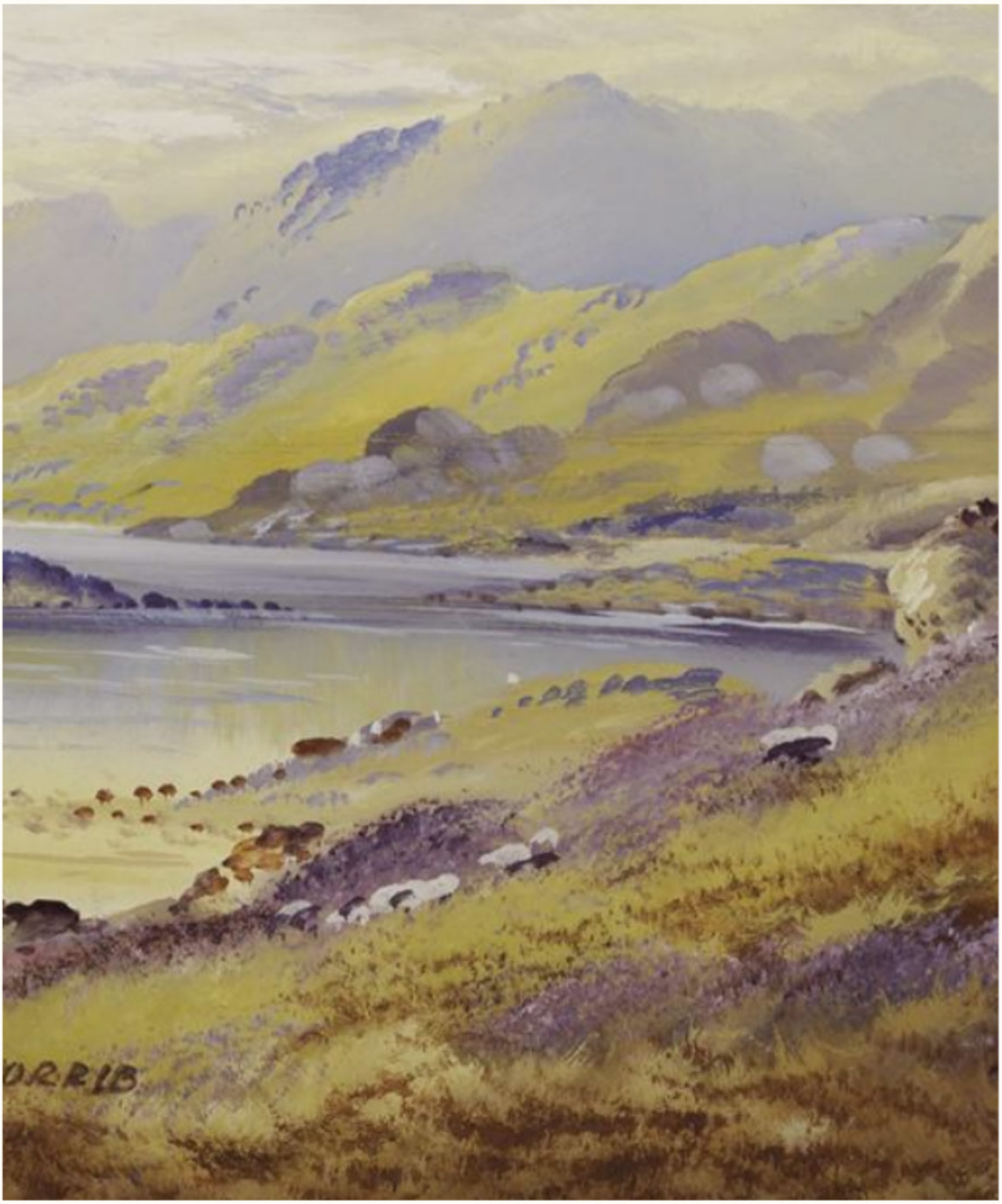
ABEI Journal

The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies



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The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies

Editors
Mariana Bolfarine
Laura P.Z. Izarra

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Editorial Address

ABEI (Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses)
Universidade de São Paulo – FFLCH/DLM
Av. Prof. Luciano Gualberto, 403
05508-010 São Paulo – SP – Brasil
Tel. (0055-11) 3091-5041 or 3091-4296
Fax: (0055-11) 3032-2325
e-mail: journal.abeibrasil@gmail.com

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Diagramação
Victor Augusto da Cruz Pacheco

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Introduction

It is with great satisfaction that we introduce the current General Issue 26.2 of the *ABEI Journal* which is open to contributors that share their work in progress and interests in present topics represented by Irish writers.

The Articles section opens with "Sinéad Gleeson and Ecocriticism: an Irish female voice responds to the Brazilian landscape," in which Nícea Nogueira and Beatriz Redmond underscore connections between Ireland and Brazil focusing on an essay that was especially included in the Brazilian translation of Sinéad Gleeson's *Constellations: reflections from life* (2019), by scholar Maria Rita Drumond Viana.

The next article, "Because I'm Struggling": Psyche, Hysteria, and Therapy in David Ireland's *Cyprus Avenue*," by Maha Alatawi, is included in the Drama section, and it skillfully explores the role of therapy in the mind of the character, Eric, and in the socio-historical context in which he is inserted.

The work of the Irish writer Sebastian Barry is approached in "Trauma and Memory in Sebastian Barry's *Old God's Time* , " by Elisa Abrantes, in which Barry's novel is explored in the light of the trauma theory framework.

In "Phantasms as Signposts of the Invisible," Hedwig Schwall revisited Yeats's theory of the mask where the poet highlights the "life-long secret image" from a psychological perspective using Lacan's theory of the self as well as Schilder's body image and Merleau-Ponty's idea of "the flesh." She supports her argument with some examples from Yeats's famous poems.

Two insightful articles comprise the section "Voices from Latin America". "Relations between Chile and Ireland: a story of four moments", by Fabián Bustamante Olguín, tackles the Spanish colonial period, the independence and the process of integration and trade in the nineteenth century as well as the religious influence in the twentieth century. The second article, "Pressupostos, salvo engano, de uma divergência nada silenciosa: natividade, Abel Barros Baptista e Roberto Schwarz" ("Assumptions, unless one is mistaken, of a far from silent divergence: nativity, Abel Barros Baptista and Roberto Schwarz"), by Fábio Pomponio Saldanha, investigates the dichotomy outside/inside, in terms of the critique on Brazilian writer Machado de Assis and the place of the "foreigner."

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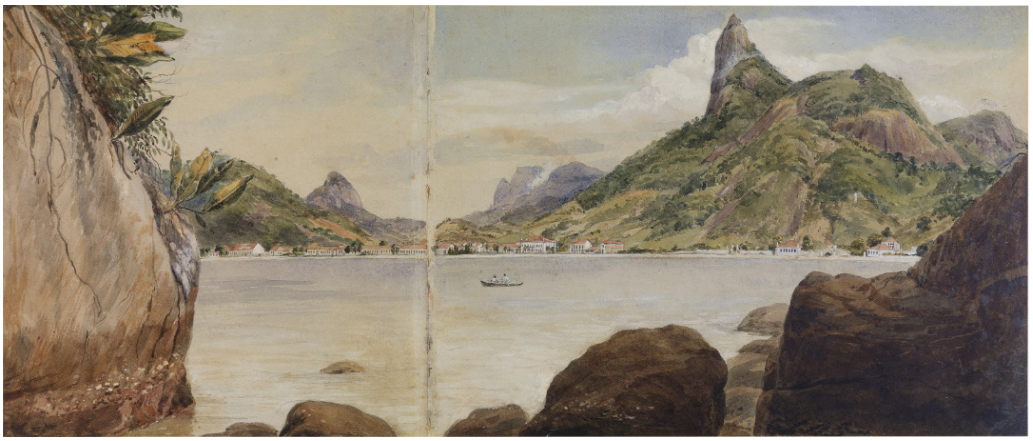
The reviews section includes *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* (2023), by Munira Mutran, reviewed by Camila Franco Batista, *Intermezzo* (2024), by Sally Rooney, reviewed by Bárbara Bom Angelo, and Patrick Holloway's *The Language of Remembering*, reviewed by Mariana Bolfarine.

The Editors



"Corcovado visto da Baía de Botafogo" (1825-1826), de Charles Landseer. Acervo de Iconografia / Instituto Moreira Salles. Available at https://www.brasilianaiconografica.art.br/obras/19337/the-corcovado-from-opposite-side-of-botafogo-bay

Articles

ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies, v. 26, n. 2, 2024, pp. 13-22.

Sinéad Gleeson and Ecocriticism: An Irish Female Voice Responds to the Brazilian Landscape

Sinéad Gleeson e a Ecocrítica: Uma voz irlandesa feminina responde à paisagem brasileira

Nícea Nogueira
Beatriz Redmond

Abstract: *In a series of 23 short texts about the travel impressions of an Irish woman experiencing South America for the first time, writer Sinéad Gleeson presents her perspective on Brazilian nature, culture, language and literature in her essay "I know what spring is like: Clarice, crônicas and Corcovado" (2021). The essay was translated into Portuguese in 2023 by Maria Rita Drumond Viana and added to the Brazilian edition of the book* Constellations: reflections from life *(2019). Gleeson reports on the trip she took to Santa Catarina and Rio de Janeiro in 2018, highlighting how she noticed similarities with Ireland, especially regarding religion, and how she felt welcomed and comfortable in tropical lands. Even when she mentions Clarice Lispector, Gleeson perceives the writer in relation to non-human characters in the Brazilian landscape. This study aims to evoke the appreciation of the human and non-human world by Gleeson from the perspective of ecofeminist environmental ethics. Since Ecocriticism sees how the presence of nature and natural elements can influence the meanings of literary work, we propose an interpretative and subjective reading of Gleeson's essay and how its descriptions of nature can be signified beyond the text.*

Keywords: *Ecocriticism; Sinéad Gleeson; Brazilian nature.*

Resumo: *Em uma série de 23 textos curtos sobre impressões de viagem de uma irlandesa na primeira experiência na América do Sul, a escritora Sinéad Gleeson apresenta sua perspectiva sobre a natureza, a cultura, a língua e a*

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literatura do Brasil em seu ensaio "Eu sei o que é primavera: Clarice, crônicas e Corcovado" (2021). Esse texto foi traduzido para a língua portuguesa por Maria Rita Drumond Viana em 2023 e foi incluído na edição brasileira de Constellations: reflections from life *(2019). Gleeson relata a viagem que fez para Santa Catarina e Rio de Janeiro em 2018, destacando como percebeu semelhanças com a Irlanda, especialmente no que concerne à religião, e como se sentiu bem-vinda e confortável em terras tropicais. Mesmo quando menciona Clarice Lispector, Gleeson compreende a escritora em relação a personagens não humanos na paisagem brasileira. Este estudo pretende evocar a apreciação do mundo humano e não humano feita por Gleeson a partir da perspectiva da ética ambientalista ecofeminista. Pela Ecocrítica observar a presença da natureza e seus elementos influenciando o significado da obra literária, propomos uma leitura interpretativa e subjetiva do ensaio de Gleeson e como suas descrições da natureza podem ter significados além do texto.*

Palavras-chave: *Ecocrítica; Sinéad Gleeson; Natureza Brasileira.*

Introduction

At the end of 2023, the Irish writer Sinéad Gleeson came to Brazil to release Constellations: reflections from life, her first book translated into Brazilian Portuguese. The translator Professor Maria Rita Drumond Viana, also an ABEI (Brazilian Association of Irish Studies) member, was with her during FLIP (International Literary Festival of Paraty) and she told us that a new chapter was added to the book which did not appear in the English version. That chapter was titled "I Know What Spring is Like: Clarice, Crônicas and Corcovado" and it caught our attention because it was all about Brazil, its landscape, its culture, its literature, and its people.

The extra chapter in the Portuguese version was first published in *Granta*, a British literary magazine, two years after Constellations was released in Ireland and two years before Gleeson's second coming to our country. In it, she describes the trip she took to Florianópolis, in Santa Catarina state, and then to Rio de Janeiro in 2018, highlighting how she perceived similarities with Ireland, and how she felt welcomed and comfortable in tropical lands.

We noticed another change in the translated volume of *Constellations*: its subtitle "reflections from life" was replaced by the sentence "essays from the body," not any ordinary body but a female body talking about Gleeson's experience of awe and amazement for Brazilian

nature. From this moment on, it was clear to us that reading the essay "I Know What Spring is Like" under Ecocriticism would make a world of difference. The essay is a series of 23 short texts – that we call sections here – about Sinéad Gleeson's travel impressions in South America for the first time and it presents her perspective on Brazilian nature.

Considering Ecocritical studies emerged in the context of the environmentalist and ecofeminist movements at the end of the twentieth century, unfolding into different approaches, the ecocritical view, in general, is focused on representations of nature, the environment and the human-nature relationship. Thus, ecocriticism can be defined as a critical approach that aims to analyze artistic and literary works from an ecological point of view. Through it, text and material reality meet to construct meanings and reflections on the relationship between humans and non-humans. According to Rueckert (1996, 107), "the conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities – the human, the natural – can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere".

***

Sinéad Gleeson's text can take on different meanings depending on the way we interpret and experience it. When reading it prioritizing natural and non-human elements, the meaning of the essay is constructed around that perspective. Our approach aims to transcend the text so the exercise of understanding and analyzing it involves social and environmental awareness. In this regard, the interdisciplinarity of the field of ecocritical studies opens space for other areas of knowledge, such as the fields of philosophy, sociology, ethics, gender studies, and cultural studies and studies on the Anthropocene, a new geological age characterized by the impact of man on Earth, influencing on climate and the environment.

In the essay "I Know What Spring is Like: Clarice, crônicas and Corcovado", we understand that an approach to ecocriticism may clarify the relationship between its literary qualities and the physical environment of a specific setting: the Brazilian landscape. According to Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) in her text "Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis", ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to Literature.

Having that in mind, we intend to answer the following questions: How is Brazilian nature represented in the essay? What ecological features does Gleeson's essay address to?

What is her purpose? To do so, we have selected some passages of "I Know What Spring is Like" we would like to present here.

Sinéad Gleeson starts the essay mentioning Brazil through the Atlantic Ocean now so distant from her birthplace in the section titled "Changing narratives": "Warm, non-European and a vast ocean away from Lourdes and Ireland. I couldn't have known it then, but there were many connections – other statues, a different kind of mysticism– waiting for me below the equator" (2021, 2). Then, in the section "Crossing the Atlantic", she has a glimpse of Brazilian shores from the airplane: "From São Paulo, we fly down the coast, frills of waves on the sandbanks beneath. A lone island appears, like a stone on a blanket" (2).

Already sightseeing in Florianópolis, the first non-human being described with admiration is a snake: "The island is home to the jararacuçu, one of the most feared snakes in South America, which grows to over two metres long. In a single bite it can inject enough venom to kill sixteen people" (2).

One of the postcards of the capital of Santa Catarina portrays a bridge that was noticed by Gleeson and reminds her of the famous American bridge on the west coast, also a gateway to foreigners: "Florianópolis is an island connected to the mainland of Santa Catarina state by three bridges, including the Hercílio Luz Bridge, which is older than San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge" (3). Having a moment of peace and quiet, when she settled in and managed some rest, Gleeson's attention was drawn upwards to something coloured by insistence: "The hotel path is lined with palm trees, tall against the insistent blue of the sky" (3).

She kept some words in Portuguese language highlighted in italics when she was talking about seasons in a poetic way in a passage that justifies the title of the essay: "It is primavera – spring – and the pool is empty, and it feels disorienting to have left winter behind in Dublin. Everything back home is dead or sleeping, each bud and bee, but here, in the distance, summer is readying, stitching itself into an ostentatious costume of colours and textures" (Gleeson, 2021, p. 3).

The feeling of hospitality comes first from the Brazilian environment while the sound of animals greets Gleeson making her feel good in Florianópolis, when she says: "Alone, I tune in to the surroundings, something sweet-smelling on the air, the sound of a bird's intermittent song, a kind of welcome" (3). In an instant, the landscape is her compass after feeling dizzy on arrival to such a distant land and she remarks: "The urge is usually to walk, to orient myself

and figure out where I am on the map, how far I am from the sea or the hills. There's a surfeit of both here" (3).

In the section "Flor das cinco chagas", or five wound flower, an allusion to Christ's crucifixion, Gleeson still seeks orientation from natural elements amid bugs and ends up savoring the most famous Brazilian cocktail and vegetable salads with local fruit in Conceição Lagoon, a tourist spot in Florianópolis. Our cuisine gives her a "sense of grace, of the short-lived and ephemeral", as she mentions:

> Time feels different, expanded. Up hills and round slivers of roads, looking out over the island. The sun fades, the light shifts incrementally. The restaurant is at Ponta das Almas beside Lagoa da Conceição in the northern part of the island. As if being surrounded by water is not enough, there is also a large subtropical lagoon, connected to the ocean by a narrow channel. At the end of a wooden jetty is the clean white line of a sailboat. Insects swarm, so we move inside and sample Brazil's national drink, a caipirinha, made with cachaça, sugar and lime. It is a delicious jolt, tart and refreshing, lime stinging the roof of my mouth. Salads of unfamiliar fruit arrive: carambola, açai, pitanga, the dark flesh glistening. Brazil accounts for over half the world's production of maracuja – passion fruit. (3)

After a brief account of Brazilian history remembering the emperor Don Pedro the Second and his daughter Princess Isabel from colonial times, Sinéad Gleeson is surprised by a feature of the skyline that was not named yet: "Despite the bridges, the island feels isolated from the mainland. A mountain range runs along the opposite bay, and when I ask the name no one knows. 'It doesn't have a name,' says J, and I like the idea of this nameless mountain, looming over the land" (5-6).

Clarice Lispector, a twentieth-century famous Brazilian writer Gleeson was fascinated with, comes along to guide her experience with nature and animals: "On the narrow path down to the beach, a massive four-foot Teju lizard emerges from the bushes. I jump, and yield to let him pass. He plods slowly into the greenery. On the strand, the sea is pale blue above a floor of sand, cooling our feet. The Teju brings to mind Lispector's many fictionalised animals: chickens, cockroaches, dogs" (6). The teju lizard reminds her of Lispector's short stories with animals. As Garrard (2006) points out, Ecocriticism has a permanent focus on the subjectivity of the non-human as well as on the issue of problematic frontiers between humans and other

creatures. In the passage above, the lizard, the pale blue sea and Lispector's animals interact to build an image of harmony and recollection in the landscape.

Gleeson has encountered Brazilian nature also in Lispector's novels. In the same section, she remembers a sea animal closely related to Clarice's work: "I hover by a large fish tank, watching two jellyfish, all albumen, gyrating in the neon blue. In Portuguese, the word for jellyfish is água-viva, an echo of Lispector's many-tentacled novel of the same name, translucent and mysterious" (3). Clarice Lispector also works as a leitmotif, a sort of recurring theme from the first to the final line unifying the essay.

Sinéad Gleeson quotes a crônica by Lispector of March 1971: "Not to have been born an animal seems to be one of my secret regrets. Their call comes to me from some remote past and I can only respond with profound disquiet. Their call summons me" (6). Actually, Gleeson borrows the form of Lispector's chronicle to write her essay "I Know What Spring is Like". Thus, it resembles a collection of crônicas in Clarice's book Discovering the World (1992), translated into English by the late Giovanni Pontiero. Quoting the translator's definition, Gleeson explains that crônicas are "a genre peculiar to Brazil which allows poets and writers to address a wider readership on a vast range of topics and themes" (1). Throughout the essay, she keeps the word crônicas in Portuguese.

Heading out of Floripa, a shortened way of saying Florianópolis that Gleeson learns from the locals, she arrives in Rio de Janeiro where she does not feel prepared to face poverty in the streets of the former capital of the country. The title of the section 'Anything was possible; people of every sort ...' refers to Copacabana Avenue where her hotel was. On her way to one of the world's most famous beaches, she notes the favelas in carioca landscape: "We pass people living under the bridges and young men straddle the roadsides selling wares in large packs shrouded in plastic to keep them dry. The favelas are all over the city: Pavão up behind the Copacabana, Babilônia above Leme; Providência is considered to be the oldest favela, and Rocinha the most populous, with 100,000 inhabitants." (6). The Irish writer was appalled by poverty in the streets of Rio: "It's midweek and overcast, but there are still sellers and hustlers along the strip. Just off the avenida, two homeless women huddle asleep on the ground, oblivious to pedestrians" (7). Invisible people crowded tourist places, but Gleeson was able to see them.

Only Clarice Lispector's experience living in Rio de Janeiro city brings to the reader the urban landscape Sinéad Gleeson longed for. When visiting Leme neighborhood, Gleeson recalls:

> Clarice felt at home, at the end of Copacabana. On a wall along Caminho dos Pescadores (Fisherman's Way), sculptor Edgar Duvivier's bronze statue of Lispector sits against the backdrop of the beach, with her faithful dog Ulisses. Read even a little about Lispector's life, and there will be many references to her as an aloof hermit who avoided socialising, but she liked walking, and browsing the markets with her sons, though it is still a stretch to think of her as a flâneuse. But the city is the beating heart in so much of the work. If the narrative is elusive, working outside of chronology, the places in her work are a dropped pin: Catete, Leme, Cosme Velho, Botafogo. (7)

Feeling the weather cooler in Rio than Florianopolis she again focuses once more on the sky: "More unsettled and overcast, the sky all marbled grey. Before that evening's event, I head to the rooftop bar to take in the view, looking down over the sea" (7). On her cell phone, she searches for information on Copacabana shark attacks and finds out that there were several, some of them fatal. She also learns that in Recife, another Brazilian state capital and the city where Clarice Lispector was brought up, there were "fifty-six shark attacks, twenty-one fatal, the highest shark attack rate in the world." (7).

