Freud" emphasises Blake's pre-Freudian plea for the free life instinct of love and imagination without crippling repression or its turning inward in narcissism. (Psychiatry and the Humanities, v. 4. *The Literary Freud: Mechanisms of Defense and the Poetic Will*, Joseph H. Smith, M. D. (Ed.). New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980. However, Leopold Damrosch, Jr. *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth*, 216, recognises that "Blake's closest affinity with Freud lies in his deep appreciation of the difficulty of doing this." Diana Hume George. *Blake and Freud*, notes that Freud is limited by his belief in immutable nature whereas Blake rises to the affirmation of imagination. Ithaca and London: Cornell U P, 1980, 233.
5 "As we watch and listen, we realize that those who are receptive to great poetry have the ultimately inexplicable and disturbing satisfaction of standing before a stake to hear the dead lips of Orpheus alive with song." (Andrew Parkin, "Yeats' Orphic Voice". *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies,* v. 2, n. 1, May 1976, 49.
6 "The Poet and the Actress" (Unpublished dialogue, 1916). See Curtis B. Bradford. *Yeats at Work*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1965, 292-3.
7 See stanzas, 8-9; Erd 79.
8 Bloom. *Yeats*, 341. Whitaker points out more emphatically, that the dance signifies for Yeats the height of passionate abandonment, "when suprahistorical man may transcend the cycles while remaining within them, when his vision may cause all things to be eternalized. The prerequisite for that moment is his acceptance of all, his learning that 'Pain is also a joy, curses is also a blessing, night is also a sun'." *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History*, Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P., 1964, 286. (Quoted from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *The Complete Nietzsche*, 396.)

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Social Coercion: The Field *Meets* Waking Ned Devine

Jerry Griswold*

"[I] who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge"
– Seamus Heaney, "Punishment"

Abstract: "The Field" *(both the film and the play by John B. Keane) and* "Waking Ned Devine" *are stories about village conspiracies and social coercion told in the tragic and comic mode. Fooling, deceiving, and outwitting authorities and outsiders are featured in both. At the same time, characters are remarkably similar the community leader (Bull McCabe/ Jackie O'Shea), their companion or fool figure (The Bird/ Michael O'Sullivan), the widow (Maggie Butler/ Lizzy Quinn), the prescient boy (Leamy/ Maurice), et al. Certain scenes (of bodies flying off cliffs, of priests giving sermons, etc.) are also remarkably similar. An intertextual comparison of this tragedy and comedy yields a sociological understanding of community coercion against a postcolonial background of morality and a history of subversion.*

The Field (both the play by John B. Keane and the film by Jim Sheridan) and *Waking Ned Devine* (the film by Kirk Jones) are remarkably similar stories told in, respectively, the tragic and comic modes. Both are "village stories" where an entire community schemes to cover up a death. Secrecy, lies, and (above all) loyalty to the village is paramount in these stories.

Carraigthomond, the village in *The Field*, faces a problem when the widow Maggie Butler decides to sell the plot of land that Bull McCabe has worked for years and feels is rightfully his because of his labors. Despite a plot to rig the bidding so that Bull might purchase the land, an outsider, William Dee, learns of the sale and expresses

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an interest in the property. While others try to dissuade Dee from bidding against a villager, he persists and is ultimately killed by Bull. To prevent the discovery of the murder, Bull coerces his neighbors to join together to provide him with an alibi and cover up the crime.

Tullymore, the village of *Waking Ned Devine*, conspires for happier reasons. Ned Devine has won the Irish lottery but, unfortunately, has died of the shock; and the prize of nearly seven million pounds is in danger of being lost and returned to the folks at the Lotto. Jackie O'Shea, however, comes up with a plan to have the village share the prize by having his friend Michael O'Sullivan impersonate the late Ned Devine. For this ruse to succeed, the entire village must be in on the conspiracy and pretend that Michael is the late Ned. They succeed, and the film ends happily with much winking and delight at the good fortune that has befallen them.

As different as these stories might at first seem, behind them is a strikingly similar plot that differs only in their respective tragic and comic emphases. Both feature a ringleader who might go to jail if the communal ruse is discovered. Bull McCabe, however, is (as his name suggests) a bully and coerces his neighbors by intimidation and threats of boycott. Jackie O'Shea, on the other hand, is not feared but liked and wins his village's cooperation in the conspiracy by goodwill and cooperation. To say this differently, while Bull regularly thumps his ashplant during a town meeting at the local pub, Jackie assembles his neighbors by hosting a chicken dinner.

Other characters in the casts are remarkably similar but, again, differ given the stories' tragic or comic modes. Both the ringleaders have sidekicks: in *The Field*, Bull has Bird, a sycophant that he intimidates; Jackie has Michael O' Sullivan, a friend whom he eulogizes in one of the film's touching moments. Both ringleaders also have wives and, following suit, Bull's bears him a grudge and hasn't spoken to him in years, while Jackie's spouse is concerned about his possibly going to jail and becomes a co-conspirator. And there is a romantic sub-plot in both films: Bull's son Tadgh takes up with the Tinker's Daughter and Jackie's pal Pig Finn takes up with Maggie; but, again, one story follows a tragic trajectory leading to Tadgh's death, while the other arcs to connubial bliss when Maggie accepts Finn's proposal.

A greater contrast exists in the widows of the two stories. Maggie Butler, in Keane's play, is the one with a field to sell and she finally accept Bull's low price because she is afraid of what might happen if she doesn't: "I'm a lone widow, living alone, and I do be worryin' nights. I have no one with me"; indeed, in the film version of *The Field*, she does not just worry about being made the outsider but, in fact, is driven from the village. The widow of *Waking Ned Devine*, Lizzy Quinn, however, chooses to be the outsider: if the village does not give her a much larger share of the prize than everyone else is getting, she threatens to report the fraud of her neighbors to the authorities in order to collect a reward.

The theme of the Outsider, in fact, plays a significant role in these stories about village cohesiveness and coercion. In *The Field*, the Outsider is William Dee. The play

pictures him as a man from Galway who has been living in England but wishes to return to his country and has fastened on this parcel of land in Kerry which he plans to pave over to create a factory to manufacture concrete blocks. In the film version, Dee is made even more the Outsider by being presented as a wealthy American, insensitive to the locals and sporting rich clothes and a pinky ring. He is killed.

The Outsider in *Waking Ned Devine* is Jim Kelly, the Lotto official from Dublin who visits Tullymore to meet and make arrangements with the lottery winner. Kelly suffers from allergies whenever he is in the country; and, in fact, his signature sneezing is the way the villagers can identify him. He is also an Outsider because of his luxurious modes of transportation: he arrives by helicopter and an aide soon transfers him to an up-market automobile. The natives, in comparison, often get about by motorbike; in fact, the most hilarious scene in the film involves naked senior citizens darting around to outwit Kelly.

Both stories involve deceiving the authorities. Kelly and the Lotto administrators in Dublin are bamboozled by the villagers of Tullymore. Investigating the murder of William Dee, Sergeant Leahy meets with silence and deception as the villagers of Carraigthomond provide an alibi for Bull, point the policeman in the wrong directions, and otherwise make of mockery of him and his investigation.

The Church has a role in these works as well. In the tragedy of *The Field*, the Church is in league with the Garde in encouraging the villagers to break their code of silence and identify the killer; in the film, in fact, the priest locks the villagers out of the parish church for refusing to speak up. In the comedy of *Waking Ned Devine*, the Church is not at odds with but in league with the villagers, collaborating directly and indirectly in the subterfuge: when Jim Kelly happens into a funeral in the town chapel, the young a visiting priest becomes a party to a ruse meant to fool the Lotto man; and when Lizzy Quinn heads to the phone booth to call the lottery officials and inform on her neighbors, it is the returning pastor whose car accidently swipes the phone booth, thankfully sending the informant Lizzy over the cliff.

In a sense, the difference between these works is symbolized by the Boy in each. Maurice in *Waking Ned Devine* is matter-of-fact and worldly wise. When the young priest, a summer replacement, asks Maurice whether the regular pastor would object to the village's scheme to defraud the Lotto, the youngster breezily replies that the pastor wouldn't object "as long as it fills the collection plate on Sunday."

Leamy is the Boy in Keane's play *The Field* and its moral center. Leamy objects to bullies and wants to go to the garde to tell them what he knows about Bull's killing of William Dee. But Leamy's mother silences him, saying, "It's you who will suffer because, don't you see, it's you who will have done all the work and you'll be a freak for ever more, different from the rest of us."

Both works, in other words, raise ethical questions; and though the crimes they present are different in degree – murder in one case and fraud in the other – both communities engage in questionable morality in covering these up. How can these communal acts be excused or, at least, explained?

In Keane's play, the Bishop comes to Carraigthomond to encourage the villagers to speak out, to identify the killer of William Dee; but the Bishop also understands how a man might be murdered in an argument over a piece of land: "There is hunger for land. And in this parish, you, and your fathers before you knew what it was to starve because you did not own the land." In the film version of *The Field*, Bull's action are somewhat explained and excused by the movie's conversion of Bull into a driven man, a tragic hero with a fatal flaw and an obsession, an Irish King Lear.

In *Waking Ned Devine*, the excuse or explanation for defrauding the Lotto is even flimsier. Jackie O'Shea has had a dream in which Ned Devine indicated he wanted the village to share his winnings. In truth, the ethical issue of cheating the Lotto and other Lotto players in the country is simply swept under the rug with a lot of winking and bonhomie.

This easy morality, let me suggest, is a colonial legacy. When the British were occupying Ireland, subversion was welcome and became a way of life; villagers banded together against the Outsider. But what happens when the colonizer leaves? What happens when the Irish, themselves, occupy positions of civil authority? What happens in a culture that has grown habituated to subversive acts and communal silence?

The Field raises that issue quite directly. In justifying his antagonism to William Dee, Bull McCabe refers to his real-estate rival as an outsider, another form of the English invader, adding, "We had their likes long enough." When the policeman invokes the law in his investigation of the murder, Bull complains that it's "the same dirty English law" and advises that, just as in the old days, a policeman could get killed. And when it seems possible that someone might break the village's code of silence, Bull threatens, "There's men around here would think nothing of putting a bomb up ag'in' a door. 'Twas done before, the time of the land division."

Old patterns take along time to die. Subversion, the code of silence, communal conspiracy – these were acceptable forms of behavior during the British occupation. But what happens once the British have left? After this behavior has become habitual? What is the postcolonial legacy?

The argument of *The Field* is that this behavior must be abandoned and renounced; in Biblical terms, it is a case of new wine in old wineskins. Bull McCabe's facile redefinition of William Dee as an outsider like the English, his too easy appeal to colonial behavior and values, shows the bankruptcy of this old thinking and its real dangers.

Waking Ned Devine, however, shows the postcolonial legacy as a comic rather than tragic inheritance. Communal subversiveness is still accepted but redefined. Now, instead of the Irish against the English, it is the village against Dublin. Boundaries of otherness are redefined, and the wily paddy is still alive outside the yuppy enclaves of Dublin 4, beyond the (new) pale.

The Trouble with Being Borrowed: Flann O'Brien's Characters in Gilbert Sorrentino's Mulligan Stew

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Abstract: *In* Mulligan Stew *Gilbert Sorrentino takes one step further the concept of the narrator of Flann O'Brien's legendary* At Swim-Two-Birds *(1939). O'Brien's proposition that any fictitious character may be made into an author, who, in turn, may create their own fictitious characters who are authors, and so on, alerted Sorrentino to the possibility of having one of these characters write the ultimate creator of the text into another fictitious character. Within the entirely artificial universe of the novel we have the invented narrator telling his story which is the novelist's story as well as the invented novelist telling his own story which is the supposed true story. The narrative is peopled by characters borrowed from F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dashiell Hammett, James Joyce, and Flann O'Brien. One of these is Antony Lamont, an avant-garde novelist, working on a murder mystery novel entitled Guinea Red. Antony keeps writing letters to his sister Sheila Lamont, in which he expresses his concern about her engagement to Dermot Trellis (created by the student narrator as his surrogate in* At Swim-Two-Birds*) as well as his criticism of Trellis's writing. Other characters of O'Brien's are also alluded to in Mulligan Stew. The intention behind the present paper is to examine the process and the results of transplanting characters from one novel into the other, with an emphasis on the alterations in the characters' fictitious* identities.

Gilbert Sorrentino's 1979 (republished in 1996) novel opens in a fairly unusual way. The initial pages, where one would expect to find the frontispiece, the title, or even the blurb, contain none of these. Instead, the reader is faced with eleven pages of letters of rejection from various publishing houses. These, the reader is tempted to believe, refer to the manuscript of the very novel he is about to begin reading. The letters are addressed to Gilbert Sorrentino himself, to his agent Marvin Koenigburg, and to the

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vice-President of Grove Press (which actually first published the novel), Mr. Milo Kent. The contents of the letters are even more puzzling and, as we later realize, quite illuminating not only in regard to the real world of publishing, but also to the fictional world of the book itself.

Some editors try hard not to hurt the author's feelings and reject the novel on the grounds of their own financial incapacity which forces them to choose other works which are "not only good, but have definitive market appeal", as for instance *The Compleat Beatle Wardrobe Book*, a "necessary addition to Beatle Lore", or *Screwing in Sausalito*, a "zany, wonderful novel about life in California". Others reveal themselves to be unfulfilled authors unable to publish their own "brilliant" writings. Some editors, however, endeavor to assess the manuscript on its merits and are far more direct in their criticism. One writes: "Everything in the book has the touch of a virtuoso. Trouble is, I got bored, and so did another reader". Another: "The book is far too long and exhausts one's patience. Its various worlds seem to us to lack the breadth and depth and width as well to sustain so many pages". Or still another: "It is much too long by half, and to this eye, needlessly so – the author seems obsessed with (unnecessary) insertions, (useless) repetitions, twice and thrice-told tales, and reams of incomprehensible lists". Some editors show clear signs of irritation. One thought the "novel dismally uninformed as far as the female characters and their presentation. She thought them "fantasy figures" far removed from the reality of Woman that is all around us today". Another publisher simply refuses to "have anything to do with that work". The reader can no longer say s/he hasn't been warned.

The proper plot of *Mulligan Stew* is, on the one hand, fairly simple and could be summarized as a story of an author struggling to write an avant-garde murder mystery novel. On the other hand, its intrinsic complexity makes it virtually impossible to convey a fair impression of the novel in a summary. The simplest solution may be, perhaps, to turn to the author himself, who kept five notebooks on *Mulligan Stew* while writing the novel. The first entry date is November 1, 1971:

> 1. The narrator of a novel immediately identifies himself as a character in a novel. 2. The novel to be interfolded; that is the novelist's novel wherein the character is moved about in actions which the novelist invents, along of course with a whole slew of invented characters. 3. There is the activity of the narrator outside of the novelist's concerns, along with other of the novelist's characters and character's who do not appear in the novelist's novel. 4. This is a possibility out of "At Swim-Two-Birds," taking that book further, adding another integer to its basic idea. Absolute artificiality. We will have then the invented narrator telling his story which is of course the novelist's story. We will also have the invented novelist telling his story, the true story, if you will. Borrow, as Flann O'Brien's "At Swim," characters from other novels, my own as well as others. Some of these characters are to be in the novelist's novel, some could be in the narrator's novel, the true story [...]. (O'Brien 1993, 20)

After all these references to the work of Flann O'Brien, and especially to his 1939 novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*, the name of the book's novelist, Antony Lamont, does not come as a stunning surprise as we recollect him as Sheila Lamont's brother in O'Brien's novel. And At Swim-Two-Birds is also a book (by Flann O'Brien) about a man writing a book (a nameless student narrator) about a man writing a book (Dermot Trellis). The frame story involves the student's attempt to write a novel. His everyday experiences determine the progress of *his* work: fiction becomes criticism, criticism fiction. The dynamics of fiction-making are reflected in the way that Dermot Trellis is based on the student's uncle in 'real' life – the uncle himself is a parody of a character in Joyce's *Dubliners*. Trellis himself is writing a 'clarion-call' to the Irish people on the consequences of sin, and has some peculiar notions – inherited from his creator – about textual composition. In collaboration with another imaginary author, William Treacy, Trellis plagiarises from a vast range of genres, populating his text with characters such as the Pooka (an Irish folkloric devil), the legendary Finn McCool, cowboys of paberback Westerns, and the mad King Sweeney, hero of the medieval Irish romance *The Frenzy of Sweeney* (*Sweeney Astray* in Heaney's translation).

Trellis keeps his characters locked up in his hotel, The Red Swan Inn, but they move independently of Trellis when he is asleep. Trellis had created the beautiful Sheila Lamont in order to have her seduced by the evil Furriskey, but he grows obsessed with Sheila himself, and rapes her.

> Meanwhile Trellis, in order to how an evil man can debase the highest and the lowest in the same story, creates a very beautiful and refined girl called
> SHEILA LAMONT, whose brother,
> ANTONY LAMONT he has already hired so that there will be somebody to demand satisfaction off John Furriskey for betraying her – all this being provided for in the plot. Trellis creates Miss Lamont in his own bedroom and he is so blinded by her beauty (which is naturally the type nearest to his heart), that he so far forgets himself as to assault her himself. (O'Brien 1998, 86)

To cover up his crime, he kills her off, but not before she gives birth to their son, Orlick. Orlick is persuaded by the other characters to exert a bizarre revenge by writing his father into a courtroom drama, and Dermot Trellis goes on trial for crimes against literary humanity. The whole affair goes up in smoke (literally) when Trellis's maid Teresa accidentally burns the manuscript of his novel.

In Sorrentino's novel Lamont seems to be shifted two levels higher, or shall we say closer, to the actual author in comparison with *At Swim-Two-Birds*. He occupies the place of the nameless student narrator of O'Brien's novel. Dermot Trellis is often mentioned in his letters to his sister Sheila as a one-day good friend and a writer, too, though of a more popular appeal. Trellis and Sheila are now engaged and about to get married. Oddly enough, it is Lamont who undergoes the most profound deformation on

his way from one text to the other. Even though we never actually get to see them other than through Lamont's letters and notebooks, Trellis and Sheila seem to preserve some of their identities, however artificial, they possessed in *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The Red Swan, the name of the hotel in *At Swim Two-Birds*, is alluded to as a novel of Trellis's, and we feel Lamont's concern for Sheila whom he believes to be Trellis's victim. Yet Lamont himself differs from O'Brien's character to such an extent that he no longer retains his transworld identity, to use Umberto Eco's term. Instead, we seem to be facing a case of mere homonymy as the character acts now as a kind of Sorrentino's alter ego, voicing his feelings about the very novel we are reading:

> Speaking of books, my own is coming along, but to be perfectly candid, not at all to my satisfaction. I sometimes feel like scrapping what I've already done and starting all over. God knows, there isn't that much of it to scrap. The trouble is that if I scrapped what I already have I honestly don't know if I could begin anyway. I've never felt so in the dark about a book, nor so unsure of myself. The other day I wondered – I mean *seriously* wondered – if all this trouble is worth anyway. All my years of work and – let's face it! – I've produced nothing first rate, nothing, nothing at all! Oh, there are flashes of good writing in, I suppose all my novels, but truly, I have an aversion for the bulk of my stuff. Sad confession. (Sorrentino 1996, 56)

Sorrentino has an interesting theory concerning O'Brien's relation with his own work. He believes that O'Brien somehow feared his own books, or perhaps he feared his own talent that created them. He argues that *At Swim-Two-Birds* avoids its eerie logical conclusion – the "assault upon and possible erasure of its primary creator, the writer himself." (Sorrentino 1998, 2) As for The Third Policeman, the novel was repressed by its author during his lifetime, appearing soon after he was safely dead. *The Dalkey Archive*, a "re-vision" of *The Third Policeman*, and published during O'Brien's lifetime opens with a dedication which, according to Sorrentino is not to be read as a joke. It goes: "to my Guardian Angel, impressing upon him that I'm only fooling and warning him to see to it that there is no misunderstanding when I go home." Sorrentino says:

> I see this novel as a non-sinister *apologia* for the unearthly terrors of *The Third Policeman*, as well as a barrier between the latter and O'Brien; and the charge to his Guardian Angel has to do with the suppressed text, for which *The Dalkey Archive* was but a surrogate. O'Brien believed that fiction is not far removed from life, that it is, in a sense, another kind of life, separate from the mundane by the thinnest of walls. (Sorrentino 1998, 2)

Likewise, O'Brien's pen name separated the author from the real person. Moreover, in *At Swim-Two-Birds* O'Brien protects himself from the dangers of his own

fiction by placing the obliteration of his narrative at two further removes from himself (O'Nolan/O'Brien/the student/Dermot Trellis).

The author of *Mulligan Stew* obtains a similar effect though in a slightly different manner. Rather than hiding his own identity behind numerous masks and disguises, he seems to lose it, firstly by borrowing someone else's character, Antony Lamont, and stripping him of his own identity, and secondly by endowing the novel with its own voice, which represents its peculiar layered quality. Sorrentino confessed he felt surprised when "I was about fifty pages through because I suddenly realized that what I thought I wanted to do, I could do, and that was to remove myself from the novel for the first time, to invent a voice and tone that for the first time could in no way at all be identified with me. It was a disembodied voice. It was a tone that permeated the novel and seemed to be cut loose from the man who wrote it. Total fabrication." (J. O'Brien 1981, 20)

Now, if we look at the work of both writers from a more theoretical angle, we won't fail to notice that they offer similar answers to the basic questions concerning fiction such as what is fiction and how it works. My argument is that Sorrentino's and O'Brien's novels seem to go hand in hand with the theoretical work of the last century Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden. A concise introduction to Ingarden is offered by Brian McHale in his *Post-modernist Fiction*. Ingarden deals with fiction's intrinsic ontological complexity. This complexity lies first of all in its being *heteronomous*, existing both autonomously, in its own right, and at the same time depending upon the constitutive acts of a reader's consciousness. Secondly, the literary artwork is not ontologically uniform, but polyphonic, stratified. Ingarden distinguishes four such strata: *Firstly the stratum of word-sounds*, that is the essential phonemic configurations, which make the differentiation of word-meanings possible: *Secondly the stratum of meaning-units* which actualize parts of our concepts of objects; sentence-meanings project "states of affairs," which are progressively and retrospectively modified by the higher units of meaning into which sentence-meanings enter. This occurs when a reader "concretizes" meaning-units, that is when they become objects of a reader's consciousness: *Thirdly the stratum of presented objects*. According to Ingarden, fictional texts do more than carry information in articulated chains of signifiers and signifieds, they also project objects and worlds. Purely intentional objects, Ingarden says, are projected by the word-meanings of nouns, or presented or implied by states of affairs at the sentence-level or higher. In the aggregate these presented objects constitute an "ontic sphere" of their own – a world. This world is partly indeterminate:

> It is always as if a beam of light were illuminating a part of a region, the remainder of which disappears in an indeterminate cloud but is still there in its indeterminacy. (Ingarden 1973, 218)

The individual objects that make the ontic sphere are cloudy, too. Compared to real-world objects, presented objects are strange and paradoxical, full of ontological

gaps, some of them permanent, some filled in by readers in the act of concretizing the text. Flann O'Brien in *The Third Policeman* has laid bare this aspect of fiction's ontological structure by putting the nameless narrator face to face with the bizarre reality of his ontic sphere. The artificial cardboard appearance of the Police Station and its crew plays overtly with the notion of ontological gaps:

> I kept on walking, but walked more slowly. As I approached, the house seemed to change its appearance. At first, it did nothing to reconcile itself with the shape of an ordinary house but it became uncertain in outline like a thing glimpsed under ruffled water. Then it became clear again and I saw that it began to have some back to it, some small space for rooms behind the frontage. I gathered this from the fact that I seem to see the front and the back of the 'building' simultaneously from my position approaching what should have been the side. As there was no side that I could see I thought the house must be triangular with its apex pointing toward me but when I was only fifteen yards away I saw a small window apparently facing me and I knew there must be *some* side to it. (O'Brien 1996, 53)

As the narrator approaches the awesome building, his initial feeling of bewilderment gradually subsides and he manages to fill in the missing dimensions. This is also true of his first contact with the policemen from the station. First, he can see Sergeant Pluck's enormous back and finds its shape "unprecedented and unfamiliar", then realizes that the whole body of the policeman creates a "very disquieting impression of unnaturalness, amounting almost to what was horrible and monstrous." (56) However, as soon as they are standing face to face, the policeman assumes the air of normality. What's more, he seems to emanate "good nature, politeness and infinite patience." (57)

Sorrentino seems to follow a similar pattern when he makes two characters explore some of the cloudy features of their own 'ontic' sphere:

> It is a rather odd house, to say the least. There is the living room and the den, but we haven't been able to find any other rooms. It *seems* as if there are other rooms, but when we approach them, they are – I don't quite know how to put this – they are simply *not there*! There is kitchen, no porch, no bedrooms, no bath. At the side of the living room, a staircase leads "nowhere." Oh, I don't mean to say that it disappears into empty space, it simply leads into a kind of [...] haziness, in which one knows there is *supposed* to be a hallway and bedroom doors: but there is absolutely nothing. (Sorrentino 1996, 30)

Naturally, all fictional houses are like this, partly specified, partly vague, but normally neither the reader nor the character inside the fiction notices this vagueness. O'Brien's narrator is not aware of being inside a fiction. This is why he 'concretizes' presented objects even though they initially appear incomplete and unnatural. Sorrentino's

characters realize they are entrapped inside the novel, and so find their house anomalous, with its permanent gaps. The same is true of the characters' own appearance: "[...] Lamont has no idea what we look like, nor what clothes we are wearing, since he never bothered to describe us. (Ned says that this is a modern novelist's prerogative.)" (Sorrentino 1996, 151)

The fourth stratum postulated by Ingarden is that of *schematized aspects*. He argues that presented objects and worlds are inevitably schematic, lacking the plenitude and density of real objects in the real world. What the literary artwork *can* do, though, is to duplicate the fragmentary and aspectual nature of our experience of objects in the real world, by restricting the point of view or choosing one sensory channel through which to present the object. The stratum of presented objects, mediated through schematized aspects, manifests what Ingarden calls the work's "metaphysical qualities" – the tragic, the sublime, the grotesque, the holy, and so on. Interestingly, in O'Brien's and in Sorrentino's novels, as well as in a vast majority of post-modernist fiction, irony appears to be the dominating "metaphysical quality," the fact which does not exclude other qualities such as the holy or the tragic, but rather turns them inside out. In an article about O'Brien's fiction, Sorrentino refers to *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* as "cruel at their core, and many of the most risible scenes, conversations, and set pieces are rooted in pain, anguish, ignominy, humiliation, and death." (O'Brien 1981, 21) And about his own view of how these qualities function in fiction: "A writer seizes on a particular aspect of the culture; and I believe that life is basically ridiculous. The ridiculous quality can be tragic, it can be pessimistic or dark, or it can be highly comic." (21)

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Portrait – In the Middle of Reality and Illusion: Analysis on The Picture of Dorian Gray *and* "The Oval Portrait"

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Abstract: *A portrait is resemblance of man and a form of painting, which retains the appearance of mortal human semi-eternally. The mysterious aspect of the portrait is used as a motif of stories by fantastic and mystery storywriters.*
In Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), beautifully completed picture mars the protagonist's pure mind. Instead of he growing old and his vices show up in his face, they appear in his portrait. The ugliness of the picture which represents the degradation of the protagonist's mentality, causes some kind of terror to the readers beyond the category of beauty as an art form.
A half-century before, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a short story called "The Oval Portrait" (1842). A beautiful portrait of a maiden is drawn by her painter husband in lonesome castle. The progress of painting is life-taking processes; as the portrait approaches its completion, she grows weak, and when it is done, her life ends as if it is absorbed by the painting.
The two stories of Wilde and Poe have the common element: the portraits are accomplished in a beautiful state but they destroy the life or the spirit of the model. Here, we see the two aspects of the portrait; a beautiful object as a genre of pictorial art and a mysterious object which semi-eternally retains the figure of the mortal model.
Focusing on the two stories, the first section of the essay considers their subject, a portrait, and analyse the origin and fantasy of it. In the second section, the relation between the human portrait and life is analysed. Because of its characteristics, coping and retaining human's figure, a portrait is also considered as an object reflects the mind of the model. In the third section, a portrait is compared to the image of mirror and examined as a reflection of self. Finally, in the section four, the illusion of a portrait which interacts with the idea of gothic literature is discussed.

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> Heart-smitten with emotion I sink down,
> My heart recovering with covered eyes;
> Wherever I had looked I had looked upon
> My permanent or impermanent images:
> W. B. Yeats, “The Municipal Gallery Revisited”

Prologue

A portrait is resemblance of man in a form of painting. It is likeness; however, it is not mere depiction of human face. Portrait, in some way, has been considered as an object sharing life with the subject as it retains the appearance of mortal human semi-eternally. The mysterious aspect of the portrait is used as a motif of stories by fantastic and mystery storywriters.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) by Oscar Wilde is one of the most important works which represents his aesthetical outlook. It might also be the most famous work of Gothic literature whose motif is a portrait. The picture of Dorian is so beautifully completed that it mars his pure mind. Instead of he growing old, his picture puts on years and in place of his vices show up in his face, they appear in his portrait. The way of the picture becoming ugly represents the degradation of the protagonist’s mentality. He even commits murder and his abominable act is clearly expressed in his picture. It causes some kind of terror to the readers beyond the category of beauty as an art form.

A half century before *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was written, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a short story called “The Oval Portrait” (1842). The story is situated in the period when his major works appeared; “William Wilson” (1839), “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839), “The Murder in the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Black Cat” (1843), and “The Golden Bug” (1843). Among these short stories, “The Oval Portrait” is one of the shortest and yet is important in order to analyse the motif of portrait and human’s life, and its relation to gothic literature. “I”, who visited lonesome castle, found a beautiful portrait of a young woman and was amazed by its “life-likeliness of expression”. He read about the story of the portrait. It is a portrait of a maiden drawn by her husband, the painter, in this castle. As the portrait approaches its completion, she grows weak, and when it is done, her life ends as if it is absorbed by the painting.

These two stories have the common element: the portraits are accomplished in a beautiful state but they destroy the life or the spirit of the model. Here, we see the two aspects of the portrait; a beautiful object as a genre of pictorial art and a mysterious object which semi-eternally retains the figure of the mortal human model.

Focusing on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and “The Oval Portrait”, the first section of this essay will consider their subject, a portrait, and analyse the origin and fantasy of it. In the second section, the relation between the human portrait and life would be analysed. Because of its characteristics, coping and retaining human’s figure, a portrait is also considered as an object reflects not only the appearance but also the mind of the model. In

the third section, a portrait would be compared to the image of mirror and examined as a reflection of self. Finally, in section four, the illusion of a portrait which interacts with the idea of gothic literature would be discussed: in the middle of reality and illusion.

1. The Origin and the Fantasy of Portrait

What is a "portrait"? What kind of genre of paintings or art is it? The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word "portrait" as follows:

> Portrait (n.)
> 1. A figure drawn, painted, or carved upon a surface to represent some object.
>   a. A drawing, painting, or other delineation of any object; a picture, design (in general) Now rare or Obs;
>   b. spec. (now almost always) A representation or delineation of a person, esp. of the face, made from life by drawing, painting, photography, engraving, etc.; a likeness;
> 2. abstr. The action or art of making a portrait; portraiture.
> 3. fig.
>   a. Something that represents, typifies, or resembles something else, an image, representation type; likeness, similitude. (In quot. 1623 absol. A striking or impressive sight, a scene.);
>   b. A verbal picture or representation; a graphic or vivid description;
>   c. Typofr. A formal in which the height of an illustration or page is greater than the width, cf, Upright a, 5c. Often used as quasi-adj, or quasi-adv.

OED indicates the first meaning of the word, portrait, as something drawn on an object. It is the oldest original usage of the word, but the usage of 1-b, considered as a general meaning of a portrait nowadays, is also the usage from ancient times as well.

In the ancient Greece, Rome and the initial Christian world, specific individual images have already expressed on a statue, bust, herms, coin, sarcophagus, wall painting, etc. One of the typical examples is *Demosthenes*,[1] a sculptor. This sculpture, made by Poryueuclitos, is regarded as a pioneering work of realistic portrayal sculpture. Another early example is a wall painting in Pompeii, *Baker's Couple*.[2] It is considered to be influenced by Egyptian portraits and Roman portraits of emperors and royalty. And yet, it is a very important portrait example of the one describing ordinary people.

In ancient Egypt, the likeness of royal family were depicted in their coffin when they passed away. During the period of ancient Greece and Rome, the likeness of ordinary people were sometimes drawn and buried in their grave. The idea of making the likeness shows that the concept of leaving a figure of deceased, as he/she was alive, has already recognised as important issue.

Nevertheless, the number of individual portraits became small during the medieval time. Instead of the likeness of ordinary people, the images of Christ and the Saints became the majority in paintings. These images were portrait-like likeness, though they were religious pictures. In the fourteenth century, portraits of individuals such as contributors to church or monarchs were again started to be drawn or woven in tapestries.

Likenesses of individuals were largely produced during the Renaissance. For the first time, they appeared as "contributor" for church or religious paintings like ones in the fourteenth century. One of the renowned examples is Jan van Eyck's *The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*.[3] Conventionally, contributors were depicted very small in the painting of Christ or Virgin Mary and it merely indicates that he/she is the donator of the picture. *The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*, however, is different from the previous religious paintings with the figure of the donator; the contributor, Chancellor Rolin, is portrayed as being the same size as the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. The size of him shows that not only is such a way of portraying the contributor allowed but also that the individual is becoming more valuable in society.

During the period of Renaissance, the concept of modern meaning of "portrait" was established. As John Pope-Henness's studies, *The Portrait in the Renaissance,* shows, painters such as Raphael, Titian, Botticelli, and Domenico Ghirlandaio produced a large number of portraits of individuals in Italy. Albrecht Durer and Hans Holbein the Younger did the same thing in the northern Germany.

The traditional genre of paintings is divided into five categories. The position of a portrait in paintings is the second, following to the history, mythology religion paintings:

1. Historical, mythological and religious painting
2. Portrait
3. Genre painting
4. Landscape
5. Still life

This order shows the hierarchy of the genre of painting. It is considered that the category of historical, mythological and religious paintings are the highest and the still life is the lowest.[4] It represents the idea of classical hierarchy which regards that the gods are the top followed by human, animal, and plant.

Among these five divisions of painting's genre, a portrait would strongly relate to the subject of Gothic literature as it marks the emergence of a particular person and it retains the figure of him/her semi-eternally. Alberti, one of the omnipotent men of the Renaissance, explains the character of the painting described human in his *On Painting*:

> Painting possesses a truly divine power in that not only does it make the absent present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living many centuries later, so that they are recognized by spectators with pleasure and deep admiration for the artist. Plutarch tells us that Cassandrus, one of the

> Alexander's commanders, trembled all over at the sight of a portrait of the deceased Alexander, in which he recognized the majesty of his king. He also tells us how Agesilaus the Lacedaemonian, realizing that he was very ugly, refused to allow his likeness to be known to posterity, and so would not be painted or modelled by anyone. Though painting, the faces of the dead go on living for a very long time. We should also consider it a very great gift to men that painting has represented the gods they worship, for painting has contributed considerably to the piety which bind us to the gods, and to filling our minds with sound religious beliefs. (Alberti 1991, 60)

A painting, Alberti says, could be regarded as a portrait. As it was written in 1435, the prime time of the Renaissance and the revival period of human power, the important subject of the painting became the human figure. Alberti also indicates that keeping the figure of mortal human semi-eternally takes one step toward the God-like immortality.

II. Portrait and Life

After the concept of a portrait was established, portraits have considered having some relation with the life of the model. During the early period when the idea of the portrait of the individual appeared, the picture originally imitated the life-like figure of the deceased. Thus, there must have been the idea that a portrait reflects the life of the deceased.

When the portrait was introduced as a motif of Gothic literature, the inclination toward the reflection of life was enforced, and it became more than mere likeness of a person. A portrait should be the model's double. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait of the protagonist completed by Basil Hallward represents the model himself more than the original. His picture also starts to grow old on behalf of the model. Dorian starts to be convinced that he would be able to enjoy his life instead of his picture getting old.

> And when winter came upon it [picture], he would still be standing where spring trembles on the verge of summer. When the blood crept from its face, and left behind a pallid mask of chalk with leaden eyes, he would keep the glamour of boyhood. Not one blossom of his loveliness would ever fade. Not one pulse of his life would ever weaken. Like the gods of the Greeks, he would be strong, and fleet, and joyous. What did it mater what happened to the coloured image on the canvas? He would be safe. That was everything. (106)

The description above counterworks Alberti's *On Painting*. Alberti explains the relationship between the mortal human and the portrait which retains the appearance of the model semi-eternally. Contrary, In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait grows old and the human model, Dorian stays young and attractive.

In Poe's "The Oval Portrait", the picture is vivid and is described as "an absolute *life-likeliness* of expression"(291). The relation between the model and the picture is opposite to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. As the painter depicts his wife on the canvas, she is debilitated.

> And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. (291-2)

The painter steeps himself in drawing so much that he does not realise that his wife obviously weakens. The fact could almost be a metaphor; the art embodied by the artist surpasses the mortality of human.

Though a portrait is a mere object, consisting of a canvas and paint, it connects to the model's life or true nature and is regarded as indistinguishable from the spirit of the model. The inseparability or even the sameness between the portrait and the model in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is indicated with subtle description in the text. Lord Henry and Basil Hallward exchange the conversation as follows:

> 'You really must not say things like that before Dorian, Harry.'
> 'Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?'
> 'Before either.' (29)

Here, both Basil Hallward and Lord Henry treat the portrait of Dorian and him on the same level. The conversation indicates that not only Dorian has a pure mind but also the picture of him and it is possibly effected by malicious thought. When Basil Hallward listens to the words of Dorian saying that he would go to the theatre with Lord Henry, he sadly states, 'I shall stay with the real Dorian.' (29), which suggest that the portrait of Dorian expresses the true nature of him.

A similar description is seen in Poe's "The Oval Portrait". The colour of the cheeks of his wife is directly transmitted to the canvas.

> And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. (292)

As the wife on canvas is becoming animated, the model is getting debilitated. The story inside of "The Oval Portrait" suggests that the likeness on canvas and the model is one and they hold the life in common. Therefore, when the canvas nears completion, it takes the life of the model and the length of her life gets shorter. When blush to one upon the mouth was given and one tint upon the eye was placed, the painter screamed, "This is

indeed Life itself!" But at the same time, his wife is dead. The portrait that takes away her life remains in the castle as the picture retains the life of the deceased.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the life is owned jointly between the portrait on canvas and the model. Since Dorian is annoyed and suffering from the existence of his portrait which reflects the ugliness of his soul, he decides to "destroy" it.

> He looked round, and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, till there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistened. As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and, without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it. (223)

Here, Dorian tries to stab his portrait with the same knife that he killed Basil Hallward. Since Basil functions as Dorian's a conscience, the portrait of Dorian drawn by him also reminds the conscience and tortures him. Thus, Dorian feels that he has to destroy it and "kills" the picture. Killing the picture is not the expression of personification. The story presupposes that the portrait has a life same as human and Dorian believes it.

However, since the picture of Dorian is the mirror of him and owns the life jointly, stabbing it means the death of himself.

> When they [Francis, the coachman and one of the footmen] entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was. (224)

When Dorian thrusts his painting, a scream and a sound of something collapsing is heard in the house. The knife plunged into the chest of him and Dorian kills himself in the end. This happens because the life has been shared between him and his portrait, and the latter was rather "true" Dorian. When the true Dorian subsided, the picture of him returns to the original portrait as a painting which retains semi-eternal beauty.

In both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait", a portrait not only reflects the exact figure of the model, but also represents the true personality or the life of the model. Therefore, the portrait can threaten the original and can take the life of the model.

In the next section, I would like to examine the image of the mirror, which is used as a symbol that the model and the painting are completely identical. I also would like to consider the subject of Doppelganger threatening the protagonists.

III. Portrait and Mirror: Doppelganger

A portrait is presumed to be a likeness of the model but not completely the same. Richard Brilliant points out in his *Portraiture* that "Even the notion of likeness assumes some degree of difference between the portrait image and the person, otherwise they would be identical and no question of likeness would arise." (Brilliant 1991, 25) As Brilliant mentions, an actual portrait cannot be an absolute sameness like the reflection of a mirror. However, when a portrait appears in Gothic literature it should be identical with its complete likeness to the model. Therefore, it has the double image with a mirror.

A mirror has occupied an important role of optics studied by Kepler, Descartes, and Newton during the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century, a mirror was given a new character and substantiality in the imagination of Gothic literature. It does not merely reflect the appearance of a person as an inorganic substance but it returns the image of someone's mind. The background of the mirror starts to have magical power and the mirror itself leads to the image of Doppelganger.

The image of a mirror as a reflection of self or the alter ego became popular in the nineteenth century. *Spiegelmensch [Mirror Man]* (1820) by Franz Welfel is a story about a man who establishes the relation like the one of Dr. Faust and Mephistopheles with his double from a mirror. *Dvoinic [The Double]* (1846) by Dostoevskii is another story about a double. The protagonist, who is a lower class officer, wishes to have a double and then it becomes true. His double has every ability he does not have, ingratiates himself with his boss, and begins to jeopardize his life. The protagonist, in the end, is sent to a mental asylum. Poe's "William Wilson" (1839) has a similar motif, though the one who could remain in this world is the protagonist in the end. In the early twentieth century, Jack London wrote *The Shadow and the Flesh* (1906) which is the story of two identical men, Paul and Lloyd who constantly compete with each other and invent a medicine that wipes the appearance off by the opposite concept. The motif, which the identical double like a mirror appears and menaces with the original, could be a good subject to represent alter ego.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian is told that he is just like his portrait.[5] The beauty initially described in the portrait of Dorian suggests "ego ideal". In his *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, Johan Fornäs explicates that the narcissism in relation to ego ideal is indispensable process of forming self:

> The narcissistic desire is necessary for the constitution of the I, but has to be reduced if one is not to get stuck in a vicious circle, like Narcissus was. The means to break the circle is the development of the ego ideal, which may form the positive parts of the superego, complemented by the negative, prohibitory ones. Instead of desiring what one is (or has been), one should search for the which one wants to be. (Fornäs 1995, 261)

The picture of Dorian first mirrors ego ideal but his egoistic narcissism could not retain his figure as such. The regression of the portrait is inversely proportional to the original

figure of ego ideal. Dorian thinks, "This portrait would be to him the most magical mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul." (106). The portrait of Dorian starts to become the ironical mirror, reflecting inside and to disclose darkness of him.

Rosemary Jackson describes the inseparability of Dorian and his mirror image, his portrait, as follows:

> The painted portrait in Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* functions similarly, as an iconographical establishment of difference, illustrating self as other, and suggesting the inseparability of these devices and mirror images from fantastic themes of duplicity and multiplicity of selves. (Jackson 1988, 45)

Shortly after Dorian wished his picture grew old instead of him, it begins to show his internal change or suppressed darkness of his mind. It initially expresses in the mouth his cruel reaction against Sybil Vane who could not act well for her love of him. (90) Dorian fiercely accused her of her a poor performance, tells her he does not love her anymore, and then leaves her. Like Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian is aware of the relationship between him and his portrait. When he sees the change of the expression of his picture, he feels guilty. Nevertheless, as he is told about the news of her suicide from Lord Henry, and talks to him, he believes the death of Sybil is mere play.

Influenced by the ironic and vagabond life of Lord Henry, Dorian starts to live frivolous lifestyle. Such a shift in the protagonist is mirrored in his portrait. The ugliness of his mind, which does not appear on his face, turns up invisible. The dramatic transfiguration of the picture makes the painter astonished.

> An exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! It was Dorian Gray's own face that he was looking at! The horror, whatever it was, had not yet entirely spoiled that marvelous beauty. There was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. The sudden eyes had kept something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from chiselled nostrils and from plastic throat. Yes, it was Dorian himself. But who had done it? (155-6)

The absolute beauty of the portrait when the painter completed it is damaged. The grotesque feature of Dorian in the picture is the mirror of his mind. It even threatens him since Dorian is afraid that someone will find it and his secret will be disclosed.

The protagonist begins to erase the person and thing which appeals to his conscience and disturbs his mind. First, he murders the painter of the picture, Basil Hallward. After he kills the painter, the picture of Dorian becomes more indecent and a "loathsome red dew that gleamed, wet and glistening" (174) appears on his hand. Its

grotesque figure makes him back with a shudder. Finally, Dorian believes that he can start a new life if he destroys his portrait. The picture, "mirror of his soul" (222), reaches to incorrigible status with its ignominious looks. It was disfigured with his sin that cannot be changed by his self-satisfactory hypocrisy that he did for Hetty Merton.

> He went in quietly, locking the door behind him, as was his custom, and dragged the purple hanging from the portrait. A cry of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before – and the scarlet dew chat spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilt. (221)

This bloodcurdling portrait is the doppelganger embodying Dorian's mind and behavior. Since his picture is not merely the likeness of his looks but mirrors and visualizes his spirit, Dorian is frightened at it and decides to pierce it.

A mirror in Gothic literature always reflects the truth that is not visible to human eyes. The stepmother of Snow-white is told the truth by a mirror. In Stoker's *Dracula*, a mirror does not reflect the Count Dracula's appearance and indicates his abnormality. Like a mirror, a "portrait" in Gothic literature is not only a likeness as an object of art, but also a reflection of true nature or alter ego of a man. The portrait in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* works as a mirror which represents the inside of the protagonist that cannot be seen on his face.

IV. In-between Reality and Illusion

The illusion of portrait should be derived in Gothic atmosphere which bewilder us whether the event occurs in the story should be recognised as fantasy. Both The Picture of Dorian Gray and "The Oval Portrait" set up the typical background of Gothic literature. The room where the portrait is placed in or drawn is a lonesome, gloomy area of the house or castle. The portrait of Dorian was in his room when it is given to him. But since he realised that it begins to show the terrible deterioration of his mind, he is afraid that it will be seen by someone and hides it in the old dark schoolroom. In "The Oval Portrait", the story unfolded in an old castle, one of the conventional Gothic backgrounds. There is a description of the castle in the beginning of the story: "The chateau [...] was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines", (290) and the room where it is painted is described as a "dark high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead." (291).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the birth environment of the protagonist is hideous and fearful:

> So that was the story of Dorian Gray's parentage. Crudely as it had been told to him, it had yet stirred him by its suggestion of a strange, almost modern romance. A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad person. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Month of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man. (35)

The birth of Dorian is associated with tragedy and the smell of blood. His father is killed in a duel which the grandfather of Dorian planned, and his mother died within a year of his death. This background of the protagonist is an indispensable setting for Gothic literature in order to make the reader expect that something terrible will happen.

With this Gothic entourage, a portrait develops its illusion. Portrait is not a merely beautiful object in Gothic literature, it has special powers over man. What Tzvetan Todorov explains about one of the important characteristics of fantastic literature – the fusion of boundary between matter and mind – is suggestive in order to consider the effect of the motif of portrait;

> This law [that the bonds of matter and mind were loosened], which we find at the source of all the distortions contributed by the fantastic within our system of themes, has some immediate consequences. Thus, we can here generalize the phenomenon of metamorphoses and say that a character will readily be multiplied. We all experience ourselves *as if* we were several persons – here the impression will be incarnated on the level of *physical* reality. (Todorov 1973, 116)

A portrait itself includes the aspect which marks off the border between matter and mind in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait". The matter, portrait, expresses the mind or life of the model. "Multiplied" self can be applied to the relation between a portrait and the subject; a portrait in gothic literature is literally the duplication of the model.

Originally, a portrait is different from the other genres of painting because of its strong relation to the human.[6] Moreover, it is considered as an object which not only shows the appearance of a particular person, but also reflects his/her mentality. The fantasy of this motif resides in such ambiguity: in between reality and illusion. Therefore, it even surpasses the category of the beautiful which Wilde assumes.

Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" mentions the definition of beauty as follows:

> The only beautiful things, as somebody once said, are the things that do not concern us. As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, or affects us in any way, either for pain or for pleasure, or appeals strongly to our sympathies, or is a vital part of the environment in which we live, it is outside the proper sphere of art. The art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent. (Wilde 1996, 56-7)

“Somebody” here, means the analysis of beautiful by Kant, Book? “Analytic of the Beautiful §2 The Liking That Determines a Judgement of Taste Is Devoid of Interest” in his Critique of Judgement. Generally, the judgement of beauty is not related to the idea of true or false, good or evil, or gain and loss. Nevertheless, a portrait is in an ambiguous status since it strongly relates to the real model. Because it reflects a man, the portrait would be able to threaten him/her, like a human being.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the painting of the protagonist grows old instead of him, and his vice appears in the painting instead of his face. The protagonist is horrified by the grotesque reflection of him in his portrait. In “The Oval Portrait”, as the painting progresses, the model grows weak and dies when it is accomplished. The portrait gives “pain”, “danger”, and “terror” to the model. In addition, such characteristics of the portrait are peculiarities found in the Gothic literature: “strong elements of the supernatural” (Cuddon 1982, 382). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* it would be the wicked behaviour of Dorian and its expression appears in the picture. *In* “The Oval Portrait”, it would be the painter concentrating to paint so much that he does not care about his dying wife. The element of beautiful uncanny illusion of the portrait gives the noticeable flavour of gothic literature.

The illusion of Gothic art is referred in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*:

> There are few of us who have not sometimes weakened before dawn, either after one of those dreamless nights that make us almost enamoured of death, or one of those nights of horror and misshapen joy, when through the chambers of the brain sweep phantoms more terrible than reality itself, and instinct with that vivid life that lurks in all grotesques, and that lends to Gothic art its enduring vitality, this art being, one might fancy, especially the art of those whose mind have been troubled with the malady of reverie. (131)

The description shows the author’s view toward Gothic art which links the sense of “enamoured of death” and the “horror and misshapen joy”. The most peculiar characteristic of Gothic art takes up its position in between the pleasure of beauty and the terror resides in illusion. This contradictory element of gothic art is a core of illusion created by portraits in *Dorian Gray* and “The Oval Portrait”.

Epilogue

The origin of Gothic literature must go back to ancient times. Supernatural events appear in local legends or mythologies and they have been told beautifully, magically, and sometimes fearfully. We have to consider, however, whether they were regarded as “supernatural” unrelated to ordinary life, because they might depend on the social and historical context. For the people in ancient times, those tales might not be considered to be Gothic literature.

Set in an ordinary life with an aesthetical atmosphere, Gothic literature deals with mysterious events deviated from the everyday experience. It has been recognised as one of the literary genres in the latter half of eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century where the idea of modern science is developed and applied in daily life. As the idea of modern science spread to the public, people lose their awe of nature and consider the supernatural event as otherworldly different from their ordinary life. Illusion should be sealed as "psychotic".

> It is curious to note here that such a collapse of the limits between matter and mind was considered, especially in the nineteenth century, as the first characteristic of madness. Psychiatrists generally posited that the "normal Man" possessed several contexts of reference and attached each fact to only one among them. The psychotic, on the contrary, was incapable of distinguishing these different contexts and confused the perceived with the imaginary: (Todorov 1973, 115)

Gothic literature removes the limits between matter and mind and treating ambiguous motif between reality and illusion. It claims the restoration of ambiguity. The period of Gothic literature also overlaps with the age of Romanticism whose idea strongly relates to Gothicism because it repels the idea of modern science and seeks for the world of beauty and fantasy after men conquer nature. At that moment, contents expressed in Gothic literature were regarded as one of the particular fields of literature.

Poe's "The Oval Portrait" and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were created in such a literary stream. Both works beautifully describe the fantasy and terror reflected in the art though they were in the social context of the nineteenth century. Using the idea of modern science, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also indicates the inexplicable incident, the way the mentality and vices of the protagonists transmits to the picture.

> As he often remembered afterwards and always with no small wonder, he found himself at first gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest. That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? – that what it dreamed, they made true? Or was there some other, more terrible reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror. (95)

Introducing the scientific terms and showing the objectivity in some degree, the text shows a strange event occurring in the story. The elements presenting some scientific idea are typical for gothic literature and the pseudo-science and magical motif of a portrait which mirrors the life of the protagonist co-exist in the story. The work draws

the darkness of the human mind contrasting the gaudy life of the protagonist with the story of man as if he sells his soul to Mephistopheles.

In his biographical study, *Oscar Wilde*, Richard Ellman points out that "For Wilde aestheticism was not a creed but a problem. Exploring its ramifications provided him with his subject, and he responded to it with a mixture of serious espousal and mockery" (Ellmann 1987, 292). Poe has a similar idea towards art. He says in "The Philosophy of Composition" that "When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect" (Poe 1984, 16). The aesthetic, for both Wilde and Poe, is not a value to believe but the problem whose effects should be considered. Both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait" describe the object of beauty and creating the aesthetic atmosphere, but cause the sense of illusion and fear to the character and the reader as well. The two stories represent an essence of Gothic literature in a portrait, a fusion of the reality and illusion.

Notes

1 *Demosthenes*, Roman Copy, Original BC. c. 280, Campagna, Italy, Marble, 192cm, Copenhagen, Museum of Ni-Carlesburg.)
2 Fourth Style, AD, c. 60-79, *The house of Telentius*, Pompeii, Italy, Wall painting, 58×52cm, National Museum of Archaeology, Naples.
3 Jan van Eyck, The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
4 The division of genre of painting is mainly established by André Félibien, an art historian and critic in the seventeenth century, except genre painting which is recognised in nineteenth century.
5 When Dorian asks Basil Hallward that "Am I really like that?" He responds, "Yes; you are just like that." (29)
6 Religious paintings are also related to human since they describe some appearance of man. The objects of the religious paintings, however, are the universal figure such as Christ or Virgin Mary, that they are the object of worship.

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Textual Anthropology and the 'Imagined Community'

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Abstract: *This paper enquires into 'textual anthropology' as a new way of reading Irish texts. It has been prompted by two papers given in Sydney last October by Antony Tatlow, Professor of Comparative Literature at TCD, and a passage from the Introduction to Declan Kiberd's Irish Classics (London: Granta Books, 2000), p. xiii, where Professor Kiberd says: 'Because there were two powerful cultures in constant contention in Ireland after 1600, neither was able to achieve absolute hegemony. One consequence was that no single tradition could ever become official: the only persistent tradition in Irish culture was the largely unsuccessful attempt to subvert all claims to make any tradition official. In conditions of ongoing cultural confrontation, most of the great works of literature produced on either side took on something of the character of anthropology.' In addition to testing this contention, this paper will enquire into issues such as: To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts? What presuppositions underpin textual anthropology? and What benefits accrue from and what limitations attend such an approach?*

It was two papers given in Sydney last October by Professor Antony Tatlow, Professor of Comparative Literature at Trinity College, where he offered 'anthropological' readings of Shakespeare, that first set me thinking about textual anthropology and the 'imagined community'. They also prompted me to recall that passage from Declan Kiberd's splendid *Irish Classics* where he writes:

> Because there were two powerful cultures in constant contention in Ireland after 1600, neither was able to achieve absolute hegemony. One consequence was that no single tradition could ever become official: the only persistent tradition in Irish culture was the largely unsuccessful attempt to subvert all claims to make any tradition official. In conditions of ongoing cultural confrontation, most

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> of the great works of literature produced on either side took on something of the character of anthropology. (Kiberd 2000, xiii)

As well, there were three further stimuli. The first had to do with a literary history of Irish poetry 1900-1940 that I have been working on for some time and my concerns about the theoretical/methodological approach I had adopted for this project. The second had to do with a very recent and most welcome invitation from the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Enterprise, at my university, The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, to convene an Irish Studies Program. And the third had to do with that passage from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, a work first published in 1983 and then revised in 1991 and subsequently reprinted numerous times; a highly influential book, not only in terms of post-colonial and cultural theory and the extent to which it has underpinned the Field-Day projects, but also, again returning to Declan Kiberd's work, as an approach to Irish Studies extensively explored in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*.

Anderson in that memorable sentence, only part of which however is generally quoted, announces his willingness to risk a definition of the term "nation" – thereby taking firm hold of a concept that had hitherto been left lie or had slipped the grip of Marxist and Modern historians. 'In an anthropological spirit, then', he says, 'I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. (Anderson 1991, 5-6) The term 'imagined community' – the qualifier 'political' seems to have silently dropped out of sight – as well as the extent to which Anderson investigated, illustrated and valorized the word 'imagined', has become as much a mantra for post-colonial critics as an incantation for cultural theorists.[1]

But what about the word "community" let alone the words "political community"? How much attention has been paid to that part of the definition? Just as Anderson contended that the term 'nation' had been elided by Marxist and Modernist historians, I would like to submit that the term 'community' has been elided in what has been researched and written in Irish Studies for at least the last ten to fifteen years. Arguably, it is now time to look more closely at the term "community" before we continue to parade out post-structuralism, strut our semiotics, hypothecate our historicism, deploy our deconstruction, or posit ourselves as just plain readers. After all, of the three terms in Anderson's definition of the nation: 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign', his definition of the term 'community' is the most cursory. To quote:

> Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it

possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.[2] (7)

The gendered metaphors embedded in this definition – 'comradeship', 'fraternity' – are enough to make a sensitive critic, whether feminist or not, shudder. But more about Anderson, 'community', and the impact on Irish Studies *anon*.

The intersection of these five stimuli, provocations or whatever one might like to characterize them – Antony Tatlow, Declan Kiberd, my own literary history, convening the UNSW Irish Studies Program and Benedict Anderson – and the recurrence of the word anthropological, stirred me into thought. Though most of what I am going to offer remains teasingly preliminary, and though I am not going rigorously to distinguish between the two uses of the term anthropological in what I have referred to so far – that is anthropological as content *pace* Kiberd and anthropological as method or approach *pace* Tatlow – I want to explore various aspects of the way we have done, are doing, and perhaps should 'do', Irish Studies.

What follows then is an attempt to address issues such as: 'To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts? What presuppositions could be said to underpin textual anthropology? And what benefits might accrue from and what limitations might attend such an approach? I hope that my attempts to address these questions will go some way towards providing the basis for a rationale for our new Irish Studies Program at the University of New South Wales as well as a guide to our own teaching and research.

Setting ourselves at ease with some of the terms intrinsic to thinking about Irish Studies in this way provides one entry point. Here Declan Kiberd's caution is instructive: 'that 'most of the great works of literature produced [...] took on something of the character of anthropology'. It is the 'character of anthropology' that is noteworthy here. As a discipline, as a systematic way of thinking about the world, anthropology only began to emerge towards the end of the eighteenth century as it disentangled itself from archaeology, in the sense of archaeology as the 'professional'[3] study of antiquities. Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language in which words are Deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers*, first published in 1755, defines anthropology as the 'study of man' – with 'man' being used in the generic sense and 'study' confined to the scientific observation of physical characteristics. Anthropology as the study of persons as social, spiritual, economic and political beings, as being formed by and forming societies, was still some way, though not a long way, off.[4] Not surprisingly, and here I am restricting myself to the English Enlightenment,[5] it is the travel literature of the eighteenth century, and the competition for status between the physical sciences and the human sciences, between the emerging yet powerful disciplines of mathematics, physics and astronomy and the more gentlemanly and often better funded enquiries made under the rubric of the Antiquities that urged on the development of anthropology. Both the competition and

the pressures disclose themselves in the debates that enlivened the Royal Society in England throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Come the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the nation-state, and the competition and the pressures rapidly intensify, with the result that Sociology,[6] fostered by Utilitarianism, begins to emerge as the dominant human science, positioning itself as relevant and necessary by providing a methodology and seemingly objective rationales for social engineering and by focusing on contemporary society, on the present, thereby obliging anthropology to continue the process of disentangling itself from the antiquities, from a preoccupation with the past, the primitive and the exotic.

Arguably a similar development has taken place and a similar tension exists within Irish Studies – the tension between post-colonial and 'cultural studies' approaches (with their parallels with sociology) and what might be termed the traditional historical approaches (with their parallels with anthropology in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century sense of the word). The practitioners of post-colonial theory and cultural studies claim relevance and feel they are more methodologically attuned; they are, as it were, the ones who produce the street directories and the lists of who's who and who isn't. For their part, the practitioners of historical studies image themselves as cartographers of source countries and hinterlands; they are, as it were, the ones who produce the topographic, physical and political maps. Not that these two approaches are entirely separate, or, for that matter, discrete. Nor do they simply exist as binary opposites. There are numerous cross-contaminations and leakages; much more, of which this conference is itself eloquent, of the inclusive 'both/and' rather than the divisive and exclusive 'either/or'.

And that is how it should be. We need both types of maps – the street directory and the topographical; the lists of who's who and who isn't and the spatial representations that show who has claimed what, when, and how. And this is one of the great strengths of IASIL, and here I pay tribute not only to the pluralist, tolerant and inclusive vision of Professor Derry Jeffares, but also to successive Presidents, who have discouraged proselytizing in the name of the *idée fixe* and encouraged pluralism. Such pluralism, I believe, needs to be practiced by individuals. To take two examples at random. As Elizabeth Butler Cullingford disarmingly admits in her most recent book: *Ireland's Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture*, Field Day Monograph 10, after feeling herself 'beached' at the beginning of the 'eighties was surprised to find as the decade wore on 'to [sense] the tide of the latest American paradigm shift lifting [her] off the shoals, and to be told that some people thought [she] was a New Historicist.' 'I hastened to find out what that was', she confesses, 'and was disappointed to discover that I was probably just an Old Historian in drag [...] though [this] in any case, proved perfectly compatible with my new feminism'. (Cullingford 2001, 3) Similarly, John Wilson Foster in *Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* narrates his own theoretical journey in the opening sentence to his *Introduction* when he says: 'These pieces written over a period of sixteen years, begin collectively as

articles in literary criticism and end as essays in cultural criticism'. (1) Ideological purity, for its own sake, can prove the most barren of all attainments.

What I encourage my students to do in the courses that will become part of the Irish Studies Program at the University of New South Wales is to think of literary theory in terms of Derrida's provocative reading of Plato's *pharmakon* – the way that in western metaphysics poison and antidote co-exist in binary opposition/relation. My argument is that theory is poisonous; that each approach is merely a variety of a toxin that if taken in sufficient quantities and over a sufficient period of time inevitably produces linguistic determinism in the unwitting victim. Injected with large doses of post-colonial theory, or with feminism, marxism, historicism, new historicism, post-structuralism or whatever, the student and the academic enter on that Faustian compact where empowerment to speak is accompanied by a hidden but nevertheless powerful and remorseless curtailment of speech. Theoretical discourses both facilitate speech/writing and limit it. I am sure we have all had personal experience of this when we have received essays from students which seem to have been written, not by the delightful free-thinking individuals we have met in lectures and tutorials or spoken with in our offices, but by impersonal jargon generators. So I require the students who take my courses to vaccinate themselves with theory against theory; in other words, if they find they are particularly attracted to new historicism to deliberately take a good strong dose of cultural theory or feminism. Poison and antidote. And to keep it practical I set exercises where I ask them to offer opposed readings of the one piece of literature – for example Yeats's "Easter 1916", first employing say a specific school of post-colonial theory and then say deconstructing the poem, setting both readings alongside one another and asking themselves what each theory has prevented them from saying even as it has enabled them to speak. Or Brian Friel's *Translations* – read with the aid of systemic functional linguistics and then counter-read through Terry Eagleton's brand of Marxism. Most of my students seem to find this rather challenging, but also very exciting and highly rewarding. Finally, to apply my own method to itself. The potentially toxic effect of what might be summarized as this dialogic double-ness is simplification; the antidotes I suspect are wide reading, deep thought, persistence and honesty. And I like to point this out to my students too.

But to return to the term 'community'. As I have indicated, it is time, I believe, to look closely at what is meant by this seminal term as we fix the compass and set off critically to chart, explore or simply traverse the 'imagined community' of Ireland/Irishness. The OED gives as its origin the Latin *cummunitat-em* f. *commun-is* and its coming into English via the Old French *com(m)uneté*, *com(m)unité*. The original Latin word was merely a noun of quality meaning 'fellowship, as in community of relations or feelings'; but in Medieval Latin the word was used concretely in the sense of 'a body of fellows or fellow-townsmen' – hence the sexism of Benedict Anderson's definition. The OED then goes on to list 9 current meanings for 'community', the meanings divided into two categories depending on whether or not the word is being used to describe 'a quality or state' or 'a body of individuals'.

Under the first category, 'a quality or state', the meanings listed are:

> **1.** the quality of appertaining to or being held by all in common; joint or common ownership; **2.** common character; quality in common, commonness, agreement, identity; **3.** social intercourse, fellowship, communion; **4.** Life in association with others, society, the social state; and **5.** commonness, ordinary occurrence.

Under the second category, as pertaining to a 'body of individuals', community can mean:

> **6.** the body of those having common or equal rights or rank, as distinguished from the privileged classes; the body or commons, the commonality; **7.** a body of people organized into a political municipal, or social unity as either **a:** a state or commonwealth or **b:** a body of men living in the same locality or **c:** as applied to those members of a civil community who have certain circumstances of nativity, religion, or pursuit, common to them but not shared by those among whom they live as the British or Chinese community in a foreign city, the mercantile community everywhere, the Roman Catholic community in a Protestant city etc; and **d:** the people of a county (or district) as a whole; the general body to which all alike belong, the public. **8.** a body of persons living together and practicing more or less community of goods such as either **a:** a religious society, a monastic body or **b:** a socialistic or communistic society and finally **9.** *Trans* and *fig* of gregarious animals or of things, a cluster, or combination.

For the most part Benedict Anderson concentrates on meanings **1, 3, 4, & 6,** arguing that nations became imagined into being through the rise of a print capitalism[7] which valorized even as it popularized vernacular speech, and valorized it in the sense that the vernacular became what he terms the 'language-of-state'. Such print vernaculars inexorably forged identity, established boundaries, created a sense of belonging, offered a means of transacting power (thereby transforming hierarchical structures into horizontal structures), and engendered new concepts of time (principally simultaneity and chronology – or what he terms calendrical time). Pivotal to this process, he argues, were the 'pilgrim creole functionaries and the provincial creole printmen' (65); or, to put it in other terms, the local bureaucrat and the local newspaper; though in a subsequent chapter he analyses passages from several novels to show how specific generic characteristics facilitated the processes of imagining that created the sense of community intrinsic to the formation and maintenance of national identity.

To reach this point Anderson relies on a number of theoretical works and theoretical approaches: firstly the work of the French annalists,[8] specifically Lucien Febvre's and Henri-Jean Martin's *The Coming of the Book. The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800* (London:

New Left Books, 1976 [Translation of *L'appartition du Livre*. Paris: Albin Michel. 1958]); secondly, a quasi Althussian/Marxist approach to develop the notions of print capitalism and the emergence of bourgeois reading publics that are quintessential to his definition of community; and thirdly on a mix of New Criticism, Chicago Aristotelianism (as a source for genre theory) and Reader Reception theory for analyzing a range of 'vernacular' novels to show how, at particular points in time, they created, through their deployment of various literary techniques, the illusion of community.[9]

The first two of these, I believe, are particularly helpful in thinking about ways of coming to terms with 'community'. Arguably writers inhabit a variety of these, which co-exist in relation to one another, for the want of a better visual metaphor, like a series of Chinese boxes. To work as it were from the outside in with perhaps the most basic of structures. There is the national/international community which comprises the way or ways writers negotiate, whether consciously or unconsciously, their ethnicity/ cosmopolitanism, their nativism/globalism. Then there is the professional community – which includes in one sense relations to fellow writers, to literary agents, to publishers, and to reviewers; as well as membership of literary and non-literary organizations, including perhaps affiliations with newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television programs, projects, manifestos, institutions and 'movements'; and in another sense, genre, tradition, intertextuality, cultural discourses all the 'stuff' that makes good cultural/ literary history. So both writers and texts can belong to and be shaped by communities. More about textual communities *anon*. Finally, there is the personal community – to some extent able to be reconstructed through memoirs, autobiography, correspondence, manuscripts, as well as 'information' about the intellectual, social, spiritual, political and cultural milieu, all the 'stuff' that goes to make a good critical editions of letters and good critical biography.

Such communities, though they may impinge on one another and interact with one another, do have 'boundaries' in the sense that Anderson posits boundaries for vernacular speech/ vernacular print/language-of-state communities.[10] Thus, Edna Longley, whose perspicacious and polemical *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland*, is mandatory reading for my students, critiques Heaney's account of the literary scene in Belfast during his formative years as follows:

> Heaney should be seen as generalizing from his own experience and, ironically, from too Anglo-centric a viewpoint, when he says: 'all of us in this group [he includes Mahon] were harking to writers from the English cultural background of the late 'fifties and 'sixties. That *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), *Night Crossing* (1968) and *No Continuing City* (1969) are such different first collections proves the range of influences at work. These early aesthetic differences have often been obscured or distorted by the political and theoretical batteries pounding away since 1970. If politics, as well as criticism, begins in aesthetics, close reading becomes all the more crucial.

> Although distant constellations counted too – Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Frost, Stevens, Crane, Lowell, Wilbur, Penguin Modern European Poets – I suggest three immediate literary environments shaped Northern Irish poetry in the 1960s. (Longley 1994, 20)

Edna Longley is equally illuminating in the way texts can be thought of in terms of community /communities. In 'writing these essays', she observes of *The Living Stream*,

> I found that I was often tracing a textual web, and that the term "intertextuality" applied to Northern Irish poetry in a special, living sense: not as a theoretical dead letter, but as a creative dynamic working upon mechanisms of tradition and cultural definitions alike.
> Intertextual dialogues may be explicit variations on a theme: Heaney rewriting Hewitt from "The Other Side", Muldoon taking oblique issue with Heaney's "Punishment"; or they may unobtrusively tweak the threads of a word or image [...] But poems can ignore one another yet be in touch. Because of the themes that go with the territory, and the territory that goes with the themes, they participate in a shifting system of aesthetic and cultural relations. Here lyric poetry, often damned as upholding the egotistical sublime, clearly subscribes to a dispersed collectivity, and observes disciplines akin to the historians 'intertextual antagonism'. This is why we should take care not to collapse generational dialectics, as when Morrison and Motion [...] press Heaney into the post-modernist mould or mouldlessness. (51)

There are a number of instructive ways of thinking about community embedded in this passage – textual communities made up of poems, plays, novels and short stories in dialogue with one another, a dialogue than can be characterized either as "intertextuality" or "textual antagonism". Generational communities – as, in the case of Northern Ireland, the stately seniors: Heaney, Longley and Mahon and then the young turks: Muldoon, Ciaran Carson and Mebh McGuckian. Here it is worth remarking that the self-assessment of performance, the competitiveness that can come from being contemporaries, or the conflict of the generations, can be just as much a factor in the power politics of a literary movement as any agreements or disagreements about aims and manifestos and just as much a factor in the ways a writer writes. George William Russell (*AE*) once suggested that a literary movement could be defined as 'five or six people who live in the same town and hate each other cordially' (Moore 1914, 165) – "inter-urban" instead of "intertextual antagonism" as it were. In adapting this to our present discussion, I would like to suggest that any literary movement could be defined as any number of writers who, regardless of where they live, monitor one another instinctively. Informing this is Eliot's observation that: 'Between the true artists of any one time there is, I believe, an unconscious community'. (Eliot 1972, 24) So generational communities, communities

of exemplary practice can be fostered within and beyond cities or regions, periods or epochs. But as Edna Longley shrewdly cautions, if we are talking about generational communities: 'care should be taken not to collapse generational dialectics'. Communities do have boundaries; and it is in locating those boundaries that the second half of Anderson's definition comes into its own. If 'imagined' is the motor; then 'community' is the brake. If 'imagined' is the spur; then 'community' is the bridle. If 'imagined' stimulates us to think about what is produced within and for the cultural artifact that is the nation; then 'community' challenges us to determine the spatial reach of that imagining, the area of its effect, the dimensions of the resultant cultural artifact.

So to offer, in conclusion, some tentative answers to the questions I posed at the beginning of this paper. To take the first two questions together: 'To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts?' And 'what presuppositions could be said to underpin textual anthropology?' It can offer one way of resolving the tension that Edna Longley, in the final paragraph of her essay on 'Revising "Irish Literature,"' felt was crippling Irish Studies:

> Perhaps Irish Studies, as we now call them, have inherited two broad modes of enquiry. One derived from the Enlightenment, is the empirical quest for data [...]. But this approach can never be wholly detached from another tradition: the discursive tradition of 'talking about Ireland' which grew up with nineteenth-century Nationalism and is, indeed, politics by other means. At the moment Irish literary studies [...] are uneasily caught between the two. (68)

Community can be the concept that grounds 'talking about Ireland' in empirical data. It can be the means for administering the antidote of fact to the poison of fancy.

Finally: what benefits might accrue from and what limitations might attend such an approach? To take the limitations first. These have been perhaps best summed up by Yeats in his condemnation of the mind that is too self-aware, too cautious, too conscious of its own processes, when he images the loss of *sprezzatura* in *Ego Dominuus Tuus* as the loss of that 'old nonchalance of the hand'. (*VP*, 368)

On the other hand, the greatest benefit that can accrue from thinking rigorously about community, I would argue, is that it can significantly improve our scholarship. A rather old fashioned term but perhaps one that needs to be revived. Community can be our safety device as we embark on that perilous journey from particular to general or general to particular. It can and should alert us to anachronism and fallacious analogy, to those legerdemain slippages that glittering metaphors half reveal and half conceal even as they enchant the writer equally with the reader. 'Just a moment', it should say to us, 'just what are the spatial and/or temporal dimensions of what you are about to relate?' Did X really know, read, correspond with Y? Was concept A available to, understood by writer B and audience C? Does text F really lie within the generic or theoretical paradigm G? Does J share sufficient characteristics of generalization K to qualify as an example? And so on. I suspect Irish Studies is still to some extent caught in the dilemma that Edna Longley identified; but if recent publications are anything to go by then perhaps

approaches associated with cultural studies are being obliged to take more account of empirical evidence, or ‘stuff’; while historical approaches are becoming more conceptually daring. And if this is not happening, let’s ensure that it does.

Notes

1 Not accepted however by Jim MacLaughlin, who writes in his *Reimagining the Nation State: The Contested Terrains of Nation-Building* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 6: ‘Nations, whatever their scale, were ‘historical happenings’ and geographical constructs. They were rarely abstract ‘imagined communities’ as Anderson implies. They were never the ‘natural’ homelands of ‘people’ as nationalists insist. They entailed a tremendous amount of social and environmental engineering [...]. They authenticated themselves, or more accurately had structures of authenticity imposed on them [...] nationalisms in Ireland were always expressions of practical politics. As such, nationalism, whether in unionist or nationalist separatist garb, was always rooted in concrete socio-historical formations and in well-defined geographical milieux’.

2 Freud, of course, came up with quite a different explanation for why thousands of young men were prepared to die for patriarchal nation-states.

3 I am using the word here in the sense of those people who were sufficiently wealthy and sufficiently devoted/obsessed to share their findings through Societies like the Royal Society.

4 OED defines anthropology as I: The science of man, or of mankind, in the widest sense. This seems to have been the original application of the word in English but for two-and-a-half centuries, to c.1860, the term was commonly confined to the sense b. Since that date, it has sometimes been limited by reaction, to c. **b**. The science of the nature of man, embracing Human Physiology and Psychology and their mutual bearing. **c**. The ‘study of man as an animal’ (Latham). The branch of science which investigates the position of man zoologically, his ‘evolution’ and history as a race of animated beings.

5 I am using the term for this article in the sense that it is defined by John Gascoigne in *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 33-4) where the English Enlightenment is distinguished from the French by characterizing it as ‘a set of barely conscious social attitudes which coloured the actions and values of society’.

6 OED defines sociology as The science or study of the origin, history, and constitution of human society; social science. First recorded use **1843** *Blackwoods Magazin*e LIII, 397: These are to constitute a new science, to be called Social Ethics or Sociology.

7 ‘If we consider the character of the newer nationalisms which, between 1820 and 1920, mark them off from their ancestors. First, in almost all of them “national print-languages” were of central ideological and political importance [...]. Second, all were able to work from visible models provided by their distant, and after the convulsions of the French revolution, not so distant, predecessors’. (67) ‘Print-language is what invents nationalism, not *a* particular language *per se*’. (134)

8 The designation derives from the journal edited by Lucien Febvre and others from 1946, which appeared quarterly between 1946-1960 and then bimonthly from 1961. The title is sometimes cited as: *Annales, économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 1946-1993; then as: *Annales, histoire, sciences sociales*.

9 Eric Aurebach’s *Mimesis* is quoted with approval on pages 16, 23-4 and 68-9; while much of the analysis of fiction in the section of chapter 3 entitled “Apprehensions of Time” (22-36) derives

from works like Wayne C Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Booth is not cited in the bibliography of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. The theoretical work that Anderson does cite with approval that has a bearing on his anthropological approach to defining community but does not seem to have influenced his literary analysis is: Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.

10 'We have also seen that for essentially administrative purposes these dynasties had, at different speeds, settled on certain print-vernaculars as languages-of-state – with the choice of language essentially a matter of unselfconscious inheritance or convenience'. (84)

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Cage and Joyce

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Abstract: *James Joyce's work was very important to the development of John Cage's music and poetry. We can see it when we listen to his compositions or read his poems. Cage admired Joyce's last novel,* Finnegans Wake*, praising mainly its language and circular structure. Cage decided to rewrite this novel, using a very personal method, that he called "chance operations".Why did Cage decide to do it? I do not intend to explain his innermost motivations, but it is obvious that Cage created a very interesting poem, "Writing through Finnegans Wake", that could be considered a very condensed version of Joyce's masterpiece. After finishing his poem, Cage decided to transform it into a musical piece. He collected a great variety of sounds, using Joyce's novel as a guide. So all the sounds that Cage collected are mentioned in Finnegans Wake – noises, voices, traditional songs, etc. All these sounds were played together, creating a sonorous chaos that suggests a dream, the dream of all mankind. Its title is taken from Finnegans Wake: "Roaratorio". This musical composition is in its own right a masterpiece. Cage's voice, reading his own poem, was added to this musical chaos.This composition was recorded and today is available on CD. I would like to play a small fragment of it. But before doing so, I would like to call attention to Cage's poem, because it reveals Cage's poetics very well.Cage loved Joyce's words, but criticized his syntax, because it looked like the normal syntax of the English language. For this reason Cage decided to use words without normal syntax, creating a new kind of poetic language not found in Joyce's novel.*

In the introduction to "In the Wake of the Wake", a book which records the impact that James Joyce's novel had on other artists, editor David Hayman comments:

> "Few writers in either nation read "Finnegans Wake". In America, we are just now getting beyond "Ulysses", but at least we have been there. Only a chosen few – [...] – are branching out from the "Wake". [...] "Finnegans Wake" is not yet the model and integrated source it could and may become."

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In the same text Hayman cites Californian musician and poet John Cage as one of the few artists who was really affected or influenced by his reading of "Finnegans Wake," even before it was published as a book.

John Cage was born in Los Angeles in 1912 and died in New York in 1992. An experimental composer, he became known for his piece "4'33," "where the composition is based on the sounds a silent audience is likely to be able to hear during that specified period of silence," according to Otto Karolyi. Cage also "developed the prepared piano, for which he became one of the most inventive writers." "[...] As the piano is prepared, the various timbres give an illusion of a percussive ensemble, though there is only one player." In the opinion of 20th-century critics, Cage "is one of the great experimentalists of our century."

In addition to being a composer, Cage was also a poet, and published several books. He was an avid reader and admired modern literature. In the 1970s he admitted that "[...] when I was young, the writers who were of interest to all of us were Pound and Stein and Eliot and Cummings and Joyce, and I am still devoted to Pound and Stein and Joyce. And of those three, I'm at present interested in Joyce."

In fact, along with composer Erik Satie and painter and sculptor Marcel Duchamp, the author of "Finnegans Wake" was probably the artist who most marked Cage's artistic path, influencing both his poetry and music. Cage recognized this at the end of his life:

> "And I think that the artists of the twentieth century who resist our understanding are the ones to whom we will continue to be grateful. Besides Joyce there is Duchamp. And Satie whose work, though seemingly simple, is no less difficult to understand than that of Webern."

Cage discovered Joyce's work when he was still very young, as we already know. In 1939 he acquired a copy of the first edition of "Finnegans Wake," but at that time he was already familiar with several fragments of the book, which had been published in magazines during previous years: "[...] I had read parts of it in "transiton" (sic) before that. [...] I was always fascinated with the language and I think of it as the most important book of the century."

Even though Cage considered the novel to be a masterpiece, he never read it from beginning to end. He admired some passages, which he stumbled on by chance. Cage admitted: "But like so many other people I never read it." Yet Cage used the book as a source of inspiration, for he "was always fascinated with the language:" "Very early in the forties I wrote a song called "The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs." I found the text for that – I've forgotten the page, something like 556 – I simply looked for a lyrical passage."

Cage composed this song in 1942. At the time, he also enjoyed reading some fragments of the book to friends. The book was always close at hand, on his table or on his bookshelf, but was only occasionally opened by Cage.

This situation continued during many years. In the 1970s Cage finally opened the book to read it from the first to last pages, as he had never attempted before. He did not, however, read it as a typical reader, but as a poet seeking inspiration in the novel for his own poems, or better yet, for some "mesostics" on the name of the Irish writer.

> "A mesostic is like an acrostic," a poem written in verse that highlights, through the succession of certain letters placed in the middle of sentences, the name of some person or thing to whom or which one wishes to pay homage. In other words, "the principle of a mesostic is simple: a name, word, or phrase serves as a "key" for the text to be written."

According to James Pritchett, Cage "began using mesostics as a way of rearranging an existing text [...]. The first such use was in his "Writing Through 'Finnegans Wake' (1977)."

That is, for John Cage a mesostic was a type of poetic composition that took as a reference another literary piece or pre-existing text: the poet randomly selected words and sentences from this source, and then rearranged them in a new and briefer order. By adopting this method, Cage was able to write in verses a fairly reduced version of "Finnegans Wake" ("it is 626 pages long"), in which Joyce's name is cited in the middle of the sentences.

However, Cage's editor considered this summarized version of the novel too long. For this reason, Cage soon thereafter decided to write "Writing for the Second Time Through 'Finnegans Wake'," as he explained:

> "The text itself was written because J. R. de la Torre Bueno, my editor at Wesleyan University Press, found my first "Writing Through 'Finnegans Wake'" unreadable. He said it was too long and boring. It has around 120 pages and is a series of 862 mesostics on the name of James Joyce starting at the beginning of "Finnegans Wake" and going to the end. [...] Instead of 120, "Writing for the Second Time Through 'Finnegans Wake'" has only 41 pages."

We could conclude from what was stated above that when Cage read "Finnegans Wake," he was "bringing it to life in another form." That is, instead of trying to discover the meaning of the book, Cage was more interested in manipulating and reinventing it. He thus declared: "So that rather than trying to find out what the book's about, this opens up the possibility of doing many things with the book."

Cage stated that he had "a non-scholarly and naive attitude toward the book" and that for him, "each instant in 'Finnegans Wake' is more interesting than trying to find out what the whole book is about." He concluded, "everything about it is endless and attractive."

Joyce's novel, however, was not the only literary work that Cage rewrote or recomposed using mesostics. As Pritchett stated:

> "After the first "Writing Through 'Finnegans Wake'," Cage wrote three more, using slightly different rules of finding mesostics. Later, Cage applied the same procedure to the "Cantos" of Ezra Pound (1982), Kafka's "Die Verwandlung" (1983), and Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" (1985).

In 1978, a German radio station (West German radio, Westdeutscher Rundfunk) invited Cage to read his "Writings Through 'Finnegans Wake'." Cage accepted the invitation and decided to read only "Writing for the Second Time Through 'Finnegans Wake'."

According to Kostelanetz:

> "Asked to add "musical background" to this declamation, Cage decided to gather sounds recorded in every geographic place mentioned in Joyce's text [...] but since most of Joyce's places were in Ireland, he decided to spend a whole month there himself [...], recording not only place but native music."

In addition, the German radio station "agreed to arrange for letters to be sent to radio stations around the world to ask for sounds from the places mentioned in the 'Wake'."

During his one-month voyage through Ireland, Cage recounts that he talked to laymen about Joyce's novel, and they told him "[...] that they didn't understand it. And then I asked them if they understand theirs dreams and they confessed that they didn't. And if you can't understand your dreams, it's perfectly reasonable not to be able to understand "Finnegans Wake," which is also a dream."

Cage preserved this dream – and on occasion nightmare – atmosphere that is intrinsic to Joyce's book, in the noise-riddled music composed for "Writing for the Second Time Through 'Finnegans Wake'." As a composer, Cage followed an aesthetic principle: he always tried, as he admitted several times, "to find a way of writing music that freed the sounds from my likes and dislikes and from my memory and from my taste." For this reason Cage began working with what he termed "chance operations," which involve impersonal and abstract decisions or choices. Cage did not wish to express his own feelings, but to do art to change himself. One could say that Joyce also shared this aesthetic conviction, to a certain extent. As Cage himself stated: "I forget where it was that I read that Joyce preferred comedy to tragedy, because in comedy – as he put it, I believe – there is greater freedom from likes and dislikes."

In sum, the "musical background" that Cage composed for "Finnegans Wake" is an experimental composition, "free of melody and free of harmony and free of counterpoint." The audio material originates from two basic sources:

> – "a tape collage, based on sounds and noises mentioned by Joyce in his book (such as bells, dogs barking, water running etc.)."
> – "a circus of Irish folk music."

The two "tapes were then assembled and mixed." The noise-riddled music that emerged from this was then "superimposed upon the reading of Cage's text."