In the section "Ipanema", Clarice Lispector meets Sinéad Gleeson under family recollections triggered by her crônicas. Gleeson tells that "Unable to sleep, Lispector paces a terrace in the middle of the night, listening to and watching the waves. The sea at night is remote, lonely, and its darkness makes her think of all the people she loves, sleeping or socialising. Thousands of kilometres from here, my husband and children are doing just that, and will be easing their frames out of bed for the day ahead" (8). In Ipanema beach, the wind is up, and raindrops are skimming the waves in the bay.

Even the landscape Gleeson did not see but only heard fascinated her as it meant a political view of Brazilian female bodies. In the section titled "Lusófonos", she describes a work of art named Diva (Notari, 2020), an open-air installation accessible to the public free of charge in the state of Pernambuco in the northeastern region of Brazil:

> Diva, by artist Juliana Notari, appears on a hillside near a museum in Pernambuco state. Measuring thirty-three metres high, sixteen metres wide and two metres deep, it resembles a wound cut into the hill, but is in fact

> a giant vagina made of concrete and resin. Notari states that it is both, and its aim is to question "the relationship between nature and culture in our phallocentric and anthropocentric western society. (8)

Gleeson adds to the description of Diva that Juliana Notari is from Recife, like Clarice Lispector. Art and literature are inextricably interwoven in the essay and, as Gifford (2009) stresses, art is a central and fundamentally essential activity for Ecocriticism.

The ultimate landscape that took Sinéad Gleeson's breath away was Corcovado, a mountain in the middle of Rio de Janeiro. The 710 metre granite peak is located in the Tijuca Forest, a national park inside the city. In the section titled "Corcovado", she sees the statue of Christ the Redeemer close to Clarice Lispector:

> Statues keep showing up on this trip, and there is one left: one of the most famous, not just in Rio, or Brazil, but recognisable to millions around the world. After the Virgin Mary in Santo Antônio, and the bronze Clarice in Leme, it would be remiss to skip *Cristo Redentor*. Chunky clouds in metal shades crowd overhead as we buy tickets and board a bus to begin the ascent. Moving closer to the sky with each bend, rain rattling the windshield. Visibility is poor and it takes a few minutes to realise we're driving through a cloud. The pressure makes my ears pop. Everyone vigilantly watches for Cristo, waiting for him to emerge from the clouds in a suitably biblical manner. The route moves up through Tijuca Forest, now a national park, a massive expanse that spreads out from the urban centres of Copacabana and Botafogo. It's one of the world's largest urban forests, and features in Lispector's novel *An Apprenticeship, or The Book of Pleasures*. (8)

Sinéad Gleeson shares with us, her readers, her mystical experience of a divine embrace in the most gorgeous landscape of Rio de Janeiro, close to the statue half submerged in cloud, a melancholic deity, as she recalls:

> The fabled view is obscured, with no aerial vista of Copacabana or Sugar Loaf or the favelas. But we are swaddled in clouds, which almost makes up for it. Famous landmarks require a certain kind of procedure: circling, looking, waiting a respectable amount of time before pulling out the camera. A certain kind of behaviour is required with religious monuments too. Tilting my phone upwards, I try to figure out how to capture Jesus and his twenty-eight-metre arm span. Our host points out that at least this photo will be unique: the opposite of a postcard idyll, or sun-streaked selfies. A different

> kind of *memento*. I angle my phone up towards the concrete embrace of Christ and click. (8)

That click ends the section "Corcovado" and leads the essay to its final lines. She acknowledges that "life's circumferences are small, but intersections happen when we least expect them" (9). In doing so, Sinéad Gleeson unifies her human condition to the landscape of Rio de Janeiro where she can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere, as Rueckert (1996) has suggested.

Conclusion

This study aimed at evoking an appreciation of the human and non-human Brazil by Sinéad Gleeson from the perspective of ecofeminist environmental ethics stressing how the presence of nature can be signified beyond the meaning her text provides. We are ready now to answer those questions posed at the beginning of this presentation: "How is Brazilian nature represented in the essay?": It is perceived by an outsider sensitive to its meaning for our culture. Nature defines us and delineates who we are. Our people still fight against economic and political oppression and nature enables us to be strong. Sinéad Gleeson sees the Brazilian landscape as a treasure that outlines our culture. Her essay addresses the ecological features of this country that make sense to our people and anyone else who comes to live among us. Those features are exclusively Brazilian such as our mountains, shores, lakes, animals, food, religion, statues, and artists. They make us what we are: intelligent, hard-working and good-hearted people. Her purpose is to show our value to the world.

During her first trip to Brazil, Gleeson's female voice responded beautifully to our landscape and culture, mainly our literature personified in Clarice Lispector. One of Clarice's paintings titled "Hope" appears as a headline of the essay in *Granta Magazine.* Nature in our country speaks louder than we do. We shall say it represents the great nation we are, there is so much to learn here as well as to enjoy. We are proud of the place we come from as she is of hers. In Ireland, there are issues as important to its people as to our people. Talking to Brazilian students of Federal University of Santa Catarina about a book she had organized under the title *The Long Gaze Back: An Anthology of Irish Women Writers* in 2015, Gleeson understood that the themes of the short-stories discussed "seemed resonant with Brazil: social change, the

dominance of the Church, emigration, the ghosts of colonialism" (4). There is so much in common between Ireland and Brazil that she felt we are united as brothers and sisters.

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"Because I'm Struggling" Psyche, Hysteria, and Therapy in David Ireland's Cyprus Avenue

"Porque estou lutando" Psique, histeria e terapia em Cyprus Avenue, *de David Ireland*

Maha Alatawi

Abstract: *This essay examines David Ireland's 2016 play* Cyprus Avenue, *exploring the role of therapy in unravelling both the mind of the patient, a man named Eric, and his socio-cultural context. It investigates how social hysteria gives birth to personal and social hysteria and the role of history in this process. It also investigates the social, political and cultural questions facing Northern Ireland both in the past and today and how therapy has been used as an effective device for not just psychological but also social and political commentary. The essay inspects how the play helps the reader and the audience to delve into the mind of a mentally disturbed man and empathize with his mental illness, which is deeply rooted in his historical and social background.*

Keywords: *Psychotherapy; The Irish Question; Social Identity; Irish Home Rule; Sectarian Hatred.*

Resumo: *Este ensaio examina a peça* Cyprus Avenue*, de David Ireland, de 2016, explorando o papel da terapia para desvendar tanto a mente do paciente, um homem chamado Eric, quanto o seu contexto sociocultural. Investiga como a histeria social dá origem à histeria pessoal e social e o papel da história nesse processo. Também analisa as questões sociais, políticas e culturais enfrentadas pela Irlanda do Norte, tanto no passado quanto na atualidade, e como a terapia tem sido utilizada como um dispositivo eficaz, não só em relatos psicológicos, mas também em comentários sociais e políticos. O ensaio investiga como a peça auxilia o leitor e o público a mergulhar na mente de um homem com distúrbios mentais*

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e a exercer a empatia para com a sua doença mental, que está profundamente enraizada em seu contexto histórico e social.

Palavras-chave: *Psicoterapia; a questão irlandesa; identidade social; autogoverno irlandês; ódio sectário.*

Introduction

And I'm caught one more time/*Up on Cyprus Avenue*
And I'm caught one more time/Up on Cyprus Avenue
I may go crazy/Before that mansion on the hill
I may go crazy/Before that mansion on the hill
Van Morrison (1968)

David Ireland's *Cyprus Avenue*[1] exemplifies the enduring significance of storytelling as a tool for exploring and understanding the human psyche and the role of society in shaping mental illness. The character of Eric Miller, a Belfast Unionist, personifies the psychological dimension of the profound interplay between personal psychological processes and external social conflicts (Schrage-Früh and Tracy 2022, 63). Eric's psychological deterioration, culminating in his murder of his wife, daughter, and granddaughter, is a poignant illustration of how individual psychologies are molded and influenced by societal strains and traumas.

Co-produced by Dublin's Abbey Theatre and London's Royal Court Theatre in 2016 and set against the backdrop of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the play begins and ends with Eric attending a therapy session with Bridget, a clinical psychologist. The remaining eight scenes unfold through a sequence of flashbacks as Eric and Bridget engage in conversation. It gradually becomes clear that Eric is in the throes of a psychotic episode, stemming from traumatic experiences in his past. The precise nature of Eric's mental condition remains largely unspecified as does the trauma behind his issues, although there are references to a troubling background, such as his daughter stating "I think you had a very difficult childhood, a very traumatic childhood." (57) The underlying assumption is that Eric has been affected by experiences from his past, from his father being killed in WWII, through fighting in Northern Ireland over the question of Home Rule, to his hatred of Catholics and the subsequent uncertainty of Protestant/Catholic relations since the start of the peace process. The gradual

revelation and deterioration of Eric's state of mind is skillfully integrated into the dialogue, reaching such a level that he believes that his five-week-old granddaughter is Gerry Adams, the Irish Republican leader, in disguise. He looks into her "Fenian eyes" (16) and finds therein something which contrasts with his own loyalism. In order to prove his theory about the baby's identity to his daughter and wife, he draws a beard on the baby's face and adds a pair of glasses, before finally, fully caught up in his delusion, killing her in a frenzy for what he perceives to be the greater good ... "although my act was abhorrent, disgusting, apparently psychotic, it was better that I did it" (81).

Cyprus Avenue goes beyond storytelling to become a crucial exploration of the nexus between personal trauma and collective experience. The play accentuates the effects of political and social unrest on mental health, establishing itself as a vital resource for comprehending the complex relationship between individual mental well-being and larger societal forces. In this context, the psychotherapeutic aspects of *Cyprus Avenue* are particularly compelling. Eric's narrative not only provides a window into the psychological repercussions of prolonged conflict but also serves as a therapeutic lens, reinforcing the importance of intervention. It offers a unique opportunity for psychotherapists and mental health professionals to understand and address the deep-seated psychological impacts of socio-political turmoil. David Ireland's portrayal, through Eric's tragic journey, thus offers critical insights for therapeutic practice, emphasizing the importance of contextualizing individual mental health issues within broader societal and historical frameworks. This dual nature of *Cyprus Avenue* as both a literary masterpiece and a psychotherapeutic case study makes a significant contribution to both literary and mental health fields.

In addressing the events depicted, the play deals with one of the most important moments of European history, one which has had a devastating psychological effect on the Irish population, the Irish Question, also known as the question of home rule.[2] Susan McKeown states about the play that, "It reminded me of Stephen Jeffrey's comment in Playwriting: 'Often the playwright sitting alone in a room is more capable of divining what straws are in the wind than any political columnist or commentator.'" (McKeown 2019) Indeed, a great playwright does not solely connect with the political and social arena but also engages with human psychology.

In terms of the psychotherapeutic aspects of storytelling, it has long been recognized that the unconscious mind plays a crucial role in shaping human behavior. Ancient Greek

playwrights such as Aristotle provided early psychologists with insights into human behavior through their fiction. These insights often became universal case studies of the human mind (Holmwood, Jennings, and Jacksties 2022, 112; Nicolson 2022), for example through Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus myth in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud 1981, Vols IV and V).

Cyprus Avenue tells the story of failed therapy, inviting the audience to consider the critical importance of timely therapeutic intervention. In the narrative, the character of Eric serves as a poignant example, intervention coming only after irreversible harm had already been done. The looming sense of foreboding in the flashback scenes are indicative of those close to Eric failing to seriously consider the red flags seen in his behavior and seek help in time.

The current study juxtaposes Eric's deepening psychological trauma against his therapy. Eric's therapy is used as a tool to unravel the hysteria that has developed in his own mind as a result of the social hatred and violence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. David Ireland has effectively made use of therapy to narrate a social and political commentary of incidents and currents which are deeply rooted in the historical and social background of the Irish Question.

Exploring historical context through therapeutic lenses

In *Cyprus Avenue*, a play steeped in historical richness, the psychological dimensions are inextricably linked to its historical backdrop. The narrative continuously raises historical questions, weaving them into the realms of psychology and therapy, underlining how deeply the past influences the psyche and the therapeutic journey. In intertwining his mental state with the tumultuous history of Ireland, Eric serves as a conduit for history, allowing the audience to perceive Ireland's past through his experiences.

Eric is a Belfast Unionist driven to a murderous frenzy for the protection of his beliefs, a cause that he shares with another man suffering similar struggles, Slim and, by extension, many across Ireland. *Cyprus Avenue* not only echoes the legacy of British imperialism in Ireland but also delves deeply into the complex identity struggles and religious and sectarian tensions that have long been a part of Northern Irish history. Furthermore, as Jang points out, *Cyprus Avenue* portrays the Unionists as those who feel they have lost, been betrayed and defeated amid a time of vast political change in Northern Ireland (Jang 2021, 210).

In his influential text, *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud (Vol. XXI) explores the complex nature of religion, portraying it as an illusion, "a collective neurosis of mankind" (18). This characterization stems, in part, from Freud's extensive experience in psychotherapy, observing recurring patterns and psychological effects of religious belief among his patients. Despite ongoing debate regarding the veracity of Freud's claims, one clear historical reality is the use of religion as a powerful political tool by governing elites. Such utilization often disrupts the human psyche, aligning religious affiliation with the interests of those who wield power. Environments laden with such manipulative practices are conducive to the rise of mass hysteria and fanaticism. The historical context of Ireland serves as a compelling case study, sectarian strife significantly bolstering colonial control.

In their defense of colonial rule, one part of the Irish population, represented by the character of Eric in *Cyprus Avenue*, was placed in a peculiar situation. Many in Northern Ireland did not consider themselves to be Irish because they did not fight for Irish Home Rule but rather for British colonial rule, siding with the British and considering themselves part of the same culture. They feared being a minority in a country dominated by Catholics, yet Eric questions how much choice he had in his "choice" of religion, musing "it occurred to me that perhaps I wasn't Protestant. I mean of course I am. I am a Protestant. In the sense of not being a Catholic. But what is a Protestant? What does any of it even mean? I am just what I was told I was." (34)

An intriguing aspect of the play is that Eric's ambivalence toward his religion highlights his internal confusion. This suggests that the root of his hatred is not religion itself, but rather that religion acts as a catalyst to foster group and cultural animosity towards another sect. In mentioning support of William of Orange, a personal connection is made with the historical context through Eric's embrace of the Orangemen's traditions and rituals, that solidifies his obsession with his Northern Unionist identity. Eric explains to Bridget, "I worked for Her Majesty's Government to combat the relentless campaign of genocide conducted by the IRA against the Protestant people of Ulster over the course of three decades" (9), although the exact nature of his employment is never made clear.

In 2007, a fully-fledged Unionist-Catholic government came to power, signaling the official end of the Troubles (Wallenfeldt 2023). It is against this backdrop of peace that the storm rages inside Eric's mind, as he sees his former enemies share power with those he fought

alongside. Simply put, as pointed out by Clare Wallace, the ongoing and unresolved political tension left over by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement is brought to the fore in *Cyprus Avenue* (Wallace 2020, 95).

The historical background is the real cause of Eric's issues, a context that significantly influences Eric's mental anguish. His sectarian hatred and insecurity are transformed into a feverish delirium, which leads to him committing a heinous crime. This is evidenced when he states that his daughter had sexual intercourse with "Fenians"[3] and even Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams, resulting in her infant daughter resembling Adams (25), before he goes on to identify the baby as actually being Adams, the point at which the audience's nervous laughter tips into stunned incredulity. The only way to understand Eric's mental anguish in a historical context is to understand the outside world that played such a huge role in it.

Therapy unravels a tale of horror and trauma

Eric's therapy sets the stage and transforms into a conduit through which the play not only delves into the inner machinations of a man's mind but also reflects the tumultuous external world he perceives. This therapeutic environment allows for a deeper exploration of Eric's mental state, providing insight into how his personal struggles mirror broader societal conflicts and acting as a narrative device, bridging the internal and external realms, effectively highlighting the impact of historical and personal trauma on individual psychology. The play cleverly uses these sessions to peel back layers of Eric's character, revealing the intertwining of his personal demons with the collective history of his community.

The setting of the clinic is crucial in terms of the audience's observation of the objective historical process working behind Eric's deteriorating mental state. Before she commences therapy, Bridget explains, "The things that happened to us in the past make us what we are. Our family of origin. Our conditioning. Our cultural background. Inside it's a mess. Every single one of us is a diabolic mess" (6), essentially highlighting the link between historical background and mental health.

Psychodynamic therapy,[4] also known as talking therapy, is a technique pioneered by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th century to assist patients in navigating and understanding the entirety of their emotional spectrum, including feelings that remain subconscious or unrecognized. This approach is rooted in the idea of bringing the unconscious mind into

consciousness, thereby helping individuals to confront and comprehend hidden aspects of their psyche. In the play, Bridget skillfully employs psychodynamic therapy, facilitating the release of Eric's suppressed subconscious experiences. Bridget makes it instantly clear that she is not judging Eric or singling him out as more monstrous than any of the rest of society. Eric is no exception. On the contrary, each individual's mental health is, in one way or another, a product of their community or culture and the social processes at work outside their own minds, some of which lead to social tension, violence, or even mass hysteria.

Eric not only struggles with his personal identity as a life-long Belfast Unionist during the late 1990s, but also tackles his ethical dilemma regarding feelings of hatred towards his granddaughter, a struggle which is so intimately linked that the two become inseparable. Such struggles between the personal and the ethical are quite common and continue to evolve within modern Western society. Eric does not want to kill his granddaughter since he understands that killing is wrong. However, he feels that his hand is forced and he must commit this act in order to protect the greater good of Unionism. He still feels sufficiently threatened by the past sectarian conflict of the Troubles to shift his idea of what is ethically or morally right to a conclusion that prioritizes the greater good. This largely stems from his perceived fear of Irish Republican rule, causing the extinction of Protestant Unionists.

A similar dilemma occurs for Slim, the UVF[5] paramilitary who encounters Eric in a park. Slim is so riled up by the cause in which he believes that even something as morally terrible as murdering a five-week-old baby is an action he is willing to consider. To begin with, he exclaims "Fuck that! She's a new-born baby!" (51) but after listening to Eric's ramblings and accusations, states "Course I'll do it. I'd love to do it! I'd love to put a stop to this dastardly Republican scheme!" (53), ultimately refusing, recognizing the abhorrence of killing a baby. While Slim moves through these stages of denial, enthusiasm, and eventual rejection due to ethics, Eric's psychological journey reaches no such conclusion. Eric remains convinced that, as a manifestation of Gerry Adams, his granddaughter must be killed, and regardless of the ethics of murder, he says "I have devoted my life to God. Or tried to, to the best of my abilities. But I love Ulster more ... if I have to choose between God and Ulster, I choose Ulster." (67–68) Eric and Slim's radical plans align with one of Ulman and Abse's observations on the individual giving into hysteria wherein they want to move beyond their "battered and bruised self" through what they see as devotion to a "noble and uplifting cause" (Ulman and Abse 1983, 638). This was in fact the reality for many young unemployed and disenfranchised men

throughout the 1960s to 1980s in Northern Ireland, resulting in them either taking up the Irish Republican or Unionist side in the conflict.

The play adeptly navigates the realms of ethics and morality, highlighting the malleability of ethical standards. The character of Eric demonstrates how rapidly an individual's moral compass can be shifted to align with their motivations or those of controlling forces, particularly when perceived as a viable route to a desired outcome. However, this moral dilemma precipitates significant psychological turmoil within the subconscious mind, underscoring the complex relationship between ethics, personal agency, and mental health. This thematic exploration is further inspected by Bridget in her therapeutic interactions with Eric. For instance, when Eric asks, "Why are you a nigger?", Bridget replies "do you think it's an acceptable comment to make in this situation?" (7). This is not just a question but a strategic challenge to Eric's mindset. Her open-ended questioning aligns with conventional therapeutic techniques, designed to provoke introspection and re-evaluation of beliefs. Bridget's role transcends that of a mere therapist; she becomes a surrogate for the audience, voicing their questions in an attempt to decipher Eric's offensive behaviors. By embedding this therapeutic dynamic within the storyline, the play not only provides insight into Eric's psyche but also invites the audience to reflect on their own moral compasses and influencing factors. This approach enriches the narrative, offering a layered commentary on the malleability of ethics and its psychological ramifications.

As the narrative of the play progresses, it quickly becomes apparent to the audience that they are not observing discrete therapy sessions throughout Eric's life, but rather a single session depicted through a sequence of flashbacks. This temporal complexity is deepened in Scene Six, in which Eric mistakenly perceives that he is conversing about the past with Bridget while sitting on a park bench. This crafted confusion serves a dual purpose: it not only mirrors Eric's disorientation with time and space but also exemplifies the key therapeutic concept that delving into a patient's subconscious and past experiences is crucial for understanding and resolving present issues.

Eric's interactions, especially with his family, are pivotal in this regard. The audience witnesses not just a man's spiral into delusion and paranoia but also the profound impact his mental state has on his loved ones. At the beginning of the play, Eric appears to have a relatively healthy relationship with his family. However, the shock of seeing his granddaughter for the first time and perceiving her as Gerry Adams sends him to bed "for days pretending to battle

a debilitating virus" (18), causing arguments and a rapid descent into madness, culminating in his wife telling him "GET OUT! GET OUT! *Leave*!" (26) By tracing Eric's journey, the play effectively becomes a therapeutic landscape, offering a glimpse into the complexities of mental illness and the importance of understanding an individual's temporal and spatial disorientation, including their interpersonal relationships.

In a 1995 play, *Blasted* by Sarah Kane, the audience sees a quest for ethics, as opposed to the more frequent depiction of simple right and wrong. Kane dramatizes the "ethics of catastrophe" (a concept coined by Ken Urban [37]) through her exploration of rape, war, and suicide set in a single hotel room in war-torn Leeds. As a piece of theatre, *Blasted* offers neither resolution nor redemption: "its aim is to put the audience through an experience rather than put forward a conclusive argument" (Kane 2001, commentary, 63). Instead, the story is found to be rooted in the changing and flexible space of ethics. Much like Kane's work, *Cyprus Avenue* considers not what is right or wrong but instead explores the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by struggling individuals.

The concept of separatist division is prevalent throughout the whole of *Cyprus Avenue* and revealed in violence at the end of the play. In an interview with *The Guardian*, David Ireland confesses, "I find it hard to end my plays without violence" (Lawson 2019). The play is often described as black or dark comedy, defined as using humorous moments to juxtapose horrific acts of violence (Holdsworth and Luckhurst 2013, 150). The humorous moments in *Cyprus Avenue*, largely during the discourse between Eric and Slim from Scene Six, provide momentary relief to an audience stuck in this absurdly dark story. The audience of the Royal Court performance can be seen in the video to laugh nervously, recognising the ever-present possibility of violence. This humorous discourse mirrors the dark comedy in the encounter between therapist and patient, a concept found in Sarah Kane's works, who made a phenomenological point by highlighting that "humor brackets, the violence for the viewer, forcing a reassessment of that violence, not as a release from the intensity of the spectacle, but as a reinforcement of its spectacular power" (Urban 2013, 150). In *Blasted*, the foul-mouthed misogynistic Ian brings a younger woman, Cate, to a hotel room, brandishing a gun. It is clear from the outset that acts of violence are inevitable, but the text is peppered with comedy nonetheless. Ian tells Cate "When I'm with you I can't think about anything else. You take me to another place." To which Cate replies, "It's like that when I have a fit." (Kane 2001, 22)

In a review for *The Guardian*, Billington (2016) states that *Cyprus Avenue* strikes a similar tone to that of Martin McDonagh's *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, the story of an INLA[6] terrorist who, after the loss of his beloved black cat, initiates a murderous frenzy. The black comedy in this play emanates from the absurdity of the protagonists in their attempts to cover up their erroneous killing of the cat, kidnapping a ginger cat and using shoe polish to disguise its color. At the end of the play, the audience is allowed to release a nervous breath as the original cat walks in alive and well. Much like McDonagh, David Ireland makes use of black comedy to bring to light the level of absurdity and irrationality of the hatred displayed by sectarian division. Eric's "For the first time in a long time, I feel at peace." (82) at the end of *Cyprus Avenue* represents a similar moment of release for the audience after the horror they have witnessed. It is easy to see a parallel between David Ireland's play and those written by Sarah Kane and Martin McDonagh within the Royal Court's 1990s trend of "in-yer-face" theatre (Sierz 2014, 4), much of which was known for its graphic moments and explicit violence, both defining features of *Cyprus Avenue*.

Integrating identity and storytelling in therapy

The focus of *Cyprus Avenue* is on personal identity and inner turmoil, stemming from Eric's agony over his British identity. This struggle is based on the fact that the culture within which Eric once understood himself to reside has been superseded by the peace process, and the new cultural model for "self-making" conflicts too strongly with the old model for him to grasp. He recounts that on a business trip to London, some ten years prior, he was invited into an Irish pub, where he realised with horror that his identity, at least in the eyes of his drinking companion, was entirely Irish. His companion understood that Eric was from Belfast but did not seem to realise the complexity of Eric's relationship with Ireland. When Eric said he was from Belfast: "I expected suspicion, horror, shrieks of despair. But instead he placed a fat and friendly Fenian arm around my shoulder. 'My grandfather was from Limerick. Let me buy you a pint'." (37) To compound Eric's horror, he found himself enjoying the drunken experience, even enjoying conversing about football and women, singing Irish folksongs: "I was so happy that night. I was Irish. For one night, I was allowed to be Irish and I had a grand aul' time, so I did." (39) He confesses to Slim, "I might be Irish. I'm worried that I might be Irish." (44) Aquino and Reed explain that identity is rooted within the core of a person's

very being also associated with one's understanding of reality (Aquino and Reed 2002, 1424). One could argue that as Eric's mental state deteriorates as he struggles to understand his own identity, so too does his self-identity appear to crumble alongside his mental state and ability to self-regulate.

In Eric's case, he had been told from a young age that he was Protestant, and although he had never had a relationship with God, this identity, within the context of his community and upbringing, led to a deep hatred of Catholics, over which Eric had little, if any, control. In fact, Eric mentions that he marches in the Orangeman's Day parade every summer, in which the Battle of the Boyne is commemorated (8). It is clear that Eric is steeped deeply in the history, traditions, and even violence associated with Northern Irish masculinity.

In mainstream psychology, the concept of "self" is prominent but elusively defined, as noted by Bruner (2003). It is generally understood that "sel" is a performance, adapted based on contexts and guided by cultural norms, yet maintaining uniqueness within these frameworks (Bruner 2003). In *Cyprus Avenue*, Eric is caught in a crisis of self, unable to reconcile his deeply entrenched identity with a rapidly changing cultural landscape. This theme resonates with the concept of "negative liminality" described by Wallace (2020), highlighting Eric's inability to move beyond his past and embrace a future marked by calls for unity between Unionists and Republicans. His character embodies the struggle of transitioning from known past to uncertain future.

The idea of identity is what creates a person's concept of themselves so it is believed to be both "a product of situations and a shaper of behavior in situations" (Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith 2012, 70). This affects an individual's ability to control or regulate themselves, as well as their ability to make sense of their own feelings and the world around them. It is clear that Eric is able to neither regulate his feelings nor appropriately understand the world he inhabits, evident when he demonstrates significant paranoia of Catholic infiltration of public cultural life: "Fenians are absolutely everywhere. Bill O'Reilly, Barack Obama. Roy Keane. The Pope" (18), envisioning invasion of his family sphere (Wallace 2020, 96). It is ironic that, in acting so drastically on his fear of the future, he kills the future of his own family.

According to John McLeod, "Much of what a therapist does in the course of therapy can be viewed as creating an environment in which the client is enabled to tell his or her story without interruption or judgement." (McLeod 1997, 55) He goes on to explain the use of techniques such as empathic reflection, used by therapists to illustrate their understanding of

a client's situation. Bridget uses empathic reflection in phrases like "I accept and understand that" (8), attempting to create a safe space and enabling Eric to vocalize his narrative account of his actions. This leads to a tension for the audience, however, as Eric has the propensity to erupt into a lengthy angry dialogue or say inappropriate things unprompted. The audience is also left with an incomplete picture due to the fragmentary nature of scenes moving between flashbacks and therapist's office. This creates suspense as the storytelling progresses and further irony in that the "safe space" of confidential therapy is witnessed by audiences viewing the play live and online, a reflection most starkly evident and turned on its head during the scene in the park when Eric talks to himself/the audience in the belief that Bridget is present.

Storytelling has always been the backbone of psychotherapy, working as a lab for those who try to understand the human mind (Holmwood, Jennings, and Jacksties 2022, 30). The more complex societies become, the more diverse and multiplex is the shape taken by modern literature. Stories provide clues about the speaker's social and cultural context as well as the identities of both the teller and the audience. Crucially, storytelling can also affect that identity: "The client telling a story," McLeod explains, "is not only reporting on a set of events, but is at the same time constructing a social identity." (McLeod 1997, 39) Given the nature of the Northern Ireland conflict and subsequent peace process, the Northern Irish ethno-national identity is clearly a complex one, experienced not only by Eric but also by all who have lived it – protagonists, audience, and storytellers alike.

David Ireland recalls how, at the age of 15 or 16, he hated being called Irish. "I got such a shock. It was a guy from Yorkshire who called me it, so I thought he must think I'm from Dublin. But when I said I came from Northern Ireland, all these English kids still called me Irish. That was very strange." (Lawson 2019) Eric similarly struggles to define his identity in a way that illustrates his sheer hatred for the "Fenians" (Dingley 2012), still perceived as the enemy despite the war having ended years before. As the audience watches *Cyprus Avenue*, they can understand how a Unionist's mindset can be highly exaggerated. This is supported by the concept of "placelessness," which Jang relates to the lack of "socio-political" space for the Unionist imagination in the aftermath of the Northern Irish peace process (Jang 2021, 214). Eric is both out of place and out of time in his current context.

It is within this context that we examine *Cyprus Avenue*, a play which Billington called "The most shocking, violent and subversive play in London." (Billington 2016) The play is

disturbing indeed and the way it chooses to narrate the story of an ugly historical truth leaves the audience shaken to the core.

Therapy uncovers shocking revelations

Eric's sectarian hatred is accompanied by racism, fanaticism, and a deep-rooted misogyny, which fuel and feed one other and cannot be analysed separately. Sectarian hatred goes hand in hand with misogyny, fanaticism being their most common conclusion. Lewis calls Eric a "psychotic bigot" (2020) while Billington observes that "the play takes fanaticism to its logical conclusion" (2016). Seen from this point of view, the play reminds the audience of Arthur Miller's 1953 play, *The Crucible*.[7] In Miller's play, girls' mass hysteria was fed with bigotry, insecurity, and groupthink, resulting in hanging and genocide. Eric's hysteria in *Cyprus Avenue* also demands killing, although the authorities do not perform the task for him, so he ends up taking the matter into his own hands. In addition, throughout the play, the psychosexual and political condition of Northern Ireland is portrayed as a crisis of masculinity (Wallace 2020, 96). To his daughter, Eric exclaims "I did not raise my children to copulate with the agents of Rome! I did not conceive a papal whore!" (25) Later, in London, when he tells his drinking companion he is from Belfast: "I worried he was a homosexual and intended to sodomise me" (37).

Eric's almost antiquated misogyny seems as vehement as his prejudice towards Catholics. Even his family appears to believe that he hates women, with his daughter asking him whether he hated her "because I'm a girl?". She then asks Eric if he is "angry that another woman's been born in this family?", followed by whether he hates her "for not giving you a grandson" (58). These questions highlight Eric's misogyny and exemplify how distant he is not only from his family but also mentally from 20th century society – his ideas and thoughts not seeming to fall in line with expectations. The conditions women historically experienced in Northern Ireland provide a clue as to Eric's character, highlighted by Susan McKay's research into what she terms "Ireland's Rape Crisis," sexual violence being widespread in Irish culture throughout much of the 20th century. For instance, she found that the view that women were to blame for attacks was strongly integrated into Irish cultural values. This is supported by the fact that sexual assault within marriage was not criminalized in Northern Ireland until 1990 (McKay 2005). The murder of three female relations by Eric might therefore be seen to be indicative of a systematic issue as much as a result of personal psychosis.

Eric's misogyny and prejudice are evident from the beginning of the play, with his use of offensive language and slurs throughout. When Bridget attempts to trace the reasons for Eric's state of mind by asking about his mother's reaction to his father's death, he says: "She was very upset. But she was a woman. Even in those days, women were very emotional. Obviously they're far worse now. Just look at my wife and daughter, how hysterical they became as the crisis enveloped us." (30) These attitudes illustrate how out of touch Eric is with society and give the audience a level of understanding about Eric's sense of isolation and mental state. His isolation is fuelled not only by his social surroundings, however, but also by increasing paranoia about the threat residing within his own family. Eric's incessant questioning about the parentage of his "Fenian" granddaughter and claims that "[t]his family is withholding secrets from one another" (24) makes it obvious to the audience that Eric has lost trust in his family. However, at times, he does not seem as distanced and isolated, particularly when speaking to Bridget and in his conversations with Slim, acting perhaps as surrogate therapist.

It could be argued that *Cyprus Avenue* is, in fact, a study on both identity and paranoia: "Eric questions whether his colonial identity is a real identity at all, and he is paranoid about his identity being erased in the future. This is a powerful comment on the state of the Northern Irish psyche." (McKeown 2019) In London, people assume Eric to be Irish and he is taken to an Irish pub, but he identifies himself as British and states that he hates the Irish. McKeown observes that the play at this stage "dramatizes the split personality of Northern Ireland. Are Northern Irish People Irish or British?" (2019) This is supported by Wallace's assertion that there is a perceived threat to the psychogeographic state of Northern Ireland in a post-Good Friday Agreement world (Wallace 2020).

This split personality is applicable to Eric, as he detaches himself completely from the Irish identity, being paranoid and hostile towards everything associated with Ireland. Indeed, "[t]he belief that you have enemies who are plotting to harm you and are spreading lies and rumors behind your back represents a profound rift with others" (Mirowsky and Ross 1983, 228). Eric expresses to Bridget that all Catholics sexually abuse children, to which Bridget replies, "But nobody wants their children to be abused." Eric replies, "Some people do. Catholics. It's a complex form of self-loathing." (27) It is this sense of detachment that advances through disconnection and develops into persecution, all stages displayed by Eric. In the very short prologue, the audience witnesses the disconnect between Eric and his wife, with Eric looking at her "dumbfounded" while she asks, "What are you doing?" (5) Later, this

is exemplified by Eric's initial statement about his granddaughter: "We don't know that this baby is the best baby in Belfast. There may be better babies." (11)

In London, it came as a shock to Eric to discover that there "were more Irish there than there were in Ireland" (35). He was even more shocked to discover "English voices" calling themselves Irish. By "Irish" he consistently means Catholics. His Unionist frame of mind is shaken. If English people were so proud to call themselves Irish and Irish people so proud to call themselves Irish, where was his place? These identifications signal a historical transition that his mind is simply not able to grasp. Eric is utterly and irretrievably stuck in the past. His "British" cause to suppress his Irish identity seems to be melting into thin air, in a land whose interest he had always served.

The disjointed nature of the scenes in *Cyprus Avenue* not only renders it difficult for the audience to discern the order of events, whether the therapy occurred before, during or after the terrible events of the climax, but also provides a window into Eric's confused mindset. It alludes to the disjointed passage of time within his mental state, which is directly referred to in Scene Six:

> Slim: This is the now.
> Eric: No it's the past. In my mind it's the past.
> Slim: How can it be the past? How can this be the past? This is the now!
> Eric: But this happened in the past!
> Slim: Stop talking about the past! This is the now! It can't be the past! It's the now! (43–44)

Eric's encounter with Slim is significant as Eric's personal frenzy finds its equal in Slim and the audience senses the shift from personal hysteria into a manifestation of something wider. What goes unsaid in therapy is shared openly with Slim, because Slim is part of Eric's club of frenzy.

Final Thoughts

In *Cyprus Avenue*, therapy is used brilliantly as a form of social and political commentary, a mirror to the audience which indicates that the talking cure or psychological treatment is only possible when we recognise the monsters that take shape in society and spread like a disease through individual insanity and wider ideologies. It is necessary to unravel history,

to "untangle" the mess, as Bridget puts it (6). Furthermore, it is important to note that Eric stands as a placeholder for disenfranchised Unionist fighters who are still present in Northern Irish society. The play takes aim at this gap that opened in the wake of the peace process post-1998. Eric's delusion that his granddaughter is Gerry Adams, a figure synonymous with the Irish Republican movement, is deeply rooted in the trauma of the Troubles. This period, marked by bombings in Northern Ireland and brutal conflict between Irish Republicans and British Loyalists, has left indelible scars on the psyches of Eric and of Irish society as a whole.

Driven by this historical frenzy, Eric, a staunch Unionist, becomes convinced that the perceived threat posed by Catholics, embodied in his delusion of Gerry Adams as his baby granddaughter, must be eliminated. Tragically, his warped perception of reality and inability to recognize his psychosis culminates in the heinous murder of his granddaughter. This aspect of the play highlights the devastating impact of historical trauma on individual mental health and the catastrophic consequences it can have when left unaddressed. It becomes clear to the audience that the monster in Eric's mind in fact resides externally, in his social conditioning. The task of rooting out his own social evils is beyond the capability of one individual and certainly beyond Eric himself, despite his assertion at the end of the play that some work has been done in this direction. It requires the collective awareness of the whole of society. To rid society of the psychological hold of social conditioning would require a re-reading of history without any prejudice, enlightenment itself. The audience realizes that Eric is a victim of his circumstances, invoking a sense of pity. There is a growing sense of foreboding, a sense of helplessness in Eric's monologue, although clear from the beginning that nothing can be done to save him. His condition is beyond his own control. The heinous act has already taken place.

In Scene Six, Eric seems to be conversing directly with the audience. He knows that the audience represents the society of which he is a victim. In confronting society, he is calling for change, for reformation. "I wouldn't have chosen to be born in Northern Ireland, if I'd had any choice" (34) The fact that, on some level, he recognizes the audience is explicitly referred to in one single stage direction: "Eric (*to audience*) I did something then that I never thought I would be capable of doing." (49) What was left unsaid earlier is said now in this strange moment of recognition and direct communication.

Notes

1 The title of the play, *Cyprus Avenue*, may draw its inspiration from the Irish song of the same name, penned and performed by Van Morrison and played in the background at various points in the stage production. This connection is noteworthy as the song's lyrics resonate with the plight of the play's main character. In the song, the protagonist finds himself ensnared on Cyprus Avenue, grappling with the fear of descending into madness – a thematic parallel that enriches the play's narrative.

2 After the Acts of Union in 1800, the majority of the southern counties of Ireland wanted Home Rule or independence from the UK (this part of the country was mostly Catholic), while in Northern Ireland, the people (mostly Protestants) largely wished to remain in union with and governed by the UK. This divide gave birth to the Irish Question. However, there were notable deviations from these normative alignments, leading to increased tensions, fear, and animosity across the various factions. This complex interplay of religious and political identities significantly shaped the socio-political landscape of Ireland during the 19th century and beyond.

3 The term "Fenian" historically refers to members of the Fenian Brotherhood and Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), secret revolutionary organizations founded in the mid-19th century which came to play a pivotal role in the movement for Irish independence. The Fenian Brotherhood was established in the United States in 1858 by Irish nationalists, while the IRB was formed in Ireland around the same time. Their primary goal was to end British rule in Ireland and establish an independent Irish Republic. In modern times, especially in Northern Ireland, the term "Fenian" has been co-opted as a derogatory term for Irish Catholics or Nationalists, often used in a sectarian context. This derogatory usage bears no relation to the historical and political significance of the original Fenian movement, which played a crucial role in the struggle for Irish independence and the shaping of Irish national identity.

4 Psychodynamic therapy emphasizes the significance of examining how unconscious factors impact present behavior and interpersonal relationships. It involves key practices such as exploring childhood experiences, delving into the role of the unconscious mind, and analyzing the influence of past experiences on current behavior.

5 The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) is described as a loyalist paramilitary organization in Northern Ireland. Established with the aim of combatting the Irish Republican Army

(IRA), the UVF was committed to preserving Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom (Bowman 2001).

6 Irish National Liberation Army, an extremist Republican paramilitary group formed during the Troubles.

7 Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* serves as an allegorical commentary on the United States in the 1940s, particularly the era of McCarthyism, characterized by political hysteria and exaggerated fears of a "communist threat." Senator McCarthy led one of the most infamous campaigns against Hollywood scriptwriters and directors, known as the "Hollywood witch-hunt" where individuals faced imprisonment and career destruction due to their alleged beliefs. Miller draws parallels between this period and the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, a historical instance of mass hysteria. In his article "Are you now or were you ever," Miller elucidates his motivation for writing *The Crucible*, noting the "astonishing correspondence" between the calamities of the McCarthy era and the events of the Salem Witch Trials.

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Trauma and Memory in Sebastian Barry's Old God's Time

Trauma e memória em Old God's Time *de Sebastian Barry*

Elisa Abrantes

Abstract: *This article delves into the exploration of Sebastian Barry's latest novel,* Old God's Time *(2023), employing a Trauma Studies framework (Caruth, 1995; Alexander, 2004; Balaev, 2014) and drawing on the concepts of Trauma Fiction articulated by Anne Whitehead (2004). It aims at examining the novel's portrayal of individual and collective cultural traumas, with a particular focus on the representation of the enduring consequences of clerical child abuse in Ireland. The narrative unfolds through the lens of an unreliable narrator, weaving personal stories with broader societal implications, thereby shedding light on the far-reaching effects of violence and abuse that resonate across years and generations. By situating the novel within the Trauma Studies framework, it is possible to examine the mechanisms through which trauma is conveyed in fiction, emphasizing the interplay of memory, testimony, and narrative structure. The analysis extends to the characteristics of trauma fiction, showcasing how Barry's work aligns with and contributes to this contemporary genre.*

Keywords*: Irish Fiction; Sebastian Barry;* Old God's Time*; Trauma Fiction; Trauma Studies.*

Resumo: *Este artigo analisa o romance mais recente de Sebastian Barry,* Old God's Time *(2023), a partir de uma abordagem dos Estudos de Trauma (Caruth, 1995; Alexander, 2004; Balaev, 2014) e faz uso dos conceitos da Ficção de Trauma articulados por Anne Whitehead (2004). Pretende-se examinar a representação dos traumas culturais individuais e coletivos no romance, em especial da representação das consequências*

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do abuso infantil pela igreja católica na Irlanda. A perspectiva de um narrador não confiável, entrelaça histórias pessoais a implicações sociais mais amplas, discutindo sobre os efeitos de longo prazo da violência e do abuso que reverberam ao longo de gerações. Ao situar o romance no âmbito dos Estudos de Trauma, torna-se possível explorar os mecanismos por meio dos quais o trauma é transmitido na ficção, enfatizando a interação entre memória, testemunho e estrutura da narrativa. A análise aborda as características da ficção de trauma, destacando como a obra de Barry se alinha e contribui para esse gênero contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: *Ficção irlandesa; Sebastian Barry;* Old God's Time*; Ficção sobre trauma; Estudos do trauma.*

In his most recent novel, *Old God's Time* (2023), Sebastian Barry employs conventions of trauma fiction, as theorized by Anne Whitehead (2004) and others, such as a fragmented non-linear narrative, the perspective of an unreliable narrator, emphasis on memory and forgetting, repetition of motifs and images and evocative use of symbolism and metaphor, which mirror, stylistically, the psychological disarray caused by trauma. This article situates the novel within contemporary Trauma Studies, drawing on theoretical frameworks by Cathy Caruth (1995), Jeffrey Alexander (2004), and Michele Balaev (2014), among others, to analyze the novel's representation of personal and collective traumas that bring to the fore the sensitive issue of clerical child abuse in Ireland for decades, as well as the societal complicity in silencing survivors. Furthermore, it examines Barry's contribution to Irish literary discourse, contextualizing the novel within a wider tradition of addressing silenced histories.