In the opinion of James Pritchett: "The effect of this is a thick, joyous collage of sounds, music, and reading." This performance, "which is both literary and musical," was termed "Roaratorio," a word composed of another two: "roar plus oratorio," which Cage took from "Finnegans Wake."

When evaluating his own work, Cage stated: "I don't think it's as complex as "Finnegans Wake" itself." His intention was perhaps to suggest the work's complexity, without reproducing it.

Cage explained the following about the term "oratorio:"

> "An oratorio is like a church-opera, in which the people don't act, they simply stand there and sing. And so a "Roaratorio" is – well, you don't roar in a church but you roar in life, or roars take place in life and among animals and nature and that's what this is. It's out in the world. It's not in the church.
> Or you can say the world has become a church – in which you don't sing, you roar."

And now I would like to present a fragment of this John Cage performance, which was recorded on CD. In fact, it is an excellent recording that preserves the qualities of Cage's music and Joyce's novel: chaotic, oneiric, nocturnal, non-melodic and non-harmonic art.

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Brazilian Readings of British Decadentism: Abgar Renault and Pedro Nava Recreate W. B. Yeats and A. V. Beardsley

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Abstract: *The paper focuses on a double affinity, which concerns Literature and the Visual Arts, involving Brazilian and Anglo/Irish works. The text likewise traces the affinities between Pedro Nava' s illustrations of Renault's poems and Beardley's drawings for* Salome.
Centring on Abgar Renault's translations of poems by Yeats and Wilde, the essay tries to trace the process of appropriation and re-invention which enables the Brazilian poet to transtextualize the Irish writers' poetry, interweaving source and translated texts. The Brazilian poet's choice of poems, which concentrates on different stages of Yeats' production, further reflects Renault's own stylistic choices: like Yeats, he starts as a symbolist, but moves on to a post-symbolist poetics, more attuned to modern taste. The paper relies on Augusto de Campos' notion of translation as a persona, in which the translator gets into the foreign text's skin, so as to "re-pretend everything again". A parallel is also drawn with Machado de Assis' translation tactics in Ocidentais*: the appropriation of European poetry illustrates Machado's own project for the construction of Brazilian literary identity.*

The ways of intertextuality are unpredictable. There is no knowing where they will take us. Having no traceable beginning or end they may lead to paths as wayward as those of the eletronic web, involving countless kinds of semiotic processes and all kinds of texts, literary or otherwise. In this connection, the relations between Brazilian and Anglo-Irish art provide exciting material, shedding new light on textual analysis.

To embark on one of these journeys, I would like to comment on the meeting of two Anglo-Irish poets, Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats, with one of their Brazilian

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translators, Abgar Renault – a poet whose centennary was celebrated in 2001 by the two literary academies to which he belonged (the Brazilian Academy and the Academy of Letters of Minas Gerais). On the other hand, I would like to explore the mediation of the three poets' work in drawings by Aubrey Beardsley and by Pedro Nava, the Brazilian memorialist whose many talents included that of painter and illustrator. In his long and busy life (he was not only a writer, but also a physician with a large practice) Nava was able to write a five-volume memoir spanning several decades of Brazilian social life. Not much time was left to develop his considerable talent for the visual arts. But he managed to leave enough paintings and drawings to display his different styles and to give a measure of his powers in the field.

In his illustrations of Renault's symbolist poems Nava seems to engage in a dialogue with Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations of Wilde's *Salome* and of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. A circuituous connection thus brings together the poetry of Wilde and Yeats, that of Renault, their Brazilian translator, as well as Nava and Beardsley's graphic art, in their illustrations of Wilde and Renault, respectively. The crisscross of associations among these texts also provides a glimpse of certain aspects of *fin de siècle* decadence as well as of its relative, Brazilian Symbolism.

We may begin with three illustrations by Nava for his lifelong friend Abgar Renault's unpublished *Poemas do Silencioso Romance,* dated 1925. Copied in the author's own hand, the poems were not selected by Renault for inclusion in his *Poetic Works* (*Obra Poética),* the register of his aesthetic itinerary, which covers seven decades and decisive moments of twentieth-century Brazilian poetry, from late Romanticism, Parnassianism and Symbolism to Modernism and Concretism. Not included in this collection, the loosely symbolist *Poems of the Silent Romance* remain in a handwritten booklet presented by the poet to his fiancée, Ignez Brant.The first three pages of the booklet were illustrated with pen and ink drawings by Nava.

The drawings recall certain features of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Wilde's 1893 English edition of *Salome* and also of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. In a way they close the circle around Abgar Renault, who translated Wilde, as well as Yeats, into Portuguese. Like Yeats's, Renault's poetics wore many "coats": it underwent a number of metamorphoses – a long fling with Symbolism preceding a bare, unadorned verse, which marked both his maturity and that of the Irish poet.

Thus, although Renault did not translate many of Yeats's or Wilde's texts, his Portuguese versions of their poems invite analysis. Regardless of their intrinsic merit, they play a significant role as indicators of the Brazilian poet's aesthetic development. The peculiar kind of intertextuality which involves the poems, their translations and the mediation of Audrey Beardsley and Pedro Nava's illustrations, foregrounds certain affinities among the literary and visual arts in Europe and in Brazil. Renault's choice of texts to be translated also illustrates a process of appropriation and re-invention which enables poets to transtextualize other artists' creations in such a way that by interweaving source and target texts they make the foreign work serve their own purposes.

The mesh of texts I have in mind is a case in point. Before I pursue their analysis, however, I must qualify their similarities by mentioning a contrast between Beardsley's and Nava's achievements: Nava, a prolific memorialist, had little time to develop his talent in the direction of the visual arts. As for Beardsley, even though he also tried his hand at writing (he is the author of *Under the Hill*, his version of the legend of Tannhäuser) he is first of all a painter and draughtsman. Perhaps the greatest illustrator of the industrial age, also a master caricaturist and natural parodist, he was considered as much a master of pen and ink as Goya was of aquatint, or Handel of the combination of voice and trumpet. His drawings, a contemporary critic once declared, are the most complete expression of what is typical of the decadent movement – a "disdain of classical traditions in art, and of clean traditions in ethics; the *fin de siecle* outlook on the husk of life, and brilliant dexterity in portraying it'. Beardsley's black-and-white illustrations seemed to capture the spirit of his age so perfectly that Max Beerbohm once dubbed the 1890's "The Beardsley Period". And yet the fashion for his work lasted for only about a year – from April 1894, when the first number of the magazine *The Yellow Book* brought him notoriety – to the spring of 1895, when Oscar Wilde's trial for indecency created a public backlash which also led to the dismissal from the magazine of the illustrator of *Salome.*

An expert in the art of intertextuality, Beardsley was capable of working at once in several different styles, and of blending them with a startlingly fresh touch. His artistic relations are as diverse as the early Pre-Raphaelites, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Whistler, Japanese prints, Greek vases, French Rococo, art nouveau and Toulouse Lautrec. For the drawings for Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, his first commission, Beardsley couldn't resist sending up the mannered intensity of Burne-Jones and Rossetti. He filled his pages with androgynous knights and droopy nymphs, but brilliantly adapted their slightly old-fashioned Pre-Raphaelitism to the more refined taste of the 1890s. In fact he considered the art of Morris and Burne-Jones as "old stuff". In his drawings for *Salome* Beardsley ironically appropriates the decadent theme of the evil, emasculating woman. The drawings create a vaguely Byzantine setting, but the artist also works in the fashionable japonisme of the period, drawing on the asymmetry, economy of line, and decorative flatness of the Japanese woodblock print. The silhouetted outlines of the figures on Greek red-figured vases served him for Aristophanes's satire *Lysistrata*; while for the illustrations to *Volpone* he used a heavy cross-hatch to create a richly baroque effect. His later infatuation with the French rococo informs the suitably frothy illustrations to *The Rape of the Lock*.

Beardsley's drawings are marked throughout by a voluptuous elegance, an ornamental rhythm akin to the abstract decorations of Islamic palaces, an exquisite calibration between the flowing lines and the flat areas of black and white. The figures appear to be arbitrarily cropped. Without totally efacing an illusion of reality, his aim, like the Eastern artist's, seems to be a beautiful design or pattern within a given space.[1]

Some of these features may be seen in Nava's illustrations of Renault's *Poems of the Silent Romance* and thus take us back to the intertextual relationship we started with.

We may first remember how gifted Nava was as a painter and illustrator. We have it from himself that his first artistic manifestations lay in that direction, and he kept a lifelong inclination for finding likenesses between real life characters and figures in painting and sculpture. On this aspect of his talent he once said: "I had an extraordinary vocation for painting, which I played with, but let pass."[2] However, he sometimes gave vent to this inclination, as in eight gouache illustrations he drew on the pages of a copy of Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma* in 1928. In the course of the correspondence with the novelist, Nava also sent Andrade five drawings. Andrade considered them excellent, especially one, *Claudionor*, which he thought "splendid" and which reveals Nava's knowledge of anatomy.[3] His friend Carlos Drummond de Andrade mentions other drawings, some of which (as a head of Oscar Wilde) Drummond kept for himself. Drummond reports, too, that Nava used to draw caricatures on the marble top of bar tables – ephemeral creations soon to be wiped off by waiters [...].

To capture the similarity between Nava and Beardsley, we may look at three vignettes, the first from Beardsley's drawings for Wilde's *Salome*, the two others Nava's illustrations for the initial pages of Renault's manuscript *Poems of the Silent Romance*. The four drawings show a family resemblance, revealed in the similarity of their upward thrust and in their economy and flatness of line, balanced by similarly flowing curved shapes. Nava's next drawing may be compared to "The peacock skirt" from Audrey's *Salome*. Tempered by violet, orange and pink touches, Nava's figure reminds us of the voluptuous slender black and white elegance in many of Beardsley's sketches, and, like some of them, is vaguely reminiscent of art nouveau. The Brazilian drawing also evokes the dreamy, vaguely pre -Raphaelite style of Beardsley's illustrations for *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1470), Malory's first poetic prose account in English of the rise and fall of King Arthur and the fellowship of the Round Table. A delicate eroticism, toned down by a reticence which does not deceive the attentive eye, can be traced in the faceless, gracefully curved naked figure. What cannot be found here, and couldn't anyway be expected in a booklet dedicated to a chaste young woman in the conventional Brazilian society of the 1920's, is the blunt eroticism which gave Beardsley's art such a role in the creation of the myth of the English "Naughty Nineties".

This eroticism often becomes pornograhy, and may be related to the fashionable japonisme of the times. Many artists had studied the prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige. But Beardsley alone looked attentively at the Shunga genre of print-making, so pornographic that such prints were sold under the counter in Victorian bookshops specialising in erotica or "curiosa". In the same vein Beardsley produced obscene drawings for private collectors. In his published work, he managed slyly to insert schoolboy smut even in seemingly blameless illustrations. The fact could not escape his contemporaries. They considered him a dangerously subversive talent, who posed a danger to the very fabric of society: in 1894 and 1895 *Punch* castigated him as "Mr Aubrey Beer de Beers", with his "comedy of leers".

The kinship between Beardsley and Nava is not limited to the affinities between the few drawings mentioned so far.The more heavily erotic or pornographic aspects of

Beardsley's art also find an echo in Pedro Nava's later drawings, kept under lock and key in Rio de Janeiro's *Biblioteca Nacional*. These illustrations, which recall Nava's long practice as a doctor, reveal the anatomist's skill in their coarse, almot brutal sensuality. So, in accordance with his family's wishes, they have not been published and can only be seen under special conditions.

This oscillation between dreamy stylized sketches and a bare, realistic touch brings us back to Renault's translations of Wilde and Yeats' s poems and to the Brazilian poet's own original work.The first thing to notice is the criterion implicit in his choice of texts to be translated – not the representativity of the poem within the author's work or of the author within a national tradition. Side by side with towering figures like Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Coleridge, or Wallace Stevens, Renault's translations include writers virtually unknown in Brazil in the early twentieth century. The fact is, Renault translates poems showing striking stylistic affinities with those he himself authored at the time. The act of translation was an exercise in literary empathy, confirming the notion (chiefly developped by the Campos brothers in Brazil) that translation may prove a way for writers to choose their precursors and to antropophagically apropriate them for their own uses. Appropriation, re-invention and transtextualization then allow for the weaving together of source and target texts. In this train of associations, Renault's selection of Yeats' and Wilde's poems is a creative option. Echoing Haroldo de Campos' words, who in turn echoes Fernando Pessoa, translation thus becomes something like a heteronym. The poet translates only what he loves, he only pretends what he wants to. The foreign text becomes a kind of skin: the translator gets into it, so as to "re-pretend everything again":

> translation for me is a persona. Nearly a heteronym. It is to get into the pretender's skin, to re-pretend everything again, each pain, each sound, each colour. This is why I hever set out to translate everything. Only what I feel. Only what I lie. Or what I lie that I feel, as, once again, Pessoa would say in his own persona.[4]

Consistently with this notion of translation, among Yeat's ample poetic range Renault chooses poems that, great lover and teacher of Literature in English that he was, could, at a certain stage, have been written by himself. The same can be said about his translations of Wilde.Two of the translated poems, "When you are old" and "She wishes for the clothes of heaven" were taken from Yeats's early books *The Rose* (1893) and *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899) Here we find the symbolist voice which, fighting the "prevailing decadence" of the nineties, Yeats will later disown for its "sentimental sadness", its "womanish introspection", as he calls them. In a letter dated 1904, the poet declares he no longer wants the kind of poetry that "speaks [...] with the sweet insinuating voice of the dwellers in that country of shadows and hollow images".[5] But in 1893, before this denunciation, when Yeats is 28, it is still the soft redolent musical voice of Symbolism that we hear in "When you are old". We can read the first stanza side by side with Renault's translation:

WHEN YOU ARE OLD	QUANDO FORES VELHA
When you are old, and gray and full of sleep	*Quando estiveres, já velhinha, a cochilar*
And nodding by the fire, take down this book	*junto à lareira, tira este livro da estante*
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look	*devagarinho lê [...] sonha com o suave olhar*
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.	*dos teus olhos de outrora e suas sombras fundas.*

Owing to the character of Portuguese morphology, the translation cannot duplicate the predominantly monosyllabic line. Largely responsible for the slow dreamy rhythm of Yeats's stanza, the heavy monosyllables seem equivalent to the curved florid pen strokes in Beardsley's and Nava's illustrations. Forcing the gaze to linger in different directions, the flowing curves retard the perception of the whole, and make for a slower rhythm in the reading of the illustration. In his blank verse transcreation of Yeat's poem Renault does his best to achieve a similar slow pace: he introduces a number of pauses, made explicit by the punctuation, which reduce the speed of the reading. Yeats's other early poem, written six years later, is marked by resplendent, precious imagery, favoured by symbolists, as well as by the hesitancy between sound and meaning so valued by Valery.Let us again compare the English and the Portuguese:

SHE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN	*ELA DESEJA OS TECIDOS DO CÉU*
Had I heaven's embroidered cloths,	*Se eu tivesse dos céus os tecidos bordados,*
Enwrought with golden and silver light,	*de luz dourada e viva prata entretecidos*
The blue and dim and the dark cloths	*os azuis, os escuros e os claros tecidos*
Of night and light and the half-light,	*da noite, do romper do dia e do crepúsculo,*
I would spread the cloths under your feet:	*estender-te-ía esses tecidos sob os pés [...]*
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;	*Mas, pobre como sou, só possuo os meus sonhos;*
I have spread my dreams under your feet;	*eu espalhei os meus sonhos sob os teus pés:*
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.	*pisa de leve, pois pisas os meus sonhos [...]*

Here again Renault's exercise in literary empathy evinces the stylistic similarity between Yeats' s and his own poetry. The slow dreamy rhythm of "When you are old", as well as its general theme and atmosphere can be found, for instance, in Renault's original poem, "Diante do Mar". Like Yeats's, this is a young man's piece, taken from *A Princesa e o Pegureiro*, the first book of *Obra Poética*, marked by a premoninantly symbolist aesthetics. Had the young Yeats written in Portuguese, he could have written this poem, so akin in tone to "When you are old":

DIANTE DO MAR

Uma tarde, quando eu não for mais eu, virás a mim sem ti.
Ver-te-ei cegamente num mortiço espelho.

O que apertarei e beijarei presente será distante aqui,
sombra de lua e nada, e estarei meu eu mais velho.

Saberei que me serás apenas álgido futuro
um dia de asas em indelével fuga, e não terei
alípede cavalo, anjo ou bruxedo. Gelado furo
no ar de inverno arrastará meu íntimo rei. (Etc., 49)

As an equivalent for "She wishes for the cloths of heaven", I would choose Renault's "Em Busca da Estrela", another youthful composition. In tone, as well as in the rich texture of its cosmic imagery, these verses again recall Yeats:

Que firmamento ou que anfracto,
perdido de ti, e pálido,
possui o vestido cálido
que afagou as nebulosas, o vinho, as ondas e as rosas
do teu subvertido corpo?

The same might be said of these lines, from *Sub specie æternitatis:*

Vi-te e vi a expressão essencial
da forma, da graça e da luz.
Vi-te e vi a trêmula fragilidade do efêmero
vestida das roupagens do eterno. (*A Princesa e o Pegureiro*, 17)

In the two poems by Renault one finds the cosmic imagery that, as in Yeats's "She wishes for the cloths of heaven", evokes the transcendental aspect of Symbolism presenting the beloved as an incarnation of the Platonic Idea.

Renault's translation of Oscar Wilde's "Requiescat" also illustrates his youthful bent towards Symbolism. Readers can see this for themselves, noticing the translator's use of rare, literary epithets like *fulvo, fúlgido*, well suited to Wilde's "golden", but also recalling the use of a similar register in Renault's original poems.

REQUIESCAT	*REQUIESCAT*
Tread lightly, she is near	*Ela está aqui (pisai de leve [...])*
Under the snow,	*por sob a neve.*
Speak gently, she can hear	*Falai baixinho; pode ela ouvir*
The daisies grow.	*crescer as flores.*
All her bright golden hair	*Seu fulvo e fúlgido cabelo*
Tarnished with rust,	*está mofado.*
She that was young and fair	*e ela, que foi formosa e jovem,*
Fallen to dust.	*Desfeita em pó.*

Lily-like, white as snow,	*Lirial e branca como a neve,*
She hardly knew	*mal conheceu*
She was a woman, so	*que era mulher, e suavemente*
Sweetly she grew.	*assim cresceu*
Coffin-board, heavy stone,	*Dura pedra e tábua de um caixão*
Lie on her breast;	*seu peito cobrem;*
I vex my heart alone,	*sòzinho, dói-me o coração;*
She is at rest.	*ela descansa.*

Note, too, that the young woman celebrated by the poem, with her "bright golden hair/ Tarnished with rust" and her "lily white "complexion likewise recalls the beloved of Abgar's poems, who has auburn hair "cabelo enastro" ("Alegoria") and "the white face of transiency" ("o alvo rosto do efêmero") in "Nas mãos de Deus/II"). Similar descriptions, which pop up in other poems, also evoke the "Rossetti face", created by the Pre-Raphaelite painter for the *femme fatales* and tragic heroines of his paintings.

As they overcome this symbolist stage, both Yeats and Renault later adopt other voices – (as does Wilde, in *De Profundis*). Here is Renault's translation of "A Drinking Song" (*The Green Helmet*, 1904), with its lighter, quicker pace:

Ä DRINKING SONG	*CANÇÃO*
Wine comes in at the mouth	*Entra o vinho pela boca*
And love comes in at the eye;	*pelos olhos entra o amor,*
That's all we shall know for truth eis	*tudo quanto sabemos*
Before we grow old and die.	*antes de velhice e morte*
I lift the glass to my mouth	*Levanto meu copo à boca*
I look at you, and I sigh.	*E contemplo-te, e suspiro.*

This is not a far cry from Yeats's later unadorned style, punctuated by realistic details. The lyricism is still here, but the song has lost its piercing intensity, which has been replaced by a quieter, lucid, almost dry tone. Yeats's "Old men admiring themselves in the water", on the age-long theme of the transiency of all things, rings with this new voice. It can here be heard side by side with Renault's rendering::

OLD MEN ADMIRING THEMSELVES IN THE WATER	*OS VELHOS CONTEMPLAM-SE NA ÁGUA*
I heard the old, old men say,	*Eu ouvi os velhos dizendo:*
"Everything laters,	*"Tudo muda*
And one by one we drop away.	*E um a um vamos desaparecendo..."*
They had hands like claws, and their knees	*Tinham mãos como garras, e seus joelhos*
Were twisted like the old thorn-trees	*eram tortos tais espinheiros velhos*
By the waters.	*ao pé das águas.*

I heard the old, old men say:	*Eu ouvi os velhinhos dizendo:*
"All that is beautiful drifts away	*"Tudo que é belo passa correndo*
Like the waters."	*como as águas..."*

The poem, from *In the Seven Woods* (1909) seems to announce the Yeats's voice that

we hear in *Last Poems*. Abgar, too, will find a new, mature voice, most notably in his great philosophical poem, *Sofotulafa*i.These confluent paths enhance the significance of the two poets' meetings, either through the visual mediation of Nava's and Beardsley's illustrations, or through their stylistic resemblances. Renault's and Nava's plunge into the vast aesthetic web we call Decadentism – a manifestation of their own individual tastes – supports the notion of intertextuality and translation as a vehicle for artists' individual projects. We are here reminded of *Ocidentais*, Machado de Assis's collection of translated poetry. In his recreations of European texts, Machado's disregard for the ancient ideal of "faithful" translation, reveals, instead, a project of his own, which included the construction of Brazilian literary identityl.[6] In their use of foreign texts on their way to the finding of their own voice, Renault[7] and Nava also brush by Machado de Assis, perhaps the greatest of all artists writing in Portuguese.

Notes

1 The remarks on Beardsley's art have been largely taken from art critic's Richard Dorment's text on the catalogue for the Aubrey Beardsley Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, on the centennary of the artist's death, from 8 October 1998 to 10 January 1999. I have also drawn freely from Michael Gibson, *Symbolism.* "

2 "Eu tinha uma extraordinária paixão pela pintura que deixei passar brincando". Apud Bueno, Antônio Sérgio. *Vísceras da Memória*. Uma leitura da obra de Pedro Nava. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 1997, 101.

3 Andrade, Carlos Drummond. Ambrosina e os incendiários arrependidos. Apud Bueno, 105.

4 Campos, Augusto de. *Verso, Reverso,* Controverso. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1978, 7. Trans. and quoted by Vieira, Else Ribeiro Pires. Nudity versus Royal Robe. *Brazil and the Discovery of America. Narrative, History, Fiction*, *1492-1992*. Mc Guirk, Bernard and Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro (Eds.). London: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996, 1-15.

5 From Yeats's letter to A.E. in April 1904. *The Collected Letters*. Wade, Allan (Ed.). London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954, 434 (apud Mutran, Munira Hamud. *Album de Retratos*. George Moore, Oscar Wilde e William Butler Yeats no fim do 'seculo XIX: um momento cultural. São Paulo. Tese [Livre-Docência, Departamento de Letras Modernas], Faculdade de Filosofia Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo, 2000, 207.

6 Here I briefly sum up Sérgio Bellei's convincing thesis in BelleiI, Sérgio Luiz Prado. O Corvo Tropical de Edgar Allan Poe. *Nacionalidade e Literatura*. Os Caminhos da Alteridade. Florianópolis: Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 1992, 77-90.

7 For a study of the evolution of Renault's poetics, see Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de.Centenário de Abgar Renault: Poeta sem Rótulos. *Revista da Academia Mineira de Letras,* v. XXII. Belo Horizonte, 2001, 17-31, Pastiche Pós-Moderno: uma releitura de Abgar Renault. *Suplemento*

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The Wild West Show: Ireland in the 1930s

David Pierce*

Abstract: *The West of Ireland has played a dignified if supporting role in modern Irish culture. Writers and painters such as Synge, Jack B. Yeats, Sean Keating, Paul Henry, and the Blasket Islanders helped define the (French-inspired) perception of the West as if not sacred then special.In the 1930s, the West was given another make-over under the impetus partly of documentary realism and partly of an interest in a disappearing lifestyle. There was still an appetite for doing something with that western alternative lifestyle, of recuperating its folds for posterity (as with the foundation of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935), of memorialising its passing (as with the accounts by the last generation of Blasket Islanders), or of using it to make a comment about modernity (as with the Canadian director Robert Flaherty's documentary film Man of Aran). Man of Aran (1934) is at the centre of several overlapping discourses – visual anthropology, ethnology, documentary film making, Grierson and the 1930s, the ethics of documentarists, and Flaherty's career as a film maker. Surprisingly, analysis of the film's place in modern Irish culture has been attended to less frequently, and the critical probing has tended to come from elsewhere. In the Irish context, Man of Aran belongs not so much with Wordworthian Synge but to a body of work that includes most notably Darrell Figgis's novel Children of Earth (1918) where there is a combination of the forceful naturalism of Zola with Hardy's sense of place. Synge's work lives in its language, a language which has a life of its own, conscious of its beauty as well as its fascination for others. In Man of Aran there is almost no dialogue and only occasionally do we hear snatches of conversation. In many ways the most telling Irish critique of Man of Aran remains Denis Johnston's little-known, satiric play Storm Song (1935). Equally, in terms of visual culture, the contemporary cartoons which appeared in Dublin Opinion should not be overlooked. These provide not only a running satire on the popularisation of the West but also another filter for viewing this body of work, a filter which, given the demise of the West, now seems in many respects closer to the emerging truth.*

* York St John College, Lord Mayor's Walk. This article appears by courtesy of Polity Press, publishers of *A Cultural History of Twentieth-Century Irish Literature*, from which this extract is taken.]

Sean Keating's painting Men of the West *(1915).*

My title derives in part from a comment made by Robert Ballagh about Keating's painting *Men of the West* (1915). The painting shows three gunmen posing desultorily against an Irish tricolour. The year is 1915, a year before the Easter Rising and four years before the War of Independence. But as Ballagh rightly concedes, the pose and attitude have more in common with the Wild West than the West of Ireland.[1]

In the 1930s, when Irish writers and artists engaged with the West, their minds were drawn not to the deprivation but more to the charmed lifestyle of the people. 'It is only in such places [as the island of Achill] that one gets a glimpse of what Ireland may become again,' Michael Collins had unnervingly observed in *The Path to Freedom* (Collins 1922, 119). Few betrayed the compromised nature of the pastoral vision.[2] Thus it was possible in the 1950s for an English outsider such as John Hinde not only to produce the famously garish postcards of Ireland, full of nostalgia, cottages, donkeys, bogs, and red-heads – 'symbols of a backward country' as the Irish Tourist Board Bord Fáilte had complained – but also to make the outrageous claim that 'most landscapes in Ireland have no colour' and in need of 'colour corrections'.[3] In many respects the nearest equivalent in Ireland to the potentially radical idea of Mass Observation in Britain was the Irish Folklore Commission, a non-political body established in 1935 to record for posterity a disappearing oral culture. Those who sought to depict the West at this time tended to be either film-makers such as Robert Flaherty (see *Man of Aran* 1934), ethnologists such as Conrad Arensberg (see *The Irish Countryman* 1937), natural historians such as Robert Lloyd Praeger (see *The Way That I Went* 1937), or travel writers such as H.V. Morton (see *In Search of Ireland* 1930), Stephen Gwynn (see *The Charm of Ireland* 1934) or Michael Floyd (see *The Face of Ireland* 1937). Only occasionally,

Keating's Slán Leat, a Athair *(Goodbye Father) (1935).*

as in the fiction of Peadar O'Donnell or in a painting such as Sean Keating's tender *Slán Leat, a Athair* (Goodbye Father) (1935), do we hear – or rather overhear – the West speaking for itself. Otherwise, what we have portrayed is a collection of rural types (the countryman, man of Aran), or the embodiment of a search, a face, charm, all of them aspects of a culture seen from outside, written for outsiders.

The Wild West Show

The West of Ireland has played a supporting, but nonetheless dignified, role in modern Irish culture. Writers and painters such as Synge, Jack B. Yeats, Keating, and Paul Henry helped define the (French-inspired) perception of the West as if not sacred then special.

Paul Henry, The Little Thatched Cottages, Connemara *(from Paul Henry,* An Irish Portrait *(London: B.T. Batsford, 1951).*

Ulsterman Henry was attracted to the 'wild beauty of the landscape, of the colour and variety of the cloud formations, one of the especial glories of the West of Ireland.' (Henry 1951, 51) The interplay of light and objects which absorb and reflect light, of towering clouds and black mountains, of muted colours and white-washed gable ends, give to his paintings not only a distinctive look but also a pervading and attractive serenity, what Heaney calls 'the unspectacular excitement of his engagement with the subject'.[4] This is not the wide-angle panoramic left-to-right dramatic vision of the West, nor the 'dramatic death' that Jennifer Johnston speaks of in one her novels about evenings in the West (Johnston 1989, 87), but the controlled upright shot where movement is captured and stilled at the same time. Like Synge, Henry has become part of the culture, 'the father,' according to one art historian, 'of the school of landscape painting which evolved in Ireland during the inter-war years,' (Kennedy 1991, 71), 'the most popular artist this country has ever produced', according to another.[5]

Paul Henry cartoon in Dublin Opinion*, March 1937, 15.*

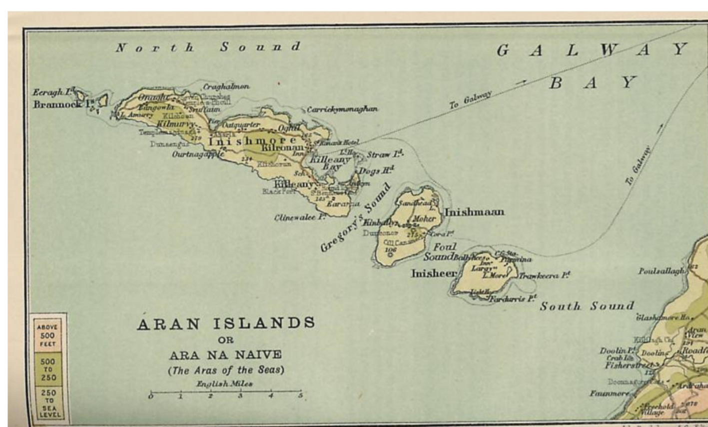
The wry humorous monthly observer of the social scene *Dublin Opinion* carried an amusing cartoon in March 1937of a landscape artist in the field looking for a view. In front of him are a winding road, the gable-end of a cottage peeping up, piles of turf standing about, and then, centre-stage, a huge conical-shape hill topped by billowing clouds. The caption reads: 'Darn it! Paul Henry has been here already!'

Maurice Wilkes Postcard.[6]

In the cloud-filled canvases of Paul Henry, in the tawny-coloured reassuring postcards of, in the quiet autobiographical reflections in Mary Carbery's *The Farm By Lough Gur* (1937), in the even quieter sketches of life in the Glens of Antrim in Hubert Quinn's *Dear Were The Days* (1934), what we witness is a deep resistance to, or a reluctance to engage with, the forces of history. It is life away from the centres of power, where an attempt is made at stilling or distilling the moment. Occasionally, we encounter a stress on continuity between past and present by those who had been in fact displaced in post-Independence Ireland. Thus, in *The Charm of Ireland* (1934), Stephen Gwynn, who had served with the Connaught Rangers in France, still sought to maintain that 'Ireland since the Great War has passed through a revolution, which has not yet finished working itself out; yet it remains the same Ireland.' (Gwynn 1934, 271) Sameness was a quality which could with a little adjustment be turned into a commodity by the burgeoning tourist board and into satire by a humorist such as W.H. Conn. In the May 1937 issue of *Dublin Opinion* under the heading 'The Influence of the Cinema', Conn depicts an old man, his shirt sleeves rolled up, digging beside a waterfall. He is being addressed by two fashionably dressed young women, one of them holding a handbag, the other, with a fur draped round her neck, sitting on a boulder her umbrella beside her: 'You must find it peaceful here in this lovely Gaelic Gleann na-mBláth' [Glen of the flowers]. 'It's okay with me, lady,' is his nicely judged reply, where the use of 'lady' is at once a marker of respect, a conversation-stopper, and a counter to her patronising attitude.[7]

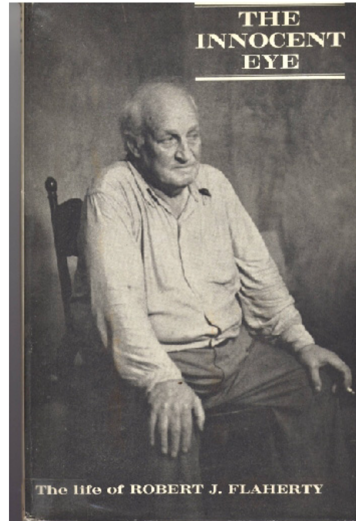
In the 1930s, the West was given another make-over under the impetus partly of documentary realism and partly of an interest in a disappearing lifestyle. The age of depicting traditional culture on the stage in Dublin was past, but there was still an appetite for doing something with that western alternative lifestyle, of recuperating its folds for posterity (as with the foundation of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935), of memorialising its passing (as with the accounts by the last generation of Blasket Islanders), or of using it to make a comment about modernity (as with the Canadian director Robert Flaherty's documentary film *Man of Aran*).[8]

Map at end of Robert Lloyd Praeger, The Way that I Went *(1937).*



Map of Aran Islands taken from Baddeley's Thorough Guide Ireland: Part II *(London: Thomas Nelson, 1911).*

Man of Aran (1934) is at the centre of several overlapping discourses – visual anthropology, ethnology, documentary film-making, Grierson and the 1930s, the ethics of documentarists, and Flaherty's career as a film-maker.[9] Surprisingly, analysis of the film's place in modern Irish culture has been less forthcoming, and the critical probing has tended to come from elsewhere. In the 1939 edition of the Irish Tourist Association guide to Ireland, the language used in praise of the film (sensational, epic, natives) betrays the kind of prejudice associated with an outside colonial power: 'Interest in the Aran Islands has recently been enormously stimulated by Mr Robert Flaherty's sensational picture – 'Man of Aran'. All the stories from this epic island story were 'shot' on the islands, the actors being natives playing on Nature's own stage, with the Atlantic Ocean as a background.'[10]



Robert Flaherty.

Maggie Kerrane set against waves. Still from Man of Aran.

Maggie Kerrane and basket of seaweed. Still from Man of Aran.

More properly, George Stoney's film *Man of Aran: How the Myth Was Made* (1978) calls into question the accuracy of the portrait on life on the Aran Isles and raises the ethical issue of the effect of the film on the islanders (neither 'Tiger' King the father nor Micilín Dillane the boy could continue living on Aran as former film stars).

Micilín Dillane casting a line. Still from Man of Aran.

According to Stoney the film is 'the historic benchmark by which most older Islanders measure their existence.'[11] Islanders became 'island-conscious' and began wearing white woollen caps again.[12] Equally,

Shark hunting. Still from Man of Aran.

there is an issue with the storm scene when islanders risked their lives putting out to sea in order for Flaherty to obtain some dramatic footage.[13] More recently, Tim Robinson has drawn attention to the reception the film received in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, and refers in passing to 'the politically ambiguous storms of *Man of Aran*'.[14]

In the Irish context, *Man of Aran* belongs not so much with Wordworthian Synge but to a body of work that includes most notably Darrell Figgis's novel *Children of Earth* (1918) where the forceful naturalism of Zola teams up with Hardy's sense of place. Synge's work lives in its language, a language which has a life of its own, conscious of its beauty as well as its fascination for others. In *Man of Aran* there is almost no dialogue and only occasionally do we hear snatches of conversation, as when Micilín asks the old man about the soil in the crevice: 'Much more down there, Pat?' To which the reply is: 'A couple of baskets more anyway.' The addition of 'anyway' is the one sparkle to delight the ear, the one unforced genuine word in the exchange. But it is in his attitude to the material that distinguishes Flaherty from Synge, and we can observe this in the first starkly worded caption thrown up onto the screen: 'The land upon which Man of Aran depends for his subsistence – potatoes – has not even soil!' The use of the exclamation mark is wholly foreign to Synge, the writer who when leaving Inishmaan confessed: 'Am I not leaving [there] spiritual treasure unexplored whose presence is a great magnet to my soul? In this ocean alone is [there] not every symbol of the cosmos.' (Greene; Stephens 1959, 96) While related to the psychological disposition of a writer or a film-maker, at root the issue concerns the hierarchical relations of power and the need to abandon the link between (superior) author and (superior) audience and to establish a relationship with the material that is free from condescension.

Aran family group with children smiling. National Geographic *51, 3, March 1927.*

Colour photo of Connemara women from National Geographic *51, 3, March 1927.*

Man of Aran resembles the opening scene-setting chapter in *Children of Earth* – the dramatic landscape with the Atlantic waves, the 'torn and tangles rocks', 'the howling wind', the headland, 'the grey ruining clouds', 'the waves pounding on the strand', the 'infinity of music in the roaring', 'the throbbing rhythms from the heart of Earth itself'. (Figgis 1918, 1-5) The scene is set, the discourse established by Figgis: against the power of climate and landscape are pitted the struggling poor. There is a narrative of sorts in *Man of Aran* – constructing a vegetable patch, catching fish by line or shark-fishing with harpoon, and surviving a storm in a currach – and a gesture towards characterisation, especially in the delightful movements of Micilín around his mother and in her facial expressions of concern towards her husband at sea. Frank Delaney is convinced that 'every picture told a story', but I think he is confusing 'story' with 'dramatic': every picture is dramatic, but not every picture told a story.[15] Flaherty is prevented as it were by the exclamation mark from getting close to his material.

Figgis moves beyond the first chapter to produce, according to Ernie O'Malley, one of the best books about the West of Ireland.[16] Figgis has a story to tell. He shares a setting with Flaherty, but he constructs a story which while invoking the 'naked friendship of earth and sky' also shows individuals responding to disappointment in love and to the 'unseen tides' of history, 'of action and reaction of souls and conditions of souls, of psychological tension and interplay, of conflict of wills and intentions, of emotions and desires, fates and characters and determinations that met and contended ceaselessly, weaving a criss-cross pattern of life – unseen tides all of them, only to be discovered, yet to the attentive eye very clearly to be discovered, in the bodily erosions that they caused' (158; 167). Figgis possesses an attentive eye and with it comes an important discovery – that, away from the glare of the camera, people in the West are more than figures battling against a hostile environment but have passions that arise from

relationships with each other not with their environment. Thus at the crucial moment in the novel, Eoghan tackles his former lover Nancy over her decision to marry another man, a man whose death Eoghan feels responsible for:

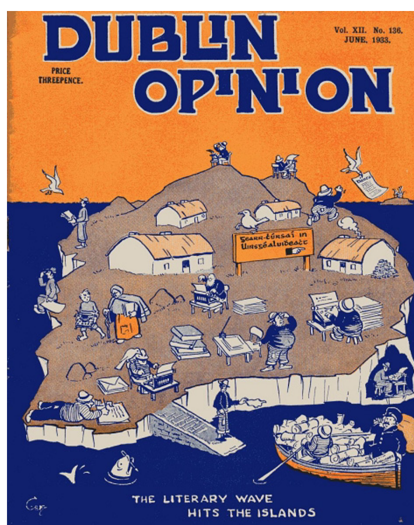
> 'Will you tell me why did you ever do it? Haven't you it all scattered now, though it was set to be evermore, and we that could have gone on that time with the hearts in us like the stars and the great times all before us [...]. Did you ever think of that now; and the two of us that are astray now, with the kisses like beautiful flowers between us?' (250)

In many ways the most telling Irish critique of *Man of Aran* remains Denis Johnston's little-known, satirical play *Storm Song* (1935), which was first staged at the Gate Theatre in January 1934, four months before the film's release, with Hilton Edwards as the Hungarian-born cameraman Szilard, and Cyril Cusack in a cameo role as the Cockney Alf Quilt.[17] Szilard has come to the West to make a film for his studio boss Solberg about the 'struggle and real meaning' of island life, 'a memorial to your fathers and your fathers' fathers', but has been delayed from shooting a storm sequence by an anti-cyclone: 'Pah – call this the Atlantic! Bathwater – that's all it is.' (Johnston 1935, 42; 100; 78-9) He has shot a huge amount of film and has been ordered to finish the project and return to London to edit it. But Szilard thinks Moving Pictures should be filmed as they happen and not falsified with a pair of scissors. Over the wireless the crew hear the weather forecast from London, promising a gale, and at 3 a.m. they begin shooting, photographing indoors the reflection in a large mirror of a gramophone resting on a stool.

Some of the dialogue is deliberately over the top, as if Johnston has Flaherty's film in mind: 'Don't you love the Atlantic? It's the only sea in the world [...] People who live in towns never really understand that there is such a thing as weather, do they?'. (105) The word that resonates in this play is fake. After complaining of making 'fake pictures for fake firms for morons to gape at' (116), Szilard heads off to the shoreline to shoot at sea. The final scene of the play takes place in the Majestic Cinema in London with a first-night showing of the film. This is a brilliant self-conscious touch on Johnston's part, for even if such films as *Man of Aran* studiously avoid this kind of contamination, they are in fact made with the metropolitan box office in mind (the first screening of the film was in London in April 1934). If we hadn't already guessed it, we learn that Szilard died that night at sea, his camera lashed to the mast of a hooker. Above the voices at the reception is heard 'Such a pity he was drowned!' (127) And the play ends with the triumph of the studio over the filmmaker with the Commissionaire calling out: 'Ladies and Gentlemen – Mr. Absalom Solberg!'

New York opening of film Man of Aran*, 1934.*

The April 1934 issue of *Dublin Opinion* featured an amusing cartoon by Seán Couglan of the fan mail arriving at the Island of Aran.



Fan mail arriving. Dublin Opinion *April 1934.*

Sacks of letters in dozens of currachs are coming ashore watched over by amused and interested groups of islanders dressed in traditional costume. In another cartoon the previous year, under a heading ‘The Literary Wave Hits the Islands’, there is an island scene surrounded by cliffs and blue sea and dotted with thatched cottages and heightened activity. The islanders, in Aran clothes with hats tilted or pulled down, are hard at work typing or looking for inspiration. A signpost in the centre of the island reads in Gaelic *gearr-cúrsaí in uirsgéaluideacht* (short stories in great storytelling). A gull has just plucked a *Danta* (poem) from the hands of a frantic author and flies off. Meanwhile, Captain Publisher is being rowed off the island weighed down with manuscripts. The sketch is a delightful tongue-in-cheek comment on the popularisation of the West in the

work on the Blasket Island writers such as Peig Sayers, Muiris Ó Suilleabháin (Maurice O'Sullivan), and Tomás Ó Criomhthain (Thomas O'Crohan). What all this self-consciousness suggests is that there was another filter for viewing the work not only of these writers but also that of Synge and Flaherty (and Jack B. Yeats), and it remains an important debunking mode for, given the demise of the West, it now seems in many respects closer to the emerging truth.

Words: 3,450 including footnotes.

Notes

1 Robert, Ballagh, 'The Irishness of Irish Art' (1980) [unpublished lecture]. Cited in Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture.*Notre Dame/ IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996, 23.

2 I am indebted at this point to Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.* Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995, 32ff. Buell doesn't refer to Ireland but many of his comments are highly suggestive in the context of modern Irish culture.

3 See *Hinde*sight (Exhibition Catalogue) (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 34; 40. The first six postcards appeared in 1957. The Liffey, which resembled the colour of Guinness, was given a blue makeover by Hinde.

4 See Heaney's Introduction to the exhibition *Seamus Heaney: A Personal Selection*, Ulster Museum Belfast, 1982. Cited in Reviews*, Circa* 7 November/December 1982, 20.

5 See Brian Lynch review of Paul Henry exhibition at the Oriel Gallery in *Hibernia* 6 April 1978, 14.

6 *Dublin Opinion* 16: 181, March 1937, 15. Reproduced in Brian P. Kennedy and Raymond Gillespie, *Ireland: Art Into History* (Dublin: Town House; Niwot, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart, 1994), 140. See Kennedy's essay 'The Irish Free State 1922-49: A Visual Perspective' for a useful accompaniment to my remarks in this chapter.

7 *Dublin Opinion* 12: 135, May 1933, 73. For comparison, see the July 1937 issue, where Conn satirises the making of an all-Irish talking film.

8 I am reminded of a comment made by Chris Curtin, Hastings Donnan, and Thomas M. Wilson, the editors of *Irish Urban Cultures.* Queen's University Belfast: Institute for Irish Studies, 1993, lamenting the dominance of two myths about Ireland in twentieth-century anthropological studies, one of the dying peasant community of the west, north west and south (where anomic rural change has been the order of the day), and the other of the two tribes in the North, 11-2.

9 See for example, Brian Winston. *Claiming the Real: The Documentary Film Revisited.* London: British Film Institute, 1999; Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy (Eds.). *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1997; Arthur Calder-Marshall. *The Innocent Eye: A Life of Robert Flaherty.* London: W.H. Allen, 1963; Paul Rotha. *Robert J. Flaherty: A Biography* (Ed. J. Ruby). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.

10 *Ireland.* Dublin: Irish Tourist Association, 1939, 195. This entry can be contrasted with Baddeley's *Thorough Guide to Ireland: Part II.* London: Thomas Nelson, 1911, which notes that 'As scenery the Arans have few attractions' and suggests that 'It is for their ancient forts, cromlechs, and cloghauns (stone-roofed houses), and very early Christian ruins that the Arans are interesting.' 187-8

11 Cited in Brian Winston. *Claiming the Real*, 219. To the islanders, *Man of Aran* was/is known simply as 'the Film'. See Tim Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth* (1986; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 162.

12 J. Norris Davidson in note to author, July 1959. See Paul Rotha, *Robert J. Flaherty: a Biography*, 139.

13 John Goldman, who helped edit the film, does not mention this; instead, he concentrates on the 'extraordinary sequence' and how it gave expression to 'the whole pent-up fury of Flaherty's genius'. See Paul Rotha. *Robert J. Flaherty: A Biography*, 133. Rotha's account corroborates the accuracy of Johnston's play although the play itself is not discussed (see 119-39).

14 Tim Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth*, 138. For further discussion, see Martin McLoone, *Irish Film: the Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema.* London: British Film Institute, 2000, 42-4.

15 See Frank Delaney, 'Endpiece'. *The Listener* 31 May 1984, 39. Delaney first saw *Man of Aran* at school in 1956. On seeing it again on Channel 4 in 1984, he connects the film with the Irish tradition of storytelling, which was 'safety itself' for 'young Catholics mustn't be allowed to think'.

16 Ernie O'Malley. *Army Without Banners.* London: New English Library, 1967, 66. First published in 1936 under the title *On Another Man's Wounds*.

17 Johnston had been present while *Man of Aran* was being made. See Paul Rotha. *Robert J. Flaherty*, 123.

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The Greek Influence on Primitive Irish Literature

Ramón Sainero*

Abstract: *There are surprising similarities between some Greek and Irish tales. The aim of this paper is to attempt a brief explanation of these similarities, or influences, firstly by studying the tales that appear in the Irish manuscripts and then the tales that appear in the works of Classical Greek writers such as Homer, Herodotus or Hesiod. We have chosen the following tales to demonstrate these similarities:*

"The prophecy of Paris Prince of Troy" and the Irish epic Tain Bo Cuailnge.

"The prophecy of Paris Prince of Troy" and the tale of "The prophecy of Deirdre".

"The apple of disagreement" or "The Judgment of Paris" and the tale of "Bricriu's Feast".

"Leda and the Swan" and the tale of "Aonghus and the Swan".

A study of Homer's Iliade reveals several important similarities between Helene and Deirdre, Cuchulain and Aquiles, Hector and Ferdius. The manner of presentation of the challenge for the bull of Conchubar King of Ulster, in the Tain Bo Cuailnge, is echoed in the primitive Greek tale of the challenge for the bull of Paris Prince of Troy and Briciu's Feast, another tale in the Ulster Cycle, is the development of the tale of "The Judgment of Paris".

It is my belief that we should not talk only of similitude, but also of relations. The theory that the origins of these primitive Irish people is somehow connected with the primitive culture of the Middle East; Greece, Thracia and the Black Sea, is supported in the primitive literature of the people who inhabited those territories. I put forward the possibility that these primitive Greek tales known by the Irish scribers form one whole, single Irish identity, combining the Greek and Irish materials.

At the Conference of Goteborg (IASAIL) I explained the possible relationship between the tale of the robbery of the cattle of Conchubar, King of Ulster, by Queen Maeve of Connaught (Tain Bo Cuailnge) and the Hispano-Greek tale of the robbery of the cattle of Gerion, King of Tartessos, by Hercules, written by Hesiodo in the 8th century

* ???

B. C. The taking of the precious bull of King Conchubar of Ulster by Queen Maeve and the refusal to return it was, as we know, the cause of the war between the armies of Conchubar and Maeve, the fight of the two champions Ferdius and Cu Cuchlainn, and the death of the former. The taking of the precious bulls of Gerion by Hercules in Hesiodo's tale caused the fight between both heroes and the death of Gerion.

Today we can give some more valuable information that appears in other Greek stories. I refer here to the Greek tale of "The prophecy of Paris Prince of Troy". Here we find an important similitude with the former tale of Tain Bo Cuailnge. The Challenge of Cuchulain and Ferdiad, as well as the challenge of Gerion and Hercules for the ownership of the cattle is markedly similar to the challenge of Paris in the Trojans tale for the ownership of the best bull of the King's cattle. Paris, as a shepherd, had cared for the bull, and was very fond of it. In the Irish tale Ferdiad died in the confrontation with Cuchulainn his adoptive brother. In the games for the prize of the Trojan bull, Paris is almost killed by the sons of the King of Troy, his brothers. Fortunately for him, he is recognised at that moment as the King's son and for that reason his life is saved.

But there are more surprises, there is also a striking similarity between the tale of the fate of Paris and another Irish tale: the tale of the fate of Deirdre.

In the "*Tale of the prophecy of Paris Prince of Troy*": Hecuba, wife of Priam, King of Troy, had a son, Paris. But Hecuba had a strange dream when she was pregnant with Paris. She dreamt that she gave birth to a piece of burning wood. The King's astrologer, Esaco, told her that she would have a child, Paris, who would bring bad luck on the kingdom, and Troy would be destroyed. Priamo, to avoid the terrible fate described by the astrologer ordered to his servant, Agelao, to leave the child on mount Ida. Agelao left the child as ordered on the mountain to be devoured by wild animals. But the infant survived and he gave him secretly to his wife whose child had just been stillborn. She brought him up as one of her own sons and Paris became the Shepard of the cattle of the King. The years passed and, one day, when Paris was already an adolescent, he took part in the Trojan games, the prize for which was the best bull of Troy, which was the bull that Paris had taken care since it was born. Priam's servants had stolen Paris' bull to be used as a funeral offering in the games of Troy. In order to rescue the bull, Paris fought in the games and won the bull in front of his real father, who recognised him. Priamo decided that the bad luck foretold in the prophecy had come to nothing, after all those years, and granted the boy a pardon. But when Paris came of age he kidnapped the Queen of the Greeks, with her consent. This was the cause of the war that broke out between Trojans and the Greeks and the city of Troy was destroyed.

We can see there are many similarities that may be drawn with the *Irish tale of Deirdre*: Before Deirdre was born, bad omens were also prophesied by the Druid of the King of Ulster. One day, Conchubar and his Ultonians were feasting in the house of Feidhlim, whose wife was pregnant. Suddenly a terrible scream came from the womb of the wife. Cathba, Conchubar's Druid foretells great calamities upon Ulster. "Feighlim's wife will give birth to a daughter, the girl will bring war to the Kingdom and Emain

Macha, the capital of the kingdom will be destroyed. To avoid the terrible fate described by the Druid, Conchubar ordered Deirdre to be taken away and hidden in a fortress in a solitary place, with a maid to take care of her, resolving to marry her off when she came of age, to avoid the foretold bad luck. But Deirdre, the fiancé of the King of Ulster, elopes with Naisi, a young warrior, one of the sons of Uisnach of Ulster. This resulted in the war that broke out in the Ulster and the city of Emain-Macha was destroyed.

Both tales deal with fate: Paris and Achilles from the time of their birth were fated to die in Troy. The fate of Deirdre and the sons of Uisnach was to die violently in the Ulster:

Paris elopes across the sea with Helen to his kingdom in Troy. War breaks out between the Greeks and the Trojans. Achilles and Paris die fighting. The city of Troy is destroyed and Helene returns to Greece. In the Irish tale Deirdre elopes with Naisi across the sea to their new kingdom in Alba. There is civil war in the Ulster. Deirdre and Naisi return to the Ulster were they die. Naisi and his brothers die fighting against Conchubar, Deirdre later kills herself. The city of Emain Macha is destroyed.

Conchubar, by means of a trick, managed to bring Naisi and Deirdre back to Ulster where both died violently, civil war broke out, and Emain-Macha is destroyed. Priam, also using a trick on the Greek king, the famous Trojan horse, manages to get into Troy and the city is destroyed too. Both prophecies have been accomplished.

The possible relations don't finish here. There is another Hispano-Greek tale that can be related to the story of Paris and Deirdre. It is the *"Tale of the prophecy of Habidis Prince of Tartessos"*: This is a well known tale in the classical world, written in the 5th century B. C. Gargoris, King of Tartessos, in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, had sexual relations with his daughter and from those relations was born an incestuous son. He considered this a bad omen for him and his kingdom and ordered the infant be left in the country to be devoured by wild animals. But the child survived, and was secretly adopted by one of the king's servants. The child grew up, and one day the King discovered that he was his son and seeing that the prophecy had not come true, he pardoned Habidis and later gave him the kingdom.

Curiously and surprisingly the tale of "The judgment of Paris" is connected once again, with another Irish tale of the Ulster Cycle known as "Bricrius's Feast" ("Fled Bricrenn). This Irish Tale is an account of rivalry among Ulster warriors and is considered to be one of the longest hero tales of the Ulster cycle. It is considered that was compiled in the 8th century and is preserved in *The Book of the Dun Cow* (c. 1100). The story is well known: Bricrius constructs a new hall and, for the inauguration, he invites the King of Ulster, Conchubar, the heroes of the red Branch and his most famous champions. Bricrius, known as the trickster for his venomous tongue, promises the hero's portion of his feast to three different champions, Lóegaire, Conall Cernach, and Cú Chulainn. Because it was always his delight to stir up strife among men and women he played the heroes and their wives off against each other, to prove who was the best champion and who was the best wife of the land of Erin.

The story, in E. O'Curry's translation, goes on to describe how Bricriu contrived to sow jealousies among the wives of the three champions, by flattering each separately at the expense of the others; so that, when they took their places in the banqueting house, he could see that the three women were almost fighting:

> "*Emer, Cuchulainn's* wife, came out next.–' A safe journey
> to thee, O *Emer,* daughter of Forgall *Manach',* said *Bricrind:* "thou wife of the best man in Erinn: *Emer* of the beautiful hair. The Kings and the Princes of Erinn are at enmity about thee. As far as the sun excels the stars of heaven, so far dost thou excel the women of the whole world, in face, and in shape, and in family, in youth and in lustre, jn falle and in dignity, and in eloquence'. So, though great the flattering praise he be-stowed on the other women, he lavished twice as much upon *Emer.*
> "The three women moved on then till they reached the same place, that is, three ridges from the house; with none of them knowing that the other had been spoken to by *Bricrind.* They then returned to the house. They passed the first ridge with a quiet, graceful, dignified carriage; hardly did any one of them put one foot beyond another. At the second ridge their steps were closer and quicker. The ridge nearest to the house [in getting after it] each woman sought to forcibly take the lead of her companions; and they even took up their dresses to the calves of their legs, vying with each other to enter the house first; because what *Bricrind* said to each, un-known to the others, was that she who first entered the house would be Queen of the whole province. And such was the noise they made in their contest to enter the kingly house, that it was like the rush of fifty chariots arriving there; so that they shook the whole kingly house, and the champions started up for their arms, each striking his face against the other throughout the house.
> ", Stop', said *Sencha,* [the judge], 'they are not foes that have come there; but it is *Bricrind* that has set up a contest between the women since they have gone out. I swear by the oaths of my territory", said he, "that if the house is not closed against them, their dead will be more numerous than their living'. So the gate-keepers shut the door immediately. But *Emer,* the daughter of *Forgall Manach* and wife *of Cuchulainn,* advanced in speed before the other women, and put her back to the door, and hurled the gate-keepers from it before the other women arrived. Then their husbands stood up in the house, each of them anxious to open the door before his wife, so that his own wife should so be the first to enter the house. 'This will be an evil night', said *Conchubar* the King". Then he struck his silver pin against the bronze post of his couch; and all immediately took their seats. 'Be quiet', said *Sencha* (the judge). It is not a battle with arms that shall prevail here, but a battle of words.
> O'Curry: *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, pages 18-22.

At the end of the tale, after the contest of the beheading game considered to be the source used in the English Medieval poem *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight,*

Chuchulainn is recognised as the best champion of Erin and so takes up his place next to the King with his wife.

"The Judgment of Paris" or "The apple of disagreement" was and continues to be a popular theme in literature. According to legend, Paris was chosen by Zeus to determine which of three goddesses was the most beautiful: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite. *Hera* tried to be the chosen one by offering him kingly power and Athena in turn offered him terrestrial power. But he selected Aphrodite's bribe, offering him the most beautiful woman alive. The chosen woman was Helen, a Greek queen, but she was married and the bribe of Aphrodite was a venomous one. His seduction of Helen, the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta, and refusal to return her to Menelaus was, as we know, the cause of the Trojan War and the end of Paris, who would perish in the war.

Aphrodite had perversely devised a deceit, to offer Paris the best reward ever: Helen, the most beautiful woman on Earth, but this would bring about the downfall of Paris and Troy. Just as Bricrius, in his perversity, had devised a trick that would bring about the confrontation of the heroes of Ulster and their wives.

A further connection with the Trojan Helen is the Greek legend of "Leda and the Swan" and the legend of "Aonghus and the swan". Leda is generally believed to be the daughter of Thestius, King of Aetolia, and mother (by Zeus, who had approached her in the form of a swan) of the twin, Pollux and of the Trojan Helen, both of whom hatched from eggs. Aonghus Og (Angus the Young), son of Dagda and Boanna (the river Boyne), was the Irish god of love. His palace was supposed to be at New Grange, on the Boyne. Four bright birds hovered about his head and, at their singing, love rose up in the hearts of boys and girls. He became lovesick for a beautiful girl whom he had seen in a dream, recounted the cause of his sickness to his mother, Boanna and father, Dagda. After a long search all over Ireland the girl was found at a lake called the Lake of the Oragon's Mouth.

Angus went to the lake, where he saw more than a hundred girls walking in couples, each couple linked by a chain of gold, but one of them was taller than the rest. Angus recognised her as the girl of his dreams. She told him she was Caer, daughter of Ethal Anubal, a Prince of the Danaans of Connach. They send a message to Ethal asking for the hand of Caer for Angus, but Ethal refuses to give her up, although he finally accepts, under pressure from Dagda. Ethal explains on the first of November that she will be seen with a hundred and fifty other swans at the Lake of the Dragon's Moutho. Angus goes there at the appointed time and transformed himself into a swan plunges in to join his love in the lake. After that they go together to the palace on the Boyne.

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Urban and Intellectual Beauty: Aspects of Oscar Wilde's Influence

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Abstract: *In the 1920s and 1930s, Chinese scholars exalted Oscar Wilde as a worthy model for others to follow. His ideas about freedom, iconoclasm, and passion without limits tremendously influenced Chinese intellectuals, more so than did his dramatic techniques. This paper examines the literary influence of* Salomé *on certain Chinese literary works. The Chinese intellectuals of the era understood the fatal physical desires and the meaning and consequence of ultimate defiance in Salomé, but they also saw her invincibility, which in turn was thought to be helpful in achieving breakthroughs in a traditional feudalistic society. In those days, the play was regarded as an unconventional discourse that exemplified a radical personality that was deemed to be suitable for China. The Chinese stories are all set in cities that foreground the individual's search for assertion and love. Salomé, instead of being a femme fatale, is redefined with a positive and rational attitude that reflects a deeper concern for the role of intellectuals. The transformation is fueled by the desire to affect a change in cultural consciousness in terms of the search for one's role and the striving for freedom, especially for women. An intellectual and bourgeoisie overtone is apparent in these stories, and it is connected to the underlying urban discourse. The indebtedness to Wilde is more a kind of inspiration than a blind imitation. By studying* Salomé*'s literary representations in selected Chinese works and by investigating the poetical devices and treatment of certain themes in relation to the sociocultural and intellectual concerns of the Chinese authors, I hope to broaden our understanding on major intellectual concepts in those days.*

The Chinese literary renaissance took place during the May Fourth period, which is thus named because of a students' demonstration in Peking on the Fourth of May, 1919. In the process of replacing the old with the new, Chinese intellectuals inevitably looked to the West for inspiration. The goal was to rebuild China in light of what was seen as advantageous in Western modes of thought, behavior, and attitudes. This was

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also in line with the traditional concept that intellectuals should use literature as the means to help and change the country. Chinese ethics, values, and concepts were considered to be too outdated and binding for a country that had to move forward. Some radical youths even advocated the complete abolishment of any Chinese socio-political heritage. In the words of Leo Lee, "it was the Chinese writers' fervent espousal of Occidental exoticism that turned Western culture itself into an "other" in the process of constructing their own modern imaginary [...]. In their minds modernity itself was in the service of nationalism" (Lee 1999, 309). This was a period that saw a great rewriting of the canons – Chinese writers did not just read and translate Western, Russian, and Japanese literary works, they also redefined and revised them to spread their own messages. This zeal in educating Chinese readers about various cultural, political, and philosophical ideas opened up a new public space for literary creation and assimilation among writers.

Andre Lefervere explains the relationship between "cultural capital" and translation: "cultural capital is what you need to be seen to belong to the 'right circles' in the society in which you live [...]. That cultural capital is transmitted, distributed, and regulated by means of translation, among other factors, not only between cultures, but also within one given culture" (Lefervere 1998, 41). According to Lefevere's definition, the mass translation of foreign texts in modern China can be considered as the transmission of cross-cultural capital, or, in the words of Shih Shu-mei, "the importation of Western literature [was] naturalized" (Shih 2001, 57). Who, then, belonged to the "right circles" that Lefevere mentions? The answer can be found in T.D. Huters' statement that "the new literature after 1919 had been urban, produced by the educated largely for the educated and highly influenced by Western forms" (Huters 1984, 55). Cities became the stage for all of these interactions and exchanges. Only the better-off intellectuals could afford to enjoy modern convenience and a Western lifestyle that included such activities as going to theatres and movies. As one scholar points out, "the unfolding of Western exoticism in modern Chinese literature is closely tied to two events: the spatial development of urban Western enclaves in China, and the creative input of foreign-trained Chinese students who had returned home" (Fruehauf 1993, 134). This urban scenario was part of the discourse of "Westernizing" China. Jonathan Friedman states that there are generally four aspects to cultural identity: "race", "Western (modern) ethnicity", "traditional ethnicity", and "lifestyle" (Friedman 1994, 30). To rephrase Friedman's words for the Chinese context, during the modern period Chinese intellectuals embraced Western models and concepts with the hope of changing the traditional personality of China and bringing forth an identity that was compatible with the West.

Among the Western writers who were highly regarded in those days, Chinese scholars exalted Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) as a worthy model for others to follow. His ideas about art, beauty, melancholy, iconoclasm, and passion without limits tremendously influenced Chinese intellectuals, more so than did his dramatic techniques. From the publication of Wilde's "The Happy Prince" (1888) in Chinese translation during 1909, his work was frequently commented upon until the 1930s. Wilde's most popular work

in translation included his essays and short fiction, *Salomé* (which was published in English 1894), and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). His plays, such as *Lady Windermere's Fan* (which was published in 1893), were staged successfully in China (Zhou 2000, 98). From the 1920s onwards, there was a wave of "Wilde-mania" (98). Lesser-known poems such as "In the Forest" and "From Spring Days to Winter" were translated into Chinese by Ke Wei, and published in 1925 in the well-known *Morning Post Supplement*. Five of Wilde's *Poems in Prose* (1894) were translated by Liu Fu in 1921 and published in 1923 in *Short Story Magazine*. They were "The Artist", "Doer of Good", "The Disciple", "The Master", and "The House of Judgment".

In this paper I shall focus on *Salomé* because it had the greatest influence on modern Chinese writers. "With the translations of *Salomé* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the staging of *Salomé* in China", writes Xu Jingan, "the spread of aestheticism reached its zenith" (Xu 1996, 171).[1] Wilde was not just a famous writer, but also "the symbol of an artistic lifestyle" (Zhou 2000, 95). The following artistic and literary personalities can illustrate this point. Shao Xunmei (1906-1968), for example, was known for adopting dandyism in his life and work. Ye Lingfeng (1904-1975) was often criticized for his overt but unskillful imitation of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898), whose illustrations for *Salomé* were considered to be his best work, and were as well known as the play itself (Wong 1998, 59). Zhu Yingpeng, a painter-writer who promoted art education in modern China, encouraged the image of "the good, sophisticated, and [...] physically cultivated citizen" by creating "a full-bosomed Chinese-style Venus, or a vivacious Asian Salomé" in his work (Fruehauf 1993, 138). Leo Lee puts it succinctly: "it was in fact the Salome figure – particularly as depicted by Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley – that became the center of attraction in a number of literary journals published by Shao [Xunmei] and other Chinese writers who shared a 'decadent' imagination" (Lee 1999, 254).

In Western scholarship on it, *Salomé* is considered as representing Wilde's "transgressive aesthetic in its ability to destabilize the audience's ideals of gender, desire, and power" (Price 1996, 162). Richard Ellmann explains how *Salomé* has long excited the imaginations of European writers, artists, and musicians (Ellmann 1985, 77). Scholars such as Julia Brown (Brown 1997, 83) and Neil Sammells (Sammells 2000, 72) agree that *Salomé* exhibits a wide array of Western influences such as those of Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), and Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), to name but a few. In addition, Patricia Kellogg-Dennis mentions that "three female archetypes from biblical, classical, and Celtic culture inform Wilde's figure of Salome" (Kellogg-Dennis 1994, 227). How did Chinese writers redefine this character of multiple lineage who was so different from conventional Chinese characters? How did they transform a Jewish princess who wanted to kiss a prophet, but only after killing him? *Salomé* and Oscar Wilde were equivalent to aestheticism and decadence in the eyes of many readers. Very often, aestheticism was associated with neoromanticism in modern China. According to Shih Shu-mei, "Neoromanticism served as a discourse with which to criticize Chinese national character [...]. Neoromanticism benefited from both char-

acteristics by maintaining romanticism's mystical tendencies and tempering it with naturalism's rationality" (Shih 2001, 57). In 1936, Zheng Junli commented that from the May Fourth era there branched out two dominant literary and artistic trends: "romanticism" and "naturalism" (Zheng 1989, 35). These two trends converge in *Salomé*, which was appropriated in the search for a new cultural identity and gender. The play was an unconventional discourse that exemplified a radical personality that was deemed to be suitable for China.

The affinity between this play and certain Chinese works lies not just in characterization, but also in the choice of stylistic devices. Wilde greatly influenced Chinese dramatists, and in relation to *Salomé* I shall discuss poems, short stories, and a collection of love letters that give evidence of his effect on various Chinese genres. The Chinese stories were all set in cities that foregrounded the individual's search for freedom and love. Given the context, we can consider these stories as works of urban fiction. The authors were all educated, foreign-trained and known for their aesthetic inclinations. Shih defines urban fiction as any work about the decadence and Western-ness of a city, especially Shanghai, which was then a foreign concession (Shih 2001, 265). The influence of *Salomé* amidst the city context could have been of interest to its playwright because "for Wilde, the city is the center of value" (Paglia 1991, 566).

Although Salomé's beauty, passion, and rebellious character are imitated in these stories, she is redefined with a positive and rational attitude that reflects a deeper concern for the role of intellectuals. What is worth noting is the multifarious approaches in these works that help to reflect the writers' own personal, literary, and philosophical concerns. Of particular interest is the transformation of this decadent femme fatale into a zealous and visionary heroine with the ability to open up territory for newly enlightened youths in China. This transformation has to do with the aforementioned sense of duty inherent in the hearts of the intellectuals. It was not only fueled by the desire to directly borrow material, but also by the desire to affect a change in cultural consciousness in terms of the search for one's role and the striving for freedom, especially for women. An intellectual and bourgeoisie overtone is apparent in these stories, and it is connected to the underlying urban discourse. What should also be noted is the clash of the modern and the traditional, romance and reality, and desire and suppression.

Guo Morou (1892-1978), who was one of the literary giants in modern China, was inspired by *Salomé* and wrote several of his early plays by assimilating its patterns and themes. His anthology of poems entitled *Goddess* was published in 1921 and became one of the masterpieces of Chinese literature. His "Misanthrope's Night Song", was printed as an introduction to Tian Han's (1898-1968) translation of *Salomé* in 1921, which was staged in 1929. Yang Cunren pointed out in 1936 in a treatise on drama that "the play of aestheticism", *Salomé*, made a great stir all over Shanghai (Yang 1989, 21). Indeed, Guo Morou's poem was included in his *Goddess* with a dedication "to *Salomé*'s writer and Shouchang [Tian Han]". The reprinting and the addition of the dedication in a book that promoted new thinking in a new China surely reflected Guo Morou's

admiration of Wilde. The poem also revealed something of the psychology of his early literary career (Ding 1984, 89).

This short poem contains two stanzas. In the first stanza the persona is alone, wearing a white peacock robe and gazing at the boundless horizon. He expresses his aspiration for the future in the second stanza by exclaiming: "Advance! [...] Advance! / Don't disappoint the bright moon that is in front of me" ("Misanthrope's Night Song" 67). It is interesting to note that by having the character wear the peacock robe, Guo Morou identifies with the tradition-defying Salomé. As did others who wrote after Wilde, Guo Morou assimilated Salomé in both male and female characters. This kind of borrowing is not so much a surface copy as an intellectual inspiration. The lonesomeness also reinforces Guo Morou's determination to go into the unknown. He makes use of white, ivory, and silver to show the beauty of the night sky and the immense universe, which reflects his energy, hope in the new era, and passionate pursuit of infinity. This poem is a first example that shows the Chinese transformation of the heroine into a positive and promising model for a new country. In another of Guo's poems in *Goddess*, "The Temptation of Death" (1921), a dagger that is personified as a woman invites the persona to cast off worries by kissing her. The death-kiss again shows the inspiration of Wilde. These two poems may not be the most popular of the poet's corpus, but they clearly register his personal revision of Salomé and aspiration for himself and China.

Tien Gu (1901-1941) studied art in China, Japan, and Germany, and was known as one of the young and romantic writers whose work reflected strong aesthetic and sentimental elements. A landmark in his literary career was in 1927 when he published a systematic study of aestheticism in the West that covered major poets from John Keats (1795-1821) to the Pre-Raphaelites and Wilde. In one critic's words, "Teng Gu's contribution to May Fourth [modern] decadent literature was emotionally more powerful and aesthetically more sophisticated" (Shih 2001, 125). Teng Gu was interested in exploring psychological reactions and change in his characters. In his short story, "The Resurrection of the Statue", (1922) a man studies theology in Japan and leads an ascetic life. Having visited an art gallery, he becomes obsessed with the beauty of a marble statue. He buys a portrait of it, puts it in his bedroom and gazes fixedly at it all night long. He praises its beauty by quoting the Song of Songs from the Bible. Examples are: "your eyes behind your veil are doves. / Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead. / Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing" (Song of Songs 4,1-2). In Wilde's play, when she sees Jokanaan for the first time, Salomé thinks that he "is like a thin ivory statue" and "his flesh must be cool like ivory" (*Salomé*, 326). She also praises his body with the elaborate imagery from the Song of Songs. Tien Gu's character continues to recite the Song of Songs before the statue, especially Chapters 4 and 7 ("The Resurrection of the Statue", 72). Both he and Wilde's Salomé vocally express their interest in physical beauty. Moreover, Tien Gu's character resembles the Jewish princess in the extremity of his emotions. Salomé says that "the moon is cold and chaste [...] She has never abandoned herself to men" (*Salomé*,

323). Salomé is also "cold and chaste", rejecting all of the men who desire her, yet she risks herself just to have the man she desires killed. Similarly, Tien Gu's theology student is "cold and chaste", and rejects any pleasures in life, but when he falls in love with the statue his world crumbles. He goes from one extreme to another. Like Salomé, he pays for the cause that he fatally desires. What is interesting is that the man can be seen as a reversal of John the Baptist (Jokanaan), who in Wilde's play remains pure and faithful to God and does not pay attention to Salomé's request and desire.

The man is later interested in a beautiful Japanese girl who cannot speak. Unable to communicate with her, he transfers all of his affection to the statue that has already held his fancy. He embraces and kisses the portrait of the statue as if it were the Japanese girl. In Wilde's play, Salomé has Jokanaan's head cut off so that she can kiss his lips. She declares triumphantly at the end: "I have kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan" (*Salomé,* 348). In a dream, the student's statue comes alive nude. When he is about to embrace her, she is broken to pieces. "Like Dorian Gray, she [Salomé] kisses her own portrait", writes Camille Paglia (Paglia 1991, 563). Destruction, selfishness, and passion in both cases are summed up in the one touch – a kiss. The interest in the statue and then the Japanese girl is ironic because both of them cannot speak. One time, Tien Gu's character sees a beautiful mannequin in a department store. He breaks the window with the hope of delivering her from the glass prison. He gets caught and is finally admitted to a lunatic asylum. As the statue in his dream and the mannequin are shattered, so is his mental health. Here is a young man whose puritanical way of life is challenged by sheer physical beauty. What Paglia writes of Salomé is also applicable to the harmful imaginary passion of the student: "Salomé creates a Decadent work of art: the severed head is male destiny sculpted by the female will" (Paglia 1991, 563). Anne Varty remarks similarly, "The ultimate form of duologue within the play is the dialogue between self and soul, between lover and beloved, between Salome and her mirror, Jokanaan" (Varty 1998, 148). Salomé and Jokanaan indeed can be seen as Janus having two faces that gaze at opposite directions – flesh and spirit, individualistic desire and heavenward aspiration. In a similar vein, Tien Gu's student and the statue he fancies reflect a battle between superego and id. Herod, often seen as an authoritative, paternal and patriarchal power, commands the princess to be killed after observing her monstrous kiss: "Kill that woman" (*Salomé,* 348). As Salomé pays with her own life, so the student is doomed by his own imagination. That he is arrested and then imprisoned for the rest of his life reflects the social and communal judgement for his unbridled lust. The explosion of his repressed passion runs its full course, and his sanity is finally ruined. On the part of the author, writing about this kind of passion was exotic and sensual. Though the imagery, passion, obsession, and fanciful kiss are clear borrowings from *Salomé*, intellectual consciousness prevails. The character's passion and sensual imagination are finally condemned by society. The rational solution at the end points out that obsession is unhealthy and costly, and this reflects Tien Gu's deeper concern for sanity in the real world.

Known for the poetic and aesthetic feel in writings, Lin Weiyin (1899-1982) showed his appreciation and sensitivity for romance and imagination even in the complexity of city life. He believed in art for art's sake and his works manifested sentimental elements and themes. In his short story "White Rose" (1929), a man named Yimin is in love with two women, his wife Lanruo and a friend, Zhiqian, who is described as a bold city girl who travels all of the time. Even though he is married Yimin keeps thinking about Zhiqian, who gives him a few of her pictures and a white rose, which he keeps in his house. Of special interest to readers is the episode in which the two watch the movie *Salomé* (1922). Leo Lee remarks, "The early movie theater in Shanghai was itself a communal setting in which the spectators celebrated the wonders of their shared public space, *the city* [my emphasis] [...]. Moviegoing had become part and parcel of the modern way of life in the metropolis" (Lee 1999, 118). In those days, going to the theatre or the movies was for the rich and intellectual. "Modern-ness" and "metropolis" are again the defining factors in this activity for the educated. Zhiqian expresses how much she longs to see *Salomé* performed after having read the play some time ago. Yimin explains to Zhiqian the career of Nazimova (1879-1945), the successful Russian actress who played the title role in *Salomé*. Such knowledge reflects the fascination of the author with this unusual actress.

As Zhiqian is watching the movie, her heart is stirred by Salomé. She admires Salomé who disregards everything to love, and finally sacrifices the life of Jokanaan to kiss him. For Zhiqian, Salomé's most impressive line is "the mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death" (*Salomé,* 347). She deeply admires Salomé's iron will and fearless spirit. As she reflects on her relationship with Yimin, she thinks: "O great Salomé, I worship at your feet. Indeed, 'the mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death!' It is not natural of me to behave like this. I shouldn't be like this. I need to let things take their own course" ("White Rose" 369). Being an educated career woman, Zhiqian has her romantic desire restrained by rationality. Though she tries to be reasonable, she finally kisses Yimin passionately ("White Rose" 372). Yimin's wife has long sensed that there is something between them and leaves her husband when she sees the two together. Having torn her own pictures and the white rose to pieces, Zhiqian also decides to leave Yimin for good. At the end, Zhiqian is with a man who has loved her for a long time while Yimin dwells in emptiness and loneliness and wallows in self-pity. The influence of Wilde is seen in the direct reference to *Salomé* and not in any similarity of theme and plot. What is worth noting is the more rational stance that is taken by the two women than that which is taken by Yimin. Both feel that it is torturing to love the same man, and thus take the initiative to break up with him. The female characters are presented as being brave, passionate, sensuous, and willing to find a better future for themselves. The author clearly shows his own interest in *Salomé*, yet lends his characters a spirit that is befitting new woman who are daring and independent. The resemblance between the two women and Salomé lies in the firmness of following up on their own decisions.

Shanghai was a metropolis in those days, and a favorite place in the literary imagination of many authors. Zhang Kebiao (b. 1900), a writer whose work also reflected

an aesthetic tendency, was no exception. His story "The Mirage" (1930) takes place in Shanghai, and there is a lengthy description of a lavishly decorated casino in which there are rooms for dancing, bathing, and even opium smoking. The decadent context is obvious. The protagonist, Zhuang Boguang, goes to the casino and meets a beautiful dancer who looks like his past lover. She tells him that they are in the palace of pleasure, a place that exists before the birth of Jesus Christ and is a section of Eden ("The Mirage" 421). In his study of Shanghai, Leo Lee mentions that the names of two of the city's famous ballrooms when transliterated meant "fairy land of pleasures" and "gate to a hundred pleasures" (Lee 1999, 23). Zhang Kebiao would have been familiar with these two places. There is also an elaborate description of the woman's beautiful body as the protagonist Zhuang watches her dance before him. She is scantily dressed and her dance resembles that of Salomé. Both women dance with naked feet and mesmerize the onlookers. Wilde writes, "Slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils, and take off the sandals of Salomé" (*Salomé* 340). There is not much interaction between characters or any exploration of their psychology, but the story reveals the decadent and exotic lifestyle of the rich in modern China. Aesthetic tendency, sensuality, and exoticism were interconnected, and it was the bourgeoisie who could afford to be exposed to these things. As already seen in the words of Shih Shu-mei, decadence is often associated with a city context.

At the casino, Zhuang is a little drunk and cannot distinguish between reality and his imagination. He later falls into subconsciousness and is taken back to his house. When he inquires about the casino, nobody has ever heard of it and it is nowhere to be found. Hence, Zhuang resolves to think that the dancing woman exists in his mind. Wilde's influence, though superficial in this story, is obvious. The borrowing is like an inspiration rather than a surface imitation. Heinrich Fruehauf explains that "typically the modernist short story's most common protagonist is thus the male seeker of romance who has yet to come to terms with the rapidly unfolding urban jungle outside" (Fruehauf 1993, 152). The entire story is therefore the author's own fantasy. It also exemplifies "Western exoticism in modern Chinese literature" (Fruehauf 1993, 134). The story can be regarded as an example of urban literature displaying an urban myth. Traces of Salomé further enlarge the urban myth and reinforce the mystic and decadent feel of a city seen through the eyes of a writer. Historical reality and fantasy (as represented by the dancing girl and the ballroom) are interwoven to further exoticize and marginalize Salomé, who is seen as only a dream woman of sensual pleasure. In the words of Leo Lee, "the allure of female flesh as commodity" in a commercial city is often emphasized (Lee 1999, 26). Some cities in modern China were foreign concessions. In this sense, the woman and the city share the same symbolism – they are both colonized and subdued by a foreign power that is often rendered as a patriarchal representation.

Bai Wei (1894-1987) lived the life of a new woman. She left her family to pursue her studies and her love. According to Zhou Xiaoyi, "Bai Wei even wrote drama and poetry in open imitation of the Wildean style" (Zhou 2000, 96). In her dramas, women take the initiative to deliver themselves from cultural and conventional bondage.

However, only in her personal letters can readers understand how she internalized Salomé. The letters that she and Yang Sao (1900-1957) wrote to one another between 1924 and 1932 were compiled as short pieces of prose and entitled *Last Night*. The book was thus named because their love was over and it could be seen as a nightmare of last night (Yang Sao 1995, 3). Raoul David Findeisen notes that the love-letter was an important genre in modern China. The first section of the book contains Bai Wei's letters, and the second section contains those of Yang Sao. Bai Wei wrote fearlessly and openly about her love for Yang Sao. In a letter in 1924, she stated, "I am Salomé, I am more murderous than Salomé [...]. But I must kiss you. Isn't kissing you the same as killing you?" (*Last Night*, 20). Though being rejected and scorned by Jokanaan, Salomé determines to kiss him by exclaiming repetitively this statement, "I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan; I will kiss thy mouth" (*Salomé*, 328-9). In several of her letters in the same year, Bai Wei mentioned how she desired just one thing – to kiss Yang Sao. Her desire was definitely inspired by Salomé's. After the kiss, all of her love, beauty, and pleasure would be turned to ashes (*Last Night*, 24). She was willing to die if she was given the one and only chance to kiss her love (*Last Night*, 29). All of these references are clearly borrowings from Salomé, who wills to kiss Jokanaan and pays with her life immediately after she has done so. To Bai Wei, Yang Sao was like a beautiful spirit who was afraid to fall in love. When she was sick and coughed blood, she wrote, "I am not sure if life to you is like an ocean of blood or if you are the John of my desire" (*Last Night*, 43). The analogy is obvious in her outcry: John/Yang Sao was to Bai Wei what Jokanaan is to Salomé. As Bai Wei felt that she might die soon, she wanted to declare her undisguised love: "I desire more and more of Salomé's murder [...]. I am above the murderous Salomé in my desire [...]. I take greater pains than she to do just that" (*Last Night*, 44). What is interesting (and sad) is that Yang Sao, as reflected in his letters, did not react to the characterization in *Salomé*, but merely felt that he was not worthy of being loved by a great writer. In her day, Bai Wei was already recognized as an extraordinary and revolutionary personality defying traditions and boundaries. Her identification with Salomé as shown in her letters reflects the extent of influence and emotionalism in her life.

In the stories that have been discussed, there is no hint that the woman is a femme fatale, despite the influence from Wilde. The indebtedness is more a kind of inspiration than a blind imitation. Joseph Donohue explains that "however perverse Salome's desire for Jokanaan's head may be, the immutable strength of that desire itself – so great that it overcomes all the world and life itself – is, fundamentally, what the play is about" (Donohue 1997, 131). Likewise, the Chinese intellectuals of the era understood the fatal physical desires and the meaning and consequence of ultimate defiance in Salomé, but they also saw her invincibility, which in turn was thought to be helpful in achieving breakthroughs in a traditional society. Even though the writers are considered as aesthetic and decadent practitioners, their works do not negate the importance of the role of the educated and thinking young people. Human passion is restrained and gives way to an intellectual articulation. All of the writers seem to adopt

the proverbial wisdom that sheer physical desire and passion is only rottenness to the bone. This type of romanticism, albeit fascinating, is illusory. Though the characters in the Chinese stories are highly educated, they cannot completely fight emotional excess. Education can only help so much. A higher director is needed so that the characters realize that they are only mortal.

Salomé is an apt example of Oriental and Occidental concepts of woman. Doubtless she is sensuous and beautiful, but she is also radical enough to go beyond any moral, emotional, or gendered boundary. She is male and female, the victor and the victim, the mysterious and the materialistic. Though she is the center of attention and the focus of the male gaze and desire, she is on the periphery that overlooks the debates of the Nazarenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, and immorality in the court. It is all of these contrasting qualities that make her stand out among other Wildean characters and other literary figures in the West. The stories that are described above reflect a China in transition, and Salomé is a fitting character in such a context. Her "dance is a watershed between the Old and the New Testaments, between the reign of Judaism and the coming Christianity. Dancing on her hands is a visually succinct way of representing the overturning of the old" (Varty 1998, 137). Amazingly, Zhang Kebiao's dancing girl seems to echo Varty's words when she says that the palace of pleasure is found before the Messiah's birth and is a part of Eden. In a way, the palace is the crossroads between primitive desires and rational awakening. *Salomé* matched the emotional, romantic, and intellectual desires of the era, and its influence propelled the rise of a sentimental trend in modern Chinese writings that carried themes of love, passion, and death. The universality in *Salomé* facilitated Chinese reading and rewriting, and a multinational and broad-based reconstruction that brought together different cultural elements with a city touch. The Chinese intellectuals refashioned this complex woman into a non-conforming spokeswoman who reacted against traditions and mores. Indeed, their high regard for this play was a fair judgment because Wilde created his Salomé out of different concepts and sources, as it is aptly put, "Wilde's achievement as a cosmopolitan artist is no doubt most evident in *Salomé*" (Brown 1997, 83). The Chinese literary revision of *Salomé* was both old and new. It was *old* in the sense that the Chinese authors shared ideas and understanding with critics in the West, as shown in their commentaries and critical essays. However, it was also *new* because the Chinese refashionings were fueled by an ideology that was closely linked to the cultural context of modern China.