The novel follows Tom Kettle, an ageing retired detective who has been living in Dalkey, a seaside suburb of Dublin, for nine months. He spends his days in his wicker chair, smoking cigarillos and staring out to sea, when his now quiet life is interrupted by the visit of two Dublin *Garda* – the National Police of Ireland – officers, who arrive seeking his help with a cold case regarding the murder of a priest accused of child abuse, because Tom had been involved with the earlier investigation of the case when he was still working. His former boss also came to see him on the following day and invites him to go to the police station and provide a DNA sample to ensure the police are following the correct procedures in such cases.

These visits stir up suppressed memories from Tom's traumatic past and initiate the narrative.

Set in the mid-1990s, Barry's novel mirrors a pivotal moment in Irish culture, when revelations of sexual abuse within the Catholic-run institutions, including orphanages, reformatories, and boarding schools, became public. The novel's setting is synchronous with the societal reckoning represented by the media's exposure of clerical abuse, making it a work deeply rooted in Ireland's cultural and historical context. In particular, the narrative draws attention to the systemic nature of abuse and the complicity of both Church and state in protecting perpetrators. The *Garda* detectives in the novel represent this new moment, when investigations could be conducted more seriously, and the Church could not entirely conceal its crimes anymore or prevent clerics from being tried and eventually condemned.

Tom is now 66, living by himself and enjoying his retirement. For him, the whole point after retiring was to be "stationary, happy and useless" (Barry 10). His initial resistance to collaborate with the young detectives is due to his attempt to distance himself from painful memories: "Jesus, go home, boys. You are bringing me back to I don't know where. The wretchedness of things. The filthy dark, the violence. Priests' hands. The silence" (Barry 20). However, being a survivor of clerical child abuse compels him to collaborate with the investigation despite his desire of erasing his traumatic past. Tom's life is marked by personal traumatic experiences, as an abused child at a catholic orphanage for boys from where he escaped at 17, as a young soldier discharged from the army due to his PTSD condition, as a witness of extreme violence in his job as a criminal detective, and also by the tragic losses of his whole family; his wife June committed suicide, his daughter Willie, heroin-addicted, died from drug abuse, and his son Joe, a doctor, was murdered in America.

Barry's choice to set the novel in that era makes its depiction capture the tension between the personal and the collective, as individuals like Tom Kettle live with their private traumas within a society confronting its systemic failures. The novel transitions from individual to cultural trauma, as defined by Jeffrey Alexander (2004): "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 1). This group identification with traumatic experiences is fostered by literature. The novel's focus on societal reckoning with institutional abuse contributes to ongoing conversations in Irish literary discourse about justice, memory, and historical trauma. Barry's treatment of these

themes adds depth to Ireland's literary landscape by combining personal narrative with collective historical reflection.

Ireland's literary tradition has long engaged with themes of trauma and repression, particularly in relation to the Catholic Church. Writers such as Edna O'Brien (1930-2024) and John McGahern (1934-2006), among others, have explored the influence of the Church on Irish life, often addressing themes of sexual and institutional abuse in their works, as for example, the short story "Sister Imelda" (O'Brien 1981) and the novel *The Dark* (McGahern 1965). *Old God's Time* expands on this tradition, not only by addressing Ireland's history of clerical abuse but also by focusing on the lasting effects of trauma through multiple generations. Barry's work stands out for its integration of trauma fiction techniques, which allow him to reproduce in language the instability of traumatic memory survivors. The reader is often placed in a position of uncertainty, and is required to piece together the narrative from incomplete and inconsistent accounts.

As the narrative unfolds, Tom reveals memories from his past concerning his professional and family lives, as well as recollects good and bad moments. His confused mind sometimes realizes that he had been dreaming or experiencing some form of hallucination. His memories emerge unpredictably, intertwining past and present without clear boundaries, which aligns with what is stated by Caruth (1995) – that trauma resists integration into a coherent narrative, emerging as fragmented memories or flashbacks. Trauma fiction, as Anne Whitehead (2004) argues, employs fragmented perspectives to reflect the inarticulable nature of traumatic experience; thus, flashbacks and nonlinear narratives are recurrent in this category of fiction. These features are central to *Old God's Time*, where Tom Kettle's memories unfold in disjointed fragments, blending past, present, reality and imagination. This narrative structure mirrors Cathy Caruth's concept of belatedness, which considers trauma as an event that cannot be fully experienced in the moment, but returns later in fragmented and involuntary ways (Caruth 9). Tom's unreliable narration further complicates the narrative, immersing readers in his subjective experience of trauma. At times, entire scenes—such as his visit to the police station—are later revealed to be dreams. This nonlinear approach captures the fragmented nature of traumatic memory and highlights how trauma survivors, like Tom, struggle to make sense of their experiences. It not only illustrates the cognitive disruptions caused by trauma and age, but also invites readers to question the reliability of memory as a means of understanding the past.

Barry's novel not only addresses individual trauma but also examines the intergenerational transmission of pain and suffering. Through Tom and his wife June, who is also a survivor of clerical abuse, the novel explores how unresolved trauma is passed down, shaping the lives of their children. The intergenerational effects of trauma are depicted as a silent, unspoken presence that haunts future generations. Although Tom and June attempt to create a loving family, their past traumas permeate the family dynamic, affecting their children in subtle yet profound ways.

The concept of intergenerational trauma is central to contemporary trauma theory and is explored through both psychological and cultural lenses. Michele Balaev (2014) offers a pluralistic approach to trauma theory that emphasizes how trauma is not only an individual psychological experience but also a cultural phenomenon shaped by social and historical contexts. Balaev suggests that "unspeakability" is only one of many possible responses to trauma and that it is shaped by cultural and contextual factors (Balaev 366). In the case of Tom and June's children, their trauma manifests not necessarily through direct recounting but through the psychological residue of their parents' unresolved pain. This aligns with the broader societal trauma that Ireland as a whole carry from its history of abuse and silence.

June's suicide reinforced and turned the silent presence of trauma in her children into a concrete reality in their lives. A survivor of clerical abuse, she carried unspoken wounds that deeply affect their family. Her trauma of being repeatedly raped by a priest from the age of six, which she reveals to Tom in a moment of vulnerability, illustrates the pervasive guilt and shame imposed on survivors: "Maybe you should get rid of me. The nuns said it was my fault. On and on, till I was twelve. Can you imagine? Twelve is a big girl, Tom" (Barry 74). Besides the feelings of shame and guilt, the narrator keeps on saying that there was "not a tear on her cheeks, as if she were far beyond tears. The tears of a little girl. The dry, cool face of his wife" (Barry 75), which demonstrates that June repressed her experiences throughout her life, and even after telling her husband about it, she could never recover. Her trauma led her to develop a kind of emotional distance: "He had no way to reach her sometimes, even when she was home. She'd be like a telephone not plugged in then" (Barry 56).

She lived an apparently normal, but in the mid-eighties she could not cope with her painful wound anymore: "After the years of seeming normality, June one day, while he was at work, took the bus into town alone. ... She was forty-five years old. She took the one fifteen bus – he looked into all this later, taking statements, looking for witnesses, needing to know

the details, forensically ... in her nice summer dress she doused herself in the petrol and set it alight. No one saw her immediately. The black smoke brought three keepers in a four-by-four. When they arrived, the fire had burned itself out and the body was smoking" (Barry 161). The effects of trauma in June's case could be read as an example of a delayed response, as Caruth (1995) developed. As the traumatic experience cannot be completely understood at the moment it occurs, silence is the first reaction to it. Only afterwards, those traumatic memories are relived and repeated, but still not processed. Thus, unspeakability seemed to be the reaction to traumatizing events.

In Barry's novel, however, the characters present different responses to trauma, and even the same character reacts differently depending on the event and period of life. These different responses are in line with the contemporary pluralistic approach proposed by Michele Balaev (2014), that suggests that unspeakability is one among many responses to an extreme event, not a defining feature of it. The cultural and intersectional dimensions are considered in Balaev's approach, and it relies more heavily on external factors to show that trauma occurs in specific bodies, time periods, cultures, and places, each informing the meaning and representation of a traumatic experience (Balaev 366).

Turning again to June's inability to fully process her experiences, which led to emotional distance and eventual self-destruction, as she internalizes the shame imposed by her abusers, it is worthy to recur to Balaev's pluralistic trauma theory, since it provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics, emphasizing the cultural and temporal specificity of trauma and its manifestations. Another aspect to be considered is that by situating June's trauma within the context of Ireland's history of institutional abuse, Barry highlights the societal complicity that allowed such atrocities to persist. His novel also engages with the ethical challenges of representing trauma, especially in relation to sensitive topics such as clerical abuse. In *Old God's Time*, Barry does not sensationalize the abuse but instead focuses on the internal experiences of survivors, capturing the psychological complexity of living with trauma. The ethical concerns about representing such pain are addressed through the novel's restrained but potent depiction of memory and suffering. As Anne Whitehead (2004) suggests, trauma fiction requires a delicate balance between witnessing the trauma and respecting its inexpressibility. One example of Barry's ethical approach is his depiction of Tom's memories of abuse at a Catholic orphanage. The narrative focuses on the emotional and psychological consequences of the abuse:

> His own memories of the Brother, and the smell of urine, and the merciless lashing, the stick on his back, on his legs, every night for a thousand years, world without end, and him getting off lightly, compared to other boys, the Limerick lad that he supposed was murdered, ran off and taken back by the guards, and then left out in the yard for the winter, the winter, for weeks and weeks, and who knows what became of him ... Tom only wet the damn bed and was beaten for that, but also Brady, a kid two years older, the Brother's pet, trying to skin him with a knife, stabbed his thigh a dozen times, little pinpricks, while his cronies held him down, laughing" (73). He also remembers witnessing the sexual assault of boys — "with the light in their eyes put out"— at the hands of priests. Boys put to the sword of their lust. For ever. He had seen it. He had witnessed it when he didn't even know the words for it. (Barry 75)

Though disruptive, Tom's traumatic childhood memories are not described as having caused pathological symptoms. His traumatic experience in the Malayan war, as a sniper in the army, though, is narrated as having caused neurobiological responses such as the impossibility of sleep and the recurrence of terrible nightmares when sleeping, symptoms associated with a condition known as perpetration-induced traumatic stress (PITS), the form of posttraumatic stress disorder caused by killing or committing violence as the stressor, as studied by MacNair (2015). It is read in the novel that Tom murdered 56 Malaysians, most of them civilian natives. PITS symptoms are underscored as devastating to Tom Kettle:

> Unlike many serving soldiers, he had killed a fair number of the enemy. He wished he hadn't. He wondered now about those lives he had ended. Mostly local men among the Malayan rebels. They had given him an honourable discharge after a year of that. He had begun to be sleepless, and to have nightmares when he did sleep. The army doctor had called it 'gross stress reaction'. Doctors had to give even terror a name, he supposed. The effects of Malaya had been like a series of aftershocks in the body – he was just a wreck when he came home. (Barry 98)

Symptoms like these are recurrently mentioned in the novel, as the ones Tom felt at some times at home in Deansgrange with his family:

> That night he had lain in bed, unable to close his eyes for hours, seeing again and again the shapes on the street, the bloodied meat that once were people,

> the unearthly silence of it. He could still hear the soundlessness of it, the profound silence after the bombs had done their devilish work. (Barry 97)

The novel depiction of Tom's symptoms resembles the ones listed by MacNair (2002):

> ... the traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in one (or more) of the following ways: recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions; Recurrent distressing dreams of the event; acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated); intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event; physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. (MacNair 6-7)

Feelings of dissociation and personal disintegration, together with a sense of unreality are also associated with PTSD/PITS (MacNair 8-9), which might be one cause of Tom's unreliable narrative, adding another layer to the complexity of his mind, which is also possibly affected by dementia. His unbalanced mind is also haunted by ghosts. He sees people, young children, running by the sea or dancing on the grass in his landlord's garden. They could be real. They might be ghosts. They might be just his imagination. Readers know that Tom's sense of reality fails. There are contradictions, denials of previous established facts, a blur between past and present. He frequently sees his dead daughter, she visits him, he talks to her (Barry 88).

As the narrative advances, the reader is more and more thrown into Tom's damaged mind, both by trauma and by dementia, and his conversations with her neighbour, Ms. McNulty, a young actress who lives with his little son, is marked by the mixture of reality and imagination, which reframe old Tom's memories of his and June's traumas, when Ms. McNulty tells about the abuse of her six-year-old daughter by her father, resembling June's abuse by Father Taddheus:

> First, she had noticed problems with her daughter's body. She had brought her to the doctor in London because there was blood in her rectum – the child was only a little girl of six, and she had no idea what was wrong ... her little girl grew sicker and sicker, and died, right in front of her, she died, and

> something had been ruptured in her that didn't have a remedy, and she died. She just died. And the post-mortem said she had been abused. (Barry 100)

After listening to his neighbour's story, Tom reflects: "this young woman was stirring at memories so deeply set that he didn't know if they were his or June's" (Barry 101). As the little girl, June also grew sicker and sicker and died because the wound she had inside her did not have a remedy. The blurring of reality and unreality grows gradually in the narrative, and the last chapter of the novel begins with this sentence: "his story was told and he had told it to no one" (Barry 176). After some pages in which reality and imagination are blended in a lyrical narrative, Tom is finally reunited with his beloved wife June, either in dreams, dementia or even death, left open for readers to interpret.

Along with the narrative structure that I intended to briefly illustrate here, Barry makes use of some stylistic features to convey the nature of trauma in the novel that might characterize his novel as an example of trauma fiction. As Whitehead (2004) states, among other key features, some which tend to recur in these narratives include intertextuality, repetition, a dispersed or fragmented narrative voice, memory places, and the presence of fantastic elements. The intertexts in *Old God's Time* show traces of the past that emerge in the present as textual echoes, determinations and directions. Repetition acts at the levels of language, imagery and plot, and one of the examples was the case of the dead six-year-old girl, daughter of Ms. McNulty, Tom's late wife, June, and Tom's symptoms of PTSD/PITS. Although there is not a formal presence of a fragmented narrative voice, the accounts of June's and Ms. McNulty's testimonies, as well as the adjustments the narrator makes in previous narrated situations, function as multiple perspectives within the plot. In *Old God's Time*, Deansgrange is a memory place, and Dalkey a place Tom chose to forget his life and try to find peace and happiness, far from his grief, which was not possible because his traumatic past emerged and put him seriously at risk. The fantastic is also present in the novel, there are ghosts and symbolic imagery through unicorns, besides Tom's dreamlike logic, emphasized in the conclusion scenes.

Among other reading possibilities of interpretations, *Old God's Time* intertwines history, trauma, ethics and love to serve as a commentary on Ireland's troubled past, particularly the systemic abuse within the Catholic Church that remained concealed for decades. It is also an extensive reflection on the nature of trauma and its effects on survivors, their families and society.

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Phantasms as Signposts of the Invisible: Yeats's Mask Theory Revisited

Fantasmas como sinalizadores do invisível: A teoria da máscara de Yeats revisitada

Hedwig Schwall

Abstract: *Yeats often stresses the vital importance of the "unique" image which helps a person to sieve "unmeaning circumstance" from one's real passions. As the poet's definition of this "life-long, secret image" surprisingly fits Agamben's study of the phantasm this article explores how this psychological phenomenon functions in the poet's writings. Starting from Lacan's idea that the so-called individual is an interaction between the unconscious Other, the split or social self, others (persons and objects in one's life) and the inner self this contribution analyses ten key poems in which the phantasm forms a bridging role between inner and outer worlds, between the visible and the invisible aspects of the body. A special form of phantasm is the body image in which Paul Schilder situates libidinal communications, which in turn are picked up in Merleau-Ponty's idea of "the flesh". As many poems are set in a schooling context, Yeats shows that secret personal conflicts can be simultaneously studied and sung.*

Keywords: *Yeats; Agamben; Merleau-Ponty; Paul Schilder; Sailing to Byzantium.*

Resumo: *Yeats frequentemente enfatiza a importância vital da imagem "única" que ajuda a pessoa a separar as "circunstâncias sem sentido" de suas verdadeiras paixões. Como a definição do poeta dessa "imagem secreta e vitalícia" surpreendentemente se encaixa no estudo de Agamben sobre o fantasma, este artigo explora como esse fenômeno psicológico funciona nos escritos do poeta. Partindo da ideia de Lacan de que o assim chamado indivíduo é uma interação entre o Outro inconsciente, o eu dividido ou social, os outros (pessoas e objetos na vida de uma pessoa) e o eu interior, esta contribuição analisa dez poemas-chave nos quais o fantasma forma uma ponte entre os mundos interior e exterior,*

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entre os aspectos visíveis e invisíveis do corpo. Uma forma especial de fantasma é a imagem do corpo na qual Paul Schilder situa as comunicações libidinais, que, por sua vez, são retomadas na ideia de "a carne" de Merleau-Ponty. Como muitos poemas são ambientados em um contexto escolar, Yeats mostra que conflitos pessoais secretos podem ser simultaneamente estudados e cantados.

Palavras-chave: *Yeats; Agamben; Merleau-Ponty; Paul Schilder; Sailing to Byzantium.*

Interactionality within the self: Other, other, social and inner self

Why is Yeats still so very popular with young people today? His verses pop up in the most diverse, unexpected places: his "Down by the Sally Gardens" appears in Ian McEwan's *The Children Act* (2014), in 2023 the Brandies Band composed music to "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" and other poems in their "Yeats to Music album",[1] and one of the most stunning zoos of Europe, Pairi Daiza, welcomes visitors with a mosaic at the entrance saying: "I have spread my dreams under your feet; / Tread softly because you tread on my dreams". ("He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven", l.7-8). This article's hypothesis is that the poet's wide and lasting acclaim is due to his constant endeavour to let all work be rooted in the unconscious. Throughout his poems, plays and essays Yeats' singers, protagonists and narrators display an adventurous mind as they explore the complexities of the self.

To map these complexities this paper starts out with Jacques Lacan's scheme L which shows how social interactions are rooted in communications which happen on a deeper axis in the self. Analysing ten poems composed between the 1880's till the late 1920's will show how Yeats condemns superficial social imitation and instead looks out for phantasms, i.e. others (persons and objects) which seems to correspond with his deepest wishes and fears. As the poet explores the conflictual nature of his vital images Merleau-Ponty's idea of "the flesh", Paul Schilder's concept of the "body image" and Jean-Luc Nancy's view on the dis-playing image will help to give us better understanding of Yeats's discipline of the mask.

In Lacan's scheme L a person is represented as an interaction of vectors. The first one starts from the Other, the unconscious. As this (being both transgenerational and personal) transcends any individual's comprehension the Other is written with capital. The social self is imbued with this energy but projects it onto "others", usually familiars (family, peers, idols).

As the social self both receives unknown impulses and tries to control its position Lacan calls it a "barred" or split self: it never has complete control over its actions and interpretations. Moreover, the unconscious also has more direct channels to work on the self as it can send impulses directly via dreams, as indicated in the link between Other and "ego" or inner self, as indicated in the bottom axis.

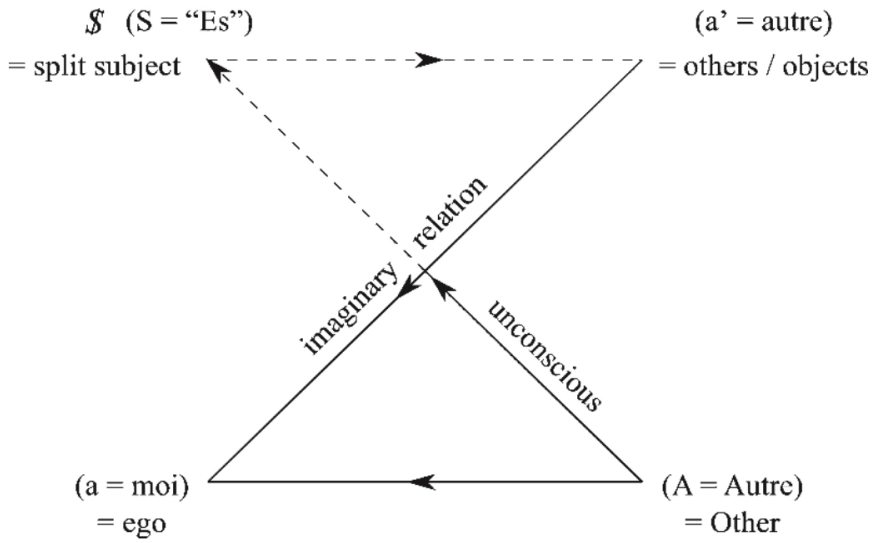

Fig. 3. Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Schéma optique pour la théorie du narcissisme also called scheme L, in Séminaire II, 1954-1955 (my translations). © Drawing by Eliane Mahy (KU Leuven).

But precisely because a person is not "individual" but consisting of constant interactions between these four factors all (Freudian) psychoanalysts agree on one thing, that a person should try to articulate the energies that form their unique self. First and foremost they warn of an uncritical "sympathy with the other" in which the difference "between the 'ego' and the 'other' ... is totally scrambled" (Borch-Jacobsen 58). To be rooted in one's real self a person must be open to the signals from the Other (arrows from and on the bottom axis). Because of this complexity and fluidity of relations Merleau-Ponty avoids the static formulation of an individual (mind) having a body. He prefers the more dynamic term "embodiment" which reflects the constant "interconnectedness of self, others, and the world", the uniqueness of which is "vital" (Mazis ix). As this article will focus on Yeats's perception of Presences and the use of (body) images it hopes to show how close the poet was to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy,

not one of "a yes-or-no phenomenon, but a more-or-less" (Mazis 53); both celebrate an "emphatically nonfoundational ontology" (Mazis xiii).

Throughout his life, Yeats would criticize people who, in their communication, forget about the Ego-Other of a personality, whether it is the kind of journalists who think in terms of mere 'facts' or other people who forget that the bottom axis of the personal's circuits is the dominant one. He shows this in the early poem "The Indian Upon God" (1886) when he mocks creatures who model their image of the Other on the other and not the other way round. This makes for religions based on rivalry and hierarchy, in which the Other is a mere reflection of themselves. In this poem the moorfowl declares that God is "an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky"; the lotus maintains that "Who made the world ... hangeth on a stalk, For I am in His image made"; the roebuck sees god as "*the Stamper of the Skies*", while the peacock thinks his creator "is a monstrous peacock" (l.7,10-11, 14 19).

From his teens on, Yeats was immersed into types of painting and literature that were dense in symbols. Under the influence of his father who loved the Pre-Raphaelites he was taught to distrust "realism" and the circles of Madame Blavatsky and the Golden Dawn helped him to explore approaches to the unconscious. In the 1910s he further tried to systematize a "theory of the mask", as in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* and in *A Vision*. This paper will now trace, throughout ten poems and other texts by Yeats, how he managed the components of his poetic personality, the social and inner self, Other and others.

Phantasms in early Yeats: the 1880s-90s

Two Early Singers: the Happy Shepherd and Aengus

As Donald Winnicott indicated one of the first material anchor points of a child's unconscious is their teddybear, or a blanket. He calls it a transitional objects. A baby is steeped in desire for and fear of loss of the first caregiver; and this object soothes the fears in times of the mother's absence. Every child chooses a very specific object which becomes very intimate, and Winnicott points out that parents must not demand from the child to determine whether it is really animate or not: it is essential for the child that it can be both material and immaterial, belonging to both the outside and the inside world. Christopher Bollas notes that at a later stage the baby's desire is moved "from the mother-environment ... into countless subjective-objects" ("Transformational Object" 2).

In "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" (1885) which opens Yeats's first volume the singer encourages the "sick children of the world" to "Go gather by the humming sea / Some twisted, echo-harbouring shell,/ And to its lips thy story tell" (l.35-36). It is interesting that the shell is twisted: it will not 'reflect' the speakers' words but will be "Rewording [them] in melodious guile" (l.39). In his later work the reverberating shell will morph into winding stairs and echoing rocks, in ancestral houses and haunted towers. But another image that runs through Yeats's entire oeuvre is that of the proud, elusive woman who helps the poet gather his favourite images:

> Miss Maud Gonne ... apart from the fact that Carolus Duran and Bastien-Lepage were somehow involved, a man so young as I could not have differed from a woman so beautiful and so young." She is a "Sybil", "she seemed a classical impersonation of the Spring, the Virgilian commendation ... Her complexion was luminous, like that of apple blossom through which the light falls, and I remember her standing that first day by a great heap of such blossoms in the window. (*Autobiographies* 123)

Bollas notices that the "transformational object", "perhaps the most pervasive archaic object relation" (Transformational Object 10), changes for the adult into mental images which challenge and encourage. He calls these images "genera", as they generate unexpectedly fertile perspectives. They often rise unbidden, but often when a person is in difficulties. At eighteen, when Yeats has to find a life for himself in turbulent times Maud Gonne, with her impressive stature, her "luminous complexion" and her "sybillic aspect" allowed the poet to make his interests in literature and painting converge. Bollas' "genera" seem synonymous with what Georges Didi-Huberman's calls phantasms. He observes how they combine a "visible" and a "visual" aspect, whereby the former is phenomenal (observed by the consciousness) while the latter belongs to the fantasmatic aspect of things (as noticed by the libido). [2] This again ties in with Giorgio Agamben's study of the phantasm which he considers a "unit in the psychic system", Plato calls them a 'painting in the soul' of a person's "desire and pleasure"; Aristotle notes that phantasms are "drawings" made by life itself which almost literally draw a person on to realize his "passion". (Agamben 75). Because they are coagulations of a person's deepest impulses, phantasms "are individuated images and not abstract concepts" (Agamben 79).

It is interesting that Yeats, only two pages earlier in his *Autobiographies*, had observed that "We all have our simplifying image, our genius" and it puts a "hard burden ... upon us" (*Autobiographies* 121). He also mentions such secret image of the unique self in an early essay:

> there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images, and that this one image, if he would but brood over it his life long, would lead his soul, disentangled from unmeaning circumstance and the ebb and flow of the world, into that far household where the undying gods await all whose souls have become simple as flame" ("The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" 95)

"The Song of Wandering Aengus" (1897) illustrates one of Yeats's early experiments with such a phantasm. The first line, "I went out to the hazel wood" immediately calls up a search for wisdom, as the hazel tree in folklore is a tree of wisdom; the second line points out that Aengus, the Celtic god of love, is driven there "Because a fire was in my head" (l.2). This deep desire steers him to the stream where he "caught a little silver trout": phantasms often start in a totally insignificant object. This turns into a rustling sound which becomes more and more urgent and specific in its appeal: "And some one called me by my name: // It had become a glimmering girl / With apple blossom in her hair / Who called me by my name and ran / And faded through the brightening air" (l.8, 12-16) The rest of the poem is about how Aengus's central image keeps varying: he broods over it his life long, which leads his soul through depressions and heights ("hollow lands and hilly lands", l.18). Aengus cannot determine the image, it escapes him.

In Agamben's study of the phantasm, which he sees as "one of its most fertile legacies for Western culture" he explains how Yeats's much-admired Dante and his friend Guido Cavalcanti stated that

> Love comes from a seen form ... which penetrates through the external and internal senses until it becomes a phantasm or intention in the phantastic and memorial cells"; they "conceived of love as an essentially phantasmatic process, involving both imagination and memory in an assiduous, tormented circling around an image painted or reflected in the deepest self" (Agamben 81).

Here Yeats manages to depict Aengus as a (pre)vision of his own life, tracing metamorphoses of a "glimmering girl / With apple blossom in her hair" which end in "the golden apples of the sun". The poet's fluid lyrics beautifully illustrate how outside phenomena (apple blossom, dappled grass) morph into libidinal objects (the glimmering flowing hair, golden apples) which "draw" the singer on in life. As in Bollas' observations the poet's phantasm is not chosen, it seems to choose the one affected. It is an appeal from the Other to the particular self, hence the repeated "called me by my name". The phantasm is dynamic and ultimately out of reach: it called the singer "and ran". It is no wonder that Agamben calls the phantasm "one of its most fertile legacies for Western culture": it seems the type of image that corresponds to the phenomenon of desire which is always metonymical and reverberating: the fire in his head can develop thanks to Aengus' meditation on certain luminous objects. It is significant that the Celtic god of love, unlike his Roman and Greek counterparts, never finds fulfilment. Instead, he notices that the image of his love, though rippling through the landscape (in dappled apple blossom), is never completely realized.[3] In Yeats's poem Aengus' love life is an "essentially phantasmatic process" which preflects the poet's own life, in which an actual person like Maud Gonne immediately becomes "an image painted or reflected in the deepest self", causing him torment, but one that will fuel his poetic skills.

In this decade Yeats writes *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, his first essay on a possible "doctrine of the mask". He starts by deploring his own behaviour, as he lets his social self overrule his inner self: "I have overstated everything from a desire to vex or startle, from hostility that is but fear; or all my natural thoughts have been drowned by an undisciplined sympathy" (*Per Amica Silentia* 325). Instead, he should "close the door", "and the world must move my heart but to the heart's discovery of itself" (*ibidem*). Disciplined sympathy seems to mean that the poet needs to get the four factors of his "self", the others, Other, social and inner self in balance.[4] This very exercise is the topic of his poem "The Mask", which sums up the problems he had in writing *The Player Queen*, a play he struggled with throughout that decade.

"The Mask": the charm of the gap

In 1910 Yeats writes the poem "The Mask". In this dialogue poem it is interesting that the man is the one who uses a logic of either/or. When a "He" orders a "She" to "Put off that mask of burning gold" (l.1) she refuses, because he thinks he could find out whether she is motivated

by "Love or deceit" (l.7). She however believes that desire is stirred by conflict, when "hearts ... [are] wild *and* wise,/*And* yet not cold"(106 l.4-5, my emphasis).

As the "she" experiences life not in a dualistic but in an interactional way, this very short poem contains Yeats's play *The Player Queen* in a nutshell. It is a play about Decima, an actress who, due to some misunderstandings and failed plottings of a Prime Minister becomes a country's queen. The actress' metamorphosis is due to two factors: that she recognized her phantasm from early childhood onward, and that she is a perfect improvisor, which allows her to make interior and exterior worlds converge easily. Decima, though "born in a ditch ... wrapped in a sheet that was stolen from a hedge" (*Collected Plays* 408) gets her stamina from an image she picked up from a play in which a mother, upon the birth of her baby, could not "help but braid/The gold upon my hair/And dream that I should carry/ The golden top of care" (ibidem 407-8). When in a surreal series of coincidences the actress is taken for the queen, Decima can realize her desire: she has been cultivating this golden image all her life and is now ready to enact the role of the queenly sovereign. The gap between the actresses' poor origin and the queenly splendour of her royal role only helps her to remain alert and successful in her role.

The Dominus' whispered wisdom

As Yeats finishes this play he also finishes a volume of essays on his theory of the mask, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, which ends in a poem.[5] "Ego Dominus Tuus" (1915), focusing on the "inner workings" in the self, is a dialogue poem like "The Mask", but this time the "he"-position is taken by a "*hic*" (Latin for "here"), the she-position by "*ille*" (Latin for "over there"). Hic, whose perception aims at the here and now, projects his idea of completeness on his world. He believes an image in the outer world can simply reflect his whole self: "I would find myself and not an image". *Ille* however knows that completeness is out of reach: life consists in exploring discrepancies. While Hic only thinks of the conscious axis Ille, like Aengus, remains "Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion", the study of the Other. This is an exercise in difference: Ille seeks "all / That I have handled least, least looked upon". Like Dante, whose worldview did not just encompass social politics but also the unconscious, he knows he must (like Aengus) go for "the apple on the bough/ Most out of reach". Hic only takes into account the top layer of scheme L; he loves "Impulsive men that look for happiness" and "sing when they have found it" (l.40-41). He lives on the level of "The rhetorician [who] / Would deceive

his neighbours" or "The sentimentalist" who deceives himself (l.46-47). Hic being narcissistic merely sees the visible, which brings "happiness" or seeming fulfillment. Ille, maintaining that "art /Is but a vision of reality" (l.48) goes for the visual, perceived on the bottom axis between inner self and the energies of the Other. As this allows for a full engagement with Life the whole self is happening here, so we could call this "happenness".[6]

The poem ends with a cryptic statement that this Other, the Dominus of the title, must only "whisper" his helpful revelations about Ille's enigmatic images; this task of finding one's own destiny must be kept private, away from the 'momentary cries' and the "blasphemous men" (l.79), who ridicule people like Ille as they do not take the unconscious into account. Yet Ille is not only vulnerable to the brutish forces who ignore the bottom axis of the self; he is also split by that Other, and knows himself to be a "split subject": "men that in their writings are most wise"; only "Own nothing but their blind, stupefied hearts" (68-9).

An annoying other: Michael Robartes

"Michael Robartes and the Dancer" (1921) takes up the positions of "The Mask", only this time a more imperative "*He*" than ever gets the lion's share in the dialogue while "*She*" hardly gets a word in. The discussion starts with "He" (Robartes) explaining a painting to "She".[7] He uses it rhetorically as teaching material for his own interpretation, which is very reductive: he proclaims the dragon is conscious thought, and identifies with its killer, because he wants her to get in touch with the unconscious as represented by painters such as Paolo Veronese and Michelangelo. However, when Robartes specifies that the Dancer must embody his ideals to mirror them (otherwise "he will turn green with rage / At all that is not pictured there" (l/17-18)) his "vision" of art turns out to be his mere view on it, which is limited by his narcissisism and its scopic nature.

In the second stanza Robartes moves from Neoplatonic painters to philosophers: he has "a Latin text" which proves "That blest souls are not composite" and that "all beautiful women may/ Live in uncomposite blessedness". There is only one way to this simplicity: the only thoughts that women must follow up on are the ones that create lineaments in the body and the skin which "pleasure soul". This sounds all noble and logical, in a Yeatsian interpretation of Neoplatonism whereby phenomenal and libidinal body interact, only the

male speaker seems to forget that the nature of phantasms may be theorized, but their actual experiencing is not a general but a singular, individual concern.

No wonder then that the Dancer does not agree. She is happy enough to go along playing Robartes' allegorical game, but she corrects him, pointing out that the knight's fight is not so much with the dragon but with the lady: "You mean they argued" (l.13) about the nature of thought. As she has a mind of her own she asks, "May I not put myself to college"?" (l.19), "And must no beautiful woman be / Learned like a man?" (l.26-27).

As He does not deign to answer her question she playfully sticks to the allegorical language of Robartes' chosen altarpiece, mocking his rhetoric: "My wretched dragon is perplexed" (l.42). She may be perplexed about two things: first, if he wants her to fully engage in certain images to the point that she would embody them, she will have to look for them herself; and secondly, her perplexity may well relate to the fact that his theories about uncompositeness use very composite means, complicated images. She would have found great support in Paul Schilder's notion of the body image. This psychoanalyst, a contemporary of Yeats, focused on how thought and emotion together form mental images of the self which he called the "body image". This is far from uncomposite or everlasting:

> The image of the body is constructed, and ... there is a continual testing to find out what parts fit the plan and fit the whole. The individual will try to get more and more impressions, because he wants to come to definite formations. The gestalt will be built up ... in distinct levels and layers (Schilder 286).

"Sailing to Byzantium": gathered by the Other

As the continuous form in the title of "Sailing to Byzantium" (1926-7) echoes the sustained effort of "Wandering Aengus" this shows that "there is a continual testing" of the body image, which will be inspired by different forms as time goes on. Here the lover of Byzantium is not any more interested in "birds in the trees", "The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas" (l.4) which appealed to younger figures like Aengus. Here, the poet's old phantasm of the blossoming boughs has moved to golden birds "set upon a golden bough to sing"(l.30). As Schilder remarks

> The body image changes continually according to the life circumstances. ... An important part in this continuous process of construction, reconstruction, and dissolution of the body-image, is played by the processes of identification, appersonization, and projection (241)

This time it is a 62-year old Yeats who seeks images to inform his own unique "singing-school". Like the Dancer who wants to find her own models, the singer is focused on having his soul **"**studying / Monuments of its own magnificence" (l.13-14). As Yeats was fascinated by the magi and other saints who glittered through Ravenna's mosaics he experienced what Schilder describes when a phantasm "hits", i.e. "when outer physiological images connect with inner psychological ones they feed into the body-image" (21). Bachelard too stresses that the singular significance of phantasmatic objects are to be taken seriously: "I am firmly convinced that if man lives his images and words sincerely, he receives from them a unique ontological benefit" (*Air and Dreams* 12). In this poem the poet articulates very precisely what a phantasm does to the self.

O sages standing in God's holy fire[8]

> As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
> Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
> And be the singing-masters of my soul.
> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is; and gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity. (l.17-24)

First of all we recognize Schilder's identification: as the immaterial aspect (standing in God's holy fire) pushes the material into the background ("*As in* the gold mosaic of a wall") the "other", this object in the outer world, turns out to be a channel for the Other, to the extent that the self is so happily overwhelmed by it that it almost forgets it is split. Bachelard asks, "how can an image, at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche?" (*Space* 1). Merleau-Ponty describes these felicitous moments as a mix of self and o/Other, material and emotional unity:

> This concentration of the visibles ... this bursting forth of the mass of the body toward the things, which makes a vibration of my skin ... this magical relation, this pact between them and me according to which I lend them my body in order that they inscribe upon it and give me their resemblance" (*Visible and Invisible* 146).

This lending of the body, which Schilder calls "appersonization", is realized as Yeats's singer wants to be "gathered", like that other Neoplatonist, Shelley, when he wants to be whirled up by the West wind (in turn like Ganymed who was taken to the Olympus). Like Shelley's plea with the West Wind to "Make me thy lyre" (l.57) the singer in Byzantium wants to join his singing masters in their work. It is in this moment of fictional fusion that the phantasm is at its strongest. While Bachelard notices how poetry for Shelley is a "synthesizing function of dynamic imagination, which sets the whole soul in motion" (*Air* 49) this chimes in with what Didier Anzieu sees happening in the phantasm: "it has a bridging role, it is an intermediating screen between the psyche and the body, the world and the other psyches".[9]

Yet of course, like with Aengus, completeness is not quite reached: the poet's heart is still "sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal / It knows not what it is". "The body which seems so near to ourselves ... thus becomes a very uncertain possession" Schilder observes (297). This is where projection comes in: Yeats's acrobatic lyrics, the ottava rima, the enjambments and unexpected rhyming sounds can make "me" rhyme closely with "eternity", but the link between them is sheer, brilliant artifice.

"Ancestral Houses": creating phantasms

As the poet finds glowing phantasms in art (luminous leaves, the burning gold of the mask, the mosaic, the golden bough) he also considers the side of the creators : who contributes these heartening images to the treasures of human civilization? In the opening poem of the series "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (1928) the speaker senses that strong images are always the result of a civil war in the self, a conflict which has been transcended in a new balance of extra elegance:

> Surely among a rich man's flowering lawns,.../ Life overflows without ambitious pains;/ And rains down life until the basin spills,/ And mounts more dizzy high the more it rains/ As though to choose whatever shape it wills" (l.1, 3-6).

Yeats makes a point that neither powerful men nor poets ask others what they should do, but they watch what is suggested by the Other. So "Homer had not sung / Had he not found it certain beyond dreams/ That out of life's own self-delight had sprung / The abounding glittering jet" (l.9-12). Here the Other is given a name: it is Life itself. In his *Autobiographies* Yeats describes Life as a formidable force; but while it is adored by poets, it is indifferent to them: "we confess to Life ... and Life answers, 'I could never have thought of all that myself, I have so little time.' And it is our praise that it goes upon its way with shining eyes forgetting us" (475).

Time and again Yeats stresses that Life is bigger than the ego, and, as Freud remarked, it is indifferent to the ego's wellbeing.[10] The poet observes a like attitude in the "men of action" he admires, as he shows in his elegy for Robert Gregory,[11] and this is reflected in the art works they want to have made. That these men of action and the artists in their service make the primordial energy of the Other interact with the social world of others can be gleaned from the chiastic constructions which staple the poem in its micro- and macrostructure. This is especially prominent in the central stanza:

> Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
> Called architect and artist in, that they,
> Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
> The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
> The gentleness none there had ever known. (l.17-21)

So phantasms can be found but also provided. As Schilder puts it: "the whole body image of others can be taken in (identification) or our own body image can be pushed out as a whole" (240). Again Yeats's central image, that of the fountain which makes itself overflow, corresponds to Merleau-Ponty's "thrill" which helps distinguishing between the happiness (of Hic) and the joy (of Ille):

> "joy" is a bursting out of oneself called forth by the strength of happenings in the world; one is not just "happy" in the sense of a self-possessed contentment with the world. In ... this mood, it escapes from us without deliberate intention ... The perceiver who is made joyous by something in the world experiences a kind of happiness that overflows itself ... a being taken in within a thrall and a release from oneself (Mazis 38).

Again the dividing line runs between those who allow themselves to be steeped in "primordial perception" (Mazis 37), the bottom axis of the personality, and others.

The final two stanzas of these "Meditations" ponder over the possibility that the inheritors of great art works (sweet and gentle things, born from violent and bitter fights) who aim at mere social happiness and who ignore any sense of the Other may not pick up the enormous energy contained in "Ancestral Houses". Jean-Luc Nancy is on Yeats's wavelength when he warns the reader not to forget the nature of the phantasmatic image: "But the unity of the thing, of presence and of the subject is itself violent. ... it must irrupt, ... it must grasp itself, ...out of nothing, out of the absolute non-unity that first is given" (Nancy 23).

"Among School Children": an element of trauma

In "Among School Children" (1926) the poet, "sixty-year-old", returns to school, but this time in a "public" capacity: he comes to inspect it. Yet immediately after taking note that "The children learn to cipher and to sing" and to "be neat in everything" (l. 8,3,5) the inspector turns to inspect himself. The neatness of contours (like the "nun in a white hood") blur into libidinal bodies: "I dream of a Ledaean body" (l.9). Instead of controlling other people's results, he investigates his own cognitive processes.

Here three features stand out. First of all, the phantasm seems to accommodate trauma time, Freud's deferred action: the "Ledaean body" immediately splits into "a tale" of "tragedy", recalling a past in which the poet's self and another "blent". Second, as a present event triggers a past image the phantasm of young Maud Gonne has a strong tactile aspect. The poet sees a child and wonders "if she stood so at that age—/ And thereupon my heart is driven wild:/ She stands before me as a living child" (l. 19, 23-24). The child's body image recalls a precise "desire and libidinous tendency" from the past (Schilder 201). The woman since ever associated with painterly dignity is not only imagined to be fashioned by Michelangelo or other "Quattrocento fingers", but the image also touches on "the libidinous half of the body-image as well as its sensual part" (Schilder 288). Thirdly the "inspector" looks at how phantasms work on women. As in Ego Dominus tuus the primordial powers of the Other are worthy of a capital: they have become "Presences". On the one hand these phantasms are worshipped ("Both nuns and mothers worship images"), on the other "they too break hearts". While they dynamize the deepest impulses like "passion, piety or affection", promising sublimation ("that all heavenly glory symbolize"), they are simultaneously "self-born mockers of man's enterprise" (l.53-55).