Note

1 All translations are the author's unless otherwise stated.

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Displacements

'Romantic Ireland's Dead and Gone': Peter Carey's True History of the Kelly Gang

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Abstract: *Peter Carey's prize-winning novel,* True History of the Kelly Gang *(2000), takes as its subject a popular figure from Australian history, the bushranger Ned Kelly. Written in a style reminiscent of Kelly's own, Carey sets out to present the major stages in the bushranger's life and interpret his character and motivation. Over the years many people have seen his exploits as heroic, stemming from his Irish origins. Carey interrogates this belief and concludes that Ned was more Australian than Irish.*

When space was assigned for the Irish diaspora in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Ireland*, an automatic choice from Australia was the life of Edward, better known as Ned, Kelly. Admittedly, the editor's requirements under the heading of 'occupation' proved somewhat hard to meet, but in the end 'bushranger and icon of Irish Australia' seemed to fill the bill. Ned was Australian born – in 1854 near the recently established city of Melbourne – but his parents were Irish, his father an ex-convict from Tipperary and his mother from the northern town of Ballymena. It has become a widely held view that his Irish origins determined how his life would be lived, and interpreted. In the eyes of the conventionally respectable – Anglo-Australian Protestants in particular – he was destined to be no better than a criminal thug, but for many Irish Australians his daring exploits made him a hero in the mould of Irish heroes of earlier times. Yet this young man, the leader of what became known as 'the Kelly Outbreak' has long remained an enigma. This is the impression conveyed in the Sidney Nolan series of paintings on Ned Kelly which was the stimulus for Peter Carey to begin a novel on a subject which had fascinated him for many years. Carey was taking on the story of a character whose life in its broad outlines was already known, at least to Australians, but the motivations for his actions as well as his current significance remained subject to debate. The novel's epigraph from William Faulkner, 'The past is not dead. It is not even past', belies any

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suggestion that this is history. While Carey did not deny Irish influences in Kelly's life, he rejected the notion that the outlaw's career could be interpreted within an Irish heroic and romantic mould, preferring instead an Australian reading of the life.

First, to provide a context for the novel, some details of Ned Kelly's life. His early years were spent in small communities just to the north of Melbourne, but at the age of twelve, his mother, by this stage a widow with a large family, moved to the north east of the colony of Victoria. This was a mountainous district where poor, mostly Irish, settlers engaged in eking out a meagre living were regularly suspected by the police of cattle and horse theft as well as other petty crimes. The Kelly family came under constant police harassment, and in 1871, Ned was sentenced to three years imprisonment for a crime he did not commit. On his release, he and other family members were routinely suspected of criminal activity, and after an incident at their farm his mother and brother were jailed for shooting at a policeman. Ned, brother Dan and some friends took to the nearby mountain ranges where on 25 October 1878 at Stringybark Creek they surprised several police pursuers, three of whom were killed. Subsequently Kelly and his gang were proclaimed by the government as outlaws, but despite a price on their heads and a massive police manhunt, they evaded capture. They robbed banks, spending the proceeds in communities that protected them, and roamed freely for nearly two years. In June 1880 they attempted a spectacular assault on a police train at the settlement of Glenrowan, but this was foiled, and several of the gang were killed. Ned was captured, brought to Melbourne, tried and hanged in November 1880, aged twenty-five.[1]

Even before his capture, ballads were in circulation which sympathetically portrayed his achievements. In 1879 a broadsheet of four Kelly songs appeared in Hobart, Tasmania, one of which began:

> Oh, Paddy dear, and did you hear the news that's going round,
> On the head of bold Ned Kelly they've placed two thousand pounds.
> For Dan, Steve Hart, and Byrne, two thousand each they'll give,
> But if the sum were double, sure the Kelly boys will live.
>
> Tis sad to think such plucky hearts in crime should be employed,
> But with great persecution they've all been much annoyed,
> Revenge is sweet, but in the bush they can defy the law,
> Such stickings up and plunderings Colonials never saw. (Butterss 1995, 153)

The Irishness of the discourse is immediately evident through the adoption of the opening line of the famous protest song, 'The Wearing of the Green', followed by expressions of tacit community sympathy for the outlaws. The references to 'plucky', 'persecution', 'revenge', 'defy', 'stickings up and plunderings' endorse sentiments of Irish defiance, and the ballad goes on to recount in an heroic manner two bank robberies with the gang members admired for their audacity and gallantry.

Later ballads strongly identified the Kelly gang with the Irish Australian bushranging tradition where an individual's defiance of British authorities was celebrated along with his refusal to accept a subservient role in this emerging society. Moreover, in the early twentieth century a popular and influential book, *The Complete Inner History of the Kelly Gang*, placed Ned firmly in an Irish republican tradition. Persecution by the police and 'British' miscarriages of justice were foregrounded and stridently condemned. The narrative was sprinkled with terms recognisably Irish: Ned was 'a gallant outlaw' (Kenneally 1929, 49) engaged in 'an active campaign' (124) with the authorities; the attack at Stringybark Creek was termed a 'battle' (49); police patrols of neighbourhoods were an 'invasion' (112), an informer was 'executed'. (125) Through such readings Ned Kelly's life gradually evolved into that of an Irish (or Irish-Australian) heroic figure.

Remarkably, Ned wrote his own apologia, now referred to as 'the Jerilderie letter' since it was in the village of that name that he left a fifty-six page manuscript for a local newspaper editor.[2] In it, he complained to the general public of no justice in English laws, hinted at giving his 'people' freedom from suffering by 'some colonial stratagem' – often interpreted as implying a form of regional independence – and railed against the mistreatment of Irish political prisoners both at home and in Australia. This manuscript was chosen by Peter Carey as the model for the style in his novel. He set out to replicate the Kelly voice with its intensity of feeling, expressed in sentences of unpolished grammar and inadequate punctuation, the result being a first person narrative which takes some getting used to, yet is justly described by one reviewer as 'glorious, raw poetry'. (Summerscale) He also wanted to give his 'manuscript' the appearance of authenticity – this was a 'true history' after all – so the narrative was arranged into a series of parcels, each one headed with the sort of bibliographical commentary one would expect from the genuine article.

The life story largely follows the biographical facts, and all the spectacular events are here: the attack on police at Stringybark Creek, the bank robberies, the final confrontation at Glenrowan. However, it is evident early on that Carey is departing from the 'Jerilderie Letter' and popular interpretations of the life in regard to the influences that shaped Ned Kelly. Unexpectedly, in the second sentence we learn that his manuscript is composed not for the colonial authorities or general public but for a daughter, a fictional character. Born in America after her mother escaped from Victoria, her presence as putative audience allows unanticipated situations to emerge. Feminine intrusions on a bushranger's life must be dealt with. Her mother, an Irish girl called Mary Hearn, is introduced, and Ned cannot help dwelling on how he fell in love with this feisty yet vulnerable girl. He quickly thought of marrying, and dreamed 'what a peaceful life a man might have'. (Carey 2000, 234) He may be coy about giving too much detail of their first sexual encounter and restrained about indulging in their growing affection for each other. Young daughters should only be privy to so much about their parents. But a fatherly concern which surfaces from time to time certainly sets Carey's Ned apart from conventional presentations.

His sensitive disposition is also evident elsewhere. Mary already had a child by another man, a frequently sick boy, and it is Ned in the midst of avoiding police pursuers who takes time to attend to him. He knows how to bring down a fever because he remembered his mother immersing her children in water, and his gentle description of this process sets him further apart from the tough bushranger image. (319) Moreover, while most accounts do mention the affection between son and mother, this is further developed as though Ned wanted to get across to his daughter a message of filial obligation. From the age of twelve, on the death of his father, he is passionately concerned for his mother's welfare, and becomes enraged when other men, lovers usually, lack consideration for her. He is even teased by manly types for treating her like a kind of girlfriend. Using a striking image, Ned himself is prepared to admit, 'I knew how deep I loved her; we was grown together like two branches of an old wisteria'. (219)

The actual audience for the book is of course the contemporary reader, and by giving Ned a feminine dimension Carey wants to move him away from the masculinist ethos of Irish Australian bushrangers. Traditionally, their world was evoked as one of male adventure. Admiration was expressed for their defiance of society's norms, their championing of a man's right to freedom, their resilience and ability to survive in the wilderness. Supposedly, there was no room in their lives for emotional attachments. They were never presented accompanied by a woman. This would imply an emasculation of their strength. If women did occasionally appear, they were likely to be casual encounters in dark corners away from public acknowledgment. In this novel, the typical bushranger is represented by Harry Power to whom Ned is briefly apprenticed, but what a contrast his untrammelled lifestyle is to that of Ned who has a pregnant wife and a sick child in tow. At a crucial time, Carey's Ned in fact has a predicament over two women: whether to escape Australia with Mary or stay and attempt to get his mother freed from jail.

A further way of distancing Ned from the popular image evolves from an incident early in the book. One day on his way to school, he saves a drowning boy from the river and in gratitude the boy's wealthy father presents him with a seven-foot sash, a rather garish object but full of significance for the recipient. After a cosy little ceremony in the village school, he stands before his classmates arrayed in the sash, and later recalled the glow from being accepted by the general community. No longer were his origins and religion a badge of difference: 'The Protestants of Avenel had seen the goodness in an Irish boy it were a mighty moment in my early life'. (34) He noted the conjunction of this episode with the exhibition of a dead bushranger in the neighbourhood, but surely Dan Morgan's banditry could have no relevance for his life. His future would be on the side of colonial 'goodness'; he was determined to follow a life respectable society would approve of. He would prove that the taint of Irishness was no barrier to decent Protestant endeavour.

Consequently, when his mother acquires a small holding of unimproved land, it is Ned who dreams of clearing the trees and making the land productive. With an attitude informed by the colonial positives of replacing wilderness with well-managed farms, he, while still a teenager, sets about the task. 'We will make a mighty farm here' he tells

a sceptical sister, and shares his mother's temporary 'romancing about all the fine cattle we soon should own'. (55) Interestingly, Ned boasted in the 'Jerilderie letter', 'I never worked on a farm', implying that a life of earnest toil were beneath him, but Carey's character is committed to a goal of agricultural prosperity. When he returns from a spell in jail or other absence, he immediately sets about felling large trees, fixing dilapidated fences and clearing weeds, and despite his family's lack of industry, he never gives up. With a most un-bushranger-like attitude, he even reminds others of his obligations under the law requiring smallholders to make their farms productive. Unlike Harry Power or Dan Morgan, he longs to be inside the pale.

But circumstances work against him. His Irishness *is* a badge of difference and try as he might, he cannot shake it off. He and his kind are harassed by the police and accused of minor offences, and when his mother is unjustly jailed, only then does he reluctantly accept that his lot is to rebel against such injustice and set her free. No grand romantic dream here, just the righting of a wrong. His feelings of outrage are further provoked by the high-handed tactics of large landholders towards the small settlers such as himself. During a period of drought, these landholders take financial advantage of their position over the less well-off by charging for the return of impounded stock that had strayed on to their land. Despite Ned's honest endeavour, hopes of betterment seem constantly thwarted, and no recourse to the law is feasible. What proves particular galling is that one of the landholders, James Whitty, started off no better than himself. He arrived in Australia an illiterate Irish peasant but schemed and worked his way into ownership of a large estate. Whitty had achieved the social acceptance that Ned aimed for and dreamed might be his. He seethes with rage on realising that it never will be.

Now that he has moved outside the pale and is publicly confirmed as an outlaw, the question of how he should react arises. As his brother and a few friends join him, there is talk of a 'gang' with its connotation of solidarity and of Irish-inspired opposition to the establishment. It is at this point that Ned is reminded of an incident from his childhood, again recounted early in the book. One day he was told that his father had been seen riding through the countryside attired in a dress. (13) A bizarre occurrence which he discovered to be true. Surely this was a sign of some abnormality, probably sexual deviance, certainly something to be ashamed of. Ned was too embarrassed ever to ask his father for an explanation. Now, years later, as he is joined in his mountain hideaway by friends, one, Steve Hart, arrives in a dress. Kelly reacts with a mixture of hostility and bewilderment. 'You think I'm a sissy but I ain't', Steve says, 'I'm a Lady Clare Boy'. (222) This enigmatic reference to the modus operandi of Irish protest movements of the previous hundred years is completely lost on Ned. Neither he, nor most readers, would know that a pattern of cross-dressing served the purpose of disguise and anonymity for individuals engaged in hostile, usually intimidatory, activities against neighbouring landowners. Steve Hart eagerly adopts an Irish format for what he sees emerging: attacks on the local gentry and the plundering of their cattle. He even offers to send a coffin letter to Whitty. (238) For him the notion of a gang terrorising the local

establishment in the Australian hills represents the continuation of the Irish struggle for freedom. He talks persuasively of Robert Emmett, Thomas Meagher and William Smith O'Brien, martyrs and heroes whom one day they might emulate. He even gives the gang a name, 'the Sons of Sieve', (303) presumably based on a mishearing of the Irish 'sidh', but with authorial irony on the prosaic 'sieve' (as in colander).

Ned Kelly however firmly rejects an Irish-inspired agenda. At this stage he is not about intimidating local landowners, but rather the more complicated task of getting his mother out of jail. He dislikes the notion of a gang, and as for Emmett, Meagher etc, well they belong to a different time and place. The aura surrounding them is merely romantic and they are no inspiration for a struggle in the Australian wilderness. One night when Steve Hart begin to sing 'some mournful song in the old language", Ned tells him to be quiet: 'we [will] write our own damned history from here on'. (279) However, the appeal of donning dresses and terrorising the local gentry remains for the hot-blooded Hart and Ned's brother Dan until Mary Hearn, the only Irish-born member of the group, arrives at their hideout and learns what is afoot. She then relates a story of what happened one night in Donegal when she was a child. It is a grim and chilling tale of terrorism on a local scale, and she asserts, what happened should never be the Australian way. A group of men, disguised in dresses, arrived at her father's smithy where they set about inflicting great cruelty on a landowner's thoroughbred horse, a justifiable act in their eyes, but to Mary a cowardly one, since they would not attack the owner. (312-7) At the conclusion of the tale, the horse-loving Kellys are outraged. Ned is so affected he cannot sleep and wanders down to a stream beside their hut. 'The story of the poor horse had laid a greasy pall upon me now the cold mountain stream were like a poultice drawing out all the ancient poisons I filled my hat with water pouring it across my head it smelt of earth and moss same as the flesh of a river trout.' (319) The 'ancient poisons' of Ireland were symbolically washed away and he was baptised in the cool, clear water of an Australian stream.

Rather than inflicting terror on the countryside, the gang devise a scheme of robbing banks, the proceeds of which go to rewarding those who protected them and buying future non-compliance with police troops. Mary hopes some of the funds will pay for escape to America, but she leaves alone, Ned still stubbornly committed to gaining his mother's freedom. He finally places his hopes in 'the colonial stratagem', luring a police train to the village of Glenrowan and creating such a disturbance that the government would have to accede to his demands. It seems a foolhardy tactic but the gang does not go unprepared. If an Irish disguise has been ruled out, the gang will have another form of protection, indeed a more pragmatic one. In a mountain hideout, Kelly stumbles upon a magazine report about the success of armour plating on ships in the American Civil War. (371) With that Australian ability to adapt an idea to new circumstances, he decides on fashioning a suit of armour for each of his men, the metal for which can readily be found in ploughshares scattered around the neighbourhood.

So, the scene is set for the final showdown between the Kelly gang and the government forces. As gang members await the train in a village pub surrounded by hostages-cum-revellers, a suggestion is made to have an impromptu concert. In an episode

full of irony, a schoolteacher, Thomas Curnow, who will later betray them, chooses for his contribution a speech from Shakespeare. It is the young king's address to his soldiers in *Henry V* on the night before the Battle of Agincourt, a rousing speech reminding his men that this, St Crispin's Day, will forever be remembered as a day of victory for England. As Curnow recites the lines, Ned senses the appropriateness of the sentiments; he notices the villagers looking 'reverently to those armour'd men. Them boys was noble of true Australian coin'. (389) They will be remembered, but ironically, unlike Henry's Englishmen, not in victory but in defeat. But they will be remembered, a foreshadowing of their legendary status in the Australian popular psyche and an authorial acknowledgement of that Australian penchant of celebrating defeat.

Despite being responsive to instances of injustice, a trait he had inherited, Peter Carey's Ned Kelly is no Irish freedom fighter. As Mary sharply points out, he is a 'colonial' (311), and he espouses colonial values, not just in the way he responds to adverse circumstances, but in more complex ways. He is, at least in embryonic form, a family man with thoughts of caring for wife and child, and in his desire to tame the land and make it productive he evinces an attitude of mind far removed from that of the romantic rebel hero. Decent toil and a white picket fence are his goals; it is almost suburban. After Stringybark Creek when his hopes were irretrievably dashed, he reflected sadly, 'I had wanted no more than a home, a hearth to sit by, [...] but [I] knew that dream were gone to smash'. (278) It was a dream more recognisable to Australians past – and present – than taking on the 'British' establishment out of sense of Irish patriotism transferred to the antipodes. That the dream 'were gone to smash' in the cause of righting a wrong would also have resonance for Australians with their abiding sense of fair play. Certainly Carey's Ned Kelly is a fascinating figure, and his creation likely to stimulate renewed interest in his life and influences.[3]

Notes

1 The most comprehensive recent biography is that by Ian Jones, *Ned Kelly: A Short Life* (1995) Melbourne: Lothian.

2 Despite Kelly's hope that the document would be published, it fell instead into police hands. A copy was made and this eventually found its way into print, in a Melbourne newspaper in 1930. The original was donated anonymously to the State Library of Victoria in 2000, and is accessible on the following website: www.slv.vic.gov.au For published version, see under McDermott in Bibliography.

3 Carey's winning of the Booker prize for this novel in 2001 greatly increased its readership, especially in the UK and Ireland where it was top of the bestsellers' list for weeks. A new film of the Kelly story is currently in production.

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Imagery and Arguments Pertaining to the Issue of Free Immigration in the Anglo-Irish Press in Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract: *This paper will examine the early relationship between a mid – to late nineteenth century Anglo-Irish newspaper, 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times' (1865-1884), and the political élites of the Brazilian Second Empire (1840-1889). The argumentation departs from the hypothesis that Great Britain, from around 1865 onwards, had devised a plan whereby Brazil would be persuaded into abolishing slavery through the liberalization of her immigration policy. This way, the massive introduction of Europeans into the country would render slavery obsolete. The activities of the editor and proprietor of that newspaper, the Irish-born journalist William Scully, look consistent with that course of action and seem to have relied at least partially on the financial support of the British Government. This strategy was short-lived and seems to have generated a serious political crisis in Brazil, which would have accounted for the failure of an English-speaking colony that was established on the margins of the Itajahy-Mirim river valley, in 1867, in the southern Brazilian province of Santa Catarina. That colony was partially occupied by Irish settlers introduced in Brazil in connection with Scully.*

Although this has been largely unacknowledged, Irish immigration, along with free immigration, was regarded in Brazil, at a certain point in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, as a component of a policy designed to people the country in such a way that the process leading up to the abolition of slavery would be accelerated. It did not become effective, though, having been successfully opposed by those who believed that the country had to avert the prospect of a great social and economic upheaval, that might ensue should slavery be abolished too quickly.

Even in the 1860's, Brazilian exports (mostly coffee) depended nearly entirely on the use of slaves and most policy makers feared that the sudden adoption of a legislation that imposed a final ban on that practice might disrupt the domestic economic life. Yet the importation of enslaved African workforce had already been prohibited in

* M. A. (*Brazil*).

1850. Thenceforwards, an internal Emancipationist movement had grown, even though it did not present itself as a real threat to the slavery system. When major hostilities between Brazil and Paraguay broke out in late 1864, however, large quantities of Afro-Brazilian workers were increasingly drawn to the front line. Plantations were thereby depleted of manpower, to a certain extent, and this reinforced the conviction that the days of slavery were numbered.[1]

Together with other schemes, free European immigration was thought of, then, as a solution for the now permanent labour shortage. Irish immigration, in particular, was hailed by Catholics as one of the best options, but appears to have been identified with a cunning British colonialist manoeuvre and was therefore rejected by the Brazilian ruling élites. This paper is an attempt at understanding how the Irish-born journalist William Scully, seemingly the principal advocate of Irish immigration in Brazil at that moment, interacted with the Brazilian Imperial society and came very close to actually establishing a potentially steady inflow of Irish colonists and free labourers into Brazil, starting in 1865/6.

Between 1865 and 1884, William Scully resided in Rio de Janeiro, then capital of the Brazilian Empire.[2] During that entire period he published a newspaper, 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' which appears to have been partially sponsored by the British Government. The enterprise seems to have been connected with previous iniciatives, diplomatic and military, carried out by Britain in order to obtain from Brazil a commitment to end slavery.[3]

The goal of complete Abolition in Brazil was accomplished only on May 13, 1888. Long before the question was settled, Brazilian policy makers, businessmen and intellectuals engaged in a domestic debate about the alternatives to a national economy nearly entirely sustained by slave labour. During the 1860's, as free immigration emerged as a potentially viable solution, foreign interests, along with Liberal politicians in Brazil, supported the idea of a massive introduction of white European free workers into the country, so as to render slavery obsolete.

That strategy is evident in an article published on February 2, 1866, by William Scully: '[...] the prosperity of Brazil depends on the development of free labour and on the influx of foreign hands and capital. The supersedure of slave labour requires abundance of free labour or a current of spontaneous immigration.' Amongst the prominent Brazilian politicians aligned with that current of thought was Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos, who, under the pseudonym "The Solitary," was the author of a series of letters later compiled in an influential book, "Cartas do Solitário."[4]

Such course of action seemed to offer good prospects for Irish emigrants, who sought desperately for escape from the economic and demographic pressures engendered by the years of the Famine, between 1845 and 1849.[5] Plans to either help them settle in colonies on Brazilian territory or afford them free access to employment or land acquisition, however, were not successful, since Brazil may have perceived the establishment of Irish colonizers in her territory as a national security breach. Understandably, they were treated as British subjects and, at that juncture (1865/70),

probably considered suspicious of being part of a bigger scheme designed to underpin or (depending on the point of view) restore British pre-eminence in Brazil. This contention, despite the clear participation of William Scully in an unsuccesful attempt at promoting the settlement of Irish families in southern Brazil, involves some degree of conjecturing, since the main evidence, diplomatic and other, is lacking.

Irish emigration to the United States played a significant role in North American demography and nation-building. Estimates suggest that around 7 million Irish immigrants settled in U.S. territory between the seventeenth century and the early 1900´s. The cultural and economic influence exerted by the Irish and their descendents upon the development of that country could be attested, among innumerable other evidences, by the 1997 White House Proclamation establishing March of that year as the Irish-American Heritage Month.

In South America, economic growth and demographics in Argentina, especially, also benefited greatly from an inflow of Irish families during the nineteenth century.[6] On the other hand, in the first quarter of that century Irish military had a measurable importance in the establishment of some of the Spanish American republics and were instrumental, as well, in helping Brazilians, in 1822, secure their independence from Portugal.[7] At that time Britain tried to persuade Brazil into abolishing slavery, already, but she was contented with securing a set of commercial privileges in exchange for the recognition of Brazilian sovereignty.[8]

The first problem to be tackled in respect to the complete abolition of slavery in Brazil regarded the Atlantic slave traffic, which was notoriously lucrative for the Brazilian and Portuguese merchant companies involved therein. In 1826, Great Britain and Brazil had come to a major settlement designed to stop the slave trade, but the latter, after successive negotiations and the domestic 1831 Law, that actually imposed a curb on the introduction of enslaved Africans into the country, failed to comply with her obligations.

This led to diplomatic conflict with the British government and legislation was passed in Parliament in 1845 (the Aberdeen Act) that unilaterally bolstered British military action against vessels engaged in the Atlantic slave trade. Finally, effective legal measures were taken by Brazilian authorities to stop it, in 1850. From 1853 onwards the traffic had completely ceased.[9]

Nevertheless, Great Britain still demanded that Brazil, among other things, comply with specific clauses of the past agreements, regarding slaves illegally imported after 1830. A Minister Plenipotentiary, William Dougall Christie, was designated to settle those matters.[10]

Christie's heavy-handed Palmerstonian, aristocratic style of diplomatic action led to a controversy over affairs that Brazilians deemed internal and affecting the nation's sovereignty. Eventually, minor incidents precipitated a serious confrontation, in 1862/63, with the British minister ordering a naval blockade that resulted in the seizure of five Brazilian ships outside the Rio de Janeiro harbour. In its wake, this crisis brought about the severance of bilateral relations between Brazil and Great Britain.[11]

Thus, in the early to mid-1860´s, the next move for British foreign policy, as regarded slavery in Brazil, seems to have involved a reorientation towards encouraging Emancipation, by means other than pure gun-boat diplomacy. Thenceforth, it would try to avoid meddling into Brazilian internal affairs, which carried with it the risk of jeopardizing existing and prospective British investments in railroads, public utilities, mining, commerce, shipping, and other businesses, in Brazil.

Since the Brazilian domestic slave labour force was effectively tending to dwindle, owing to the absence of fresh supplies from Africa, a potential interest in supporting journalistic activity designed to disseminate Liberal doctrines among Brazilian intellectuals and policy makers may have developed in Britain by the prospects of boosting, in a business-like fashion, the substitution of Africans in Brazil by European free labourers. This would be especially true if the workers were Irish –given the demographic and political problems Ireland presented to Britain in the 1860's.

Such a niche of capitalist activity would have perfectly suited authentically mid – to late nineteenth century modernizing and enterprising British Liberal (as opposed to Tory) immigration agents, for whom journalism would have looked like a tool for them to achieve goals that, apart from individual satisfaction, might prove strategically important, from an institutional standpoint. Actual newspapermanship would thus be combined with political and ideological propaganda, in an effort to influence the hammering-out of public policies, in Brazil, designed to end slavery and pave the way for demographic growth and economic development.

Technical novelties such as the telegraph and steamers enhanced the material conditions that made those objectives seem feasible, and desirable in the short term. William Scully's articles about those matters, in 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' dating from 1865 to 1870, look entirely consistent with this interpretation.

According to estimates presented by Leslie Bethell, 371,615 slaves were smuggled into Brazil between 1840 and 1851, in anticipation of the end of the traffic.[12] This circumstance greatly magnified already existing fears that the domestic white population might be decivilized or engulfed by the hosts of Africans newly reduced to slavery.

Bethell quotes a Brazilian journalist, Evaristo da Veiga, who, as early as 1834, argued that "[...] 'our country is inundated without measure by a rude and stupid race, the number of whom [...] ought to alarm us'."[13] Brazilian Liberals, in particular, embraced the idea that this should be countered by the introduction of white labourers, and their families, from Europe, so as to make viable the constitution of a so perceived better national "race," identified with the ideals of progress and civilization.[14]

International diplomatic, demographic and ideological pressures for greater political openness and free immigration, coupled with similar domestic demands, seem to have been perceived by the Brazilian Conservative ruling élites, however, as a major threat. This situation became more alarming in the mid-1860's, when open warfare between Brazil and Paraguay was drawing to the front line large numbers of Afro-Brazilian workers. Among other measures, a governmental decree of November 1866

made provisions to compensate proprietors who liberated slaves that were willing to go to war.[15] Many ex-slaves also joined the national corps of volunteers, called '*Voluntários da Pátria*'.[16]

Conservatives, thence, appear to have summoned up their domestic political strength in defence of Brazilian national sovereignty against foreign pressures and against Paraguay. Equally, and ironically, they were keen on defending slavery, insofar as both, the country's sovereignty and slavery, seem to have been considered to be under menace, respectively by an invading Paraguayan army and by Liberal doctrine.

Apart from strategic, military considerations, this may have accounted for the fact that the war against Paraguay dragged on until March 1870. Conservatives seem to have needed to buy time and rid the domestic political arena of excessively Liberal tendencies, and, sovereignly, address the problem of slavery.

The odds were not against Brazilian Conservatives. In 1864 there were approximately only 1,7 million slaves in the country, out of a total population of 10,245 million. Even though slaves accounted for the bulk of the production of exportable commodities, especially coffee, politically they did not matter at all, of course. Voters consisted mainly of free small tenants whose economic well-being and social standing relied heavily upon arrangements worked out with large estate owners, whereby the formers' right to vote overlapped with their access to the latters' property. Political allegiance secured the tenants the use of land and, if their income entitled them to, the right (which in fact was an imposition, a duty) to cast a ballot.[17]

The Brazilian political system was parliamentary and had been conceived of after the British model. However, there was an important distinction: in Brazil the 1824 Constitution had established the existence of four powers: apart from the Judiciary, the Legislative and the Executive, the Emperor was invested with the function of a Moderator (the *'Poder Moderador'*). The monarch, thus, had acquired the aura of an Enlightened Despot.

When Parliamentarism came fully and effectively into practice, in 1847, that special legal provision was employed by Dom Pedro II, the Emperor, to appoint and dismiss Prime Ministers at his own discretion. That system was, by Brazilian themselves, scornfully referred to as "Parlamentarism in reverse" (*'Parlamentarismo às avessas'*): whenever the monarch chose a new Prime Minister, new majorities, accordingly, had to be assembled, which lent to the polling process the appearance of mere theatrics.[18] Elections' results were, then, conveniently arranged in advance. Retainers and tenants had no choice but to vote in accordance with their patrons' orientation, thereby securing their land titles or rights.

Those arrangements, moreover, had serious administrative effects. In the wake of each Cabinet change, there took place innumerable new appointments to positions within the entire Imperial bureaucracy, so as to adjust it to the new political environment. Those sweeping administrative reshuffles were known as '*derrubadas,*' (or 'downfalls,' probably evoking something like the collapsing of a castle of cards).

The recurrent *derrubadas* produced great administrative instability. This enhanced enourmously the importance of patronage. Brazilian politicians actually had to spend most of their time writing letters of recommendation on behalf of their friends, relatives and protégés, in the effort to fill the administrative positions in harmony with the Emperor's wishes or strategic goals.

Those practices had the effect of blurring the ideological distinctions between the existing political parties. An opinion was generally shared by Brazilians, according to which there was no real difference between Liberals (or *'luzias'*) and Conservatives (or *'saquaremas'*). William Scully himself noted, in a article published on May 24, 1865, that '[...] if the truth be told, [...]' any differences originated '[...] more in the desire for place and patronage than in disapproval of the policy of the Government.'

That deceptive indistinctiveness, though, often concealed the fact that there were, actually, characteristically Liberal propositions on the table, like Emancipation. With the notable exception of the Catholic Ultramontanes (which will be discussed below), most Conservatives were not at all inclined to accept it, whereas those willing to support the Emancipationist cause would normally join the Liberal Party. Other points of contention, like the free navigation of the Amazon River, clearly separated *'saquaremas'* from *'luzias,'* the former being fiercely against that measure until it became law, in December 1866.[19]

In addition to the concentration of political power, land policies were tailored to suit the large estates' owners' interests, especially from a Conservative standpoint.[20] However abundant, arable land was not cheap, the best tracts really being affordable only to the very rich. Scarcely any good terrain was left over for the purposes of European colonization, which, being aditionally subjected to State control, was thus severely restricted.

Given the above circumstances, the idea of free immigration stood hardly any chance of being spoused by the Emperor, or of being seriously considered by most Brazilian statesmen. However, the perception, especially from 1865 onwards, that the domestic slave workforce would inevitably diminish opened up prospects for Liberals in Brazil to make alliances with foreign interests and so advance the ideological propaganda advocating the free introduction of white, Christian, and so depicted progressive and hard working agriculturists in Brazil. Foreigners like Scully were quite optmistic about it, as the following quotation from the May 23, 1867 edition of 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times' shows:

> Should Europe pour in here her superabundant population, where employment could be given to 20,000,000 of them, then the Government of Brazil can emancipate the slaves without ruining the production of the country and with some prospect of providing for the future of the freedmen.

Paradoxically, this also appealed to Ultramontane Catholic Conservatives. Free European immigration was regarded by this ultra-radical branch of Catholics as an opportunity for Brazil to admit authentically Catholic immigrants into her territory. As

for the suitability of the Irish to people the territory of Brazil, Scully made the following assessment:

> The Irishman, perhaps justly accused of unthriftness and insubordination at home, for he is hopeless there and has the tradition of a bitter oppression to make him feel discontented, becomes active, industrious, and energetic when abroad; intelligent he always is. He soon rids himself of his peculiarities and prejudices, and assimilates himself so rapidly with the progressive people around him that his children no longer can be distinguished from the American of centuries of descent. ('The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' January 23, 1867.)

Politically, Irish immigration looked like a means to enlarge the flocks of those truly faithful to the Holy See (and to Pope Pius IX). Catholic clergymen would thereby stand on firmer grounds and lay stronger claims for a ban on the Emperor's religious privileges. The Brazilian Imperial ruler, Dom Pedro II, was constitutionally empowered as Head of the Brazilian Catholic Church and had, thus, religious prerrogatives, like the right to vetoing bulls issued by the Vatican. Greater immigration of European Catholics was also thought of as a sort of deterrent, preventing the number of incoming Protestants from Germany and, once the Civil War ended, the United States, from becoming disproportionately large.[21]

Having aligned themselves with the Progressive faction of the Conservative Party, Brazilian Ultramontanes joined forces with the Liberal movement, in opposition to the monarch. Led by the Ultramontane Senator Zacarias de Góes e Vasconcelos, a Liberal-Progressive parliamentary majority gradually developed and materialized, in 1866, that was sympathetic towards new immigration policies.

All this seems to account for the fervent optimism with which Scully began publishing 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times.' Playing a strategically convenient role for Great Britain as regards her political determination to end slavery in Brazil, he appears to have envisaged an opportunity to thrash Conservative powers in Brazil and make way for radical Liberal policies to step onto the country's political stage.

During an initial four-year period of intense activity, the Irish newspaperman argued in favour of the progress to be derived from the introduction of new fiscal legislation, from the admission of free western labourers into the Brazilian economy, greater financial flexibility, fiscal reform and easier credit for immigrants to buy land. He also emphasized the need for closer commercial, technical and scientific relationship with Great Britain. Diplomatic relations between the two countries, meanwhile, were resumed in July 1865. Also, a loan was floated in London to help Brazil fight the 1864/1870 war against Paraguay.[22]

On the other hand, Scully's paper featured critical portraits of the Brazilian Conservative ruling classes, despite his initial commitment to avoid comments on personalities. A number of aspects of such criticism deserve closer analysis. First, the

slavery system was persistently deemed 'irrational,' and directly identified with those responsible for its survival. In other words, Conservatism was tantamount to irrationality.

Secondly, Scully regarded the country's political life with considerable contempt, even though the all-embracing Brazilian system of patronage actually elicited seemingly ambiguous responses from him. At various times he would either praise it, as if he desperately needed to appease the Brazilian Emperor, or decry it violently, showing how it hindered the country´s institutional and economic development.

If one takes it that he was a Catholic Liberal, possibly aligned with the political currents that supported William Gladstone at home, it could be assumed that, although he may have counted on British official sponsorship, he was left, in a foreign country, to fend for himself, so to say, since Liberals in Britain did not have so steady a hold on to national political power, and were constantly vying with Tories like Lord Derby and Disraeli, between 1865 to 1868, for control over Britain's destiny.[23] The Irish Question and the rise of Fenianism, which were Gladstone's concerns, may also have accounted for the degree of isolation Scully appears to have been forced to endure in Brazil.

English merchants in Rio de Janeiro seem not to have regarded Scully's initiatives with optimism, but rather derisively. Letters were published in his paper that clearly show this. Actually, their commercial interests could be jeopardized should the abolition of slavery in Brazil be brought about too soon – which carried with it the prospect of a rapid, albeit temporary, disorganization of the country's plantation economy. Even the British São João D'El Rey Mining Company, in the Brazilian province of Minas Gerais, hired slaves to work the mines.[24] Both Brazilian coffee planters and large British trading companies, therefore, not to mention wealthy British financiers, had good reason to be cautious about the issue of European free immigration.

Hence Scully's comment, on the bilateral crisis triggered off by William Christie, that '[...] the Brazilian is innately courteous, and, appreciating in a high degree the quality in others, will yield much more to the politeness and suavity of the stranger than could be extorted by the menaces of the Foreign Office.'[25] In several other instances he conveyed his seemingly acceptance of the practice of patronage and the perception that the Brazilian Imperial government was 'stable and strong.' The country itself, Brazil, was said to be 'the destined rival on the Southern Continent of the great Anglo-Saxon nation of the North' ('Anglo-Brazilian Times,' Feb. 25 1865).

However, in spite of his own appreciation that Brazilians expected 'politeness and suavity' on the part of foreigners and abhorred English arrogance, Scully's impatience with the Brazilian patronage system was soon made patent. After having published (March 24, 1865) a lengthy article in defence of the official Brazilian stance on specific questions regarding illegally enslaved Africans, and against the patronizing disposition of W. D. Christie, he complained bitterly that Brazilian congressmen spent most of their time with the task of writing letters of recommendation, dedicating scarcely any attention to actual legislative duties. According to the Irish newspaperman, the volume of individual requests for employment and appointments was so massive that '[...] the life of a Brazilian Minister is a life of downright slavery.' (May 24, 1865.)

Thirdly, and in connection with the foregoing aspects of his position, Scully made disparaging parallels between Brazilian slaveowners and the Chinese governing élites of the time. The former, and their male offspring, were deemed idle and unimaginative, living parasitically out of employments afforded to them within the public administration: 'true, our Brazilian boy is not unlearned [...] still, all his studies are without an aim, his only view in life is towards the 'dolce far niente' of a government employment [...]."

According to him, those traits were akin to those of the ruling classes in Asian societies. Curiously, Brazilian Conservatives at that time also put forward proposals for alternative immigration projects, aiming at the introduction of Chinese workers. Again, Scully disapproved of the initiative and wrote successive articles in defense of his arguments on this question. Further, Scully stressed, rather threateningly, that [...].

> [...] the Brazilian educated classes have through indolence and pride abandoned to the more utilitarian foreigner engineering, mining, trades, commerce, and manufactures, and leave the resources and the riches of their wonderful country undeveloped until the educated science of some enterprising foreigner finds out the treasure and turns it to his own advantage. (April 8, 1865.)

Nearly a century after Scully's first articles in 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times,' the late Brazilian sociologist Gilberto de Mello Freyre, in his classical work on the Brazilian colonial and imperial societies, 'The Masters and the Slaves,' quoted several European observers whose impressions on the education of the young Brazilian male clearly matched Scully's perceptions and apprehensions about the fate of the country's ruling élites. Freyre noted that the main concern of Brazilian young males was 'to syphilize themselves as soon as possible, thereby acquiring those glorious scars in the bouts of Venus that Spix and Martius were so horrified to see Brazilians proudly displaying.'[26] Scully's opinions might be endorsed by the quotation below, again from Freyre:

> The Brazil of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers came near to being a land without children. At the age of seven many a shaver could repeat for you by heart the names of the European capitals, could tell you the 'three enemies of the soul,' could add, subtract, multiply, and divide, decline in Latin, and recite in French. We may picture him as he looked at his first communion: black topcoat and black boots – all this funereal black contrasting with the sickly yellow of his anemic countenance. It was then that the child became a youth.[27]

Other remarks bluntly made by Scully on the Brazilian aristocracies' lifestlyle, however, did touch on a rather sensitive aspect of the image of the Brazilian male:

> [...] Again we repeat that mind and body react upon each other and enervate together, and we warn our Brazilian youth that, if they suffer to degenerate and become emasculated through their indolence and contempt for usefulness, they

> will 'ere long endure the mortification of being ousted even out of their present stronghold of the public service, by those other classes whose pursuits they affect so much to scorn, when once the energies that win for these their wealth be directed to the loaves and fishes of government employ. (April 8, 1865.)

Such disparaging comments on the so-perceived slothfulness that allegedly pervaded the Brazilian slave-owning aristocracy's way of life reveal two prominent features of Scully's discourse: on the one hand, there stood his convivtion that the Brazilian people had to be regenerated, *as a whole* –and not only the 'colored race.'

On the other hand, that first aspect was coupled with his strong attachment to British values. Although he upheld internationalist and somewhat pacifist Liberal principles (as in an October 9, 1866 article against the destructiveness entailed by the war Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay were waging against Paraguay), he enthusiastically called for the introduction of classes of physical education into the syllabuses adopted by the incipient Brazilian school system. Thus, the Brazilian youth might develop a greater sense of discipline, responsibility, and a stronger character, emulating, or adopting, British models of education. Physical education was referred to as the tool which "[...] joined with Western utilitarian science, makes two hundred thousand Europeans the arbiters of two hundred millions of the inhabitants of Indian climes." Further, Brazilians had to remember that "[...] Waterloo was won at Eton and Harrow" (April 8, 1865). Those observations could easily be taken for an ingredient of a British colonialist strategy.

Scully's writings appear to fit into the wider context of Anglo-Irish Victorianism in an authentic way, with a discourse that combined Liberal ideas and patronizing Conservative (Tory) attitudes.[28] As discussed above, the British policy towards Brazil in 1865 could no longer afford to follow guidelines related to a purely commercial kind of hegemony, as expressed by the Anglo-Brazilian Treaties of 1810 and 1827, whereby Britain secured significant customs' privileges, and other, from Portuguese and Brazilian authorities. Although the aristocratic, Palmerstonian kind of diplomacy had become inadequate, the middle-class, Liberal substitute, however persuasive, intrusive, officially non-diplomatic, *journalistic*, nevertheless had to be pungent, aggressive, whenever necessary.

Turning the focus of this discussion, at this point, to the symbolic aspects of Scully's *colonialist* discourse and its emphasis on the risk of the Brazilian aristocracy becoming emasculated 'through indolence,' it could be argued that he tentatively spearheaded the reproduction, in mid – to late nineteenth century Brazil, of the male/female, either/or, kind of dicothomy that the ideal of an intellectual, transcendental androginy later embodied in James Joyce's 'Ulysses' appears to have disavowed, as Declan Kiberd puts it:

> In spousing the ideal of androginy, just one year after the declaration of the Irish Free State, Ulysses proclaims itself a central text of national liberation.

> Against the either/or antitheses of British Imperial psychology, it demonstrated the superior validity of a both/and philosophy.[29]

The subsequent quotation seems illustrative of how the Victorian mentality operated, in Ireland:

> [...] Antithesis had been the master-key to the Imperial mind, causing people to make absolute divisions between English – and Irish, but also between men and women. By this mechanism the British male could attribute to the Irish all those traits of poetry, emotion and hypersensitivity which a stern muscular code had led to suppress in himself. In like manner, Victorian men insisted that their women epitomize domestic virtues and emotional expressiveness which a harsh mercantile ethic had led them to deny in themselves.[30]

Scully's 1865 article on Education in Brazil seem to reflect very clearly an urge to persuade the local aristocracy into adopting a similar 'stern muscular code.' The warnings against the slave-owning élites becoming emasculated, and prospectively inferior to the European immigrant, tally with the either/or antitheses characteristic of British colonial psychology and must have had, in the eyes of the Brazilian Imperial government, the ring of a future colonial subjection that had to be prevented at any costs.

After having drawn a depressing picture of the Brazilian upper-classes' youth, and of their presumable fate, Scully started to describe the kind of remedy necessary to improve the fabric of the Brazilian society. Apart from the proposed educational reform, the 'regeneration' should be triggered be the massive introduction in Brazil of Irish and other sanguine, labourious, disciplined and forward-looking European immigrants. Incoming former Confederates, displaced by the North American Civil War and emigrating to Brazil in 1865/67, were also depicted favourably.

Signs that the Brazilian Imperial government really favoured European immigration came, officially, on May 22, 1867, when the Emperor delivered his inaugural speech ('*Fala do Trono*') to the Chamber of Representatives. He showed concern about the problem of the shortage of labour affecting the country's main industry, agriculture, and drew the attention of the legislators to the question of Emancipation, urging them to note that '[...] promoting colonization has to be an object of your particular solicitude.'[31]

Meanwhile, early in 1866 a group of immigration agents, journalists, Brazilian Governmennt officials and politicians had established the International Society of Emigration, with the professed aim of facilitating 'the settlement of the emigrants in the territory of Brazil, to advise them, protect them, and remove any embarrassments with which they may have to struggle.' Scully became one of its directors, but, during the preparatory meetings he made it clear that such 'an association of gentlemen' ought to be '*entirely unconnected with, and independent of the Government and of any emigration projects*.' Also:

The object of the association ought not to be take any *direct* part in the bringing of emigrants to this country; _that is the province of the Government and parties directly interested in the matter. But the society can, *indirectly*, largely supplement the direct efforts to promote emigration. (January, 1866.)

Naturally, his propositions, which pointed to the adoption of policies suitable to the promotion of free immigration, failed to elicit a positive response. Among other dubious initiatives implemented by some of its Brazilian directors, the society was employed as a springboard for the establishment of an emmigration agency in New York, the purpose of which was to recruit and remove to Brazil, in connection with the Brazil-United States Mail Steamship Company, emigrants that did not adapt to life in the United States. William Scully maintained a long and acrid series of accusations against one of the directors of that agency, the Brazilian journalist Quintino Bocayuva. According to the Irishman, the agency was sending to Brazil 'the scum of New York,' thereby undermining current colonization programmes.

Although free immigration was therefore out of question, arrangements were made beetween Scully and the Established Church of Ireland, in order to actually enlist Irish families willing to settle in Brazil. In October 1966, he personally addressed the Clergy of Ireland asking for immigrants and, even though he did not approve of governmental colonization schemes, approximately 330 Irish Catholics were sent to Brazil aboard the ship "Florence Chipman," from Wednesbury, England. After having been greeted by the Emperor in person in Rio de Janeiro,[32] they were dispatched to the then province of Santa Catarina, in Southern Brazil.[33]

There, in April 1868, most Irish incomers joined a group of Confederates that had already settled on the Colony Príncipe Dom Pedro, on the margins of the Itajahy-Mirim River, along with colonists of various nationalities, including Irishmen recruited in New York by Bocayuva's agency.[34] Upon arrival most of the Irish colonists from Wednesbury appear to have received the lots ascribed to them, but soon the whole enterprise collapsed.

That colony, created by the government in 1867, was located not far from the predominantly German settlement of Blumenau, which was already prospering.[35] The latter faced problems similar to the ones affecting the English-speaking settlement on the Itajahy-Mirim, but its founder, Dr. Hermann Blumenau, being one of the actual settlers, was personally involved in the task of establishing and administering the whole business, having become a real bulwark against administrative misconduct.

The English-speaking colony, on the other hand, as pointed out by Scully himself in an article of April 22, 1870 ('Why the colony failed'), not only had to cope with the difficulties posed by the terrain, that was somewhat improper for cultivation and subject to flooding (as was also the case in Blumenau), but fell prey to other problems, administrative, logistical,[36] and inter-cultural. Eventually, the Irish colonists were forced to leave the country, in 1869, as did most of the first settlers. The original area was later

developed by immigrants from Poland. Nowadays it corresponds, to a certain extent, to the municipality of Brusque.

The deeper causes behind the failure of the colony seem to relate, actually, to the Cabinet change that took place in July 1868. The Progressive-Liberal cabinet was dissolved, by the Emperor, after a political crisis had been generated by Liberal criticism against the military operations on the Paraguayan front line. Given the Brazilian patronage system, the subsequent polling placed a strong Conservative majority in power. All support to the English-speaking colony in Santa Catarina, hence, appears to have been withdrawn.

That Liberal criticism was, unfortunately, initiated by Scully, according to whom the then Marquis of Caxias, Commander-in-Chief of the Brazilian armed forces and later of the combined Brazilian, Argentine and Uruguayan armies, was conducting the military operations in Paraguay very slowly, thereby allowing the enemy to regroup and set up new defensive lines. Besides, the alleged "moroseness" displayed by the Brazilian army under Caxias' command was, again according to the journalist, remarkably costly. In an article of January 7, 1868, among several diatribes against the Brazilian general, he accused him to cause '[...] the war [...] to linger on as long as the country can find the gold to squander,' and pointed out that the '[...] favorite weapon [...]' of Caxias' were 'gold-bags.'

The accusations were echoed by the Brazilian Liberal press, producing a clamour so negative that prompted Caxias to submit his resignation. The Emperor refused it and the Progressive-Liberal Prime Minister, Zacarias de Góes e Vasconcelos, eventually had to step down.[37]

From a military standpoint, the 'moroseness' Scully alluded to was a result of the strategy devised by Caxias, designed not to attack the Paraguayan capital directly.[38] Although the general refused to track down Solano López personally, in 1869, on grounds that such a role did not suit him, his plan, from the start, appears to have been directed towards the creation of a stifling effect on Paraguay and so afford no opportunity for the enemy to escape – or surrender. López was eventually killed on March 1st 1870, after having being chased from the beginning of the second semester of 1869 onwards.[39]

Prime Minister Zacarias de Góis e Vasconcelos' substitute, Joaquim José Rodrigues Torres, Viscount of Itaborahy, was an old *saquarema*. From his inauguration, on July 16, 1868, the English-speaking immigrants of the Príncipe Dom Pedro colony really seem to have been denied financial assistance.[40] Further, the *derrubada* that followed the Cabinet change, depriving Liberals of their appointments, must have ensured that they were kept unaided. All this bear resemblance to a retaliation against Scully.

In the aftermath of this débacle it would seem that renewed attempts to foster British colonization schemes in Brazil would be ruled out, but other colonies were established in the subsequent years, in the Paraná and São Paulo provinces.[41] Measures to promote massive free immigration in Brazil, however, remained unadopted until the 1880's.[42]

Although Scully did not succeed either in helping Irish colonists settle in Brazil in large numbers or in having free immigration legislation adopted in the country, the

period spanning from 1865 to 1884, which corresponds to Scully's professional life in Brazil, saw the establishment in the Brazilian territory of various industries, the expansion of foreign trade, the construction of railroads, unprecedented urban growth and the improvement of public works, much of which was implemented with British capital and manpower.[43]

It looks nearly impossible to make an assessment of the importance of Scully's activities as a journalist and businessman in the joint effort to make those economic developments come to life, from the inauguration of 'The Anglo-Brazilian Times' onwards. Many of Scully's original objectives, as featured in his newspaper's first issue, of February 7 1865, were never achieved. Massive free immigration, for instance, was only possible when the slave labour system finally showed signs of undeniable exhaustion and of its incapacity of sustaining the profitability of the Brazilian coffee production, in the 1880's. And Irish immigration, in particular, was rendered inviable.

Nation-building was, for nineteenth century Brazilian policy makers, a major challenge. Various problems had to be tackled simultaneously, that were complicated by material and political constraints. The preservation of the country's sovereignty was their main concern, in a domestic context dominated by a political life that gravitated around a hierarchically organized system of patronage, cunningly orchestrated by Dom Pedro II. Slavery, the territorial extension of the country (over 8 million km^2), the lack of a military force compatible with the size of the territory, and an administrative structure dependent on revenues obtained from an economic infrastructure almost entirely concerned with the exportation of primary goods, all these were geopolitical and economic factors accounting for a certain degree of national decentralization and strategic vulnerability.

Brazilian Conservative politicians displayed greater aptitude to sort out those problems, during the Imperial period (1822-1889), and, justifiably, rejected Liberal policies.[44] The political changes that accompanied the end of the Empire and the installation of the current Republican régime also owed very little, if anything, to the old Liberalism of the 1860's. Positivism became the doctrine spoused by the ruling civil and military Republican élites, whereas the Conservative Party dissolved after the end of slavery.

Therefore, the remembrance of the legacy of William Scully's has been nearly completely, and undeservedly, neglected. Although pervaded by certain nineteenth century Victorian prejudices, his writings seem to be an acknowledgeable Anglo-Irish contribution to the History of Ideas and of Liberalism in Brazil, having played an arguably considerable, if controversial, role in the country's Political History.

Notes

1 Conrad 1972, 20-46.
2 Marshall 1996, 20.
3 Graham 1979, 68-70.

4 Azevedo 1997, 62-8; Vieira 1980, 95-112.
5 Ranelagh 1983, 125.
6 Korol & Sábato 1981.
7 For a brief account of the role played by Irish military in, for example, the building-up of Bolivia, please see Dunkerley 1996.
8 Manchester 1973; Bethell 1970.
9 Bethell 1970.
10 Bethell 1970, 382.
11 Manchester 1973; Graham 1979.
12 Bethell 1970, 388.
13 Bethell 1970, 72.
14 Azevedo 1987, 62-6.
15 Doratioto 2002, 272-76.
16 Salles 1990; Silva 1997.
17 Graham 1990.
18 Carvalho 1996.
19 Cervo 1981, 228.
20 Carvalho 1996, 301-25.
21 Vieira 1980, 245.
22 Bethell 1996, 26.
23 Robbins 1998, 161-86.
24 Libby 1984.
25 Scully 1866, X.
26 Freyre 1964, 358.
27 Freyre 1964, 359.
28 This argumentation draws on the distinctions between aristocratic and middle-class mentalities in Britain during the XIX century as expounded in Perkin 1978.
29 Kiberd 1992, Lxiv.
30 Kiberd 1992, Lxiv-lxv.
31 Brasil 1988, 264.
32 Platt 1964, 23.
33 Vieira 1980, 245; Marshall 1999.
34 Lauth 1987, 21.
35 Silva 1995, 74.
36 Lauth 1987.
37 Holanda 1972, 7-13 And 95-104. Doratioto 2002, 334; Vieira 1980, 247-53.
38 Doratioto 2002, 115-21.
39 Doratioto 2002, 383-455; Bethel 1996, 8.
40 Lauth, 1987, 73-80.
41 Marshall, 1999.
42 Hall, 1969, 4-11.
43 Graham, 1968.
44 Cervo, 1980.

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Travelling With Desmond Hogan: Writing Beyond Ireland

Jerry Nolan*

Abstract: *The uneven and at times tentative development of Desmond Hogan's fiction, based in Ireland for over some twenty years, was transformed in 1995 by his novel 'A Farewell to Prague' when Hogan discovered that while he could still assemble fragments from Irish life and history, now he had at his command a new means of incorporating insights from his restless travelling in many countries and a way of moulding diverse experiences into personal encounters with inner landscapes, the imagined worlds of others and visions in art. The most exhilarating effect of such travel writing is the perspective where one's own indigenous culture may appear insignificant by itself, yet when viewed in certain ways may become a linking and a bonding with the peoples of other cultures. Hogan's 'miracle' occurs when the human tragedies of history do not divide but actually help to unite individuals from whatever culture when they are moved to join in the crosscurrents of mutual understanding and guarded hope.*

Desmond Hogan (1950-???) felt the urge to travel from a very early age. He wrote in 1988: 'In the old Jewish Cemetry I'd thought of them and in the suburbs of Prague, under high-rise flats, a gypsy family on a bench waiting for a bus, I'd thought of the gypsies, the tinkers who'd enriched our town when I was a child. They'd created a pattern for the lives of many of my contemporaries, a pattern of moving on, always moving on, nomads.' (*Edge*, 66) But the metaphor of a nomad, while perhaps still retaining an appeal for the older Hogan, provides an inadequate explanation of Hogan's compulsive wanderlust. Hogan published his first novel in 1976 *The Ikon Maker* wherein Diarmaid O'Hallrahan, at the age of four or five, is described as walking on fields 'where Jacobean soldiers once fled before the Williamites after the Battle of Aughrim'. (*Ikon Maker*, 19) In a journalistic piece written about a visit back in 1990 to his home town of Ballinasloe in County Galway for the annual horse fair, Hogan evoked his strong sense of local history, rather like George Moore had responded many years before to the local history

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of Lough Carra in County Mayo: ‘On a hired bicycle I made a tour of medieval monastic ruins that form an exhilirating demi-necklace around Ballinasloe [...] stone patterns of arched medieval windows against the sky.’ A sobering thought was that Ballinasloe once had the largest mental hospital in Europe: ‘The first building went up in 1833 and extensions and additions haven’t stopped since.’ (*Edge,* 142-8) In *The Ikon Maker* Diarmaid experiences feelings of rebellion against his mother who thinks travel is to go nowhere, and harbours secret sexual longings for boys. Trauma climaxes in the suicide of Diarmaid’s childhood friend, Derek O’Mahoney. Ireland is imagined as having mangled, twisted and embittered Diarmaid by the way in which Diarmaid’s school boy Derek committed suicide as a result of the small town’s bullying and of Diarmaid’s own refusal to respond sexually to Derek’s love. Another influential aspect of Diarmaid’s childhood experience is his early addiction to the art of collage. At first ‘he made shapes, puts bits of cardboard together, eggshells, fluff – matress fluff, ducks’ feathers. He constructed these icons’ (*Ikon Maker,* 20). Later he made a collage of Derek O’Mahoney’s guts; ‘His collages were becoming bloodier, all red; one day he smeared lipstick over eggshells.’ Much later he constructed an ikon for a drug addict: ‘That night Diarmaid put bits and pieces together, feathers for the boy’s eyebrows, paper skin, a button in each eye’ (*Ikon Maker*, 43-6). In *The Ikon Maker*, Hogan prologues in lyrical mode the four major themes of his fiction: the bloodshed of history, the urge to travel, the compulsion of homosexual desire and an undying passion for assembling life’s fragments into collages of memorable beauty.

Hogan’s second novel *The Leaves on Grey*, published in 1980, is a surprising diversion into the genre of the French Catholic novel. This short novel is mainly concerned with a group of friends from the Irish Catholic middle class who were undergraduates in University College Dublin in the mid-1950s. The narrator, Sean McMahon, becomes a married solicitor with three children who works in Dublin and London. Sean experiences the problems of marital infidelities and the massive psychological impact of terrorist explosions in Dublin in 1974 which shatters his complacent belief that Ireland had become quietly cosmopolitan during the 1950s and 1960s in spite of the plethora of gombeen politicians and numerous quack artists. Sean shares with his creator Hogan a collage style of narrative, but Sean’s collages which consist of listings of places, clothing, drinks, food, songs, films, poets too often suggest the shorthand doodlings of a Dublin newspaper gossip columnist. *The Leaves on Grey* comes fully to imaginative life only as Sean’s curiosity grows about two old Dublin friends, Sarah and Liam, who were once lovers. Sarah’s father was an eminent surgeon who was well known for his sympathy for the martyrs of the 1916 Rising and for his dedicated work among the Dublin poor. His death causes Sarah to revert to orthodox Catholicism in the form of entering the Medical Missionaries of Mary: ‘She would go north to Drogheda, dress in a habit white as skulls, kneel before crimson Christs like the poor of Dublin did, eventually journey abroad to Africa, redressing the ignorance of the Western world which abandoned huge areas of the universe to starvation’ (*Leaves*, 68). Years later in London,

Sean meets up again with Sarah who, having left her religious order many years ago, is the headmistress of a progressive all-girls comprehensive school. Liam, after a period in California during the 1960s, also reverted to orthodox Catholicism. Sean finally meets up with Liam on an island off the coast of Northern Ireland, peopled by celibate poets and academics in monks' gowns all dedicated to the cause of peace. Looking back at his Catholic middle class upbringing, in a conversation with Sean on the holy island, Liam denounces his own class for its lack of pity for the world from its privileged rampart during the 1950s, and explains the creative communal possibilities of the new form of medieval monasticism which celebrates the inner plentifulness of leaves on gray: 'I'll tend to lives. Grow flowers. Shape again. With my hands. A sculpture. A recognition, a divining of that area where one registers peace, from which peace flows'. (*Leaves*, 116-8) Sean's final impression of his old friend's face is 'a stillness of stone, one of those faces on ancient stone in Ireland', but his parting reflection is ironical when he concludes that he must return to the things of life, doubtless drawing some consolation from his wife's explanation of the Sarah and Liam as mere 'meteorites'. In *The Leaves on Grey*, Hogan tried to depict the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie, somewhat along the lines of Francois Mauriac who had been a scourge of the French Catholic bourgeois family in South West France when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952. The role of quasi-radical Catholic writer excluded too much from the Hogan itinerary. The uncharacteristic feature of *The Leaves on Grey* is that Hogan's narrative here is mostly landlocked in period and place. In his account of the holy island of poets and academics in monks' robes as an image of a challenging poetic idealism in the modern world, Hogan seems to be suggesting that the holy island way of life was a state of exile from the Ireland of the 1970s, perplexed by the threats of material prosperity and terrorist violence which could put the thinking elite in touch with a more idealistic way of life. Hogan's sense of travelling at this stage of his journeying retreated too quickly into safe territory.

A Curious Street was Hogan third novel, first published in 1984 and marked a virtuoso development of the practice of collage-making which had been first signalled in *The Ikon Maker*. The main storyteller is Sergeant Jeremy Hitches, a British soldier of English and Irish parentage, on active service in war-torn Belfast. Jeremy mostly remembers with affection making good friends in Ireland but also of being faced, as a boy with an English father, with those long and bloody accounts of Ireland's grievances over many centuries against the English. He suggests that somehow he was returning to the English working class roots when he joined the British army, whereupon he was branded by his Irish mother as a Cromwellian. But early on in his upbringing Jeremy heard from his mother another story of Ireland – that of Alan Mulvanney, history schoolteacher, with whom Mrs. Hitches had an unconsummated love affair. His mother spoke to Jeremy often about Alan's unpublished historical novel entitled *A Cavalier Against Time* which had been born out Alan's individualistic response to things like the Irish historical exhibition which he had experienced as a boy of ten in the classroom –

an exhibition of the wrongs done to Ireland which was dominated by the picture of Oliver Plunkett who had been hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1681. Alan's story in *A Cavalier Against Time* concerned a pair of star-crossed lovers, Lorcan O'Mahony and Eleanor O'Keefe, who preach peace on horseback throughout the Ireland of the seventeenth century until they endure the siege of Galway and survive only to become separated. Sergeant Jeremy becomes so involved with the lovers' life-story and the historical fiction world of Alan that he admits to rewriting parts of *A Cavalier Against Time* and to imagining much of Alan's interior exile from Irish society by way of acknowledgement of that part of him which had been conceived in that unconsummated affair between his mother and Alan. Jeremy, empowered by his creator Hogan, creates intensely romantic collages of people, places and events by means of inventive non-linear cross-cutting between the past and present in Irish history. Alan's romantic lovers, Lorcan and Eleanor, roam the countryside in sympathy with gnostic forms of Celtic Christianity and with the dreams of the utopian Diggers and Levellers. Eventually each lover is driven into an exile of wandering in Europe where Eleanor ends up as a Flemish burgher's wife and Lorcan settles for life happily married to a Moorish girl in Andulusia. Alan's own personal life-story unfolds in fits and starts: loneliness, furtive fantasies about Red Hugh O'Donnell, confusion about a sexual identity, loving remembrance of the young red-haired farm labourer who committed suicide, unsettling experiences in Rome, feelings of alienation from a country whose history becomes a kind of ultimate wound, inner exile in the local mental hospital which is ecsape for those who cannot live in the present. Jeremy imagines all his friends acting out some part in Alan's story of Ireland, concluding that 'a chaos which will go on and on, which nothing will stop, neither journeys, nor movement, nor changes of role, nothing except the gesture of love' (*Curious Street*, 40). The greatest paradox in Jeremy's life is that while he plays his own minor part in the prolongation of the Cromwellian agony in modern Northern Ireland, his imagination has been sufficiently matured by the telling and the retelling of Alan's stories to the point where he can confidently acclaim Alan as 'the unwreathed laureate of Ireland'.

The most remarkable tour de force in *A Curious Street* occurs at the climax in the imagined apotheosis of the unwreathed laureate. Alan as a child of ten takes his poem about the dissolved snowman whose pebble eyes and top he treasures on a walk to the Shannon river, close to the ruins of the house which had been burned down during the recent Irish civil and which had once been owned by two harmless elderly Protestant ladies whose presences are invoked: 'their heads close together, fearful of what the night will bring [...] fearful of what this land will bring and is commonly known for – the untoward assassin, whether of the emotions or the body, the intruder in the night, the gun in the bushes, the rupturing insult that will destroy for life – but sure of this, the discordant rhapsodies of the heart'. Near that same spot some fifty years later, Alan would be found shot dead, a presumed case of suicide. The novel ends on an apocalyptic note with Jeremy invoking Alan as he would a saint: 'He was a talisman on nights in a

mental hospital corridor, nights of orange lights, of the Sacred Heart's picture and the assassin's bullet. He accompanied me through the desert, over the sea, through these pages. He kept me going when there seemed to be nothing else' (*Curious Street*, 192-4). Rarely have such compelling tragic depths been plumbed in a novel about a nobody as the transfigured victim of history. Hogan's uncompromising collages may not appeal to those who prefer a tidily academic historical answer to the perennial question of the nightmare of Irish History.

The dimension of homosexual desire played a subtle role in the exposition of Alan's human condition; but in Hogan's fourth novel *A New Shirt*, first published in 1986, his theme of homosexuality emerged as the dominant theme. The story concerns the anonymous narrator, the only child of a Spanish aristocrat and Irish industrialist, beginning to research, just after the Second World in New York, the life and work of the famous drowned poet Nessan Muir as a consequence of having read the little flutterings of Nessan's poems during his undergraduate days at University College Dublin. The narrator arrives just in time to meet the dying mother of Nessan whose maiden name was Bonnie O'Dowd, a second generation American who traced her Irish stock back to the Kinucanes, the one time owners of a Big House who had to flee to the New World during the Penal Days. The young Nessan was brought up by his grandmother on great stories about the triumphs of the Liberator Daniel O'Connell. But what made the greatest impression on the growing Nessan was down-hanging, male American genitalia in the changing rooms after baseball games on Sunday afternoon. Nessan became famous for exposing his marble white buttocks for everyman. While publishing slim volumes of fashionable poetry, he determined to enjoy a life of untrammelled sexual indulgence among the rich set in New York. Surprisingly the narrator shows no interest in Nessan's poetry but much interest in Nessan's homosexual sexual promiscuity which he romanticises into a form of self-reflection; 'The people you pick up, usually not penises, but loneliness, stories. Most of them not queer. But lonely. Searching. Open. Vulnerable. Those treading the earth with vulnerability' (*Shirt*, 94). All that one is allowed to learn about Nessan's artistic activities are the facts, or fictions, that he worked as a scriptwriter for a millionaire Hollywood director and appeared as a star in a blue movie. Stimulated by thoughts of Nessan's erotic life style, the narrator, now an antiquarian bookseller and married man, explores the makeshift caverns of modern Irish homosexuality in the clubs, saunas and gyms operating in the Dublin of the 1970s and 1980s, invariably frequented by those, like the narrator, with a middle class veneer of cars, wives, children and synthetic smiles (*Shirt*, 114-6)

A vividly imagined Nessan hovers like a guardian angel over the relationship which develops between the narrator and Phineas Ward, the IRA revolutionary and male prostitute, just one of the numerous latter day Irish patriots who trade on a policy of guns for sex which the narrator, while availing of the service, brands as the great Irish perversion of 'sex for sale and guns for the chalk Virgin with plastic lilies at her feet in Belfast'. Phineas Ward, himself haunted by the memory of the drowning in the Liffey

of a fellow rent-boy by the name of Bord Bainne, has a jaundiced look which inspires the narrator to cast him as an ikon; 'a fleshed, mustard skin colour that was suitable for someone who espoused the cause of Ireland, connecting him with the shades in those suffering medieval Christs' (*Shirt*, 15) The collage of Irish landscape closely associated with Phineas consists of children playing on rubble, wall mosaics of national heroes and giant Easter lilies, posters for Sinn Fein, patriotic griffiti, and refuse heaps of syringes, durexes and offerings from the Virgin cased in glass. The relationship between the bourgeois pervert and the resourceful rent boy ends when Phineas is blown up with his own bomb near the Cavan-Fermanagh border in 1984. In an attempt to grapple with his own confused emotions following the horrific death of Phineas, the narrator projects attitudes onto Nessan: 'Deranged things were happening inside Nessan. He was scribbling himself to death. These ghosts, the demons of Ireland, of other places, were after him, the void of his ancestry. They didn't wish he'd draw things into a path of lucidity, of meaning. It would be an embarrassment to history, to them. These ghosts, these demons wanted to remain as amorphous, screaming commotion in the ancestral memory. They did not want to give way to clarity' (*Shirt*, 114). Clarity is just what this narrator lacks in these memoirs of bad faith. Towards the end a kind of bizarre clarity leaps out when Fintan, Nessan's grandson born in 1967, appears in the Ireland of 1984 to hitchhike round Ireland in search of ancestry. In Belfast, Fintan has 'nightmares, men with explosions of blood on them, blood the way crimson appears on Hawaiian shirts'. In Dublin, Fintan discovers in the National Library the verses in the Martyrology of Donegal which explains his grandfather's ancient Irish name: 'Nessan, the holy deacon, loves/Angelic pure devotion;/Never came outside his teeth/ What was untrue or guileful.' Hogan's novel ends not on the expected note of irony but on a celebration of Fintan's enthusiasm at the discovery of a name as we are presented with the resonance of the blond American boy making a telephone call in a kiosk just inside a Dublin pub, a month after Easter in 1985: 'a resonance of an Easter which you'd hoped for in this shabby and slithering city but which had never come, never that is, until now' (*Shirt*, 213-5).

A New Shirt must seem somewhat underwhelming to the admirers of *A Curious Street*. Nessan Muir's Irish ancestral history is never explored thoroughly by the narrator. This fundamental failure is acknowledged knowingly in the account of Nessan's ghostly encounter with his grandfather Paid O'Dowd during his flying visit to Dublin after he has had an even more fleeting, unfinished encounter with a County Kildare farmer's boy in the lavatory of a Dublin pub; 'A grandfather of Nessan had broken from order once, broken from inheritance, and so had sundered the connection in his descendants between the roots of their being and themselves' (*Shirt*, 181). The fact that Nessan's poetry remains totally undocumented, unlike Alan Mulvanney's historical novel, reduces him to the narrator's aphrodisiac image of an American homosexual celebrity. Why did Hogan decline the challenge to bring the promiscuous Nessan alive as a poet, perhaps somebody like Walt Whitman or Hart Crane, two American poets whom he greatly

admires? The novel works best as a collage of male homosexual stories which buoy up the narrator in the Dublin homosexual caverns but fails to encompass the theme of Irish ancestry which the narrator doggedly but unsuccessfully attempts to incorporate into the narrative. The novelist's obsession with the homosexual theme frequently leads him as a traveller only into *cul-de-sacs* of feverish erotic fantasies.

Hogan's fifth novel *A Farewell to Prague* appeared some nine years after *A New Shirt.* The novel is an ambitious one in that Hogan at last adopts a literary form which enables him to integrate his major themes into a new and exciting synthesis. The only sad fact is that many of his critics have felt bewildered and put off by the spirals and interlacing of language, by the pointillistic verve of the narrative and even by the absence of chapter numbers and headings. The language is at times as elliptical as anything in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In any study of *A Farewell to Prague*, the problem is to know what to leave out and what to put in from the seemingly endless exhibition of Hogan's collages in this uncompromising novel.

In his occasional travel pieces collected in *The Edge of the City*, Hogan notes down the interesting but random observations of a journalist: the world's edges are primarily chronicled in a diaries of restlessness during the years 1976 to 1991: Santa Cruz (1976), Cairo (1977), Israel (1984), Norway (1987), Galicia (1987), North Yemen (1988), Russia (1989), Lisbon (1989) Prague (1989) Leningrad (1989; 1991), Mississipi (1989), New Orleans (1990), South Africa (1990), Berlin (1990) and Guetemala (1991). Hogan's narration in *A Farewell to Prague* concentrates for the most part on the European experiences of a character called Des. Des is not a journalist, or anthropologist, or business man or politician or aid worker or even tourist circling the globe; rather, he comes across as a wandering inquisitive writer who is intensely vulnerable to the personal and communal histories existing beyond, yet often reminding him of, his Irish experiences. Clearly there is an interchange and an absence of boundaries between the preoccupations of this fifth novel with the rest of Hogan's fiction, including his forty or so published short stories. In Hogan's numerous short stories, the plots are often tenuous, characters undifferentiated and entire family histories compressed, yet there is a relentless procession of metaphors, the most remarkable of which are refashioned in his novels.

The long Hogan project at last emerges finally as a brilliantly fashioned kaleidoscope of myriad impressions and reflections. Memories of Ireland persist in welling up. There is the vignette of Des' mother on the occasion when she brought him as a small boy from Galway to Dublin to see the Jack Cruise pantomime: Des remembers how he saw her naked before she put on a pink nightdress and slept in the bed with her arms about him. Then again Des remembers the occasion when his mother beat him, when he was thirteen, in a wild frightened way for standing in a makeshift theatre in the back shed in a turban with a turkey feather in it and with a tan acquired from mixing some of her cosmetics (*Prague*, 55). There is the recurring memory of the Korean war veteran (with blond hair like Tab Hunter) in the Ireland of the 1950s: 'on a frayed armchair at the guesthouse down the road, he told us about the green trains of Seoul and

about the many lepers [...] he caused my first wet dreams'. Later, in the company of a Croation woman, Des remembers the War veteran: 'He was my first and enduring lesson in courage, courage to face memort, hyprocisy [...] a talisman, his strength being passed on like a candle in dreams' (*Prague,* 168-70). The Irish past is best suggested in the collage description of Eleanor. Eleanor's father was a lecturer in the Dublin College of Art. She was sent to a convent school on an island in Mayo where a nun, Sister Camisias, captivated her young imagination by telling the story of the Children of Lir. Sex as an adolescent in Paris gave her the first sense of exile from Ireland. She began the habit of sending friends Rembrandt postcards acquired in Mulvanys on Wellington Quay. It was among the dead and mutilated bodies on Talbot Street, May 1974 that she resolved to leave a country which continued to breed such unyielding versions of political nationalism, because behind much of the poetry was the savagery which attacked everything not vetted by the tribe. Dublin for Eleanor became for ever associated with the memory of a dead blond male prostitute being pulled out of the Liffey. Des lives for a period with Eleanor in Rathmines: 'Making love to Eleanor I saw a battle, a World war Two Battle in the snow. It is the early forties in Russia [...] There was a young German soldier, slightly bumpkin face, his hair straw blond, just looking at the battle, not fighting' (*Prague*, 71). Through her failing marriages, Eleanor and Des continue to keep in touch in spite of the emotional torture they inflict on each other; 'I remember the crucifix I saw with Eleanor in Italy and knew that this was to be our lives'(Prague, 171). At one stage, Des experiences a total breakdown from which he can recover only by calling up the child in him, 'the broken part in me' (*Prague,* 56). The travels of Des go on multiplying partly to fill the crater left by the physical absence of Eleanor. These travels render national boundaries less and less meaningful; while people met and events experienced across the globe come to be increasingly seen as interconnected and interchangeable.

The other abiding presence in Des' life is Marek, the child of a failed marriage between a German actress and a Palestinian doctor. Des first meets Marek in a school in the West of Ireland from which the rebellious Marek eventually escapes. One of the highlights of Marek's drifting life across the cafes of Europe is a conversation with the brilliant Russian film maker Andre Tarkovosky in a café in Berlin. Marek becomes HIV positive on heroin in Verona. Des and Marek fall more deeply in love as Marek's death approaches. Des becomes godfather at his baptism on Easter day. While Des waits in a small room, he draws consolation from an ikon of Our Lady of Vladimir, with its squirrel-like child being held by the black hands of the mother (*Prague*, 118-22). After his death in 1991, Des dreams of Marek with his mother by the turquoise sea in Sicily, with Marek in a black summer shirt with white skulls (*Prague*, 167)

Two great European painters help to shape the maturing aesthetic perception of collage maker Des into the fabrication of some resplendent ikons. The first is Rembrandt, the favourite painter of Eleanor. Rembrandt's masterly chiaroscuro gives an intensely luminous quality to the partly lighted human figures set against the dark background,

suggesting a perspective in which to view his own collages. Des begins to see Rembrandts everywhere in London: ‘He brings tenderness to old people, mostly black, queuing to take part in an old people’s talent competition [...] to two young Irish lovers, holding hands, looking at Padre Pio in a window [...] to a Killarney brick-layer in a hospital, about to have a hernia operation’(*Prague*, 157). The second painter who leads Des towards a visual sense of mystical beauty is Georges de La Tour whose picture of St.Sebastian depicting the saint’s motionless body with a single arrow and silent figures including St. Irene, Des sees in a gallery in Berlin and notes the fact that La Tour’s pictures were neglected for centuries. La Tour’s use of the baroque devices of close up, strong tone contrasts, the qualities of stillness and silence achieved by geometrical patterning, the switching of perception from naturalistic setting to dreamscape all help to create the luminous quality which Des so admires. The spirit of La Tour is invoked by Des when he proclaims the miracles of cities: ‘every embrace with every stranger became an act of expiation, and every act of kindness became an act of atonement, and the city’s orphans became the only possible mirror, a candle always reflected in that mirror if the liasion [...] if the exchange of hurt was a true one, like the candles in Georges de La Tour paintings’ (*Prague*, 150). Des pays tribute to La Tour’s pictures of the Magdalen imagined by flame and mirror in the darkness of a room by ending *A Farewell to Prague* with a magnificent iconic image of the ebony-haired woman with the tattoo of a ladybird on the cup of her hand: ‘She has been spat on. She has been abused like the women in my town were abused long ago. Her bags packed beside her, she is ready to move to another abode, another country even. But like a Georges de La Tour Madeleine at the flame she stares out now at the city whose rags and orphan walls have adhered to her (*Prague*, 245). Even as he acclaims the art of La Tour in characterisation by candlelight, Des reaffirms his own fervent belief in the practice of the art of collage: ‘Keep fighting for love. Even when they’ve all but destroyed language in you, pick up the pieces and make collages, continue making collages – some meaning will come out of it’ (*Prague,* 166). The strength of collage is inclusiveness; but the risk of collage is triviality as in Sean’s fleeting impressions of Dublin bourgeois life in *The Leaves on Grey*, or incoherence as in the arid stretches of *A New Shirt*. In *A Farewell to Prague* the aesthetic touchstone is the creation in literature of those painterly qualities usually to be found in the chiaroscuro of Rembrandt or in the candlelit image of La Tour. The risk, then, becomes a wordy pretentiousness; but, *pace* the uncomprehending critics of the Hogan style, the risk was worth taking in view of the imaginative mapping so tellingly set forth in *A Farewell to Prague.*

As the novel’s title suggests, the city of Prague has a special place in Des’ affections. While he celebrates Wenceslas Square – with lovers on benches, marigolds on sale and the young and old mingling – it is the old Jewish Cemetery which provides a perfect mirror for his journey East: ‘When I first went to Prague and used to sit in the old Jewish Cemetery, I’d think of how the old Jewish town reflected my life, sometimes the double-tailed Bohemian lion flying proudly here, sometimes with the inhabitants

having to wear the yellow star'(*Prague*, 185). Before he travelled to Eastern Europe 'to see the face of God', Des in North Connemara had a dream of a prison cell with two small windows with five hooks on a cross beam: 'I did not know at the time this was Plotzensee Prison in Berlin' (*Prague*, 91). The poem by Harro Shulze Boysen found under the floor of his cell after his hanging at Plotzensee in December 1942 haunts the dreams of Des. It is an important moment of truth for the Irish writer as he ponders not such the history of Ireland's grief, but on the universal meaning of the world's suffering. (*Prague,* 123).

Hogan's fictional collage in *A Farewell to Prague* is a late twentieth century development of the genre of eighteenth century Romantic fiction wherein the traveller is the questing, homeless self whose true citizenship is not of one country but of many countries, and whose actual travels become mental travels as the writer moulds experiences into modes of encounters with inner landscapes and imagined worlds. (1) The most exhilarating effect of such travelling is the realisation that one's indigenous culture is a small but crucial link with the peoples of other cultures. In *The Ikon Maker*, Diarmaid grew aware of the painful gap between his own inner ideal and his mother's ideals for her cherished son. In *A Curious Life*, Alan Mulvanney was finally imprisoned and destroyed by his sense of Irish history, yet Alan's tragedy inspired an understanding of the possibilities of life in a British soldier who adopts him as his father. (2) Unlike Alan, and unlike Liam on his holy Irish island in *The Leaves on Grey*, Des finally transcends in *A Farewell to Prague* the limitations of the commonly propagated tradition of Irish mainstream national navel-gazing. Des jumps to respond to the memories of peoples from different races and beliefs – often to the point of friendship, and occasionally to an intense awareness of the paradoxical human complexities of sexual desire and love. The raddled reign of the mottled queen Nessan in *The New Shirt* is metamorphosed into the tragic fate of the heroin and Aids victim Marek in *A Farewell to Prague*. Hogan's miracle in the cities which he visits in his travels occurs at the point when the human tragedies of history do not divide but actually unite individuals from any culture in crosscurrents of mutual understanding and guarded hope. The uneven and somewhat tentative development of Hogan's fiction, over some twenty years, finally led to the emergence of an imaginative structure in which the selected fragments from Irish history may be contemplated alongside a further selection gathered from the histories of cultures far and wide throughout the world.

Yet neglect of Hogan's cumulative achievement is general, especially in Ireland. (3)

This woeful state of neglect confirms Hogan as the great outsider novelist in modern Irish literature. Yet Hogan's ikons – made from autobiographical quest, cultural exploration and historical scope – form an unique voice on the Irish cultural margins. One is reminded of the cold shoulderings of *The Crock of Gold* and *The Demi-Gods* of James Stephens; and of *The Interpreters* and *The Avatars* of George Russell (AE), which have been too often consigned to the cultural margins of the Irish literary consciousness,

most probably due to an obstinate lack of sympathy for their theosophical idealism. (4) Ireland's national fear of travelling, as distinct from touristic jet-setting, suggests that the country's cultural horizons remain over restricted in range. If the dynamic urges to travel outwardly and inwardly were more commonly practised by the Irish beyond Ireland, then Hogan's idealism would probably be more readily understood, and his fiction would be more widely appreciated.

Notes

1 See Percy G.Adams. *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Kentucky: University Press, 1984) for the historical background to the beginnings of the genre which Hogan adapted in a strikingly original way, in *A Farewell to Prague*.
2 See Robert Tracy's review of *A Curious Street* in *Eire-Ireland*, Spring 1986 for one of the very few sustained analysis and interpretation of Hogan's Fiction.
3 See *Dictionary of Irish Literature,* v. 1 (A-L) Robert Hogan (Ed.). London: Aldwych Press, 1996, for the nadir of the trivialisation of Hogan's achievement by the Irish critical establishment: 'Hogan's late novels have really very little to offer but their appalling prose style [...]. Hogan in his late novels is unintentionally silly and almost unreadable', 558.
4 See James Stephens. *The Crock of Gold.* London: Macmillan, 1912; James Stephens. *The Demi-Gods.* London: Macmillan, 1914; George Russell. *The Interpreters.* London: Macmillan, 1922; *The Avatars.* London: Macmillan, 1933.

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Picture Bride: Fact or Image? – Immigration from Ireland and Japan

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Abstract: *In the early twentieth century, masses of immigrants from "underdeveloped" nations suffered depravation of honour, dignity and self-respect, despite their hopes and expectations, at the time of their entry into America. Ireland and Japan in those days were included among such nations, and female immigrants were apt media targets for criticism or contempt. Feminist historians have pointed out that Irish women continued to suffer exclusion from the socio-economic discussion of massive emigration from Ireland to America for several decades. Likewise, Japanese women emigrants' "lived" lives, after nearly three generations, still await thorough research and revelation. Only recently, their granddaughters have begun to explore their footsteps, and expose the true intentions of these women, their hopes, disillusionment and perseverance."Picture Brides" was a term first employed by the Japanese government to evade the U.S. legal barrier against Japanese immigrants, after the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908, The term was applied to young women willing to marry on the basis of photographs provided through matchmakers. Soon it became a symbolic branding of female immigrants from nations which were poor, different in language, culture and values, and therefore, incomprehensible in the eyes of contemporary Americans.*

New York Times, in a 1922 article entitled "231 Picture Brides on Wedding Liner", reported the arrival of female immigrants from Turkey, Rumania, Armenia and Greece, without any mention of Ireland. The picture panel at Ellis Island Immigration Museum in 1995, however, displays a photo of Irish women immigrants alongside the New York Times' newspaper article as if perpetuating the discrimination in the media.To rescue their forerunners from disgrace and oblivion, attempts have been made by women researchers and artists to revive and retell the stories of those voiceless women. This paper will discuss this process of cultural salvage, using such films as Picture Bride in its attempt to show where Ireland and Japan met in the New World.

* ?

I wonder if, for how many of you, the word, “Picture Bride”, is familiar, and what sort of image that word invokes in you. Do you know any one who was or is called a “Picture Bride”?

The word, whether or not it is familiar to you in any way, inevitably brings us back to the past, at least for those of us who live in what is called “developed countries” now. It is because in our countries, mass emigration occurred when there was a lack of jobs locally, and a demand for labour elsewhere; that is, we had a “population surplus:” more people than we could sustain within our countries for economic reasons.

Since the nineteenth century onward, and especially since the early twentieth century, masses of immigrants from “under-developed” nations have huddled together on the shores of the so-called New World. Ireland and Japan in those days were included among such nations, and many of their citizens were either encouraged or obliged to emigrate to America or elsewhere where opportunities were promised though not guaranteed. The emigrants from these countries sailed long and far with mixed feelings of hope and apprehension for the life that lay ahead, and their nervous excitement was at its highest as they landed and queued for inspections at the Immigration Office at the port of entry.