In this "fission", the Presences recall the challenging images of Ille. He therein reflects the distinction Jean-Luc Nancy makes between open a and closed images. Open images "think in their own way": they go beyond the social self's narcissistic projections; instead of yielding the expected effect "open" images disturb complacency. (Nancy 30) If a picture is "thought of as a closed presence, one completed" it is only reflecting "the stupidness of the idol" (Nancy 31).

In the poem's famous final stanza the poet celebrates the balance and containment the complex human being can reach. "Labour is blossoming or dancing where /The body is not bruised to pleasure soul": when the poet's work touches upon the Other, Life itself, this brings joy, "happenness", as it is the unique self that is happening here, like the fountain springing from some unseen source. If a person realizes their whole self and comes into full being as a "great rooted blossomer", all parts combine. Yeats specifies that motional and emotional aspects mix: "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, / How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (l.63-64). Real body and body image combine, "Every striving and desire changes the substance of the body, its gravity, and its mass...and the shape of the body" (Schilder 201). It is in this line that Yeats most beautifully illustrates what Merleau-Ponty calls "the polymorphousness of the flesh", and he explains: "the flesh ... is not matter. It is the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body": "The flesh is ... a texture that returns to itself and conforms to itself" (146).

"Before the World Was Made": dis-playing libidinal lines

While the She in "The Mask" bluntly told the He that he should not enquire whether she was motivated by "Love or deceit", the speaker in the second poem of the sequence "A Woman Young and Old" (1928) is more willing to introduce the He to the epistemology of her boudoir. When the lady applies make-up "No vanity's displayed:/ I'm looking for the face I had / Before the world was made." (l. 7-8) This "face" refers again to the Neoplatonic belief that the Holy Spirit was a feminine divinity.[12] However, this female speaker does not aim at any ontology, all she does is exercise the different components of her being. This brings interesting nuances into the practice of the body image. First of all, this speaker actively experiments with her body image, and while the male poet merely used his imagination to identify with the sages in Byzantium via "autoplastic" changes in the body-image this lady also uses "alloplastic methods, masks, and clothes" (Schilder 205). She is as playful as the psychoanalyst who remarks that "We like to have our body in a hundred sizes and a thousand variations" (Schilder

204). She explores the emotional effect of each change, knowing that "the primary visibility ... does not come without a second visibility, that of the lines of force and dimensions" (Merleau-Ponty 148).

In the second stanza the dimension of the other is introduced: changing the body image with alloplastic means is one thing, but one's gaze has a more unsettling effect. Yet she tries it all:

> What if I look upon a man
> As though on my beloved ...
> I'd have him love the thing that was
> Before the world was made. (l. 9-10, 15-16)

While this lady does not literally wear a mask as in the earlier poem she stresses the opaqueness of the self. This opacity is sincere, not just to sabotage the narcissistic lover's projections, but to draw attention to the unconscious layers of the self. Stressing that she is but an image to her lover, which Nancy defines as "the display of presence"; she does not hide; on the contrary, "in the dis-play the image shows that the thing is and how it is" (Nancy 21).

Final Thoughts

Rereading some of Yeats's key poems in this overview of his work has shown "the permanent importance of the individual phantasm" and its "bridging role" as "an intermediating screen between the psyche and the body, the world and the other psyches". It made us agree with Merleau-Ponty that we "have to recognize an ideality that is not alien to the flesh, that gives it its axes, its depth, its dimensions" (*The Visible and the Invisible* 151). That Yeats tried to weave his unconscious impulses in his conscious life to come to some form of "Unity of Being" was an exploration that revealed many aspects. The Aengus figure highlighted how a simple object can become a phantasm. Like the unconscious, it is paradoxical: belonging to the outside world, yet kindling inside desires; non-intended yet chosen; recognizing the self in the Other, to the extent that the poet wants to be gathered by that Other. Some poems focused on the creation of phantasms, showing they were always inspired by Life, by Presences, which kept the self alive with conflict, as in The Mask and later poems. Ille observed that his unconscious self should not be shared with others: one's deepest secret is sacred ground for self-research. Yet the other is important too, as Michael Robartes indicated, though he forgot that "the

body image is always only partially communicated", and that it is unique and opaque. Unlike Robartes Schilder respects the secret: "I acknowledge ... the deep-lying factor of the partial community of the body-image" (Schilder 247). Yet Yeats is keen to explore these libidinal communications, so many of the poems find the singer in a "schooling" context. This remains true till his last poem, where the poet acknowledges strong conflict "Before he can accomplish fate" ("Under Ben Bulben" (1938), l.35).

Notes

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DihqvTevvGQ

2 "Une telle opposition (between the visible and the visual)... n'appelle donc pas un édifice de concepts: elle répond plutôt à la structure d'un fantasme" (Didi-Huberman 119).

3 As Denis de Rougemont explains in *L'Amour en occident* it is the Celtic tradition of the "white woman", the ever-elusive concept of the perfect spiritual companion of the Celtic monk, that gave rise to the idea of courtly love, the desire for the unattainable lady, which has become an important strand in European emotionology.

4 As Yeats lives between cultures (London and Sligo, Protestant and Catholic, Romantic and Expressionistic, politics and the unconscious, theatre and poetry) in a country that must invent some form of "home rule" for itself he does not have a firm framework that helps him to make choices so he has all the more reason to get in touch with his deepest self, the Other.

5 In Yeats critical and creative work (poetry and drama) have always converged. As he observed in 1908, in each of his texts "It is myself that I remake".

6 When Ille says "I seek an image, not a book" (l.67) he means he is not looking for a theory or some general truth but for a singular sensual impulse that will resound with his deeper self. Yeats does not use the term Other but anti-self. He is ambiguous in its definition: on the one hand the anti-self "look[s] most like me, being indeed my double" (l.72), on the other hand that Other is "most unlike" me (l.74). In other words the "anti-" seems to indicate a symmetry, but declaring itself as "Ego Dominus Tuus" (later "Lord of Terrible Aspect") the Other does seem to be in a hierarchically higher position.

7 As He specifies that it is an altar-piece we know it is St George who slays a dragon. In most pictures with this theme there is also a lady in the picture, who is the captive of the

dragon. However, the most famous picture in this tradition is Paolo Uccello's depiction of the scene which has been puzzling critics for over 6 centuries about the position of the lady, who seems to see the dragon not as her guard but her pet, or a friendly companion. While traditionally the dragon, belonging to a cave in dark earth, as the unconscious, Robartes does the opposite, seeing it as the representation of opinion.

8 In his study about images JL Nancy observes that the French expression sage comme une image, literally "wise as an image" (10), indicates that powerful images always come from the Other. This is certainly the case here, both in form and content.

9 "l'importance permanente du fantasme individuel conscient, préconscient et son rôle de pont et d'écran intermédiaire entre la psyche et le corps, le monde, les autres psychés." (Anzieu 26).

10 Freud sees the unconscious or the "primary system" as "an indifferent psychical energy which only becomes libido through the act of cathecting an object" (On Narcissism 78). Yeats often refers to the way in which "Dante and Villon ... seem to labour for their objects, and yet to desire whatever happens, being at the same instant predestinate and free, creation's very self. We gaze at such men in awe" (Autobiographies 273). The fact that these masters are ready to realize their full self, Other included, to prefer happenness to happiness, is awe-inspiring.

11 "Those that I fight I do not hate, Those that I guard I do not love; (l.3-4) Nor law, nor duty bade me fight, Nor public men, nor cheering crowds, A lonely impulse of delight Drove to this tumult in the clouds" ("An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" l.9-12).

12 There was a strand in mediaeval Celtic monasticism where "white women" accompanied monks in Platonic love relationships.

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Relations Between Chile and Ireland: A Story of Four Moments

A relação entre o Chile e a Irlanda: Uma história de quatro momentos

Fabián Bustamante Olguín

Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to carry out a historical reconstruction of four key moments in the relationship between Chile and Ireland. Basically, it seeks to highlight the Irish contribution to our country in three fundamental fields: political, military, economic and religious. This article is historical in nature and aims to highlight Irish contributions through four key historical moments, which, according to the author, are the most interesting and revealing within this relationship. The methodology used is secondary sources under the selection criterion if they mention Irish people and their descendants in the history of Chile.*

Keywords: *Chile; Ireland; Contributions; Relations; History.*

Resumo*: Este artigo tem como propósito realizar uma reconstrução histórica em quatro momentos-chave da relação entre o Chile e a Irlanda. Basicamente, busca-se destacar a contribuição irlandesa em nosso país em três áreas fundamentais: política, militar, econômica e religiosa. Este artigo tem um caráter histórico e pretende ressaltar as contribuições irlandesas através de quatro momentos históricos chave, que, segundo o autor, são os mais interessantes e reveladores dentro desta relação. A metodologia utilizada são fontes secundárias, sob o critério de seleção se mencionam irlandeses e seus descendentes na história do Chile.*

Palavras-chave: *Chile; Irlanda; contribuições; relações; história.*

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Introduction

The Irish contribution in Chile, although not as numerous as in other Latin American countries such as Argentina, has left a significant mark in various areas, especially in politics, military, economic and religious matters. These four fundamental pillars allow us to observe how Irish immigration has influenced the development of the Chilean nation throughout its history. This article is historical in nature and aims to highlight Irish contributions through four key historical moments, which, according to the author, are the most interesting and revealing within this relationship. I understand historical moment as a specific period in time that is characterized by significant events, processes, or changes that have a lasting impact on society, culture, politics, or the economy.

To begin, it is important to note that, although relations between Chile and Ireland are close, there is a paucity of information, especially regarding the Irish roots of Chileans (Cruset 2023; Soto Zárate, 2022; Griffin 2006). The information available about the Irish in Chile is usually scattered and, for the most part, is addressed tangentially in national literature. This means that information about the contribution of the Irish in Chile is not easily accessible. One way to approach this relationship is through genealogy, looking for traces of Irish ancestry, especially in military contexts, during the Spanish colonial period and the independence processes, as well as in the religious sphere, considering the arrival of Irish priests in the second half of the 20th century. Therefore, an effective method to investigate the presence of the Irish in Chile has been the genealogical and biographical method. Many of these biographical studies, some of which I have written for the *Society for Irish Latin American Studies* (SILAS), have been fundamental in this sense (Bustamante Olguín 2008). Although Irish immigration in Chile did not have as significant an impact as in Argentina (Murray, 2004; Wall, 2017), numerous Irish and their descendants played an important role at various moments in Chilean history (Soto Zárate, 2022; Bustamante, 2019). In that sense, it is necessary to carry out a study through interviews with all the descendants of Irish who exist in our country. This would be very useful to deepen the historical reconstruction of the Irish contribution in Chile and its descendants.

Consequently, the scarce presence of Irish people in our country effectively means that the sources are quite limited to carry out a historical reconstruction of their contribution. However, some notable Irish stood out in various fields, which ultimately gives some importance to Irish migration in Chilean history. It is likely that, given the geographical

conditions of Chile, with the Andes mountain range acting as a natural border, access has been much more difficult compared to the neighboring country of Argentina.

My interest is to be able to make a reconstruction around these three pillars mentioned above, and that in some way this article serves as a reference for researchers interested in the relationship between Chile and Ireland. Therefore, one of the safest approaches to address this is through this essay, supported by secondary sources, that is, specialized bibliography that tangentially mentions the Irish contribution in Chile.

1.First moment: the Spanish colonial period

During the Spanish colonial period, several Irish figures played crucial roles in Chile, contributing significantly to the country's early history. Among them are John Clark, engineer John Garland y White, and Governor Ambrosio O'Higgins. These Irish were fundamental in the fortification of Valdivia, a crucial aspect for the defense and development of Chilean territory in those times. Ambrosio O'Higgins, in particular, stood out as governor of Osorno and promoted the arrival of Irish to that city with the aim of turning it into an industrial area. Although the colonization of Osorno faced challenges and difficulties, it marked an important milestone in the relationship between Chile and Ireland and in the history of Chilean colonization.

Ambrosio O'Higgins, who later became viceroy of Peru, is perhaps the most emblematic figure of this period. His administration was characterized by significant efforts to improve Chile's infrastructure and economy. The construction of roads and bridges, as well as the implementation of policies to encourage agriculture and industry, are testament to his lasting impact on the region. O'Higgins' influence endures in Chilean historical memory, not only for his administrative achievements, but also for his legacy through his son, Bernardo O'Higgins.

1.1 John Clark and the fortification of Valdivia

John Clark was one of the first Irish to leave a mark on the history of Chile. His work in the fortification of Valdivia was fundamental for the defense of the region against external attacks, especially from pirates and privateers. Valdivia, a city located in southern Chile, was a crucial strategic point due to its geographical location and its natural port. The fortification of the

city not only protected the Spanish settlers, but also facilitated the commercial and economic development of the region (Guarda 1994).

1.2 John Garland and White: pioneering engineers

The engineer John Garland y White also played an important role in the early history of Chile. Garland, a military engineer of Irish origin, was responsible for numerous infrastructure works that helped consolidate Spanish control over Chilean territory. Their contributions included the construction of fortifications, roads and bridges, which not only improved security but also facilitated trade and transportation in the region. These infrastructural improvements were crucial to the economic and social development of Chile during the colonial period.

John Garland's impact in Chile was not limited to the physical works he supervised and built. His influence also extended to the way these projects were designed and planned. Garland brought with him advanced engineering techniques and knowledge that were unknown in Chile at the time. These innovations not only increased the efficiency and durability of buildings but also served as an example and a source of learning for local engineers. Through his work, Garland helped raise the standard of engineering in Chile, establishing practices that would continue to influence the country's infrastructure long after his departure.

In addition to his technical contribution, Garland played an important role in the formation of an engineering and construction culture in Chile. As one of the first professional engineers in the country, his presence and work served to legitimize and professionalize the discipline of engineering. This was particularly significant at a time when many of the constructions were carried out by workers without formal training, relying on traditional methods and empirical experience. Garland's arrival marked a shift toward a more scientific and organized approach to infrastructure construction and development.

The fortifications built under Garland's supervision were particularly important. In a time of frequent conflicts and threats, both internal and external, these structures provided a crucial defense for local communities and Spanish colonial interests. By strengthening defenses at strategic points, Garland helped secure trade routes and settlement areas, allowing for safer and more sustained growth. His work in the construction of fortifications is a testament to the importance of military engineering in consolidating territorial control during the colonial period.

The roads and bridges built by Garland also had a significant impact on the Chilean economy. Before their arrival, many areas of the country were isolated due to a lack of adequate transportation infrastructure. This not only made trade difficult, but also limited the movement of people and resources. The roads and bridges built by Garland connected communities and markets, facilitating the exchange of goods and services. This new connectivity boosted local and regional commerce, stimulating economic growth and improving the quality of life for many people.

Garland's influence extended beyond his time in Chile. The techniques and methods he introduced continued to be used and developed by local engineers and future immigrants. Its legacy can be seen in the infrastructure that continued to be built throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Furthermore, its focus on planning and durability laid the foundation for a more modern and efficient infrastructure, contributing to Chile's progress towards a more developed and connected nation.

The story of John Garland and White is an example of the impact that an individual can have on the development of a country. Through his work and innovations, Garland not only helped consolidate Spanish control in Chile, but also facilitated the country's economic and social growth. His legacy is a reminder of the importance of engineering and infrastructure in the development of a nation. Today, his influence can still be seen in Chile's infrastructure, a lasting testament to his contribution to the country.

1.3 Ambrosio O'Higgins: governor and visionary

Ambrosio O'Higgins is, without a doubt, the most prominent Irish figure in the colonial history of Chile. Born in Ballynary, Ireland, O'Higgins came to South America as a merchant and later entered Spanish military service. His talent and dedication led him to quickly rise through the ranks, and in 1788 he was appointed governor of Chile. During his administration, O'Higgins implemented a series of reforms that had a lasting impact on the region.

One of O'Higgins' most notable achievements was the construction of the Camino Real, a network of roads that connected the main cities and towns of Chile. This infrastructure not only improved communication and trade within the country, but also facilitated the mobilization of troops and resources in times of conflict. Additionally, O'Higgins promoted the construction of bridges and the improvement of ports, which further strengthened the Chilean economy.

O'Higgins' vision was not limited to improving infrastructure. As governor, he also cared about education and public health. Understanding the importance of an educated and healthy population for the development of a prosperous society, O'Higgins promoted the creation of schools and hospitals in various regions of Chile. These institutions not only improved the living conditions of Chileans, but also laid the foundations for a more balanced and sustainable development of the country.

In the economic sphere, O'Higgins implemented policies that promoted the growth and diversification of the Chilean economy. He promoted agriculture and livestock, introducing new techniques and crops that increased productivity. In addition, it promoted the development of mining, a sector that would become one of the main sources of wealth for Chile in the centuries to come. Their efforts to strengthen the local economy contributed to the creation of a solid economic foundation that allowed Chile to face future challenges with greater resilience.

O'Higgins was also noted for his focus on justice and order. During his term, he carried out important reforms in the judicial system, seeking to guarantee a more efficient and equitable administration of justice. These reforms included the training of judges and officials, as well as the implementation of more transparent and accessible procedures for the population. Their commitment to justice and order contributed to the creation of a safer and more predictable environment, which in turn facilitated economic and social development.

Another relevant aspect of O'Higgins' administration was his focus on defense and security. Aware of the external and internal threats that Chilean territory faced, O'Higgins strengthened the military forces and improved fortifications at strategic points. These measures not only ensured greater protection for the population, but also consolidated Spanish control over the region. His ability to combine infrastructure with defense was a testament to his skill as a leader and strategist.

In addition to his tangible achievements, the figure of Ambrosio O'Higgins left an intangible but equally important legacy. His leadership and vision inspired future generations of Chileans, including his own son, Bernardo O'Higgins, who would become a key figure in Chile's fight for independence. Ambrosio's influence on the training of his son and on the configuration of the political and military thought of the time is undeniable. His legacy endured in the values and principles that guided the independence leaders and in the administrative and military structure that contributed to the success of Chilean independence.

O'Higgins' impact in Chile was not limited to the colonial period. The reforms and projects he implemented laid the foundation for the future development of the country. The network of roads and bridges he built continued to be a key piece of national infrastructure for many years, facilitating economic growth and regional integration. Likewise, its educational and health policies contributed to the formation of a more equitable society prepared for the challenges of the future (Bustamante Olguín 2019).

1.4 Osorno and Irish colonization

The colonization of Osorno is another example of Ambrosio O'Higgins' impact in Chile. As governor, O'Higgins promoted the arrival of Irish settlers to Osorno with the aim of developing agriculture and industry in the region. Although this effort faced numerous challenges, including conflicts with indigenous peoples and logistical difficulties, it marked an important milestone in the history of Chilean colonization.

The arrival of Irish settlers in Osorno also reflects O'Higgins' vision of a more industrialized and economically independent Chile. By promoting the immigration of skilled workers and farmers, O'Higgins sought to diversify and strengthen the local economy. Although the colonization of Osorno was a failure in its objectives, it at least laid the foundations for an effort to develop an industrial city (Bustamante Olguín 2019).

1.5 Viceroyalty of Peru and the legacy of O'Higgins

The impact of Ambrosio O'Higgins was not limited to Chile. In 1796, he was named viceroy of Peru, a position of great power and influence in the Spanish empire. During his tenure as viceroy, O'Higgins continued to promote administrative and economic reforms that benefited the entire Andean region. His focus on improving infrastructure and economic development left a lasting legacy in Peru and beyond (Bustamante Olguín 2019, 1-2).

As viceroy of Peru, O'Higgins faced a number of significant challenges, including the need to strengthen the economy and improve colonial administration. One of his first initiatives was to improve tax collection, combating corruption and ensuring that resources effectively reached the coffers of the colonial government. This measure not only increased revenue but also improved government efficiency and transparency.

O'Higgins also focused on improving infrastructure in the viceroyalty of Peru. Modeled on what he had done in Chile, he promoted the construction of roads, bridges and

canals, facilitating trade and communication in a geographically challenging region. These works not only improved the economy, but also helped to more closely integrate the various regions of the viceroyalty, promoting a sense of unity and cohesion (Barros Arana 2000).

In the economic sphere, O'Higgins promoted the development of agriculture and mining, two fundamental pillars of the Peruvian economy. He introduced advanced agricultural techniques and promoted the cultivation of products that could be exported, generating additional income for the colony. In mining, he encouraged the exploration and exploitation of new deposits, ensuring that Peru maintained its position as one of the main producers of precious metals in the Spanish empire.

O'Higgins' focus on education and health also became evident during his tenure as viceroy. He promoted the founding of schools and universities, as well as the construction of hospitals and the improvement of health services. These initiatives reflected his belief in the importance of an educated and healthy population for the sustainable development of society. By investing in education and health, O'Higgins contributed to the creation of a more solid foundation for the future progress of the viceroyalty.

In addition to his economic and administrative reforms, O'Higgins also showed notable sensitivity toward the indigenous populations of Peru. He recognized the importance of protecting their rights and improving their living conditions, promoting policies that sought to integrate indigenous communities into the colonial economy in a more fair and equitable manner. Although their efforts in this regard faced resistance and did not always achieve the desired results, they reflected a genuine commitment to social justice and equity.

Ambrosio O'Higgins' legacy also lives on through his son, Bernardo O'Higgins, who would become a key figure in Chile's fight for independence. Bernardo O'Higgins is remembered as one of the fathers of the Chilean country, and his leadership and bravery in the fight for independence are deeply linked to the influence and example of his father. The education and values instilled by Ambrosio in his son were crucial in forming the character and determination that Bernardo would show during the war of independence (Murray 2006).