An optimistic image of these emigrants is epitomised in the depiction of Annie Moore, the first immigrant, and an Irish girl, that arrived at Ellis Island, in New York, in 1892. Annie Moore, was described in the contemporary media as an innocent young woman patronised auspiciously by male adults both upon landing and in the immigration office.[1] It seems there is, not surprisingly, a gender issue behind the story. Moore’s statue in the museum on Ellis Island, therefore, seems to exploit the image of a very young girl, while the same girl’s statue, in which she is represented with her two younger brothers, at the Cobh Heritage Centre, in Ireland, presents Moore as a very different kind of young woman, that is, like Fionnuala, the daughter of King Lir, the very symbol of female strength and perseverance. If the statues depict the same girl, one cannot help wondering how she could possibly forget her responsibility for the care of her brothers upon disembarkation.

Perhaps it is reasonable to think that Annie Moore was a lucky female immigrant to be given such favourable treatment at the immigration office and to enjoy the flattering spotlight of the media, as well. Certainly there were many others who suffered the depravation of honour, dignity and self-respect, at the time of their entry into America, despite the hopes and expectations they arrived with. With more than a million immigrants entering the U.S.A each year during the peak years, over 10,000 of them queued on Ellis Island daily, patiently waiting to be “processed” by the officers and medical examiners.

But I am not going to enter the discussion of the disgraceful treatment of female immigrants in these premises, which has come to light in recent years. Rather, what I would like to bring to the fore is the story of women who emigrated from Ireland and Japan, and how their lives were lived, how they were depicted by the American media, and how their lives have been told. As their stories unfold, the similarity of their

experiences will be striking. However, before I begin, one question remains to be asked: Is the "Picture Bride" really a thing in the past?

I

The United States, or more commonly "America" to many outsiders, was the ultimate destination of their long voyage for many emigrants in the 19th and 20th century. According to the figures that the U.S. Census Bureau makes available on the Internet,[2] the foreign-born population has shown a constant rise since 1850 (total 2,244,602). Every decade after showed an increase of over a million in the number of the foreign-born citizens until 1880 (over six and half million, 6,679,943), but there was then a sudden surge in the numbers in 1890, as the foreign-born population jumped to over nine million, (9,249,547); by 1930, three decades later, it had reached 14,204,149.

Among that foreign-born population were Irish immigrants, 1,871,509 of them in 1890, but this number decreases to 1,037,234 in 1920, and soon afterwards gets divided, of course, into separate figures for Northern Ireland and Ireland, making the total of 923,642 in 1930. The numbers remained high, regardless; in 1960, there were as many as 338,722 from the South and 68,162 from North – till in 1990 the number dropped to 169,827 from the South and 16,531 from the North (total 186,358).

On the other hand, the number of Japanese emigrants from Japan in 1890 was a mere 2,292 (which was less than 40 years after Commodore Perry set foot on the shores of Japan, forcing the country to abandon its self-imposed isolation policy in 1853), but it was ten times that in 1900 (24,788), 67,744 in 1910, and, in 1920, reached a peak of 81,502, only to decrease as U.S.-Japan relationship worsened.

According to population statistics for the year 2000, it is estimated that there are now over 40,000,000 Irish Americans in America, and 1,150,000 Japanese Americans. If one considers the vast gap in the total population between Ireland and Japan (120,000,000), a comparison of these figures only make the Irish exodus more significant. However, I have said enough about the figures now, and would like to go on to the issue of female emigrants.

II

It is a well-known fact nowadays that the Irish emigrants after the Famine were remarkable for the large number of single women they included. As Diner points out:

> "Irish women differed from most other immigrant women in terms of numbers. They were the only significant group of foreign-born women who outnumbered men: they were the only significant group of foreign-born women who chose to migrate in primarily female cliques" (Diner 1983, xiv).

Emigrants from other European nations often travelled as families, while cohorts of single women were a distinctive feature of Irish emigrant groups. To explain this phenomenon of "massive female exodus," Diner points out such reasons as "late and infrequent marriage, high rates of celibacy, social environment of gender segregation and reluctant sexuality, etc." (4) Although the land of promise did not offer easy access to contrary conditions or status, Irish women continued to leave the old home, forcing 20th century Ireland to emit its young women and men as "its chief export." (4)

At the superficial level, the feature of Japanese female emigrants seems quite similar; there, too, were cohorts of single women on board the emigrant ships. However, these women were in fact destined to marry unseen husbands after landing. How did they decide whom to marry? Through photos or pictures; hence they were called "picture brides".

There has been a common understanding among historians that the term "picture bride" applied only to Japanese women who imigrated to America to be wedded to Japanese men whom they had met only through photographs. *The Encyclopaedia of Women's Studies* specifies that the term describes women from Japan, Okinawa and Korea immigrating to the U.S.A. for marriage (Tierney, 355).

This style of marriage was a notion based on a conservative custom in Japan that considered marriage not as the culmination of romantic love, but as an agreement reached through a matchmaker between the families of both parties; Or, to be more precise, between the patriarchs, because women were not normally included in the process of decision making.

This process is documented in various sources, and I would like to quote one passage from "The Japanese in Hawai'i: 1885-1920" by Ogawa and Grant. In the case of Japanese emigrants, they describe that male labourers went first, hoping to earn a fortune to bring home. However, the reality was not quite what they had expected.

> [So] they would make Hawai'i their home until perhaps at some distant time they again could see their parents and homeland. First they would need families, and being dutiful sons of farmers they knew they would need dutiful Japanese brides.
> Letters were written home requesting that their parents contact the matchmakers in the village so that respectable women could be found for the distant sojourners. Pictures of the men were taken by professional photographers who often used the same worn suit over and over so that these labourers looked a little more distinguished. The portraits were then tucked into the letters. In time they would receive from Japan the exciting news that a bride had been found and if approved, arrangements would be made to send the young woman across the seas to this foreign land. Inside the envelope would also be the photograph of the prospective bride.

Ogawa and Grant write that "[t]he first major waves of Japanese 'picture brides' began in 1908 and [...] [d]uring the peak years between 1911 and 1919, 9,500 picture brides bolstered the Islands' female population."

Another observation based on the Hawaiian experience by Bell shows the other aspect of this marriage style:

> "It is part of our [the] immigrant folklore to expect a mismatch of a young beautiful woman with an older, work-wearied husband whose matchmaking photo was taken many years before. The folklore of romance includes the not uncommon tales of those couples who grew to love and cherish each other. However, no community is immune from the social ills of abuse, alcoholism, gambling and the stress of a new marriage in a new country."

Out of such lore emerged the film *Picture Bride* (1994), it might seem, but the film was actually based on the true story of Riyo, a young girl who went to Hawaii as a picture bride in 1918. The film, directed by a woman director Kayo Hatta, is one of the first independent feature films produced in Hawai'i, but I will discuss the film later.

The question now is who invented this funny word "picture bride", and what connotation did it have? I would like to quote Ikumi Yanagisawa in her forthcoming Japanese paper titled "Picture Bride: What was at issue?" She writes that it was in 1905 that the first "distant" marriage between a male Japanese immigrant living in Santa Clara, California, and a woman residing in Japan was recorded in the official documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The couple had never met, but the woman was married on paper in Japan, and the government issued her a passport as a married woman. However, when her boat reached San Francisco, the U.S. immigration office refused to admit her, saying the marriage was not valid under Californian law.

What actually was at issue was American resistance to the notion of marrying someone without having even met them; it was unthinkable, and such a marriage, if it were to be called "marriage", was a false or falsified one. Therefore, it was assumed that the woman was either a prostitute, or else the China-based custom of polygamy, which was morally unacceptable, was about to invade American society. In this case, the Japanese woman was given accommodation at a training centre of the Methodist Church for Japanese in San Francisco, and eventually married her husband in an American style wedding ceremony.

In the documents related to this first case, no such words as "picture bride" are used, but certainly this is the first example of "marriage through exchange of pictures" (Yanagisawa, forthcoming). Soon after, the Japanese government began to take precautions so as not to stir up suspicion or animosity about Japanese immigration. The antagonism toward Chinese immigrants had been a precedent, and Japan did not want to be seen as a threat to the States, while aspiring to be seen as the newly emerging power in Asia and one of the "first class" nations of the world.

The problems with massive immigration in the eyes of Americans were seen as two-fold: economic and moral. The increasingly growing number of ethnic groups, especially Asians in California, presented a threat to the land ownership by white

Americans, and differing customs and values presented an impediment to social assimilation.

Between 1907 and 1908, negotiations continued between the US and Japanese governments over the restriction of Japanese immigrants, and what is called a "Gentleman's Agreement" was reached between the two, which allowed families of only those Japanese already in the States to join them. Japan agreed not to send any more immigrants to the U.S., except for the ones joining their families residing in U.S. already, which in reality meant wives-to-be to be wedded to bachelors (Yanagisawa 1998, 125).

With women being only 2.3% of the immigrant population, the predominantly male Japanese immigrant society in America typically consisted of unskilled labourers, and had problems with misconduct from excessive drinking, gambling, fighting and the sex trade, which were the cause of much embarrassment to a nation aspiring to be modern. Japan did not want to be looked down on, nor treated as a "yellow peril" by its powerful neighbour.

In order to make single men marry and establish themselves in a country where mixed marriage were prohibited by law, "picture brides" were considered the best solution to such problems in the eyes of diplomats and government officials. Thus, as Yanagisawa argues, marriage through photos were encouraged by the Japanese government as a way of evading the strict ban on immigration, and as a result, many a young Japanese woman braved the distance to marry a man in the promised land.

According to an information online provided by Bill, "[b]etween 1908 and 1920 nearly 20,000 Japanese, Okinawan and Korean women arrived in Hawai'i as "picture brides" while thousands of others also migrated to the U.S. Mainland". And according to Yanagisawa, it is estimated from the record of Immigration Office that between 1912 and 1920, which were the peak years, over 7,000 picture brides entered through Seattle and San Francisco (Yanagisawa, forthcoming).

However, the brides' official entry into the U.S. itself was terminated by the Japanese government in 1919 by refusing to issue them passports. This was an outcome of the political consideration on the part of the government, resulting from the outrage that ensued after the "Alien Land Act" was issued in California in 1913. The Act targeted Japanese immigrants because their diligence and fertility afforded them land acquisition, and their increasing prosperity was perceived as a threat to white citizens. Ethnic fear and prejudice mounted, and gradually a nationalistic "100% Americanism Campaign" raged in California and beyond.

Therefore, it is apparent that the 'picture bride' was a highly symbolic term with very political connotations, and some diplomatic heft to it. Yanagisawa points out that while the term "picture marriage" was used at the beginning, "picture bride" became the set term for referring to the women and the issue. Another possible term "picture groom" has never been used. This reflects the apparent gendered exploitation of the ethnic groups in America, because women seen as objects most acutely epitomises vulnerability and "the otherness" of ethnic groups in the society and the media.

III

It is not actually known who invented the word "picture bride," but the American media did not miss the chance to use this new catchy phrase to describe the ethnic invasion. Representing the general apprehension of middleclass white Americans, the Seattle's *The Star* newspaper reported on 5 March, 1913, that "533 picture brides came from Japan in the past year." Examples of such media exploitation of female immigrants as the photographic subject of the term "picture brides" are many, but the following is a case where the term is used for a different ethnic group, and with an obvious difference in tone from that used for the Japanese 'brides".

The left-hand side panel in the photo (shown by OHP) shows the article in *The New York Times*, July 3, 1922.

> 231 Picture Brides on Wedding Liner
> Grooms-to-Be Say It with Candy and Flowers at Quarantine.
>
> Sixteen nationalities were represented on the passenger list of the King Alexander of the National Greek Line, which docked in Brooklyn yesterday from Constantinople. One Customs Inspector call the ship "the matrimonial special" because 231 of the 700 women passengers from Turkey, Rumania, Armenia and Greece had made the trip to be married here. The majority of them were "picture brides," young women who had exchanged pictures with nationals here during their courtship by mail.
>
> When the King Alexander reached Quarantine more than fifty motor boats and tugs with prospective grooms aboard swarmed around the liner. Lined against the rail of the King Alexander were young women with photographs in their hands looking for the men to whom they were to be married when they stepped ashore. Boxes of candy and bouquets in profusion were hurled aboard the Greek vessel by the happy grooms-to-be. The motor boats and tugs escorted the King Alexander to her pier.
>
> The Travelers' Aid Society, which acts as guardian for the young women until they are married, had a busy day, its appointment list being the largest on record, it was said.
>
> Three young men were doomed to disappointment. Their brides-to-be on the way over had exercised a woman's privilege of changing her mind and announced that they had fallen in love with fellow passengers.
>
> The various nationalities represented on the passenger list were: Greek, 511; American, 35; English 2; Turk, 66; Russian, 92; Rumanian, 22; Armenian, 64; Albanian, 25; Persian, 16; Egyptian, 2; Dutch, 1; Italian, 7; Serbian, 1; Bulgarian, 2, and 11 from Asia Minor.

Compared to the headline of the Los Angeles Times of 3 January, 1915, which wrote, "Right Bride for Right Jap", one cannot help noticing that the tone of the New

York Times headline is more benign, and even a bit romanticising the scene at the port. Nevertheless, while no perjorative term is used in the headline, there is a similar wryness to the reportage, because the grooms-to-be who have to resort to mail order brides are being mocked.

Actually the panel is the same one we saw on 20 July, in 1996, when Maureen Murphy, our host at the Hofstra Conference, took us to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. The enlarged copy of the photo of the panel, which I took and examined later, gave me the source of the article, and Yanagisawa later confirmed the original. What struck us both at the initial stage was the combination of the article and the photos. Perhaps, some of you have noticed that the photo on the top right is the famous one of the girls looking their best as they arrive at the port of entry in Kerby Miller's *Out of Ireland*. And yet, as I have just read, there was not a single Irish girl on board according to the newspaper article; nor was the term 'picture bride' ever applied to Irish girls, as they did not have such practice, at least as far as we know.

Then, what does this use of the photo mean? I do not like to think that Miller deliberately used a false photo in his book, so I must allow myself to think that it was either the curator of this section or the designer of this panel who simply wanted some suitable pictures to match the article on the panel. If so, this is a typical case of perpetuating undiscriminating discrimination against women in the media and in education.

Apart from this problem, one thing is certain from the panel: No matter where they came from, these emigrant women wanted to look good, and got dressed up carefully before landing. The two photos on the panel show that, and so does the other one showing Japanese brides arriving in their best kimono at SF's Angel Island, which is only one of many examples of groups of "picture brides" covered by the U.S. media. The obvious reason of their best dress, of course, was that the women were concerned about their appearance, as they were about to meet their families or unseen spouses.

However, behind that natural motivation, there were people taking care, especially in the case of Japanese women, to make them look respectable in the media; i.e. the government office and the voluntary Christian groups of Japanese women at home. They saw that the women who volunteered or were persuaded to become "picture brides" were mostly from economically handicapped rural areas, and therefore unsophisticated and vulgar in the "civilised" eyes of Americans. They opened up purpose-oriented boarding schools in Yokohama, Kobe, and in America, too, to teach them "better" manners and basic English. Tanaka clarifies that fact in his article. This seems to remind us of the various functions the Catholic Church and its organisations assumed in taking care of Irish girls in American ports, but I do not have time to go into comparisons now, except to mention the common formative systems for young women coming from Ireland and Japan.

IV

Concerning the Irish women's migration, Kelly and Choille refer to more recent phenomena:

> At school everybody had to read a book called Dialann Deorai (The Emigrant's Diary); [...] we never thought about it too much then, it just seemed like all the emigrants were men. Women never figured too much in those books. [...] I realised that women were also leaving in large numbers but weren't included in the story of emigration that we were told (O'Sullivan 1995, 175).

While emigration was pervasive in both countries, the absence of information about women's emigration is both surprising and deplorable. Women's experiences of emigration, which, till quite recently have been assumed to be the same as that of men, actually need more exploration and telling.

Kelly and Choille write, "Being in an ethnic ghetto, while offering security, imposed the same restrictive values that some women sought to escape," (182) and emphasis on family life restricted and repressed both Irish and Japanese women. Diner writes, "Ethnicity can be a central determinant of human behaviour" (Diner 1983: xv). She points out that Irish women's behaviour "as immigrants and as wage earners, may seem to indicate autonomy and independence. It does not. [...] Their actions stemmed from family loyalties. [...] Their actions represented a commitment to Irish Catholic culture and to its way of life. The move to America did not represent a search for a new identity, nor did it constitute a break with the past (xiv). It is apparent that many women from both groups, Irish and Japanese, shared the social and familial attitudes, and retained the old identity in the New World.

However, their lives should not be generalised, as they are diverse, as the oral history of old emigrant women documents it, and their true stories before they are entirely lost, are beginning to be explored and told by women of younger generations. The already mentioned film "Picture Bride" based on a Hawaiian experience was a conscious effort by the female film makers to do so. The promotional material of the film includes the following introduction:

> As filmmakers we (with a deep aloha for Hawai'i, Kayo Hatta, Lisa Onodera, and) realized that with surviving picture brides in their 80s and 90s, with sugar plantations closing down throughout Hawai'i, and with historical sites such as Honolulu Harbor experiencing transformation into modern shopping complexes, preservation of this history was not only important, but crucial. The closing of one sugar plantation after another would result in the inevitable fading of Hawai'i's unique plantation culture and society. (Mark)

The women emigrants' "lived" lives still await thorough research and revelation, while their granddaughters have begun to explore their footsteps and expose the true

intentions of these women, their hopes, disillusionment and perseverance. More oral histories of women have to be recorded and collected, to be more truthfully and artistically presented. Examples like the films "Picture Bride" and "The Piano" have done so, to convey the challenges these brave and tenacious women met, years ago.

These attempts are important and relevant to our contemporary world, because we, in developed countries, see women arriving daily from developing countries accompanied with the familiar baggage of similar ethnic and gender problems. In this sense, I believe that the combined efforts of daughters, writing and reading Irish and Japanese literatures, have much to offer to the world in future generations.[3]

Notes

* ???

1 In one episode, Annie Moore was said to have been the second passenger to leave the ship, but the first "gentleman" yielded the place to her. In another, she was given a gift of a ten dollar gold piece by Colonel Weber, Superintendent of Emigration, which made Annie "dumfounded", according to *New York Herald*, 2 January 1892, edited and quoted in *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

2 Much of the information, including photographs, in this paper was obtained through Internet, which seems to indicate that this new information media is of great value for scholars exploring this field, the census statistics, especially.
Gibson, Campbell J. and Lennon, Emily, (February 1999) "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990", *Population Division Working Paper,* n. 29, Washington, D.C.: Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, HYPERLINK http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab01.html http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab01.html, 10 October 2002.
The table of "Religion and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-born Population, with Geographic Details Shown in Decennial Census Publications of 1930 or Earlier: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 1990" (Internet Release date: March 9, 1999), obtained on 4 July 2002, was also the source of information in the following section of this paper (HYPERLINK http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab01.html http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html).

3 I regret that I was unable to cover the experience of the Japanese immigrant women in Brazil in this paper due to lack of space and sufficient material. Brazil being alternative destination, as America became more exclusive, for Japanese immigrants after June 1908, there must be numerous stories awaiting to be told about the first generation women's experience, and later generations who returned to Japan as migrant workers, which I hope will be carried on by younger scholars in Brazil and Japan.

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____. (Forthcoming), "Shashin-hanayome-wa-naniga-mondai-dattanoka (Picture Bride: What was at issue?)".

Documents of the self

All Politics is Local

James E. Doan*

Abstract???

'All Politics Is Local': Catholic/Protestant Conflicts and the Boer War
in Séamus Ó Grianna's *Nuair a Bhí Mé Óg*
(*When I Was Young*)

Based on his recollections of growing up in the Donegal Gaeltacht in the 1890s and early 1900s, Séamus Ó Grianna's *Nuair a Bhí Mé Óg*, recently translated by A. J. Hughes as *When I Was Young* (A. & A. Farmar, 2001),[1] represents one of the hallmarks of twentieth-century Gaelic literature, an Ulster equivalent to the Blasket Island memoirs such as *Peig, The Islandman* and *Twenty Years A'Growing*. This is one of the few Donegal memoirs translated so far into English, the other major one being Micí Mac Gabhann's *Rotha Mór an tSaoil*, initially transcribed by his son-in-law, the folklorist Seán Ó hEochaidh, and later translated into English by Valentin Iremonger, and published as Michael Mac Gowan, *The Hard Road to Klondyke* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962).

Ó Grianna's writing style bears a strong relationship to the Gaelic oral tradition which formed a large part of life in the Rannafast (Rann na Feirste) area of Donegal, between the two inlets of Gweedore and Gweebarra in the Rosses, where the economy was based primarily on fishing and small farming. The memoir, dealing with his life from about 1895 to 1907 (or from the age of 5 ½ to 17), is structured around significant events in his early years, from his first pair of trousers, catechism class and the trials of Confirmation, leaving school, the hiring fair in Tyrone and his first job in the anglicized Lagan area, to his seasonal work on the harvest in Scotland and his love for the girl he calls "Highland Mary," named after the beloved of Robbie Burns, a poet whom he idolizes.

The influence of storytelling may be seen quite early in the book. Ó Grianna recalls:

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> My father was a wonderful storyteller. Often on a long winter's night we would sit around the fire and not a cheep out of us as we listened to him. He held us in a trance talking about Ned, Michael Ruadh, and Micí Bheil [local personages]. When you had listened to him for a while you would think that the finest of men that were ever in Ireland lived in Rann na Feirste. And then he had stories of the Day of the Great Wreck on the Ocean, the day *La Hoche* engaged the English fleet between Tory Island and Aranmore. He had heard these stories from people who had stood on the promontories of Rann na Feirste looking down on the conflict on that dismal day of our suppression. You would swear that you were looking at the French vessel with its gaping timbers where her side had been torn asunder. Masts and men heaped on her decks and her boards awash with gore. (12)

Note how the father's storytelling fascinates the young boy, analagous to the way Malachy McCourt's stories and songs inspire and cajole the young Frank in *Angela's Ashes*. Thus begins the socialization process whereby young Séamus learns the local geography, history and folk traditions, mediated through a nationalist Irish lens. Or as the thisteenth-century poet, Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe had said in a famous quatrain:

> If poetry were destroyed, o people,/ and there were no old stories or songs,
> Nobody would know anything ever again/ about generations before their own.[2]

After telling him the story of Humbert and *La Hoche*, his father regales him with the encounters between the local poteen-makers and the revenue collectors ("ribbonmen") during his own youth. As Ó Grianna states, "When the ribbonmen won my father would tell the story half-heartedly and we would only half-enjoy listening to him, but when the people of the Rosses outwitted the Queen's men I can assure you that the story was worth listening to" (12). Séamus and his young friends even act out the encounters: "These stories were music to the ears of young boys, and it was reflected in our play as some of us were poteen-makers and other were ribbonmen" (13).

Apparently, Feidhlimidh and Máire's house (Ó Grianna's parents) was a center of storytelling in the community:

> Our house was a great ceilidh house long age. Donnchadh Ruadh would visit us from time to time and recount his father's exploits. Seánín Phádraig an Dálaigh would call and spend the night telling of the Fianna and the Houd of the Feats [Cú na gCleas, an epithet of Cú Chulainn]. On spinning nights there wasn't a story from Heaven to Aranmore that my grandmother did not tell us. Conchobhar of the Two Sheep, the Daughter of the King of the Hill of Gold, the King of Norway's Children and Míogach, Son of Colgáin fromt he Norse Territories of the Sweet Music. (54)

The effects of these stories on the incipient writer's mind reminds us the effects of reading on a contemporary youth in anglicized Ireland, e.g., Frank O'Connor, who writes in *An Only Child* about discovering a version of the Ulster sagas in school. In O'Connor's case the effect is revolutionary, as it sets up a contest in his own mind between the imperial worldview presented in the English children's stories and a national one:

> For months I read nothing but Irish history and the result was horrifying [...] somewhere or other I had picked up Eleanor Hull's *Cuchulainn*, a re-telling of the Ulster sagas for children, and that became a new ideal. Nobody in any English school-story I had read had done things as remarkable as that child had done by the age of seven.[3]

At this point in Ó Grianna's life, literacy was also very much an English-language experience, while Gaelic for the most part remained with the oral sphere. This dichotomy remained in force until 1910, when he attended Coláiste Uladh, one of the five colleges established by the Gaelic League to train Irish-language teachers. One of Ó Grianna's teachers at Coláiste Uladh was Séamus Ó Searcaigh, who had a significant influence on his future as a writer. Ó Searcaigh was impressed with his pupil's command of Donegal Irish and he consulted with Ó Grianna on a number of projects, including an Irish-language history of Cloghaneely parish which included a tale about Cú Chulainn he encouraged Ó Grianna to commit to writing. This launched him on his writing career, and Ó Searcaigh went further by convincing him to enter three folktales for a literary section of the 1912 Oireachtas. Ó Grianna won the competition which set him on the course of writing for a national stage.[4]

Earlier in his life, though, we see the trauma of English-language education in the Gaeltacht, when students were beaten for using the vernacular or for mangling English responses to the questions posed by the anglicized schoolmasters. In Chapter 3 of the memoirs, Ó Grianna writes:

> Many's the lash of the cane I got when I was at school trying to learn English. That was until Master Boyle came to us, a young man from Crolly who, just like ourselves, spoke nothing but Gaelic as a boy which led to understanding and tolerance on his part when he in turn grew up.
> The master with whom I spent most time – the poor man is in the place of truth and it would not be right for me to lie about him – did not speak one word of Gaelic and we had not a single word of English, so our little world was uneasy and full of strife. We all got many beatings on account of English. (20)

It is surprising that these policies of the colonial government did not cause more linguistic turmoil in the native population than they did. The Irish language had begun to break down in much of the land even before the Famine of 1845-50. As Declan Kiberd points out in *Irish Classics*:

> In the countryside, it was a different matter. There parents spoke Irish and children English, and some of the more naive children were unaware that these were different languages. When Douglas Hyde asked a country lad, 'Nach labhraíonn tú an Ghaeilge?' (Don't you speak Irish?), the replay came back, 'Isn't it Irish I'm speaking, sir.'[5]

The breakdown in the language may also be seen in these remarks made by a semi-literate countryman to Hyde:

> The people that is living now a days could not understand the old Irish which made me drop it altogether their parents is striving to learn their children English which themselves never learned so the boys and girls has neither good English or good Irish [...].[6]

However, this confusion does not appear to have taken place in the Donegal Gaeltacht, where the two registers of Gaelic and English remained sufficiently distinct to prevent linguistic atrophy. There seems to have been a certain amount of collusion on the part of local authorities, for example, the Church, to support the continual use of Gaelic. When Séamus is supposed to be learning his catechism in English, he is unable to answer the questions posed to him, but instead responds in Gaelic. Even though the schoolmaster is highly incensed at this, Séamus is eventually allowed to go to his confirmation. During the ceremony, the bishop interrogates him in Gaelic, rather than English, and Séamus reveals that, even though he doesn't know the English catechism, he does know Christian Doctrine taught him by his father in Gaelic, as well as a repertoire of native folktales and lays, stories of St. Columba (Colm Cille), etc., so that he is ultimately confirmed (30).

Though the Rosses had been settled by Protestants as early as the seventeenth century, they remained a distinct population group in Ó Grianna's time, living in an area across the water from Rannafast called the Point. Called *Albanaigh*, literally "Scots," their ancestors were probably Scottish settlers, though the word had come to mean Protestant in general in the Irish dialect. Rather unusually, considering their fate in other parts of Ulster, these Protestants were generally poor and less socially mobile than their Catholic neighbors, who would emigrate to Scotland or America when they had a chance. They spoke a rather broken form of Gaelic, presumably in addition to Ulster Scots. As Ó Grianna states:

> The Catholics and Protestants of our district never quarrelled about religion but they used to fall out from time to time over political matters. Those who know the history of the Point would tell you that England never went to war without the Protestants venting their anger on the Catholics. One night when they were the topic of conversation, I heard my father say that they refused the Rann na Feirste people the right to cut mat-weed during the Crimean War [1853-56]. All the houses in our townland were thatched at that time and every house was nearly ruined by leaks by the time the war ended. (124-5)

Interestingly, the Home Rule movement actually strengthened the tie between members of the two faiths in the 1890s, due largely to a minister from Ballybofey, related to Isaac Butts, who convinced the local Protestants that Home Rule was in their interest. Then, in an image surprisingly similar to that of the Brown Bull of Cúailnge from *The Tain*, Ó Grianna refers to a brown bull belonging to a Protestant from the Point named Dicí Gallta ("English Dickey"), which was "well-bred and great at siring female calves," and which he would share at this time with his Catholic neighbors (127).

This *entente cordiale* in Donegal began to collapse, though, when hostilities broke out between England and the Boer republics in South Africa on 11 October 1899. Though Ireland, as an integral part of the United Kingdom, was officially at war with the Boers, during the ensuing 32 months of conflict the Irish nationalist population demonstrated their enthusiasm for the cause as pro-Boer fever swept the country. The press campaign in support of the Boers was instigated by Arthur Griffith, who had recently founded the advanced nationalist paper, the *United Irishman*. Though undoubtedly biased in favor of the Boers, his articles on the Transvaal are the most accurate in the Irish press at the time, and he went so far as to print the Transvaal national anthem translated into Irish.[7] Though the advanced nationalists in Dublin recognized the political gain of alliance with the Boers, the sympathy and respect for the Boers were even stronger in the countryside. The Boers were a farming people with a strong attachment to the land; they had a democratic system of governing themselves; and they were devoted to their religion, all qualities which the rural Irish understood and respected.[8]

Despite the fact that the Boers were fellow Protestants, the majority of unionists in both Ulster and the south were staunchly pro-British government. The Ulster unionists, in particular, were hostile to the Boers primarily because of the strong nationalist support for them. Many Ulstermen, being fellow Calvinists, had considerable respect for the Boers and would have concurred with their counterparts in South Africa in believing that the British were fortunate in having such a people as partners in developing the country instead of others who had equal claims with the Dutch to the country, from the point of view of discovery.[9] Some liberal unionists, however, admired the Boers, for

example the historian W.E.H. Lecky of Trinity College, Dublin, who said regarding Paul Kruger in an address to the College Historical Society in 1896:

> They [the Transvaal Boers] have at their head a man who, with greatly superior abilities, represents very faithfully their characters, ideals and wishes [...]. In many respects he resembles strikingly the stern Puritan warrior of the Commonwealth – a strong stubborn man with indomitable courage and resolution, with very little tinge of cultivation, but with a rare natural shrewdness in judging men and events [...] In a semi-regal position [...] he lives the life of a peasant; and though I believe, essentially a just, wise and strong man, he has all his countrymen's dread of an immigration of an alien element [the English], and all their dislike and suspicion of an industrial and mining community.[10]

One notes the way each group, Catholic nationalist or unionist, constructs their notion of the Boers based on their view of Irish or British history and their sense of local Irish politics.

Once the war begins, the antagonism of Ó Grianna's Protestant neighbors to the local Catholics comes out in very immediate ways. They prevent Dicí Gallta's Brown Bull from mating with a local man's cow, and then send home a Catholic boy – whom Ó Grianna calls a *chargé d'affaires* – who had been working for one of the Protestant farmers for several years. When asked what has happened, the boy answers that it's because of a war, but can only tell them that the war is "in far off countries some place." At first Ó Grianna has a hard time believing that the relations between the two groups have broken down so completely: "it did not necessarily follow that the War of the Gael with the Foreigner was near at hand" (129), referring to the eleventh-century *Cogadh Gaedheal re Gallaibh*, which dealt with the Irish/Viking wars and which had been edited and translated by J. H. Todd in 1867. Unlike the references to *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and the stories of Cú Chulainn which Ó Grianna may well have heard locally, this reference to the Middle Irish text is certainly based on his encounter with it as an adult in Dublin. Here he is using the tradition of the early medieval struggles between Viking and Gael as a paradigm for subsequent conflicts in Ireland. This is analagous to the way Ó Grianna's contemporary (and fellow prisoner during the Irish Civil War), the Donegal writer Peadar O'Donnell

> assimilates the outbreak of the Civil War into a Gaelic pattern of events by recounting a prophecy, uttered by an old man from Aranmore, Co. Donegal, that the English 'will offer something which will not be good enough to accept but which will be too good to refuse. Some will take opposite sides and England will win the day.'[11]

Apparently, at the same time heated rhetoric is building in the House of Commons in London and in the South African Rand over the developing war, by mid-October 1899, the Protestants in the Rosses are carrying on their own discussions about how to respond, as Ó Grianna later learns:

> And the third set of talks was taking place in Robbie Alcorn's house in the point, and Dicí Gallta spoke on behalf of the Protestants. He said that the Catholics deeply resented them [was this possibly projection on their part since the latter didn't even know the war had begun?], that they wanted England to lose this war. Then they would be able to do what they had always wanted: banish the Protestants from the Point. But the Catholics wouldnot have it all their own way. He would sell the bull, Searlaí Liam Bhig [Charley, son of Wee Liam, who was Ó Grianna's *chargé d'affaires*] would be sent home, and not a single wisp of mat-weed or a single drop of buttermilk would ever again be given to the people of Rann na Feirste! (131)

The first *communiqué* in this local war comes from a woman named Máire John. Arriving at the well for a pail of water, she tells them all the news:

> There's something strange going on in the Point [...]. I was down today looking for thatch grass and devil the wisp I, or anybody from your townland, could get. England is at war with people they call the Boers, and treachery has broken out among the Protestants. Dicí Gallta won't let his bull near Donnchadh Eoghainín's cow, and humpy Billy sent Liam Beag's son home, and devil the wisp of mat-weed any Catholic's son from the Rosses will get in the Point [...]. Ah, child dear, [...] the bad drop is in them, but they'll be made to pay for it. For as sure as God, the next time Donnchadh Eoghainín meets slobbering Dicí, he will knock his wry mouth to the other side of his face. (p.131-2)
>
> Ó Grianna comments on this:
>
> For years it had seemed that there were strong ties between the Catholics and the Protestants but there were not. They were like a pair of horses bound together by a yoke of straw who walked steadily together just as long as they wished to go in the same direction [...]. But, as soon as England went to war, the Protestant looked to London and the Catholic suddenly turned his head to see if the host of Aileach was awakening. And they snapped the bond as if it were only a silken thread. (132)

The local men return from their seasonal work abroad (usually Scotland) around Halloween and for the whole winter the major topic of conversation is the war. Ó Grianna mentions that this was the first time he saw a newspaper, the *Derry Journal* which his mother brings back from Bunbeg. That night the house is packed to the door and one of the men reads the paper, explaining it in Gaelic to the others. Afterwards, everyone sits around discussing the Boers, and it turns out that the people of the "townland knew a lot about them," though generally in the form of stories concerning their skill and bravery. In fact, Ó Grianna likens these to stories of the "Fianna and the Red Branch Knights," again pointing out the way in which – at least as a child, and perhaps as an adult – he interprets events through the prism of Irish folklore, myth and history. The Boer who dominates the conversation is General Cronje, and the stories about him follow the traditional heroic pattern:

> His like had not been seen since Cú Chulainn took up arms. His first trophy was a lion. He was only a ten-year-old boy at the time. He was riding on horseback past the edge of a wood one day and his sister was sitting behind him in the saddle. She was at least two years younger than him. The next thing they knew a lion leapt out from behind a tree and snatched the young girl clean out of the saddle, but before it got a chance to hold on the ground, the boy lashed out at him with his whip and took the eye clean out of its head. This blow stunned the lion and he loosened his grip. The boy immediately drew his pistol from his belt and fired three bullets in succession into the lion's head. (132-3)

Other stories relate to the way he was able to avoid capture by the English: "And then the news came that Cronje was fifty miles away from the place they had hoped to capture him, and had inflicted fresh slaughter on the English" (*ibid.*).

By Christmas the Boers seemed to be winning the war. At that time "there were great celebrations in Rann na Feirste for a week [...]. The English were defeated at Stormberg and they ahd lost two thousand men and all their weapons." Ó Grianna continues:

> But the next feat overshadowed the first one. I can still picture Niall Shéimisín with the paper on his knee telling the story in Gaelic. Cronje along with five hundred of his men were camped at Magersfontein. General Methuen came in the night with four thousand men intending to surround them. The next thing they knew they were caught in barbed wire and they could neither advance nor retreat. With that, a light was lit in the Boers' camp that illuminated the hillside so that you could see a rabbit from afar. Then the firing began. It was the men of the Highland Brigade who led the attack under the command of General Wauchope. (134)

Then pointing out one of the ironies of the conflict – that a large part of the British army was made up of both Irishmen and Scotsmen, not to mention the fact that Irishmen were fighting and dying on both sides – Ó Grianna states:

> It was the poor Highlanders and the Dublin Fusiliers who were most often at the front in this war. And the worst part of the disaster was not that the two groups of men were so lacking in sense as to die for the English Empire which had ruined Scotland and Ireland. In this battle, the commander fell in the first hail of bullets and six hundred of his men fell after him. (*ibid*.)

By February the tide has begun to turn: "Cronje was captured. The Boers were on the point of subjugation [...]. England had the upper hand once more [...] and the most galling aspect of all was the Protestants of the Point. Won't they be hard to stick tomorrow?" (author's ellipses). The episode ends with a conflicted sense of what the local Catholics should do: say the Rosary for the Boers or burn down every Protestant house in the Point, though it appears they chose the latter (134-5).

I find this treatment of the conflict a perfect example of the late U.S. Speaker of the House, Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neill's statement that "all politics is local." Since Ó Grianna's Catholic neighbors had a very imprecise sense of the South African geopolitical reality, they interpreted it in their own terms. Both the nationalist and unionist ideologies were based on the notion of binary opposition: us against them, Catholic vs. Protestant, Irish vs. English (or Scottish). One must ask if this is still the case today. Let me end by quoting the essayist Hubert Butler who, referring to cross-border relations in 1955, wrote of the polarization within Irish life as "gentle, persistent pressure towards some simple alignment of Good and Evil, Friend and Enemy."[12]

Notes

1 In this paper subsequent references to the text will be to this translation.
2 Eleanor Knott, *Irish Classical Poetry* (Dublin 1960), 53, cited in Declan Kiberd, *Irish Classics.* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001, 18.
3 Frank O'Connor, *An Only Child* (Belfast: Blackstaff 1993, 156-7), in "'A Quaking Sod': Ireland, Empire and Children's Literary Culture", in P. J. Mathews (Ed.). *New Voices in Irish Criticism,* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000, 192.
4 Hughes. "'Máire' – Séamus Ó Grianna's life and times", in *When I Was Young*, 202.
5 Douglas Hyde. "A Literary History of Ireland". (Dublin, 1899), 631ff, in Kiberd, *Irish Classics.* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000, 280-1.
6 Hyde, 636, in Kiberd, 285.
7 Donal P. McCracken. *The Irish Pro-Boers, 1877-1902.* Johannesburg: Perskor, 1989, 44.
8 Ibid., 48.
9 Ibid., 112.
10 J. J. Auchmuty. *Lecky.* Dublin, 1945, 110, cited in McCracken, 118.

11 Hughes, "'Máire' – Séamus Ó Grianna's life and times", in *When I Was Young*, 204.

12 Edna Longley, "Multi-Culturalism and Northern Ireland", in E. Longley and D. Kiberd, *Multi-Culturalism: The View from the Two Irelands.* Cork U. P. in association with The Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh, 2001, 3, 20.

Tomas Ó Crohan's Autobiography: A Cultural Analysis of Robin Flower's English Translation

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Abstract: *Tomás Ó Crohan's autobiography, An tOileánach, was translated into English by Robin Flower, appearing as* The Islandman *in 1934. It has been widely read ever since, perhaps more widely than the Irish original.*
A view that something is lost in the translation has persisted through the years. This paper seeks to examine this view by considering Flower's translation as both process and product and the context in which it was produced. It seeks also to consider what it was that Flower translated.

Tomás Ó Crohan was a man from the Blasket Islands who wrote in Irish during the second and third decades of the last century. At the time he was writing the society in which he lived was in decline, the language he spoke was almost dead in many parts of the wider nation and the island on which he lived was not many years from complete evacuation. During this critical period, many scholars visited the island, drawn there by the Irish language spoken there. They quickly recognised the cultural value of island lore and traditions and soon saw the community as a vestige of the old Gaelic order. At the national level, questions of Irish identity were being considered in tandem with a language revival movement. At the international level, the loss of the Irish language and cultural tradition was being viewed as a loss to European civilisation. As rare examples of modern writing in Irish, Tomás' books were enthusiastically received, his autobiography, *An tOileánach,* soon becoming a tale of the nation, a blue-print of Irishness that is still owned and read a certain way by many Irish people today.

Tomás' autobiography was translated into English as *The Islandman* by Robin Flower, an Englishman and frequent visitor to the island who had worked extensively with Tomás on matters of language and culture over a period of many years. This translation has always been more widely read than Tomás' original text and has been reprinted regularly since its first publication in 1934. Nevertheless, research in Ireland in 1999 revealed that there were some who had certain reservations in regard to this

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translation: they felt that Tomás' work is lost to a considerable degree on readers who do not speak the Irish language and on those who live outside the culture. I was told, in short, that within Ireland, the Blasket books are valued for their fine Irish language and for their expression of a culture, both of which are commonly deemed inaccessible as well as irrelevant to readers of the books in translation and that every sentence of Blasket writing contains a cultural load that is not apparent to such readers. I heard that there is something intrinsically untranslatable in the texts and that it is in this area of untranslatability that the essence of the texts is to be found. It was said that reading Tomás in translation would not give much of a picture of the Tomás that is accessible to readers of Irish and that it is through the Irish text he is best appreciated.

The views of translation on which these attitudes seem to be based have been re-examined in the light of various kinds of literary theory in recent years. They hark back to the days when translation was thought of as the inferior product of a second rate literary activity which, at best, compared unfavourably with the writing of an "original" work (Bassnett 1996, 10). At worst, it was viewed as a betrayal of a pure source (11), itself a notion that has come under serious question. Considered mechanical and derivative, translation was always and inevitably subordinated to its superior original.

In a recent series of seminars, Maria Tymoczko discussed the impact of World War II on Translation Studies: the urgent need to gather and be able to interpret intelligence across many languages and cultures gave rise to two distinct philosophies of translation (IASIL Conference, Sao Paolo, 2002). The first concerned itself with "cracking the code", while the second, more broadly based school of thought recognised translation as an activity that brought about cultural refraction through language. At last, in the 1980s, the emergence of Translation Studies as a discipline in its own right (Lefevere xi) brought with it a shift in focus from the long concern with the methodology of translation to a concern with its location and significance within cultures. From this developed a recognition of translation as a mode of cultural politics that concerns not one, but two cultures at their point of contact (Mulhern, 164).

It is interesting, at this point to consider the etymology of the word "translate" which shows that to translate is "to carry across". The image of the translator, the one who "carries across", plying the borders while bearing his burden, happily accommodates both post-war schools of thought mentioned above, both the notion of "cracking of the code" and that of refraction of one culture through the language of another. It is the latter of these two views of translation that is most helpful when considering the genesis of *The Islandman*.

The emergence of Translation Studies as a discipline has had a positive impact on the status of translation in both the academic world, where translation was long viewed as a menial intellectual task (Hope) and in the world of literature where it was too often considered an inferior or suspect product. Running counter to the old notion of translation as a secondary product is the notion that translation might in fact constitute a new original Susan Bassnett points out that Derrida and de Campos each concluded that the translation is indeed an original by virtue of the fact that it comes into being

after its source text (Bassnett 1996, 22). The fact that the efforts of the translator extend well beyond an attempt at linguistic equivalence to embrace a complex tangle of ideological and poetic judgements offers significant support for such a view.

Translation is now recognised as much more than a linguistic exchange. It is a rewriting that involves at least two cultures, a complex procedure that involves two languages and two literary traditions (Aixela, 53). It involves an effort to match "like with unlike", "familiar with foreign", in Michael Cronin's words (Cronin, 4), in a long process that begins at "the very moment the Self looks at the Other" (Delisle, 223). In its functions and in judgements made about it, translation is doubly burdened in that it must not only be a text but must also represent a text (Aixela, 60). It needs to be considered of value in the receiving culture, while representing, in a way that might be called "faithful", an artefact that already exists in another language and belongs to another literary tradition. Thus, it is always subject to evaluation by two distinct and differing cultures (53).

The notion of the "death of the author" (Barthes, 167) allows fresh consideration of the status of translation, as many consider that it implies the death of the "original" (13). The death of the author and of the original strips the source text of its former authority and moves translation out of its old place in the shadows of literature. Susan Bassnett draws attention to the work of Octavio Paz, who writes of the world being presented to us as a growing heap of texts "each slightly different from the one that came before it: translations of translations of translations. Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation [...]" (Paz 1992, 154, quoted in Bassnett, 3). This is particularly so with Flower's translation of Tomás, whose work, we will see, was itself already a translation.

Michael Cronin writes that both the process and the product of translation are important in the construction of culture (Cronin, 140). We know that every translation is written and received in a context (Lefevere, 14) and offers a number of readings. Lefevere writes: "Translation, like all re-writings, is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed." Bhabha identifies translation as the *locus* of cultural meaning: "We should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national anti-nationalist histories of 'the people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves (Bhabha, 38-9).

The foregoing discussion of developments in Translation Studies invites many questions concerning Robin Flower's English translation of Tomás Ó Crohan's autobiography, *The Islandman.* It would suggest a need to consider the translation as both "process and product" that reflect the cultural context from which it emerged. It also suggests the need to examine what it was exactly that Flower translated.

Robin Flower, an Englishman with Anglo-Irish grandparents, was a keeper of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum who first went to the Blasket Island in 1910 in order to improve his knowledge of the modern Irish language. He already had an adequate knowledge of philology, a good ability with linguistics and was an expert paleographer. He had a wide knowledge of Irish and Welsh literature and was well read in regard to contemporary English and Continental writers. His classical erudition was matched by his love of medieval studies, his knowledge of which encompassed the cultures of almost every country in Western Europe. With this first sojourn on the island, Flower began his twenty years of involvement with the people of the Blasket Islands, a period of grace which endowed him with "inspiration, poetry and vision, besides the most loveable of nick-names" (Ó Lúing 1981, 122). As a sign of their love for him, the islanders gave him the name *Bláithín*, meaning "little flower" (NiDhomnaill, 28).

Bláithín, the nick-name that has been longest remembered, was not the first Flower was given on the island: he was first known as *an garsúinín an bhainne* (the little milk-boy), as it was his daily chore to get milk for the tea from a neighbour. From the very beginning, he participated in the work of the island, doing any task he was asked, none too lowly for him. He worked alongside the men even though, by his own account, he lacked their strength and expertise: "I too worked on the road, wielding an inexpert pick amid the mockery of others, and taking long periods of rest to nurse my aching arms"(Ni Dhomnaill, 29). He left the island with bandaged hands after this visit. Whenever he was on the island, he would often join in, frequently helping those who went to the hill with the donkeys to bring back turf. He was known to like accompanying the men on their fishing trips and their journeys to the smaller islands, as well as his friend, the king's son on his journeys to Dunquin for the post and the newspaper. Unflustered by the hardships of island living, he is said to have shared the king's kitchen quite cheerfully and gratefully with the king's domestic animals and poultry (Bell, 364).

Just as he entered fully into the life of the island, he shared his life fully with them. To whatever extent he observed their lives whilst among them, he allowed his own life to be observed. He brought his young bride to the island for their honeymoon in 1911 and, in the years that followed, sent his children to the island school whenever circumstances permitted.

He also experienced the full measure of the temperamental sea that gave the island life its character. At its generous best, it allowed him one of the greatest pleasures of his life: "there is no greater pleasure on earth than to lie in the stern of a *naomhóg*, almost in the embrace of the water, as the strong rowers snatch the boat over the waves"(Flower 1944, 6). At less than its best, it could be mean and unaccommodating as it was on the occasion when Flower found himself in a *naomhóg* on "an unquiet sea" with a dictaphone he was bringing, as well as a goat and an internal combustion engine. It was meaner yet when its turbulence prevented Flower and his family reaching the little harbour of Dunquin, forcing them to land at the foot of a cliff, up which they were hauled to complete their journey to Dunquin in a manure cart (Bell, 364). He shared in

full measure the penultimate misery of island life when, from the cliffs at Dunquin, he was forced to watch the sea's savage punishing of the *naomhóg* carrying his wife, which caused many present to despair for those on board (Ni Dhomnaill, 29). Thankfully, he was spared the common sequel to such an event.

Flower shared in more than the physical life of the island. He also shared in its communal life. Bell writes of him going among the people, roaming the island, talking with the men as they worked, and "taking down from their lips whatever of traditional lore they had to impart" (Bell, 364). However, he did not just collect from them, but swapped with them, often capping "their fine stories with equally good ones of his own, drawn from his treasure of medieval lore". For which, we are told, the islanders loved him (Ni Dhomnaill, 29), as "nothing goes down so well in this part of the world as a good story, skilfully told".

He gave back out of his own life when they exchanged life stories and thoughts with each other (Bell, 364). Conversations in the turf ricks could at times cover topics as diverse as the origins of the ogham stones and the war that was looming in the east (Ni Dhomnaill, 29). Flower's son, Patrick, recalls that his father enjoyed keeping the islanders informed of the doings of the macrocosm (Flower 1998, 26). Sims-Williams quotes an island woman, Mrs Nance O'Sullivan, as having said that Flower was always a popular visitor to the island because he gave them news of the outside world and talked about the British Museum. (Sims-Williams 1998, 78). His popularity was no doubt enhanced by there being, in NiDhomnaill's words, "no whiff" in his speech of the many hours he spent poring over dusty manuscripts (29). As she said, his learning sat lightly on him. He particularly enjoyed offering them interesting snippets of information about their own culture that they would not have known, such as the origin of the name of their island, in the Norse word, *brasker*, which meant "sharp reef" (Sims-Williams, 78).

He also delighted in sharing his pleasure when he detected connections with other literatures and traditions in island lore. He recounts one such moment in his preface to *The Western Island*, when the islanders were reciting a litany of proverbs provoked by discussion of the deaths that had occurred in Flower's absence. The litany ends with *Cá'il an sneachta bhí comh geal anuirig?* (Where is the snow that was so bright last year?), which Flower counters with François Villon's "Où sont les neiges d'antan?" (Flower 1944, viii). His pleasure almost leaps from the page when he tells of Tomás asking if Villon was a Connaughtman and remarking dryly that he would not put it past the French to have made this remark first.

Flower's deep respect for the man who became his friend and whose work he translated is evident in a passage he wrote about his arrival on the island with his new bride:

> But a sudden feeling comes upon you of a new presence in the room. You look up and see, leaning against the wall almost with the air of a being magically materialised out of nothing, a slight but confident figure. The face takes your

attention at once and holds it. The face is dark and thin, and there look out of it two quick and living eyes, the vivid witnesses of a fine and self-sufficing intelligence. He comes towards you, and with a grave and courteous intonation, and a picked and running phrase, bids you welcome. You have indeed come home, for this is Tomás Ó Crithin, the Island poet and story-teller. (1944, 12).

A magic materialisation more than a new arrival, no indication is given of how long Tomás might have been there. His self-possession and charisma seem unrelated to the slight figure he cuts, but stem from what is evident in his thin dark face: "two quick, living eyes, the vivid witnesses of a fine and self-sufficing intelligence". His unremarked arrival, the sudden awareness of his presence and the mention of his quick, living eyes puts one in mind of Synge sitting as silent witness among the islanders, but here it is the island man that is silently, and one guesses, shrewdly, observing the scholar. In contrast to the gravity of Tomás' courteous manner and carefully chosen words as he bids his visitor welcome, Flower expresses the fullness of his heartfelt response to the moment. He writes that his arrival on the island signifies a homecoming for him and that it is the presence of Tomás that makes it so.

We have a record from each man of the working relationship that existed between Tomás and Bláithín. Flower's account of their method (Flower 1944, 16) reveals that they decided between them that Flower should write down from Tomás' dictation island tales and the poems of the island poet, Seán Ó Duinnlé, which Tomás knew by heart. Towards the end of *The Islandman*, Tomás relates succinctly that Flower visited the island yearly, that they spent two sessions per day writing together and that a part of each year was given over to getting the material into good order.

Flower's description of their sessions is much less prosaic:

And so, he sitting on one side of the table, rolling a savoury sprig of dillisk round and round in his mouth to lend a salt flavour to his speech, and I diligently writing on the other side, the picture of the island's past grew from day to day under our hands. At times I would stop him as an unfamiliar word or strange twist of phrase struck across my ear, and he would courteously explain it, giving parallels from the local speech or illustrating with a little tale, budded off, as it were, from the larger unit. (16-7).

Their shared endeavours reflected a mutuality of experience that was new in island dealings with visitors as this account reveals. One senses that the friendship between the two men grew apace with the picture of island life that was emerging from their labours. Each man had much to give and much to gain and was both student and teacher as their project progressed. While Flower was gaining much more than the mastery of the language he had originally sought, it is clear that Tomás was also gaining a great deal from his contact with Flower. Tomás enriched his mind considerably by

drawing on Flower's wide knowledge of Irish and other literatures. Their discussions when together were diverse and wide-ranging and their correspondence when Flower was absent facilitated Tomás' writing on a range of topics far broader than the folklore he had become used to writing about (MacConghail, 139).

As Bláithín, Flower enjoyed an island identity as well as an island experience. In his writings, he asserts repeatedly his position within island culture in ways both subtle and unmistakable. The opening paragraphs of his two books, *The Irish Tradition* (1994 Dublin) and *The Western Island* (1978) provide two significant examples.

The opening paragraph of the former sees Flower eschew the customary detachment of the scholar:

> A visitor to Ireland familiar with Gaelic literature has his attention arrested everywhere in that beautiful island by many features, natural and artificial, which set him searching among his memories and clothing hill and river, rath and church and castle, with the lively and intimate colouring of long-descended tradition. And if he yields himself to the spell of that lure of recollection and summons back out of the past the kings and saints and scholars and poets whose names still cling about the places that they knew, he may be contented to recall that he is acting in the very spirit of those devoted scholars to whom that tradition owes its origins and survival (1).

We see in this passage that the visitor's response is not only strong and immediate, but also almost involuntary: his attention is "arrested", he yields to "the spell of the lure of recollection". His response to "that beautiful island" is personal and emotional. It triggers a response from the visitor, sending him to search among his memories to invest what he sees with his knowledge of "the long-descended tradition". At this moment, when his response to the place moves from emotion into intellectual activity, the visitor becomes an active player in the story, a late player contributing to the continuation of that tradition. Flower aligns the visitor with the "devoted scholars who brought the tradition into being in the first place and then nurtured it and kept it alive. Such a visitor is no disinterested, impartial observer, but one who has consciously yielded to the spell, and can be no other but Flower himself, his identity only faintly obscured by the thin veil of a third person narrative.

The Western Island provides us with Flower's account of his twenty years or so of island experience and reveals the depth, the complexity and emotion of his response to the island. Describing the progress of his journey into the island, he writes of the increasing spareness of what he sees. Of the little railway station at Dingle, he writes: "you forget London and Dublin, all the cities of the earth, and with Gaelic faces and Gaelic voices about you stand in the gateway of an older and simpler world." (1).

Imitating the ways of the traditional storyteller and demonstrating his knowledge of local lore, he offers several little stories about people of the island and soon enough

draws himself into the word picture he has drawn of island life with a tiny personal anecdote: "'Wasn't it a great thought Columbus had', said a man to me once as we lay gazing out over the Atlantic, 'to find out America? For if there wasn't America, the Island wouldn't stand a week'."

With his last words in the first chapter of this book, Flower signals his entry into an entirely other world: "'Say your farewell to Ireland', cries one of the rowers, and I turn and bid farewell, not only to Ireland, but to England and Europe and all the tangled world of today." (6).

Each of these two passages discussed reveals as much about Flower as they do about the island. His deliberate lack of detachment is immediately and everywhere apparent in his writing, which is coloured throughout by his deeply personal, emotional responsiveness to the island and all that it contained. Though the Flower who enters the island is clearly a romantic, he is neither a fuzzy sentimentalist nor a scholar coming to gain the language quickly and leave. He has both the time to lie around in a field with his island friend and the knowledge of the "long-descended tradition" with which he can make a continuum of past and present. For him, the place is neither empty nor unknown, nor had it ever been.

In passages such as these, Flower recognises and asserts his own position within the tradition as the latest in a long line to whom the tradition owes both its creation and its continued existence. Participating in this tradition, he imitates local storytellers by weaving subplots into his stories and relating local lore about the places he passes through. He could eventually "embellish every turn of the road from Dingle to Dunquin with a snatch of legend or folktale" (O Luing, 1981, 122). What is more, he could eventually blend it "with stories of personal experience", thus adding to the spoken "canon" of the place from his own island life.

A further significant assertion of his own place within the tradition of the island is to be found in his discussion of Seán Ó Duinnlé, the island poet who came to the island as a *spáilpín*, or itinerant worker:

> In Ireland, as in medieval Europe, the tales spread among the people of the roads, the wandering harvesters, the tramping men and the beggars, the poor scholars and poets and migratory schoolmasters. Seán had graduated in this university of the road; and if we can find, as I have found on the Island, a tale which can be traced back, through the jest-books of the Middle Ages and the sermon-books of the preaching friars to the Arabs of Africa, and through Persian books to ancient India, it is by such men that it has been carried from extremest East to farthest West, to die at last by a turf fire within hearing of the Atlantic wave. (Flower 1944, 95).

Once again, while seemingly discussing matters of island culture and without mentioning himself, Flower asserts his own cultural position. He and Seán have a lot in

common. Each has spent his life collecting and disseminating the popular culture of Ireland. Flower is a traveller like Seán, carrying tales from one place to another, a scholar and a poet. Like Flower, Seán has "graduated", not from Oxford but from his university of the road, from which he has garnered "an immense store of knowledge, tales and poems and sayings, all that vast flood of popular tradition".

Flower is not the only one to observe that his cultural position was within the tradition, by invitation as well as by his own volition. Patrick Sims-Williams observed that Flower allowed himself to be absorbed by the culture instead of remaining outside it, that he became an "honorary insider" and even that he "went native" (Sims-Williams 1998, 90). Sean O Faolain referred to him wryly as "the king of the Blaskets" (Ó Faoláin, 134). These opinions would seem to be borne out by Seán Ó Lúing's description of *The Western Island* as "a book as Irish in its character as the *Acallaml na Senórach* (*The Colloquy of the Ancients*) (1981, 124), a twelfth century monastic compilation of Fíonn tales that glorified Ireland's legendary past (Welch, 5-6).

Flower discusses his approach to the translation of Tomás' autobiography in his Foreword to *The Islandman* (O'Crohan, ix, x). He begins with remarks about his long acquaintance with the author and the vivid picture of him conveyed in the book. In translating *An tOileánach*, Flower said he had been attempting to "convey this double image" of the man he knew and of the book in which he saw him so vividly pictured.

He acknowledges at the outset the asymmetry of languages that Maria Tymoczko has been discussing in her seminar series at this conference, and discusses the impossibility of achieving linguistic equivalence between Irish and English, languages which are "so widely separated in their mode of expression that nothing like a literal rendering from the one language to the other is possible". Recognising that there is never just one way to effect a translation, he discusses his various options. He considers and rejects the use of the stage-Irish idiom then in vogue. He spurns the charm of such language and the ready applause it meets with, reacting against its lack of authenticity. He suggests that such a medium actually comes between the writer and the reader, impeding the reader's access to the authentic text. He sees "something artificial" in it and considers it a medium incapable of conveying "the forthright, colloquial simplicity of the original of this book". For similar reasons, he rejects the more sophisticated forms of literary English, choosing instead "to adopt a plain, straightforward style, aiming at the language of ordinary men [...]". Flower's choice of style is validated by Binchy's report that Tomás, stung by criticism that his language was difficult, replied that what he had written could have been understood by every child on the island (Binchy, 552). Flower's rejection of cheap applause and easy charm, his decision not to make Tomas and his companions quaint or cute or charming for an English readership is the foundation of the integrity of his translation. It indicates the translator's fidelity to his subject as well as to his text in that he chooses to represent what he saw as its essence rather than to strive for an effect. We need now to become a little more precise about what it was that Flower translated.

Flower translated the first edition of *An tOileánach*, written by Tomás and edited by Padraig Ó Siochfhrada, best known by his pen-name, An Seabhac who was a writer, a teacher and an organiser for the Gaelic League in Munster. He was a man of considerable influence, who went on to become the editor for the Educational Company of Ireland and the Talbot Press as well as a Senator in the government. An Seabhac entered the project of Tomás' work on the invitation of Brian Kelly who, having seen Tomás through the writing of most of *Allagar na hInise* and two thirds of the way through the autobiography, now had suddenly to leave Ireland. Kelly's many efforts over several years to arrange the publication of the *Allagar* had been fruitless. Before he agreed to take over from Kelly, An Seabhac secured Tomás' consent for the arrangement and, significantly, his agreement that An Seabhac should do what he thought best with the material.

In his Introduction to *An tOileánach* An Seabhac indicates that he used the power Tomás gave him to make certain changes to the text. He writes cursorily that the length of the manuscript necessitated some omissions but that nothing had been left out that would have lessened the truth of the story. He also writes that he altered Tomás' spelling system to conform with what was acceptable at the time and that the dialect could not be left entirely intact as the book was intended for a wide audience. In what appears to be a contradictory vein, he also writes that the author's grammar and idioms have been left intact.

An Seabhac's rationale for the changes are amplified in his article, *Tomás Ó Criomhthain, Iascaire agus Udar.* The freedom with which he made the changes to the text seems to derive from his reading of the man whose work he had taken charge of. His appreciation of Tomas' abilities seems grudging: he saw Tomás as a man indistinguishable from many other storytellers in the Gaeltacht who was set apart only by the fact of his taking to pen and paper. The strengths he recognised in this group from whom Tomás was indistinguishable were good memory, an ability to arrange words and thoughts, a polished expression, a personal philosophy and an empathy for his fellow man.

He saw limits to Tomás' abilities, writing that the author had no knowledge of the craft of writing, that he was in fact ignorant that such a craft existed, and that his only talent was to be found in his story-telling, his vocabulary, his logic and his personal experience. He attributed the lack of tedium in Tomas' text to his own editing. He stated his view that because Tomás wrote about people he knew and events he had witnessed, he did not write from the imagination and did not "compose". This he backs up with an anecdote that shows Tomás refusing Kelly's request to write a fiction about the island because it seemed to him to be a lie. An Seabhac saw *An tOileanach* as the book anyone who could write would have produced if he had lived that life.

The account of the changes he made is more detailed than what he offered in his introduction to the published text. It is nevertheless still far from frank or complete. The first change he discusses is that he made to the spelling system Tomás had devised himself, not too difficult a task by his own account, as Tomás' system was not problematic

for someone who read Tomas' dialect. A self-devised script such as this, coming from a newly-literate person in an oral community surely has its own intrinsic interest. Secondly, he got rid of material that seemed repetitive – more storms, more near-drownings, more trips to Dingle and so on, omitting a lot, he wrote, to avoid boring the reader. It seems he did not recognise that repetition or, if you like, tedium, inhered in island life and that by removing the artistic rendering of this fact, he was falsifying or, at the very least, distorting Tomás' record of island life. The third kind of change he instigated, by this account, was to ask the author to fill in what he saw as gaps in the text. To some of these Tomás agreed. To others, he did not. An Seabhac asked him to give more insight into the stories of the two women in his life, the girl from Inis Mhicileáin that he loved but forsook to marry according to his family wishes and the woman he married. He writes that Tomás viewed these very personal matters as "discretions of the soul" and not to be aired before the readers of Ireland. On the other hand, he acquiesced to An Seabhac's request for an ending to the book that was more substantial than the one he first offered. Tomás' original ending was in the style of the traditional storyteller and was only about a page long. Even though he acquiesced, and even though he repeatedly professed his deep gratitude to An Seabhac he did not hide his irritation about this particular change.. He wrote: "maybe it does not have such a short tail now. If there is a sentence in it which does not appeal you just leave it out." (Ó Coileáin, 255).

Finally, in this article, An Seabhac attempts to put to rest rumours that material had been cut from the text because it contained "immodest references" with the reply that anyone who knew Tomás, knew that there was no immodesty or corruption in him. He also denies that the government had issued a special school edition devoid of offensive material with the disingenuous statement that "every line of text they received from me they published".

We learn years later from Seán Ó Coileáin that, in regard to several pages of manuscript, there is even some confusion as to which text they actually belong, as the final parts of the *Allagar* were bundled in with the early parts of *An tOileanách.* We learn also that some of the text An Seabhac worked from had been reworked by Brian Kelly before he handed it over. To Ó Coileáin's eye, some of the rewriting looks bedraggled and silly, especially when compared with Tomas' easy to read style of writing. It seems that Kelly left out words he did not understand, came back to it and put in whatever he could work out himself.

An Seabhac's handling of Tomás' text comes under close scrutiny in a long study by James Stewart which confirms that what he published as *An tOileánach* was quite incomplete. Commenting on the omissions An Seabhac made, Stewart writes that "the cuts listed were made to save face rather than space, because, mistakenly, they were believed to show the islanders as either too punchy, too sexy, too sly or too slanderous" (235). Stewart observes that An Seabhac omits quite a bit concerning "human emotions", specifically material concerning the girl from the Inis, the very material that An Seabhac said he had tried without success to elicit from Tomás. He also excluded

several accounts of fights between island people, one between some women quarrelling over eggs and another between some men fighting over a pot. He omitted some of Tomás' harsh judgements of his neighbours and of Father Clune who had failed to acknowledge Tomás' contribution to a work he had published. As Stewart points out, while the changes made in many cases improved the images of the protagonists, "it also leaves us with words and thoughts ascribed to the author which are not his" (235). In addition, details of the rituals of a wake were omitted as were some of the island songs Tomás included, omissions which, as Stewart rightly says, rob the reader of some of the rhythm and flavour of island life, rhythm and flavour Tomás had seen fit to impart.

Some of the omissions or substitutions of individual words reflect personal attitudes and preferences of the editor. Stewart gives the example of a whole passage omitted because it contained the word *mún* (urine), a word An Seabhac found too distasteful to use. For similar reasons, he substituted *bolg* (belly) for *bleadar.* Another word banned from the text is *smuga* (mucus, snot) while *tóin* (backside, bottom) could not be made to disappear entirely from the text but had its number of appearances cut.

Other changes made by An Seabhac speak directly to the politics of culture that have always surrounded the Blasket texts. The people of the Blaskets had for some time been championed as the last speakers of an uncorrupted Irish language. It seems quite likely that it was to maintain the myth of cultural purity that had grown up around the islanders that he got rid of loan words from English that he considered insufficiently "naturalised" (239), words such as *lumpaí, compás* and *pob.* He deleted most references to "the appurtenances of royalty" such as crowns and palaces, drawing the line at *cúirt* which he let remain. Significantly, according to Stewart, he altered references to the English language that Tomás had made, minimising both the islanders' abilities with the language and their need of it (240). The adjective *binn* (sweet, melodious) that the author uses to describe *Béarla* (English, ie language) is omitted by the editor. In this matter he is at odds with Flower who is said to have reiterated at every possible moment his belief in an Irish culture that had always assimilated foreign influences easily and seamlessly (Sims-Williams, 77).

While a reconstruction of the complete text is to be hoped for, it is not going to be a straightforward task. As already noted, the opening chapter survives only in the hand of Brian Kelly. The last four pages of the first chapter are no longer to be found in the manuscript. The ending of the wedding chapter is missing as is some material on the poet and on religious practices. The need for sensitive editing cannot be overstated.

Stewart sees An Seabhac's edition and its successor as two stages in a journey towards the publication of the actual book that Tomás wrote. On this topic, he writes: "for those of us who have loved and lived with this book since student days, it had assumed something of the character of a sacred text, sacrosanct and immutable. It was therefore with an increasing sense of disillusion that the realisation grew [...] that what we had taken for a sacred text [...] was no sacred text but a surrogate, which in content and phrasing owes not a little to arbitrary editorial decision and whim" (252-3). What

we have in An Seabhac's edition of Tomás' autobiography is, in Maria Tymoczko's terms, a refraction of one culture by another, a refraction of Blasket Island culture through Irish eyes, a translation in effect.

But what An Seabhac edited was already a refraction, a translation. In the act of writing, Tomás had become not only the island's first writer but its first translator as well. A man straddling two eras that met in his person, he translated the island's orature into literature, its voice into text, in order to preserve self first for its own sake and then to make it known to the Other. He turned the events and the surroundings of his life into the stuff of literature: as An Seabhac himself wrote in his article, Tomás "made an enduring book of the story of his life". And, a translator in its most basic sense of being one who "carries across", he bore his story to safety with some urgency just before the culture from which it arose succumbed.

Flower's translation can thus be seen as only one of many refractions of the culture in which Tomás lived and about which he wrote. There is much that can be said about the creativity of Tomás' enterprise which was called into question by An Seabhac. All that needs to be said here is that, even if one is in agreement with An Seabhac, the fact remains that Tomás chose to record certain events and not others, that he used certain words, not others, and thus offered his own refraction of his culture. A second refraction was commenced by a well-intentioned Brian Kelly, according to his own imperfect understanding of Tomás' language, a refraction mercifully cut short by his sudden departure from Ireland. It was further refracted through An Seabhac who used the control he was given by the author to bring the text into conformity with what he thought should have been written and, more often, what should not have been written. So we see that Flower's translation is much more than a negotiation between two languages and two cultures. Here we have the culture of the Blasket Islands refracted through the culture of Ireland, its conventions and its needs and refracted again through language, and to some degree, the culture of England. We also have, in An Seabhac's editing, peasant culture subject to the agendas of Irish academe and Irish politics.

If we consider the final two refractions of island culture, that of An Seabhac and that of Flower, we see that one offers a correction of the author, the other an expression of the author. If the modern reader of Tomás has his approach to the author obscured, it is not only or mainly because of Flower's translation. The reader who approaches Tomás through the Irish faces many of the same impediments as the reader in English: what Tomás wrote is yet to be published.

A denial of the bridge between cultures offered by Flower's translation would see Tomás and his book islanded forever, growing more ghostly as years go by. This is something that Tomás himself would have regretted. It should be remembered that he was not translated against his will or in his absence; that he was impatient for Flower, who was delayed by illness, to finish the task; that he was pleased with the result. It should also be remembered that Tomás himself wanted his book to be widely known: he sent his book abroad, an autographed copy to his son in America. The fact that it was

indeed his life that was at the heart of the text is evident from his inscription which is translated thus: “I send you this book which your father has written on his own life. Perhaps every father is not in a position to do this and he being an Islandman.”

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Shaw's Sculptress – Kathleen Scott

Stanley Weintraub[*]

Abstract: *GBS once told Kathleen Scott, widow of the Antarctic explorer, who was sculpting Shaw, that the nearest he ever came to homosexual feelings was his love for her. She understood. Because of her vocation she seldom wore anything feminine – overalls at her vocation, sack-like garments with no adornment of any kind when at leisure. Beautiful, bohemian and uninhibited, with a host of male admirers from H. H. Asquith and David Lloyd George to James Barrie and Gordon Craig, she nevertheless reserved herself for a yet-to-be-found hero figure – who turned out to be explorer Robert Falcon Scott.*

Barrie would tell her that she was half man and half woman, but that the female half was twice as feminine as that of most women.

She was in her middle twenties and as yet unmarried when Shaw first met her. He saw her often after her widowhood. A neighbor of his was a survivor of Scott's last expedition. She had visited Apsley Cherry-Garrard, and Shaw was there. He made no secret of his feelings, and became the grandfather figure her little son, Peter, never had. During the Great War, Shaw saw much of her and Peter, as she turned to temporary war work, finally in Whitehall. As Lady Scott – a title she received as a widow – she could have had nearly any wartime job she wanted yet began in a munitions factory.

In the 1920s, even after she married one-armed Great War hero Hilton Young, who became Lord Kennet, and had a late second son with him, Wayland Young, Shaw continued to remain a close friend. She was a guest at Lady Astor's estate when Shaw read to the group, laughing at his own jokes, his new play The Apple Cart*, which has two women Cabinet ministers who may have some of Kathleen's traits. Even earlier, in one of his segments of the futuristic* Back to Methuselah*, the only sculptor in all of his plays, the cocky, self-confident Pygmalion, may also have some satiric touches at her expense.*

Although Kathleen, according to Shaw, "never played the grief-stricken lonely widow," he never would tell her his true feelings about Scott's "folly": that the stubborn Scott died on his Polar journey and others with him because he "did what was done last time; and every thing he did was wrong."

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When she died in 1947, before Shaw, she had long been Lady Kennet, and the difficulties of travel during World War II, and Shaw's great age, and her declining health, had long kept them apart. When Lord Kennet wrote to him of her long-expected death, Shaw answered that he had heard of it on the radio, on his 91st birthday, and the news "instantly reduced the monstrous pile of letters and cards to dust and ashes. But it did not hurt. I rejoice in Kathleen, dead or alive. I never grieve; and I never forget."

Many years into their long friendship Bernard Shaw told Kathleen Scott (she had sculpted him, wearing then-unfeminine coveralls or slacks), "No woman ever born had a narrower escape from being a man. My affection for you is the nearest I ever came to homosexuality."[1] Lady Scott, widow of the Antarctic explorer, nevertheless always had trouble deflecting admirers. Nor did she try very hard. Devotees often became subjects for her chisel, and if not then, they became helpless with admiration as they sat for her.

A friend late in her life, who would write Kathleen's obituary in advance for *The Times* in 1937, ten years before she died, called her "alleged vamping of distinguished men" empty charges that were "rubbish." Rather, "famous men sought K. out, even those who were not being modelled," and she would claim in pleased vanity that she had "volumes" of letters from them.(Lees-Milne, 8-16) Shaw's alone would make a small volume.

G.B.S. met Kathleen Bruce in the early 1900s. Born on March 27, 1878, she had studied with Rodin when just out of her teens. At work in England later, Kathleen mingled with politicians and artistic people in circles that intersected with Shaw's own. Her admiration of Shaw was so complete that when she was hospitalized for surgery, and "half-expected to die," she became even more certain of that when a nurse asked her if she would like to have a clergyman visit. No, she said, she would rather see Bernard Shaw. (Young, 77)

Her personal world found a focus when she met naval captain and explorer Robert Falcon Scott and determined to marry him. He was forty and she was thirty. She had waited almost in eugenic Shavian fashion until she had found the man she wanted to sire her sons (she was sure they would be sons). Scott succumbed.

Peter Scott was born before his father left to search for the South Pole in 1910; and with Scott gone, Kathleen resumed much of her former life despite the intrusions of her new celebrity. Later she recalled that among her own searches for excitement she had been the second woman in England to fly, going up in a biplane with dual controls with Thomas Sopwith, and getting her now-familiar face – but to her relief, not her name – in an issue of *The Aeroplane.* Shaw's characters were often real-life composites, and Kathleen may have contributed to the personality of Shaw's daring aviatrix in his farce *Misalliance* (1910), who flies tandem with a male companion, and turns men into

helpless worshipers. In 1911, while Scott was contending with Antarctic extremes which Kathleen could hardly imagine, she went to the opening night of Shaw's next comedy, the feminist *Fanny's First Play*, after which she chatted happily with G.B.S., who was "awfully hilarious."

Scott, who reached the Pole in January 1912, perished with the team struggling back after the final push. Even making it had been less than a triumph. Arriving at ninety degrees south they had discovered that Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian explorer, had beaten them by a month and left the evidence. It was almost as if Scott's party would be dying twice.

For Kathleen it was not the way she wanted to become a titled Lady, but she was authorized to use the style that would have been her own, had her husband been knighted on a triumphant return. Sculpting commissions – including an inevitable Scott memorial – increased with her widow's visibility, but when war came the next year she sought appropriate work.

Lady Scott was persuaded to take a job with the Ministry of Pensions. She became private secretary to the Permanent Secretary, Sir Matthew Nathan, for whom she was working when, at Christmas 1916, she and Peter visited Apsley Cherry-Garrard for the holidays. "Cherry" had survived the "Terra Nova" expedition, not having been among the four that died short of rescue. Shaw's country neighbor at Lamer Park in Hertfordshire, Cherry-Garrard had lived at the idyllic Garrard estate since he was six, when his father inherited it and accordingly hyphenated his name. Cherry blamed himself rather than circumstances for not having returned with supplies for Scott in time.

Cherry-Garrard invited the Shaws to join them for Christmas Eve, and Kathleen noted in her diary, "Shaw was enchanting; told me I had the blue eye of genius, what he called the Strindberg eye." ("He always flatters me a good deal," she confessed.) On Christmas Day 1916 she and Peter (whom Kathleen dressed for the occasion as a miniature Father Christmas) took several books as gifts to the Shaws at nearby Ayot St. Lawrence – less than a mile down the lane. G.B.S. asked them to stay (with Peter as the excuse) so that he could read to them "what he called a children's story, [although] it was a hyper adult story." It imagined an encounter between the Kaiser and a waiflike girl somehow exposed at night on a Flanders battlefield. Shaw had written it for a gift book in aid of a Belgian children's charity.

Kathleen was still fixated on death and sacrifice, as were the many who mourned loved ones lost in the continuing carnage of the war It may have seemed to her as if Shaw, anticipating Joan of Arc's death, had suggested what the Maid of Orleans was like when she was a girl. Simple yet shrewd, and irreverent toward authority figures, the child is the Kaiser's intellectual match in their brief exchange, and the blustering Wilhelm II is seen as the helpless pawn of his position. As they debate amid the shellfire, a round explodes nearby, obliterating the child but leaving her disembodied voice, in which fashion she reappears to him as if in a waking dream. Although the bewildered and bespattered monarch remains alive, he is now alone. The child has been "set free by the

shell" from the pain and privation of existence much in the manner the lively Joan of the epilogue of Shaw's play to come (in 1923) is freed from the body by her burning.

Sixty, but younger in heart when it came to attractive women, even when he thought of them only as daughters, G.B.S. was exhilarated by reading the story to Kathleen and her fatherless little son. He would see much more of her through the war years and later. When she learned that he was going to Flanders by army invitation in January and February 1917, which he would write up as "Joy-Riding at the Front," she used her connections to get him a follow-up invitation to visit the Austro-Italian lines. He knew it would disappoint her, but he responded to the British Military Mission that although the Trentino in the spring was a pleasant thought, he would be of no propaganda use there. Few Englishmen were involved in the fighting, and the public considered the war in Italy a sideshow to the main stage.[2]

Kathleen would be among the select few in Shaw's Adelphi Terrace flat late in the afternoon of June 8, 1917 when he read scenes of his newest play, *Heartbreak House*, taking all the roles himself. "Very, very funny," she noted in her diary about the first act. Halfway through came tea, and the remainder of the play followed, but while others stayed to the end, Lady Scott had to return to her office at the Ministry of Pensions to work late.

The next day Shaw traveled to Lamer with her, and after Peter had gone to bed that evening, G.B.S. read to her and to Cherry parts of what she had missed. She was baffled by it, its dreamlike elements escaping her: "All the people develop as you least expect." On Sunday she and Peter lunched at the Shaws, and afterward as she dozed intermittently in the sunlit garden, G.B.S. completed his reading, more for himself, it seemed, than for her. According to one of her diary entries in May 1917, after lunch at Ayot, G.B.S. walked back with her to Lamer, "and we discussed the propagation of the race." The new play he was planning, the *Back to Methuselah* cycle, would deal in part with longevity and futuristic evolution, and he was apparently trying out ideas with her.

He would see a lot of Kathleen. She often frequented Lamer Park. There was almost always Lady Scott on weekends. She had emerged as a trusted figure in whom he could confide those things he was reluctant to tell Charlotte. Once, encountering Kathleen and Peter on the train, he "descended from first class to third class to play with us." At Lamer he would turn up for tea, and remain for the evening, telling bedtime stories for Kathleen's son which he would invent on the spot. Ever since he was very little, Shaw explained to Peter, he always told himself a story each night before he went to sleep, some of them continuing as serials over several nights. He repeated his favorite stories, Shaw confessed, over and over again.

One evening that November, after Peter went off contentedly to bed, the Shaws and Kathleen had dinner with Cherry, at which G.B.S. confessed for reasons unknown that he had never learned to dance. Kathleen offered to give him a lesson, and he glided across the floor with her to music from Cherry's phonograph, pleased with himself. While Charlotte watched placidly (she bridled at his attentions to other women, yet never to Lady Scott), Shaw happily went through his paces with Kathleen. "To begin to

learn to dance at sixty-one is rather delicious," she had written in her diary two weeks earlier. "I love old Shaw."

Late in December 1917, she became a war casualty, falling ill from overwork. She had often worked at the Ministry far into the evenings, and loathed her dull job, considering it "very little different from a grave." On January 8, 1918, Shaw visited and sat for hours at her bedside, returning two days later, after which she was able to pen a diary note, "Still in bed, fainting a good deal. Bernard Shaw came, and we discussed dreams, deliriums, and happiness." He often told her his dreams, never revealing them to Charlotte.

Shaw often visited, alone, at Buckingham Palace Road, dining with her and reading scenes from his overly talky new play about characters based on her friend former prime minister Asquith and his successor, David Lloyd George. "Ll.G. the bouncing rhetorical fraud, and Asquith, the bland, benign old gentleman – very funny, but not quite right," she observed loyally about the ousted Asquith. When she next went to Lamer, this time without Peter, Shaw was again there because he expected her. Shaw "amazed me," she wrote. "I have known him for fifteen years, and this was the first time I knew he sang. He went almost through the score of Rheingold on the piano, singing in a charming baritone voice. He plays amazingly well. He is a marvellous man." Alone with her, he often reminisced about his past indiscretions – his affair with actress Florence Farr, whom Kathleen met only after her looks had faded; children's writer Edith Nesbit's failed passes at him; his own frustrations in trying to seduce "Mrs. Pat" Campbell, his Eliza in *Pygmalion.*

What Shaw did not tell Kathleen – if he knew himself – is that he may have put aspects of her into a character in the next futuristic playlet, after the Asquith – Lloyd George segment, in his *Methuselah* cycle, "The Thing Happens." It includes a female Domestic Minister, perhaps a promotion from Kathleen's job at the Ministry of Pensions, who wears a tunic and dresses "*not markedly different from [...] the men.*" Mrs. Lutestring, who, from experience, discusses, among other matters, "Old Age Pensions," is "*a handsome woman*, *apparently in the prime of life, with [an] elegant, tense, well held-up figure, and the walk of a goddess."* Among men she inspires *"instinctive awe."* Although never an artist, her late husband was "a great painter." Only the smallest of hints, perhaps, but the stately Cabinet Minister may be a Shavian bow to Lady Scott.

For July and August, 1918 Kathleen rented Streatley Vicarage in Berkshire, up the Thames from London, using it also as a studio. Shaw agreed to visit and pose for her while she did a statuette. While Charlotte went off to visit her sister in Ireland, Shaw paid visits to Kathleen. G.B.S. remained for ten days, swimming in the Thames when the sun shone, sitting for a statuette when it didn't. And he wondered to her whether an artist's own gender and character revealed itself in the work, guessing that in her androgynous case it did not. Although husbandless since 1912, Kathleen was unconcerned about having Shaw on the premises, however her neighbors might talk. Their relationship was father-daughter.

Shaw was to travel further, by bus and rail, to visit Beatrice and Sidney Webb in Wales. Since that meant lunching en route, Kathleen asked her cook to pack cucumber sandwiches for Shaw. When he unwrapped the first one he discovered that the thoughtful cook had enhanced the dreary vegetarian repast with potted meat. G.B.S. threw them away and hungered all the way to Wales. He was in Ireland with Charlotte when Kathleen went to the pre-opening of the International Art Show in London, where her already completed bronze statuette of Shaw, standing, with arms folded across his chest, appeared to her "alone on the central table of the principal room, looking very small." After seeing it, Shaw would call it "a masterpiece."

To G.B.S., Kathleen could do no wrong – unless it was her marrying Scott. To her second husband, who was not amused, Shaw would confide indiscreetly that Kathleen should have only been "secondarily famous as the wife of the world renowned wonderful Scott." Her authentic achievement was in art. "Now Scott was not wonderful: [...]

> and he was so unsuited to the job he insisted on undertaking that he ended as the most incompetent failure in the history of exploration. Kathleen, on the other hand, was a wonderful woman, first rate at her job, adventurously ready to go to the ends of the earth at half an hour's notice with no luggage but a comb with three teeth left in it, and always successful. Scott's best right to his celebrity is that he induced her to marry him.

Although in part Shaw was indulging in his love of paradox, Kathleen would have remained far less friendly had she known of Shaw's private disloyalty to Scott, and how Cherry, with Shavian assistance, was treating her hero in the memoir he had begun early in 1917 as *Never Again: Scott, Some Penguins, and the Pole*." Cherry had been invited by the Captain Scott Antarctic Fund to write the official history of the doomed second Scott expedition. The Shaws lunched with Cherry-Garrard nearly every Sunday they were in the country, and on one crucial Sabbath he revealed the offer. But he was no explorer, he said dismissively: he had only been the young naturalist of the expedition, who as a boy had "a taste for snails and solitude." G.B.S. and Charlotte urged him to undertake it although he had never written for publication. He felt daunted by the prospect, but Shaw offered editing help, and Charlotte even promised to correct his proofs.

Kathleen was delighted. In the circumstances, she felt, loyally, how could the result be anything but a masterwork? But Shaw saw the project as more than a saint's life. First he set down for Cherry a half-page rules of punctuation, Shavian style, that emphasized the colon and semi-colon. Then Shaw criticized the text, Cherry noted, "as it was written, word by word and chapter by chapter." As self-appointed editor, he asked questions to establish clarity, as in "What is pack?" Some of the questions, as this one, became rhetorical devices, as it introduced an explanation of pack ice. Beyond the pathetic end for Scott, Shaw also saw a drama in the race to the Pole.

Cherry, Shaw recalled at the start, "still retained his boyish notions of Scott and his expedition [...]. One day, in his library, I asked him if there was any extant account of Amundsen's venture." Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian adventurer who had reached the Pole a month before Scott (as Scott discovered to his consternation), on December 14, 1911, had published a book about the enterprise, *The South Pole*, in 1912. Cherry took down the book, which Shaw guessed he had not been opened. "I read it and found he was an explorer of genius, who had got to the Pole and back without losing a single man, having found a new route [...] by two inspired guesses and taking two big chances, and knowing exactly how to treat his men. Everything he did was original and right: Scott did what was done last time; and everything he did was wrong." Thus Cherry writes, undoubtedly with Shaw's hand guiding him, of Amundsen's "sort of sagacity that constitutes the specific genius of the explorer," and that his expedition "was more highly endowed in personal qualities than ours."

G.B.S. had been drafting and rewriting passages for Cherry, and both Shaws, as Cherry wrote, made marginal comments and textual emendations. (The plethora of full colons is also likely to have been Shaw's hand, as well as the discussion, recalling *Man and Superman*, of exploration as "the physical expression of the Intellectual Passion.") Shaw even arranged with his own printer, R. & R. Clark in Edinburgh, and his long-time publisher, Constable, for publication, and the proofs of the book were delivered on April 9, 1920. It was, Cherry concluded, "the worst journey in the world." "There's your title," said Shaw.

As the book moved closer to publication, G.B.S. deflected Cherry's request that his considerable assistance be acknowledged. "It would be fatal," he advised on April 26, 1922, "to make any suggestion of collaboration on my part. The book would be reviewed on the assumption that I had written all the striking parts of it, and that they were 'not serious.' Beyond proofreading work, and paraphrasing your conversation here and there," he downplayed, "I have done nothing that is not covered by your device of quoting the practical man. You should not be at all uneasy as to the integrity of your authorship." Cherry would confess about the Shaws, "They taught me to write," and among the well-chosen epigraphs to chapters of the book he included one from *Man and Superman*, in which Don Juan in the interlude in Hell declares that men can be driven by ideas – "I tell you, [...] if you can show a man a piece of what he now calls God's work to do, and what he will later call by many new names, you can make him entirely reckless of the consequences to himself personally."

That concept as it applied to Scott should have appealed to Kathleen, but since Shaw realized, too, how she would react to other implications in the book, he had, accordingly, kept his distance. She would never have any idea what Shaw's part had been in Cherry's book either, which among other things had included writing at least some of the lines that praised Amundsen at Scott's expense. (G.B.S.'s later role was a jacket blurb for the Chatto & Windus reprint that hinted only slightly at that. Compared with Scott's "extraordinary and appalling" expedition," Shaw wrote, "[...] Amundsen's victorious rush

to the South Pole seems as cheerful as a trip to Margate. Even Dante's exploration of the icebound seventh circle of hell shews that men cannot imagine the worst that they can suffer." In a way that toned down for Kathleen the criticism in the book itself.)

Kathleen's first postwar years included hectic travel which the war had precluded, in part to escape her past, in part to escape new and intent admirers [...]. But she wanted to remarry, and noted in her diary from Cherbourg, after travels across both Americas, "Lord will I ever find a man I altogether like – who do I want? No one will do. Maybe I am utterly and completely spoilt [...]."

Another aspirant, however, had emerged from her surfeit of adventurers and heroes. In November 1922 she had Shaw and H. G. Wells to lunch, when they learned about her betrothal by accident. Kathleen had Shaw promise to read his new and yet-unproduced *Saint Joan* to her, and she asked him "if he was never coming to an end." He confessed, "I thought I must have dried up after producing *Methuselah*, but to my astonishment I found the sap rising again." The discussion turned to her show of recent work at the Grosvenor Gallery, to which Wells had taken Shaw, and he was "awfully impressed," Kathleen noted, by her nudes, especially one she had titled, obscurely, *I Want.* Since she sculpted from life, he wondered about its origin. "Bill did it," she said.

Shaw looked puzzled. "Bill" was Edward Hilton Young, the Liberal M.P. But the statuette had two arms. In 1918 Hilton Young, then a naval officer, had lost his right arm in Belgium, and Kathleen had restored it in her bronze. She had felt immensely sorry for Hilton, and as her feelings for him intensified, Shaw tried to console her as he had done, wryly and unsuccessfully, with Robert Loraine. "I said," he recalled, his propensity for paradox again unsuccessful, "that as a man with two arms is not unhappy because he has not three, neither is he unhappy if, having one, he hasn't two, and she flew out at me so furiously that I discreetly shut up."

Kathleen was well past forty-four when she and Hilton were married in the crypt of the House of Commons by an Anglican bishop; he was younger by nearly a year. It was an opportune time for Shaw (March 23, 1923) to caution her as gently as he could about Cherry's just-published deflation of Scott, which Shaw had abetted but described to her as "a classic story of travel." Kathleen had the two-volume boxed set sent by Cherry inscribed "with very grateful thanks" and had already begun to pen "Rots!" in the margins.

Shaw wrote two long, delicate letters to Kathleen about Scott and the *Worst Journey*. "Keep this," he began one letter defensively, "for a quiet hour: it is about Cherry and old times and sorrows." The facts would come out by some means or other, and as in "Cherry's narrative" Scott would be proved "reckless in travelling without sufficient margins in provisions and fuel; and he had accepted the official scientific formula for rationing, which was of course all wrong, and produced a starvation which was disguised until it was too late." The book, he explained, gently but unpersuasively, in his second letter, was not "an act of personal disloyalty to [Scott]."

Loyally, Hilton was even more outraged than Kathleen, seeing on Cherry's part "a grievance against his late leader, whom he believed to have neglected his, C.G.'s,

merits, on the expedition." Although he saw Shaw's (and Cherry-Garrard's) undiplomatic assessment of Scott as irresponsible, it has stood up.

Shaw "seems unconsciously determined to make me angry and resentful against Cherry," Kathleen wrote in her diary, "a thing I do not want to be at all. I have never admired Cherry but I am fond of him and don't want to have to cease to be [...][but] his rendering of Con's character is so ludicrous it should not even make one cross, only Shaw seems determined I should be cross!" Scott had become a national icon for stoic endurance in terrible adversity, a quality glorified by a world war. Cherry (and Shaw) had tarnished the shining moment.

Kathleen's friendship with Shaw survived *The Worst Journey in the World* because she never knew the extent of Shaw's hand in it. Cherry-Garrard would see little of Kathleen afterwards, but he was gradually withdrawing into chronic, debilitating depression. "My own bolt is shot," he wrote near the close of his book; "I do not suppose I shall never go south again before I go west." He had not been able to save Scott's marooned team. The memoir had attempted to explain why, but it could not purge him of his demons. One of the few people he was willing to see over the full course of his forty-six post-polar years was Shaw.

In August 1923, at forty-five, after four days of difficult labor, Kathleen gave birth to her second son, Wayland. The late, risky pregnancy had not kept her from working. That Armistice Day, a cold, sunny morning, her war memorial, a larger-than-life brooding soldier, was unveiled at Huntingdon. Shaw remained in her life, now given over substantially to her husband's career in the Commons. "I was awfully pleased to see him," she wrote of Shaw on March 11, 1924. "He sat holding forth on life, politics, and the drama, with our babe comfortably tucked up on his arm. There's summut [Scots for *something*] in a white-haired old man with a little baby that stirs all my heart."

In 1926, Hilton Young switched allegiance to the Conservatives, and politics became more intrusive in Kathleen's life. It was hard to be a sculptor, she wrote, when "there are [...] political parties in the world." People were beginning to forget exactly who her first husband was, other than that he was somehow connected with polar exploration. At a political dinner party in the Commons, a guest greeted her with, "I knew your dear husband [Ernest] Shackleton." (At Charles Shannon's house a servant once asked him, as he ushered G.B.S. out, "Excuse me, sir, is that the gentleman who wrote Shakespeare?") Despite her remarriage she could not escape Scott's shade, even when it was misindentified.

With Hilton's change of party he was now seeking a seat from the Sevenoaks division, and early in 1928 Kathleen made speeches for him while he was on political business in East Africa. She served her "lord god" by hosting dinner parties, made time for overseeing her sons, now nineteen and six, and worked on statue commissions. At one party, she recalled, Mrs. Stanley Baldwin, wife of the Tory prime minister, "looked down her nose at Bernard Shaw, and didn't get hold of him at all." Shaw often came to

lunch, "which is fun," and on one occasion when she had the famous Portuguese cellist Suggia also as guest, the one-time music critic (as "G.B.S.") "chid Suggia teasingly for having such a cumbrous instrument as a cello. Why not a nice little fiddle?" It reminded Shaw of the elderly removals laborer who, while weighed down by a grandfather's clock he was carrying, stopped to ask, "Excuse me, but at your age, wouldn't you find a wristwatch more convenient?"

Shaw was again at Buckingham Palace Road in April 1929 to lunch with American banker Otto Kahn and several English politicians. Kathleen and Hilton "had a bet" as to whether Shaw or Austen Chamberlain would "talk the other down." To their surprise, Kahn "beat them both, and Shaw came in a poor third." On one occasion the millionaire playwright boasted to a party of economists and financiers that he was a communist, a paradox which Kathleen found "unconvincing." At another, in 1932 – he was often a raisin in her social cake – he brought her his newest book, the *Candide*-like *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Search of God,* and "got on like a house on fire" with fashionable conductor Malcolm Sargent. Afterwards she walked across Green Park with Shaw "at an immense rate." She was amazed at his stamina. "He is a grand old man [...]. May I be like him when I am seventy-five." Kathleen would have been peeved had she known that in Cherry-Garrard's gift copy of *The Black Girl* G.B.S would write,

> For Cherry and Angela
> Greatest of my friends. (Cherry-Gerrard, xxiv)

In 1938, when Shaw was eighty-two, she had Shaw sit for a head-and-shoulders sculpture. She was sixty, and in dark slacks and blouse she looked youthful. Watching her results, Shaw, who materialized under her fingers with his head in his hands, framing his face, deplored it facetiously as "a Shakespearean tomb." It did look remarkably like the iconic portrait of the Bard. For it (and her) Shaw wrote a rhyming commentary, on green paper, beginning, "Weep not for old George Bernard: he is dead" – a copy of which he sent to Lord Alfred Douglas, once Wilde's young friend and a minor poet. Kathleen, he wrote, rejected his "epitaph" (jokingly intended as inscription for a pedestal) as "nonsense verse" – which might have been too kind. He had once written of his bust in marble by Auguste Rodin that he – G.B.S. – would be known mainly as "subject of bust by Rodin." Now he closed by versifying that "Kathleen plied" at his head

> Until one day the Lord said "No, my lass:
>
> Copy no more. Your spirit shall be your guide.
> Carve him [...]
> So, when his works shall all forgotten be
> He yet shall share your immortality."[3] (Hyde, 98-100)

At the Royal Academy exhibition in the spring of 1940, while the *Luftwaffe* rained incendiary bombs on London, she exhibited in bronze what she called "a half-

figure, almost," pleased with the outcome. Under wartime restrictions, people got around far less, and Shaw saw little of Kathleen then and nothing of Peter Scott, who commanded a destroyer. Shaw lived largely in the country, as Charlotte was very ill, and the bombings made matters worse for her. Kathleen, too, lived more at Leinster Corner, the country place she and Hilton had acquired.

Charlotte died on September 13, 1943, at eighty-six. At the end of October, after her private funeral and cremation, Kathleen wrote, still maintaining her diary, that Shaw, eighty-seven, came to tea, traveling alone by tube. "He was more amazing than ever, and better company. He told us all about Charlotte's illness and death." Charlotte, G.B.S. told Kathleen and Hilton – he was now Lord Kennet of the Dene, and she was Lady Kennet – had illusions that the service flat in which the elderly Shaws had lived since the mid – 1920s was full of people who didn't belong there. "You must get up the housekeeper and the manager," Charlotte appealed. "We pay for the flat and it is very expensive: we have a right to have it to ourselves." Shaw explained the hallucinations to her imaginatively as her clairvoyance – "all these people existed but they were in Australia or Oxford or anywhere," and the manager would not be able to see them.

Three years later, after Shaw (then 90) had a fall, Kathleen went to see him, finding him sitting up in a dressing gown and "looking really very frail [...]. Oh dear he is the oddest maddest mixture. He told me yet again how [, since Charlotte's death,] many women wanted to marry him, knowing that they would only have to look after him for a year or two and then have his fortune." It was October 14, 1946. "He is ninety, but his mind and gestures are as active as ever and his memory for what we had said and done thirty years ago quite prodigious, and putting me to shame." Feeling his mortality, at his suggestion they talked of possible Shavian memorials, including her bust. "I tried to go lots of times, lest he should get tired, but he wouldn't let me. He was a little sentimental, finally. Waning is a sad, sad thing."

Kathleen said nothing about herself, but she was waning more seriously, stricken by painful angina. Soon after Christmas she was bedridden. A few months into 1947 she went into St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, realizing that it was the end. When she died on July 24, 1947, a year short of seventy, it was two days before Shaw would reach ninety-one. He wrote to Peter, now an eminent ornithologist, "The news from Leinster Corner reached me on my birthday, and for a moment struck it all of a heap. But I cannot feel otherwise than gladly about her, nor imagine her old. She was a very special friend."

At the time, Shaw was contemplating publication of his admittedly lightweight *Rhyming Picture Guide to Ayot Saint Lawrence.* He could not imagine a year without producing something between hard covers. Its origin, years before, had been picture-postcard doggerel verses for Ellen Terry. The last contribution to it was a photograph he had taken of Kathleen at Ayot. Accompanying it were his unmemorable yet deeply felt lines,

> Widow of Scott, whose statue [I] cherished
> She wrought when at the Pole he perished;

A later union of two hearts
Was with a man of many parts.
She wedded him, and then was seen Chatto and Windus, 1965.

It was the last book on which Shaw worked, published in December 1950, six weeks after his own death.

Notes

1 Kathleen recalled the remark in he diary for September 19, 1929. All her diary entries following, unless otherwise cited are from her *Self-Portrait of an Artist.*

2 Shaw's story of the Flanders episode as a war correspondent appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* on March 5, 7 and 8, 1917, later collected, with additions, in "Joy Riding at the Front," *What I Really Wrote about the War* (London, 1931), 248-79. That Lady Scott had procured the invitation is clear from Shaw's letter to General Delme-Radcliffe, April 23, 1917.

3 Shaw to Kathleen, November 12, 1938, in Mary Hyde (Ed.). *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas. A Correspondence* (New Haven and New York, 1982), 98-9. The bust is illustrated on p. 100.

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Drama

Denis Johnston's Revisionist Theatre

Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos[*]

Abstract: *Denis Johnston's first and last plays are, in essence, historical plays.* The Old Lady Says 'No!' *(1929) portrays the leader of the 1803 Rising, Robert Emmet.* The Scythe and The Sunset *(1958) is an Easter Rising play. The object of this article is to consider in what ways these plays can be read not only as historical, but, moreover, as revisionist plays.*

When Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says 'No!'* was first staged, the Irish Free State was just seven years old. *The Old Lady* had been rejected by the Abbey, but welcome by the adventurous and innovative sense that oriented The Gate Theatre, where it was successfully produced in 1929. The Abbey, facing a period of insularism, entrenched in a local conservative realism, "under the constant surveillance of a vociferous nationalistic bourgeois audience, could make no commitment of its own to a project devoted to non-Irish work and *avant-garde* to boot" (Harold Ferrar, *Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre*, 9). Johnston's non-realistic play was, then, written under the influence of German Expressionism, for Johnston had been exposed to the work of writers such as George Kaiser and Ernst Toller in London, as well as under the influence of the Dublin Drama League, which performed works of dramatists like Strindberg and O'Neill, Kaiser and Toller. Yet, not only was Johnston dissatisfied with the prevailing theatrical modes in Ireland, but also with the ways of the politics of the Irish Free State. Like other voices in his generation, Johnston's was a voice of embittered and agonized disillusionment with the nationalistic orthodoxies of the Free State. "Cinderella", he once said, "has turned into the Free State" (Harold Ferrar, *Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre,* 29).

When Johnston's last play, *The Scythe and The Sunset,* was first staged in 1958, the Irish Republic was already ten years old. The social and political backgrounds of the late fifties were rather different from those of the mid and late twenties, when *The Old Lady* was written. The first three decades under native governments after the establishment of the Free State were marked by economic and social conservatism: nationalism, concern for the native language, valorization of rural life and antagonism to cosmopolitan values prevailed. The entire period after independence was, then, marked by an essentialist conception of Irish identity and an isolationism encouraged by official

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ideology and protected by severe censorship. In the late fifties, however, Irish society began to plant the seeds for the rapid social and economic changes that would take place in the following decades. According to Terence Brown,

> There were many signs that a new Ireland, an Ireland less concerned with its own national identity, less antagonistic to outside influence, less obsessively absorbed by its own problems to the exclusion of wider issues was, however embryonically, in the making. [...] A new kind of iconoclasm was in the air, distinct from the satiric, antagonistic bitterness that had characterized the work of an earlier generation of writers. (*Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, 225-7)

Edna Longley has affirmed that "it has grown harder to discuss Irish literature without being drawn into arguments about culture and politics.[...] The argument does not turn on whether to link literature and history, literature and politics, but on how" (*The Living Stream*, 9; 37). Both *The Old Lady Says 'No!'* and *The Scythe and The Sunset* are, in essence, historical plays. *The Old Lady* portrays the leader of the unsuccessful rising of 1803, Robert Emmet, and *The Scythe and The Sunset* constitutes an Easter Rising play. In the light of Edna Longley's argument, it consider in what ways both plays can be read not only as historical drama, but, moreover, as revisionist historical plays.

The term Revisionism, as it is conceived now, however broad in sense it may be, had not been coined when Johnston's plays were first staged, but the seeds of what would later gain force and become a rather widespread movement were definitely being planted. As Luke Gibbons has pointed out, "while it is true that revisionism had to await the 1970s to make a popular impact on Irish life, the first direct challenges to the orthodoxies of the national revival date not from the 1960s, but from the 1930s and 1940s, from in fact the writings of O'Faolain and others associated with *The Bell* magazine (founded in 1940) and the publication of *Irish National Studies* (1938)" (*Field Day Anthology*, 562). It's possible, then, to consder that can consider, then, that the embryo of revisionist thought, as it was developed in the second half of twentieth century, was in the making in the voices of disillusion with the isolationist nationalistic politics of the Free State in the late 1920s, when *The Old Lady* was premièred, and a context of open discussion around the theme of historical revisionism already established when *The Scythe and The Sunset* was first staged.

In the complex structure of *The Old Lady Says 'No!'* Johnston's main theatrical method is the persistent use of allusions to Irish history and legends, mostly to sentimentalized expressions of those, which he subjects to critique, as wanted a much later historical revisionism wanted. *The Old Lady* opens with a play-within-a-play where the romantic farewell between the nineteenth century hero, Robert Emmet, and his beloved, Sarah Curran, is being performed. In spite of the existence of other views of the hero, which considered Emmet as a force working against more rational parliamentary

efforts towards independence, Johnston preferred to work with the popular romanticized view of the hero, as he justifies:

> One of the best beloved figures of Irish romantic literature is Robert Emmet. The story of his rebellion of 1803 has all the elements to make for magic. It was very high-minded, and completely unsuccessful. It was picturesquely costumed and insufficiently organized. Its leader – a young protestant university man of excellent social background – having failed to achieve anything more than an armed street riot, remained behind to bid goodbye to his forbidden sweetheart, instead of taking flight as any sensible rebel should do. In consequence of this, he was captured by an ogre of melodrama called major Sirr, and was hanged after making one of the finest speeches from the dock in the annals of criminal court. [...] So we all love Robert Emmet. Yeats and De Valera loved him. [...] I do too, and so did Sarah Curran.
>
> The whole episode has got that delightful quality of storybook unreality that creates a glow of satisfaction without any particular reference to the facts of life.
>
> (*Dramatic Works*, 15).

The opening playlet, then, is a parody of a melodramatic play where the actors' speeches consist basically of a collage of fragments from sentimental and patriotic eighteenth and nineteenth-century Irish verse, which Christine St. Peter has carefully catalogued in her edition of the play. The very first words of the play, for instance, spoken by voices, consist of lines from *The Shan Van Vocht.* Chritine Christine St. Peter is precise in pointing out Johnston's specific target: "Dorothy Macardle, as a playwright and nationalist historian, had three plays presented at the Abbey between 1918 and 1925, and her *Ann Kavanagh*, produced in April 1922, opened with the song 'The Shan Van Vocht', an evocative touch which Johnston stole for his own overture" (*The Old Lady Says 'No!'*, 30). In *The Old Lady* the opening song acquires new meaning, when related to the famous revised title and to the images of Ireland to be developed further in the play. As the scene unfolds, Emmet defends his ideals of heroism and his aspirations for liberty to be achieved through violent revolutionary action:

> But there is lightning in my blood – red lightning tightening in my blood! Oh, if there was a sword in every Irish hand! If there was a flame in every Irish heart to put an end to slavery and shame! Oh, I would end these things!
>
> I have written my name in letters of fire across the page of history. I have unfurled the green flag in the streets and cried for the high places to all the people of the five kingdoms: ' Men of Eire, awake to the blest! Rise, Arch of the Ocean and Queen of the West!' I have dared all for Ireland and I will dare again for Sarah Curran. Ah, it is a good thing to dare! (*Dramatic Works*, 23).

What Johnston wanted to provide his audience with, in these first scenes, in an extremely clever way of allying content and form, was an image of their own concepts of sentimental nationalism and romantic heroism, perpetuated by patriotic literature and fed by Irish politics.

After the initial playlet, the action of *The Old Lady* happens in the visions taking place in the unconscious or semi-conscious state of mind of the actor who plays Emmet in the opening scenes, in a Strindbergian fashion. Emmet, in the actor's dream is transported to contemporary Dublin, where a series of encounters with people who fail to recognize the hero take place, illustrating the irreconcilable contradiction between his dream and reality in modern Ireland. The most significant encounters are with the statue of Henry Grattan and an old flower woman. The statue of Grattan, according to Nicholas Greene, "speaks for the tradition of constitutionalist nationalism, while Emmet represents the spirit of armed rebellion" (*The Politics of Irish Drama,* 153). In the recently published biography of Denis Johnston, Bernard Adams has affirmed, adding to Nicholas Greene's comment on the play: "*The Old Lady* trenchantly undermined what Nicholas Greene has called 'the postures of nationalist revolution' – particularly violent revolution. Johnston's sympathy for the views of Grattan, the rational gradualist, was clear" (*Denis Johnston: A Life*, 104). In fact, in the play, Grattan states:

> Full fifty years I worked and waited, only to see my country's new found glory melt away at the binding of omniscient young Messiahs with neither the ability to work, nor the courage to wait.
> [...]
> Oh, it is an easy thing to draw a sword and raise a barricade. It saves working. It saves waiting. It saves everything but blood! (*Dramatic Works*, 32-33)

Grattan attacks the hero and the chain of violence which sprung from the fights for independence and prevailed in Ireland in the Civil War and in the Free State government.

The old flower woman becomes a recognizable image of Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan when she says: "Me four bewtyful gre-in fields. Me four bewtyful gre-in fields". She is Yeats's Ireland as Johnston sees her – degenerated and lowered to images of degradation. She is Cinderella turning into the Free State. Not only does Johnston use, then, the image of the romantic hero as the object of his satire, but also the image of Ireland itself as provided by Yeats in his well-known play. What Johnston eventually does in his play, then, is to invert the revivalist and nationalist methods. Instead of taking historical moments and legendary figures to glorify, he uses such figures for a project of demystification and demythologization, again in the fashion of a much later revisionism.

Harold Ferrar, among other critics, considered *The Old Lady Says 'No!'* "a landmark in the story of Irish theatre – at once a summing up of the advances of the

decade and a herald of future possibilities. [...] The Irish theatre stood at a critical point, a zenith of anticipation" (*Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre,* 15). The point here is to consider that in embodying a satirical and political content in an experimental form that broke the barriers of isolationism and opened up to outside influence and plurality, in a project of open demystification of history, Johnston was definitely anticipating several aspects of the revisionist agenda which was to come. He wanted "to paint Ireland and her problems in their true colours" (Ferrar, 17), to shatter what he identified as misconceptions of Ireland's past. In this same fashion the revisionists of following decades have committed themselves to interpret history, in the belief that what they saw as false images of Ireland's past undermined its present and compromised its future.

Loyalty to truth and commitment to a reexamination of Irish history, divested of sentimental romanticism, again constituted Johnston's inspiration as well as his aspiration in *The Scythe and The Sunset*. Insofar as this play leans heavily on O'Casey's *The Plough and The Stars*, their contrasting relationship usually helps to identify how Johnston attempts to rewrite and reshape history as well as transform the image of the Irish national spirit. Although Johnston denied any intention of parodying his predecessor's shatteringly successful work, most analysis of *The Scythe and The Sunset* cannot afford to neglect *The Plough and The Stars.* Our primary aim, here, however, is not to confront O'Casey's and Johnston's plays, but identify Johnston's own interpretation of the Easter Rising. He sets out in the introduction to his play, to present factual evidence that would sustain his play as a truthful unromantic, however theatrical, vision of what took place:

> I was a schoolboy at the time of the Rising, and for the greater part of the three days my home was occupied and fortified by four male members of the De Valera's battalion, while we of the family were held, supposedly as prisoners, but actually as hostages. [...] It all sounds more dramatic than it really was. Our captors were soft-spoken and apologetic young men who did the least damage they could, compatible with their order to turn the house into a fort and to prevent us from leaving [...] consequently my recollections of the week are personal and undramatic. Of the rebels, I principally remember their charm, their civility, their doubts and their fantastic misinformation about everything that was going on. About the men in khaki there remains an impression of many cups of tea, of conversations about everything except the business in hand, and of a military incompetence of surprising proportions. (*Dramatic Works*, 87)

The idea of being loyal to a truth divested of romanticism and propaganda, apart from being very much inserted in an established context of rethinking history from a revisionist perspective, as we now conceive it, had been strengthened in the war years, when Johnston worked as a BBC radio reporter. In his autobiographical report on the war, Johnston states: "I was not going to concern myself with propaganda. I was

going to describe soberly and sensibly exactly what I saw, and give the people at home the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, whether happy or unfavorable" (*Nine Rivers from Jordan*, 8). Thus, Johnston links his experience to the production of *The Scythe and The Sunset* and explains:

> Most plays about national uprisings are based upon an assumption that the embattled rebels are always romantic, and that the forces of oppression are totally on the wrong. A dramatist whose historical experience makes it difficult for him to accept these rather shopsoiled axioms as a matter of course, is usually regarded as being either satirical or deliberately confusing, unless he is prepared to waste a lot of time disproving such conclusions. (*Dramatic Works*, 86-7)

The three acts of Johnston's realistic play take place in a café called the Pillar Café, used as a site of support for the insurgents in the Post Office across the street. From there the Rising can be perceived and commented upon by the characters inside. Johnston is, then, insistent in providing characters that make explicit judgments about the conflict, apart from suffering its consequences. As the scenes unfold, we see in the café representatives of the common people, the rebels, and the Irish serving the British army, whose words convey the ideas of the groups they represent. Johnston's satire strikes in every direction; he sees the failures and contradictions of every party involved in the absurdity represented on stage. He shares with his audience a satirical but sympathetic view of the combatants, which include a perception of confusion and a sense that somehow people get entrapped by the nets of history and power in wartime. Johnston's play meets, then, his personal view of war inserted in the historical-political debate in Ireland in the late fifties.

Denis Johnston employed theatrical methods to convey his views and represent the Irish past, as well as reinterpret established images of that past. In the *Old Lady Says'Nó!* and in *The Scythe and the Sunset* he anticipated Historical Revisionism, thies providing a fuller understanding of the Irish history. In what ways did Denis Johnston somehow anticipated a revisionist interpretation of history, while employing theatrical methods to convey his views and represent the past. And I conclude with Ciaran Brady's words in the introduction to his *Interpreting Irish History – The Debate on Historical Revisionism*: "the recognition that complete understanding can never be attained in history should be sufficient to stay the hand of judgment, and to sustain the belief that all historical judgments, whatever their provenance, are partial and imperfect" (29).

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Statistics and The Canon: Irish Theatre Historiography Beyond the Diaspora

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Abstract: *This article examines issues raised in the paper "Infinite Rehearsals", presented at IASIL 2001, which stressed the importance of taking audience reaction into consideration when analysing the historical significance of dramatic texts. Focusing on the author's current research project, the article goes on to recognise that, desirable though such an approach is, the limitations of research facilities in a country like Brazil render it largely impracticable.*

At IASIL 2001, held at Dublin City University, Chris Morash and Shaun Richards presented a joint panel on Irish Theatre Historiography entitled "Infinite Rehearsals", in the course of which they raised a number of issues of seminal importance. In this article I wish to take up some of those issues, focusing particularly upon the difficulties faced by theatre researchers working in countries like Brazil, beyond the Irish diaspora. At the outset I should make it clear that it is my intention to ask questions rather than to answer them, problematizing rather than proposing solutions.

Although I was unable to be present at the panel, which coincided with one that I was chairing, Shaun Richards was kind enough to give me a copy of their paper after the session. As far as I am aware the text of "Infinite Rehearsals" has not yet appeared in print so it will be helpful if I begin by summarising some of the main points raised. The authors' central argument was that it has become necessary to utilise theoretical models other than simply that of postcolonial theory to analyse Irish Theatre. Using *Playboy of the Western World* as an example, Morash and Richards demonstrated how Hans-Robert Jauss's concept of a *horizon of expectations*[1] could be applied to the play's rapid passage through the processes of canonisation, automation and reshuffling, thus freeing up the interpretation of the text and its performance from a dependence upon the notion of a sacrosanct original which is subject to inevitable decay. In the course of their paper the authors expressed the conviction that theatrical analysis must go beyond the dialogue if it is to deal with a play's theatrical specificity, paying equal attention to the didascaly or stage directions, thus giving due recognition to the aural and visual aspects of a dramatic work in addition to its purely literary content. They pointed out

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that this is especially important in the case of Irish theatre, which has been so dominated by the word ever since Yeats's strictures concerning the sovereignty of speech over gesture almost exactly a century ago. Analysis should also take into consideration the means by which plays structure the dimensions of time and space, both on the stage itself and between performers and audience. The vital necessity of concentrating on the complete range of theatre languages was seen as being no less relevant to the study of scripts as dramatic texts than when the object of study is a theatrical performance itself. However, the authors went on to stress the idea that any analysis will still be incomplete if it fails to recognise that the audience also plays a major role in the creation of a theatrical text. They therefore advocated the fusion of theatre semiotics and reader response theory that has been developed by such writers as Patrice Pavis[2] and Susan Bennett,[3] in order to reach a critical model which would retain textual analysis of the dramatic text but replace the author with the audience as the locus of meaning. Only with such an analytical tool would it be possible to give due recognition to the vastly expanded horizon(s) of expectations that a contemporary Irish audience brings to a performance of *The Playboy of the Western World* in contrast with that available to their counterparts in 1907. The proposed model would also facilitate the discussion of the vexed questions of the authenticity and fidelity of a given performance to an author's "original" intentions, given that the Jaussian concept of reshuffling enables a play to be re-historicised in order to make the reality of historical change manifest. The authors concluded by expressing the hope that the theoretical model that they had advanced might enable the discussion of Irish theatre to escape from the ever more restrictive clutches of postcolonial theory and its overwhelming focus on the question of "identity."

I was particularly excited by the ideas contained in this paper because it seemed to me that they addressed many of the concerns that were fundamental to the research upon which I myself was engaged. My own involvement with Irish theatre studies began in 1992 when I was accepted as a Ph.D. student by Munira Mutran, one of the co-organisers of IASIL 2002 and undoubtedly the person who has done most to establish the study of Irish Literature on the Brazilian academic map. I joined her research group, which at that time was studying Irish dramatists through their non-dramatic writings, principally letters, autobiographies and criticism. Munira justified this oblique approach by saying that, as researchers in Brazil, we could not expect to make any significant contribution to the study of the plays themselves but that playwrights' non-dramatic work, having been the subject of far less critical attention, offered the possibility of genuinely original research. Thus it was that I embarked on my study of Sean O'Casey's *Letters* and *Autobiographies*, little appreciating the profound truth underlying my supervisor's advice.

It was only after I had successfully defended my thesis that I came to understand the wisdom in Munira's words. Free of the strictures of supervised study I drafted a research project which, brilliant though it might have been as a concept, has proved to be entirely inappropriate for the arid research climate of the Brazilian hinterland. My idea, based on the solid foundation of postcolonial theory, was to examine the progress

of Irish theatre from Independence until the end of the twentieth century by means of selecting representative plays and examining the reception of these plays in the former metropolis. As an end-product I envisaged a book-length socio-cultural study which would chart not only the growing assurance of the Irish playwrights in exploring and defining their postcolonial identity but also an inverse collapse of certainties as London critics and audiences fought to come to terms with the multicultural post-imperial kaleidoscope around them. In passing, I should make it clear that, when I drafted the project, I was unaware of John Harrington's endeavour along parallel lines in relation to the reception of seven Irish plays on the New York stage.[4]

The first step obviously was to select the plays that would represent appropriate moments in this tale of cultural and artistic revisionism. I decided to work on a decade-by-decade basis, choosing the "play of the decade" for the 20s, 30s, 40s and so on. With no access to box-office receipts or audience figures, which would have reliably indicated the popular success of the plays in question, I had to fall back on the canonical status of the plays, a more nebulous criterion by far. (In parenthesis, I was interested to see that, in the first months of 2002, John Sutherland used the objective ringing of the cash register in order to structure his cultural history of Britain's past fifty years in his analysis of the books that have featured on the best-seller lists.)[5] In gaining an overall picture of which plays had actually been performed in London during the period I was enormously assisted by the work of the indefatigable Bernice Schrank and William Demastes.[6] In order to prioritise the best or, at least, most representative work of each decade I then embarked on a crude statistical survey of some leading histories of Irish and British theatre, simply recording which plays were registered by each writer. The picture that emerged, was a fascinating one, not least for the insight that it offers into the procedures that underlie the formation of literary canons.

One of the most striking results of this statistical survey was the apparent insignificance of the majority of the Irish plays that were presented in Britain during the period. In the 77 years between Independence and the end of the twentieth century I was able to establish that at least 184 Irish plays had been staged on the British mainland, most of them in London, an average of 2.4 per year, an inconvenient figure, coincidentally identical to the number of children in the fabled nuclear family. Of this total, less than a third, 32.1% to be precise, received any mention at all in the critical texts and theatre histories that I consulted. However, as a rule-of-thumb designed to reveal canonical status, I resolved to take into consideration only those plays that were mentioned in five texts or more. Only 32 plays passed this particular test, 17.4% of the total, which therefore meant that it was precisely that inconvenient four tenths of a play that was destined to pass into the canon every year!

On a decade-by-decade basis, and ignoring the fact that the post-Independence portion of the 1920s was less than ten years, the figures also make for interesting reading. As might be expected, the number of plays staged in the last four decades is almost exactly double the number staged in the first four decades, with the 1960s witnessing

more productions by Irish playwrights than any other period. However, in qualitative terms, it is apparently the 1920s that saw the highest proportion of plays destined for canonical status, followed closely by the 1950s, with the 1980s in rather distant third place. It comes as no surprise to find that the 1930s generated not a single play of canonical significance. As Terence Brown has noted, it was a period in Irish cultural history when "an almost Stalinist antagonism to modernism, to surrealism, free verse, symbolism and the modern cinema was combined with prudery" and the Irish "population at large was protected from the incursions of alien modern thought and art forms."[7] In strictly numerical rather than proportional terms, however, there is little to differentiate between the four most productive decades, for three of them each produced six canonical plays, with the 1950s just edging into first position with seven.

If we now move on to look at the playwrights whose work has been canonised it is predictable enough that the laurels should be awarded to a very select group. Almost exactly two thirds of the 32 canonical plays were written by three playwrights alone, Sean O'Casey and Brian Friel each producing seven and Samuel Beckett six. The only other playwrights who achieved more than a single entry were Denis Johnston, Brendan Behan and Frank McGuinness, with two each. In terms of individual plays, it would seem that the most important Irish play of the post-Independence period has been *Translations*, with 18 "recommendations," closely followed by *Waiting for Godot* with 17. Some way behind came *Juno and the Paycock* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* with 13, followed by *Saint Joan*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Endgame* and *Faith Healer* with 10 each, which just pipped *The Silver Tassie*, *The Quare Fellow* and *The Hostage* on 9. Flawed and simplistic though my statistical methodology undoubtedly was, these are results that few critics would wish to dispute.

For the purposes of my proposed study, unlike John Harrington, I resolved to choose Behan rather than Beckett as the playwright of the 50s, as being more self-evidently Irish in his concerns. Thus, in synthesis, I was able to draw up a list of representative Irish plays for the post-Independence period as follows:

1920s *Juno and the Paycock* (1925)
1930s *The Big House* (1934 – Lennox Robinson)
1940s *Red Roses for Me* (1946)
1950s *The Hostage* (1958)
1960s *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964)
1970s *The Freedom of the City* (1973)
1980s *Translations* (1981)
1990s *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996)

This, then, would form the corpus of my proposed research. In practical terms, of course, with no library resources to speak of and dependent upon books purchased in foreign exchange as the value of the Brazilian currency plummets, this project is unlikely

to be satisfactorily completed. Munira's words of caution back in 1992 have returned to haunt me a decade later.

Nevertheless, I feel that my statistical survey has not been entirely in vain. One of the questions that I toyed with before I finally settled on my Ph.D. research topic was that of the principles, if any, that guided the play-selection process of the Abbey Theatre at the time of the rejection of *The Silver Tassie*. In his autobiography, Lennox Robinson quotes from a public debate that he and Yeats held on the subject of the Theatre's artistic policy. Robinson had advanced the point of view that there was a very good chance of the Theatre accepting "third-class plays" and Yeats had defended himself by saying that all of the world's theatres of "intellectual attainment" produce "more third-rate plays than masterpieces."[8] Amongst the third-class plays that were staged by the Abbey in 1928, in preference, one might say, over *The Silver Tassie*, were "Before Midnight" by Gerald Brosnan and "Full Measure" by Kathleen O'Brennan. Although a manuscript of the latter play may be consulted in the National Library of Ireland, no trace apparently remains of the former, whereas *The Silver Tassie* has duly entered the canon of Irish theatre. Indeed, the acclaimed production of Mark-Anthony Turnage's operatic version of the play by the English National Opera in February 2000 is likely to assure O'Casey's play of its canonical status for some time to come. So I therefore find myself wondering about the 118 plays from that list of 184 Irish plays that have been staged in Britain since 1922 which were apparently not considered worthy of a single mention in any of the research sources that I consulted. Has the process of canonisation been a fair one? Has some terrible critical oversight been committed in consigning to oblivion such plays as George Shiels's *The New Gossoon*, which opened at the Apollo Theatre on 8 April 1931, or Donagh MacDonagh's *Fading Mansions*, staged at the Duchess Theatre in September 1945? Was the 1950 performance of Austin Clarke's *The Plot Succeeds* at the Lyric truly insignificant? And what about Hugh Leonard's *The Au Pair Man* in 1969? Here in Brazil, beyond the Irish diaspora, where Irish theatre is rarely staged, we can do no more than trust that the arbiters of the canon have got it right.

In conclusion, then, perhaps a brief homily to the canonisers may be permitted. At IASIL 2002, delegates were hugely privileged to receive seminars led by Christopher Murray and Nicholas Grene, two of the leading authorities on Irish Theatre. They were undoubtedly aware of the weight of importance that would be attached not only to their comments but also to their very choice of plays for inclusion in their seminar series. How much greater, then, are the repercussions of their selections when these appear in print. Notwithstanding the protestations of Nicholas Grene to the contrary, the inclusion of plays and playwrights in works of critical analysis, irrespective of the objective of the study in question, contributes to the canonisation of those works. When he introduces a work, itself destined to become a classic of criticism, by saying that he "is not trying to construct a canon of national drama,"[9] he must understand that, willy-nilly, this is precisely what he is doing. For all of those of us around the world who are doomed to know plays through criticism rather than through performance it is inevitable that we will attach more importance to the plays that are mentioned in works of criticism than to

those that are not. Box-office success is, of course, fundamental to a playwright whilst he is alive, but after he or she has gone it is the critics who award the laurels.

Notes

1 Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
2 Pavis, Patrice. "The Classical Heritage of Modern Drama: The Case of Postmodern Theatre," *Modern Drama*, v. XXIX, n. 1, March 1986, 5.
3 Bennett, Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. 2nd. ed. London: Routledge, 1997, 211.
4 Harrington, John P. *The Irish Play on the New York Stage, 1874-1966*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997.
5 Sutherland, John. *Reading the Decades: Fifty Years of British History through the Nation's Bestsellers*. (London: BBC Consumer Publications, 2002).
6 Schrank, Bernice; William W. Demastes, (Eds.). *Irish Playwrights, 1880-1995: A Research and Production Sourcebook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997.
7 Brown, Terence *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-79*. Douglas: Fontana, 1981, 147-8.
8 Robinson, Lennox. *Curtain Up*. An Autibiography. London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1942, 138.
9 Grene, Nicolas. *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 2.

Stayley's The Rival Theatres *and Metatheatre*[1]

Margarida Gandara Rauen*

Abstract: *Theatre rivalry in Ireland in the 1700s has been described by stage historians such as William Clark, La Tourette Stockwell and, more recently, John Greene and Gladys Clark. A famous case involves the Smock Alley and Aungier Street companies, which ultimately were united in the 1743-44 season. Little is known, however, about the metatheatrical content of playtexts regarding rivalry in Dublin and London, such as* The Rival Theatres *(1759), by George Stayley, an actor and playwright who has been ignored by scholarship. This paper is about him, his context of production and his pretexts, which can only be studied in rare books and have been the subject of a postdoctoral project I developed as a Fellow at the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington D.C./ 2001-02). Aspects that I have stressed include the role of audience preferences and of business constraints in the shaping of content and form, provided the tensions between high culture (notably Shakespearean) and the popular genres (the farce in particular) that gained space and visibility in the 1700s.*

Theatre rivalry in Ireland in the 1700s has been studied by stage historians such as William Clark, La Tourette Stockwell, John Greene and Gladys Clark. A famous case involves the Smock Alley and Aungier Streer companies, which ultimately were united in the 1743-44 season. Although rivalry continued to exist and was a subject matter of drama, little is known about the metatheatrical content of specific playtexts. Given the remarkable appeal of Shakespearean drama in the 1700s, in effect, authors of the 18th century and particularly those who have not been canonized in academic *curricula*, have received modest or no scholarly attention. Lewis Theobald's "Restored" pieces and then David Garrick's acting career are among the favorite topics in the bibliography that covers the period before the 1750s. Gray actually claims that "The story of criticism in the eighteenth century, it might in truth be said, centers in the developments in the judgments about Shakespeare" (19). As Dobson in particular has pointed out, the Bard has continuously been raised as far as one could be as a cultural symbol.

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This paper is meant to fill a bit of this gap by considering the work of George Stayley, an Englishman born "at Burton upon Trent, in Stratfordshire"[2] the author of *The Rival Theatres* (1759). This is a rare book that I have studied at the Folger Library and, in addition to illustrating the use of Shakespearean drama in the dramaturgy of the 1750s, reveals ways in which the theatrical space operates as a socio-political formation.

Stayley's *The Rival Theaters*: pretexts and transmission

The objective of my initial project was to study George Stayley's play *The Rival Theatres: or, a play-house to be let* (1759, printed in Dublin and reprinted in London for W. Reeve), which I had located at the Folger Library vault. When I began reviewing bibliography, the matters of authorship and stage history became complicated because there was a connection between Stayley's play and others with similar titles, and possibly by different authors, in two different houses, the Smock-Alley and Aungier Street theatres in Dublin. I had found a reference of an afterpiece named *The Rival Theatres*, performed on 10 Jan. 1737 at Aungier Street, Dublin, associated with another play called *The Stage Mutineers.* The entry bears:

Afterpiece: *The Rival Theatres; or, A Playhouse to be Lett*. [Probably The Stage Mutineers; or, *A Playhouse to be Lett*.] Cast: [listed in 24 Jan. 1737 Dublin edition] First Manager– Ward; Second Manager– Reed; Pistol– Butler; Crambo– Watson; Truncheon– J. Elrington; Comic– Jenkins; Wardrobe Keeper– Dash; Prompter– Seivers; Coupee– Sheridan; Madame Haughty– Mrs. Williamson; Mrs. Squeamish– Miss Mackay; Miss Crotchet– Miss Woffington; Miss Lovemode– Miss Butcher. Miscellaneous: A tragi-comi-farcical ballad opera. By "A Gentleman late of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1733" [i.e. Edward Phillips.] (Greene and Clark 198, boldface mine).

Greene and Clark, covering the Dublin stage from 1720 to 1745, do not mention George Stayley and list an Edward Phillips as the author of a play called *The Rival Theatres* recorded in the 1736-37 Aungier St. calendar (79). There were, in fact, I was three different playtexts, listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Dates	Title	Author	City/Theatre	Printer
1733	*The Stage Mutineers*	? Edward Phillips	London/Covent Garden	? For Richard Wellington
1737	*The Rival Theatres* (new ed. of SM?)	? Edward Phillips	Dublin/ Aungier Street	Ebenezer Rider for James Hamilton
1759	*The Rival Theatres* with the afterpiece *The Chocolate Makers*	George Stayley	London and Dublin/ ??	? For W. Reeve

Having examined the Folger Shakespeare Library copies of these rare books side-by-side, I verified that there are only two different plays, but one of them is a ballad-opera

that was published twice, under different titles, in England and later in Ireland: *The Stage-Mutineers: or, a play-house to be lett* (London, Printed for Richard Wellington, 1733) and *The Rival Theatres: or, a play-house to be lett* (Dublin, Printed by Ebenezer Rider for James Hamilton, 1737), with a different title-page lacking any indication of authorship, with changes in wording and a different cast list, similar to the one cited by Greene and Clark. My original object of study was the unique playtext of *The Rival Theatres: or, a play-house to be let* (MDCCLIX, printed in Dublin and reprinted in London for W. Reeve), by George Stayley.

Pursuing other editions, I found that Stayley's play had not only been printed in Dublin and reprinted in London for W. Reeve in 1759, as the title-page of the one copy I had looked at indicates, but it had also been printed in Dublin by D. Chamberlaine in 1759 and by Ebenezer Rider in 1742. The English Short Title Catalog (ESTC) lists a 1737 edition, also printed by Ebenezer Rider! The ESTC, however, provides different information, probably from the title pages of the 1742 and 1737 Rider printings: "A tragi-comi-farcical-ballad opera, as it is now acting at the Theatre-Royal in Aungier-Street". The ESTC is mistaken in listing a 1737 edition linked to Stayley. This book is not in the Folger Library, so that a question remained: had Ebenezer Rider printed a play with the same title for two different authors in 1737? This seemed unlikely. With the help of Bernadette Cunningham, Librarian of The Royal Irish Academy (RIA) I was able to identify a second mistake. The RIA item listed in the ESTC is not Stayley's. Rather, it is a copy of the Dublin issue of *The Stage Mutineers* with the 1737 title *The Rival Theatres*. It seems, therefore, that *The Rival Theatres* Greene and Clark have listed is in reality the *The Stage Mutineers*, which appeared in a non-dated second edition that can also be found in the Folger collection. Provided these doubts about authorship I have explored intertextual connections that I'll briefly mention, while discussing Stayley's play.

The content of *The Rival Theatres*

The Folger copy of Stayley's *The Rival Theatres* (PR/3699/S95/R6/Cage)[3] has irregular quire numbers and sequential page numbers from 2 through 30. Shakespearean plays are quoted frequently. According to the title-page, the piece is a farce. A "General Advertisement" (A2r) is found after the title page. It indicates that the author has released the texts for publication because of "The favourable reception [they] met in their Representation on the Stage [...]". A second title page mentions that the farce "was performed at the Theatre-Royal in Dublin" and collates as follows:

The
RIVAL THEATRES:
OR,
A PLAY-HOUSE TO BE LET.
A
FARCE.

As it was performed at the
Theatre-Royal in Dublin.

Long hath the Stage, with partial Rigour, shewn
Some Fools of all Professions– but her own;
Long hath she laugh'd at Follies of the Age,
Laugh you, in turn, at Follies of the Stage.
Four borrow'd Lines a little alter'd.

The phrase "*Four borrow'd Lines a little alter'd*," has a source. I have identified similar lines in the Prologue of the various editions of *The Stage Mutineers*:

Long to your Sight the Stage has *partial* shown
Some Fools of all Professions– *but their own:*
Long has she laugh'd at *Follies* of the *Age* –
Laugh, in your Turn, at *Follies* of the *Stage.*[4]

The verso of title page 2 bears an "Advertisement" per se, stressing that the objective of the Farce is "to turn into Ridicule the Falshoods [sic] and Inventions of Idleness and Party; [...]". *The Rival Theatres* seems to be politically engaged in the cause of defending the Theatre-Royal. This Advertisement, like a pamphlet, praises the Theatre Royal: "Therefore, with the Voice of gratitude and Truth, be it often and loudly repeated, that the People of Ireland have not only expressed the warmest Attachments for the Theatre-Royal, but eagerly snatched at every Opportunity for Encouragement, and only want a Countenance to support it" (verso of title page 2).

A prologue follows. Its pretext is Jaques's seven ages of men speech in *As You Like It*, but it stresses metatheatrical subject-matter: audiences, stage managers, apprentices and actors. The connections with Shakespeare and the capturing of polemics within a social context are explicit:

The World's a Stage: So Shakespeare wisely said.
(Look up and read it, written o'er my Head) [...]
Herein, again, the Stage resembles States; [...]
The World observes, and joins in our Debates.
To such an height the Malady is grown,
That Man and Wife __ have Stages of their own.
Their Pleasures, like their Creeds, lie different Ways,
And go divided, now __ to Church and Plays.

As the first scene unfolds, labor relations in the theatre are brought up, as Proteus, manager of a Play-House in New England, complains about the life of managers. Proteus

uses another Shakespearean allusion to remark how bad his night's sleep was: "Queen Mab was with me all Night (B1v)." He goes on to request that the Orderman take a letter to the printer. This is the piece's first obvious critique of the rival theater, concerning their excessive use of tragedy to attract the public and rhetorically praising both comedy and tragedy for the different ways each genre may be appreciated (B1v-B2). Proteus and the Orderman expand on the subject of profit and on how much money the rival house might have made the night before. Proteus then instructs Orderman to give what appear to be pamphlets to advertise that night's performance to well dress'd people: "See that the Women have Cardinals[5] [...] and the men clean Shirts; that they need not be oblig'd to wear Gloves, to hide their Dirt and spoil their Clapping (B3)." Proteus is eager to have audiences that can afford to pay well. He further instructs Orderman to find out what kind of program the public is looking forward to having in the other house, so that they may "either bring it out before them, or advertise something strong against it (B3)." Orderman agrees, remarking that "all Arts and Advantages are lawful in War Time (B3)."

The dialogue gradually develops the characterization of Proteus as a wicked, competitive manager who will do anything to hurt his business rivals, as he himself vows, quoting Shakespeare: "Damn me, but we'll crush 'em if we can: For, as Richard says, 'while they live, my goodly Kingdom's on a weak Foundation' (B3v)." There are no stage directions regarding acting, but he could be played as a very cunning person, indeed a Richard III of the theatre trade! The aggressive process of rivalry is also accentuated by Neutral, the character who tells an actress, Lady Betty Modish, that "both Houses will be shut up, by order of Government, till there's a Peace" (7). This Lady draws on Shakespearean subject matter and characters for her metaphors, asking Neutral: "[...] in these Theatrical Times, as we may call them, this bloody Contention between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which side have you declared for? Are you a Capulet or a Montague?" (7). Neutral simply says: "I am a Dutchman, and trade with both Nations" (8). Another intertextuality, this time with Norfolk's description of the poor condition of the enemy in *Richard II*, is found when Neutral refers to the Smock Alley artists as a "scum of Britons" (10). Explicit mention of rivalry between the houses is then made: "Lady: But seriously, Sir; which of the Houses do you really think will carry it next Winter?" (12). Neutral's guess "perhaps neither" proves to be correct when the joke of letting the Smock Alley is revealed in the Epilogue: "The Farce is done: my Staff of Office broke: A play-house to be let – was all a Joke" (29).

The Rival Theatres is followed by "The Chocolate-makers: Or, Mimickry Exposed. An Interlude. As it was performed at the Theatre-Royal in Dublin" [sic]. This afterpiece is 124 lines long (39-44) and seems to offer some insight regarding the playwright's craft in one of its footnotes: "A Mimick (according to Johnson's Dictionary): a ludicrous Imitator; a Buffoon, who ridicules by a Burlesque Imitation, copying another's Act or Manner so as to excite Laughter." (39) Whether or not Stayley viewed himself as a Mimic, the Piece also reflects upon the illusory and ephemeral nature of the artist's trade, a mere instrument in the business network:

For gen'ral Satire was the Stage design'd,
To shew the World, and moralize Mankind.
But when it comes to point at single Men,
'Tis Inhumanity, and Slander then.
Whether in Farces ye be turn'd to Scoff,
Or Fellow-Players *take each other off*. [...]
[...] 'Tis poor and cruel to expose Inferiors,
And worse than Folly to burlesque Superiors.
But how should common Merit 'scape th' Infection,
When Excellence itself is no Protection?
Have ye not seen, upon this very Spot, ___
(Alas! How soon is Woffington forgot?)
A woman fam'd for evry noble Gace,
Of Carriage, Action, Movement, Speech and Face;
Turn'd into Ridicule, and vile Description,
From Bits and Scraps of misapply'd Expression?

The playhouse and authorship issues

What theatre was Stayley writing for (or about)? The expression "Theatre-Royal" on the 1759 title-page is ambiguous because both Smock-Alley and Aungier Streets (and later other houses) were *theatres royal*. Dublin's first Theatre Royal was Smock Alley, opened in October 1662: "A replacement theatre in Aungier St. was nearing completion when, on 4 March 1734, 'Part of the House' at Smock Alley collapsed" (Greene and Clark 17), so that the company moved on to the new Theatre Royal in Aungier Street, opened on 9 March 1734. Meanwhile, manager Louis Duval took the initiative to build a new theatre on the site of the demolished Smock Alley: "the new Theatre Royal in Smock Alley was used for the first time on the evening of Thursday, 11 December 1735" (Greene and Clark 31). From then on, the two theatres became rivals:

> [...] By the end of 1741-42 season the financial strain of six years of uninterrupted rivalry with Smock Alley was beginning to tell not only on the finances of the proprietors but also on the fabric of the building itself. [...] When the long-contemplated union of the Smock Alley and Aungier Street companies took place at the beginning of the 1743-44 season the United Company made its home at Aungier Street under the management of Thomas Griffith (Greene and Clark, 20-1) [and] the Smock Alley theatre was advertised for auction in January 1744 (Greene and Clark, 35).

The fact that George Stayley's name appears on the title-page of the 1759 W. Reeve printing of *The Rival Theatres* is the major evidence of authorship, and Stockwell

also acknowledges him as the author of this 1759 edition (note 28, 342). By this time, then, the "Theatre Royal" on the title-page probably means neither Aungier Street nor Old Smock Alley, and Greene and Clark do not include Stayley as an actor of these companies in the 1740s. Nevertheless, the old music hall of Dublin opened as Crow-Street Theatre in 1758 and Stockwell does quote *The Rival Theatres* regarding the new rivalry Smock-Alley versus Crow-Street between 1758 and 1767, stating that "The intimate details of the situation which prevailed at Smock-alley during this season are also revealed in *The Rival Theatres* whose author, George Stayley, was at that time a member of the company" (Stockwell, 126-7), going on to quote a full page of conversation between the characters Proteus (manager) and Mr. Orderman (his servant), from p. 3 (Stockwell, 127-8; note 42, 343).

Additional scholarly information about Stayley is in a biography of Thomas Sheridan (Sheldon), who became the manager of the united Dublin theatres in 1745. Sheldon is interested in the later career, accounting for the exact beginning of Stayley's new connection with Smock-Alley in 1752: "One other addition to the acting troupe must be specially mentioned: George Stayley, whose playing contributed little [...] but whose later writings touch often on Dublin theatrical matters. [...] he was made poet laureate of the company in 1753" (Sheldon 184). Regarding Stayley's *The Rival Theatres* (1759) Sheldon does not mention previous versions or sources and claims that "it satirizes the destructive rivalry between Crow-Street and Smock-Alley" (184). Overall, the connection between Stayley, Phillips and the various books placed in Table 1 cannot be established on the basis of the bibliography consulted, but the on-going rivalry between the Dublin playhouses has been well documented by those who pursued the history of management.

A hypothesis could be that the Crow-Street Theatre opening in 1758 not only revived an old story of rivalry, but reminded Stayley of the 1733 play called *The Stage Mutineers*.

In his autobiography *The Life and Opinions of an Actor* (1762), Stayley claims to have been born "some little time before" George II was crowned (v. 1,5), which happened in 1727. Stayley also reports having arrived in Dublin on "the 29th day of May, 1752", being hired immediately at Smock Alley and becoming the company's Poet Laureat there in 1753 (v. 1, 22-4). He then acknowledges the authorship of *The Rival Theatres* before 1760, but provides no exact date (v. 1, 28). It is unlikely that he would remember a play he had seen in London when he was only six or seven years old, but he may have become acquainted with it in Dublin in his twenties. Interestingly, Edward Phillips, whether or not he was the author of *The Stage Mutineers*, was still in the scene in the 1750s, since his play *The Mock Lawyer* was in the Smock-Alley calendar in 1751-52 (Sheldon, 442).

The transmission of *The Stage Mutineers* in the Dublin 1737 edition printed by Ebenezer Rider happens with of a new title: *The Rival Theatre: or, a Play-House to be Lett.* It is also described as "A Tragi-Comi-Farcical-Ballad Opera," and then linked with the Theatre-Royal in Aungier-Street. Stage directions assign the Prologue to Mr. J.

Elrington and the Epilogue to Miss Woffington. These Dublin players who are listed might have contributed in making the play known in Ireland, particularly Mr. Sheridan and Miss Woffington, who had London connections. Yet Margaret/Peg Woffington, who played her first part as Ophelia at Aungier Street in 1735, only began her acquaintance with manager John Rich of Covent Garden in 1740 (Hughes; Roose-Evans). Speculations apart, whatever prompted Ebenezer Rider to print *The Stage Mutineers* in Dublin with the new title *The Rival Theatres* for James Hamilton, this 1737 edition was completely reset and it also bears very different woodcuts and word changes, although the playtext is similar to that of previous editions.

Afterthoughts

The historical processes of rivalry, of commercial struggle and of professional tensions that are appropriated in Stayley's *The Rival Theatres,* in addition to being coherent with non-fictional references of the period, reflect aspects of the theatre trade that are familiar and contemporary nowadays. The fiction deals with theatre dominantly as business at a time when aesthetic values and moral assumptions were changing rapidly and accommodating a range of cultural forms that the aristocracy and the Church could not control anymore. Playwrights as Stayley probably drew on prestigious authors in order to attract audiences and cater to the wishes of the eager managers who hired them. Provided this context, Stayley's *The Rival Theatres* indicates that the eighteenth century was not only about "restoring the classics" but also about dealing with business constraints and keeping playhouses open or closing them out, often at the expense of the workers, in this case a whole cast whose artistic value had little or no importance to the managers in their quest for profit and financial success. During my limited time at the Folger Library, I focused on bringing the metatheatrical relevance of Stayley's *The Rival Theatres* to light. All of the associated books in Table 1 are, however, rich primary sources for criticism, revealing tensions between high culture (including Shakespearean drama) and popular genres (especially the farce), as well as transformations in stage history and the entertainment business in the 1700s. Hopefully, the links I have opened here will allow for them to become objects of research for other scholars who pursue comparative theatre and drama studies.

Notes

1 I am indebted to the Fellowship Committee of the Folger Shakespeare Library and to professors Geraldo U. de Sousa, Michael Dobson and Philip McGuire for recommending the project that led to this article.

2 An Internet search in Eureka Export/ ESTC (English Short Title Catalog) has yielded significant information about Stayley and his books, published between 1753 and 1780. Extant copies of his autobiography *Life and Opinions of an Actor* (Dublin 1762), which is the source here, exist in the United Kingdom. I read and have quoted from a microfilm of the Cambridge copy at the Penn

State Univ. Pattee Library. An extensive bibliography by Stayley remains unexplored, despite indications that his works have been read internationally. The ESTC actually lists nineteen extant copies of *The Rival Theatres*, for example, some in the UK and others in university or research libraries of Canada and the United States.

3 All the quire numbers after the quotations of Stayley's *The Rival Theatres* are from this Folger copy.

4 This quotation was taken from the Folger copy of *The Stage Mutineers* (1733).

5 A Cardinal is "a short cloak worn by ladies, originally of scarlet cloth with a hood" (OED 891). Cardinals were fashionable in the 18th century and indicated a higher social status, as opposed to one piece Capuchins, worn by poorer women.

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Fatal Fathers and Sons in Tom Murphy's A Whistle in the Dark

Hedwig Schwall[*]

Abstract: *Under this general title I want to discuss several instances of "filicide" throughout twentieth century drama. As W.B. Yeats was a great advocate of the importance of the unconscious, I would start with Yeats's idea of the father, as he goes from Cuchulainn's slaughter of his son in On Baile's Strand (1904) to that other infanticide (or rather adulticide) in Purgatory (1939), whereby his two Oedipus plays Sophocles' King Oedipus (1928) and Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus (1934) yield important material to understand the complications inherent in father-son relations.*
Then I would move to Tom Murphy's A Whistling in the Dark (1961), where the father has his rival son killed in more contemporary circumstances, to end with the very complex picture of the father-son relations Frank Mc Guinness offers in his Mutabilitie (1997), both in the colonist's and the colonised households. I would hereby use a Lacanian approach, since this would allow for na in-depth analysis of the problems at stake. This approach, however, has already a respectable tradition, which means that the obvious works like Deleuze and Guattari's L'anti-Oedipe, capitalisme et schizophrénie (1973) will first have to be nuanced by more recent studies like Philippe Julien's Le manteau de Noé (1991). While the latter offers an excellent status quaestionis, this can be refined by remarks made by Didier Anzieu in his analysis of father-child relations in Créer détruire (1996), as well as by new representations of the concept of identity and desire by Philippe van Haute (Tegen de aanpassing, 2000).

1. Introduction

In this article I would like to illustrate that forms of knowledge "other" than purely literary ones can indeed be very elucidative in the study of (Irish and other) literatures. Sometimes, a philosopher's line of thought can help us find our way in a labyrinthine text (as has so often proved to be the case in Joyce). Sometimes, economic theories prove to be a handy spade to dig up a whole microcosm of references to the surface in some textual field.

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Again, in other constructs, psycho-analysis may provide the magnifying glass that allows us to disentangle a complex knot of stylistic patterns which may characterise the different figures' mental make-up. Indeed, some schools of English have shown a special interest in widening the range of approaches to literature, and those critics who use psycho-analysis appeal most to me. I am thinking here of Soshana Felman, Meredith A. Skura and Peter Brooks, Jonathan Culler and Johan and Tim Schokker, Slavoj Zizek and Philippe Willemart.[1] In his article, "Nouveaux paradigmes et psychanalyse", Willemart immediately points out that the link between sciences (i.e. psycho-analytic theory) and literature is not obvious, but the ditch between them can be crossed,[2] and I fully endorse this view, as I have tried to argue and illustrate in an issue of EJES which concentrates specifically on the question of possible interrelations between theory and Literatures in English.[3]

What I want to undertake here is an analysis of Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark*, where I will use a Lacanian approach. I have chosen this play, which has become one of the modern canonical texts of Irish drama, for two reasons: first, it focuses on the problematic father-son relationships,[4] a recurrent phenomenon in twentieth-century Irish literature; and secondly, its dialogue matches the different characters so well that this language rolls out the red carpet for us to go into the underlying conflicts that were generated in the family's past.

But before I start my own analysis I will give a brief survey of how others have read Murphy's play. We see that three lines of thought can be delineated: some critics focus on the national and sociological context in which the protagonists are to be situated,[5] a second group foreground political issues, while a third group stress the mythic dimension which Murphy's tragedy is claimed to share with its Greek predecessors.[6]. I side with the last group, and agree with Colm Toibin that Murphy's work is an investigation into "the human predicament"[7] as such. It is interesting to see how those who approached Murphy's work from a more political angle, like Fintan O'Toole, have moved from a marxist view ("the play is [...] about the battle between a pre-industrial nationalist Ireland and the capitalist, meritocratic 'Ireland of the future'"[8] to a more individualistic focus with psycho-analytic points of interest: "Much of the play reminds us of the Greeks – the story of a house accused in which the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons.. the Oedipal tinge in the make-up of Michael, who tries to usurp his father both as protector to his mother and as father figure to Des"[9] The special 1987 issue of the *Irish University Review* on Tom Murphy's work tends to move from the political to the psychological: Chris Murray considers "Murphy [...] not a political writer. He is a tragic poet",[10] while Anthony Roche retraces Murphy's origins to "their great Greek and Shakespearean predecessors".[11] Finally, within the group of the more psycho-analytically oriented critics, we may distinguish between the "ontologising" Jungians and the "de-ontologising" Derrideans: while the former see the "archetypal and universal" in Murphy's "twisted relationships of family and parents",[12] the latter use Colonialist theories like Frantz Fanon; with its stress on contingency and factitiousness, this way of reading connects more easily with a Lacanian approach to language.[13]

So most of the abovementioned critics refer to the problematic father-son relation, and Lionel Pilkington even mentions Lacan's RIS system, but only superficially, which accounts for some imprecision in his character description.

One decided advantage in using Lacanian categories is that they focus entirely on language, which is the very medium of literature. In drama, however, there is not only verbal dialogue, but also an "underlying dialectic of physical action and language" and, as many critics have pointed out, Murphy's masterly exploitation of "the non-verbal aspect of drama" "generate[s] alternative sign-systems".[14] With "a language so purely theatrical"[15] all depends on patterns in speech and action, set by the "pater familias", which will ruthlessly lead to the tragic events in the play.[16] So, like the psycho-analyst who listens to a speaker's language to hear how his or her psychic system functions, I want to look for clues in dialogues and interactions to understand how the Carney family relations are constituted.

Thus I will concentrate on the father figure because his vital role consists in separating the baby from the first caretaker, and this first frustration will be formative for the constitution of one's psychic reality.[17] Before we go into Murphy's play, I will briefly sketch how Lacan sees the psychic system, the RIS system, which is divided into three dimensions: the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The child must pass through all three phases, and through his contact with the nearest of kin in his home he must assimilate the fears and abilities each phase brings, in order to balance them as dimensions of his psychic system. As we will explain, this can only happen if the Name-of-the-Father is realised.

When the baby is born he goes through the "Real" phase, that is, it cannot distinguish between itself and others, between subject and object; everything is a blur. The baby itself is primarily a body in need of food (milk) and attention. Its main sense is feeling, matter is the first thing to go by. As a result, communication will be realised mainly by means of things and inarticulate language. But when the baby is about six months old, two things happen that mark the transition to the anal phase: the child is weaned, and he recognises himself in the mirror. This event leads him to an "Imaginary" perception. His image of himself gives him a first idea of his own contours, but the specular image also teaches him a new language: the child notices that the image in the mirror imitates him, and that he can control it. As a result, the child's self-love and ideal image of his self grows; and since the mirror stage coincides with the anal phase, children become aware that they can control their muscles and either give or refuse to give their faeces to their parents. In this stage, the world is interpreted in dual terms: the child can obey or disobey the parent, be clean or dirty, orderly or not. His majesty the baby knows he is loved by the mother (who represents the whole world for him, all women who adore him), which brings (especially) the boy into a position of rivalry with the father. So, the Imaginary component is the one in which the narcissistic "I" seeks to establish itself, playing roles, in competition with others. The third component of the psychic system, the Symbolic aspect of perception, develops when the child goes through the oedipal complex, which means that the boy has to accept the "no" of the father, the "*non* du père", a symbolic castration which implies that the boy must learn that not his individual father is the boss, but that his authority is borrowed: he is powerful because

both his wife and the community have invested him with paternal authority. Castration means that the boy is confronted with the enigma of *sexuation*, on the one hand, with the *Law* on the other hand. This implies that the boy acknowledges that he is incomplete, that his mother does not desire him but his father, and that he has to go and seek his own desire elsewhere. As a matter of fact, symbolic castration, or the acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father[18], implies three things. First, the child moves from a belief in the Imaginary phallus (i.e. a belief in what you see, that the father is powerful because he is tall and strong) to a belief in the Symbolic phallus, which is an awareness that his authority has been assigned to him by society at large, through the Law. Hence the *Name* of the Father: not the physicality of the father is meant here, but the fact that the child bears his name and thus is assigned to the father's responsibility. Second, castration, or being marked by the Name-of-the-Father, means that the child must hand in his *jouissance,* the chaotic energies of the unconscious which have only one law: they return – to have them transformed into *desire*. The loving mother who was always at hand to fulfil the baby's wishes is now turned into a distant, puzzling Other, out of reach, who represents the enigma of sexuation and thereby the child's awareness of a fundamental lack. Whereas *jouissance* is an energy that is "full", urgent, recurrent, escaping all reality check, desire is an energy that adapts itself to actual possibilities and goes for compromise.[19] Third, the Name-of-the-Father implies that body and image become less important signifiers; they are replaced by verbal communication. Thereby the Symbolic person realises that "words, words, words" can never fully cover one's desire; there will always be a gap between experience and expression.

Briefly, the realisation of the Name-of-the-Father implies that the boy finds the right distance to the Other, which appears in a threefold form: sexuality (with the boy's mother as its prime representation), society (with its laws which are suprapersonal) and the Law, i.e. the laws of language which allow the individual to link up the three dimensions of the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic with each other. This means that he can connect (respectively) his unconscious, his narcissistic selfconsciousness (Ideal-I) and his Super-I (I-Ideal), in other words – the body he was, the individual he is and the ever-desiring person he will ever be. So the child moves from the Real, where the "It" is predominant (the body and the unconscious drives), to the Imaginary, where the "I" prevails (and the eye is the central sense, which looks for impressive examples to imitate); while the child who enters the Symbolic dimension internalises the Name-of-the-Father, the laws which are passed on by the parents, and thus builds a "Super-I". It is only in this last stage that the subject fully accepts his dependence on the Other, i.e. his trust in the Laws of language that regulate sexuation and allow the human being to promise, and thus to create continuity. So in the Real dimension all is one, the subject-object difference is blurred; in the Imaginary realm the (Ideal-)I lives by self-pronounced, clearly drawn differences,[20] while in Symbolic perception difference is experienced as something ungraspable, to be felt in one's shortcomings with the sexual partner and with society's rules which one can never perfectly fulfill. As a result of the subject's

awareness of his lack of completeness, the I-Ideal always moves and transforms itself constantly into something new to strive for. Language, too, changes in the transition from one stage to the next. Real language is called *lalangue*: it is an unarticulated babble or halting language with stammers. Imaginary language can still remain strongly underpinned by *lalangue*, in which unconnected, free-floating, meaningless signifiers are still completely permeated by jouissance,[21] which Lacan punningly characterises as "enjoy-meant". Symbolic language, finally, is the language of suggestion, which calls for a communication in which both speakers and listeners are disciplined by a real attention to the fine nuances of a language system. Of course, people can regress from the Symbolic to the Imaginary and lapse back in the Real. The regression into the Real is thereby marked by symptoms: if language no longer works, body language takes over, which is prompted not by the linearity of desire but by the recurrence of the drives; and the "grammar" of one's actions also becomes symptomatic, as the lapsing person reiterates certain actions which become purposeless.[22]

These types of speech and characters, stuck in or in between these different realms of existence, is what Murphy so masterfully stages in *A Whistle in the Dark*.

2. The play

A Whistle in the Dark (1960-61) is not just typical of the times, but a classic in its genre. It can even be lined up with masterworks of the grandest calibre: as Anthony Roche pointed out, the play has "Shakespearean roots". I think we may be even more precise, and to make my point I will briefly sketch some striking similarities between *Macbeth* and *A Whistle.*[23]

In *Macbeth* the tyrant needs the witches to whisper (self-)destruction in his ear, which he then realises with the help of an unsexed Lady Macbeth. In Murphy's play the witches are embodied in Mr Carney Sr hatred of society. In the process of his self-destruction he is helped by Harry, who is "unsexed". He is not castrated, as he does not allow for any notion of dependence or lack on his part: sex for him is absolute mastership, it has nothing to do with a mystery of exchange. Indeed, the Carney children are not really confronted with a female presence: Mr Carney's "undaunted mettle" annihilated his wife's presence and brought forth men-children only.[24] *A Whistle* also opens with *Macbeth*'s central clothes' metaphor: both Dada and Harry are characterised by their borrowed clothes: Harry puts on Michael's socks, Dada steals a coat he subsequently throws away, thus symbolising his *jouissance*, the vicious whirl of pointless gratuitous behaviour Macbeth too is sucked into. Michael Jr is cast in the role of Macduff, who loses his child (Des) and his wife (who leaves), but who is finally able to unmask the tyrant. And, like the Macbeths, the Carney Clan break the most fundamental laws of hospitality, in the sense that they actually expel the hosts from their own house.[25] Both plays are based on the same fundamental opposition: Macbeth, like Dada and his

followers, upholds an Ideal-I that must obliterate all ideas of an I-Ideal, which Michael jr constantly propagates. In both plays, the world is turned upside down: at the moment where Macbeth is given a new lease of life in society, with a new title and newly installed Name-of-the-Father, he kills his benefactor and further blocks the Symbolic system. In *A Whistle in the Dark* Michael jr welcomes his father, inviting him to (belatedly) affirm the Name-of-the-Father with his brothers, but all the rules are inverted: the owners are expelled by the guests, grown-ups are treated like children, and the most promising son is killed.

In both plays one group is stuck in the Imaginary and the Real; they are *re*miss in all aspects of life. Their language consists mainly of repetitive expressions of hatred, of a hunger for complete annihilation: they are caught in the mechanics of the death drive. The other group wants to install a *pro*mising mode; they cautiously invite the others to respect and forgive each other, and to move from gratuitousness to a sense of responsibility, calling for the unfolding of the Eros drive and their adaptation to the country's laws.[26]

Indeed, Mr Carney – alias Michael Sr – is *the* imaginary father par excellence.

"Le père imaginaire [...] est le père effrayant, tout-puissant comme le bon Dieu garant de l'ordre du monde, qui s'évit dans une relation imaginaire avec son cortège d'agressivité et d'identification. C'est le père avec lequel on est en rivalité fraternelle".[27] As Porge points out, he is one of those Imaginary fathers who are chosen by Imaginary people. This kind of relation is destructive: they are deathly fathers.[28]

The Father Figure

The story is quickly told. Michael Carney has five sons, four of whom have left Mayo to live in Coventry. The eldest, Michael jr, is the only one who married; his wife, Betty, is English. Michael jr feels responsible for his brothers Harry, Iggy and Hugo, who have set up a minor criminal business in prostitution with young girls and in a building enterprise's illegal practices. Michael has invited his father and younger brother, Des, over to Coventry for two reasons: to make his peace with his father, whom he left after years of having been violently abused, and to ask the father to lay down the law for his three sons, who may end up in jail or worse. The father, however, endorses Harry's views, who loves stealing and fighting. Harry has arranged a fight with the Mulryans, another family of thugs, and wants to draw Des into it. Michael jr opposes Des' taking part, and refuses to participate in it himself; the father pretends he will be there but sneaks out. Due to their foul fighting, the Carneys win, but the father now wants to be revenged on Michael and tries to humiliate him by egging him and Des on to have a fight. Michael jr accidentally kills his favourite young brother. Again, Michael Sr wants to shift the responsibility to his eldest, but the appalling outcome of his machinations finally unmasks him in the eyes of the other brothers.

It will already have become pretty obvious to the reader that Michael Carney Sr has not only failed to reach the Symbolic phase, he even inverts the father's function by dissuading his sons from complying with any law apart from his own. In this sense, one might say he is Imaginary, going by his own individual sense of control, but he goes further: he does not merely ignore the laws of society, but wants to destroy them. Whereas the function of the father is to introduce the child into society, to national education and to human culture,[29] Mr Carney bars his sons from the world beyond the family and tries to destroy it. Expelled from the police, he wants to keep his sons out of the "polis" in general;[30] national education is obliterated and only echoes of Mayo provincialism are heard, as in Dada's song (79); and instead of instilling his sons with examples to follow, with a desire to improve themselves, to grow in respect and authority, he vilifies everything that is beyond his own scope. As a result, he made his boys see the world from the vantage point of his Ideal-I, rather than in terms of a possible I-Ideal. Being stuck in his self-admiration of his own stagnant "I", Dada ridicules all culture, all progress, all forms of meritocracy.

Dada's introduction underscores the Imaginary aspect of his being: "DADA is a fine tall man and aware of it."(29) The opening of the second act characterises him in a similar way: "DADA is viewing himself from different angles in the mirror."(43) Like his manner, his expression is grandiloquent, as we hear in the way in which he addresses his sons: Desmond, Ignatius, Hubert – not Des or Dessie, Iggy, Hugo [...] only, his self-magnification proves totally empty, as when he boasts to Betty how he has many books at home, *The History of Ancient Greece*, and *Ulysses*: about the former book he says "Very interesting on how [...] Yeh"; about the latter: "Famous book. All about how [...] how [...] Yeah [...]." (70) He never reads, since he has no curiosity about a world beyond himself.

His body language perfectly illustrates how he presents himself as the Imaginary Phallus, the ideal example that is beyond all criticism; only, it turns out again that he is a hollow statue: Dada tells his sons to "stand up as a man", and initially even Betty is "impressed by him" (30); but his bragging language makes her sceptical and the extra chair he needs to "pull his height" in order to incite his sons to fight will lead to his ultimate downfall.

This very body language is symptomatic of all Dada's dealings with his family and with the world at large. He cannot stand anyone beside him, so he obliterates his wife: when he comes home at night he does not join his wife but addresses the children, making them fight each other.[31] But not only does he never refer to her – thus also forbidding the possibility for his sons to acknowledge their castration, i.e. the sexuated and therefore interdependent nature of the human being – he humiliates her, literally sub-jects her, as we deduce from Michael's description: "And you talk about pride! And you smoking cigars and drinking brandy with them and your wife on her knees scrubbing their floors." (94)

Like his wife, his sons were never allowed to stand beside their father, let alone to outgrow him. In this context, Michael's inquiry about the trees he planted is significant. He asks Des about the "five young ash trees. And we planted them [...] one for each of us, five sons, you know. I was wondering, did they all grow?" Des, apparently, is not

very sensitive to their symbolic value: “They did. I think. Some of them.” Dada’s answer is characteristic: “I never seen them. It’s dangerous anyway having trees near a house like that.” (31) Anything too near him is threatening, and he will always concoct an explanation for it: “Dada: [...] the carbon dioxide. Gas. The trees give it out at night. The carbon dioxide. Tid poison you.” (31) This fear of being out-rivalled links up with the fact that Michael was expelled from the home, something Dada omits to say, just before he starts to riposte about the trees.

Dada will do exactly the opposite of the Symbolic father. “Il n’y a de véritable autorité paternelle que reçue d’une femme”, as Julien informs us,[32] and indeed Dada will never have authority, only power. “The normal” in this household is the male norm, not the law of castration and culture, of interaction. An angry pseudo-certainty is all Mr Carney has to offer, and since fatherhood is never certain, and hence must be underscored by prescribed rituals, Mr Carney counteracts the classic rituals, used to acknowledge fatherhood”. This consists in lifting a child from the floor,[33] but Dada will have one son smash the other to the floor.[34]

Dada’s behaviour is strongly Imaginary, but this is only a protective layer over his deeper self which is a whirl of destructive energy, a strong underlying Real dimension. This Real is clearly expressed in his language, which is characterised by three features. It is *contradictory*, *meaningless*, and a merely *repetitive* expression of sheer spite. And because there is no Other beyond the I, Dada’s expressions have *no clearly defined addressee*: his “communications” are entirely caught in the mill of *jouissance* and he will often use *thing* language.

Contradictions abound: while Dada is the absolute coward who never fights, he eggs his sons on to fight. Though he is of imposing stature, he only dares to attack children; and though he tries to pretend to be a connoisseur in books, it turns out he has not read any. But his speech also reveals the deep rift in himself, between threatened Ideal-I and chaotic unconscious. The Imaginary and Real dimensions of his psyche remain unlinked, and his speech never connects with any social perspective, since he does not acknowledge the Symbolic aspect, the laws of society. As a result, Dada cannot use the promising mode of language. Promises turn to curses, continuity to destruction. The discrepancy within his psychic system comes to the fore in the contradictory link between Dada’s personal anger and the religious authority he wants to borrow power from: “I hate! I hate the world! It all! [...] But I’ll get them! I’ll get them! By the sweet, living, and holy Virgin Mary, I’ll shatter them!” (70)

Secondly, his life is aimless, and since he does not want to acknowledge this, his utterances are often aborted: “A man must fight back at – at – at A man must fight back. I’m a fighting man myself, and I can talk with the best [...]” (39) “I came in here like a man to – to – to – And this is the reception.” (46-7) When Dada senses that Des maybe impressed by Michael, who tends to put his finger on Dada’s problem, he will not allow this to be expressed: “that’s a highly intelligent way of talking. I bet he told you I was – Well, imagine. What else did he say?” (57) Indeed, Dada has never allowed

anyone to check his aggressive energies, he has never accepted any form of symbolic castration, and as a result both his actions and words are not steered by desire but by *jouissance*, the aimless energy of the death drives that turns on itself, without ever allowing for a reality check.[35]. We see this clearly when Dada wants to beat Michael in the same ritual way he used when his sons were children. However, Betty's horrified look makes him realise "he has let *himself* down; it drives him to excesses" (41, my italics). This brings us to a word that is central to our understanding of Mr Carney. Like Macbeth, the "restless ecstasy" of fear[36], the Real that often breaks through the surface of the Imaginary, is what makes him lash out regularly. That his energy is fundamentally aimless (and thus, *jouissance* instead of desire) becomes especially clear in his failure to delineate his addressees. This has ironic effects. Dada, who delights in shows of (negative) power, redirects the insults that were levelled at his sons to these same boys to make them fight:"Yaa-hah-haa! Man, Desmond Muck and trash! Again! Again! Keep it going! [...] Into it! Go on! Dirt! Dirt! Filth! Dirt! Muck and trash! Scum! Tinkers! Filth! [...]" (96) So Dada's unconscious is so strong that the words he repressed come back and speak through him, so that, ironically, Dada is imitating the society he hates, accusing his own sons now of what he and his family were said to be.[37] Indeed, Dada loses control over the basic condition of communication: he is so deeply steeped in the Real that he cannot make any distinctions any more, as we see in his confusion with personal pronouns, which normally delineate the "situation of discourse" [38]. Dada, transported by and wrapped in his own anger, previously used "them" to indicate the society that was hostile to the family, but now the "them" are his own sons: "Mister intelligent sneerer! We'll get them!", whereon Michael Jr puts his finger on the problem: "Jesus, our victory over *them*! Are ye happy now? Look at him: another victory for us over *them*!" (96). Thereon he kills Des and Dada immediately backs out, trying to deny his responsibility: "Dada: I was up on the [...] Ye were [...] Ye were all [...]" Whereon Harry: "Who's ye?" (97) Indeed, his own sons are "them" to Dada, as we saw with the trees. This is translated into stage language when the sons realign themselves against him. With Des' death, castration finally takes place in the family, and the question of clear reference is asked for the first time.

Dada's language betrays him as a man, up to his ears in the Real. Not only are his utterances contradictory, aimless and non-referential, but he also recurs to thing language. He uses the materiality of the bottle – i.e., its contents – to fortify his speeches (his sons use the bottles themselves as weapons); he uses his belt to hit his son (who is too strong with words), and needs the chair to add to his height. In normal, symbolic use, this object is used to sit on, as fits an impartial referee; but Dada needs the chair to be able to literally shout his sons down; it is merely a kind of amplifier. Finally, there is the silver cup Mr Carney offers his sons after their fight with the Mulryans. His cover-up story is not enough excuse for his absence at the fight, and so the cup must serve as an alibi.[39] This literal cup will get a fatal, metaphorical meaning when it becomes symbol of the final "Carney World Championship".

The Sons

It is obvious that, under the long and tight rule of a father who is sliding from the Imaginary into the Real, the sons have not been introduced to the Symbolic order. Never is there any form of real, i.e. reciprocal, communication. The opening stage directions immediately tell us that "*Generally, all of them are preoccupied with themselves.*" (13) Indeed, most brothers see their father as "le père maître, Père primordial, Urvater,[40] who is not to be questioned. But, lacking all confrontation with the Other in themselves (the question of sexuation and the Law) they cannot question themselves either, and the differences between male and female, between good and bad are never indicated.[41] As a result, the boys (especially Harry, Hugo and Iggy, who suffered most from their father's rule, are also steeped in the Real, urged in their actions by mere *jouissance*. Their one example in life is their father's Ideal-I, his own made-up ideal male image which never changes. As Pilkington puts it: "Like the fetish, the stereotype normalizes the trauma of difference by affirming an original identity or plenitude that seems to mask and conceal that difference".[42]

Indeed the sons are perfect mirrors of their father. The brothers treat Michael's wife as a skivvy, as their father had done with their mother; in the end, even Michael Jr will do so. Harry is even worse: he uses prostitutes in a doubly unlawful way. Not only are they misused by their employer, but they are too young: "Do you know what I mean when I say he has a few little girls working for him? Kids."(45) That not only sexual and moral differences are wiped out in this family, but also generational differences, should not surprise us. The pattern, whereby a cowardly Da could only bully his sons when they were children, has been set long ago. Dada repeats it, when he wants to subject Michael Jr to a childhood punishment, Harry echoes it as he prostitutes only little girls, and Des is said to have fought only a small boy in the famous fight with the Mulryans: he gave "one little bloke, that was just standing watching, a terrible dig in the head" (72). Even Michael Jr will not escape the devilish round of *jouissance*, when he will kill his youngest brother Des.