The influence of Ambrosio O'Higgins on the education of his son Bernardo was not limited to values and principles. It also included a deep understanding of military strategy and the importance of efficient administration. Bernardo applied many of the lessons learned from his father into his own leadership, allowing him to play a crucial role in liberating Chile from Spanish rule and consolidating the country's independence.

The Spanish colonial period in Chile was marked by the significant contribution of several Irish figures. From the fortification of Valdivia to the administrative and economic reforms implemented by Ambrosio O'Higgins, the Irish played a crucial role in the early development of Chile. Its influence was felt in various aspects of colonial life, including defence, infrastructure and the economy. The fortification of Valdivia, for example, was an engineering work that ensured Spanish control over a strategic region, protecting sea routes and coastal settlements from possible foreign incursions.

The administrative and economic reforms implemented by Ambrosio O'Higgins transformed the colonial administration, making it more efficient and effective. These reforms not only benefited Chile, but also served as a model for other regions of the Spanish empire. The implementation of a more professional and transparent administration contributed to improving governance and laying the foundations for economic and social development.

In conclusion, the story of John Clark, John Garland and White, and Ambrosio O'Higgins is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Irish in foreign lands. Through their work and dedication, these figures not only left a lasting mark on Chilean history, but also helped forge the ties between Chile and Ireland that endure to this day. The Irish contribution during the colonial period is an integral part of Chilean history and a reminder of the country's rich multicultural heritage.

2.Second moment: the Independence process

The independence process of Chile (1810-1818) also had the significant participation of Irish people. Prominent figures such as John Mackenna O'Reilly, John O'Brien and Carlos María O'Caroll joined the patriot cause. However, the most relevant figure in this context is Bernardo O'Higgins, a key leader in the Chilean independence process of Irish descent.

Bernardo O'Higgins, son of Ambrosio O'Higgins, is considered one of the fathers of the Chilean country. His leadership and bravery in the fight for independence were crucial to the success of the independence movement. O'Higgins not only stood out as a soldier, but also as a statesman, playing a fundamental role in the consolidation of independence and the formation of the new Chilean state.

The participation of these Irish in the independence process highlights the fundamental role they played in one of the most significant moments in Chilean history. His influence and

leadership in the fight for Chilean independence not only evidence his commitment to the cause, but also the deep connection between the two nations in this critical period.

2.1 John Mackenna O'Reilly: Engineer and strategist

John Mackenna O'Reilly, born in Clogher , Ireland, in 1771, is one of the most prominent figures among the Irish who supported Chilean independence. Mackenna, a talented engineer and military strategist, was invited by Bernardo O'Higgins to join the Chilean independence movement. His military engineering experience and strategic skill were invaluable to the patriot forces.

Mackenna participated in several key campaigns and her role in defending the independence cause was vital. One of his most notable achievements was the fortification of the city of Valdivia, a crucial strategic position for the control of Chilean territory. In addition, Mackenna was fundamental in the organization of the Chilean Army, contributing to the formation and training of the troops that would fight for independence.

2.2 John O'Brien and Carlos María O'Carroll: heroes of Independence

John O'Brien and Carlos María O'Carroll are two other Irishmen whose participation in the Chilean independence process deserves to be highlighted. John O'Brien, a native of Wexford, Ireland, arrived in South America attracted by the possibility of joining the independence struggles that were developing on the continent. In Chile, O'Brien stood out as an officer in the patriotic army, participating in various battles and demonstrating his courage and commitment to the cause (Figueroa 1904).

Carlos María O'Carroll , although less known than O'Brien and Mackenna, also played a significant role in the independence movement. Their participation in the war and their support for patriot forces reflect the spirit of solidarity that many Irish felt towards the people of Latin America who were fighting for their freedom.

2.3 Bernardo O'Higgins: leader and statesman

However, it is Bernardo O'Higgins who stands out as the most emblematic figure of Irish influence on Chilean independence. Born in Chillán in 1778, the son of Ambrosio

O'Higgins, Bernardo was sent to England for his education, where he soaked up the liberal and revolutionary ideas that were ascendant in Europe at the time.

Upon his return to Chile, Bernardo O'Higgins quickly joined the independence movement. His leadership and military skill became evident in crucial battles such as Chacabuco and Maipú, where his strategies and bravery led to decisive victories for the patriot forces. These victories not only consolidated Chile's independence, but also reinforced O'Higgins' position as the undisputed leader of the new state.

As supreme director of Chile, O'Higgins implemented a series of reforms that laid the foundations for the country's modernization. He promoted education, improved infrastructure, and established institutions that strengthened the Chilean state. His vision of a free and progressive nation was fundamental to the construction of modern Chile.

2.4 Cultural and political connections

The participation of the Irish in Chilean independence also had cultural and political implications. The influence of Irish ideas and values was reflected in the Chilean independence movement, contributing to the formation of a national identity that valued freedom and self-determination.

Furthermore, the connection between Chile and Ireland during this period laid the foundation for future diplomatic and cultural relations between the two countries. The shared heritage of the struggle for independence and the common values of freedom and justice continue to be an important bond between Chile and Ireland.

Chile's independence process is a crucial moment in the country's history, and the participation of Irish people such as John Mackenna O'Reilly, John O'Brien, Carlos María O'Carroll and, especially, Bernardo O'Higgins underlines the importance of the Irish influence on this historic event. His leadership, bravery and commitment to the independence cause not only contributed to the success of the movement, but also forged a lasting connection between Chile and Ireland.

The history of Chilean independence, enriched by the participation of these Irish, is a testament to the interconnectedness of freedom struggles in different parts of the world. Through their contribution, the Irish helped shape the destiny of Chile, leaving a legacy that continues to be remembered and celebrated today. This historical connection highlights the

importance of recognizing and valuing multicultural influences in the formation of nations and their identities.

3.Third moment: integration and trade in the nineteenth century

During the nineteenth century, some Irish immigrants integrated into the Chilean elite through marriages to prominent women and became successful merchants. This stage highlights the evolution of the identity of the Irish in Chile, as some chose to identify themselves as British, which allowed them a better reception by the national elite.

The case of Juan Mackenna, who became a prominent member of Chilean society and a successful merchant, is a clear example of this integration. The ability of these immigrants to adapt and thrive in their new environment reflects their resilience and ability to take advantage of the opportunities available in the Chilean context.

This period is also linked to the colonial matrix of conquest societies and the racial hierarchy, in which white skin conferred social advantages. The integration of the Irish into the Chilean elite and their success in trade are framed in this context, providing an important framework for understanding the social and economic dynamics of 19th century Chile.

3.1 Marriages and Strategic Alliances

The integration of the Irish into nineteenth century Chilean society was not an isolated process, but was deeply influenced by social and marital strategies that facilitated their acceptance into the local elite. These marriages not only offered social and economic stability to immigrants, but also allowed them to form strategic alliances that were beneficial to their business ventures.

One of the most interesting aspects of this phenomenon is how these marriages helped consolidate the position of Irish immigrants in Chilean society. By marrying prominent women of the Chilean elite, the Irish were able to access social and economic networks that would have been inaccessible to them otherwise. These marriage alliances also helped smooth out cultural differences and facilitate the integration of immigrants into Chilean social life. Here the names of the Irish Timothy Cadagan, James Glover, James Hogan, John MacKenna, Peter Smith, William Taylor and Charles Emanuel Webar stand out. (Guarda 2006, 674).

3.2 Identification as British

Many of the Irish immigrants chose to identify as British to integrate more easily into the Chilean elite. This decision was based in part on the social and economic advantages that came with association with the British Empire, which at the time had significant influence on global trade and international relations.

Identifying as British not only allowed the Irish to access certain trade advantages, but also helped them avoid the stigma associated with being Irish at a time when Ireland was under British rule and suffered from political and economic instability. This identification as British, therefore, was a pragmatic strategy that facilitated the immigrants' integration and success in their new environment.

3.3 Trade and Prosperity

The ability of Irish immigrants to prosper in the 19th century Chilean trade is another crucial aspect of their integration. Many of these immigrants brought with them knowledge and business skills that allowed them to establish successful businesses and contribute to the economic development of Chile.

Import-export trade, in particular, offered significant opportunities for these immigrants. Chile, with its expanding economy and growing demand for imported goods, provided an ideal environment for Irish merchants. Furthermore, the ability of these immigrants to establish trade connections with other countries, especially the United Kingdom and the United States, gave them a competitive advantage.

3.4 Example of Juan Mackenna

Juan Mackenna is a leading example of an Irish immigrant who managed to integrate and prosper in 19th century Chilean society. Mackenna was not only a successful merchant, but also became an influential figure in the social and political life of Chile. His ability to establish relationships with the Chilean elite and his success in trade reflect the opportunities available to Irish immigrants and their ability to adapt and prosper in their new environment.

Mackenna's story highlights the importance of adaptability and resilience in the immigrant integration process. His success was not only based on his business skills, but also on his ability to form strategic alliances and navigate the social complexities of his new

environment. Mackenna's story, therefore, is a testament to the ability of immigrants to overcome challenges and achieve success in a foreign context.

3.5 Racial hierarchy and social advantages

The integration of the Irish into the Chilean elite and their success in trade were also influenced by the racial hierarchy of the time. In the colonial and postcolonial context of Chile, white skin conferred significant social advantages. The Irish, by being considered white, were able to benefit from this racial hierarchy and access opportunities that would have been inaccessible to other racial groups.

This racial hierarchy not only facilitated the integration of the Irish into the Chilean elite, but also allowed them to establish themselves as successful merchants. Association with Chile's white elite and access to exclusive social and economic networks were crucial factors in the success of these immigrants (Guarda 2006).

The integration of Irish immigrants into 19th century Chilean society is a clear example of how social, marital, and commercial strategies can facilitate immigrants' adaptation and success in a new environment. Through strategic marriages, identification as British, and taking advantage of the social advantages conferred by the racial hierarchy, the Irish were able to integrate into the Chilean elite and prosper in trade.

The history of the integration of the Irish in Chile highlights the importance of adaptability and resilience in the immigration process. Despite the challenges and barriers, these immigrants managed to establish themselves and contribute significantly to the economic and social development of their new country. Their story is a testament to the ability of immigrants to overcome obstacles and achieve success in a foreign context, and offers valuable lessons for understanding the dynamics of immigration and integration in the nineteenth century and beyond.

4.Fourth Moment: religious influence in the twentieth century

In the 20th century, the Irish influence in Chile manifested itself notably in the religious sphere, with the arrival of Irish Catholic priests who played a significant role in the parishes and base ecclesial communities in the peripheral areas of Santiago. The relationship of the Irish religious with Latin American liberation causes, in line with the liberation theology of the Catholic left, is notable.

These priests not only contributed to the strengthening of the Catholic faith in Chile, but also became involved in social and political movements that sought justice and equity. The historical oppression experienced by Ireland under British Protestant rule could have influenced the affinity of these religious with the liberation struggles in Latin America. Thus, this stage shows how the history of oppression can influence the participation of Irish people in social and political movements in Chile and throughout the region.

The work of these Irish priests in Chile highlights the spiritual and social dimension of their contribution, underscoring how the history of a people can resonate in geographically distant but similar contexts in terms of struggle and resistance.

4.1 Irish priests and liberation theology

Liberation theology emerged in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century as a response to the conditions of poverty and oppression that prevailed in the region. This theological current, which combines Christian principles with a critical approach towards unjust social and economic structures, found an echo among many Irish priests who arrived in Chile.

Irish priests, many of whom had experienced or knew the history of British oppression in Ireland, found in liberation theology a way to connect their faith with social justice (Dillon, 2006). Their commitment to this theology led them to become involved actively in the most disadvantaged communities of Santiago, where they worked to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants and advocate for social and economic reforms.

In Chile, starting with what was known as the General Missions in 1962-63, a plan by the Catholic Church was implemented to insert itself into the poor neighborhoods of Santiago and the entire country, in response to the new rulings of the Second Vatican Council. During this period, many priests settled in the so-called Chilean towns, and among them there were several foreigners, including some Irish, belonging to the Irish-origin congregation of San Columbano (Sánchez Gaete 2014).

The insertion of priests into popular neighborhoods was a significant experience, because, as the Chilean historian Maximiliano Salinas points out, it deeply affected the religious identity of the priests. As they integrated and got to know the popular world, they began to question their role as priests and their faith. Being among the poor, following the example of Jesus, led many of them to question the hierarchy of the Church. As a result,

several priests withdrew from their clerical roles and began participating in social movements, as will be discussed in another section.

However, the relationship between European priests and the popular classes was not free of tensions. At first, some sectors of the population looked at these foreign priests with distrust, perceiving them as alien to local reality. Furthermore, certain sectors of conservative Catholicism saw the General Missions and the insertion of priests in the neighborhoods as a foreign intervention. By getting involved in leftist social movements and popular struggles, these priests were accused by the most conservative Catholicism of propagating an alleged Marxist infiltration in the Catholic Church, a thesis defended by organizations such as Tradition, Family and Property, especially during President Salvador Allende's government.

4.2 Involvement in social movements

The work of these priests was not limited to spirituality; their influence extended to the social and political arena. In the peripheral areas of Santiago, Irish priests participated in the organization of base ecclesial communities, which became spaces of empowerment and resistance. These groups not only promoted the Catholic faith, but also promoted participation in the fight for human rights and social justice.

As I pointed out previously, the experience of British occupation in Ireland and the differentiation with the British through the Catholic religion is a very important factor to understand the commitment that some priests of Irish origin had with the social struggles in our country. There is an interesting intersection between the priestly insertion in the popular neighborhoods and the struggles of the settler movement, which sought liberation from state oppression and, above all, from the political right.

Here the community and the congregation of San Columbano played an important role, especially in the western area of Santiago, which we have investigated mainly through the *Dios con Nosotros* (God with Us) community and the role of the Irish priest Kevin O'Boyle, better known as Father Miguel for the residents (Bustamante Olguín 2011). He introduced the Catholic charismatic renewal in Chile, especially in the popular sectors. Also in the northern area, such as in Huechuraba, testimonies are recorded from residents who highlight the role of San Columbano in the grassroots communities, resisting repression, persecution and shortages during the civil-military dictatorship. Also, according to specialized literature, some Irish priests participated in the Christian Movement for Socialism, a group of priests and

lay people committed to the socialist option and, therefore, to the government of President Salvador Allende and Popular Unity.

I argue that the "Irish Catholic *habitus*," which developed over many centuries in the Republic of Ireland as liberation Catholicism, may have influenced commitment and sensitivity to issues linked to popular social struggles in Chile. Bourdieu (1971) defines *habitus* as a set of durable and transferable dispositions that individuals acquire through socialization and that guide their perceptions, thoughts and actions. These dispositions are the result of personal and collective history. In the case of the Irish Catholic "habitus", we can consider how the history of Ireland, marked by British colonization, resistance, the fight for independence and strong religious traditions, has shaped a particular set of dispositions and sensibilities.

4.3 Context of repression and dictatorship

The political context of Chile in the 20th century, particularly during the civil-military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), also shaped the role of Irish priests in the country. During this period, repression and human rights violations were common, and many priests found themselves on the front lines of resistance against the dictatorship.

And as I mentioned in previous pages, if in the period prior to the military coup foreign missionaries had penetrated the spaces of the settlers, now it was the settlers who penetrated the missionary spaces available to sustain their social, political and cultural organizations. All of this occurred in a context of conservative militarization of society and its traditional local institutions. In this sense, the Catholic Church once again revalued its institutional weight and its assistance capacity to welcome civil society.

As Salinas (1994) points out, the Church and the missionaries recovered an authority and prestige typical of another era, an authority and prestige that was fought, but at the same time recognized. In this period, unprecedented missionary bodies were created, such as the *Vicaria de la Solidaridad* (Vicariate of Solidarity) and the *Vicaría de la Pastoral Obrera* (Vicariate of Workers' Pastoral) in 1976 and 1977, respectively. In addition, numerous foreign missionaries arrived who contributed to reversing the missionary crisis experienced between 1967 and 1973.

Ireland's history, marked by resistance to British rule, resonated with the experiences of Chileans fighting against the dictatorship. Irish priests in Chile, familiar with the history of resistance in their own country, found a parallel in the Chilean struggle and became active

defenders of human rights. The Catholic Church, and particularly foreign priests, played a crucial role in protecting the persecuted and exposing the abuses of the regime.

4.4 Connections with the opposition

The affinity of Irish priests with liberation causes in Latin America also led them to form alliances with other opposition movements. In many cases, these priests became intermediaries between local communities and international human rights organizations, helping to bring global attention to the injustices committed in Chile.

In this sense, between 1983 and 1986, some missionaries more committed to the social and political situation of the inhabitants were expelled from the country, as in the case of the Irish missionaries Desmond McGillicudy (St. Joseph's of Mill Hill) and Brandan Forde (Franciscan) (Aguilar 2006). It is important to remember that in 1986 the attack on General Augusto Pinochet by the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), a far-left organization, occurred.

That said, there is another connection between this far-left group and the Irish. In 1996, some members of the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front) (FPMR) escaped from the public prison in Santiago, Chile, with the help of two Irish sisters, Frances Mary Shannon and her sister Christie, both belonging to the IRA. Currently, Frances was detained by the police in Croatia during the month of June 2024.[1]

4.5 The spiritual dimension

The influence of Irish priests in Chile is not limited to social and political aspects; there is also a significant spiritual dimension to his contribution. These priests brought with them a deep spirituality that resonated in the communities they served. Its focus on liberation theology and its commitment to the poor and oppressed reflect a living and active faith that seeks to make a tangible difference in the world.

The spirituality of Irish priests was characterized by a deep sense of empathy and solidarity with the marginalized. Their ministry was not just about preaching, but about living the Gospel through concrete actions of love and justice. This integrative spiritual approach helped strengthen the communities of faith and inspire others to follow their example.

The arrival of Irish Catholic priests to Chile in the twentieth century and their influence on the country's religious and social communities represent an important chapter

in the history of relations between Ireland and Chile. These priests not only helped strengthen the Catholic faith, but also became active advocates for social justice and human rights. His work in the most disadvantaged communities and his commitment to liberation theology had a lasting impact on the lives of many Chileans.

The legacy of Irish priests in Chile is a testament to the power of faith and solidarity to generate positive change in the world. Their life stories and dedication to social justice continue to inspire new generations of religious and secular leaders in Chile and beyond. This historical connection between Ireland and Chile underlines the importance of multicultural influences in the formation of national identities and the fight for a more just and equitable world.

Conclusions

Through these four historical moments – the Spanish colonial period, the process of independence, integration and trade in the 19th century, and religious influence in the 20th century – the depth and diversity of the Irish contribution to history can be appreciated from Chile. Although Irish immigration to Chile was not as numerous as in other Latin American countries, its political, military, and religious impact has been significant and lasting.

This historical analysis reveals not only the connections between Chile and Ireland, but also how the experiences and legacies of immigrants can shape and enrich the societies into which they integrate. The history of the Irish in Chile is a testimony of resilience, adaptation and contribution, offering valuable lessons for understanding cultural interaction and historical development in diverse contexts.

Chilean specialized literature rarely explores this contribution in detail, possibly due to the lower numerical significance of Irish migration compared to countries like Argentina. However, the historical division proposed in this text can serve as a starting point for future research that sheds light on the impact of the Irish community in Chile throughout different periods, thus enriching our understanding of Chilean history and the complex intercultural relationships that have shaped it.

Notes

1 https://interference.cl/articulos/detienen-en-croacia-irlandesa-que-participo-con-el-fpmr-en-la-fuga- desde-la-carcel-de-alta

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Pressupostos, salvo engano, de uma divergência nada silenciosa: natividade, Abel Barros Baptista e Roberto Schwarz

Assumptions, Unless One is Mistaken, of a far from Silent Divergence: Nativity, Abel Barros Baptista and Roberto Schwarz

Fabio Pomponio Saldanha

Resumo: *Discutiremos os pontos de Roberto Schwarz e Abel B. Baptista, baseados na dicotomia fora/dentro, em torno da crítica machadiana e o valor do lugar do "estrangeiro". A importância do local e da sua superação é debatida para se pensar certa postura que se constrói enquanto restritiva e excludente para ambos: se em Schwarz isso aparece com a primazia do nacional, em Baptista é sua versão da hospitalidade que o torna aporético, quando pensa o comparatismo. Por fim, as conclusões retomam Schwarz, quando se nota o sequestro de um nome (Gayatri C. Spivak) e, ao parafrasearmos alguns pontos da autora, buscamos demonstrar que é possível unir, de forma que Schwarz e Baptista não concordam, as teorias que ambos tentam defender como únicas possíveis para análise pois, em Spivak, muitas vezes, se observa a exata junção do comparatismo e do marxismo para a construção argumentativa.*

Palavras-chave*: Roberto Schwarz; Abel Barros Baptista; Gayatri C. Spivak; Crítica literária; Natividade.*

Abstract: *Points made by Roberto Schwarz and Abel B. Baptista, based on the outside/inside dichotomy around Machado de Assis' criticism and the evaluation of the place of the "foreigners" are discussed. The importance of the local and its overcoming is debated in order to think about a certain posture that is constructed as restrictive and as excluding for both: if, in Schwarz, this appears as the primacy of the national, in Baptista it is his version of hospitality that makes his*

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assumptions aporetic, when thinking about comparatism. Finally, our conclusions return to Schwarz, when we note the hijacking of a name (Gayatri C. Spivak) and, by paraphrasing some of Spivak's points, we seek to demonstrate that it is possible to unite, in a way that both Schwarz and Baptista do not agree on, the theories that both try to defend as the only possible ones for analysis because, in Spivak, we often see the exact combination of comparatism and Marxism for argumentative construction.