Harry

Harry is the one who proceeded farthest into the Imaginary, in the sense that he is the boss of the Carney gang. He respects neither women nor the law (he has Iggy steal money from his own workers), but he wants others to boost his Ideal-I, like when he invites Mush to sing a song about him (77). Only, he misses the irony of its title "Harry from the land of Saints and Scholars"(79). Both Saints and Scholars are typical representatives of the Symbolic order into which Harry was not only not introduced: this entrance was refused to him both by his father and his teacher. Harry had wanted to become a priest –of all things – but was mocked by the teacher, who told him he would become "a Jewman" (53) like his father. So here again he misses the Name-of-the-

Father: on the occasion when he could have expressed his desire, to be of service to society, to become something different from his father, he is pushed back into the chaotic patterns of his family by a figure who should have done the opposite, to e-ducate him. Not being allowed to voice his desire, let alone become a priest, we see that the 'Name-of-the-"Fawther"' was literally kept from Harry; and so his communicative skills were severely reduced, and his language dwindles to mere body language.

In Harry's utterances, the dialectic of physical action and language is telling. His understanding of metaphor is always closely linked to the literal. When people find him cocky he interprets this in a literal way: "And then some people'd want our cocks chopped off too."(20)[43] Or when he calls himself "We're all iron men" he immediately adds: "Aw, but look, more iron", showing how he wears an ass-shoe as his knuckle duster. His language is very "material" anyway: he uses the word "thing" all the time and is angered by the density of things, as they seem to reflect the enraging density of his own being to him. So the passage "*Things! (He kicks a chair.)* (89)" clearly illustrates the gestural and thing language which must relieve his pent-up, unspeakable frustrations. Harry is also repetitive in his language. He does not stammer like his brother Iggy, but the fact that the opening sentence of the play goes "Sock-sock-sock-sock-sock?" already indicates how important the principle of repetition (of old troubles) will be for the whole family.

Yet he knows that fuller forms of expression exist: he has notions of a kind of communication that goes beyond the moment, that can create continuity, and at one time Harry stresses the importance of being honest: "I don't mind a man, no matter what he talks, if he *means* it. If he's *faithful*". (88) Only, Harry has not had many examples of men who provided "meaning", i.e. purposeful speech, and who instilled confidence, by fulfilling their promises. The promising mode, typical of the Symbolic order, is nowhere present in any Carney discourse.

Des

Being the youngest by far of the brothers (Michael is thirty-seven, Des only sixteen or seventeen) Des may have escaped the ritual of competition Dada imposed on his sons, and he was linked to a twofold authority: that of his father and that of his eldest brother Michael who sent him money from England. This dual loyalty, and the reference to a place beyond Dada's rule meant that Des had slightly better chances of being introduced to the world of general conventions and fair play. Des shows in three instances that he makes an opening to the mystery of the Other: he refers to the mother, the law (of reciprocity) and to the enigma of another person's deepest desire. Indeed, only the youngest and the eldest mention the mother at all[44]; they are the only ones that plead for compromise with Dada; and it is Des who finally invites Harry to express his own deepest desire, after the school teacher had cut him short, so that Harry can at long last own up that he wanted to become a "Priest." (53)

Yet – and this is Murphy's mastery again – in the short time of the play Des enacts all the bad examples the Carneys set him: in the fight he hits a small, innocent bystander; he fishes for compliments, and wants Mush, the hanger-on of the family, to sing a song to boost his own Ideal-I. Next, confronted with Betty, he does not know how to behave, his "cockiness" escalates to excessive abuse, in a tirade of gross insult, which leads to the final fight. This killing shows in symptomatic form the short-circuiting of the uncastrated drives. That Des incarnates the Carneys' destiny can be seen in his gradual deterioration from "I-Ideal" to corpse, dead body.

Michael Jr

In the eldest brother the Symbolic dimension is most developed, yet his Super-Ego will not prove strong enough to withstand the rest of the clan. He invited his father over for two main reasons: to be reconciled with him, and to give him another chance to install the Law, to realise the Name-of-the-Father (or the "*No* of the Father") for his brothers. Yet Mr Carney does exactly the opposite. Instead of reconciliation – the German word "Ver*söhn*ung" is more appropriate here, as it literally indicates that one becomes again the son (Sohn) of the father[45] – Mr Carney daemonises his son; instead of being alarmed at Michael's report of his brothers' gross crimes, he endorses his sons' exploitation of girls and working men: "The whole family could be in on it. Michael Carney and Sons. Hahaa, Michael Carney *Senior* & Sons." (45)

So Michael and his wife stand isolated, opposed to the antagonising Carney clan. They are diametrically opposed in many aspects. First, in their orientation. The brothers choose Mush, a weak character, to sing the praises of their Ideal-I; Michael chooses people he can look up to, as he wants to work on his I-Ideal. Second, Michael goes for promise and compromise, whereas Dada champions competition as his top value. This is clearly illustrated in one of the opening scenes, where Iggy is holding the door handle against Michael and then releases it, in the expectation that he will come flying in, but he doesn't. Harry notices the difference between the symmetry of Iggy's thinking and Michael's attitude which has always something asymmetrical: "that's what's called antic'pation." (15) Michael Jr follows the same principle with his da: while Dada expected Michael to retaliate for his calumny, Des and Betty tell him he usually says nothing at all about Dada.[46] Not only does the son shun revenge, he has invited the father also to forgive him. This act, too, is a typical manifestation of the Name-of-the-father, since it indicates that the Other is more important than the wronged I. In the act of forgiving, the suprapersonal prevails over the narcissistic dimension.

Throughout the play, the patterns of the Imaginary versus the Symbolic, of Dada versus Michael, are kept up in a consistent way. Dada always repeats his old patterns, Michael wants change; the Da wants profits, the son forbids, cuts in with the No of the Father; Carney senior accepts money from his sons, the junior pays for other sons; one hides his real fears and yells, the other chides and questions. The former challenges,

incited by anger and jealousy, the latter eases, led by hope and humour; Dada cowardly escapes fights, Michael bravely refuses to fight. Dada refuses to adapt, casts annoying children out and locks the others in a box of rules of his making and keeps up an illusory immunity; Michael wants to adopt Des but send him away back to Ireland, and tries to make them all fit in a community.

Indeed they function in totally different systems. The Carney clan is fuelled by *jouissance* only, and Michael is very precise in his diagnosis of this basic evil that destroys the family: because there has been no "No of the father", no castration, there is no desire, no social perspective, no linearity at all, but merely the recurrence of the *jouissance* which keeps turning around nothing: M: "That daft father has ye all gone mad. "Fighting Carneys! If ye were fighting for a job, even! – A woman, even! Can't you see *there's no point*." (61/62, my stress). Michael, on the contrary, sees the wider perspective. Whereas his brother Harry harps on the individual, Michael can see the superstructures that steer those subjects. So he points out to Harry that both antagonistic families, the Mulryans and the Carneys, are really each other's mirror: "He was Mulryan, you're Carney. It's the same thing"(64).

And yet, Michael Jr will be seduced back into the fold of the Imaginary world, and even further dragged down into the shapelessness of a Real perception. It all starts with the impact of the proper name. In *L'identification*, Lacan indicates that there is a strong link between the Name-of-the-Father and "le nom propre".[47] Indeed, that "The subject of the unconscious is intrinsically linked to the autonomous efficacity of the signifier"[48] is powerfully illustrated at the very point when Michael starts his attempt to be reconciled with his father and to start the family anew, this time in his law-abiding way. At that very moment the father ignores the law and binds the eldest son to him in one sentence, "Hah-haa, Michael Carney *Senior* & Sons!"(45). Michael will indeed become a Carney, in the carnage at the end.

Like Oedipus, Michael Jr is to a certain extent blind to his family links. In the stichomythia at the end of Act Two, Betty tries to make Michael see that he, too, belongs to that Carney family ethos, with its deadlock of rivalling interactions. Like Harry, Iggy and the father, Michael starts repeating himself, especially in his refusal to see how, gradually, he is re-assimilating his father's attitudes: he, too, does not assist his brothers when they are in trouble; and he, too, develops a tyrannical attitude to his wife, whom he tries to subdue into silence. However, this does not quite work, and the outcome of this dialogue will be decisive for the fatal outcome of the final act.

> B.: What do you want to do?
> M: He's a great help now for his fighting sons.
> B.: But what are you going to do?
> M.: He's a great help to his army.
> B.: But what are you –
> M.: Well, I don't believe in fighting Carneys[49].

B: I'm only trying to tell you stop and think for a moment. It's no good going from one thing to the other.
M: I'll do the deciding about what's good and bad. (67-8)
Right. Right then. I'm Carney too, another Carney. Right. (End of Act II)

Both Betty and Michael regress from the Symbolic into the Imaginary. Whereas Betty stood out from the rest in her encompassing interest in the well-being of others (she made sure Iggy liked his campbed), while the single-minded Carneys were "*all of them [...]preoccupied with themselves*" (13), she is pushed into the duality of Imaginary perceptions, and repairs to a clear either-or stance: "To hell with Des and the rest of them! It's us or them. Which is more important to you?" (19) Later, she has to repeat her question: "Are you coming with me *or* are you staying with *them*?" (94, my stress) Michael is torn between the family and the male gang, and he vacillates, until he is churned back into the *jouissance* of the male group. At that very moment, Michael, who could have left as *le bouc émissaire*, is brought back in, which means that an inversion of the scapegoat ritual takes place: the sins of the whole family are hauled back into the centre and so this small "community" explodes in the disaster of the murder. It is interesting that Michael becomes here the symptom[50] of the family: as the "man of action", murdering his brother, his body language reveals the deadlock into which Dada had led the family.

That, deep down, there was still a big "rest" of Real in Michael can be gleaned from his language. He picks up Harry's thing-language very easily, like in an angry outburst: "Michael: If I had got away from *things* like ye!" (87, my stress).

3. Conclusion: the Modalities of Place and Time

So, finally Michael's effort to escape his family failed,[51] and by way of summary, I would like to see how indications of space and time reflect the changes in the Carney family "history".

Space

From the opening passage, the Carney's attitude to doors is telling. First, Hugo and Iggy want to break in one door, but at Michael's arrival change their mind and keep a door closed (15). This shows us how their use of things is neither functional nor conventional; it reveals the dual either-or logic Betty would later pick up from them. Indeed, once the Carneys have conquered (and taken apart) the house, people are either expelled (like Mush and Betty) or locked in (Michael is kept from leaving, only to deal the fatal blow).[52]

In his move through different locations, we see how Michael breaks out to the Symbolic, but only to regress through the Imaginary to the Real mode of perception and

expression. He had left Ireland to start a life for himself, in law and order in another country, where he marries Betty and settles. At this point they start on a Symbolic existence, in which they want to realise their desire. But when the couple move within Coventry to be nearer to the criminal Carney brothers, and consequently invite Dada and the whole clan to their house, the either-or logic of the Imaginary divides the couple, until Michael is caught in the Real when the tensions rise, as the invited party starts to expel Betty from the house. Once this arbiter is gone, all distinctions are lost, and instead of destroying society they destroy each other.[53] This had been prefigured in the trail of violence the brothers leave behind: Iggy broke the billiard table in a nearby Club (54), and a Carney probably broke the TV at Michael's house (55); further, four cups were broken, and finally the World Champ Carney Cup will break them.

Time

The Carneys stand out in the fact that their experience of time is circular and their view on it idiosyncratic.

Of course, the circularity of the family's dealings is symptomatic for the fact that they are driven by *jouissance*. The Carneys have no continuity, no perspective. They have no past, because their violent acts are still re-enacted in the present; Michael skips the present, as he never wants to stop and think, though Betty implores him to reflect on his own desire, instead of being milled into the Carney patterns. And of course they have no future, since Dada condemns all constructive actions, like growing up, being educated and getting a decent job.

The idiosyncratic view of time most Carney brothers share reflects their refusal to accept any objective norm. This becomes clear in two passages. First, the brothers are late to welcome Dada and Des at the station. Second, they have no sense of social framework to situate their family rituals in. Though Riana O'Dwyer sees the Mulryan versus Carney fight as a remnant of a traditional kind of ritual, "a version of the faction fight, which was once a common feature of Fair days and markets in rural Ireland[54]" I do not quite agree on this point, since the appointment was merely made with the Mulryans for the occasion of Dada's and Des' arrival.

Yet there is one who refers to a more common, socially sanctioned time, Des: "Wouldn't it be great if we were all at home together *at Christmas*? [...] I think she gets sort of lonely. Us all gone, you know" (49, my stress)[55] But since Dada forecloses all references to the Other, the mother, society, the language of promise, this could not take place. Instead, Des will be "all gone" indeed, and all continuity stopped for the Carneys, who end up as a "Despossessed" family.

Notes

1 Felman, Soshana. La Folie et la Chose littéraire. Paris, Seuil, 1978; Le scandale du corps parlant. Don Juan avec Austin ou la séduction en deux langues. Paris, Seuil, 1980; and "Turning the

Screw of Interpretation"in: *Literature and Psychanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise.* Shoshana Felman (Ed.). Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989. (1977) Skura, Meredith Anne. *The Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process.* New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1981. Peter Brooks, *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling.* (Cambridge (Mass.)/Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) Schokker, Johan en Tim. *Extimiteit. Jacques Lacans terugkeer naar Freud.* Amsterdam: Boom, 2000. Zizek, Slavoj. *Looking awry: an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991; "The Detective and the Analyst." *Literature and Psychology*, v. 36, n. 4, 1990,.27-46; "The Seven Veils of Fantasy." *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* Dany Nobus (Ed.). London: Rebus Press, 1998, 190-218.

2 "Il n'est sans doute pas impossible [...] de combler le fossé épistémologique entre ces deux domaines."
Willemart, Philippe. *Au-delà de la psychanalyse: les arts et la littérature.* Paris/Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998, 143.

3 Schwall, Hedwig. "Mind the Gap: Possible uses of Psychoanalysis in the Study of English Literature with an Illustration from Joyce's 'Eveline'." *European Journal of English Studies* 6 (3), 2002, 343-59.

4 W. B. Yeats broached it in *On Baile's Strand* (1904) and took it up again in *Purgatory* (1939); J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) offered another version of the conflict, while this tension is present in most of Brian Friel's plays and Frank McGuinness's, among which *Mutabilitie* (1997).

5 Ivor Browne observed how Murphy's play brings "to the surface the hidden violence and covert aggression in so many Irish families" (Browne, Ivor W. "Thomas Murphy: The Madness of Genius". *Irish University Review* 1987, 1 (17),136); Gerry Smyth pointed out that "The dysfunctional family is a symptom of an increasingly disjointed society"Smythe, Gerry. Qt. in Imhof, Rüdiger. *The modern Irish novel*. Dublin: Wolfhound, 2002; 246. In an article on Working-class heroes of Robinsonion fiction Schwall, Hedwig. "The Working-Class Hero's View on 20th-Century Ireland in Recent Historical Novels"; BELL, *Belgian Essays on Language and Literature*, 2001; 123-38) I underscore the view that the dysfunctional family is omnipresent in contemporary fiction, but agree with Rüdiger Imhof that Doyle (and many other novelists) does not picture that disjointed society in great detail. However, as I have explained in another article, Doyle has good reasons not to do so in *Paddy Clarke Ha ha ha.* For the full argument on this novel, see "Drie meester-vertellers uit Ierland". *Onze Alma Mater*, Leuvense Perspectieven. (56 jg), 2002, 3; 304-25.

6 Richard Kearney maintains that "the Irish sense of identity is closely bound up with myth" ("Myth and Motherland", 23-4, qt. in José Lanters, *Irish University Review,* 286) It does, of course, but all identity is bound up with myth, not just the Irish.

7 Toibin, Colm. "Thomas Murphy's Volcanic Ireland." *Irish University Review,* 1987: 1 (17), 30.

8 Fintan O'Toole in *The Politics of Magic*, qt in Pilkington, Lionel. "'The Superior Game': Colonialism and the stereotype in Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark*." *History, Myth and Politics in Anglo-Irish Drama*. (Ed.). C.C.Barfoot and Ria van den Doel. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 173.

9 O'Toole, Fintan. "Introduction". *Plays: 4* by Tom Murphy. London: Methuen Drama, 1997. (xiii)

10 Murray quoted in FitzGibbon, T. Gerald. "Thomas Murphy's Dramatic Vocabulary." *Irish University Review* 1987: 1 (17), 47.

11 Roche, Anthony. "Bailegangaire : Storytelling into Drama." *Irish University Review* 1987: 1 (17) 114.

12 Browne, Ivor W. "Thomas Murphy: The Madness of Genius". *IUR* 1987: 1 (17), 133. Personally I am not keen on Jungian psycho-analysis, as it thinks too much in general terms, whereas Lacanian analysis is diametrically opposite to anything universal, in that it concentrates on the grammatical, imaginative and emotional peculiarities in a certain individual's expression. As Willemart puts it:

"Les deux fondateurs (Freud and Lacan) savent [...] que chaque analysant présente [...] mille variables de ces conditions initiales [...]" (Willemart, Philippe. *Au-delà de la psychanalyse: les arts et la littérature.* Paris/Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998. 145)

In a same vein, I do not concur with Michael Etherton. Though he rightly sees a "deep sexual ambiguity", he thereby observes that "there is not just a Freudian link here but a metaphysical as well", the latter of which I fail to see. (Etherton, Michael. "The Plays of Thomas Murphy". *Contemporary Irish Dramatists.* London: Macmillan, 1989, 110).

13 Pilkington, Lionel. "'The Superior Game': Colonialism and the stereotype in Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark*." *History, Myth and Politics in Anglo-Irish Drama.* (Ed.) C.C.Barfoot and Ria van den Doel. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 165-79.

14 In his article, "Thomas Murphy's Dramatic Vocabulary" (*Irish University Review*, 1987, 46-7) T. Gerald FitzGibbon promises to analyse both "the underlying dialectic of physical action and language" "sign-systems" generated by "the non-verbal aspect of drama", he never does.

15 Stembridge adds: No matter what way I look at it it comes back to language, [...] Stembridge, Gerard. "Murphy's Language of Theatrical Empathy"; *Irish University Review* 1987: 1 (17) 51-61.

16 Indeed the Carney world is dominated by the father's speech and action patterns. "In this theatre effect follows cause, we are concerned primarily with motivation, and the climax [...]has been determined by the past" (O'Toole, 96). Or as Etherton puts it: "Their relationships, marred by language, force them into conflict with each other." (Etherton, Michael. "The Plays of Thomas Murphy". *Contemporary Irish Dramatists.* London: Macmillan, 1989, 115.)

17 In "La réconciliation avec le père." *Esquisses Psychanalytiques*, 1993: 19; 9-25, Paul-Laurent Assoun clearly shows how one cannot account for the formation of the unconscious without retracing the development of a subject's attitude to his or her father: "On ne peut pas en effet 'faire sans' le père pour le savoir de l'inconscient." (Assoun, Paul-Laurent. "La réconciliation avec le père." *Esquisses Psychanalytiques*, 1993: 19; 9.

18 Lacan loves punning on this central concept to indicate that "Le Nom-du-Père" and "le Non-du-Père" are identical both in pronunciation and in meaning.

19 Le phallus signifie donc ce qui, dans la sexualité, ne peut pas être assumé par l'individu, ou, à proprement parler, ce qui est non subjectivable: il connote [...] le sujet [...] comme manquant, et du même coup comme désirant. […] (*Dictionnaire* 596-7) Or, as Dylan Evans puts it: "castration is "an operation by which jouissance is drained away from the body"; it "is primarily a symbolic operation of language. It is the imposition of rules and prohibitions that drains the initial quota of jouissance from the child's body in the castration complex." Evans, Dylan. "From Kantian Ethics to Mystical Experience: An Exploration of Jouissance." *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* (Ed.) Dany Nobus. London: Rebus Press, 1998, 13.

20 In Lacanian thought "the 'me' is not the representative of reality, as Freud conceived it, but a showpiece of illusory mastery, a simulacrum of individual control." (Nob 117)

21 Evans, Dylan. "From Kantian Ethics to Mystical Experience: An Exploration of Jouissance." *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* (Ed.) Dany Nobus. London: Rebus Press, 1998, 13.

22 Profitant de changements significatifs dans la vie du sujet, le symptôme touche des trajectoires encore non atteintes, perturbe la linéarité de sa vie et change alors de statut, exigeant la répétition fréquente d'actes sans motifs apparents et, de solution stable, devient indice de non linéarité dans l'ensemble de la vie du sujet." (Willemart, Philippe. *Au-delà de la psychanalyse: les arts et la littérature.* Paris/Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998, 146)

23 One might also compare the family structures in *A Whistle in the Dark* and the film *Festen.* In the Danish film, the eldest son challenges the father to air their dark secret and open up the box of their chaotic family life, to liberate his brothers and himself from the suffocating tyranny of the "pater familias". Murphy's play has been "translated" into a film as well.

24 *Macbeth*, Arden Edition, 1.7.73-5.

25 Betty: It's no use trying to get them out. We'll have to move ourselves. (64)

26 "Aggressivity is thus as much an intrapsychic, as an inter-personal incident, a phenomenon Lacan linked to 'destructive, and, indeed, death instincts'" (Nobus, Dany. "Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage." *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* (Ed.) Dany Nobus. London: Rebus Press, 1998, 113.

27 Porge, Erik. *Les Noms du père chez Jacques Lacan.* Points hors ligne. Ramonville: érès, 1997, 35
We will see how Mr Carney is "the terrifying father [...] omnipotent like God who vouches for the order in the world, who expresses himself in an imaginary relation with his train of aggression and identification. It is the father with whom one is in fraternal rivalry". Indeed, Michael Jr will point out precisely this – that the stories their Dada makes up have no general value whatsoever: "I'd just like some people to know that a lot of the rubbish talked isn't the gospel." (51)

28 "Ce sont des pères imaginaires, qui sont choisis selon la relation imaginaire; morcelante. Ils sont des pères mortifères." (Porge, 23)

29 "d'introduire l'enfant à la société, à l'éducation nationale et à la culture humaine." (Julien, Philippe. *Le manteau de Noé: Essai sur la paternité.* Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991, 21)

30 Lionel Pilkington maintains "Dada himself has left Ireland.. because he has inexplicably left his job as a Garda" (Pilkington, Lionel. "'The Superior Game': Colonialism and the stereotype in Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark*." *History, Myth and Politics in Anglo-Irish Drama*. (Ed.) C.C.Barfoot and Ria van den Doel. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 169. As far as I can see, Dada has left Ireland merely to visit his sons. The reasons why he was sacked from the Garda can easily be got by circumstantial evidence: first, he believes his authority is his own; he never presents himself as the representative of the State or any other instance, so he is too Imaginary for such a position. Secondly, he lapsed back into the Real when his *jouissance* got the better of him when he stole a coat, only to throw it away later. The sheer gratuity of his (unconscious) angry energy shows that he was not fit to function as a policeman, which is a Symbolic position par excellence.

31 "Pulling four little kids out of bed, two, three, four in the morning. And up on a chair. 'World Champ Carney! Ah-haa for the Carneys! We'll get them! Charge!'" (92-3)

32 Julien, Philippe. *Le manteau de Noé: Essai sur la paternité.* Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991, 36

33 "en l'élevant au-dessus du sol" (Julien, 15)

34 If ritual is not allowed, play will a fortiori be absent. A certain playfulness, necessary for the boy to find a viable relationship with the mother, is entirely absent in the Carney household. "Précieux espace de jeu qui autorise, au-delà du lien-à-la-mère, de fonder un rapport sur le père. (Assoun, 10)*

35 Dylan Evans describes *jouissance* as a "circling" movement of the unconscious, the "unserviceable part" of one's psychic system. Evans, Dylan. "From Kantian Ethics to Mystical Experience: An Exploration of Jouissance." *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.* (Ed.) Dany Nobus. London: Rebus Press; 1998, 11.

36 Arden edition, 3.2.22.

37 Pilkington observes that "Ireland is associated [...] with an anonymous middle-class 'them' that insists on the Carney's subordination."(Pilkington, 170) This is true, but there is more at stake: the father is lapsing back into the Real, where the subject-object relation is obliterated, so that pronouns cannot work.

38 "Les pronoms [...] indiquent précisément [...] avant le monde même des significations, à *l'événement de language* à l'intérieur duquel seulement une chose peut être signifié." Porge, Erik. *Les Noms du père chez Jacques Lacan.* Points hors ligne. Ramonville: érès, 1997, 12-3)

39 Hugo too likes to use extra instruments in fights: "a chain or a rasp or a belt or a chair" (34). Iggy doesn't, and this is very significant. After Michael, he is the one who most differs from his Da. He is not so locked into himself, as we see in his attention to others: he enquires after Harry's well-

being and wants to be on time for the train to welcome his Da and Des. This is underscored by his refusal to use weapons and his insistence on fairness in battle.

40 Julien, Philippe. *Le manteau de Noé: Essai sur la paternité.* Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991, 38.

41 It is typical that none of the boys, except Michael, is married. The others only giggle when women are mentioned. That they mix male and female pronouns (talking about an actor as "she") may be an indication of the Real dimension in their speech, but it is also not uncommon in certain Hiberno-English dialects. I owe this insight to Nick Grene.

42 Pilkington, Lionel. "'The Superior Game': Colonialism and the stereotype in Tom Murphy's *A Whistle in the Dark*." *History, Myth and Politics in Anglo-Irish Drama*. (Ed.) C.C.Barfoot and Ria van den Doel. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 175. He adds: "In Lacanian terms, the subject is fixed in the Imaginary and denied the access to the Symbolic" (ibidem, 175). Yet, as we will see, the Real predominates over the Imaginary.

43 Des is explicitly said to be "*At times given to cockiness*" (29)

44 He even suggests they should focus on her: "Wouldn't it be great if we were all at home together at Christmas? I think she gets sort of lonely. Us all gone, you know." (49)

45 As Paul-Laurent Assoun points out, the "Versöhnung" implies the passage from enmity to a relation of friendship – "le passage de l'inimitié à la relation amicale" ("La réconciliation avec le père." *Esquisses Psychanalytiques*, 1993, 19; 11).

46 When Michael becomes impatient with the euphemistic way in which Des sketches his mother's misery, he bursts out but contains his anger: "He never made things easy for her. He – (*Restrains himself.*) (49)

47 Porge, Erik. *Les Noms du père chez Jacques Lacan.* Points hors ligne. Ramonville: érès, 1997, 45.

48 "het subject van het onbewuste is intrinsiek verbonden met de autonome werkzaamheid van de betekenaar." Van Haute, Philippe. *Tegen de aanpassing*. Nijmegen: Sun, 2000, 60.

49 The ambiguity of this passage is telling. Is "fighting" an adjective or a verb? In the former case, it means Michael condemns his family's aggression against others in the wider society. In the latter case, it would mean that Michael does not believe he can fight and change them. Indeed, it is this vacillation that is at the heart of Michael's deadlock, which will lead him to kill his brother. So Michael proves how the structure of the subject is reflected in his link to his proper name, illustrating Porge's remark about the Name-of-the-father: "Il y a la structure du sujet, que cache et révèle à la fois le rapport à son nom propre. (Porge, 89)

50 As Willemart puts it: the symptom reveals a disjunction in the whole texture of being. "Le symptôme[...] révèle une disjonction dans l'ensemble de l'être" (Willemart, Philippe. *Au-delà de la psychanalyse: les arts et la littérature.* Paris/Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998, 151)

51 Though Vivian Mercier seems to doubt whether Des or Michael is the protagonist and victim, I do not. "the problem for the critic lies in deciding which of two characters is in fact the victim/protagonist." (Mercier, Vivian. "Noisy Desperation: Murphy and the Book of Job". *Irish University Review* 1987: 1 (17), 22)

52 Mush is on the same wavelength: he either sees "Harry Carney as one "from the land of Saints and Scholars" (79), but on the next page as "Tinkers! Carneys! Tinkers! Tinkers!" (80).

53 They are tinkers in that they act as if they were beyond the law. They never take objective differences into account, like Ireland-England, or darkies – Irish; the fights they pick are with their own kind: the Mulryans, and later the circle becomes even tighter, when they kill one of their own.

54 O'Dwyer, Riana "Play-Acting and Myth-Making: The Western Plays of Thomas Murphy" *Irish University Review* 1987: 1 (17), 35.

55 Interestingly, Porge points out that Father Christmas is another instance of the Name-of-the-father, the wider scheme of things. "Le Père Noël […] [est un] autre nom du père" Porge, 155.

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Paper Knowledge. Books, Maps, Letters: the Written Word in Brian Friel's Plays

Giovanna Tallone*

Abstract: *Brian Friel's plays often exploit the techniques of the short story writer, so that the presence of a character narrator, the use of extended monologues and direct address to the audience shed light on powerful acts of narration. The "narrative" strategy is recurring and often dominating, as in the case of* Faith Healer*, whose intergeneric or intermodal character is a challenge to dramatic action. However, the aural/oral dimension is counterbalanced by the presence of the written word on stage in the form of books, maps, letters, banners, newspapers, which remind the spectator/reader of the accomplishment of Friel's plays as both literary and theatrical texts.*
The article investigates the use and the significance of the written word in Brian Friel's oeuvre as a constant and obsessive presence. Books, maps, newspapers, letters, items that may seem negligible in isolation provide a recurring motif and turn out to be structurally relevant when pursued from play to play.

> There's three rocks [...], two big ones and a wee one. We call them the Monks. There's a name for every stone about here, sir, and a story too (*The Gentle Island*: 32).

In Brian Friel's *The Gentle Island* (1970), Manus Sweeney, the ambiguous patriarch of the depopulated island of Inishkeen, introduces himself as a storyteller, the depository of links between places, placenames, and stories. The "conservative" nature of placenames is highlighted in *Translations* (1980), where the story of Brian's well remains in Tobair Vree (*Selected Plays*: 420). A story nearly forgotten is kept alive on a map.

Written placenames tell unwritten stories. In Brian Friel's plays where real and invented places recur, placenames are narrators, so that the litany of "those dying Welsh villages" in *Faith Healer* (1979) has the "incantation" of stories (*Selected Plays*: 332).

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The storytelling mode in Friel's plays reminds the act of oral storytelling behind Irish drama (Roche 1994, 115) so that the presence of a character narrator, as in *Lovers* (1967) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), the use of extended monologues and direct address to the audience, as in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1966), *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney* (1994), make each play a powerful act of narration.

Michael in *Dancing at Lughnasa* tells the audience the story of the Mundy family at the same time participating in it. So does Andy in *Losers*, who acknowledges the audience's presence in the stage directions:

> [...] when he becomes aware of the audience, he lowers the glasses slowly, looks at the audience, glances cautiously over his shoulder [...] and then speaks directly and confidentially down to the auditorium (*Lovers*: 51).

Likewise in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, the eponymous protagonist addresses the audience directly, because "they are her friends, her intimates" (*Loves of Cass McGuire*: 15), her only reality before being caught up in the makebelieve of Eden House. The narrative strategy dominates in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*, whose "intergeneric" character between novel and drama (Kiberd 1985, 106), between stream of consciousness and straightforward narration represents a challenge to dramatic action.

A playwright who started his career as a writer of short stories (Worth 1993, 75), Friel "has remained fond of narrators and narration in the theatre" (Grene 1999, 207) and is a great creator of storytellers (Kilroy 1993, 98), from Casimir in *Aristocrats* (1979), Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer*, Michael in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, to Frank in *Molly Sweeney*, and Berna, Frank, Terry and their companions in *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993). "All we want of a story – says Frank – is to hear it again and again and again" (*Wonderful Tennessee*: 61).

Yet some of these narrators are also writers, or rather, are in different ways involved in the act of writing: they are "chroniclers, analysts" (O'Toole 1993, 205), "map-makers, translators, historians, [...] politicians, schoolteachers" (Pine 1999, 310). They are variations of the writer, anticipating the professional writer in *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997). These are all – as Richard Pine describes them – characters who "live by the book and are lived by the book" (310).

This draws attention to the presence of the written word on stage in Friel's plays – books, maps, letters– which questions the nature itself of drama and reminds the spectator/reader of the accomplishment of Friel's plays as both literary and theatrical texts (Kilroy 1993, 91).

As a performing art, theatre exists as "a process rather than a product" (Kiberd 2000, 147), it is "written on the wind [...]. It's created out of air, and vanishes into it" (Hughes 2000, 11). However, in his attitude to playwriting Brian Friel is one of those who live by the book. "My belief – he said in 1968 – is absolutely and totally in the printed word" (Funke 2000, 55), a peculiar statement for a man for whom the written

word is a source of ambiguity, since he possesses two names and two birth certificates (Pine 1999, 41).

The written word is a major referent in Friel's production, as he has employed a variety of texts "implicitly or explicitly" (9). His plays are based on a knowing intertextuality (Kiberd 1996, 618), having made use of written texts as diverse as John Andrew's *A Paper Landscape* and George Steiner's *After Babel* in *Translations*, Ervin Goffman's *Forms of Talk* in *The Communication Cord* (1982), Sean O'Faolain's *The Great O'Neill* in *Making History* (1988), Oliver Sack's case history *To See and Not See* in *Molly Sweeney* (Pine 1999, 9).

The written word is a recurring presence inside his plays too, which – as Friel himself said of *Translations* – have to do "with language and only language" ("Sporadic Diary": 58). Books and their allomorphs, maps, letters, newspapers, items that may seem negligible in isolation, become a motif and turn out to be thematically and structurally relevant when pursued from play to play. The physical presence of books and maps as stage props or as protagonists in Friel's plays is consistent with his "Weltanschauung", where definable or verifiable truth is elusive, as in the conflicting monologues in *Faith Healer*, and exists only in the "reality" of words. "There's ways and ways of telling every story – says Manus in *The Gentle Island*– Every story has seven faces" (*The Gentle Island*: 57).

Frank in *Molly Sweeney* is obsessed by the written words of books, magazines, articles, which he has been gathering for years in his "'essential' folder" (*Molly Sweeney*: 17). Molly's blindness is an oject of study which materializes in "a brilliant article" he read once (20) and in the time he spends in the library:

> I spent a week in the library [...] one full week immersing myself in books and encyclopedias and magazines and articles – anything, everything I could find about eyes and vision and eye-diseases and blindness (35).

Thus books and their variants can be justified by the protagonists – students or scholars in *Winners*, *Translations*, *The Communication Cord*, *Wonderful Tennessee*, historians in *Aristocrats* and *Making History*, professional writers in *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* – and as such they are significant as stage props and as part of the action development, working at different levels and with different degrees of significance.

Friel's first successful play, *The Enemy Within* (1962), opens with "the monk Caornan [...] a scribe [...] working at the large wooden table" (*The Enemy Within*: 11), a typical activity in a seventh-century monastery. Occasional references to the accomplishments of a scribe's work (19, 20, 56) are consistent with the set described in the stage directions: "On the wall above the table hangs a collection of scrolls – the equivalent of a library" (8). The written word on stage reminds of the permanence of Columba's story told to a twentieth-century audience, but it also acts as a reminder of the conflicting words that bind Columba, loyalty to his family and to the Church, mutually exclusive words.

Similar occasional references to writing appear in both *The Communication Cord* and *Wonderful Tennessee*, whose characters are involved in a writing activity that is not carried out on stage, or is not particularly relevant for the action of the play. Tim in *The Communication Cord* is writing a PhD thesis on "Response Cries" which informs the background of a play where language provides "chaos" (*The Communication Cord*: 19). Frank in *Wonderful Tennessee* is writing a "long overdue book" (Jent 1995, 33) on "The Measurement of Time and Its Effect on European Civilization" (*Wonderful Tennessee*: 50), an activity that has involved him for over three years. Writing and its results are mistrusted and illusory. At the end of *The Communication Cord* Tim admits he will have to rewrite most of his thesis, and Frank in *Wonderful Tennessee* jokes on Terry's question: "When is it going to appear?" replying: "Another apparition" (51), maybe implying the vacuity of his enterprise.

This leads to considering the "insufficiency" of Friel's writers (O'Toole 1993, 205). Writing itself often takes place in paradoxical or absurd conditions: Owen and Yolland writing in their Name-Book while getting drunk; Michael in *Dancing at Lughnasa* writing at the wrong time of the year to a Santa Claus who doesn't exist, asking for a bell for the bike he doesn't have; Peter Lombard writing his distorting history of O'Neill (205).

Doubt, uncertainty, confusion underlie *Give Me Your Answer, Do!*, where books are written, read, studied, quoted, but also bought and sold. They are commodities, entering the world of trade to provide self-esteem as well as financial stability. All this is anticipated early in Act One, where the stage directions shed light on the physical presence of books and papers as catalysts for apparent order:

> On the floor along the back wall we can see Tom's papers very neatly laid out in a line, one beside the other, mostly manila folders, but also a few box-files and shoe boxes. Perhaps about thirty items in all.
> There are books in a bookcase and in small piles on the floor. (*Give Me Your Answer, Do!*: 16)

David Knight, the outsider in charge with assessing Tom Connolly's work, recalls the character of the historian Tom Hoffnung in *Aristocrats*. As his name suggests, Tom is "<hopeful> of finding the complete truth" (Murray, in *Plays Two* 1999, xii) about the O'Donnells' big house out of Casimir's "phoney fiction" (*Selected Plays*: 278). The book he is writing will probably never materialize in spite of his checking, rechecking, double checking, cross-checking (312), as he encounters a standard of truth, as Eamonn says, "beyond" his "scrutiny" (310), where invention and information overlap. What Tom is writing down in his notebooks is lies. "All you're hearing is lies, my friend – lies, lies, lies" (284), says Alice, implicitly admitting that all these lies are a necessary fiction to face everyday life.

If Tom Hoffnung the historian is likely to be driven by and to drive others to disorder, the written word of chronicle is often conducive to personal confusion or

misinformation. The copy of *The Clarion* Gar O'Donnell finds in the old suitcase he is packing in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) is the objective-correlative of the "burden of the past" (Jones 2000, 28) he is carrying away into exile, together with master Boyle's book of poems as a talisman (Mahony 1998, 127). Gar is thus bringing the written word of Ballybeg to Philadelphia.

In *Living Quarters* (1977) the *Donegal Enquirer* provides information about the Butler family mixing up names and occupations of each member in turn. This lighter detail does not relieve the pattern of impossible escape from the past, but increases the sense of ambiguity and confusion characterizing the play.

And in *Faith Healer*, in particular, Frank Hardy has kept a clipping from the *West Glamorgan Chronicle* recording the miraculous healing of ten people, but also distorting his name:

> <A truly remarkable event took place in Llambethian on the night of December 21st last when an itinerant Irish faith healer called Francis Harding [...] cured ten local people of a variety of complaints ranging from blindness to polio> (*Selected Plays*, 370-1).

The written word belongs to the realm of "verifiable, historical, public" truth (Roche 1994, 113), it bridges the gap between the stories variously recounted in the play and their public acknowledgment. Frank's paradoxical reason for keeping the newspaper clipping for so long is the need to be identified: "It identified me – even though it got my name wrong" (*Selected Plays*: 371). The spoken word out of which the play is made in the structure of subsequent and contradictory monologues is juxtaposed to the improbable fixity of the written word. In a play in which the spoken word is everything, it is the written word that identifies the faith healer and his art. Likewise, at the opening of the play Frank introduces himself and identifies himself with the large poster that dominates the stage:

> I beg your pardon – *The Fantastic Frank Hardy, Faith Healer, One Night Only* [...]. The man on the tatty banner (332).

Frank thus IS a written word in the same way as he is the spoken words of his story. As Anthony Roche suggests, he is "the textual word made flesh" (Roche 1994, 113). The poster that remains on stage throughout the monologues but the last one is "the fiction that has stuck" (113). It is a crucial presence in terms of identity in performance and identity as fiction. It has been rewritten – we are informed – and a lie ("Seventh Son of a Seventh Son", *Selected Plays*: 332) has been omitted. The written word is subject to change, and the faith healer's shifting identity is marked by the few written words that contrast with the flood of spoken words he involves himself and the audience in. The written word is a survivor to the the dead voices reciting their monologues, a testimonial of a story where truth is – unlike the *West Glamorgan Chronicle* – unverifiable.

In Grace's monologue, however, the written word is an act of creation, confirming an unspoken or unspeakable reality:

> The first day I went to the doctor, he was taking down all the particulars and he said to me, "and what was your late husband's occupation, Mrs Hardy?" "He was an artist", I said – quickly – casually – but with complete conviction – just the way he might have said it. Wasn't that curious? Because the thought had never occurred to me before. And then because I said it and the doctor *wrote* it down, I knew it was true [...] (346, emphasis added).

Writing thus provides existence, which is what takes place in the painful, controversial and contradictory acts of translation in *Translations*. As Owen says, "We name a thing and – bang! – it leaps into existence!" (422). Writing codifies the process of naming giving it stability and fixity. The setting of Act Two, Scene One of *Translations* is dominated by written texts:

> A large map– one of the new blank maps – is spread out on the floor. Owen is on his hands and knees consulting it [...]. One of the reference books – a church registry – lies open on his [Yolland's] lap. Around them [Yolland and Owen] are various reference books, the Name-Book, a bottle of poteen, some cups etc. (409).

Maps and books have taken over the theatrical space of the barn to mark the invasion of alien words onto the everyday-life stage of Baile Beg. The "mammooth task" of mapping and renaming (Jones 2000, 61) is physically evidenced by the presence of written words, or of words in the process of being written. Maps control the uncontrollable, fixing space into parameters. The dispossession, the "bloody military operation" (*Selected Plays*: 408) behind the act of writing or rewriting, transforms Baile Beg and the surrounding localities into prescribed texts. The "mapping exercise" (Meissner 1992, 166) in 1833 Ireland is an attempt– to use Hugh's words– to "imprison" a civilization "in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the language of [...] fact" (*Selected Plays*: 419). Writing new names is a way to assert power, the "occupier's response to what he perceives as unchartable wilderness" (Kiberd 1996, 620). If mapmaking belongs to the kind of "progress" the colonizer brings to the colonized (Garratt 1996, 77), it also changes landscape into text (Pine 1999, 39), prescribing it according to new and alien formulas. In writing the map, filling in the Name-Book, the written word physically invades the stage, which too becomes a text, to be written, read, acted out, performed, interpreted.

The overpowering presence of maps and books at the opening of Act Two does not cancel the other texts/written words that belong to the play. If the Name Book has a function of control, in *Translations* other texts suggest authority (211). The classical texts of Homer and Virgil that are read, translated, quoted and applied to everyday life are juxtaposed to Hugh's pompous *Pentaglot Preceptor or Elementary Institute of the*

English, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Irish Languages; Particularly Calculated for the Instruction of Such Ladies and Getlemen as may Wish to Learn without the Help of a Master (*Selected Plays*: 419), whose long title echoes and counterbalances the formality and detachment of Captain Lancey's speech introducing the mapmaking plan to the people of Baile Beg.

The Book of Names as a controlling agent in *Translations* with its biblical overtones has a counterpart or other self in *Making History*. The play is dramatically dominated by a book strategically posited at the centre of the stage. The stage directions deliberately focus on a variety of written texts, starting from "various papers on the table" (*Making History*: 1) Harry Hoveden is reading from at the opening of the play. Other written texts are elicited and mentioned, letters and remiders, Lombard's *Commentarius*, "the book with the blue cover" (11), recent correspondence with Spain (7), O'Neill's submission to the Queen, each of them anticipating the setting of Scene Two, Act Two:

> When the scene opens the only light on stage is a candle on a large desk. This is Lombard's desk; littered with papers; and in the centre is a large book – the history (54).

All the documents mentioned previously are written within a context of diplomatic or political trafficking. But the Book, the history, is a catalyst, it responds to Lombard's need to write "the best possible narrative" (8). Rather than made, history is remade on a selective basis, the "overall thing" (39), as Mabel Bagenal, O'Neill's English wife calls it, will always escape. Lombard's history is a text that refuses fixity (Hohenleitner 2000, 241), whose "unstable stability" (Pine 1999, 22) is implied in the "distortions to which truth is subject when it is implicated in language" (Andrews 1995, 202).

To Hugh's insistence and obsession that the truth be told, Lombard ambiguously replies:

> I'm no historian, Hugh. I'm not even sure I know what the historian's function is. Maybe when the time comes my first responsibility will be to tell the best possible narrative. Isn't that what history is, a kind of storytelling? [...] *Imposing a pattern* on events that were mostly casual and haphazard and *shaping* them into a narrative that is logical and interesting (*Making History*: 8, emphasis added).

As a pattern-maker, Lombard provides in retrospect a pre-text, a script for O'Neill where he is to be "the powerful historical actor" (O'Brian 1988, 117). Expressions such as "imposing a pattern" and "shaping" highlight Lombard's "command" (Pine 1999, 233) of the material, of the written words in which he, as an editor rather than a writer, tries to fix and establish a role for what Ireland now needs, a national hero. "You're going to embalm me in a florid lie" objects O'Neill (*Making History*: 63). The potentialities of his multiple

roles are the actual truth of his life, so that what he sees in the great book gaining ground is “a story hardly recognizable as his own” (Worth 1993, 74). To this written word O’Neill has to submit, aware of the “role-playing that political involvement demands” (Murray, in *Plays Two* 1999, xi). As the large book takes possession of the stage, it prescribes O’Neill’s action and his role in history as well as in the play’s action.

The deliberately conscious metatheatrical design implied between the lines of *Making History* recalls the artifice of storytelling and play-within-a-play that characterizes the structure of *Winners* and *Living Quarters*. Both plays are constructed around inside-outside characters that are masters of the written word, because responsible for a script, physically present on stage.

In *Winners*, the first part of the dyptic *Lovers*, a framing narrative contains the actions of teenagers Mag and Joe meeting on a hill outside Ballymore to revise for their school exams. A turning point is to take place in their lives as they are about to get married since the girl is pregnant. The realistic construction is dispelled by the presence of the Commentators, Man and Woman, who, posited at each end of the stage, control the action and watch it dispassionately at the same time. Schoolbooks are scattered on stage and are part of the setting in the same way as they belong to the protagonists’ life. Yet, while Joe usually refers to and quotes from schoolbooks to test his knowledge, Mag’s references go beyond schoolbooks and take into account the broader perspectives of adult life:

> I read in a book that asthma is purely psychosomatic (*Lovers*: 19)
> I’ve read about them [sadicists] in books! (23)
> I don’t know what things I take seriously [...]. Never books or school or things like that (27)

In her naïve and instinctive approach to studying and to exams (“In all exams the smart thing to do is to write down everything you know – no matter what the question is”; 27) Mag does not seem to trust the written word, even the written words of her own story. In fact, all the various references to books cast a glimpse at the other “book” held by the Commentators, the prescribed words of Mag and Joe’s story. In the stage directions:

> They are the Commentators. They are in their late fifties and carefully dressed in good dark clothes. Each has a book on his knees – not a volume, preferably a bound manuscript – and they read from this every so often. Their reading is impersonal, completely without emotion: their function is to give information. At no time must they reveal an attitude to their material (11).

Not by chance is a manuscript to be preferred to a volume: this implies the immutability of fate, but also a casual and overpowering, superior authority Man and Woman are not responsible for. The information is journalistic, giving accurate details

related to action, time, names, places. Man and Woman, too, are pattern-makers. As such they go through the same routine to introduce Mag and Joe respectively, and while they read the two boys come alive on stage. They are unaware of their presence as objective outsiders. Their "formal arrangement" (Dantanus 1988, 109) corresponds to the formal language they use to convey "dry information" (111) such as temperature and weather, and the number of inahbitants of Ballymore. This emphasizes the distance implied in the juxtaposition of the private language of future expectations in Mag and Joe's discourse and the public language of fact (Andrews 1995, 114). It is their dry reading to announce the death by drowning of the two students, so that as in later plays such as *The Freedom of the City* (1973), *Living Quarters*, *Faith Healer*, *Molly Sweeney*, dead characters on stage speak from beyond the grave. Man and Woman reiterate a Greek impersonal chorus (Dantanus 1988, 111) and their constant presence on stage throughout the action keeps alive the attention on the written words they are bearing. Their manuscript is a pre-text, or an Ur-text, arbitrary and eternal, and since it is constantly visible on stage it is a metonymic script, a form of knowledge or preknowledge in paper linking text and performance, and highlighting the written word as a container for all possible performances. In this metadramatic dimension, Man and Woman are custodians of the facts of history (Andrews 1995, 115), but also mediators between action and script, a script which is nothing but a textual prison, not unlike the one that prescribes O'Neill's role in Lombard's history.

Their manuscript/script is probably "the same copy" (Dantanus 1988, 115) with which Sir is entrusted in *Living Quarters*. Like Man and Woman, Sir is the "dramatic mediator in the reconstruction of the past" (Corcoran 1993, 15), but unlike them he is no detached bystander. He is involved in the action directing the rehearsal the characters reenact in the play-within-a-play of their recollections. Theatre itself is a controlling metaphor (Kilroy 1993, 96) and the self-conscious theatricality of the play is a metaphor for the writer or playwright at work (Dantanus 1988, 143), so that Sir has a multiple role, "destiny, prologue, chorus, director, stage-manager" (O'Hanlon 2000, 110). He is the "ultimate arbiter" (*Selected Plays*: 177), a recording force (Worth 1993, 74), the servant or guardian of a script (Pine 1999, 233) who controls the past and predicts the future (Dantanus 1988, 146). The script in this case is not a book or manuscript or volume, but a "Ledger", "a balance sheet" or "list of entries" (Pine 1999, 149), where everything is to be registered and whose transparency is necessary. A "deep psychic necessity" (*Selected Plays*: 177) has caused the protagonists to "invent" Sir to reenact the events that led to Frank Butler's suicide. Anticipating Mabel Bagenal in *Making History*, Sir points out he has been invented "to reach an understanding of *all* that happened" (177). Both maker and made, he allows the protagonists of his rehearsal to read between the lines possible alternatives to inevitabilities.

The play is indebted to Euripides' *Hyppolitus* and to Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, pre-texts of the pre-text contained in the ledger. The protagonists negotiate their role with Sir, yet submit to the authority of the ledger, which contains all

possible variations and all possible apocryphal texts (Pine 1999, 319), an infinite number of predetermined possibilities (320) and infinite rehearsals. Yet the Ledger imprisons the protagonists in their roles, which turn into traps from which they cannot escape. When Father Tom reacts to the dictates of the ledger, Sir's dry reply is: "it is your role" (*Selected Plays*: 180), because so is written in the ledger.

Like Hugh O'Neill in *Making History*, unable to escape from Lombard's book, the protagonists in *Living Quarters* spend their time "attempting to escape from the lines laid down" for them (Pine 1999, 29). Between the lines they look for alternative readings, alternative performances and alternative truths. Yet, "The ledger's the ledger" says Frank echoing Sir, "Nothing can be changed now" (*Selected Plays*: 240). As Grace said in *Faith Healer*, because it is written down, all the protagonists know it is true. And like Lombard, Sir the pattern-maker wants to impose an order and a shape to the narrative/script or possible narratives/scripts the ledger contains:

> on this occasion – with your cooperation, of course– what I would like to do is *organize* those recollections for you, *impose a structure* on them, just to *give them a form of sorts* (178, emphasis added)

Anna's attempt to escape from the text is of no consequence:

> Anna – Did I mess it all up?
> Sir – You shuffled the pages a bit – that's all. But nothing's changed (203).

And yet what remains at the end of the nth performance is nothing but "blank pages", where however nothing is missing, "not a single thing" (246). The ambiguously uncompleted script is a textual prison, whose authority both fixes and gives life and from which escape is impossible.

Like Sir, also Cass's brother Harry in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* insists on a chronological recounting of events. A hidden text prescribes the story, whose author Cass openly attacks: *"The Loves of Cass McGuire* – huh! Where did he get that title from anyway?" (*The Loves of Cass McGuire*: 26), and whose control she contends with Harry. But the text of her story contains also other written words, the letters she has written over the years, Trilbe's Christmas cards and adjudication speech, and especially Ingram's volumes, visible on stage, which he carries all around Eden House – "his Wagner" (*The Loves of Cass McGuire*: 27). He too reads from it every so often, like the Commentators, repeating over and over again the story of Tristan and Isolde. Imprisoned in the text of their story, Tristan and Isolde represent for Ingram, Trilbe, Cass, and Eden House at large, the prototype of escape; the text provides and fuels imaginative freedom. It is an illusion, but because it is written down, we know it is true.

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What Makes Johnny Run? Shaw's "Man and Superman" as a Pre-Freudian Dream Play

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Abstract: *"Long before Freud was heard of," Bernard Shaw wrote to a friend in 1934, a generation after he had written* Man and Superman, *(1901-1903), "I held that Nature had introduced an element of antipathy into kinship as a defence against incest.*" *Although* Man and Superman *appears to be a late-Victorian comedy about love and money and Shaw's philosophy of the Life Force, one of the driving forces that impels both the manifest play and the latent dream play is the incest taboo. It is a taboo which is so universal and so strong, that it affects persons who have brother-sister and parent-child relationships, even if they are not actually family members.*

Ann Whitefield is determined to have as her mate, her first love, John Tanner. Tanner knows he has long loved her and still does. But his terror at having any sexual relationship with her is far stronger than his ardor. For much of the first two acts, Ann manipulates and tempts John as their relationship changes from brother-sister to father-daughter and then pursued lover and determined pursuer. At some point between Act 2 and Act 3, while Tanner and his chauffeur Straker are racing through France and Spain, Tanner falls asleep and the remainder of the play takes place on two levels: the manifest play which includes the literary dream sometimes played separately as "Don Juan in Hell" and the latent dream play in which Tanner's fear of incest is resolved and he is finally able to accept himself not as Ann's brother but as her future husband.

"What makes Johnny run?" What makes Johnny run is what makes "Man and Superman" run. This pre-absurdist play seems deliberately to make no sense. In the first act, a what we might now call a Rolls-Royce radical has been named guardian of Ann Whitefield, a young woman who is old enough not to require a guardian and with whom he and his friend, Octavius, also known as "Ricky-Ticky-Tavy," grew up in a brother-

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sister relationship although they are unrelated. Now not only is he emotionally Ann's brother, he has become in effect her father.

On 2 July 1901, Shaw drafted an outline and cast list for "The Superman, or Don Juan's great grandson's grandson." Among the characters who are omitted from the final text of "Man and Superman" are John Tanner's parents: George *Whitefield* Tenerio and Mrs. *Whitefield* Tenerio.[1] (Berst, 201-2) There is no suggestion in "Man and Superman" that John Tanner is also a Whitefield and in some way actually related to Ann; yet in those intriguing preliminary notes, there is a hint that Shaw was considering, even if not consciously, the suggestion of an incestuous relationship between Ann Whitefield and JohnTanner. When in the second act he realizes it is he, not Octavius, whom Ann is determined to marry, Tanner flees in the first automobile ever to be put on the stage.

The next act opens in the Sierra Nevada. A group of brigands is headed by Mendoza, a lovesick Jewish London waiter whose Louisa has rejected him in anti-Semitic England because she is not good enough for him. His brigands, all but one of whom are also British, include an anarchist and socialists who argue about which type of socialism is more correct and who are dressed more for cold London streets than for Spain. Their political argument is interrupted when they carjack John and his chauffeur, Straker. 'Enry Straker, who has a polytechnic degree and should be an engineer not a chauffeur, is the brother of Mendoza's Louisa and is more proud of his dropped ***H'***es than the gentlemen are of their Oxbridge accents. Night falls and John and Mendoza dream. In the "Don Juan in Hell" dream scene, Mendoza is the Devil, John is Don Juan, Ann Whitefield is Dona Anna and her other guardian, the elderly Roesbuck Ramsden, is her father. The four debate ideas about heaven and hell, happiness and fulfillment, life and death, and with the exception of the last line of the dream, Dona Anna's exclaiming, "A father – a father for the superman,"[2] (689) there seems so little connection to the frame play that this long scene can be, and has been, played as a separate, complete drama. In drafting the play, Shaw also gave Ann's line to John,(Berst., 201) but in the completed play John says, instead, "Is there a father's heart as well as a mother's?" (729) Shaw wrote the Hell scene interlude before he wrote the social comedy that is the frame play. (Berst. 202) The frame play can also be played without the Hell scene. When the five hour drama is played in its entirety, it is often broken for a supper break as is opera at Glynnebourne.

The third act ends with the arrival of Ann and party, three men and two women, in the company of an armed escort. It is inconceivable that the group of five plus the unmentioned and unseen but inevitable chauffeur has managed to get there in Hector's American steam car. The travellers' original plan was to head for Nice, northeast of Granada. Hector says "When we found you were gone, Miss Whitefield bet me a bunch of roses my car would not overtake yours before you reached Monte Carlo." To Tanner's "But this is not the road to Monte Carlo," Hector replies, "No matter. Miss Whitefield tracked you at every stopping place: she is a regular Sherlock Holmes." (692) The utter

impossibility of her having done so, not knowing where he was headed nor from which port he had embarked, stretches one's ability to suspend disbelief.

The final act takes place in Granada and Ann's party now includes her mother. Mrs. Whitefield had not been in Ann's party in the third act and would have had no idea that Ann and the others would have wound up in Granada. Hector Malone's father, an Irish peasant who fled the famine ("the starvation" 704) and has become the wealthiest furniture manufacturer in the United States, turns up in the same hotel as his son is staying. In an inversion of a Henry James theme, Mr. Malone has sent his son to England to marry a titled lady. But James's millionaires were not Roman Catholic and such a misalliance between a Catholic peasant's son and an upper class Anglican British woman could not have been possible. Even though they might be the possessors of an abbey, they would have been cut by the society so dear to Violet. The senior Malone might have softened and not disinherited his son for marrying a woman without a title, but he would never have countenanced his son's marrying out of the faith.[3] Malone, the otherwise shrewd man of business, has bought stock in an enterprise about which he knows nothing except that it is operated by Mendoza, the waiter turned brigand. Ann compromises John by announcing that she has agreed to marry him, even though he has neither proposed to her nor agreed to marry her. And the play ends with the triumphant Ann treating John as a child. All of this, and more, occurs in a frame play that is generally thought to be a somewhat realistic comedy about manners. Just what is going on here?

In a dream play the latent play, that is the dream, complements the manifest play and solves the deep seated emotional problem of the dreamer.[4] Shaw provides us with numerous clues – the non-linear structure, already described, the language, the splitting of characters, and the symbols – suggesting that he intended "Man and Superman" to be a dream play, one which includes within it another dream that reflects upon and complements the frame play dream. In both the manifest play and the latent play, John Tanner must overcome the incest taboo in order to become the mate of the woman to whom he is both brother and father, having been named her guardian after the father's death. That he is not actually related to her does not affect his feelings as the taboo can occur when children who are not related are raised together as they had been. In the Hell scene, the dream play within the frame play, the Commander, Dona Ana's father, has been killed by Don Juan. Having in this way resolved in the dream his conflict caused by in effect being Ann's father, John must now deal only with the problem of being her brother.

Many of us take some bedtime reading to our pillows. The text suggests that John Tanner may have read himself, and dreamed himself, into his play. One volume seems to have been Kipling's *Jungle Book* (1895), which includes the story of the heroic mongoose Rikki-tikki-tavi. The mongoose kills a father cobra, whose mate attempts to retaliate on humans. The play's ineffectual "Ricky-Ticky-Tavy," the heroine's pet name for her suitor, seems an inversion of the deadly mongoose. Continuing the image, Tanner refers to Ann as a boa constrictor "with ensnaring eyes and hair." The women in Kipling's story outwit and dominate the men (Cauley, 23-4) as do the women in *Man and Superman*.

The other book is suggested in the Preface to the play where Shaw writes, "The theft of the brigand-poetaster [Mendoza] from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is deliberate." [Bodley Head 2, p 518] Reading Conan Doyle in either *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* or in *The Strand Magazine*, Tanner would have found, in the story "Silver Blazes," a retired jockey named John Straker who may metamorphose into John Tanner's chauffeur, Henry Straker. Hector Malone calls Ann a "regular Sherlock Holmes." Perhaps the very literary John Tanner, just prior to the opening of Shaw's play, has taken both Kipling and Conan Doyle to bed, and fallen asleep. In addition, as a gentleman, he had most likely been to a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni.* There are deliberate references to that opera in the dream sequence which opens with "*a faint throbbing buzz as a ghostly violincello palpitating on the same note endlessly. A couple of ghostly violins presently take advantage of this bass [...]. It is all very odd. One recognizes the Mozartian strain*;" Donna Ana's entrance is heralded by a clarinet playing *Donna Ana's song to Ottavio.* (632)

Shaw, by repeatedly using the word *dream*, even when some other word would have done as well, reminds us that this might indeed be a dream. From the start, the play is full of allusions to dreams. In the first act when Ann makes her first appearance, the stage directions say "Ann would still make men *dream*." (549) Tanner in describing the unscrupulous artist says the artist knows women can "make him see visions and *dream dreams*." (557) In the verbal duel between John and Ann in the first act, he tells her "Love played a part in my earliest *dreams* [...]. Yes, Ann: the old childish compact between us was an unconscious love compact [...]. Oh. Don't be alarmed." To Ann's "I am not alarmed." He, aware of the taboo that has not affected Ann, responds "Then you ought to be" (571-3)

In Act two John tells Straker, "I am the slave of that car. I *dream* of the accursed thing at night." (586) As a Freudian symbol, an automobile while more likely to represent a phallus can also represent a female.[5] John tells Tavy that if he marries Ann she will cease "to be a poet's *dream* [...]. You'd be forced to *dream* about somebody else." Tavy answers "There is nothing like Love: there is nothing else but Love: without it the world would be a *dream* of sordid horror." (593) In Act three Mendoza tells Straker and Tanner: "I went to America so that she [Louisa] might sleep without *dreaming* [...]." (627) He then tells Tanner, "[...] these mountains make you *dream* of women – of women." (629) As symbols, the mountains themselves may represent female genitalia and breasts. John answers "They will not make me *dream* of women. I am heartwhole." Mendoza cautions him, "This is a strange country for *dreams*." (629) In the dream play within this dream play, Don Juan tells Donna Ana "Whilst he fulfills the purpose for which she made him, he is welcome to his *dreams* [...]" (659-60) "The romantic man [...] went to his death believing in his *dream*." (655) "I had been prepared for infatuation, for intoxication, for all, the illusions of love's young *dream*." (667) "I had never *dreamt* [...]." (677) "Never in my worst moments of superstitious terror on earth did I *dream* [...]." (682) When morning comes and Tanner and Mendoza awake, Mendoza asks Tanner, "Did you *dream*?" and Tanner responds "Damnably. Did you?" and Mendoza replies, "Yes. I forget what. You were in it." To which Tanner responds, "So were you. Amazing."

(690) In Act four, Ann tells Tavy, "Then you must keep away from them [women], and only *dream* about them." (717) John says to Ann: "When did all this happen to me before? Are we two *dreaming*?" (728)

John Tanner and his friend Octavius can be viewed as being different aspects of the young John Tanner. Both were treated as sons by Ann's father, having had unlimited access to his house. Both love Ann. Tanner tries to resist that love, feeling that somehow it would be inappropriate for Ann and him to mate. Tavy, the romantic side of John, desires nothing else but that consummation. While Ricky-Ticky-Tavy thinks he is an artist and poet, it is Tanner, the author of "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion," who is the creative one. John will overcome his fear of incest and marry Ann while Tavy will be "that sort of man who never marries." (727) Ann tells them that she will have "my dear Granny to help out and advise me. And Jack the Giant Killer. And Jack's inseparable friend Ricky-ticky-tavy." (554) Granny, Roebuck Ramsden, Ann's other guardian was in his youth a liberal, even a radical. Since he still holds the beliefs and attitudes he had as a young man, Jack considers Ramsden an out-of-date conservative. Ann assures them that "Nobody is more advanced than Granny." (553) We can see in Ramsden another side of Jack, the man he will become. Jack tells Ramsden "You have no more manners than I have myself." (545)Both guardians appear in the dream sequence, Ramsden as Donna Ana's father while Tanner is Don Juan, the libertine who killed Donna Ana's father. In Ramsden we can also see the elderly bachelor that Octavius will become. Ramsden's sister, however, will remain unmarried, unlike Violet, Tavy's sister. Ramsden, the matured John, wants Tavy, the immature John, to reject the friendship of "your schoolfellow" to whom "you feel bound to stand by because there was a boyish friendship between you. Jack could not be turned out of Whitefield's house because "you lived there [...]." (538)

Jack tells Tavy "you must marry her after all and take her off my hands. And I had set my heart on saving you from her!" (545) Tavy says, "I have no secrets from Jack." (559) In a listing of his childhood pranks that Ann describes to Jack she includes "[...] You set fire to the common; the police arrested Tavy for it [...]." (572) When Ann, responding to Jack's description of her as a boa constrictor, throws her arms around him, he exclaims, "My blood interprets for me. Ann. Poor Ricky-Ticky-Tavy!

Ann: Surely you are not jealous of Tavy?
John: Jealous. Why should I be? But I don't wonder at your grip on him. I feel the coils tightening round my very self.
Ann: Do you think I have designs of Tavy!
John: I know you have.
Ann: Take care Jack. You may make Tavy very unhappy if you mislead him about me.
Jack: Never fear: he will not escape you.
Ann: If you and Tavy choose to be stupid about me, it is not my fault. (576-7)

Tavy having proposed to Ann and been rejected, tells Jack, "You don't understand. You have never been in love."

Jack: I! I have never been out of it. Why I am in love even with Ann [...]. Tavy: I believe we were changed in our cradles, and that you are the real descendent of Don Juan [...]. She has marked you for her own; and nothing will stop her now. (593)

The act ends when Straker informs Jack that Ann is not interested in Tavy "Cause she's arter summon else." Pressured by Jack to reveal who it is, Straker says "You."

John: Me!!

Straker: Mean to tell me you didn't know [...] the marked down victim, that's what you are and no mistake." (610)

Mrs. Whitefield tells Tavy "I don't know which is best for a young man: to know too little, like you, or too much, like Jack." (719) When Ann asks Octavius to congratulate her on being engaged to John, Ramsden says "Jack Tanner. I envy you." and Mendoza,responds, "Sir: there are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it. Mine and yours, sir." and John's and Tavy's. (731-2) Three characters in the manifest play; three facets of the dreamer in the latent play.

In Ann Whitefield and Violet Robinson, Octavius's sister, we can see the dream's splitting of the manifest play's Ann. The stage directions describe Violet as "*a personality which is as formidable as it is exquisitely pretty. She is not a siren, like Ann; admiration comes to her without any compulsion or even interest on her part; besides there is some fun in Ann, but in this woman none, perhaps no mercy either: if anything restrains her it is intelligence and pride, not compassion* [...]." (580) Both women must connive and manipulate in order to marry the spouse of her choice. Ann must trick John into marrying her while Violet is already married but must inveigle her husband's father into consenting to that marriage. In discussing Violet with her brother, Ann says: "You are so softhearted! It's queer that you should be so different from Violet. Violet's as hard as nails."

Octavius: On no. I am sure Violet is thoroughly womanly at heart.

Ann: [...] Is it unwomanly to be thoughtful and businesslike and sensible? Do you want Violet to be an idiot – or something worse, like me?

Octavius: Something worse – like you! What do you mean, Ann?

Ann: [...] I have great respect for Violet. She gets her own way always.

Octavius: So do you.

Ann: Yes; but somehow she gets it without coaxing–without having to make people sentimental about her.

Tavy: No one could get very sentimental about Violet, I think, pretty as she is.

Ann: Oh yes they could, if she made them. (717)

After it is revealed that Violet is a married woman and everyone is embarrassed by their behavior to her except Ann, Violet says, "Yes: Ann has been very kind; but then Ann

knew." (583) In Act four, Mrs. Whitefield says "How I wish you were my daughter, Violet." And Violet answers "There, there: so I am." Ann, projecting her feelings onto Violet, says: "Fie, mother! Come, now: you mustn't cry any more: You know Violet doesn't like it." (724) As Violet leaves, with Mrs. Whitefield, she tells John, "The sooner you get married too, the better." John relies "I quite expect to get married in the course of the afternoon. You all seem to have set your minds on it.

Violet: You might do worse.

She and Mrs Whitefield exit and Ann says: "Violet is quite right. You ought to get married." (724-5)

As in *Arms and the Man*, Shaw's earliest dream play,[6] the play opens in a set permeated by Freudian-type symbols. The study, an enclosed room, and the bookshelves that line the walls, can be interpreted as a uterus and by extension, a woman. On Roebuck Ramsden's right is a window looking out onto a street. The window can be a body orifice, and the street, a place for traffic with women. In the center of the wall is a door opening into the house, repeating the symbolism of the window and the room. "*Against the wall are two busts on pillars*." (534) Both heads and pillars are phallic symbols, with the bodyless head – the busts – symbols of fear of castration. Before a word has been spoken, the audience has been prepared for the erotic problem-solving dream that will follow, one in which the dreamer must overcome his fear of incest and the emotional castration it has imposed upon him.

Tavy protests Jack's describing Ann as a boa constrictor (544). He also describes her as a spider, a bee, and a elephant. All are symbols not of a woman but of the male phallus yet when Ann throws her scarf, called a boa, around Jack he "feels the coils tightening around himself" (576) inverting the symbolism and becoming the penis within the vagina during intercourse.

Act two opens in a park of a country house, "*a motor car has broken down. It stands in a clump of trees round which the drive sweeps to the house, which is partly visible through them [...] a pair of supine legs [...] protrude."* (585) The car and the protruding legs are both symbols of the penis, but in this case the car is an impotent penis while the legs protrude from the cavity beneath the car, a symbol for female genitalia. According to Leon Altman, a Freudian psychoanalyst, "The number of things reconstituted in the image of man's narcissism with regard to the phallus and endowed with its attributes is truly awesome." and the man who dreams of a broken automobile is "preoccupied with his potency." (Altman, 27) The house seen through the clump of trees might represent a woman or her genitalia seen through a clump of pubic hair.

Act three opens in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of Spain. The description of the mountains in early evening is both realistic and symbolic. "*Rolling slopes of brown, with olive trees [...] in the cultivated patches, [...] Higher up, tall stone peaks and precipices, [...] the high road passes a tunnel [...] in the face of the cliff, a romantic cave [...] towards the left a little hill, commanding a view of the road, [...] and an occasional*

stone arch [...]." (613) John Tanner's car drives into this sexually charged atmosphere,[7] and its tires are punctured by the nails the bandits have strewn in the road. The act ends with the arrival of Ann and party. They are heralded by the sound of a shot fired from a rifle, an obvious phallic symbol. Their automobile has also been rendered inoperable because of the nails strewn on the road. Ann had bet Hector a bunch of roses if he could overtake John before he arrived at Monte Carlo. Having won the bet, he reminds Ann that she now owes him those flowers. "Flowers, like eyes, can stand for either [...] female genitalia," (Altman, 25) but it is his wife Violet, not Ann, whom he beds.

Act four opens in a garden. In the background are, of course, more hills, with the Alhambra on the top of one of them. "*If we stand on the lawn at the foot of the garden looking uphill, our horizon is a stone balustrade of a flagged platform [...] Between us and this platform is a flower garden with a circular basin and fountain in the centre, [...].*" (596) Since the setting is a garden, there are many flower beds, clipped hedges, and such. Since it is walled and gated and, contains furniture, the space is a room as well as an out-of-doors space. It is in this space that Violet manipulates her father-in-law into accepting her and Ann tricks John into becoming her fiancé. While still struggling against his having to marry Ann, John responds to her "you do not love me," "It is false. I love you [...]. But I am fighting for my [...] honour." (729) In both the manifest play and the dream play Ann overcomes that delicacy and John's resolve. Having conquered the emotional taboo of incest, in both the manifest play and the dream play, he can marry the woman he loves.

Notes

1 Holograph Manuscript, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lennox and Tilden Foundations, as quoted in "Superman Theater: Gusts, Galumphs, and Grumps," Charles A. Berst, *SHAW Unpublished Shaw*, v. 16.University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, 202-3. Italics mine.

2 All quotations from the play are from *The Bodley Head Shaw,* v. 2, 493-733.

3 Later in the century, when rich Catholics sought titles for their daughters they went to the Continent to purchase Catholic nobles. A notable exception was Joseph Kennedy's daughter Kathleen who married an English nobleman and whose mother then refused to recognize her as a daughter.

4 For a more detailed discussion of a dream play, see Rodelle Weintraub, "Johnny's Dream: Misalliance," *SHAW: The Neglected Plays,* 171-86.

5 Some commonly accepted symbols are listed in Leon I. Altman, *The Dream in Psychoanalysis,* 24-30.

6 See Weintraub, R. "Oh, the Dreaming, the Dreaming" *Arms and the Man*, in *Shaw and Other Matters.* University Park, the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, 31-40.

7 Rolling slopes and mountains : female genitalia; tall stone peaks : phalluses; precipices breasts; caves: bodily cavities; stone arch: female genitalia.

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Fiction

Reading O'Connor's My Oedipus Complex

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Abstract: *Frank O'Connor (1903-1966) displays with deep acuteness, subtle irony and much humor the conflicts of the world of children in "My Oedipus Complex", the title of which illustrates the theme and is repeatedly used as a leitmotif in almost all of the episodes.*
Five-year old Larry, the main character in the story, comes up against difficult situations, on account of his fantasies and narcissism, when his father/rival comes back home from the First World War. This is when his Oedipus complex comes to the fore. If, on the one hand, the father's homecoming is responsible for Larry's isolation and anguish by bringing out his obsessive love for his mother, on the other hand, the birth of a younger brother exacerbates his frustration and jealousy, and, in the process, reveals the ambivalence of his feelings. However, it is precisely because of his younger brother that Larry overcomes the Oedipian stage of the triangle upon identifying himself with the mirror image of his father. This image reflects itself in several mirrors, including those which represent the Other, his mother, his father, and his brother. These reflections come together so that the union of the family is re-established.

> He saw through Sonny, and now knew that
> *I saw through him as well*.
> (Frank O'Connor's *My Oedipus Complex*)

The title of the short story "My Oedipus Complex" indicates its interrelationship with Greek mythology and psychology. In the well-known Greek legend, Oedipus slew a man without knowing that he was his father and made his wife his – unaware that she was his mother. This inspired Sophocles (414 BC.) to write his two celebrated tragedies: *Oedipus King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Freud (1986-1939) used the expression "the Oedipus Complex" for the first time in his work *Contributions to the Psychology of Love* (1910). In his view, the Greek

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myth is a slightly modified manifestation of infantile desire against which the barriers of incest are raised as the child grows older. This analysis of "My Oedipus Complex" will examine the following features of the story: Larry displaying his Oedipal complex; the father as a socio-sexual prototype; the mother defending her son's attitudes and the newborn child as a mediating instance of the father-son conflict.

A critical review of the story reveals it to be a reminiscence of childhood which, from the Freudian perspective, owes its existence to a *displacement process* (Italics mine) made up from the supplemental reproduction of other extremely important impressions which are made apparent by psychological analysis but which cannot be directly produced because of a *resistance* (Italics mine) (Freud s.d., 55). On account of the relationship between the story's content and other repressed content, Freud calls these reminiscences "hidden reminiscences". (55).

As a starting point, I will assume that the main character reveals, as in a dream, only remnants of events (261) which marked his childhood and will try, as far as possible, through association of ideas, to wend a way through the labyrinth of his unconscious in order to seek out the most important impressions he did not reveal on account of that resistance.

The first thing to notice right from the first paragraph is the egocentric narrative of the main character. This evokes the paternal absence related to what Serge Leclaire calls emptiness, vacancy, 'lettre' (Leclaire 1997, 123). It becomes significant in order to give meaning to the solitude of the child who withdraws into the world of his fantasies and dreams to escape from reality. This is why Larry, who up to the age of five, had been raised without his father, confesses that the little he knew about him did not worry him in the least. This makes us note a feigned indifference on his part, a clear portent of the conflict-ridden atmosphere-to-be when they meet. It is interesting to recall that "the primary function of fantasy is to act out the desire where the thing prohibited is always present in the proper position of the desire" (Freud s.d., 118). In such conditions it is normal that Larry's Oedipean structure becomes obsessive in view of his demanding love for his mother.

In reminiscing on his childhood, the artful narrator sums it up in a memorable antithetic phrase loaded with meaning: "The war was the most peaceful period of my life". These words show the interference of the writer by his use of a stylistic resource. In my view, this calls for further analysis. Firstly it is an ambiguous, ironic affirmation since nobody can have peace in a war. However for the main character-narrator paradoxically the war may mean the realization of his narcissistic Id, on account of his possessive love for his mother. According to Freud, while the Ego "stands for what can be called reason and common sense the Id stands for the passions". (195).

In addition, taking into account the hidden reminiscences which "do not correspond to the original material but are deformed substitutes in the presence of a resistance" (Freud s.d., 55), there may be an association between the elements of ideation of Larry (the desire to possess his mother) and an element of wishful thinking, that is, to be free from his father by having him removed from his world.

When playing with his feet, Larry calls them Mrs. Left and Mrs. Right, which may suggest a projection of his mother's neighbors or friends as he sees them when these women are gossiping. Maybe the idea of projection of his Id (115) prevails associating each significant respectively to the maternal and paternal instances. And to the maternal instance corresponds the affective part. The fact that the boy gives his feet women's names and not men's names is perhaps due to the context of the story that refers to the war, when there were probably few men around, and it would not have been appropriate for his mother to have men friends.

Larry's play takes us to the live scenario of his childhood world and illustrates Freud's reflection that "the favorite and most intense occupation of the child is the toy". It may be correct to say that the child at play behaves like a poet, creating his own world and "the antithesis of the toy is not seriousness but reality". (118) This adds to significance to the scene where Larry is scolded for playing with his father's toys. For Larry, his father's treasures were toys; for the father they are the memorabilia of reality but at the same time he seems to recognize unconsciously they can be seen as toys.

"The immortality of the Ego so strongly denied by reality conquers its reaffirmation by taking refuge in a child". (165). This idea applies here, for guided by the principle of pleasure, (Le Galliot 1977, 13) Larry overestimates the power of his wishes and mental acts and therefore makes use of fantasies, placing himself at the phase of the ideal Ego, judging himself omnipotent in his anxiety to have his mother for himself alone and to be the center of the household. While he is fantasizing on his source of pleasure, he introjects the maternal image and expels whatever in himself has become a cause of displeasure. In such circumstances his Ego becomes an "Ego of pleasure" (Freud s.d., 47).

Larry's sexual ideal (his mother) is menaced by the arrival of his father. At the same time, the dissatisfaction he feels, caused by the non-fulfillment of the ideal of the Ego, in a cleavage turns into aggressive behavior which leads to a "guilt complex" and to a "castration complex". (Le Galliot 1977, 22) Larry's conflict may be more intense on account of his having received excessive maternal affection while his father was absent.

When account is taken of the affection Larry is given by his mother, the revival and reproduction of maternal narcissism are shown. "Parental love", Freud says, "so moving and so infantile is basically only a resurrection of the parents' narcissism which evidently reveals its former nature in this transformation into the objectivized love." (268).

It is not without reason that the child feels free to play with the military equipment that his father left at home. The chain of signifiers "model tanks and Gurkha knives [...] all sorts of military equipment" (O'Connor 1975, 27) conveys the meaning of Larry's *pleasure* (Italics mine), tinged with a feeling of vengeance, which takes us back to the "original scene". Interpreting Freud, Jean Le Galliot points out that the scene referred to is "at the origin of the sexual relation between the parents as observed or imagined by the child". (Le Galliot1977, 22) Then the scene in question is taken by the child as an aggression by the father towards the mother in a sadomasochistic relationship, which caused the child

sexual excitation concomitant with the anguish of castration, a characteristic of the Oedipal phase (23).

The episode when Larry says "Mother let me get a chair and rummage through his treasures" is charged with meaning. First of all, the term 'treasure' would lend a strong sexual connotation to Larry's impressions of his mother since he invests his narcissistic libido in her. At the same time, it functions as a metaphor of paternal power. And also the term "treasure" in the Freudian symbology, refers to someone who is loved in dreams or in conscious life. (Freud s.d., 107). Furthermore, would the referred scene be a symbol of Larry's mother wanting to imprison him in his childhood? And still, this same scene of playing with Father's 'toys' is paralleled immediately with Larry trying to imitate some of his father's habits and mannerisms, acting out what it is to be a man.

Gazing out at nature through the window, Larry was stimulated by a specific quality of excitation: the beauty of the scenery. According to Freud, "an examination of how the erogenous zones adjust themselves to sexual excitation shows that the eyes – although distant from the sensual object – correspond to the zone most frequently stimulated by the excitation". (215) Thus it may be suggested that the signifiers "tall, red-brick houses [...] rigid and painted", (O'Connor 1975, 28) give symbolic meaning to the sexual act in Nature and represent the unfolding of Larry's pulsional sexual universe toward his mother. In Freudian theory, "any part of the body can be the seat of an erogenous zone and so too the whole body". (Freud s.d., 259). Furthermore, "all tall things symbolize the masculine phallus in contrast to the corresponding feminine organ which is deep and concave". (107).

The external world is described through the eyes of the child as he sees and feels it. It is presented in the first person, as experienced by the child who is only an object in the hands of the narrator and here an unfolding and isolation are to be found. The child feels lonely and a strong obsession for his mother.

The scene in which the boy goes to his mother's bedroom evokes intimate privacy, especially by means of the sequence of signifiers "[...] Mother's room and climbed into the big bed" (O'Connor 1975, 28) which conveys a hint of incest. At the same time and paradoxically, Larry, while investing his libido in the prohibited object, feels hampered and despondent. This idea is suggested by the words "petrified" and "frost", "strong symbols of the castration complex". (Le Galliot 1977, 22).

The fact that Larry accompanies his mother to Saint Augustin Church merits comment. It is quite possible that O'Connor has picked out this name in particular to relate Larry's future atonement to Saint Augustin's. Soon after the boy gives vent to his feelings: "Little, indeed, did I know what I was praying for", (O'Connor 1975, 28) which may be construed as a complaint against God himself who is personified, transposing the cosmic level into the personal one. Might God then be a symbol of Superego?

An analysis of the text also brought to my attention the recurring association between Larry's father and Santa Claus. The characteristics of both are all-important to distinguish that the emphasis is set on the characterization of the father as a masculine

personage *par excellence* as a prototype of man, when always dressed in his military uniform which for Larry is another symbol of power.

Although smoking has become a commonplace habit among women, it was formerly a man's habit (at least in public) and this enhances Larry's father masculinity. In the same way, insignia and caps used to be masculine objects and shaving is essentially a male activity. All these aspects evidence Larry's father as a socio-sexual stereotype. According to the text I argue that the child would link Santa Claus, who is a giver, to the maternal instance for the mother gave when the father was at war. Another possible interpretation is that Larry may unconsciously relate the comings and goings of his father to his parent's lovemaking, such an idea being strengthened by the word "mysteriously" (O'Connor 1975, 27) which refers back once more to the "family romance". (Le Galliot 1977, 22).

In the episode where Larry walks to his parent's bedroom, he jumps into bed and places himself in between the two of them and sucks his thumb – after failing to expel his father from bed as was his intent. Thumb-sucking represents a return to the oral phase which begins at the maternal breast and corresponds to the "lettre" inscribed in Larry's unconscious (Leclaire 1997, 123). It may also be a representation of Larry's unconscious satisfaction intensified by mother-oriented sexual desires and by the awareness that his father was an obstacle to that realization. This being so, this emotion returns transformed into never-ending social and moral anxiety and self-censorship. Thumb-sucking "is a substitute for displacement". (Freud s.d., 69) Furthermore, "thumb-sucking is an essential characteristic of the sexual manifestations of childhood and sensual sucking includes total absorption and induces sleep or even a motor reaction like an orgasm". (184).

Of course there is great irony in the reference to what is healthy in bed. Larry was not allowed to sleep with his mother while her husband was in the army though he did go to her bed when he woke in the early morning and fell asleep again there.

The expression "talking-to-Daddy" may be the metaphorical focus standing for the prohibited object (the mother) desired by the son. The first day his father comes home to dinner, after his return from the war, Larry did not like to see how anxious his mother was, claiming that "it destroyed her good looks". The child is jealous of his mother and does not accept her interest in his father which sends us back to the "original scene", as conceived by Freud. It is worth examining some of the details in this description. For instance, "put on his slippers" carries a sexual connotation. To Freud, "the act of putting on one's slippers would refer to the sexual act" (118). The phrase "to save him from colds" may represent the "castration complex" and imply a "feeling of culpability". (Le Galliot 1977, 22).

When Larry's mother asks him to keep quiet because she is "talking to Daddy" or says "don't wake Daddy", and "don't wake Sonny", three nodal points are established. The first expression is an euphemism to allow a couple to be alone. Perhaps we can go beyond and say that "talking to Daddy" means that Daddy wants sex, while "don't wake,

Daddy" suggests that Daddy has had sex and needs to sleep. The last one "don't wake Sonny" conveys that Daddy cannot have sex. These phrases will keep ringing in the child's head tormentingly and his ambivalent feelings will re-appear. We will see later on that he is going to pray to God to send his father back to the war, which is the equivalent of sending him to his death. From then on Larry will begin to repress his feelings.

The first walk Larry and his father took together was very disagreeable for the child because of his father's interest in conversation was with adults exclusively and whenever Larry wanted to stop his father tugged him on by the hand. It may be possible that the father's aggressive pulsion spills over, spurred on by his jealousy of his wife. At first sight it may imply the traumas of the man who comes home from war and loses patience with children, even if the child is his son. When the child avows that "Father has an extraordinary capacity for amiable inattention", (O'Connor 1975, 29) this conveys Larry's latent desire to get his father's attention. Thus the meaning of the irony is tantamount to a frustration backed by "I sized him up and wondered would I cry..." Still in the same passage, the child compares his father to a mountain. That would represent his desire to have him back to the inorganic state, which unconsciously may indicate a wish for his father's death. (Guerin 1972, 75) Also and more directly, the sheer size of the adult world – the child is overwhelmed and he realizes that resistance is useless because he will be ignored.

Another issue present in the story is eroticism as in the following passage is redolent with eroticism. "Dawn was just breaking" [...] I had caught it in the act" (O'Connor 1975, 30) brings to mind the idea of catching the parents in the sexual act. Thus Larry would harbor latent elements of scopophilia in trying to see what was happening when his parents were having sexual relations. In Freud's theory, "the pair of opposites scopophilia/exhibitionism refers to instincts for the purpose of looking and exposing respectively. (40)

In projecting himself into nature, Larry is sub-consciously reflecting on an initial relation between "the symbolic, the imaginary and the real" which would mirror his fantasies and myths (Clément 1975, 17).

Since nature is the archetype of "mother", Larry is reinvesting his libido in it. This idea is emphasized because Larry goes to his parent's bed and places himself in between them, kicking his father. Once more the maternal instance seems to be his accomplice. Says he: "Mother felt for me". Literally, this is only an expression of the mother understanding Larry's emotional need as long as she reaches out and touches him and her touch puts him to sleep: in other words, physical contact with her is soothing to Larry. However, in an analysis like this, the expression also connotes Larry's unconscious sexual desire for his mother. When antagonizing his father, Larry is nevertheless afraid of him. This reveals that Larry is acting out his inner drama and struggling with the ban on incest. His mother/wife plays the part of "the Other", (Lemaire 1977, 201), a mirror image in the contemplation of which Larry delights, since it represents a version of his narcissistic Ego.

In the early morning the child would go to his parent's bedroom to talk with his mother. Larry's oneiric world is brimming with fantasies. Now "don't-wake-Daddy" will be another signifier of the wish which will remain on the same plane as "talking-to-Daddy".

As may be observed the nodal points keep growing from the moment the child expresses his wish to go fishing. The problem reaches its climax when the hero demands to be treated as an equal. He wants "to have tea", another signifier of desire. And he says that one of the two will have to leave home, either he (Larry) or his father.

When Larry says he wants to go fishing, this shows he has not yet associated his father with this kind of activity. We conclude his mother used to take him on such expeditions because his father was at the war front. Perhaps we could say the father's return means this mother loses the masculine attributes – something that Larry failed to understand especially as the text implies that the father did not take up this role on his return from war.

In a study on Lacan, Anika Lemaire shows that "repressed pulsion keeps tending to complete fulfillment which would consist in the repetition of a primary satisfaction: that of the union with the mother" but "nothing can put a stop to that state of tension". (22). It is precisely Larry's repressed pulsion which makes him aggressive, as when he reverts to his sado-masochistic phase by defying his parents.

By physically punishing the child, in similar fashion to her husband, Larry's mother may be considered as a virtual phallic woman and also because in her husband's absence she played the father's part. Thus in this aspect she is unmistakably phallic.

In another nodal point, paternal authority is challenged by the ambivalent hero who, although only five years old, snaps back at his father so challenging the paternal Superego. This is the point at which Larry's father slaps his son's backside and the fact of being smacked even though no pain was inflicted infuriates the boy. At that moment maybe Larry assumes the role of a sado-masochist to the extent that he wishes to provoke negative feelings in his parents. He may also desire to be a victim because on this occasion he is protected by his mother who, in a cleavage, shows she is annoyed with her husband by siding with Larry.

The episode when Larry avows to his mother that when he grows up he will marry her and they will have many children, is very instructive. This is when she takes the opportunity to tell him that he will have a little brother. It is worth recalling Freud's observation that "children choose their parents as their first objects of love". (43).

Though Larry longed to have a baby brother, Sonny's arrival belies this. Contrary to his earlier thoughts, Larry expresses negative feelings toward the infant. Larry projects himself in Sonny and finds him very possessive when actually it is Larry who wants to be the center of attention. His jealousy is so intense that he used tois pinch eshis little brother, thus displaying sadistic behavior. When his mother catches him in the act of pinching the baby, she slaps him.

After this episode Larry is very depressed since he was used to being the center of the family. One night just as his father arrived home, Larry gave vent to his feelings:

“If another bloody baby comes into this house, I’m going out”. This explosion of pent-up rage causes his father to understand him better and so to project himself in his son. This is the climax of the story, that is, the defining moment in changing Larry’s life.

His father, who had rejected him, now counter-invests in his son as a result of the sharp transfer of maternal love toward the new baby who, in a process of displacement, becomes the center of maternal attention. While previously it was Larry who had been driven out of bed, now it is his father’s turn. An understanding is reached: “He saw through Sonny, and now he knew that I saw through him as well”. (36) This is linked to Lacan’s image of the mirror, that of the identification with the Other and with the father.

Let us recall in line with Freud that at the very moment the Oedipus Complex was destroyed, Larry recognizes that a maternal characteristic is to give priority to the newly born, that is, “mother” as child-bearer. At the same time, Larry identifies himself strongly with his father and this allows Larry to maintain an affectionate relationship with the mother and also with the baby.

An interesting fact stands out though: we become familiar only with the hero’s name. Only once, as the conflict grows in intensity, do we hear Larry’s mother call her husband ‘Mick’ which reminds us of “meek” meaning obedient, yielding, and presents a strong contrast to the ongoing paternal violence.

Larry only once (29) refers to his father as ‘Daddy’. All other uses of ‘Daddy’ are by his mother. Apart from this one instance, he always uses the form ‘Father’. This suggests that the boy never got really close to his father.

Beyond this, I argue that maybe the omission of names takes on some relevance since it may indicate a displacement, a cleavage of the mental route by representations very distant from the signifiers “Father”, “Mother”, and “Sonny” in contrast with the importance of the meaning they have for Larry, a fact enhanced by the capitalization of the names. As in a dream, this artifice could indicate, in the latent content, something repressed or yet be the receptacle of a trauma. It may also be that the absence of names indicates contempt, a withdrawal or an escape mechanism of the narrator.

Freud’s reflection that “humor is one of the main functions of defense which, as opposed to repression, neglects to subtract from attention the content of representation linked to painful affection and in this way, governs defensive automatism” (243) applies here.

He adds that “maybe the connection with the infantile allows humor to play that role thoroughly since in a child’s life, intensive painful affections occur which the grown-up would laugh at as does the humorist when identical feelings assail him at maturity”. (243) This observation is strikingly exemplified by Larry who feels the pain of having to share maternal love. And there is an interesting connection with the infantile behavior through the exaltation of the Ego shown by the humorous displacement. This is a point of view which this analysis has been examining.

It may be possible to infer that the specific feature of comicality of “My Oedipus Complex” is exactly the rebirth of the child and to consider the comic as “the lost

childhood laugh" recovered. The laugh springs therefore from the comparison between the adult Ego of the narrator and his Ego when a child (243).

O'Connor's short story confirms Freud's observation according to which "humor is the highest of the defensive processes". Humor is but a camouflage which hides something deeper. Does its very title suggest that the author's intent was to make fun of psychoanalysis? If it is so, it is exactly by gently mocking Freudian theory, that the author falls into a trap at the level of the text by creating various humorous moments centered on both the "I" as narrator and the "I" as hero.

It is Leclaire's "lettre" which is beneath and beyond the Oedipean drama. Larry's Ego is an empty place, his desire is not at the place indicated and the object of his search may be unreachable. The desire in "My Oedipus Complex" is in the before, now and after and the hero speaks of his infancy as if it were a self-defense mechanism. The irony of the title "My Oedipus Complex" is a metaphor which sums up the spirit of the work. By this artifice and because of it, the narrator feels less inhibited to tell such a story in which he reflects on himself.

The thematic preoccupation already singled out – Oedipus – with the literature itself implies a reversal of the irony on the narrator himself and on the mirror features of his childhood in which narcissism is seasoned with poetical maturity. Yet this does not keep him from revealing his Ego and presenting us with an aesthetic experience.

The message is the whys and wherefores of childish attitudes, behaviors, pains and pleasures, which reverberate in the reader who projects and identifies herself/himself in Larry's mirror image. This is because by being a universal figure, Larry stands for the eternal theme of the search for the Other; the mirror of the other – the maternal one – which reflects and materializes the Oedipean child's desires which converges in the father and son scene in which the family model is re-established. This is a reflection of the very social system in which we live.

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The Ontological Imperative in Irish Writing

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Abstract:*There is a tendency to engage with Irish writing and culture in terms of identity. Epistemological concerns are therefore foregrounded with the emphasis on the intellect and the imagination and how it creates and apprehends itself in relation to the world about it. Identity, then, in either the political or historical sphere becomes a matter of narrative. This, it could be argued, fits neatly with Ireland's conception of itself primarily as a culture where the act of story-telling is celebrated above all else. I want to argue that in the last thirty years there has been a recognition of ontological concerns in Irish writing; in other words, a shift in emphasis away from epistemology toward a questioning of Being – of what it is to exist. Of course, Being can only be imperfectly accessed through language so that words and narrative still remain of paramount importance. Yet, this shift signals a self-reflexive consideration of the ontological status of the text itself. Thus the act of writing is interrogated and its relationship to the 'real' world probed. Form now becomes important as writers struggle to find and sustain a structure/model in either poetry, prose or drama that will adequately express their predicament. John Banville's novels are the most obvious example of books about the writing of books. Yet, in looking at the work of some other contemporary Irish writers like Brian Friel, Seamus Deane, Tom Murphy and Eilís Ní Dhuibhne it can be observed that each of them struggle with the telling of their stories, with attempting to give final shape and meaning to their narratives.*

There is an overwhelming tendency to engage with Irish writing and culture in terms of identity. Epistemological concerns are therefore foregrounded, with the emphasis firmly on the intellect and the imagination and how it creates and apprehends itself in relation to the world about it. Identity, then, in either the political or historical sphere becomes a matter of narrative. This, it could be argued, fits neatly with Ireland's conception of itself primarily as a culture where the act of story-telling is celebrated above all else. Indeed, at some level Irishness is actually bound up with the performance

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of narrative: one knows the usual clichés of the 'Irish being great talkers'. There are a number of implications of this being the case in an Irish situation.

Edward Said famously argued that the colonial territory is always viewed 'institutionally'; that is to say, the colonial space is defined and framed through the institutions of 'law' and the court, education and prison. Obviously, this underscores the epistemological; i.e. these institutions (as all institutions do) base themselves on knowledge and knowing and the power – and empowerment – that goes along with an institution. As he says, "Orientalism, then, is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, study, judgement, discipline, or governing" (Said 1978, 41). In an Irish context James Joyce was very aware of this: we need only think of his powerful use of the institutional image employed in his essay, "Ireland at the Bar" (Joyce 2000, 145-7) with presents his namesake, Myles Joyce, caught uncomprehendingly in the glare of an alien legal institution in whose frame his story, his words, his plea, could not be heard.

The project, then, of resistance and decolonisation is one of challenging and overcoming this deployment of knowledge. There is, consequently, a situation set up where there exists a tyranny of knowledge: a tyranny of epistemological concerns where there appears to be an endless testing of 'Irishness' itself – what it is, or was, or might be in the future – and, also, perhaps more crucially, an endless testing and querying of the validity of the very processes by which we view and create 'Irishness'. Thus, a common debate in Ireland is not so much about the 'reality' or 'factuality' of events or a situation, rather the debate revolves round the nature of the category by which that event is engaged with: it is history, for instance, or is it fiction or something else?

There is, then, an over emphasis on 'narrative' or, in contemporary parlance, spin. Thus, the stories or the story surrounding an event or happening becomes just as important as the actuality of the happening or event. As was said earlier, this fits neatly in with the conception of Irishness being bound up with the act of storytelling. For instance, the 'land' in an Irish context has more to do with the stories associated with place than with any environmental relationship to or with the land. A case of, not what one can do with it the land, or indeed, how one can physically own the land, but rather a case of what stories can be told about the land and thereby grant a sense of cultural and imaginative ownership (See Hand 2000).

All of this, surely, is nothing new: the power struggle in Irish culture is one of narrative: is one of who speaks and what they speak about. In short, stories and story-telling are paramount, or at least, have in terms of a critical approach to Irish culture and Irish writing been the main focus.

One implication of this is the situation now where we have the 'tyranny of theory' (and this is not confined to the Irish Studies scene, but perhaps its effects are felt more acutely or keenly in an Irish context), as critics cast about for a convenient theory through which (almost institutionally) to perceive Ireland and Irishness and come to some understanding about it. In a way, this tendency can be understood as a means of

considering the Irish story or narrative with the help of other stories and narratives. What we witness is a tendency to become beguiled by stories – or theories – from elsewhere which might help us explain and know ourselves. This is a difficulty in so much as that these stories/theories from elsewhere can sometimes obscure, as well reveal, certain aspects of the Irish experience.

Perhaps what I am detailing here is a nightmarish version of the postmodern world where 'the-thing-in-itself' is ignored in favour of the endless and distancing utterances that whirl about it. If this, in fact, were the case, then it would seem that in Ireland the situation is experienced at an extreme level.

Set against this epistemological bias or emphasis in Irish writing and culture is what can be termed an 'ontological imperative': that is, a reaction to this tyranny of knowledge. What can be observed in certain texts is a desire to get beyond knowledge and to gesture toward a new way of knowing and engaging with the world. On one level this impulse can be thought of as a need to get back to basics, to begin again at the very start. It can also be thought of as an acknowledgement of knowledge's uncertainty, even if that does appear to be somewhat contradictory and paradoxical.

In a recent TV documentary Seamus Deane pinpointed 1972-1973 as a crucial moment in Irish writing and culture: a moment after which he claimed, 'nothing would be the same again' (RTE 2001). Obviously Bloody Sunday of January 1972, and indeed, the issue of the north of Ireland in general would have a much to do with this contention. Brian Friel's 1973 play, *Freedom of the City*, might for some seem to be a failure because of its closeness to the events it depicts – Bloody Sunday – and thereby lacking the critical distance that might somehow bestow greatness. On the other hand, its very proximity to these events and its attempt to make sense of the immediacy and the reality of violence and death, make it an interesting text for consideration, despite its faults.

In relation to the argument being made here, Friel's play can be understood as dealing with the impossibility of true knowledge. It is a play that dramatises various forms of 'knowledge': the audience is presented with different forms of discourse – legal discourse, journalistic discourse, sociological or academic discourse, and popular discourse in the form of ballads. It is not a case that these varying discourses are in conflict with one another – that might imply that one is privileged and allows an engagement with the truth of the events in the Guildhall in Derry. Rather, what Friel does – and I think successfully – is present each as a discourse that alienates the audience from the truth: the truth being what the audience views the three characters enacting. The more that is said, the further one gets from that initial truth. Friel, in other words, recognises the limitations of knowledge in the Irish situation – or recognises the 'end' (or uselessness) of some forms of knowledge and, while not perhaps articulated fully or coherently, registering the absolute need for a new form or a new way of engaging with reality. The final scene that sees the three characters standing with their hands above their heads, caught as in a freeze-frame, with powerful beams of light shining on them and the sound of gun fire blazing, in its lack of movement is a stark visual reminder of

the necessity of discovering a means of making sense and communicating the facts of history. Coming, as it does, at the end of the play, this might be understood as a moment of possible transition – these three figures and their lives and what happened to them, still remain to be translated.

John Banville's 1973 novel, *Birchwood*, is one text specifically mentioned by Seamus Deane as one of those reflecting this paradigm shift. Indeed, it could be argued to be one of the primary examples in that it registers its 'break' with tradition in a highly conscious manner. The opening lines of Banville's novel *Birchwood* encapsulate this shift: "I am, therefore I think" (Banville 1994, 11). In this playful reversal of seventeenth century philosopher Rene Descartes' famous dictum, Being is privileged above conscious Being: ontological concerns are given precedence over epistemological ones. Banville, though, is not simply dismissing Descartes and his enlightenment values – as might be expected of a postmodern writer. Instead, he could be said to be tapping into the revolutionary and experimental spirit of Descartes. For the philosopher had the audacity to set out in his *Discourse on Method* to take nothing for granted in what he knew and, importantly, how he knew. In other words, he desired to get back to fundamentals – forget everything he had inherited and taken for granted as true and begin afresh with a 'new' method. Thus, Banville acknowledges that desire in the opening of *Birchwood*, by declaring that in an Irish situation a new world needs a new perspective.

Critic Brian McHale famously makes the distinction between modernist and postmodernist fiction along the lines of epistemological and ontological concerns (See McHale 1987). The dominant in Modernist writing, he contends, is an epistemological one, whereas postmodern writing is dominated by ontological issues. Certainly, this shift in emphasis can be observed in Irish writing and culture. Banville's work can be productively considered as an on-going meditation on the what is to be: obviously, this has implications in an Irish context, reminding us that, whatever else we might be (or whatever else others might think we are), we are also human. Though, of course, that common humanity is necessarily going to be coloured by local conditions. Thus, "I am, therefore I think" is a declaration of intent, as Banville sets out on his artistic project. I am not saying that Irishness must be negated or forgotten or overcome and that a common or modern or European or International humanity must be embraced: I am not detailing an interaction that positions Ireland on the margins or on the receiving end of ideas from elsewhere. In other words, I do not endorse that usual reading of Irish writing that sees the trajectory of Irish writers – physically and imaginatively – as one that moves away from Ireland. However, it is not just a shift away from questions of knowledge and knowing toward questions of what it is to be – there is, also, the issue of the text and what its status in the world might be. Combined with considering what is to be, this self-reflexive element has many implications for the kind of texts being produced in the contemporary moment.

If we look briefly at Banville's *Birchwood*: there is an uncertainty pervading it in terms of what it actually wants to be. Is it a traditional Irish Big House novel, like

those produced by Elizabeth Bowen, Somerville and Ross? Many see it as such (Burgstreller 1992). Though the second part of novel with its ‘run-away-and-join-the-circus’ narrative would seem to disturb the expected movement within a traditional Big House narrative. Is it a bildungsroman tracing the growth of Gabriel Godkin or is it a gothic extravaganza with hints of incest and dark deeds? It is all of these, and none of them, at the same time. It is both a success and failure. By disrupting the expected narrative trajectory of an Irish novel, Banville forces his readers to consider again, the nature and status of the text being read. It is a warning, too, that a single narrative or genre can never encompass “Ireland”.

In his novel *The Newton Letter* another version of this ontological imperative is to be found. Again, confusion reigns – is this a history written by the unnamed narrator, an historian, or is this a fiction written by narrator obsessed stories and power that stories can confer on their author? This tension between fact and fiction comes to a climax in that moment when the unnamed narrator’s ‘story’ is challenged by Ottilie. He strikes out and hits her in the face: but, immediately afterwards it too becomes an element in his fiction making consciousness:

> It happened so quickly, with such a surprising, gratifying precision, that I was not sure if I had not imagined it” (Banville 1982, 58)

A moment of ‘reality’, however violent and intense, can be imaginatively incorporated and softened. Yet, this afternoon, as the narrator admits, opens up a tear in the fictional fabric he has woven for himself over the course of the summer spent in the countryside. Once again, Banville shows himself to be aware of the issues and the questions surrounding the difficult relationship between the realms of epistemology and ontology. His work, especially some of his earlier work, manifests formally his own uncertainties and anxieties surrounding this tension. Many of these early works have narratives that are unable to sustain themselves and self-consciously break down. In *Doctor Copernicus*, for instance, the third part made up of letters is preceded by a section that sees the once omniscient narrator lose authorial control of the narrative, as different voices and different styles invade the text. His more recent fiction, while not as formally experimental, continues to offer narratives which interrogate the quest for knowledge, each possessing a character who comes to realise that perhaps they have spent their lives looking for answers in the wrong places.

It is surprising to see and recognise the extent to which many contemporary Irish writers – be it consciously or unconsciously – confront this issue. Another example can be discovered in Tom Murphy’s play *The Gigli Concert* (1983). This is a play that on numerous levels dramatises rupture and breakdown and challenges the happy and accepted consensus between the play and the audience. In doing so it is one of Murphy’s more successful plays, internalising or intellectualising the naked violence of his earlier days so that – cerebrally – it packs a very strong punch indeed.

It is the end of Tom Murphy's *The Gigli Concert*, which marks it out in contemporary Irish drama. It is – needless to say – a very disturbing close to the preceding action leading up to this final moment. Disturbing, not in that anything untoward is said or presented to the audience that might be construed, perhaps, as offensive (Murphy, it can be certain, is not after cheep theatrical thrills). It is disturbing, rather, in its self-reflexive/self-conscious implications for the nature of this particular theatrical experience but also for theatre and literature in general. One early reviewer of the piece felt that this ending was an "awkward" moment in the play (Harris 1985, 39). Another considered it "too dubious a gimmick to provide the kind of climax the play craves" (Devitt 1983, 57). To be sure when the character JPW sings like Beniamino Gigli the audience is being asked not – as the tradition would have it – just to simply 'suspend their disbelief'. That would be easy and accessible and, indeed, acceptable. Rather, when JPW sings like Gigli: he literally does in that it is the voice of Gigli that we hear – the same voice that we have heard throughout the play on the record player brought by the Irishman – complete with the hiss and scratchiness of the record. It is so obviously not JPW or the actor playing JPW singing, that the audience might feel conned; or this supreme moment might fall spectacularly flat on its theatrical face. As that critic who felt that this device was 'too dubious a gimmick' for the nature of the play as it unfolded, goes to on say: Murphy is justified in taking the risk he does because of the ambition at work in *The Gigli Concert*.

It is this final moment, then, which is disturbing: rupturing the happy consensus between stage and audience, between a resolution to the drama and a radical moment of opening up further interrogation and questioning. For it raises more questions than it answers. It is a final moment that oscillates between success and failure, the miraculous and the mundane, magic and chicanery. And this applies to both the world within the play and the world outside the play. Indeed, it is a moment that breaks and overcomes, explodes even, the boundaries between the play and the audience, fiction and reality. Importantly, and crucially, it is all of these simultaneously: a classic instance of postmodern both/and rather than the traditional either/or model. This, of course, is one main reason why this ending is so disturbing.

It is an 'end' that challenges the conventions of the traditional moment of resolution because rather than closing the play by offering a manageable and readily available 'meaning', it opens up the play to the audience – making the audience begin to think again about what has just been presented to them. Numerous critics of the play talk of this end in terms of 'apocalypse' (O'Toole 1994, 208-27) or as 'an explosion' (Kearney 1988, 167) – so shattering of the norms can it be. Certainly, such terminology is appropriate: it is unexpected; it's presentation – at once miraculous and ordinary – must leave the audience questioning rather than merely reaffirming what they have been witness to. This end, though, is radically open in that any attempt by a critic or an audience to pin-point and fix a definite and definitive meaning necessarily works against what has been presented.

Working back from this moment, demonstrates that *The Gigli Concert* is a play that at its heart is uncertain. Not only in terms of content: i.e. the story being told, but also in

terms of form: that is, the way in which the story is told. It is itself a manifestation of the instability it talks of. As Anthony Roche has pointed out, *The Gigli Concert* mixes – or mixes up – numerous genres. There are hints and gestures that would suggest a gangster movie: we are presented with such things as the Irishman's hat, the use of light and dark, and setting of a seedy city centre office. Then, it is quite literally a confessional play with JPW who is a kind of psychiatrist and who is in turn a kind of modern day priest (Roche 1994, 162-88). It is also a play that deals with relationship between Ireland and England. It is, as well, a modern day reworking of the Faust myth. It is a play that shifts almost imperceptibly between comedy and tragedy. It is, in short, a fluid play, modifying and mutating as it progresses. It would seem as well that it is a play in which anything can happen, even the most unexpected of things.

It could be understood to be a play that dramatises this need to get beyond narrative and begin to engage with the world on a more direct level. A straightforward reading of the play would see it as one where the movement is one from a position of illusion (or delusion) toward a clearer (truer) understanding. In other words, what is demanded of the characters is that they strip away the fantasies that sustain each of them and confront head-on the reality of their collective predicament: only then, can healing and closure to come to pass. Fintan O'Toole, in applying a Jungian reading to the play, conceives *The Gigli Concert* working in this manner: the illusions each character harbours – but especially those of JPW and the Irishman – need to be escaped from because of their tyrannical and stultifying nature (O'Toole 1994, 213).

The problem with this reading as applied to *The Gigli Concert* is that it ignores those moments of utter joy in these characters' acts of creation. When the Irishman imagines his youth as Gigli, JPW enters into the game with enthusiastic gusto and zeal. The same is true when The Irishman again invents a narrative about his earliest sexual encounters. The dialogue during these moments is quick-fire and energetic. Despite these being fantasies that are being created, the characters appear to connect with one another at a basic level, something that could be said to be absent at other times in the play. Then, of course, there is the end of play which hovers uneasily between fact and fiction, between the magical and mundane, would seem to raise – as was argued – more questions than offer final answers.

But, there is another powerful moment within the play, that acts as something of a counterpoint to this final end. It occurs just after The Irishman offers his second version of his childhood. This version tells of the brutality within his family and how Danny, his brother, demised his youthful wonder at the simple beauty of the world. Many might see this as the true version of his youth, but in a play that is so much concerned with fictions, that cannot be in any way taken for granted. Directly after this moment: the Irishman breaks down and lets out an anguished cry, giving vent to the all the pain in his life. It is a truly powerful dramatic moment and can be compared with the end of the play in its assault on the audience's sensibilities. For in this instant of inarticulate expression the Irishman is transformed. In a way he finds his cure. The next

day on his return to JPW's office, he offers his third version of his childhood, denying the unhappy version of the day before and declaring that his was a very happy upbringing. His cure has not led to 'reality' but, instead, simply more story-telling. The hoped for transition from illusion into the fact has not occurred in the manner that might have been hoped for.

In a way, this moment is the 'end' of the play or should be – it is a false ending perhaps, again registering – as does Banville – the inability for a moment to remain outside expression and narrative. What is of note, however, is that once again, an Irish writer's uneasiness with epistemological issues finds expression in the ontological status of the text or work. It is in the 'form' that those misgivings are manifested and articulated.

Another example of this undecidibility regarding form can be found in Seamus Deane's novel *Reading in the Dark* (1996). Is this a ghost story, a detective story, a bildungsroman, an autobiography, or a fiction? Is it history? This uncertainty is reflected in the story itself. Knowledge is the object of Deane's novel. Self-consciously, he focuses on the issue of power surrounding narrative and understanding, his unnamed narrator's search for the truth at the heart of his family's secret is what propels *Reading in the Dark* along. The expected conclusion, though, when all should become marvellously clear in a moment of triumph for the narrator is denied. Despite the narrator gaining knowledge, he forfeits wisdom. At the close of the novel, the narrator is able to admit failure in that he is still unable to fathom his father's silence. The words "Oh, father" (Deane 1996, 226) betray the emotion that has been, at some level, curiously absent throughout the novel. The narrator has, instead, been focusing on the discovery of the 'facts' relating to the disappearance of his Uncle Eddie. Along the way he has learned that stories – certainly in an Irish context – can conceal as much they reveal. And yet, despite of all this, he does not possess the meaning of these facts and events. The truth, for him, hinted at perhaps in that emotive intrusion into his narrative is always just beyond his cognitive reach.

One final example of this can be observed in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's recent novel *The Dancers Dancing* (1999). The novel's original source is a short story entitled "Blood and Water" from Ní Dhuibhne's 1988 collection of the same name (Ní Dhuibhne 1988). At the end of that story we have the character looking out over the sea, acknowledging her ignorance about her life and the decisions she has made. Or perhaps, a better way of considering this is to say that reader is more aware of the character's ignorance than the character is herself. Something similar seems to be happening in *The Dancers Dancing* (Ní Dhuibhne 1999). It is as if, at the end of the novel, Orla, the narrator, is unsure of the import of her story, unsure of exactly what it might mean. It is a courageous stance to take for any writer of the novel, a form that traditionally tends toward resolution.

So far, then, we have seen that there is a strain in his Irish writing which appears to herald the 'end' of knowledge; works that dramatise the insufficiency of knowledge and thereby the dead-end of epistemological concerns. This might seem to offer a something of a 'dead-end' or intellectual cul-de-sac; but this need not necessarily be the

case. These moments are powerful breaks in narrative, opening up a space for both the writer and the reader to begin to engage with issues and concerns that precede politics and history. They are, perhaps, an acknowledgement of the constant need to recognise the pressures of lived experience prior to any attempt to incorporate that experience into narrative.

Some texts consciously gesture toward a new type of engagement with the world. John McGahern's *Amongst Women*, for instance, suggests that the end of knowledge is actually an opportunity to begin to see the world afresh. Near the close of the novel Moran is able to see the Great Meadow again, as if for the first time:

> They found him leaning in exhaustion on a wooden post at the back of the house, staring into the emptiness of the meadow [...] To die was never to look on all of this again. It would live in others' eyes but not in his. He had never realized when he was in the midst of confident life what an amazing glory he was part of. (McGahern 1991, 179).

The end is not the end, but it signals the possibility of a new beginning, and a fresh start.

Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* is another text that acknowledges the possibility of some new form of interaction. Dancing signals not only the end of language but the beginning, or perhaps a remembering, of a different method of connection.

> Dancing as if the very heart of life and all its hopes might be found in those assuaging notes and those hushed rhythms and in those silent hypnotic movements. Dancing as if language no longer existed because words were no longer necessary [...]. (Friel 1990, 71).

It is important to emphasise that the end of knowledge is not to be confused with an end to communication. Rather, communication and the desire to connect with others is, in fact, brought to the fore. Thus, hopelessness is not to be countenanced or embraced. The "as if" in this quotation is significant, not least because it concedes how impossible it actually is to fully turn one's back on knowledge and epistemological concerns. For Friel, the image of the dance is not enough: words do exist and words are still necessary. The irony then, of course, is that the 'ontological imperative' – this desire to get beyond or behind narrative – can (indeed must) itself become a narrative or a part of one.

As suggested at the outset, Ireland's post-colonial position means that narrative ownership is very much fore-grounded in Irish writing and culture. However, as I have been trying to argue, Irish writers are acutely aware that it is not enough to simply tell one's own story. True possession and authority can only be acquired if form itself is interrogated and opened up. Thus, as has been demonstrated, the contemplation of the ontological status of the work is a feature of much Irish writing. Nonetheless, narrative

issues remain in that the 'ontological imperative' itself enters into narrative. The question then is, what type of narrative?

Certainly, from the examples considered in this paper, there is a sense that the aspiration for a new way to begin imagining the world and Irish realities remains just that, an aspiration. And yet, it is the desire itself which, perhaps, remains crucial, demonstrating a self-awareness about the limits of language and knowledge, recognising that there is always something more to be said, something 'other' that is hidden which needs to be uncovered and expressed. This attitude in turn reveals a wariness of promoting one single narrative as primary or authentic. The constant motif of the formal breakdown of a narrative undercuts any sense of that narrative being definitive or final. The result is a writing that tends toward inclusivity rather than exclusivity: each narrative or voice is one more layer of a wider, evolving narrative. Overall, it could be argued that the 'ontological imperative' is a central element in Ireland's process of decolonisation in that it forms a part of the culture's resistance to imperial structures and thought.

The tension remains, though, between a desire to engage in the act of telling stories and a realisation that, ultimately, the narrative will be unable to sustain itself. It is a tension that encapsulates hope and despair: hope that a story can, indeed, be told and the despair associated with the realisation that there will always be something more to be said. The texts that have been considered in this paper would suggest that this is a productive tension. Perhaps, the true consequence of an ontological imperative is a constant reappraisal of knowledge and narrative, meaning our writers must remain energetically engaged with the possibilities of what has not yet been said and might, hopefully, be said.

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Infinite Regress and the Darkness of Reason – Flann O'Brien's The Third Policeman *in the Context of Greek Cosmology*

Nigel Hunter*

Abstract: *Few fictional fates can be as bleak as that of the narrator in Flann O'Brien's* The Third Policeman. *The reader sees it, even if he doesn't. When he (the narrator) reaches the end of his story, he finds only another beginning, a repetition, words used before [...]. The reader can check – can verify the pattern; but for the nameless victim, this is something new, a little strange, a little puzzling. He's no wiser, no better – no older – than before. He's moving, but he's in the same place.*

Infinite regress is the principal postulate of Flann O'Brien's work. The figure is there in the first novel, At Swim-Two-Birds*, through the receding sequence of narratives-within-narratives. It is there in this, his second, suppressed, novel, in the ever-smaller, ever-less-visible boxes of Policeman MacCruiskeen (and much more besides). There is a hint of it too in his image of the Irish artist* sitting fully dressed, innerly locked in the toilet of a locked coach where he has no right to be, resentfully drinking somebody else's whiskey *– the coach in question sitting inside a railway tunnel (from 'A Bash in the Tunnel', his essay on James Joyce).*

Through the copious material relating to de Selby (mostly footnotes), The Third Policeman *brings forward a number of pseudo-rational theories on various aspects of the physical universe (*our *universe). Through the principal narrative, it offers an attempted description of a different universe, where the 'rational' breaks down, and the 'inconceivable' somehow actually happens. The present article is an attempt to show how this double focus of the novel constitutes a formal unity, through an exploration of O'Brien's philosophical debt to such thinkers as Parmenides, Zeno, and Democritus. In their theories, and disputes, may be found the seeds of many of the ideas and episodes present in the work.*

In the *Parmenides* by Plato there is an argument that goes, in a simplified form, as follows: All the members of a set of large objects partake of the single Idea (or Form) of Largeness; but Largeness itself is large; the *Idea* may therefore sit alongside the other

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large objects to make a second set of large objects. All of these share in a single Form also – a 'new' Form of Largeness (it is argued). But given the premise that any Form can be predicated of itself (as above, 'Largeness is large'), this 'new' Form (or Idea) may now join the others to make a third set. And this in turn gives rise to a fourth set; and so on [...].

It is a classic instance of 'infinite regress': this particular example was named by Aristotle the 'Third Man' argument. There are a number of ways, I intend to argue, in which Flann O'Brien's second novel plays with the ideas of Parmenides and his coevals; and infinite regress is a structure of some importance in the work – I would hesitate to suggest, however, that Aristotle's 'Third Man' coinage gave rise to O'Brien's '*Third* Police*man*' (even though all three policemen are, to the narrator, strikingly *large*). Some coincidences are *just* coincidences. Nevertheless, with Flann O'Brien – as we shall see – nothing (almost nothing) is altogether impossible.

> The world of [*The Third Policeman*] is a rational and even scientific one, a normal one except for the pervasive feeling that something has slipped, that the give-and-take of good and evil, which is the normal state, has been somehow disturbed. The plane on which we live has been, as it were, tilted over.

This is the view of Anthony Cronin, in his biography of Flann O'Brien, *No Laughing Matter*.[2] In emphasizing the moral dimension of O'Brien's novel, Cronin acknowledges an aspect of the work sometimes underplayed in critical commentary. It is after all the narrative of a murderer. From a theological point of view, it dramatizes sin and retribution. But most of the comment on *The Third Policeman* – including the present paper – is more interested in its philosophical and scientific aspects.

From this point of view, the idea that the 'world' of the novel 'is a rational and even scientific one, a normal one' for the most part is rather puzzling. There is a room in the policemen's barracks where the various cracks and other marks on the ceiling form a detailed, accurate map of the local surroundings (complete with a road to eternity). 'Did you make it yourself?' asks the narrator. 'I did not and nobody else manufactured it either,' Sergeant Pluck replies. 'It was always there and MacCruiskeen is certain that it was there even before that.' (O'Brien 1974, 107) Many more examples could be cited to make the point: simply stated, this is hardly a 'normal' world. But what is rational and scientific about it is a rather more complicated question.

We should perhaps clarify, initially, which of the novel's 'worlds' we are discussing. For there is, of course, a 'normal' recognisable world – this is the world of Chapter One, and the start of Chapter Two; the world briefly revisited by the narrator at the end of the book. With some reservations, perhaps, we can say it is the world of the novel's many footnotes, as well. But most of the story takes place in a different world – the Policemen's world, where maps exist on ceilings from a time, apparently, before time began [...]. What kind of world is this? It is a fictitious world – that is one answer; and clearly true. But it does not get us very far.

Let us consider the world of the footnotes for a while. This is essentially a textual world, a parodic scholarly world of documents and commentary concerning the life and theories of the so-called 'savant' de Selby. This is the material base, we are to suppose, for the narrator's never-to-be-published 'De Selby Index'. O'Brien's writing here is rich in comic effects, not the least of which is the way in which all of de Selby's exegetes manage to disavow his theories one by one, whilst nevertheless maintaining (most of them) his genius. As the narrator himself concedes, in considering de Selby's denial of motion (in the body of the main text, this):

> Like most of de Selby's theories, the ultimate outcome is inconclusive. It is a curious enigma that so great a mind would question the most obvious realities and object even to things scientifically demonstrated (such as the sequence of day and night) while believing absolutely in his own fantastic explanations of the same phenomena. (45)

The body of knowledge known as Pre-Socratic Philosophy is also composed of texts – more often fragments of texts – and commentaries on texts (some of the latter non-existent now, some of disputed provenance and import). In this, albeit in another sense than that used up to now, it resembles the 'world' of the novel's footnotes. A useful account of the various positions of leading Greek thinkers is to be found in Friedo Ricken's *Philosophy of the Ancients* (1991), to which I shall refer more than once in what follows. Consider the following summary of a surviving text by the Eleatic philosopher Parmenides (born towards the end of the Sixth Century *BCE*):

> The position that Parmenides develops [...] contradicts everyday experience to such an extent that it is almost tantamount to a religious revelation. That it is placed in the mouth of the goddess underlines its claim to validity and truth. (Ricken 1991, 32)

And, concerning a later section of the work:

> These statements exclude the possibility of attributing to things predicates that characterize our world of experience: coming to be and perishing, change, plurality, capacity for development, and difference. Parmenides' ontology disputes the reality of the world of experience. (33)

De Selby, then, is not historically alone in his 'eccentricities', his denial of empirical 'facts'. His notions may indeed have quite ancient, and quite respectable, roots. We might even note how these particular predicates – coming to be and perishing, change, plurality, capacity for development, and difference – all come into question in the universe of the Three Policemen.

What makes de Selby a ludicrous figure may be less to do with his theories in themselves – or what we know of them, which is often quite shadowy – than with O'Brien's genius for comic invention. Anaximander, a philosopher of the Miletus school, at the very start of the Greek tradition, held that the world was shaped like a cylinder, with its height exactly one third of its diameter (Ricken 1991, 13) – why is de Selby's theory that the earth is sausage-shaped so much less credible, or creditable? In either case, the logic (I suppose) is flawed. (And we have images from space now, confirming the sphere; yet 'flat-earthers' still exist.) But there is an interesting follow-up to this, in connection with de Selby's conviction that 'human existence' – both life and death – is a hallucination.

The narrator puts it thus (O'Brien 1974, 82): 'If a way can be found, says de Selby, of discovering the "second direction", i.e., along the "barrel" of the sausage, a world of entirely new sensation and experience will be open to humanity.' (For de Selby, the four cardinal points of the compass logically reduce to one: the 'second direction' is thus a trans-dimensional corridor.) According to de Selby, the narrator continues, 'death is nearly always present when the new direction is discovered'. In the passage following the narrator's own death – which of course he doesn't recognize as such – we find such details as these:

> It was as if the daylight had changed with unnatural suddenness, as if the temperature of the evening had altered greatly in an instant or as if the air had become twice as rare or twice as dense as it had been in the winking of an eye. [...] I heard a cough behind me, soft and natural and yet more disturbing than any sound that could ever come upon the human ear. That I did not die of fright was due, I think, to two things, the fact that my senses were already disarranged and able to interpret to me only gradually what they had perceived and also the fact that the utterance of the cough seemed to bring with it some more awful alteration in everything, just as if it had held the universe standstill for an instant, suspending the planets in their courses, halting the sun and holding in mid-air any falling thing the earth was pulling towards it. (21)

For the present purpose, there are two points to notice here. Firstly, the narrator's consciousness of his senses as a source of knowledge about the world, and his awareness of their inadequacy in this new situation – which becomes a constant of his experience from now on. And secondly, the intriguing echoes of another Milesian philospher, Anaximenes. Anaximenes held that material objects are all formed of air; that their identity is a function of the density of the air that composes them. The difference between fire, wind, cloud, water, earth and stone is a merely a difference of degree, from the most rarified to the least rarified form of air. For Anaximenes (unlike Parmenides) 'coming to be' and perishing is a fact of existence, and the process is one of condensing and rarefying air. When the narrator of *The Third Policeman* perceives instantaneous

changes in the ambient temperature and 'density' of the air, he is, in fact, experiencing the creation of a new universe (a mental universe, arguably – and this too has resonances in terms of the Greek tradition). The same process is taken to be the cause of changes in temperature. As evidence for this, Anaximenes observes that air breathed out through pursed lips is cool, where exhalation from a wide-open mouth is warm. To cite Professor Ricken,

> The earth has come to be through a "felting" of air. [...] [It] "rides" (or floats) on air. The stars proceeded from the earth's moist exhalations that have become more rarefied with increasing distance and have eventually turned into fire. (Ricken 1991, 16)

The cough from old man Mathers (or his ghost), that seems to hold the universe momentarily suspended may be read, perhaps, as a knowing reference to the theory.

The notion of origins – in particular, cosmic origins – is closely associated with the idea of regress. That this was of some interest to the author of *The Third Policeman* is not in doubt. There was a time when the distinguished physicist Erwin Schroedinger, working in Dublin's Institute of Advanced Studies, gave a lecture that offended the Catholic sensibilities of Flann O'Brien's pseudonymous 'other', Myles Na Gopaleen.[3] Myles registered a memorable protest in his *Irish Times* column against the physicist's denial of the necessity of a First Cause or *Primum Mobile* – in other words, of God. It obviously rankled. *The Third Policeman* – at that point entering literary limbo as a rejected manuscript – had, implicitly at least, already approached the issue as part of a cosmic scheme arguably more disturbing even than that revealed by relativity theory, or by Schroedinger's particle physics.

But as we have seen in the reference to the theory of Anaximenes, the metaphysical recourse to a putative 'Prime Mover' is not always deemed to be logical, or necessary. For the early cosmologists, there were a number of contenders for the basic 'stuff' of the universe. (Where this itself came from – the ultimate origin of the underlying material – remains for the most part an open question.) For Anaximenes, as noted above, the basic material was air; for one of his immediate predecessors, Thales, it was water; for the slightly later Empedocles, it was four-fold – consisting of the familiar 'elements' of earth, air, fire and water. The notion of a 'basic element' is also a part of the physics of *The Third Policeman*. Before going more particularly into this area though – the question of origins – I want to return to the structural design of the novel, to consider the relation of its parts to the question of knowledge.

There are two distinct approaches to knowledge manifested in the novel. One is de Selby's, which – for all his madness – is a form of rationalism; the other is the narrator's, which – for all his declared fascination with the theories of 'the sage' – is strongly empirical, based on the evidence of his senses. In the 'normal' recognisable world of the novel's early pages (the world too in which de Selby conducts his hopeless

experiments), empiricism 'works', on the whole – it establishes and explains 'reality' reasonably well. In the world of the narrator after his death – the world of the Three Policemen – it doesn't. What the narrator encounters there is much more congruent with the reality posited by de Selby.

The problems with de Selby's reasoning are frequently linked to faulty premises, or logical gaps: his proof – supposed proof – that the earth is sausage-shaped is based in part on a premise drawn from the fact that it is spherical, for instance; his assertion that an arrangement of opposing mirrors will reflect back an image of one's face increasingly younger overlooks the logical impossibility of going back beyond the starting-point (the age of the viewer on first looking into the mirror) – to cite just one minor flaw in this particular theory.

In discussing de Selby's denial of motion, and the fact 'that time can pass as such in the accepted sense', the narrator highlights his own opposing perspective (O'Brien 1974, 44): 'His theory, insofar as I can understand it, seems to discount the testimony of human experience and is at variance with everything I have learnt myself on many a country walk.' The theory, in fact, is a comic variant of the Flying Arrow Paradox of Zeno, deriving in part from an ignorance of the technical process of cinema (oddly enough, de Selby's rationale for our illusory conviction of motion intuits the physiological principle of cinema – persistence of vision – exactly). To paraphrase is unnecessary here – but it is worth quoting the basic premise attributed to de Selby, that human existence is 'a succession of static experiences each infinitely brief', and his account of the numerous 'resting places' which supposedly give rise to the illusion of movement:

> They are not, he warns us, to be taken as arbitrarily determined points on the A-B axis so many inches or feet apart. They are rather to be regarded as points infinitely near each other yet sufficiently far apart to admit of the insertion between them of a series of other 'intermediate' places, between each of which must be imagined a chain of other resting places – not, of course, strictly adjacent but arranged so as to admit of the application of this principle indefinitely. (44-5)

The postulate here is another instance of infinite regress. (The same goes for the receding mirror-images referred to above.) In denying Zeno's assumption that time was composed of moments, of a series of 'indivisible nows', Aristotle[4] was perhaps the first to offer a solution to Zeno's Paradoxes – this, as part of a reaction against what was seen as the extreme rationalism of the Eleatic school, to which Zeno, like Parmenides, belonged. It may not be too much to say that De Selby also belongs in their company.

Discussing Parmenides, Aristotle might almost be referring to certain ideas of the latter-day 'sage' himself: 'Although these opinions appear to follow logically in a dialectical discussion,' he notes,[5] 'yet to believe them seems next door to madness when one considers the facts [...].' But when the facts appear to support a notion like time not passing 'in the accepted sense' – and when this is not a matter of abstruse relativity

theory, but a matter of straightforward observation – one's reason may justifiably totter. In the universe of the Three Policemen, the narrator is continually faced by incontrovertible empirical 'facts' that contradict his reason – his sense of the real, and the possible – utterly. His customary reaction (naturally enough, one might suppose) is fear. The first event for the narrator in this 'world of entirely new sensation and experience' (to refer back to de Selby's hypothesis) is his encounter with the figure of 'old man Mathers', whom he had killed three years earlier In emphasizing his horror at the seeming 'mechanical' quality of the old man's eyes, the narrator offers a classic reaction to 'the uncanny'; he also creates a memorable image of regress, fantasizing a 'real eye' located behind a series of thousands of 'dummy' eyes, each 'with a tiny pinhole in the centre of the "pupil"'. The contradiction between knowing the old man had been killed three years earlier and seeing him apparently alive in the same room is all but irresolvable. 'In the terrible situation I found myself, my reason could give me no assistance,' the narrator reflects. 'I decided in some crooked way that the best thing to do was to believe what my eyes were looking at rather than to place my trust in a memory.' (O'Brien 1974, 22-3). The decision to trust his eyes – and by extension, his other senses too – brings little in the way of understanding, however.

Repetition – multiplication, doubling, mirroring – is a major motif in the novel, as is splitting and division (in fact, in some respects, there is no difference between these operations). Repetition is present also in the basic structure of the novel, down to the numerous redundancies of the style. In the case of much of the Policemen's dialogue, this is parodic perhaps – 'Wait now till I show you and give you an exhibition and a personal inspection individually' (63); but it is present in the narrator's mode of expression also. The most crucial repetition is the one that gave the novel its original American title, *Hell Goes Round and Round*. This, as everyone who has read the book will remember, involves a duplication of the passage describing the narrator's approach to the Policemen's barracks. Here too we find an emphasis on appearance and the process of looking, and an expression of fear in confronting a radical deformation of the 'normal' world (note the redundancies in the opening of this passage, incidentally):

> I had never seen with my eyes ever in my life before anything so unnatural and appalling and my gaze faltered about the thing uncomprehendingly as if at least one of the customary dimensions was missing, leaving no meaning in the remainder [...]. It was momentous and frightening; the whole morning and the whole world seemed to have no purpose at all save to frame it and give it some magnitude and position so that I could find it with my simple senses and pretend to myself that I understood it. (46-7; 171-2)

The hoped-for 'understanding' is an elusive category in this universe. Before long, the nameless narrator is confronted by Policeman MacCruiskeen's ever-diminishing series of elaborately wrought chests. This leads him beyond normal perceptual limits –

close to a conceptual horizon, even. It also brings him close to panic: at a certain point of MacCruiskeen's activities, he comments,

> [...] I became afraid. What he was doing was no longer wonderful but terrible. I shut my eyes and prayed that he would stop while doing things that were at least possible for a man to do.

But the process goes on:

> [T]hrough the agency of the [magnifying] glass I was in a position to report that he had two more [chests] out beside the last ones, the smallest of all being nearly half a size smaller than ordinary invisibility.

And even here, there is no end. MacCruiskeen explains:

> 'Six years ago they began to get invisible, glass or no glass. Nobody has ever seen the last five I made because no glass is strong enough [...]. [M]y little tools are invisible into the same bargain. The one I am making now is nearly as small as nothing. [...] The dear knows where it will stop and terminate.' (64-5)

This is the realm of visual perception. But the chapter ends with MacCruiskeen briefly clarifying the nature of his 'small piano-instrument', previously an object of some curiosity for the narrator: 'It is an indigenous patent of my own,' he explains. 'The vibrations of the true notes are so high in their fine frequencies that they cannot be appreciated by the human earcup.' (65) [...] From the invisible to the inaudible, then. And the chapter begins, more or less, with a spear point so fine that it cannot be *felt*. More:

> 'It is so thin that it could go into your hand and out in the other extremity externally and you would not feel a bit of it and you would see nothing and hear nothing. It is so thin that maybe it does not exist at all and you could spend half an hour trying to think about it and you could put no thought around it in the end.' (60)

The effort to understand these anomalies is constantly emphasized – 'I fastened my fingers around my jaw and started to think with great concentration, calling into play parts of my brain that I rarely used' – and defeat constantly admitted – 'Nevertheless I made no progress at all' (60). Similar formulations are to occur with some frequency – in the circumstances, not surprisingly.

Perception was a process of some interest to the Fifth Century Greek Democritus – the Atomist, the 'father of modern nuclear physics'; a thinker known to his contemporaries as 'the Laughing Philosopher'. In his view, the original 'stuff' of the universe was an

infinite mass of atoms, indivisible units or particles in constant motion in empty space. Perception depended, for Democritus, on the emission or radiation of atoms from the surface of the material object (sometimes he can sound quite like the 'sage' of *The Third Policeman*, as when he says, for instance, that 'whiteness' consists of 'smooth' atoms, and sourness of small, 'sharp-cornered' atoms (Ricken 1991, 44). Objects themselves are formed by the 'binding together' of atoms of various shapes: 'for some of them are uneven, some hooked, some concave, some convex, and others have innumerable other differences' (Cartledge 1997, 12). This commentator, Simplicius, claims to be quoting Aristotle on Democritus. He continues,

He [Democritus] thinks that they hold on to one another and remain together up to the time when some stronger force reaches them from their environment and shakes them and scatters them apart.

Sergeant Pluck's explication of the 'Atomic Theory' is essentially this, if a little more colourful:

> 'Do you happen to know what takes place when you strike a bar of iron with a good coal hammer or with a blunt instrument? [...] When the wallop falls, the atoms are bashed away down to the bottom of the bar and compressed and crowded there like eggs under a good clucker. [...] [I]f you keep hitting the bar long enough and hard enough [...] some of the atoms of the bar will go into the hammer and the other half into the table or the stone or the particular article that is underneath the bottom of the bar.' (O'Brien 1974, 73-4)

Whether this is actually the case, or whether Democritus would concur, it leads to the remarkable theory of the hybrid half-man half-bicycle, a theory which towards the end of the novel becomes quite affectingly convincing to the narrator himself. It also may have something to do with what is referred to at one point as 'the importance of percussion in the de Selby dialectic' (125) – that is, the frequency with which hammering is associated with his experiments. (The absurdity here echoes that of the scholarly apparatus of the footnotes in the novel. But there has to be room for laughter in a work on Flann O'Brien.)

In connection with the multitudinous variform atoms of Democritus, too, one might refer to the remarkable passage concerning free-falling, indescribable objects encountered by the narrator in Chapter Eight of *The Third Policeman*:

> In colour they were not white or black and certainly bore no intermediate colour; they were far from dark and anything but bright. [...] It took me hours of thought long afterwards to realize why these articles were astonishing. *They lacked an essential property of all known objects.* I cannot call it shape or configuration since shapelessness is not what I refer to at all. I can only say that these objects, not one of which resembled the other, were of no known dimensions. They

> were not square or rectangular or circular or simply irregularly shaped nor could it be said that their endless variety was due to dimensional dissimilarities. Simply their appearance, if even that word is not inadmissable, was not understood by the eye and was in any event indescribable. (117)

'Not understood by the eye' is a telling phrase, for the present argument. More significantly though, this experience takes place in the deep-lying, humming 'engine-room' of the Three Policemen's universe, 'Eternity' as they call it – where the mysterious but all-important daily 'readings' are determined, and time, in relation to the outside world, stands still. It is a place where anything can be had for the asking, being instantly created (and duplicated, in every duplicate corridor of the place). What more likely visionary sight here, one might ask, than the basic 'building blocks' of creation?

But of course the novel contains an alternative to atoms for the originating 'stuff' of the material universe – the substance referred to as 'Omnium'. This, as Policeman MacCruiskeen explains, is 'the essential inherent interior essence which is hidden inside the root of the kernal of everything and [...] is always the same.' (95) (Another figure of regress, incidentally.) It comes in waves, he adds; some people call it energy, others call it God. 'If you had a sack of it or even the half-full of a small matchbox of it, you could do anything and even do what could not be described by that name.' (96) On the one hand particles; on the other, waves – *The Third Policeman* here seems to be approaching much more recent theoretical territory than that of the Ancient Greeks (indeed, the connections have been explored).[6] The narrator of the book, towards its end, believes Policeman Fox – the Third Policeman himself – when he says that four ounces of omnium await him at home in the black box stolen from old man Mathers (an item on his mind throughout the story). It is interesting to note the details of his excitement here:

> Formless speculations crowded in upon me, fantastic fears and hopes, inexpressible fancies, intoxicating foreshadowing of creations, changes, annihilations and god-like interferences. Sitting at home with my box of omnium I could do anything, see anything and know anything with no limit to my powers save that of my own imagination. Perhaps I could use it even to extend my imagination. I could destroy, alter and improve the universe at will [...]. (O'Brien 1974, 163)

How much less appealing is this Faustian fantasy than his earlier vision, in the moments before his intended execution, of a form of metempsychosis:

> [P]erhaps I would be an influence that prevails in water, something sea-borne and far away, some certain arrangement of sun, light and water unknown and unbeheld, something far from usual. There are in the great world whirls of fluid and vaporous existences obtaining in their own unpassing time, unwatched and uninterrupted, valid only in their essential un-understandable mystery, justified

> only in their actual abstraction; of the inner quality of such a thing I might well in my own time be the true quintessential pith. (138)

As he has just remarked, without knowing why, 'strange enlightenments are vouchsafed to those who seek the higher places.' (137) [...] But if this, again, is a figure of regression – of advanced interiority – it is surely a more tranquil vision than that of his soul ('Joe') and himself, enfolded within a series of enfolded bodies, reaching back to a disturbing last question:

> Why was Joe so disturbed by the suggestion that he had a body? What if he *had* a body? A body with another body inside it in turn, thousands of such bodies within each other like the skins of an onion, receding to some unimaginable ultimatum? Was I in turn merely a link in a vast sequence of imponderable beings, the world I knew merely the interior of the being whose inner voice I myself was? Who or what was the core and what monster in what world was the final uncontained colossus? God? Nothing? (102-3)

This is the abyss, surely – Modernism's 'Heart of Darkness'; and as a culmination of a certain tendency in thought, Reason's too, perhaps. 'There is a limit and a boundary to everything within the scope of reason's garden,' says Sergeant Pluck (117): in the various hopeless attempts of de Selby to 'dissipate the hated and "insanitary" night' (128) we might see an image – ludicrous, misguided and comic, certainly, but perhaps with a particle of the heroic about it – of the 'Enlightenment Project' that began, quite plausibly, in the squares and Academies of Ancient Greece.

Notes

1 See Plato, *Parmenides*, 132a-133a.
2 Cronin, 1989, 105.
3 Cronin, 1989, 177.
4 See http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/zeno.htm
5 Russell, 1961, 85
6 See Olivotto, Roberta – 'Epistemology and Science in The Third Policeman' – site reference below.

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Uncle Silas*: Forms of Desire in the Gothic House*

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Abstract: *This article will focus on the discourse of Maud Ruthyn, in Uncle Silas, by Sheridan Le Fanu, emphasising her personal and political power within a feminine Gothic frame, as a means of disclosing closed spaces that both imprison and free women. The experience of terror and desire shall be seen as a reading experience of liberation where fantastic elements function as a way of provoking uneasiness at the same time that it reveals that what is apparently "exaggerated beyond reality" may function as "difference" by – following Linda Hutcheon thought – multiplicity, heterogeneity, plurality. I also intend to observe the way Le Fanu makes use of the classic Gothic genre as a metaphor for female experience, mainly through the most important element that constructs and deconstructs it: the house, that harbours the textures of gender, culture, and sexuality.*

In *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival*, G. J. Watson claims that in Irish literature "always lurking somewhere near the surface is a painful sense of a lost identity, a broken tradition, and the knowledge that an alien identity has been, however reluctantly, more than half embraced" (1979, 20).

In *Uncle Silas* (1864), by Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873) the heroine, Maud, promises her aristocratic father, Austin Ruthyn, that she is prepared to "make some sacrifice" in order to restore the lost honour of their family name and tradition (Le Fanu, 102). A little further Austin stresses that "the character and influence of an ancient family is a peculiar heritage – sacred but destructible; and woe to him who either destroys or suffers it to perish!" (Le Fanu, 104). As we see, Austin's speech emphasises two important features of nineteenth century Anglo-Irish literature: its tendency to figure Anglo-Irish tradition – political and cultural – as an aristocratic dynasty, and its ambivalent characterisation of that tradition as both sacred and fragile. Thus Maud, willing to sacrifice to the family honour, indicates a related characteristic of Anglo-Irish literature, as already seen by Marjorie Howes: its persistent habit of encoding its discussion of tradition in representations

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of gender and sexual issues (Howes, 1992, 165). In this light, the construction of femininity and the regulation of female sexuality can be observed in the narrative as a mirror of nineteenth century Anglo-Irish political anxieties.

The Anglo-Irish were a local ruling class whose pretensions to aristocracy obscured their strong middle-class character, and whose imaginative construction of an authoritative, aristocratic political and cultural tradition also obscured their dependence on English centres of power for their strength and legitimacy in Ireland. Like all traditions, the Anglo-Irish tradition was an invented one (to borrow Eric Hobsbawn's expression in *The Invention of Tradition*) whose asserted unity and stability over time and across groups of people sought to mask change and fragmentation. What was unusual about the Anglo-Irish was the degree to which change and fragmentation themselves became the consistent, identifiable characteristics of their invented political and cultural tradition. Because of their hybrid cultural status and tenuous political position, the Protestant Ascendancy imagined an Anglo-Irish tradition that was legitimating and empowering, but simultaneously broken, betrayed, and corrupt. As we shall see, *Uncle Silas* illustrates this ambivalent structure.

Sheridan Le Fanu wields to the Empire

It's well known that *Uncle Silas* is an expansion of a short story that Le Fanu originally published in 1833 under the title "Passage in the secret history of an Irish Countess", and which was reprinted in 1851, with some minor changes, as "The murdered cousin". Those short stories are set in Ireland. However, the novel had to obey Le Fanu's London publisher who demanded that the novel dealt with English settings and modern times. Accordingly, the author not only expanded his story but abandoned the Irish scene and set the novel in England, showing, thus, a clear concession to metropolitan powers.

While Le Fanu suppressed the overtly "Irish" aspects of the story by making geographical changes, he structured the text with Irish characteristics through its emphasis on sexual corruption and its preoccupation with Maud's femininity. To understand those aspects, it is necessary to observe the relationship between the Protestant Ascendancy and English imperialistic culture.

During the nineteenth century, British rule of Ireland underwent two related changes that crucially affected Anglo-Irish attitudes and anxieties. First, the number and complexity of agencies, institutions, and laws used to administer Ireland increased steadily over the course of the century, and second, during that period British domination shifted from a reliance on military and legal coercion to an increasing reliance on integrating the native Irish into the state apparatus. Increasing agitation for Catholic emancipation was a major cause of this shift, and the granting of emancipation was an important means of institutionalising it.

While mid-nineteenth-century British imperialist thought was characterised by new practical and ideological emphasis on assimilating the native Irish into the cultural and political structures of Britain, it was also characterised by profound anxieties about assimilation in its more threatening guises. The spectres that haunted the colonial and especially the Anglo-Irish imagination were racial assimilation that, it was feared, would sap the strength and purity of England, and assimilation as the descent of the British to the political and social level of the barbarous Irish, because assimilation was seen as the descent of the British to the political and social level of the barbarous Irish.

The history of the Anglo-Irish in the nineteenth century is one of a gradual diminution of wealth and power. Colonial discourses alternately allegorised Anglo-Irish relations as a family romance and expressed fear of just such a romance between Saxon and Celt on a limited level. As Howes points out assimilationist thought was both a basis for policy and a response to already existing political and social trends, expressing both the will to power of British imperialism and its fears of impotence and decay as well.

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, and governmental policy and rhetoric increasingly emphasised integration in a number of concrete ways, Anglo-Irish anxieties about their own weakness and tenuous hold on power focused more and more on the dangers of assimilation. The terms in which the prevailing discourses on the subject cast the possibilities for maintaining British imperial power in Ireland spelled the demise of the Anglo-Irish as a distinct group. Thus, for the Anglo-Irish to stay in power was also to become extinct. Due to this contradiction Anglo-Irish writers produced a Gothic version of the imperial romance of reconciliation. In *Uncle Silas*, for example, sexuality is represented as the agent of corruption and immolation rather than healthy assimilation; the same way political and dynastic strength is revealed as emptiness and weakness. So by having to shape the novel to accommodate the British reading public's taste, Le Fanu has presented the internal corruption of the Anglo-Irish and figured the political and cultural decline of the Ascendancy as the genealogical decay of a family dynasty in a Gothic setting. What can be observed is that in such a narrative the Anglo-Irish is represented less as victims of British indifference or Irish resentment than as victims of their own vices.

Thus, in the absence of specifically Irish setting, Le Fanu introduced the sexual corruption of Silas's mismatch with a lower-class Celt to suggest the novel's connections with the threatened Ascendancy. So, for instance, Silas's son from this marriage, Duddley, a coarse, brutal villain whom Maud finds repulsive, incarnates the family's degradation. Ironically, Silas describes Dudley as the culmination of precisely those hereditary qualities that Silas's marriage has imperilled in the Ruthyn family. He tells Maud that "Dudley is the material of a perfect English gentleman" (Le Fanu, 248-49) and [that] "a Ruthyn, [is] the best blood in England – the last man of the race" (325). This parodic combination of asserted cultural and genealogical purity with obvious barbarism and corruption is not merely an ironic comment on the disparity between what Silas imagines Dudley to

be and what he in fact is. It points to the Anglo-Irish fears that the well-bred English or Anglo-Irish gentleman might, on some level, be indistinguishable from the debauched barbarian; fears that deep affinities between Celt and Saxon were already established and partial assimilation was a natural fact.

The Gothic houses and femininity

In *Uncle Silas*, Le Fanu uses a Radcliffean Gothic frame which involves two houses, both in "hermetic solitude". One house is Knowl, the pastoral space, where Maud lives with her father. The other house is Bartram-Haugh, a decaying stone mansion with its secret passages and located rooms, where Uncle Silas lives in obscurity.

Le Fanu makes use of Gothic motifs of gloomy houses, ruins, ghosts, but he craftily transcends those apparatus, and instils into the narrative the terrifying ghostliness of the real world we know, a terror confined to the human consciousness that apprehends it. Thus he constructs a narrative which deals with internal corruption and decline. In this respect it is important to remember the comment made by Rosemary Jackson, who argues that as society became increasingly secularised during the nineteenth century, Gothic fiction came to embody the internal and the personal origin of horror, rather than external and supernatural sources (2000, 54)

Unlike Radcliffe's novels, however, *Uncle Silas* has a first person narrator, Maud, who tells her story. This technique is very effective to highlight the human, especially the female, as a means to move beyond patriarchy to some new form of social organisation.

When defining the "speaking subject", Émile Benveniste shows that "it is through language that man positions himself as a subject, because language alone establishes the concept of 'ego' in reality, in *its* reality" (1971, 224). So subjectivity comes into play through difference – by separating the "you" and the "I" – and is therefore relational: "not an essence but a set of relationships [...], which can only be induced by discourse, by the activation of a signifying system which pre-exists the individual, and which determines his or her cultural identity" (Silverman, 1983, 52). This signifying system – itself a process within cultural historical dynamics of a specific context – determines the gendered aspects of that cultural identity.

At Knowl, Le Fanu portrays a society composed of an inscrutable though kindly father, and a group of motherly servants. Father and daughter view their existence as being bound by family tradition and responsibility. Thus, Maud's direct inheritance is the responsibility to link past and present as part of her role in the family trust, a responsibility to carry along the future the guilt of the past.

If Knowl represents a place of containment of Maud within the family, then the journey to Bartram-Haugh, another Ruthyn possession, maps a still deeper procedure of enclosure within the family history. If Knowl represents the present, Bartram is the image of the house trapped in the past. Though Bartram is associated with decay, it is

also a place of action and knowledge, whereas Knowl, though it allows the heroine some movement, deprives her of social contact. Bartram is a place enclosed in itself, but where the heroine must trespass to gain knowledge and get in contact with the Other.

In the beginning Maud believed her uncle a generous person, however her lack of knowledge causes her to reject the thought of escape until it is too late, making her return to Bartram-Haugh as a prisoner. When she comes downstairs to confront Silas, looking like a phantom newly risen from the grave, he, surprised, asks her in a whisper: "where do you come from?", to which she replies: "Death! Death". Therefore, by accepting the reality of death, Maud validates her own perception of herself as a Gothic heroine, for Bartram-Haugh now stands revealed as her prison and its occupant a Gothic tyrant who plans her death.

Le Fanu questions the basis of the patriarchal house to provide a critique of gender and power relations. As we see, Gothicism intersects with gender. With reference to this point, it is worthwhile remembering Ellen Moers's work which is still legendary for its original celebration of the attractions of the excesses of Gothic romance for women writers and readers: "In the power of villains, heroines are forced to do what they could never do alone [...]. the Gothic castle, however much in ruins, is still an indoor and therefore freely female space" (Moers, 1978, 126).

In fact, Maud, through the exploration of indoor spaces, acquires knowledge about the tyranny of patriarchy. So, the haunted house signifies, to borrow Becker's words, the containment within traditional power structures; Gothicism is used then not only to expose but to exceed these homocentric structures and their control (Becker, 1999, 10).

In the manner of Radcliffe, such houses have become fortresses. Since they have become isolated from public life, they are displaced fields of considerable force which now turns inward, in order further to control the inmates of the house. The age and reclusiveness of their owners mirror the houses lack of a social function. Thus, when Maud escapes from such a house, she flees not so much from domestic captivity as from the morbid grip of an obsolete social system.

Maud and her readers must "detect" the house in order to reveal the corpses of its victims, and to demythologise the murderous aristocratic ghosts who still stalk its corridors. As Howes states, the necessity for negotiating between the Irish origins of *Uncle Silas* and the demands of the English literary market encouraged Le Fanu to encode the text's political concerns in the languages of sexuality, femininity, barbarism and civilisation, which characterised colonial discourses on the benefits and/or dangers of assimilating the Irish more thoroughly into England.

In *Uncle Silas* Maud's apparent escape from the decay represented by Bartram to the health represented by Knowl assumes the shape of her confrontation with the problematics of femininity. She negotiates the sexual dangers represented by Captain Oakley and Dudley Ruthyn, makes an appropriate match with Lord Ilbury and bears

him a son. By behaving in that manner, she achieves a socially acceptable femininity and is integrated into civilised society. She rejects forbidden sexualities and alliances, and chooses a permissible one that will ensure proper genealogical continuity, thus accomplishing her father's will.

Thus, according to such line of thought, the novel's linking of Knowl and Bartram suggests the internal corruption of Anglo-Irish tradition, and Maud's journey from the former to the latter and back again casts her as the physical embodiment of that link.

So, Maud's femininity provides a framework for the novel's depiction of Anglo-Irish tradition as fallen, broken, and betrayed from within through their alienated separation from English traditions and their intimate proximity to Irish ones. While on one level Maud successfully assimilates herself to the proper English civilisation represented by Ilbury, on another level the text suggests the inevitability of her surrender to the kind of Celtic assimilation that Anglo-Irish writers found so threatening.

Finally, we can say that Le Fanu makes use of the classic Gothic genre as a metaphor for female experience, mainly through the most important element that constructs and deconstructs it: the house, that harbours the textures of gender, culture, and sexuality.

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Poetry

"An Old Song Resung and Revisited" by W. B. Yeats

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Abstract: *This article aims at discussing a poem by W. B. Yeats – "Down by the Salley Gardens" – by considering first the contextual surroundings of the poem, which locate it in the poetical production belonging to Yeats's Sligo perceptions and experiences, so as to further analyse how the symmetrical formal construction of the poem camouflages conflicting ideas concerning love and life, youth and maturity, inexperience and awareness, life and art.*

The poem "Down by the Salley Gardens", published in 1889, was originally entitled "An Old Song Resung." The explanation for the title is provided by Yeats himself: "This is an attempt to reconstruct an old song from three lines imperfectly remembered by an old peasant [...] who often sings them to herself." (Abrams 1986, 1935). The poem thus aligns with a common feature usually attributed to Irish Literature: that of incorporating the richness and spontaneity of oral forms and traditions to its literary productions. "Down by the Salley Gardens" inserts itself in the group of poems that deal with the poet's experiences in the countryside around Sligo, and relates, though indirectly, to "a knowledge of the life of the peasantry and their folklore" (Abrams 1986, 1928).

The poem is symmetrically constructed: it has two stanzas of four lines each, and both stanzas rhyme in aabb.

> Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
> She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
> She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
> But I being young and foolish, with her would not agree.
>
> In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
> And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
> She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
> But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

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This formal symmetry is further perceived in the parallel syntactic constructions between both stanzas; the echoes are such that one can consider the second stanza as a clear formal re-iteration of the first. Let us compare their formal-structural echoes:

first stanza	second stanza
my love and I did meet	my love and I did stand
little snow-white feet	her snow-white hand
she bid me take love easy	she bid me take life easy
as the leaves grow on the tree	as the grass grows on the weirs
But I being young and foolish	But I was young and foolish

A careful comparison between both stanzas soon indicates that the formal symmetry does not find an echo in terms of the experiences depicted. However, paradoxical as it may seem, it is the poem's symmetrical construction that serves as an initial invitation for the reader to perceive contrasting ideas. Actually, the symmetry highlights the antithetical relations posed by the poem. For instance, there is a group of words in the first stanza, exactly those that will be "substituted" in the second, which are responsible for creating a *positive* atmosphere in relation to the experience lived by the participants: 'meet', 'passed', 'love', 'leaves', 'tree'. These elements are found in the first three lines. The fourth line in the first stanza, "But I being young and foolish [...]", already introduces a contrast in relation to the first three lines: this is indicated by the connective 'but' and also by the adjectives 'young' and 'foolish'. One should notice that 'young' here is contaminated by the *negative* connotation of 'foolish', thus also acquiring a negative nuance. This line is also responsible for setting a difference of viewpoint between the two participants in the poem. Considering that one is 'young' and 'foolish', one may conclude that the other (the 'she') is more mature and aware of the dangers of love.

Let us now question on the difference of effect the choice of words in the second stanza provokes: 'stand', 'leaning shoulder', 'laid her snow-white hand', 'life', 'grass', 'weirs'. First of all, the verbs 'stand' and 'lay', as well as the adjective 'leaning', convey a sense of 'stillness' and 'density' as in opposition to the 'lightness' and 'dynamic experience' expressed in the first stanza, illustrated mainly by the terms 'meet', 'passed', 'feet', 'being'. Such an opposition is further corroborated by the different ways the verb 'to be' was used in the last lines of each stanza: in the first, 'being' denotes process and continuity, whereas 'was', in the second, denotes the end of an action, in this case, a clearly demarcated finished state ("But I *was* young and foolish [...])". Further underlying meanings arise when we consider certain specific lines in relation to each other. If we isolate the second line of each stanza, for instance, and set them in a dialogical relationship, we are able to perceive other significant details:

She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet. (first stanza)
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand. (second stanza)

The repetition of ‘snow-white’ to characterize the beloved woman is relevant to indicate that the female figure is the same in both stanzas. Though the time and spatial patterns are different (as we will discuss below), the participants remain the same. The identical repetitions ‘She bid me take [...] easy’ and ‘But I [...] young and foolish’ in both stanzas further support this argument. Not only do the participants remain the same as *participants*, but as participants *who act in a certain way*. Whereas the ‘she’ ‘bids [him] take love/life easy’, the ‘young and foolish’ ‘he’ will not agree with her. On the one hand, the participants remain the same in their attitudes in relation to love and life. On the other hand, however, the participants might be seen as changed human beings when one considers the passing of time. The comparison between ‘passed’/ ‘feet’ (in the first stanza) and ‘laid’/ ‘hand’, as well as ‘leaning shoulder’ (in the second stanza) reveals significant changes. Besides the opposition between ‘dynamic/lightness’ and ‘stillness/density’ already pointed out, the adjective ‘leaning’ comprises at least two different meanings: the shoulder can be ‘leaning’ just temporarily, that is, just for a change in physical position; or rather, the shoulder can be ‘leaning’ as a result of the passing of time, as a result of old age. This would thus be an indication that the participants are partially the same: they are not young anymore, but experienced old partners in love and in life.

These considerations lead us to conclude that the two stanzas in the poem stand for two specific moments in the participants’ lives: the first stanza depicts a love experience lived during one’s youth – a time when emotions are experienced in an intense way, without much reasoning or restraint. However, as already pointed out, there are two lines in the first stanza that already show the difference of viewpoint between the couple as it concerns their attitude to love:

> She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
> But I being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In other words, the female voice in the poem is endowed with that wisdom which is characteristic of older people, or at least of those who have gone through a greater number of life experiences, those who have a deeper sense of consciousness in relation to life. To “take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree” means to accept and experience love as naturally and spontaneously as the growing of leaves on trees.

The second stanza clearly reveals the consequences of the ‘facts’ introduced in the first one. As such, the time in the second stanza is not simultaneous with that of the first. (And the same will happen with the question of space, to be discussed below). Judging from the apparent ‘inaction’ and ‘stillness’ conveyed by ‘stand’, ‘laid’, and ‘was’, as contrasted to their respective counterparts in the first stanza (‘meet’, ‘passed’, ‘being’), one may infer that the second stanza stands for a later phase in one’s life, a more mature one, characteristic mainly of elderly people, with no place for innocence or illusions. This is clear in the poem’s two last lines:

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

The changes operated in the lines above (comparing with the corresponding lines in the first stanza), though apparently irrelevant, serve significant purposes and produce relevant effects. The first change consists of the substitution of 'love' for 'life.' At first we should consider that these terms occupy the same syntagmatic position in the line, a fact that already points to a possible identification between them. Such an identification is further corroborated by the fact that 'love' and 'life' also echo one another on the basis of their alliterative sound and on the fact that both have only one syllable. But such an alteration (that is, the substitution of 'love' for 'life') also serves to extend the poem's existential significance: 'life' is a much broader subject than 'love', love being one of the elements of life. It is true that during one's youth, when one falls in love, love can be considered as the very essence of life, a fact that might suggest a possible interchange between the terms. But considering that in the second stanza the participants are more mature, because elderly, it is only natural that the term 'life' replaces 'love'. As one grows in maturity, the consciousness in relation to life becomes more acute. Life experience inevitably entails awareness and suffering, as the poem's last line illustrates:

But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

Several oppositions emerge from that: love vs. life; young/foolish vs. full of tears; youth vs. maturity/old age; love vs. age.

Another relevant difference between youth and maturity/old age is provided by the half-lines:

as the leaves grow on the tree
as the grass grows on the weirs

The first half-line – "as the leaves grow on the tree" – is attuned to the ideas expressed in the first stanza, and which are related to 'youth', 'love', 'freshness', 'freedom', 'spontaneity'. 'To take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree' refers not only to the natural process of 'growing' (both leaves and love), but already foreshadows that love – as the leaves – may also die. The second half-verse – "as the grass grows on the weirs" – also reflects the assumptions conveyed by the second stanza, which are associated with 'maturity', 'life', 'the passing of time'/'aging', 'restraint', 'control'. Besides, 'To take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs' sounds quite ironic. Considering that 'weirs' constitute barriers placed across a river to control the flow of water, one may infer that the naturalness and spontaneity that the leaves have in the first stanza are now contrasted to the limits and obstacles imposed on the growth of the grass by the weirs. The irony arises exactly when the analogy between 'life' and 'grass' reveals that in the same way that the grass is restrained

by the weirs, so is life by so many barriers. In this context, how can one 'take life easy'? Perhaps – and this constitutes another reading – "to take life easy" means exactly to accept that which we cannot change.

The way each stanza starts is also worthy of attention. "Down by the salley gardens [...]", in the first stanza, is replaced by "In a field by the river [...]" in the second. This change in terms of space is also revealing of the change in terms of the life experiences portrayed. The symbolic meaning of 'garden' as "an enclosed space" (Cirlot 1971, 115) seems, at first, rather appropriate for the reservation and privacy required by the lovers. One should not forget, however, that "the garden is [also] a place where Nature is subdued, ordered and selected" (Cirlot, 115). In this sense, this symbolic meaning would align with the attitude of the female voice in the poem, present in "She bid me take love easy [...]". Such a request certainly implies a conscious and rational decision; it certainly constitutes a sort of defensive attitude in relation to life, an attempt to tame and control emotions.

The replacement of "Down by the salley gardens [...]" by "In a field by the river [...]" must also deserve some consideration. The openness that a field suggests (as opposed to the intimacy and cosiness of the gardens) sides with the contemplative and meditative atmosphere constructed in the second stanza. The lovers, here, do not 'meet', but merely 'stand'. The gap between them – a gap which has been gradually announced since the first stanza – now reaches its climax through several devices: through the time pattern of the poem (as the verb forms 'being', 'was', and 'am' indicate); through the physical distance between them, as the verb 'stand' suggests; through the expression 'full of tears'. The lovers are now clearly separated – a separation that was gradually announced so as to culminate in a definite and irrevocable one.

General considerations result from our reading so far: Yeats's poem, though apparently simple in terms of language and structure, contains further meanings not easily perceived at first, as always happens with high-quality poetry. For instance, the poem's simplicity catches both the tone of folkloric traditions and the richness of natural, countryside imagery. To provide another example, the symmetry we have pointed out, though apparently formal and structural, affects the poem's overall significance; in between the lines the stanzas convey, if not opposing ideas, at least very different or conflicting ones. The visual gap, for instance, between both stanzas, metaphorically evinces the gap that exists between the participants in terms of the experiences depicted: love and youth as opposed to life and awareness; spontaneity and freedom as opposed to constraint and suffering/tears; or, ultimately, life and art, as the epithet "an old song resung," used by Yeats himself to entitle the first version of the poem, may also suggest.

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Ní Dhomhnaill's Poetry as a Challenge to Patriarchy in the Irish Literary Tradition

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Abstract: *This article aims at reading Dhomhnaill's poem,* Mother, *as a transgressive voice that tries, hardly, to break the silence over female literary production in Ireland. This reading aims to focus on Irish women's attempts and transgression to negotiate their relation in Irish culture. Emphasis will be given to the lyric I who transgresses the traditional form of the literary hero, escaping from the nets of Mother Ireland through her anger. Thus, the myth of* Mother *becomes the big metaphor for our historical deconstructing purpose of mother as an image of controversy in feminist urge for new readings of patriarchies.*

"[...] you have to make something against the whole patriarchal thing.
I think it's the language of the Mothers and Irish
par excellence is the language of the Mothers".
(Ní Dhomhnaill 1986, 5)

To write about Ní Dhomhnaill's poetry is a great challenge for me because, among other difficulties, she is quite unknown in the Brazilian academy and consequently neither her literary production, nor her criticism is published here, mainly, in the Northeast of Brazil, my home place. Due to this fact, one might ask how I was introduced to Ní Dhomhnaill's writings. Well, it's a love story. Everything started around 1999, when Dr. Margaret Kelleher came to the State University of São Paulo, Brazil, to take part in a big conference. After that conference, Dr. Kelleher went through a tiring academic agenda visiting and lecturing at some Brazilian Universities and ours was included in her schedule, for a week's Seminar. In her Seminar about Irish culture and contemporary Irish writers efficiently, Dr. Kelleher she included Ní Dhomhnaill's poetry was one name, among others. And it was love at first sight. I was completely overwhelmed by the power of her language, and the strength of her discourse. She writes to create impact, as she herself acknowledges

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in her interview to Michael Cronin: '[...] part of creativity is the need to make an impact. You can't say 'I don't care'!" (Ni Dhomhnaill 1986, 5) Her discourse and her language not only threaten the Irish cliffs, but they are crossing boundaries and her voice starts to be heard on the other side of the Atlantic. It's needless to say that Dr. Kelleher's Seminar was an event for teachers and students at the Federal University of Paraiba.

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill was born in 1952 in Lancashire, England, and grew up in west Kerry Gaeltacht. She was educated in University College, Cork, and has lived in Turkey and Holland. Now she lives in Dublin. According to her own words, her poetry is politically committed to minorities, women and children, and poverty as well: "Somebody whose feet never touched ground, who never had a baby [...] a woman who was never hungry, who never went and did something. It's the poetry of non-lived experience." (Ni Dhomhnaill 1986, 5) And she keeps moving consciously embracing the commitment to her literary creation, while placing herself as a writer whose poetry has a double duty: "I feel that I have a double bout [...] because, of being a woman and writing in Irish it's almost impossible."(Ni Dhomhnaill 1986, 5) For her, literature has a social function, it's not only the creation of beauty, it's much more, it's a social, historical and cultural engagement.

In my article I plan to analyse one of Ní Dhomhnaill's poems, *Mother*. It was originally written in Gaelic, then published and translated into English in 1986 by Michael Hartnett, in the collection double entitled, *Selected Poems /Rogha Dánta*. In my reading, the focus of the argument will be the image of the mother in close connection with the idea of motherhood as institution and experience, according to Adrienne Rich's investigation in her book *Of Woman Born*, 1986.

I will try to move away from the common knowledge in Ireland that sexual identity and national identity are mutually dependent. Because my analysis does not want to reduce the image of the mother to a national symbol, on the contrary, it will struggle very hard to escape from this image of woman as nation which, according to my understanding, not only represents the power of patriarchy in the country, but it has been reinforcing woman's invisibility to edit the reality of womanhood. That is, the images of the self-sacrificing Irish mother are difficult to separate, both seek to perpetuate an image of woman far from the experience, expectations and ideals of contemporary women. The extent to which women only exist as a function of their maternity in the dominant ideology of southern Ireland became quite revealing during the participation of women in the so-called 'pro-life' movement during the referendum on the 8th amendment to the constitution. Those women seek to perpetuate the idealized virgin/ mother figure of woman so that they can be that figure. Such identification offers women one of the few roles of power available to them in patriarchy, and the struggle for political and economic power and equality can not yet compete with those consolations for many women, who are unable to accept themselves as thinking, choosing, sexual, intellectual and complex ordinary mortals and instead cling to a fantasy of women as simple handmaids of the Lord.

Because our objective is to use the mother myth as a big metaphor to deconstruct the idealized and romantic vision of mother, and politicize woman's role in society, I will follow Rich's analyses, which sees motherhood as experience and institution. For her there are two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the institution, which aims at ensuring that the potential – and all women – shall remain under male control. According to Rich this institution has been:

> [...] a keystone of the most diverse social and political systems. It has withheld over one-half the human species from the decisions affecting their lives; it exonerates man from fatherhood in any authentic sense; it creates the dangerous schism between private and public life; it calcifies human choices and potentialities. In the most fundamental and bewildering of contradictions, it has alienated women from our bodies by incarcerating us in them. (Rich 1996, 13)

However, for most of what we know as the mainstream of recorded history, motherhood as an institution has ghettoized and degraded female potentialities.

The power of the mother has two aspects: the biological potential or the capacity to bear and nourish human life, and the magical power invested in women by men, whether in the form of Goddess-worship or the fear of being controlled and overwhelmed by women. We do not actually know much about what power may have meant in the hands of strong, prepatriarchal women. We do have guesses, longings, fantasies, and analogues. We know far more about how, under patriarchy, female possibility has been literally massacred on the site of motherhood. Most women in history have become mothers without choice, and even greater number have lost their lives bringing life into the world. On the light of these facts one can assume that motherhood has been penal servitude, not the romantic fate, not the idealized duty or mission that our patriarchal western culture/society leads us to believe unquestionably.

After presenting those brief considerations about what be motherhood is meant to be as experience and institution, let us discurs the poem:

Mother

You gave me a dress
and then you took it back from me.
You gave me a horse
which you sold in my absence.
You gave me a harp
and then asked me back for it.
And you gave me life.

At the miser's dinner-party
every bite is counted.

What would you say
if I tore the dress
if I drowned the horse
if I broke the harp
if I choked the strings
the strings of life?
Even if
I walked off a cliff?
I know your answer.

With your medieval mind
you'd announce me dead
and on the medical reports
you'd write the words
"ingrate, schizophrenic".

When we read this poem we are shocked because it shows a mother that in any way matches with what is supposed to be a mother in our idealized patriarchal imagination. The mother image shown in this poem corresponds much more to a witch, a vampire, a dehumanized being, than to the docile, lovable, nurturing, passive and self-sacrificing picture represented by our Madonna as an example to be followed. This mother is a transgressor. She contradicts her role as a Giver, because she gives and then she takes back: "you gave me a dress/ [...] a horse [...] /a harp [...] / and then you took [them] back." (L.,1-6) However, on line 7, we are informed, by the daughter's voice, that life is the only given thing that her mother did not ask her back: "And you gave me life." (L., 7) This statement closes the first verses in an abrupt way and it functions as a break in terms of language flaw and construction of the sequential rhythm followed by the poem so far. I mean, poetics construction and melody are interrupted, broken, due to the lack of a line matching with this last stanza. Until here, from lines 1 to 6, the verses are articulated as a dichotomous construction and this device raises a perfect balance between the game of giving and taking. However, the introduction of line 7 with the conjunction 'and' replaces the subject 'You', addressing to the mother, which has been recurrent in the verses so far, creating a pause. This pause has a purpose, it is not only an invitation to share feelings and to smooth the growing tension of the text but it's much more. It expands the tone of the discourse contaminating the whole atmosphere of the poem. Indeed, this technique leads the reader to go beyond an individual female experience and it functions universalizing a woman's story, that is: what starts as an isolated individual experience becomes universal, transcends the personal and becomes political.

This terrible mother, according to Jung, is the counter part of Pieta and she represents not only death, but also the cruel side of nature. She is completely indifferent towards human sufferings. And it's not by any chance that the next lines of this poem contemplate the famine experience in the Irish family life: "At the miser's dinner-party/ every bite is counted." (L., 8-9) In this passage, one is invited to think about the penalties imposed upon those mothers who could not feed their children; who despite their efforts to work hard could not produce, according to a Marxist point of view, "surplus value" in a day of washing clothes, cooking food, and caring for children. And, as mothers, we have the right to demonstrate our indignation to the psychoanalysts who are certain that the work of motherhood suits us by nature. We do not think of the power stolen from us and the power withheld from us, in the name of the institution of motherhood. All our energies are directed to fulfill patriarchy's expectations and demands upon us. Of course, we will never be able to accomplish such a pushing performance, precisely because whichever are our deeds they have turned against us.

Before being mothers we are daughters, it means that as females we play a double role. And, when we speak about the mother we are also speaking about the daughter. Going back in time we have to recognize that most of us first know both love and disappointment, power and tenderness, in the person of a woman. And the first knowledge any woman has of warmth, nourishment, security, tenderness and mutuality, comes from her mother. Of course, the male infant also first knows tenderness, security, nourishment and mutuality from a female body as well. But, the heterosexuality and institutionalized motherhood demand that the girl-child transfers those first feelings of dependency, eroticism and mutuality, from her first woman to a man, if she is to become what is defined as a 'normal' woman, that is, a woman whose most intense psychic and physical energies are directed towards man.

Mothers and daughters have always exchanged with each other a knowledge that is subliminal, subversive, and preverbal: the knowledge flowing between two alike bodies, one of which has spent nine months inside the other. This biological condition plus the development of a close identity, supported by years of physical and emotional dependency create such strong bonds between mother and daughter that are very difficult, if not impossible, to split them apart. And this difficulty becomes each other's struggle for their lives.

Consequently, the mother's daughter's battle for emotional distance creates, between them, some deep-burning feelings of love and anger increased by their physical and psychical strong closeness; which most of the time is perceived as invasion, thus contaminating their relationship easily. To acknowledge the existence of such ambiguous feelings as those ones towards the mother and the child are not accepted in the Christian-Jewish tradition which sets the model of the virgin Mary to be followed; and to question the emotional damages of patriarchy upon women requires a constant consciousness raising.

I think the daughter's voice from lines 10 to 18 in this poem, is a manifestation of mother's daughters' rage upon each other. It expresses a violent sentiment of anger

from both, mother and daughter, in a growing speed: “What would you say/if I tore the dress/if I drowned the horse/if I broke the harp/if I choked the strings/the strings of life?”(L.10-18) The questions are posed creating tension and indignation in a society that was taught to worship the mother’s image, and this deconstruction of motherhood breaks not only the romantic idea of mothers, but it also fractures the untouched and sanctified place of the mother in the patriarchal culture, that is, the place of the Madonna.

Who dares to provoke the institution of motherhood? An institution that is supposed to be like Renoir’s blooming women with rosy children at their knees or Rafael’s ecstatic Madonnas? The poem echoes the voices of the silenced women breaking out of the patriarchal mindset. It’s not only a personal rage, it’s a transpersonal rage: it’s my mother’s rage and my mother’s mother’s rage and it goes back for generations. It’s the: “[...] medieval mind [that] /would announce me dead/ and [...] would write the words “ingrate, schizophrenic”. (L. 19-23)

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Translation

The Language and Translation of Finnegans Wake

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Abstract:???

For many scholars and translators of *Finnegans Wake* (1939), the last novel by Irish writer James Joyce (1882 - 1941) represents a special case within the field of translation, since the first issue under debate is the text to be translated, that is, the original language of the novel.

To write *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce used a mixture of approximately sixty-five languages and dialects and included in this new language modern and ancient languages, both Eastern and Western, and distorted and disguised many of them, creating in this manner an enormous "puzzle full of guesses and word games."[1] For this reason, it is not always obvious that English is the novel's original language, or even more prevalent than the others.

In Umberto Eco's opinion, "*Finnegans Wake* is not written in English, but in 'Finneganian,'"[2] which would be an invented language, even though, according to the Italian writer, the language of Joyce's last novel does not fit entirely into any of the vast concepts of invented language. According to one of the definitions, 'invented language' is one whose lexicon and syntax were at least partially created by its author, such as the case of the Foigny language (cited by Eco). Another example is a language without conventional words, reduced to a sound effect, as occurs for example, with the poems of Hugo Ball, or as it seems to me, in some John Cage poems.

Parting from these definitions, and taking into consideration the fact that Joyce's syntax is basically taken from the English language, Eco concluded that *Finnegans Wake* is, "to begin with, a multilingual text. Hence, it is equally useless to translate it, for it already has been translated. To translate a certain pun with a German radical G and an Italian radical I, means, at the most, to transform an GI syntagm into an IG syntagm."[3]

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As we shall see, the mixture of languages is not the only challenge that translators must face when they work with Joyce's last novel.

The complexity of the novel's language is also underscored by the attempt to give it circularity and simultaneity – characteristics motivated not only by stylistic reasons, but also philosophical reasons, since they are based on the theories of Italian thinkers Giambatistta Vico and Giordano Bruno. However, while the book is circular as a whole, its parts contain sentences composed in a normal sequence that follows, in a broad definition, the English standard. Even so, we can say that in *Finnegans Wake* the reader encounters "a new language" – "the 'chaosmos' governed by its own laws,"[4] – capable of recording new meanings and experiences of the human mind.

Scholars state that Joyce generally used normative constructions when writing sentences, yet he would insert non-standard words.

In *Finnegans Wake*, a single word can concentrate two or more meanings, and this accumulation of meanings occurs through semantic, phonic, graphic and morphological associations.[5] Joyce obtained this multiple meanings effect by using mainly two stylistic resources: puns and *portmanteau* words.

Puns are plays on words that have similar sounds yet different meanings, and for this reason, instead of clarifying, they generate multiple meanings. Some examples of puns found in *Finnegans Wake* are: "Maria full of grease," in the place of "Mary full of grace," and the expression "making loof," in place of "making love."

A *portmanteau* word – a term coined by Lewis Carroll in the book *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) – is a vocable that "packages" two or more words in a single one. In the case of Joyce's *portmanteau* words in *Finnegans Wake*, these words frequently belong to different languages. Some examples are "chaosmos," originating from "chaos" and "cosmos"; "laughtears", which conjugates "laugh" and "tears"; and "funferall," constructed from "funeral" and "fun for all."

However, Joyce explored more than just words in *Finnegans Wake*: sometimes, the basic construction unit of his language, both in terms of meaning and musicality, is the syllable. The best example of this are the "soundsenses," vocables formed by an association of several letters. There are approximately ten "soundsenses" in the book and their meanings can only be appropriately deciphered by reading them out loud. An example of a "soundsense" is the noise of thunder that appears on the novel's very first page: (Cd player)

> Bababadalgharaghatakamminarronnkonntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawn
> toohoohoordenenthurnuk!

Because of these aspects of the novel's language, it is questionable whether the effort of translating the book actually compensates, or "if it wouldn't be more useful and easy for the actual reader to learn English and learn about Joyce's principles and techniques."

The translation of *Finnegans Wake* is, however, possible and valid, as demonstrated by Joyce himself, who supported his translators and cooperated on at least three translations of the book: into French, Italian and German.

Of course, when we consider the complexity and nuances of the language in *Finnegans Wake*, we easily understand that a literal translation of the work is not possible, and neither is a translation into standard English. According to Professor Donaldo Schüler, who translated Joyce's last novel into Portuguese, "to translate into a particular language a novel such as *Finnegans Wake*, in which over sixty-five languages are mixed together, is effectively a betrayal. To translate is always to bring another linguistic universe into our own."[6] Ideally, it would be appropriate to express in the target language the (same) experience that Joyce developed in the source language— "English"— parting from the same premises and attempting to preserve from the original the highest amount of linguistic registers, word plays, allusions, etc.

In the opinion of scholar and Spanish translator Francisco García Tortosa, the translation of *Finnegans Wake* is, however, "a hermeneutic translation, essentially not that different from any other of the same type."[7] For, if one accepts the premise that two languages are never totally equivalent, one must try to understand the function and meaning of all of the text's linguistic elements and try to find corresponding approximations in another language. However, each language allows for varying types of experimentation, because they each have different resources.

Fritz Senn stated the following on the translation of Joyce's novel:

> For having said that *Finnegans Wake* cannot be properly translated, I would go on to say there is no reason why it shouldn't be. Provided that we all know what is going on. For whatever our pontifications about the impossibility - it will be tried. The book remains the challenge for the translator. [8]

The fact is, a translation of *Finnegans Wake* is always questionable, or, according to Umberto Eco, it is a translation that "at each step says, implicitly, this translation is not a translation."[9] Paradoxically, in the opinion of the Italian essayist and writer, "for the same reason that it is theoretically untranslatable, *Finnegans Wake* is also – among all – the easiest text to translate because it allows for the highest degree of inventive freedom and does not require the obligation of precision in any form of narration."[10] Joyce himself was not always faithful to the original text in the translations of which he was a part, thus attempting to renew the target language with his own resources.

Partial and complete translations of the novel have been attempted in several languages, which demonstrates in practice that the translation of *Finnegans Wake* is possible and has been done, with more or less aesthetic success. In all of these translations there are common narrative elements and similar levels of meaning, confirming the presence of coincidental readings, and, most importantly, that the translations can in a certain way "provide an opening into the somber world of *Finnegans Wake*."[11]

In Brazil, the first translation of fragments of *Finnegans Wake* was published in 1962, carried out by Augusto and Haroldo de Campos. They had the following opinion on it:

> Translation becomes a sort of free yet at the same time rigorous game, where what matters is not the readability of the text, but, most of all, the faithfulness to the spirit, the Joycean "climate."[12]

Without a doubt, the translation of Augusto and Haroldo de Campos seems fairly loyal to the Joycean "climate," even though they only translated fragments, taken from different chapters of the novel.

Almost thirty years transpired between the translation of fragments and the translation of full chapters of *Finnegans Wake.* In 1999 the first chapter of the novel was published, translated in its entirety by Donaldo Schüler, and currently the first eight chapters have been translated. These chapters comprise the first part of the novel, which is divided into four books, or parts, consisting in the whole of 17 chapters.

Schüler held the following opinion about the translation of *Finnegans Wake*:

> It is not possible to translate. There is no correspondence between one language and the other. With exception of technical languages: mechanical translation. Literary language goes beyond all subordinations. The decisions of a creative text are unpredictable. Joyce is simply underscoring this process.[13]

Evaluating his own work, Schüler defined his translation in the following manner:

> Whoever translates Joyce cannot abstain from the obligation of creating similar aspects to the original language. We distance ourselves frequently from literalness to capture effects that surpass meanings. Joyce is not austere at all. We took great caution not to destroy the jocosity (to not say *Joycosity*). Since in Portuguese we do not have the critical apparatus that formed throughout the decades regarding the original text, we tried to stay within the range of the Portuguese language and of languages that are very close to it when attempting the Joycean verbal game. [14]

Finally, I would like to say that in my Masters thesis, defended at the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* in 2001, I proposed a translation of Chapter VIII of the novel, known as "Anna Livia Plurabelle."

This chapter narrates the dialogue of two washerwomen who, while washing clothes at the bank of the Liffey River – which splits the city of Dublin – talk about the life of Anna Livia Plurabelle, the wife of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. During the conversation, Anna Livia becomes the Liffey River, or gets confused with it. Other

characters are cited in the washerwomen's gossip, which only ends at nightfall and with their transformation into a rock and a tree.

I chose to translate this chapter because it is, according to scholars, the best known, most translated and perhaps the most accessible chapter of the novel.

The idea of translating it initially emerged as a practical manner to study and comprehend Joyce's narrative and stylistic techniques.

To undertake my version of the chapter I adopted a principle similar to Professor Schüler's: "each text to be translated imposes its own laws. General translation laws cannot be formulated. A translator must learn from the text he translates."[15]

In my translation, I attempted to recreate the rhythm of the original text, and not simply reproduce the Joycean rhythm, based on monosyllables – common in the English language but not in Portuguese. In this manner I was able to obtain a Brazilian, or perhaps Latino, rhythm: a slower rhythm, based on longer words than the original ones.

However, by emphasizing rhythm (accent, rhymes, alliterations, assonances), I left out other aspects of Joyce's work, even though I did appreciate its semantic aspects, and in particular *portmanteau* words. I also tried to preserve the dialogue between the different languages. This dialogue is infinite and endless, and for this reason I agree with Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, who stated that translation, especially that of *Finnegans Wake*, "never assumes the static apparatus of the definitive, but remains in movement, an open and constant attempt."[16] An attempt, perhaps, to reach the unreachable –the whole.

I now invite you to listen to a fragment recorded on CD of my version of "Anna Livia Plurabelle," preceded by the original text and followed by Professor Donaldo Schüler's version , in order to highlight the different options that translators have:

Anna Livia Plurabelle: Cap. VIII, p. 203

…he plunged both of his newly anointed hands, the core of his cushlas, in her singimari saffron strumans of hair, parting them and soothing her and mingling it, that was deepdark and ample like this red bog at sundown. By that Vale Vowclose's lucydlac, the reignbeau's heavenarches arronged orragend her. Afrothdizzying galbs, her enamelled eyes indergoading him on the vierge violetian. Wish a wish! Why a why? Mavro! Letty Lerck's lafing light throw those laurels now her daphdaph tease song petrock. Maass! But the majik wavus has elfin anon meshes. And Simba the Slayer of Oga is slewd. He cuddle not help him himself, thurso that hot on him, he had to forget the monk in the man so, …

…ele mergulhou ambas suas recém-ungidas mãos, o cerne do seu pulso, no curso do cabelo cantamarino açafrão dela, dividindo eles e suavizando ela e mesclando ele, aquilo era escuro-profundo e amplo como o pântano vermelho no pôr-do-sol. Por aqueles

lucydoslagos do Vale Vowclose, os ceute-arcos do arco d'íris arranjados ao redor dela. Amaryellows afrodizzyarcos, seus esmaltados olhos indigoinstigando ele à beira da violetação. Desejo um desejo! Por que um por quê? Mavro! Aquela luminosa faixa agradável de luz de Letty Lerck lauraando agora sua tãotola caçoante-canção petrárquica. Maass! Mas as mágicas ondas têm mille uma armadilhas. E Simba o Matador do seu Mar é lascivo, ele mesmo não podevitar, aquele desejo ardente sobre ele, assim teve que esquecer o monge que habitava o homem,… (Dirce Waltrick do Amarante)

…ele afundou suas recém-ungidas mãos, o cerne do pulso, na caudalosa corrente de seus singimari cabelos, partindo-os, tranqüilizando-a, misturando-os, isto se deu na escuridão e na Vermelha amplidão do crepúsculo. Junto ao lucylado no Vale de Vaucluso, as arrongeadas cores do arco-iris a orangeavam. Afroginosos galbos, seus olhos esmaltados, índigo-envolventes, virginais, violáceos. Desejo um desejo! Por que o por quê? Moura! Dos sorrisos pendentes nos leves lábios de Letty Lerck aos de Laura laureando sedutores dáfnicos a Petrorca. Música! Maass as mágicas ondas ondeiam mil mechas red ondas Siva-Simbá sangra-singra libidinosos líquidos. Como deter cuchilos, o calor era tanto, teve que olvidar o monge no homem,… (Donaldo Schüler)

Notes

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Translating Brendan Kennelly's Poetic prose: The Crooked Cross or the Claustrophobic Representation of a Classic-Irish Odyssey

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Abstract: *The aim of my article is to highlight the presence of some classical epic topoi in Kennelly's The Crooked Cross, such as the theme of heroism, emigration, exile, as well as of a sort of pagan religion. I will underline how these themes are here developed in a way that makes this short novel an example of a claustrophobically authentic Irish epic, not so intellectually and systematically built as in Joyce's Odyssey, though not less classic and universal.*
The microcosm of the Irish village here represented, with its oral tradition, its folkloric and legendary material, supplies a fertile soil of cultural, literary and stylistic interrelations suggesting an interesting underlying crosscultural communication.
I will also focus on some of the linguistic features of this work and on the problematic aspects to be faced in the process of translation into another language/culture.

The Crooked Cross, published in 1963, is the first of the only two novels written by Brendan Kennelly. His second novel, *The Florentines*, was published in 1967.

The Crooked Cross is set in the author's native village, Ballylongford, in County Kerry, and the action takes place during the hot summer of 1955.

Last year, on the occasion of the inaugural Brendan Kennelly Summer Festival, which took place in Ballylongford and is expected to become a major national and international event, Kennelly wrote a page I am here quoting as the most suitable introduction to his village, the "Crooked Cross" of the title, and to the novel itself:

> The Ballylongford (hereinafter called Bally) I was born and reared in was a quiet yet lively place, constantly threatened by emigration, committed to football,

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> devoted to talk, fond of the drink, electric with stories, cherishing its 'characters' and always proud of its sporting tradition and achievements. Most of all many of the Bally people were, and are, subtle wizards of laughter.
> I was born in 1936 and left Bally for Dublin in 1954. So I had eighteen very enjoyable years in the village. When I was thirteen or fourteen my family moved down main street to the pub at 'The Corner'. That pub is still run by the family. My brother Alan and his wife Brenda have been running the place for years. I loved working in it at night listening to the talk, the stories, the songs and ballads. I loved these happy singers. The early fifties were, perhaps a more relaxed time than now: the drinking often went on till two or three in the morning. I remember frying sausages well after midnight for men whom Guinness had made hungry and myself enjoying the taste of Donnelly's skinless sossies with a host of peckish drinkers. Sometimes we were "raided" by vigilant Gardai; but somehow or other, things worked out all right.
> Four roads meet in the middle of Bally. There's a companionable sense of convergence about those roads; it's as if life is pouring in from four directions, four sources. But life is also pouring out of Bally along these same four roads; that life has poured out to England, America, Australia, indeed to many parts of the world. The numbers of young men and women who have left Bally over the past hundred years must be quite stunning. It is, therefore, a reason for sustained celebration that people are once again converging on Bally for this Summer Festival. Let's hope that everyone will have an enjoyable time. May the four roads lead to a Festival of fun and craic, exchanges of ideas, poetry, pictures, song, stories. May old friendships be affirmed; and may new friendships be made and enjoyed.[1]

This page contains many of the themes and motifs of *The Crooked Cross,* a novel that could be defined as an epic in prose with the rhythm of a ballad, or better, quoting Fielding, as a "heroicomic poem in prose". Such a statement, at first, might sound slightly ambitious for this work, however, after a careful analysis, it will prove extremely adequate. The novel, in fact, is a sour epic of an Irish village threatened by drought and of his inhabitants, sometimes heroic, more often comic, while facing this awful situation. The dry spell is the evident metaphor of a more general dryness, a spiritual and social aridity that becomes responsible for the emigration of the inhabitants of the village which, at the end, is populated only by few emblematic figures, true "characters" as Kennelly himself defines them.

There is the poet of the village, the local bard who makes a rhyme about everything and everybody. His name is Paddyo and is inspired by Paddy Drury, a true versifier, a satirical poet of the oral tradition in North Kerry. There is the Old Sailor, now half-crippled and always in his armchair, telling his heroic deeds in front of an audience of children who regularly gather in his shabby house to listen to his tales

offering in return a few chores for him. The first chapter is devoted to the character of Sheila Dark O'Donovan, a beautiful fortune-teller, a tinker woman; the final chapter is about a water-diviner called to the village in order to detect an underground stream. At the end, he succeeds in detecting water with the help of a twig, bringing delight and hope into the hearts of the villagers.

The heroism I have hinted at, is that sort of heroism close to Celtic mythology whose deeds and feats are characterized mainly by legendary, folkloric aspects, by a sort of magic and of superstitious religion.

The whole novel may also be read as a "disturbing Christian allegory": one of its character is called Goddy, the water-diviner is called the Pope and the name of the village itself, Deevna, sounds like the adjective *divine*. When I asked Kennelly himself the reason of this noun he said that *Deerna* was meant to be the first title of the book. *Deerna,* in fact, represents the phonetic sound of the Gaelic expression *Do Thighearna,* which means *To the Lord*. Then, the typist saw *v* instead of *r* and typed *Deevna*, keeping by chance a lucky closeness to the adjective *divine*. The final title, *The Crooked Cross*, is a metaphor with a double valency, religious and social. As a religious symbol, this cross, being crooked, stands for a sort of castrating and oppressive religion. At the same time, it conveys a concrete meaning in so far as this image indicates both the irregular, let's say "crooked", crossing of the two main streets of the village, and the Celtic crosses in Irish graveyards which are always crooked, that is, inclined, bent.

Now, to go back to our previous definition of "heroicomic poem in prose", if the word *poem* may be a bit inappropriate, we certainly can speak of a poetic prose, where the poetic trait is given both by the epic feature of the story and by the language itself, a language which is affected by Gaelic, the Irish language. From the very beginning of the novel, the reader is caught by a sort of rapture of the language, by a hypnotic movement given by the echoes of a "melodious speech", a sweet underlying language, a singing language such as Gaelic is with its cerimonial sayings and its ancient poetic tradition, a tradition that is essentially formulaic.[2]

The variegated material of popular ballads, of gossipy anecdotes and sayings is incorporated in the narration of this novel and this helps convey a hypnotic rhythm that often sounds as poetry.

Kennelly claims he has always liked listening to people talking and in this story he tried to convey the spontaneity and the sound of their conversation. So, as Terence Brown states, "the presence of an oral community is the text's originating source". Terence Brown sees in Kennelly's novels:

> the 'prentice work of an artist who was to remain throughout his career open to the hybrid possibilities of literary form, its fertile instability. Lyric intensity, symbolism, imagistic juxtaposition and epic directness of style enter their episodically fragmented realism as if to signal the author's impatience with any too univocal a text, anticipating the radical heteroglossia of his later achieve-

> ments. [...] The ubiquitous presence of story as a generating force in Kennelly's art is, by contrast, a factor which tends to stabilise the heteroglossia of his variegated texts. (Brown 1994, 57; 51)

Terence Brown quotes from the sonnet "Master", in *Cromwell*, where Kennelly makes Edmund Spenser say: "Trouble is, sonnets are genetic epics./ Something in them wants to grow out of bounds".[3] This statement stands as the best comment on Kennelly's whole work, in so far as it highlights the generic impurity and instability of Kennelly's writing, "his refusal to be bound by safe artistic taxonomies." (Brown 1994, 50)

In the introduction to the collection of poems *Poetry my Arse*, Kennelly starts as follows:

> This poem concerns a poet, poetry, language and various forms of relationship. The poet, Ace de Horner, moves through his poetry, the city, different relationships. He broods on words, people, streets, dreams, the Liffey, Janey Mary, his self. And he broods in such a way or ways that terms such as poem, novel, story, drama or play merge with each other to form an Acenote which he often finds very odd. His brooding estranges whatever he broods on. The poem he writes may not be the poem he wishes to write or even the poem he believes he has written. His own concoctions (he will not call them creations) are frequently bizarre to himself. Am I really guilty o'that? He seems to wish to control what laughs at the notion of being controlled. (Kennelly 1995, 13)

The Crooked Cross presents a mixed literary form with passages of intense lyricism and the agile and flexible pace typical of epic narration. To give an example of the poetic prose in this novel I will refer, once again, to the same passage chosen by Terence Brown in his essay, not simply because I feel safe with his authority but mainly because this very passage proves particularly suitable to highlight some of the problems I had to face in my translation and it will allow me to develop the main motif of my paper: *the claustrophobic representation of a Classic-Irish Odyssey.*

The passage is contained in the novel's central chapter, "The Walk". The whole chapter is about a poor girl who, being the only child of a widowed mother, is forced to work in a few houses of the village. The passage describes this girl while escaping the malicious gossip of her employer, who pronounces her pregnant, and walks towards the countryside finding relief and freedom from the oppressivness of the village in her total immersion in nature: she bathes naked in the river. This epiphanic passage is rich in images and symbols and is a powerful piece of poetic prose:

> Then she gripped projecting pieces of rock with both hands and clambered up till she sat on the almost flat surface. The three white rocks were known locally as the Cow, the Bull, and the Calf. The Bull was the centre one. Anne sat on it

> for a few moments, her wet, naked body as white as a hound's tooth in the sunlight, her dark hair clinging wetly to her shoulders. Then she stretched out on her back and let the sun fall on her belly and legs. She closed her eyes. Under her back, the white surface of the rock was warm and she didn't mind the minute fragments of gravel which stuck to her wet skin from the rock-surface. It was all freshness and beauty; it was all clean water and warm sunlight, green grasses and yellowy flowers, berries and the blueness of the pool. Her closed eyes saw nothing but blueness of water and sky and her naked body exulted in the feeling of utter cleanliness. She was back in the morning of the world when the first light was breaking over undiscovered fields, and nothing was unclean or fallen. She thought how wonderful it would be if one could be clean for ever. (Kennelly 1963, 81-2)

The quoted passage is characterized by an apparently deliberate absence of synonyms. The author keeps using the word *wet* and never replaces it with the synonim *humid* for example. The adjective *warm* is repeated, as well as *clean*. The iteration of these words gives musicality to the language, a musicality further enhanced by the numerous allitterative sounds. In my translation into Italian I have tried to maintain this musical aspect by keeping the same words as much as possible, such as *umidi* for *wet*. Besides, I have done what in Italian does not sound as stylistically appropriate, that is I have often expressed the possessive pronoun before the parts of the body: one of the well-known signals of an awkward translator. The article alone would be necessary, however, in this passage, as in many others, I have kept the third-person personal pronouns (I will underline them in the quoted passage) any time I thought it useful to convey the original rhythm and to create allitteration with nearby words:

> Poi afferrò con entrambe le mani pezzi di roccia sporgente e si arrampicò finché si sedette sulla superficie quasi piatta. Le tre rocce bianche erano note sul posto come la Mucca, il Toro e il Vitello. Il Toro era quella al centro. Anne vi si sedette per pochi istanti con il *suo* corpo nudo e umido bianco come il dente di un segugio alla luce del sole e i *suoi* neri capelli umidi attaccati alle spalle. Poi si stese sulla schiena e lasciò che il sole le cadesse sul ventre e sulle gambe. Chiuse gli occhi. Sotto la schiena la superficie bianca della roccia era calda e non le davano fastidio i minuscoli frammenti di ghiaia che si erano attaccati alla pelle umida dalla superficie rocciosa. Era tutto freschezza e bellezza; tutto acqua pulita e sole caldo, erbe verdi e fiori giallastri, more e il blu del laghetto. I *suoi* occhi chiusi non vedevano altro all'infuori del blu dell'acqua e del cielo e il *suo* corpo nudo esultava alla sensazione di assoluto nitore. Era tornata all'alba del mondo quando la prima luce irrompeva su campi inesplorati e nulla era contaminato o decaduto.
> Pensò a quanto sarebbe stato bello poter essere puliti per sempre. (Kennelly 2001, 112-3)

The novel is also interspersed with true rhymes, Paddyo's poetic production. Paddyo "half-chanted" (14) his first lines:

Come in, dark woman from the Maharees
With your step more light
Than a feather in a breeze. (14)

No rhyme to signal poetry, just the chanted rhythm, as the author's voice points out before remarking the sudden shift to prose: "Welcome to Deevna", he said, lapsing into prose. (14)

Hereinafter, Paddyo's lines are in the form of quatrains with alternate rhymes as in the ballad form. In fact, Paddyo's verses are sometimes nonsense, often invective and in general just two or three quatrains of a ballad as a chronicle of everyday events, that is events about Deevna and its inhabitants. What I have done in this case has been to keep the rhyme as much as I could:

"I see Paris,
I see France,
Red is the colour
Of my underpants." (Kennelly 1963, 20),

in my Italian transaltion reads as:

"Vedo Parigi,
Vedo le Ande,
Rosso è il colore
Delle mie mutande". (Kennelly 2001, 36);

sometimes even changing the rhyme scheme:

Naked Cully lived alone
And never was he seen,
But he quenched the thirst of everyone
And kept the village clean. (Kennelly 1963, 29)

become:

Naked Cully da solo viveva
E mai lo si vedeva,
Ma la sete saziava ad ampio raggio
E teneva pulito il villaggio. (Kennelly 2001,48)

I have often tried to keep the rhyme even to the detriment of the metre as in the following lines:

"I'd give my body and my soul,
My sister, son and daughter,
My money, clothes, belongings all,
For a drop of Naked's water." (Kennelly 1963, 30)

which have been translated as follows:

"Il mio corpo e la mia anima darei,
Mia sorella, mio figlio e mia figlia,
I miei soldi, vestiti, tutti gli averi miei,
Per avere dell'acqua di Naked una sola bottiglia." (Kennelly 2001, 49).

At this point, I would like to take into consideration what can be considered the specular counterpart of this passage in particular, and of the whole novel in general. I am referring to a poem, *The Walk*, about walking from the village centre, "the Crooked Cross" mentioned in the first line, to the island of Islandman.

The Walk

Start at the Crooked Cross
Pass Martin Carmody's and the Sacred Heart
over the bridge and the light summer dust
See the river winding with cold, clear art

till it consents to recognise the Atlantic.
Is Molly in? Stories of lovers endure
longer than the lovers themselves. The thick
mud of the Moneen grips your eyes for

a moment but you walk on your way
past Aghavalin where Kitchener was baptised,
past Bambury's wood under God's burning eye

on to the castle where a small light betrayed
O'Connor. And there it is: the island,
fisting the sea, clear as a plover's cry.[4]

The Walk is an example of *prosaic poetry*: formally, it is a Petrarchan sonnet of 14 lines divided into two quatrains and two tercets. The lines rhyme but the rhyme scheme is quite random and there is an enjambement at the turn of each stanza. Direct speech (should we properly say *free indirect speech*?) is incorporated in the narrative flow: Is Molly in? (l.6); And there it is (l.13). We can detect many allitterative sounds, assonances, the same stylistic devices we have just noticed in the novel. The language certainly conveys a fluent walk but in a claustrophobic epic territory.

All the places here mentioned resound of mythic echoes, while they essentially describe the domestic places of the poet's native landscape. The Crooked Cross, as the reader knows by now, is Ballylongford. Carmody's and the Sacred Heart are two pubs

(the Sacred Heart takes its name from the woman-owner's favourite phrase: "O Sacred Heart of Jesus"). Molly is a popular lover. The Moneen is a muddy place over which the river passes. Aghavalin nowadays is an old Protestant graveyard, once a little church. Kitchener is the famous Kitchener of the sentence: "Your Country needs you". He was born two miles outside the village and fought in World War One.

The Walk ends at the island which is not fully an island: there is a little road leading to it. The road is sometimes covered by the tide. So it is an island then.

What the poem says is that no walk leads out of the Crooked Cross, it is instead a walk throughout its local history and even if "the river [is] winding with cold, clear art till it consents to recognise the Atlantic", the Atlantic is not the goal and the eye withdraws to stay inland and stop at the island from where it does not look at the sea which, in fact, is paradoxically fisted by the island and not the opposite.

The novel *The Crooked Cross* conveys the same sensation of immobility albeit with a tension to movement, at least in the form of emigration. It tells the static epic of Irish history as it is lived in Ireland's smallest villages. The novel starts and ends with the following emblematic lines:

> If life in little places dies,
> Greater places share the loss;
> Life, if you wish, may not be worth
> One passing game of pitch-and-toss;
> And yet a nation's life is laid
> In places like the Crooked Cross. (Kennelly 1963, 8; 124)

Patrick Kavanagh once wrote of "Losing faith in Ballyrush and Goirtin, / Till Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind / He said, 'I made the Iliad from such a local row."[5]

Brendan Kennelly was to echo this in his just quoted lines but what Homer whispered to his mind was rather the word *Odyssey*. However, what he has created is a classic Irish Odyssey, that is, an Odyssey lacking its main theme: the journey out of one's own land. No Ulysses goes out from Deevna if not by means of imagination and the potential Ulysses who actually emigrate from Deevna never come back to tell and share their experiences. They just disappear. And, among those who stay, we can identify potential travellers who are entrapped either physically or spiritually. Goddy O'Girl, "the man with the figure of a God and the heart of a mouse" (p.12), is paralysed in his spirit and is unable to satisfy his desire to escape. The Old Sailor could be a sort of Ulysses, he has travelled a lot, albeit more with his fantasy than in reality and now he cannot move because he is half-crippled and all he can do is to tell his stories to the children of Deevna. His main deed was when he swam from Tureen Quay to the town of Kilkee in County Clare, a story he recounts with an epic emphasis which reminds the reader of Ulysses swimming towards the land of the Phæacians. Homer's Ulysses is he

who knows because he has seen everything, he has travelled a lot, thence his versatility. None of the characters in *The Crooked Cross* embodies such a personality: Ulysses's features live in many of them, split into empty shreds and thwarted by static characters. He lives in Paddyo's rough wit, in the Old Sailor's invented stories and courage, in Goddy O'Girl's patience, so that the novel lacks a single personality which could give unity to the work. On the contrary, Ulysses in Homer's *Odyssey* gives unity to the whole work which is not made of a single episode with many characters but of a single character who goes through many adventures. Nevertheless, the *Odyssey* itself is echoed in *The Crooked Cross*, as a unitary work on the whole, though built by interspersing pieces taken from oral tradition, by drawing from already extant verses or group of verses expressing a certain idea or concept, from recurrent schemes of typical scenes.

With *Ulysses* Joyce had already created a claustrophobic Odyssey in a paralysed place: Dublin, but his was an intellectually and systematically built novel where the connections with the Homeric work were explicitly declared. Kennelly's "Odyssey" instead, seems to be almost unconscioulу linked to the classic model and succeeds in being authentically Irish while keeping a more universal epic trait. *The Crooked Cross*, more than *Ulysses*, conveys the atmosphere of the Homeric epic: both epics are told by local bards who mix reality and legend in such a way as to make their borders naturally overlap often with the complicity of an archaic magic-shamanic element. Piggott, in his famous work *The Druids*, claims that Celtic literature was orally created and handed down by a barbaric society, just like the original version of the Homeric poems. (see Piggott 1998, 50)

Kennelly, in my opinion, succeeds in creating a true Irish epic in so far as he does not force its local material in order to adjust it to the classic model: he does not introduce either wars or divine quarrels, he rather focuses on Irish reality through a spiritually and stylistically epic perspective.

Many in fact are the themes and motifs that *The Crooked Cross* shares with Homer's *Odyssey*: heroism, emigration, exile, as well as a sort of pagan religion with some magic aspects. A religion which is embodied by the Pope, the water diviner, a sort of pagan god, or by Naked Cully, the hidden god who saves the people of Deevna by supplying them with water. The magic element is also embodied by Sheila Dark, the fortune teller, a sort of tempting and seductive witch similar to the Circe of the *Odyssey*. The same Anne Dillon of the passage we have quoted is described as a Nausicaa near the banks of the river.

Then there is the assembly of the village which meets when important decisions have to be taken and it reminds the reader of the Achaeans summoned to full assembly. Also in the *Odyssey* the assembly is the expression of a rural society based on a primitive democracy represented by the assembly.

There is no systematic correspondence between the *Odyssey* and *The Crooked Cross*; however, the novel is embedded with many epic motifs and images which appear as discoursive configurations or mere stylistic devices which remind the reader of the Homeric work.

An example is given by the presence of the dog, Lighting:

> There was a dog especially that caught the eye and disgusted and repelled everybody who saw it. This was an old sheepdog, black in body, with a white neck. At least, these were the colours it had been, until it was stricken with a terrible attack of the mange, the scourge of all dogs in hot weather. As a result of this awful afflication it was like a waking corpse. Nearly all the fur and hair had disappeared from its body, leaving practically all the flesh visible. The flesh was a horrible raw red, covered with scabs and sores of all sorts, which festered and stank in the terrible heat. Ironically, the dog's name was Lightning. Lightning slouched along the hot, dusty street, stopping now and again to lick its sores. Every living thing and person shunned it, but nobody took the trouble to destroy it. Sometimes a child, in its innocence, would approach it, but would scamper off on seeing the grotesque state of the body. (Kennelly 1963, 31-2)

Its description is very close to that of Argos in the *Odyssey*,[6] though here the dog does not belong to any master, does not embody faithfulness: it is an empty, slightly oleographic image functional to the whole description.

The figure of One-eyed Palestine, is in fact described as a Cyclops:

> "I'm the only man in this place," he would say, his one eye glinting with pride, "who can say that he saw the grave of Jesus the Jew." So he got his name through his disability and his distinction [...]. Palestine was a big man, with a massive head, strong shoulders and a brown moustache. Physically, he was a giant. He had a quick mind, and enough imagination to appreciate the appalling nature of his boredom. (Kennelly 1963, 47)

A few lines later we read: "When sober, Palestine was a man of few words." (47); but as soon as he sees a pint in front of him:

> He downed it without taking the glass from his lips and ordered another which promptly got the same treatment. A third pint stood in front of him before his tongue loosened a little. [...] Palestine drank steadily for the next three hours, all on his own. Little talk between himself and the widow. But the alcohol was having its effect on Palestine who, when he began to get "merry", like to talk nonsense to himself and to the world. [...] One-eye Palestine sweated and drank like a hog. (48-9)

This description of the drunk Palestine reminds us of the Odyssey's Cyclops, drinking the wine Ulysses offers him:

All the characters of the book are like epic characters, flat like cardboard cut-out figures, more symbols than individuals. However, the most stunning parallelism is that between the poet of the Odyssey and the poet of *The Crooked Cross*, Paddyo himself who shares with the homeric poet that knowledge of different stories coming from different sources. But Paddyo is a satiric poet and in many of his lines he ridicules the formulaic tradition and the repertoire of epic predictions and anecdotes. Paddyo finds a complimentary figure in the Old Sailor, the true storyteller of the village.

The Crooked Cross at the end proves to be an unintentional parody of the *Odyssey*, though the parody does not affect the model as much as the represented Irish reality and conveys once again a denunciation of its paralysis: an endemic paralysis connatural to Irish nature. Kennelly draws characters and motifs from the *Odyssey* mixing them with, and adapting them to, the Irish material. These motifs often live in his text in the form of epiphanic moments which, unlike Joyce, are not introduced as mere and isolated stylistic devices, in so far as they contribute to the developing of a story and to the characterization of the general setting.

Therefore, the microcosm of this Irish village, with its oral tradition, its folkloric and legendary material, supplies a fertile soil of cultural, literary and stylistic interrelations suggesting an interesting underlying crosscultural communication, an aspect that could be investigated more deeply and, in relation to which, to conclude, I wish to mention a book I have recently read and which has enhanced my interest in cultural interrelations. I wish I had discovered it a bit earlier so that I could have carried out more detailed research. The title of the book is *Homer in the Baltic/An essay on Homeric Geography*. The author, Felice Vinci, claims that

> The real scene of the Iliad and the Odyssey can be identified not in the Mediterranean Sea, where it proves to be weakened by many incongruities, but in the north of Europe. The sagas that gave rise to the two poems came from the Baltic regions, where the Bronze Age flourished in the 2nd millennium B.C. and many Homeric places, such as Troy and Ithaca, can still be identified. The blond seafarers who founded the Mycenaean civilization in the 16th century B.C. brought these tales from Scandinavia to Greece after the end of the "post-glacial climatic optimum". Then they rebuilt their original world, where the Trojan War and many other mythological events had taken place, in the Mediterranean; through many generations the memory of the heroic age and the feats performed by their ancestors in their lost homeland was preserved, and handed down to the following ages. (Vinci 2001, 1)

It is certainly a revolutionary theory and it is rather difficult to accept it at the beginning: it subverts completely the traditional beliefs regarding Homer. However, the essay is so well researched and documented that, so far, it has convinced all its readers, including myself.

In the 4th chapter, "Ulysses and Norse mythology", we read

> The Northern location for the events of the Odyssey suggests a possible relationship with another important Northern European mythology, that of the Celts. The Celtic poets, known as "fili", entertained the Court's noblemen, just as the Homeric bards did. Their favourite themes included "adventure" ("echtra") beyond human bounds and "wanderings" ("immram") from island to island over far-off seas (Cataldi, Introduction to *Ancient Irish Tales and Fables*). This, of course, reminds us of Ulysses when he was intent on narrating his fabulous adventures and wanderings in Alcinous's palace. What is more, one of the favourite destinations in Celtic tales are the paradisal islands situated in the middle of the ocean, towards the far west, where divine women refresh and make love to the heroes coming there. They also offer them immortality and overlasting youth, as we see in *Immram curaig Màele Dùin* (*The Voyage of Màel Dùin's Ship*) and *Immram Brain maic Febail* (*The Voyage of Febal's Son Bran*). All of this is identical to the island of the goddess Calypso, remote in the ocean towards west, who had promised to make Ulysses "immortal and ageless ("athànaton kaì agéron") forever" (Od. V, 136; VII, 257). Incidentally, one could match the name of Ogygia itself with the Celtic island of everlasting youth, which is called "Tir-na n'Og". In a word, "Ogygia" may mean "the Land of Youth". (Vinci 2001, 42-3)

What I have found particularly interesting is the presence of themes shared by the Homeric poems and the mythologies of Northern Europe, including Celtic mythology and, in particular, the occurrence of these themes in Kennelly's novel.

In the *Kalevala*, Finland's national epos made up of fifty runes and cantos, rune XXXIV tells of a girl who disappears while picking berries and searching for strawberries at the foot of the mountain and is desperately looked for by her mother everywhere. This episode reminds us of Persephone, whom Hades abducted while picking flowers and her mother went looking for her (Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*). It also reminds me of Anne Dillon who, while walking out of Deevna to the countryside, before bathing in the river stops to pick blackberries from a cluster of briary bushes and when she goes back home her mother had been looking for her.

Besides, Vinci quotes the following lines from the *Kalevala*:

> My brother's old dog, which I fed as a child and trained as a young girl, will mournfully bark behind the manure heap, inside the cold winter pens; he will surely recognize me as the daughter of the house. (Vinci 2001, 41)

These lines belong to rune XXIV which tells of a married woman who returns to the paternal house after many years and expects her old dog to recognize her, a scene

which reminds us of the famous scene of the dog Argus in the *Odyssey* and of Kennelly's description of the dog Lightning in the passage quoted above.

These are certainly not sufficiently stunning analogies to claim a close contact between Homer and Northern European mythology, however they are a curious coincidence, let's say just a suggestion, which have offered me the pretext to further investigate in order to detect interesting similarities in *The Crooked Cross* and in Irish literature in general. The research has just started.

Notes

1 This passage is at page 3 of the pamphlet *The Brendan Kennelly Summer Festival* issued on the occasion of the inaugural Festival devoted to Brendan Kennelly from 9th to 12th August 2001.

2 See Gianni Celati, "Introduzione" a Flann O'Brien (1987), *La Miseria in Bocca*. Milano: Feltrinelli, p. 10-11

3 The complete sonnet "Master", contained in *Cromwell* (p.63), reads as follows:
"I am master of the chivalric idiom" Spenser said
As he sipped a jug of buttermilk
And ate a quaite of griddle bread.
"I'm worried, though, about the actual bulk
Of *The Faerie Queene*. She's growing out
Of all proportions, in different directions.
Am I losing control? Am I buggering it
All up? Ruining my best intentions?
As relief from my Queene, I write sonnets
But even these little things get out of hand
Now and then, giving me a nightmare head.
Trouble is, sonnets are genetic epics.
Something in them wants to grow out of bounds.
I'm up to my bollox in sonnets" Spenser said.

4 This poem does not belong to any collection, it appears inside the cover of *The Brendan Kennelly Summer Festival*.

5 Quoted by Padraig Ó Concubhair in "Local Historical Themes in the writings of Brendan Kennelly" in *The Brendan Kennelly Summer Festival*, p. 10

6 Now, as they talked on, a dog lay there
lifted up his muzzle, pricked his ears [...]
It was Argos, long-enduring Odysseus' dog
he trained as a puppy once, but little joy he got
since all too soon he shipped to sacred Troy.
In the old days young hunters loved to set him
coursing after the wild goats and deer and hares.
But now with his master gone he lay there, castaway,
on piles of dung from mules and cattle, heaps collecting
out before the gates till Odysseus' serving-men
could cart it off to manure the king's estates.

Infested with ticks, half-dead from neglect,
here lay the hound, old Argos.
But the moment he sensed Odysseus standing by
he thumped his tail, nuzzling low, and his ears dropped,
though he had no strength to drag himself an inch
toward his master. Odysseus glanced to the side
and flicked away a tear, hiding it from Eumaeus,
diverting his friend in a hasty, offhand way:
"Strange, Eumaeus, look, a dog like this,
lying here on a dung-hill [...]
what handsome lines! But I can't say for sure
if he had the running speed to match his looks
or he was only the sort that gentry spoil at table,
show-dogs masters pamper for their points." (Homer, 1996: XVII, 363-4)

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Translating Joyce

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Abstract: *This article aims at providing a general view on translation according to Friedrich Schleiermacher and José Ortega y Gasset, extending to a discussion on the translation of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, centered on the adaptation to Brazilian Portuguese of James Joyce´s poetic style. Being aware of the diversity of both languages with their own melody, cadence, and rhythm, an attempt was made to transfer to Portuguese, as much as possible, Joyce´s peculiar and outstanding style. The preservation of the repetition of words and connectives used by Joyce was essential, for not only does it help to suggest the psychic development of Stephen Dedalus, but it also lends greater musicality to his language.*

In "On the Different Methods of Translating" Friedrich Schleiermacher finds only two possible paths to be followed in translating: " either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader".[1] After discussing the two possibilities, he concludes that the second option "is far higher and more nearly perfect when compared to the former," and counsels the true translator to use it more often so as to replace the other which, in his opinion, "is of a dubious nature and in many ways ineffective".[2]

In "The Misery and Splendor of Translation", José Ortega y Gasset agrees with Schleiermacher in this respect, in spite of considering "the act of translation a utopian exercise".[3] Yet he proceeds by saying that, since "man's existence has a sporting character, with pleasure residing in the effort itself, and not in the results", which accounts for "man's continuous inexhaustible capacity to invent unrealizable projects", the wedding of "reality with the demon of what is impossible supplies the universe with the only growth it is capable of". To Ortega, "everything worthwhile, everything truly human is difficult, very difficult; so much so, that it is impossible". Nevertheless, "to declare its impossibility is not an argument against the possible splendor of the translator's task. On the contrary, this characterization admits it to the highest rank and lets us infer that it is meaningful".[4]

Ortega y Gasset's words helped me to understand why, after having always considered impossible any translation of Joyce's works, I have faced the challenge, by

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accepting to translate *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as *Um retrato do artista quando jovem*, when invited to do so by the Brazilian publishing house Siciliano. And now I am doing a translation of *Ulysses*, having the same idea in mind.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce presents us the development both psychic and physical of his character, Stephen Dedalus, from his early childhood to the end of his adolescence. To reach his aim, he invites us to plunge into the boy's consciousness, so that we may follow his discoveries, or, according to Joyce, observe him achieving his epiphanies, concerning the outside world and the people around him, so different from his idealized image of them.

We are, then, led to follow the processes of repression and castration to which the little boy is submitted, threatened as he is to have his eyes pulled out by the eagle if he does not apologize, which reminds us of the myth of Prometheus, up to the moment in which, as a young man, he manages to set himself free. Then, as the mythic artificer Dedalus, whose prophetic name he has inherited, he will make his own wings to escape from the chains that have kept him stuck to the ground and take flight in search of the creative freedom of art.

Language, Joyce's tool and greatest concern, is artistically handled to show Stephen's psychic evolution. In fact, he will start with the most elementary syntactic constructions: repetition of words, short sentences, and the use of coordination with the resulting juxtaposition of ideas, so proper to little children, as we may observe in the first chapter.

> Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo [...].[5]
> Era uma vez e uma vez muito boa mesmo uma vaquinha-mu que vinha andando pela estrada e a vaquinha-mu que vinha andando pela estrada encontrou um garotinho engrachadinho chamado Bebê tico-taco [...].[6]

From this kind of language Joyce moves to more elaborate syntactic arrangements in his sentences, until his language acquires its most refined form and style, at the end of the novel, when Stephen finds out his real vocation amidst an orchestration of sounds, or when, as an artist, he dialectically expounds his own aesthetic theory to one of his classmates.

> The snares of the world were its ways of sin. He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant. Not to fall was too hard, too hard: and he felt the silent lapse of his soul, as it would be at some instant to come, falling, falling but not yet fallen, still unfallen but about to fall.[7]
> As ciladas do mundo eram suas formas de pecado. Ele sucumbiria. Não sucumbira ainda mas sucumbiria silenciosamente, num instante. Não sucumbir era difícil demais, demais: e sentia o declínio silencioso de sua alma, como o

seria em algum instante futuro, sucumbindo, sucumbindo mas ainda não sucumbido, ainda não sucumbido mas prestes a sucumbir.[8]

And still regarding his vocation:

> Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being?[9]
> Agora, ao som do nome do fabuloso artífice, ele parecia ouvir o barulho de ondas escuras e ver uma forma alada voando por sobre as ondas e se elevando lentamente no espaço. O que queria dizer aquilo? Seria aquele um recurso curioso introduzindo uma página de algum livro medieval de profecias e símbolos, um homem como um falcão voando acima do mar em direção ao sol, uma profecia do fim que ele nascera para servir e que viera perseguindo através das névoas da infância e da meninice, um símbolo do artista forjando de novo em sua oficina da matéria informe da terra um novo ser a planar nas alturas impalpável e imperecível?[10]

It is also convenient to keep in mind the importance Joyce attaches to sound. Such is the part it plays in his writings that we may accompany Stephen Dedalus's psychic progress through the effects he lends to this literary device. Besides showing a monophonous quality, in the first chapter, as Joyce depicts the mind of the little boy who is awakening to life, his language becomes polyphonous, orchestral, when the young man discovers he is not to be a priest, but wants instead to become an artist.

> But he was not sick there. He thought that he was sick in his heart if you could be sick in that place [...] He wanted to cry. He leaned his elbows on the table and shut and opened the flaps of his ears. Then he heard the noise of the refectory every time he opened the flaps of his ears. It made a roar like a train at night. And when he closed the flaps the roar was shut off like a train going into a tunnel.[11]
> Mas ele não estava doente ali. Ele achava que estava doente em seu coração se fosse possível ficar doente naquele lugar [...]. Ele tinha vontade de chorar. Apoiou os cotovelos na mesa e apertou com os dedos e soltou as abas de suas orelhas. Fazia um barulho de ronco como o de um trem à noite. E quando ele apertava as abas o ronco era interceptado como um trem entrando em um túnel.[12]

Sound may also be used repeatedly by Joyce with different connotations as in the case of "pick, pack, pock, puck", when these words appear in the sentence: "and

from here and from there came the sounds of the cricketbats through the soft grey air. They said: pick, pack, pock, puck like drops of water in a fountain slowly falling in the brimming bowl".[13] When first used they suggest the boy's isolation and undesired remoteness from his colleagues, deprived as he is of his spectacles, which had been broken. When repeated at the end of the chapter, they will reveal the isolation sought by Stephen himself, so that he may enjoy "alone", because he is now "happy and free",[14] his successful meeting with the rector and taste delightedly his celebration as a winner by his fellowmates. In between, the repeated separate sounds will disclose fear: "pick, pock"[15] and pain: "pock" since, according to the boy "there were different kinds of pains for all the different kinds of sound".[16]

Furthermore, rhythm is so significant to Joyce that he makes a distinction as to the one which is more typical and suitable to each of the three stylistic forms lyric, epic, and dramatic, as he discusses his aesthetic theory with his friend Lynch. Afterwards, in *Ulysses*, he will confer his three main characters Stephen Dedalus's, Leopold Bloom's and Molly Bloom's inner monologues quite distinct rhythms, which will fit their own personalities. Stephen Dedalus's monologue will be slower, alternating longer sentences, phrases, and words with shorter ones in order to impart the complexity of his philosophic and metaphysical questionings:

> Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath. They clasped and sundered, did the coupler´s will. From before the ages He willed me and now may not will me away or ever. A *lex eterna* stays about Him. Is that then the divine substance wherein Father and Son are consubstantial?[17]
> Concebido na escuridão do pecado eu também fui, feito não gerado. Por eles, o homem com a minha voz e os meus olhos e uma mulherfantasma com cinzas no seu sopro. Eles se abraçaram e se separaram, fizeram a vontade do acoplador. Desde antes dos tempos Ele me quis e agora não pode me querer fora daqui ou jamais existente. Uma *lex eterna* permanece à volta Dele. É essa então a substância divina pela qual Pai e Filho são consubstanciais?[18]

Leopold Bloom's monologue will consist in predominantly short phrases and words, frequently monosyllabic, sometimes even reduced by the loss of the first or of the last syllable, projecting in this way, by means of a staccato rhythm, the objectiveness of his scientific mind.

> I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I? Twentyeight I was. She twentythree. When we left Lombard street west something changed. Could never like it again after Rudy. Can´t bring back time. Like holding water in your hand. Would you go back to then? Just beginning then. Would you?[19]
> Eu era mais feliz então. Ou será que eu era? Ou será que eu sou agora eu? Eu tinha vinteeoitoanos. Ela vinteetrês. Quando partimos de Lombard Street oeste

> alguma coisa mudou. Nunca pôde ser a mesma coisa depois de Rudy. Não se pode trazer o tempo de volta. É como segurar água na mão. Você voltaria para aquela época? Apenas começando então. Voltaria?[20]

Molly Bloom's monologue, however, devoid of any kind of punctuation, will flow uninterruptedly, unrestrained and uncontrolled, pouring from a mind completely free from any chain of whatsoever kind.

> the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouthand it was leapyear like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is[21]
> o sol brilha para você ele disse no dia em que estávamos deitados entre os rododendros no topo de Howth com aquele terno de tweed cinza e seu chapéu de palha o dia em que eu fiz ele se declarar a mim sim primeiro eu lhe dei um pedacinho do bolo de sementes aromáticas que eu tinha na boca e era um ano bissexto como agora sim 16 anos atrás meu Deus depois daquele longo beijo eu quase perdi a respiração sim ele disse que eu era uma flor da montanha sim assim somos todas flores o corpo de uma mulher sim isso foi uma coisa verdadeira que ele disse em sua vida e sol brilha para você hoje sim foi por isso que eu gostei dele porque eu vi que ele compreendia ou sentia o que uma mulher é[22]

Music being such a paramount trait in Joyce's writings, it is not surprising to notice the significant role it plays in *Finnegans Wake*. This is the reason why, when asked by Terence White Gervais if the book was "a blending of literature and music", Joyce replied, flatly: "No, it's pure music".[23]

Having all these elements in mind, and realizing the importance and beauty of Joyce's language, I felt even more frightened at the defying task of translating *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, with its innovating style, the remarkable relevant sonority of its words, the melody, cadence and rhythm of his sentences and phrases. Quoting, however, again, Ortega y Gasset's words that "everything truly human is very, very difficult" and, what's more, that "to declare its impossibility is not an argument against the possible splendor of the translator's task",[24] I decided to carry my reader to Joyce's language.

Thus, although I was quite aware of the diversity of both languages, with their own melody, cadence, and rhythm, I have attempted to transfer to Portuguese, as much as possible, Joyce's peculiar and outstanding style. I have, then, preserved Joyce's

repetition of words and connectives, which he used either to suggest the psychic development of Stephen Dedalus, or to lend greater musicality to his language.

In the case of repetition, Joyce often uses the *ing* form – which in English stands for both the present participle and the gerund – on account of the rhythm and the melody of its sound. In my translation I have turned it into either the present participle or the gerund, which confers different forms in Portuguese. For the sake of preserving the original cadence and sound in the Brazilian context, where Joyce used *opening, closing, locking, unlocking,* I used our gerund "*abrindo, fechando, trancando, destrancando"*, or still where he made use of *sobbing and sighing, gurgling and rattling in the throat* I turned it into "*soluçando e suspirando, gorgolhando e chocalhando na garganta"*. Yet for Joyce's *a hot burning stinging tingling blow,* I have used our present participle, which I considered, then, more musical and rhythmic: *"um golpe formigante, ardente, escaldante e quente.*

To my surprise, there were situations in the text in which the typical English poetic alliteration turned up spontaneously in my Brazilian version, in spite of not being present in the original, as for instance the initial sibilant Brazilian sound of **c** in "s*eu terno* c*inzento* c*ingido por um* c*into" – his belted grey suit* – or the labial initial sound in *"*l*endo uma* l*enda em um* l*ivro" – reading a legend out of the book.*

I have also preferably placed the Portuguese objective pronouns before the verbs, not only because it is a softer Brazilian usage, but also because I have occasionally found such measure necessary to make the narrative more melodious, harmonious and rhythmic. The same was also done in regard to the position of the adjective in the sentence, either preceding or following the noun, for the sake of retaining the music and cadence of the linguistic construction.

Seeing that rhythm was always of such importance to Joyce, for in his unpublished essay "A Portrait of the Artist" of 1904 he had already referred to the "individuating rhythms" of his characters, I decided to keep his punctuation whenever I could, in spite of some difference of usage in Portuguese, for in my opinion his long sentences without any coma, alternating with shorter ones full of comas, meant his way of bringing his own rhythm into his language.

In my translation, I have intended to respect what was fundamental to Joyce, that is, the music of his words, combining it with fidelity to his style. I could not forget what he once said to a Danish lady, Mrs. Kastor Hansen, when it was suggested to him that she was to translate *Ulysses*. Calling upon her without notice, he introduced himself to her by saying: "I am James Joyce. I understand that you are to translate *Ulysses*, and I have come from Paris to tell you not to alter a single word"[25] . (*James Joyce* 692). Thus I should not think it fair to incur Joyce's displeasure or disapproval by creating upon his work.

Notes

1 Schleiermacher, in Schulte, 1992, 42.

2 Idem, 48
3 Ortega Y Gasset, in Schulte, 1992, 100.
4 Idem, P. 99
5 Joyce, 1968,7
6 Joyce, 1992, 17
7 Joyce, 1968, 162
8 Joyce, 1992, 164
9 Joyce, 1968, 169
10 Joyce, 1992, 170
11 Joyce, 1968, 13.
12 Joyce, 1992, 23.
13 Joyce, 1968, 41.
14 Idem, 59.
15 Idem, 41.
16 Idem, 45.
17 Joyce, 1986, 32
18 The translation is mine although not yet published.
19 Joyce, 1986, 137
20 Mine the translation.
21 Joyce, 1986, 643
22 Mine the translation.
23 Ellmann, 1983, 703.
24 Ortega y Gasset, opus cit., 99
25 Ellmann, opus cit, 692

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Translating Oscar Wilde and Liam O'Flaherty

Flavia Maria Samuda*

Abstract: *Should the translator cater for the needs of the writer or for those of the reader? Should he/she remain as close to every single word of the original text as possible, sacrificing if necessary fluency and clarity; or should she/he interpret the text in a manner that ignores the spirit and foreign nature (i.e., tempo, character, concepts) of the original language as well as the author's peculiar way of thinking and feeling? Is there a third alternative, a middle way? Is every translation in fact an adaptation? I had to try to answer these questions when translating Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband and Liam O'Flaherty's The Informer. These are the questions one always faces when engaged in the challenging, often perilous, ever fascinating and enriching experience of translation.*

My aim in writing this paper was to share with fellow translators considerations and reflections, of my own and of others, on the act of translation. Despite the fact that as a professional translator I experience working conditions that differ from the conditions of those whose translations are part of their academic pursuits, I feel that we have much in common in the way of difficulties, enjoyment and enthusiasm. Therefore, I hope the insights, ideas, opinions and approaches that follow will be of some interest to translators in general.

According to the dictionaries, to translate a book is to express the sense of the book in another language, but is that really possible ? Of course perfect translations do not exist. They are just an ideal goal that we know we cannot possibly reach but of which nevertheless we must not lose sight. And this paradoxical combination of realism and idealism is the stuff translations are made of.

The Italian saying 'traduttore tradittore', meaning translator traitor, is a measure of a judgment that is unfair, simplistic and extremely harmful. Because of its negative assumption some translators may lower their standards and surrender to difficulties without a struggle. It may also give readers the defeatist attitude that sees all translations as hopelessly inaccurate. This is possibly the reason why poor translations are accepted

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by some publishers and by the public in general, who give the impression of not adopting any criteria regarding quality. They seem to believe that there is no such thing as quality where translations are concerned and that, since all translations are inaccurate, they are all more or less equivalent. Sometimes there appears to be a sort of conspiracy to advance the less than good, thereby implying that we should give up trying for any sort of too hard to reach excellence When, in fact, the quality of what we achieve depends on what we propose to achieve.

As so well expressed by Lord Goring in *An ideal husband*, 'Everything is dangerous. If it wasn't so, life wouldn't be worth living'…In translations as in life, it is all challenges, risks, adventure. Although perfection keeps eluding us, we keep trying to get as close to it as possible. This reaching for the moon, and when the moon is reached reaching for something else, is essentially human. It makes us restless and creative so that any degree of accomplishment and sanity is conditioned by the ability to push oneself to one's limits and to know when to stop.

Oscar Wilde made an art of pushing himself, of living on the edge. Brilliant, sensitive and versatile, he knew that it is impossible to be fully understood as a human being or as a writer. Using different forms of expression, he sent out signals as precise as signals can be pointing to what he really meant and could not possibly express despite his genius. This predicament we all share with him no matter how clever, educated or ignorant we are. Even when engaged in the most trivial conversation, we are not able to say exactly what we think and feel. Some will argue that we don't really want to say what we think and feel and that we actually hide behind language. But that is another story and does not concern us here. Here we start from the premise that we long to be capable of true communication, which of course we all do occasionally at least. The problem is that we are forced to give up saying many things because language has no words for them. There is much we have to leave unsaid and every time we pick a word to use we are abandoning many other possibilities. John Keats, acutely aware of the vast universe of the inexpressible, wrote: 'Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter.'

Naturally translations are particularly affected by the shortcomings of language. On top of all the difficulties inherent to communication, it has to deal with the characteristics and limitations of two languages, two human beings, two different sets of concepts, two different tempos and styles, two peculiar ways of thinking and feeling. Why attempt such a hopelessly complex task?

Certainly it is hard but, when one is lucky enough to translate works of quality, it is also a great pleasure to plunge into the universe of a writer and reveal it to others. Ideally the immersion should be complete. The translator should inhabit the territory of the work being translated, go around everything in it, look closely, listen, taste, touch, smell. It is not enough to picture in his mind what he is reading about, he has to believe it fully and study it like an actor learning a part. Therefore, translators should not be encouraged or expected to meet unreasonable deadlines. They should always be given enough time to do their work well, out of respect for themselves, the original author and

the readers. They should be allowed the gratification of not selling themselves short and of doing their very best. In José Ortega y Gasset's opinion 'no writer should denigrate the occupation of translating, and he should complement his own work with some version of an ancient, medieval, or contemporary text. It is necessary to restore the prestige of this labour and value it as an intellectual work of the first order'.

Intellectual work that is both demanding and modest. The expression 'reading between the lines' describes the active part we have to play if we want to try to understand our fellow man through his spoken or written word. And in order to read between the lines, we have to exercise our imagination, our creativity, therefore imprinting the information we receive with our own individuality, our own interpretation, our own knowledge. In *An Ideal Husband*, Lord Goring responds to anglophile Vicomte de Nanjac's 'I read all your English newspapers, I find them so amusing' with 'Then, my dear Nanjac, you must certainly read between the lines' [*Eu leio todos os jornais ingleses, acho que são tão divertidos. Então, meu caro Nanjac, você deve ler nas entrelinhas*.] Yet, the translator must be prepared to keep a low profile, to resist the temptation, sometimes strong, to modify or 'improve' the original text.

The French poet Paul Valéry comments on his translation of Virgil:

> After a while, as I went on with the translation – making, unmaking sacrificing here and there, restoring as best I could what I had first rejected this labour of approximation with its little successes, its regrets, its conquests, and its resignations produced in me an interesting feeling, of which I was not immediately aware and which it would be better not to confess, if I cared about other readers than those reflective enough to understand it. […] I caught myself wanting to change something in the venerable text. It was a naïve and unconscious identification with the imagined state of mind of a writer in the Augustan age. […] At bottom there are always the same problems – that is, the same attitudes: the 'inner' ear alert for the possible, for what will murmur 'of itself' and, once murmured, will return to the condition of desire; the same suspense and the same verbal crystallizations; the same oriented sensitivity of the subjective vocabulary, as though all the words in the memory were watching their chance to try their luck in reaching the voice.

Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*, produced at a time when other playwrights were turning to realism, is a splendidly artificial play dedicated to the power of words. The characters seem to come to life in order to speak their lines. There is no feeling of things left unsaid for lack of means to express them. It seems to be all there by virtue of its sparkling irony that expresses it indirectly, allowing for, without seeming to demand, almost limitless 'reading between the lines'.

In fact a play about serious values, it mostly sounds flippant and trivial. In Act III, for example, Phipps, Lord Goring's butler, apologises for the buttonhole that does

not quite meet with his lordship's approval: 'I will speak to the florist, my lord. She has had a loss in her family lately, which perhaps accounts for the lack of triviality your lordship complains of in the buttonhole'. To which Lord Goring replies: 'Extraordinary thing about the lower class in England – they are always losing their relations'. And Phipps promptly concludes: 'Yes, my lord! They are extremely fortunate in that respect'. [*'Vou falar com a florista, senhor. Ela perdeu um membro da família recentemente, o que talvez explique a insuficiente inconseqüência da flor'. 'Coisa extraordinária o que acontece com a classe operária da Inglaterra - está sempre perdendo parentes'. 'É verdade, senhor! É muito afortunada nesse particular'.*]

The play tells the story of Sir Robert Chiltern, a presumptive ideal husband, politician and human being whose past has not been as honourable, honest and morally unassailable as it should be. On the verge of ruin, he is rescued by his best friend and the play's main character, Lord Goring who, by contrast to Sir Robert, is thought to be idle, frivolous and useless. Wilde states that Lord Goring, 'the first well-dressed philosopher in the history of thought', a gentleman with 'a well-bred expressionless face', is a romantic in spite of himself 'fond of' being misunderstood'. Very much like the author, of course. He is also the moral voice in the play. But even when uttering grave and surprisingly wise remarks, his sentences are beautifully well balanced, every word sounding crisp and fresh and exactly right. Moreover, he does not even then give up his clever maxims and witty repartees. When Sir Robert thanks him: 'You have enabled me to tell you the truth', he answers: 'Ah! The truth is a thing I get rid of as soon as possible! Bad habit, by the way. Makes one very unpopular at the club…with the older members. They call it being conceited. Perhaps it is' [*'Você me possibilitou dizer a verdade'. 'Ah, a verdade é uma coisa de que me livro logo que posso! Um mau hábito, aliás. Faz com que se perca a popularidade no clube [...] entre os membros mais velhos. Eles chamam de convencimento. Talvez seja'.*]

Some of the characters make no secret of the fact that they live in fantasyland and are not usually trying to communicate thoughts or feelings when they speak. They are just making entertaining noises to distract themselves and others from thoughts and feelings. They are wearing masks and are not prepared to take them off. Including, of course, the above- mentioned Phipps, the Ideal Butler, who is described as 'a mask with a manner'.

Everyone displays wonderful language control and, apart from the rather pompous Sir Robert and his unmasked wife Gertrude, nearly everyone is a master of wit. Even Lady Markby who, according to the crafty and down to earth Mrs Cheveley, "talks more and says less than anybody I ever met", is remarkably articulate and amusing. The language she and all the other characters use is not only faultless but also rather formal in register, less due to the vocabulary than to its structural elegance, while sounding extremely easy on the ear. Complaining of her husband's behaviour she declares:

> [...] since Sir John has taken to attending the debates regularly, which he never used to do in the good old days, his language has become quite impossible. He

> always seems to think that he is addressing the House, and consequently whenever he discusses the state of the agricultural labourer, or the Welsh Church, or something quite improper of that kind, I am obliged to send all the servants out of the room. It is not pleasant to see one's own butler, who has been with one for twenty-three years, actually blushing at the sideboard, and the footmen making contortions in corners like persons in circuses. I assure you my life will be quite ruined unless they send John at once to the Upper House. He won't tale any interest in politics then, will he? The House of Lords is so sensible. An assembly of gentlemen'.[...] *desde que Sir John começou a freqüentar os debates regularmente, o que ele nunca fazia nos bons tempos, a linguagem dele ficou insuportável. Ele parece que pensa sempre estar se dirigindo ao plenário e, conseqüentemente, quando discute a situação do trabalhador agrícola, ou a Igreja do País de Gales, ou algum assunto inconveniente como esses, sou obrigada a mandar os criados saírem da sala. Não é agradável ver o seu próprio mordomo, com vinte e três anos de casa, chegando ao ponto de enrubescer ao lado do aparador, e os lacaios se contorcendo pelos cantos como se fossem de circo. Garanto-lhes que minha vida será totalmente destruída a não ser que mandem Sir John para a Câmara dos Lordes imediatamente. Aí ele perderá todo interesse na política, não é mesmo? A Câmara dos Lordes é tão sensata. Uma assembléia de cavalheiros.*]

In my translation of the speech I have attempted to maintain the rather formal elegance, which contributes to the humour, while making it sound good to the Brazilian ear.

Clearly Lady Markby, with her non-stop commentary on the mores and manners of her class and times, reflects Wilde's fierce criticism of English nineteenth century society even more than other characters in the play:

> Season as it goes on produces a kind of softening of the brain. However, I think anything is better than high intellectual pressure. That is the most unbecoming thing there is. It makes the noses of the young girls so particularly large. And there is nothing so difficult to marry as a large nose; men don't like them. […] In my time, of course, we were taught not to understand anything. That was the old system, and wonderfully interesting it was. I assure you that the amount of things I and my poor dear sister were taught not to understand was quite extraordinary. [...] *à* medida que a Estação vai passando, provoca nas pessoas uma espécie *de amolecimento cerebral. No entanto, acho qualquer coisa* preferível a uma forte pressão intelectual. Isso é a coisa mais deselegante que existe.Faz os narizes das moças acentuadamente grandes. E não há *nada mais* difícil de casar do que um nariz grande; os homens não gostam. [...] No meu tempo, naturalmente, nos ensinavam a não entender nada. Era o sistema antigo e era incrivelmente interessante. Eu lhes garanto que era extraordinária a quantidade

de coisas que eu e minha pobre e querida *irmã tínhamos que aprender a não entender.*]

Occasionally, however, she gives hints to the fact that she is not so absolutely feather-brained as she may seem: 'Nothing is so dangerous as being too modern. One is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly. I have known many instances of it'. [*Nada é tão perigoso como ser moderna demais. Fica-se com uma tendência a virar antiquada de repente. Conheço vários exemplos disso.]*

What can a translator do but relish Wilde's superb dry humour and style, and approach the task with the determination to be as faithful to his spirit and as close to his words as humanly possible? And that is the attitude that seems appropriate whoever the author may be. An attitude of respect for the creative artist and his work, for the tone of the original language and the author's rhythm and style. All this should be accomplished without sacrificing fluency and clarity. The reader must be made to travel to what is foreign to him, which is an integral part of the enriching exercise of reading, while being given the means to appreciate it.

Not easy to do, I grant you, when you realize that the pictures that come to one's mind depend on one's individual and linguistic experience. Suffice to say that different people have different mental pictures of things as ordinary as an apple, for example. To some it is a sweet red fruit; to others, a rather acid green one, while still others wouldn't know how to picture an apple. A language reflects the instincts, climate, ways of behaviour and thought of the people who speak it as their mother tongue. A responsible translator cannot afford to ignore these facts and should make use of explanatory footnotes whenever necessary. Transposing an original cultural image, for instance, to the reader's cultural environment seems to me to be a lack of respect for both the author, for obvious reasons, and for the reader, who is denied an insight into the foreign culture. The other night I was watching TV and saw and heard more or less the following. Original text : 'You're only interested in photographs that show cleavages.' Translation: 'You're only interested in photographs that show mini skirts'. The translator disregarded the fact that in America men are supposed to have a rather obsessive interest in female breasts, and transformed it into the supposedly Brazilian male equally obsessive interest in the female behind, thus making watchers believe the latter to be a universal complaint. What does it matter, you may ask, unless one is a psychologist or psychoanalyst? To me, a translator, it matters a great deal as a sign of a tendency to spare readers and watchers the effort of becoming aware of cultural differences. An unrealistic denial of these differences makes it more difficult, not easier, for different peoples to understand each other. It plagues people with misapprehensions and misplaced assumptions

concerning others, supported by the old cliché that 'people are the same everywhere.' Yes, of course we are all basically the same species, but the means and ways by which we express and exercise our basic sameness vary greatly. Moreover, 'one thinks differently in every language', affirms Arthur Schopenhauer. I believe that to deny this is to refuse to widen our intellectual and emotional horizons. Respect for the foreign in the original source-language text brings with it a desire to adjust and adapt to the foreign. According to J. P.Vinay and J. Darbelnet, the act of translation demands some met linguistic knowledge, which is supported at the end of the day by the knowledge of man, his philosophy and his environment, and this not only makes it humanistic but also gives it a place among the most spirit-shaping activities. In the words of Octavio Paz,

> [...] while translation overcomes the differences between one language and another, it also reveals them more fully. Thanks to translation, we become aware that our neighbours do not speak and think as we do. On the one hand, the world is presented to us as a collection of similarities; on the other, as a growing heap of texts, each slightly different from the one that came before it [...] No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase. However, the inverse of this reasoning is also entirely valid. All texts are originals because each translation has its own distinctive character. Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text.

Arthur Waley argues:

> A French scholar wrote recently with regard to translators: *They should make* themselves invisible behind the texts and, if fully understood, the texts will *speak for themselves.* Except in the rather rare case of plain concrete statements such as *The cat chases the mouse*, there are seldom sentences that have exact word-to-word equivalent in another language. It becomes a question of choosing between various approximations…I have always found that it was I, not the texts, that had to do the talking. [...] Every word holds a certain number of implicit meanings; when a word is combined with others to make up a phrase, one of those meanings is activated and becomes predominant.

In the case, for example, of idiomatic expressions, once one has looked in vain for a parallel expression, words in the target language must be found to communicate the idea of the original. According to Eugene A. Nida in *Language Structure and Translation*, 'The relevant unit of meaning for the translator is not the word, but the message'. Literal translations often sound awkward, can distort the original meaning

and be said to betray the object of the author. A case in point is Mabel Chiltern's response to Lady Chiltern: 'I assure you she is coming upstairs, as large as life and not nearly so natural'. Instead of choosing to keep the word *life* ('grande como a *vida* e bem menos natural'*)* in a literal translation so as to use Mabel's pun, thus not only forcing the Portuguese words into an expression that does not exist in Portuguese, but also altering the meaning, I opted to communicate what the expression actually signifies: '*Eu garanto que ela está subindo as escadas ostensivamente, em pessoa, e uma pessoa nem um pouco natural'*.

Some of the traps any translator worth his salt must be able to recognize as such are deceptive cognates that look similar or even identical but have acquired different meanings in different cultures. However, cognates are not just deceitful, many of them, relating to beings, things, concepts, abstractions, qualities and actions, 'hide' behind a meaning and give rise to delicate problems of non-translatability. Noam Chomsky stresses the fact that

> The existence of deep-seated formal universals [...] implies that all languages are cut to the same pattern, but does not imply that there is any point by point correspondence between particular languages. [...] The possibility of a reasonable procedure for translation between arbitrary languages depends on the sufficiency of substantive universals. In fact [...] there is little reason to suppose that reasonable procedures of translation are in general possible.

When Vladimir Nabokov declares that 'The person who desires to turn a literary master-piece into another language, has only one duty to perform, and this is to reproduce with *absolute exactitude* (the italics are mine) the whole text, and nothing but the text', he seems to be arguing for as literal a translation as possible and to be asserting his disregard of linguistic conditions that do not allow for absolutes. However, later on in his article, referring directly to his own translation of Pushkin's *Onegin*, he states that he had to give up translating the poem in rhyme and that 'It is possible to translate *Onegin* with *reasonable accuracy* (the italics are mine) by substituting for the fourteen rhymed tetrameter lines of each stanza fourteen unrhymed lines of varying length, from iambic diameter to iambic pentameter'. In other words, this major author, possessing an extraordinary mastery of both the Russian and English languages, finds himself forced to compromise, to be contented with *reasonable accuracy* in his translation of a major poet. He tries to compensate for this by describing 'in a series of footnotes the modulations and rhymes of the text as well as all its associations and other special features'. It would seem that in fact he has not actually translated the poem, he has transposed it, which many consider the only way to deal with poetry. Nevertheless, when he affirms that 'The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase' and that 'anything but that (literal translation) is not truly a translation but an imitation, an adaptation or a parody', what he is really doing, I think, is echoing Rudolf Pannwitz's words:

Our translations, even the best, proceed from a false premise. […] They have a much greater respect for the little ways of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign work. The fundamental error of the translator is that he maintains the accidental state of his own language, instead of letting it suffer the shock of the foreign language. He must […] penetrate to the ultimate elements of language itself, where word, image, tone become one; he must widen and deepen his language through the foreign one.

That is to say, translation revitalizes language.

The Informer is quite a contrast in subject matter, atmosphere and style to *An Ideal Husband.* Written by Liam O' Flaherty, it is intense and filled with realistic descriptions of people, places and situations. Set against the background of 1920's Ireland, it deals seriously with serious life and death issues. All through the book, register and rhythm keep changing as one goes from the crude language of the uneducated to the smoother, more refined language of Mary McPhillip and Gallagher, and the powerful, expressive language of the author as narrator.

The novel follows the anti-hero Gypo Nolan's Calvary all the way to his assassination. And it carries us with it. Along the way, Gypo undergoes changes of circumstances and of attitude. A destitute and lonely underdog when first introduced to us, with no place in society or outside it, he goes from near despair to arrogance and, in the end, terror. His use of language reflects his different moods. Initially monosyllabic, he becomes talkative and loud from the moment he realizes he can make some money and thus give himself the luxury of a warm bed and plenty to eat, among other things. As he grows in stature in his own eyes, and no longer sees himself as a nobody, his confidence is reflected in his desire to express himself, or just hear himself. Frank McPhillip, his ex-companion and the man he will betray, notices it: 'Where the divil did ye get all the gab?' he cries out. 'I never knew ye to let out all that much talk in a day, or maybe a whole week.' he adds, and asks '[...] what ails ye?' [*Que diabo deu em você que tá tão tagarela? Nunca vi cê falá tanto num dia, até numa semana inteira [...] que bicho te mordeu?]* We, the readers, suspect that we know what 'ails' Gypo. We have been given a glimpse into his mind. 'A monstrous idea had prowled into his head, like an uncouth beast straying from a wilderness into a civilized place where little children are alone.'[*Uma idéia monstruosa invadira a cabeça dele, como uma fera bravia que tivesse se desviado da floresta e penetrado em um lugar civilizado ondes criancinhas estão sozinhas.*]

O'Flaherty counterpoints the vivid scenes of Gypo in the external world with Gypo inside his own head. In his head Gypo tries to understand what happens to him. It is there that this violent, bullying, simple-minded giant on the rampage succeeds in moving us. Often making use of very effective figurative language, the author exposes Gypo's pathetic humanity, his ordeal, his voiceless, excruciating pain.

> Gypo's mind was looking at that uncouth ogre that was prowling about in his brain. […] Two facts rumbled about in his brain, making that loud primeval noise, which is the beginning of thought […] First, the fact of his meeting with McPhillip. Second, the fact of his having no money to buy a bed for the night. These two facts stood together in an amorphous mass [...] [*A mente* de Gypo estava olhando para o ogro bravio que rondava à espreita em seu *cérebro.* […] *Dois fatos reboavam em seu cérebro, fazendo aquele* barulho alto e primitivo que é o começo do pensamento [...] Primeiro, o fato de seu encontro com McPhillip. Segundo, o fato de que ele não tinha dinheiro *para pagar por uma cama para passar a noite*.]

The deed having been done, Gypo soon becomes aware of his guilt and of the threat that the Revolutionary Organization represents to him. They are bound to suspect him, hunt him and execute him. From then on he is on the run enjoying few confident or peaceful intervals. During one of these intervals, Gypo once again shows his mind to be split into two parts one of which feels foreign to him:

> Into his resting mind pleasant memories came, distant pleasant memories like day-dreams on a summer day, dreamt on the banks of a rock-strewn river, among the flowering heather. They were memories of his youth. They came to him in a strange bewildered manner, as if afraid of the dark, ferocious mind into which they came. Gypo stared at them fiercely, with bulging lips, as if they were enemies taunting him. Then gradually he softened towards them. Then a mad longing seized him for the protection of the environment of his youth… [*Para sua mente repousada vieram agradáveis* recordações, recordações distantes e agradáveis como se estivesse sonhando acordado em um dia de verão, sonhando às margens de um rio cheio de pedras, no meio da urze florida. Eram recordações de sua juventude. Chegaram a ele de um modo estranho e desnorteado, como se temessem a mente escura e feroz na qual penetravam.. Gypo olhou para elas fixamente, com olhos ameaçadores e lábios protuberantes, como se fossem inimigas escarnecendo dele. Depois, aos poucos, foi se enternecendo com elas. Então tomou conta dele uma louca saudade do ambiente protetor de sua *mocidade* [...]
>
> And, a hundred and forty pages later, before the Revolutionary Court:
>
> A succession of terrors flitted through his mind. They were not ideas or thoughts, but almost tangible terrors that seemed to materialize in his brain as the result of the reasoning of some foreign being. His cunning and his assurance were gripped suddenly by that amazing foreigner and hurled out of him, clean out of him into oblivion, like two bullets fired into the air.

In my translation of the above passage I substituted *head* for *mind* in the first sentence. My reason for doing it is that the word *mente*, which in Portuguese is mostly

used in specific contexts, would sound clumsy to me in the sentence. I felt I was not betraying the original since O'Flaherty often uses *head* and *mind* as interchangeable synonyms. Another problem was the language of the last sentence, so vivid, so beautifully balanced. The literal translation of *clean out of him* would be: *completamente (para) fora dele* and the last sentence would then read: *Sua astúcia e sua autoconfiança foram agarradas subitamente por aquele espantoso estranho e arremessadas para fora dele, completamente para fora dele e para dentro do esquecimento, como duas balas atiradas no ar*. I did not think this sounded at all good so I chose to ignore the words *clean out of him* and render their sense instead. And what they are doing is emphasizing the preceding *hurled out of him*, which the repetition emphasizes anyway. Only they are doing it while preserving the rhythm and 'melody' that a literal translation would destroy, I think. I do believe that O'Flaherty wouldn't have minded as I believe that to be faithful to the author is also to try not to destroy the beauty he has created with his language. Therefore my final version of the passage was: *Uma sucessão de terrores passaram rapidamente por sua cabeça. Não eram idéias ou pensamentos, e sim terrores quase tangíveis que pareciam se materializar em seu cérebro como resultado do raciocínio de algum ser estranho para ele. Sua astúcia e sua autoconfiança foram agarradas subitamente por aquele espantoso estranho e arremessadas para fora dele, arremessadas para fora dele e para dentro do esquecimento, como duas balas atiradas no ar.*

Oh, the fascinating intricacy of languages!.. How did it all begin? The Segond Bible, published in 1910, has its version:

> Those are the sons of Sem, according to their families, their tongues, their countries, their nations. Such are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, their nations. And it is from them that emerged the nations which spread over the earth after the flood. All the earth had a single tongue and the same words. As they had left the origin they found a plain in the country of Schinear, and they dwelt there. They said to one another: Come! Let us make bricks, and bake them in the fire. And brick served them as stone, and tar served as cement. Again they said: Come! Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose summit touches the heavens [...]

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