Keywords: *Roberto Schwarz; Abel Barros Baptista; Gayatri C. Spivak; Literary criticism: Nativity.*

Uma introdução em torno da piada, uma explicação em torno do método

Mesmo não sendo machadiano, escolhi retornar a um problema de pesquisas anteriores que, de certa forma, também acabava envolvendo Machado, mais por envolver tantas outras coisas a ter, invariavelmente, a figura de Machado quase tornada um palimpsesto, do que propriamente estar discutindo o autor em si. Talvez, por fim, acabe se tornando um prelúdio da vontade possível de, por tantas vezes acabar lendo e pensando de maneira mal-humorada, ser levado a ler machadianos. Essa espécie de tensão rançosa/rancorosa em torno da possibilidade de ler, falar e pensar Machado a partir, desta vez sim, de forma a tomar nossos prolegômenos de pesquisa como ferramentas não-discutíveis, cujo corolário é a própria inimizade da fomentação proibitiva de dissenso, assumem o ponto no qual gostaria de chegar.

A história parece ser conhecida até mesmo por quem não se enquadra enquanto machadiano, mas de alguma maneira cai em discussões sobre Machado de Assis nos cursos de Letras: em 1960 "revolucionou-se" a maneira pela qual entendemos a obra do escritor brasileiro, com a publicação de *The Brazilian Othello*, de Helen Caldwell, no qual a suspeição definitiva de Bentinho ocorrera a partir da comparação entre Casmurro e Otelo. Entre ciúmes, verossimilhança e a descrição de uma elite branca benevolente somente com os seus, o paradigma do pé-atrás (Baptista, 1998) ficava fincado nas leituras posteriores de Machado, sendo as mesmas, ainda assim, cada vez mais diferenciadas entre si por precisarem, no sentido de necessidade, ao mesmo tempo no sentido de tentar tornar preciso/exato, definir quem, o quê e como se pode ler Machado de Assis de forma definitiva, precisa, gerando herança.

Sigamos, então, os frutos dessa relação entre a produção estadunidense e a brasileira,

passando também por Portugal, para que cheguemos aonde de fato gostaria de chegar. Acompanhando os autores escolhidos, busca-se destacar a lógica prevista pela manutenção da exclusão tanto em Schwarz, quanto em Baptista, quando o garantido pelo prolegômeno da argumentação não cessa a possibilidade de levarmos em consideração a importância da própria chance de, enquanto estamos agregando certas lógicas comunitárias, pressupormos a exclusão da diferença, do dissenso, etc.

Beto *marvadeza* Schwarz

"Leituras em Competição" (2006) tem como pressuposta a possibilidade de ver, perante novas traduções machadianas para o inglês nos Estados Unidos, que há diferença direta e enunciada no fato de se produzirem, a partir disso, leituras não-nacionais de suas obras. Entre *o* nacional e *o*s não-nacionais, uma aporia que não se resolve, por ser ela mesma uma aporia: a escolha, que na verdade não é uma escolha, por não se escolher de fato ser não-nacional, já gera um correlato de existir ali uma perda, ao se interessar pela obra de um autor de alhures e tecer algum tipo de reflexão e comentário em torno do mesmo. A ideia da competição vem como pressuposto da leitura schwarziana de A república mundial das Letras (2002), de Pascale Casanova, reforçando a ideia de que, mesmo sendo uma felicidade ao campo de estudos machadianos ver seu autor alcançando um patamar internacional, o sabor final tinha um certo retrogosto estranho, ao ver o tipo de exercício feito pelos analistas mundo afora.

Partindo de uma resenha publicada por Michael Wood (2005) a partir das novas traduções de Machado nos Estados Unidos, Schwarz tenta um balanço em torno das leituras dos tempos do presente, das teorias do momento (lê-se: os pós-modernos e os desconstrucionistas) *versus* a leitura nacional. Para o primeiro grupo, retoma a "lição" de Caldwell (que Wood não cita), para demonstrar que mesmo leituras comparatistas (e parece ser esse o grande problema) podem atingir bons resultados que, todavia, são sempre insuficientes porque, a partir da comparação, chegam em lugares um tanto aquém do esperado, caso se considerasse a leitura nacional, ou ao menos a importância do nacional para a leitura em si.

Essa espécie de possibilidade de ler o livro fora do nacional, sendo a obra produzida na periferia do mundo capitalista subdesenvolvido, gera sempre falta e falha na percepção de leitura: Caldwell acertou, mas em paralaxe; Wood talvez tenha chegado em algum ponto, mesmo não sendo especialista em Machado. Por serem filiados, a partir de Schwarz, às "teorias da moda", como o autor as considera em "Fim de século", recolhido em Sequências Brasileiras (1999), já há aí deficiência por osmose, uma espécie de laudo programado a partir da opinião

já prévia que vê na não observação da localidade algo a já ser sobredeterminado como ruim.

Creio que o seguinte ponto sintetize aquilo que, mesmo aqui, já se dispõe de forma também resumida:

> A certa altura de seu ensaio, que leva em conta a crítica brasileira, Wood propõe uma dissociação sutil. As relações com a vida local podem existir, tais como apontadas, sem entretanto esclarecer a "maestria e modernidade" do escritor. Ou, noutro passo: seria preciso interessar-se pela realidade brasileira para apreciar a qualidade da ficção machadiana? Ou ainda, a peculiaridade de uma relação de classe, mesmo que fascinante para o historiador, não será "um tópico demasiado monótono para dar conta de uma obra-prima?" E, finalmente, faltaria saber "por que os romances são mais do que documentos históricos". Não há resposta fácil para essas questões, que não recusam as ligações entre literatura e contexto, mas situam a qualidade num plano à parte. As perguntas têm a realidade a seu favor, pois é fato que a reputação internacional de Machado se formou sem apoio na reflexão histórica. Tomando recuo, digamos que elas, as perguntas, resumem a seu modo a situação atual do debate, em que se perfilaram uma leitura nacional e outra internacional (ou várias não-nacionais), muito diversas entre si (Schwarz, 2006 64).

Um tanto adiante, eis outra maneira de se dizer os mesmos termos:

> [...] veja-se que o Brazilian Othello causou uma viravolta memorável em nosso meio, sem ser forte em seu próprio terreno: conforme entra pelas semelhanças e diferenças de personagens machadianas, shakespearianas e outras, postas para flutuar na região comum das obras universais, onde tudo se compara a tudo, Caldwell vai se perdendo no inespecífico, para não dizer arbitrário. A verdade é que o melhor de sua intervenção — o tino para a má-fé do pseudo-autor — não frutifica no âmbito comparatista, e sim no da reflexão nacional. Esta última, demasiado bloqueada para enxergar o artifício machadiano, fizera um papelão. Por isso mesmo, entretanto, uma vez esclarecida a respeito, era ela quem tinha mais elementos para lhe apreciar o gume e explicitar o alcance, seja artístico, seja de crítica de costumes, seja político. Em suma, o resultado substancioso do livro foi a inviabilização da leitura conservadora de um clássico nacional, até então assegurada por uma aliança tenaz de convencionalismo estético e preconceitos de sexo e classe. A solidez social dessa liga conferiu aos novos argumentos um valor de contestação inesperado, que escapa à imaginação das teorias literárias universalistas. Invertendo a blague inicial da Autora, segundo a qual só anglófonos e shakespearianos teriam condições de apreciar Machado de Assis, digamos que foi no ambiente saturado de injustiças nacionais e

> de história que o achado universalista adquiriu a densidade e o impulso emancipatório indispensáveis a uma ideia forte de crítica (Schwarz, 2006 71-72).

De certa forma, entre as idas e vindas das competições entre as leituras, Schwarz tenta responder àquilo que vai elaborando enquanto a possibilidade de dominação dos não-nacionais para o modo de entendimento do nacional, quando vai escrevendo, ao mesmo tempo, a leitura do outro não nacional e a leitura correta de Machado de Assis, i.e., a vertente escolhida pelo autor como a explicação etapista da crítica literária brasileira, a desembocar na sua própria tese em torno do autor. Partindo de certa altura do século XIX, nota-se que

> [o] percurso da crítica brasileira no mesmo período foi distinto. Ela não tinha diante de si um grande escritor desconhecido, mas, ao contrário, o clássico nacional anódino. Embora fosse coisa assente, a grandeza de Machado não se entroncava na vida e na literatura nacionais. A sutileza intelectual e artística, muito superior à dos compatriotas, mais o afastava do que o aproximava do país. O gosto refinado, a cultura judiciosa, a ironia discreta, sem ranço de província, a perícia literária, tudo isso era objeto de admiração, mas parecia formar um corpo estranho no contexto de precariedades e urgências da jovem nação, marcada pelo passado colonial recente. Eram vitórias sobre o ambiente ingrato, e não expressões dele, a que não davam sequência. Dependendo do ponto de vista, as perfeições podiam ser empecilhos. Um documento curioso dessa dificuldade são as ambivalências de Mário de Andrade a respeito. Este antecipava com orgulho que Machado ainda ocuparia um lugar de destaque na literatura universal, mas nem por isso colocava os seus romances entre os primeiros da literatura brasileira (Schwarz, 2006 62-63, grifos do autor).

O século XX, a etapa seguinte, pensa da seguinte forma:

> O centro da atenção desloca-se para o processamento literário da realidade imediata, pouco notado até então. Em lugar do pesquisador das constantes da alma humana, acima e fora da história, indiferente às particularidades e aos conflitos do país, entrava um dramatizador malicioso da experiência brasileira. [...] Mal ou bem, os cronistas e romancistas cariocas haviam formado uma tradição, cuja trivialidade pitoresca ele soube redimensionar, descobrindo-lhe o nervo moderno e erguendo uma experiência provinciana à altura da grande arte do tempo. Quanto ao propalado desinteresse do escritor pelas questões sociais, um dos principais explicadores do Brasil pôs um ponto final à controvérsia: sistematizou as observações de realidade

> espalhadas na obra machadiana, chamando a atenção para o seu número e a sua qualidade, e com elas documentou um livro de 500 páginas sobre a transição da sociedade estamental à sociedade de classes. O trabalho escravo e a plebe colonial, o clientelismo generalizado e o próprio trópico, além da Corte e da figura do Imperador, davam à civilização urbana e a seus anseios europeizantes uma nota especial. Compunham uma sociedade inconfundível, com questões próprias, que o romancista não dissolveu em psicologia universalista — contrariamente ao que supôs o historiador [i.e.: Wood] (Schwarz, 2006 63).

As referências dessa seção, para o autor, são Mário de Andrade, "Machado de Assis (1939)", Antonio Candido, com "Esquema de Machado de Assis" (1968/2023), e Raymundo Faoro, com *Machado de Assis: a pirâmide e o trapézio* (1974). O passo final é a chegada ao seu modo de observar e produzir a crítica machadiana:

> Nas etapas seguintes desta virada, que ainda está em curso, a *composição*, a *cadência* e a *textura* do romance machadiano foram vistas como *formalização artística* de aspectos peculiares à ex-colônia, apanhados onde menos em falta e mais civilizada ela se supunha. Explorados pela inventiva do romancista, esses aspectos ganhavam conectividade e expunham a teia de suas implicações, algumas das quais muito modernas, além de incômodas. As peculiaridades prendiam-se a) ao padrão patriarcal; b) a nosso mix de liberalismo, escravidão e clientelismo, com os seus paradoxos estridentes; c) à engrenagem também *sui generis* das classes sociais, inseparável do destino brasileiro dos africanos; d) às etapas da evolução desse todo; e e) à sua inserção no presente do mundo, que foi e é um problema (ou uma saída) para o país, e aliás para o mundo. [...] Assim, embora notória por desacatar os preceitos elementares da verossimilhança realista, a arte machadiana fazia de ordenamentos nacionais a disciplina estrutural de sua ficção. Sem prejuízo da diferença entre os críticos, a natureza complementar dos trabalhos que levaram a essa mudança de leitura se impõe, sugerindo uma gravitação de conjunto. Passo a passo, o romancista foi transformado de fenômeno solitário e inexplicável em continuador crítico e coroamento da tradição literária local; em anotador e anatomista exímio de feições singulares de seu mundo, ao qual se dizia que não prestava atenção; e em idealizador de formas sob medida, capazes de dar figura inteligente aos descompassos históricos da sociedade brasileira (Schwarz, 2006 63-64, grifos do autor).

São referências do resumo de Schwarz, que simboliza uma espécie de ponto de

parada da crítica machadiana, mesmo se com diferenças entre colocá-las nesse bojo final do pensamento, como visto em outros textos do autor quando o mesmo menciona alguns dos nomes selecionados de suas referências: Silviano Santiago, "Retórica da verossimilhança" (1978); Roberto Schwarz, Ao vencedor as batatas (1977) e Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo (1990); Alfredo Bosi, "A máscara e a fenda" (1982); John Gledson, The deceptive realism of Machado de Assis (1984) e Machado de Assis: ficção e história (1986); José Miguel Wisnik, "Machado Maxixe: o caso Pestana" (2004).

Para a (boa) crítica importaria, então, o conhecimento das tensões de classe e o processo de subsunção de uns perante outros, porque isso estaria dentro da própria construção argumentativa velada de Machado, de seu projeto crítico de Brasil ao, por exemplo, retornando a Bentinho, desvelar o processo de benevolência e autocomplacência entre homens brancos de classe alta que nunca duvidaram de tal narrador, um dos seus. O fato de toda essa construção se perder, a partir da entrada da internacionalização de Machado, funciona como uma espécie de atestado funesto para a área da leitura nacional, ou seja, aquela que busca mais uma vez voltar a ler Machado, a partir dos dilemas de classe fundados pela modernidade escravocrata brasileira, e como tudo isso se reflete e instaura, tanto na forma, quanto no conteúdo, uma maneira de ler e pensar não só Machado de Assis.

Perder isso, de certa maneira um tanto pessimista, significaria perder a possibilidade de imaginar, até mesmo, a produção de senso crítico dentro do capitalismo tardio, no qual o paradigma do desenvolvimento já se configura como uno e desigual, dentro da República Mundial das Letras. As tensões entre um modo e outro que, no sistema, podem fazer com que o subdesenvolvido e sua produção epistêmica sejam desvalorizados, a menos que dentro de seu próprio contexto de produção, passam a ser matizados e questionados pela parte final do texto de Schwarz, uma análise entre a dialética do universal e do particular a partir da inscrição e apagamento de Lucrécia dentro da história de Martinha. Se a duplicidade dos termos e das possibilidades no conflito não estão resolvidas em Machado e em sua época, parece ser um tanto não indecisa a escolha de Schwarz pelo local em detrimento do universal, ainda que, em sua resolução final, aponte Machado como um autor avesso à unilateralidade, sem respostas fáceis, que apostava nas decalagens das dicotomias tais quais impostas nas formas sociais e literárias de seu tempo, traduzindo-as e matizando-as com a dupla de humor e horror pela qual se torna conhecido.

Outras tensões dentro desse próprio movimento que, mesmo enquanto crente de ser

descrito como movimento, tem suas tendências, podem ser vistas a partir do comentário de Barros Baptista para as competições de leitura em Schwarz.

Abel, de uma forma *europeiamente* cosmopolita, Baptista

O ponto de partida de Baptista, em "Ideia de Literatura Brasileira com propósito cosmopolita" (2009), já é uma consideração necessária do que é ser estrangeiro partindo do princípio de que, mesmo dentro de uma língua em comum, considerar o de fora como algo alienígena ao de dentro pode ser diferente entre os pressupostos dos falantes de português em duas partes do mundo, já partindo da ideia de que, talvez, o tal provincianismo ao qual se dirige Schwarz aos "de fora" seja, em realidade, daqueles a verem o provinciano como o redutor do "de fora = de fora" (exterior = exterior), sem considerar que, ali, existem pessoas. E a interferência disso no processo de construção do saber em torno da instituição literária se mostra já a partir da própria construção do que é a universidade e a universalidade nos termos de Baptista: se é reflexo de uma instituição que, decerto, se internacionaliza, o nacional parece ser sempre um substrato a marcar um lado negativo para aquele a quem o apego parece fazer o movimento de sobressair o segundo em detrimento do primeiro, ainda mais quando se fala na pesquisa em torno de algo como a literatura. Isso se dá da seguinte forma, no texto de Baptista (2009 62):

> Usamos "o estrangeiro", e diríamos "estudos de literatura portuguesa no estrangeiro". Mas talvez disséssemos "estudos de literatura brasileira no estrangeiro" mais depressa do que estudos de literatura brasileira "fora do Brasil" ou "no exterior do Brasil"; a mesma construção valendo, aliás, para outras literaturas, seja a inglesa, a alemã ou a italiana: como se houvesse uma substantivação de "o estrangeiro" que o "exterior" já não alcançou. Digamos que há sempre o "estrangeiro", e sempre se sabe o que é: o "exterior", por seu lado, requer determinação.

O destaque à instituição em si no argumento de Baptista é notório para que se possa construir uma outra forma argumentativa a, inclusive, questionar os argumentos de Schwarz, de modo não a desmerecê-lo ou transformá-lo em algo inferior por ser brasileiro, ou pelo modo de leitura realizado pelo autor, a partir de uma perspectiva cosmopolita europeia. Local e universal se tornam inimigos no raciocínio de Schwarz, defende Baptista, cujo corolário final é a própria inimizade ao de fora, inclusive não somente no sentido figurativo de interpretação literária, temas ou críticas, partindo do próprio paradigma da formação da literatura brasileira

como um mecanismo de exclusão da diferença e, logo, da exclusão da entrada do nacional em qualquer espécie de cosmopolitismo que acolha o diferente, i.e., o estrangeiro, dentro de sua morada, figurativa ela ou não:

> Produzir a verdadeira e exacta história da crítica machadiana, também chamada "leitura nacional", é o principal meio de defesa contra a crítica que a põe em causa: é o meio de mostrar ao elemento hostil a dimensão e a força daquilo em que está a tocar. Não há nenhuma inocência na precisão com que Schwarz sublinha que Wood não é "especialista em Machado, nem brasilianista, mas um crítico e comparatista às voltas com a latitude do presente": é o mesmo que dizer que esse crítico é alguém de fora e que está por fora, estrangeiro que permanece duplamente no exterior: tocando num livro, fazendo o reparo de que não responde à questão do cómico sombrio, o crítico estranho toca numa tradição, num processo intelectual demorado – num país. Talvez sem se aperceber disso, e então o crítico severo e carrancudo sai do recolhimento e explica, e brandamente repreendendo-o, assim se defende (Baptista, 2009 84).

A exemplificação de Baptista, com as próprias referências de Schwarz, reafirma a diferença das proposições analíticas, por exemplo, de Antonio Candido, a partir do raciocínio na *Formação da Literatura Brasileira* e em "Esquema de Machado de Assis". É necessário, no entanto, mediante a economia textual, tomar como pressuposto que os leitores deste texto conhecem tais referências e raciocínios de Candido, mesmo sendo de fato muito interessante pensar tanto os textos em si, quanto as leituras de Baptista e Schwarz, a partir dessa bibliografia em comum.

O que gostaria de ressaltar, como exemplificação de Baptista, é que ali mora uma dicotomia viva no método analítico de Candido, como ele pontua: o Candido da *Formação* e o de "Esquema" se anulam a partir das premissas teóricas tomadas como pressupostos para justificar seus próprios paradigmas, em uma espécie de prolegômeno não questionável. Enquanto o primeiro vê Machado como a epítome do paradigma, exemplificando o melhor da tradição e o último dos nacionalistas possíveis, o segundo o vê a partir de uma lógica internacional *a partir* do comparatismo, excluindo, proponho eu, até mesmo a importância, a relevância e a determinação necessária de que estamos falando de um autor negro em um Brasil escravocrata. A inserção de Machado por Candido no cânone, pela comparação com Sterne e Kafka, anula a fomentação do autor como um *continuum* e o transforma em uma ruptura,

para Baptista, e, acrescento: a raça segue subsumida nos dois.

Afinal, seja no cânone nacional, ou no internacional, Candido exclui a possibilidade de sequer vermos a importância da discussão racial em Machado, entendendo-o como um fator que não deve ser levado em consideração; isso está, até mesmo, posto nas primeiras linhas de "Esquema de Machado de Assis" (2023 16, grifo do autor): "[a] cor parece não ter sido motivo de desprestígio, e talvez só tenha servido de contratempo num momento brevemente superado, quando casou com uma senhora portuguesa. E sua condição social nunca impediu que fosse íntimo desde moço dos filhos do conselheiro Nabuco, Sizenando e Joaquim, rapazes *finos* e cheios de talento". Voltando para Baptista, nessa relação entre *os Candidos*, nas palavras do autor:

> O segundo Candido é melhor ou pior do que o primeiro? Dir-se-á que se complementam, que o primeiro valoriza o local, o segundo, o universal, polos necessários de qualquer descrição rigorosa da obra machadiana, etc. A verdade, porém, é que o segundo Candido não tem lugar para o primeiro, e este não admite o outro. Decerto Antonio Candido, crítico inteligente e informado, não teria duvidado de que o seu auditório na Flórida ou no Wisconsin havia de permanecer razoavelmente indiferente se ele insistisse em explicar-lhes que a grandeza de Machado decorre de ter estudado Macedo e superado Alencar: não porque os desconhecesse, mas porque o protagonista dessa explicação não seria nenhum deles, nem sequer Machado, seria a narrativa da "formação da literatura brasileira" – a narrativa que precisamente os constitui estrangeiros diante de Machado. Em vez disso, o que Candido faz não é diluir a originalidade de Machado de Assis tornando-o aceitável ou tolerável pelo estrangeiro ignorante das coisas brasileiras, nem valorizar o universal em detrimento estratégico do local: generosamente, deveríamos interpretar a diferença do segundo ensaio à luz de um princípio de filantropia literária, digamos assim, que consiste em procurar tornar inteligível e apreciável um escritor a quem quer que se interesse por escritores e literatura, ou seja, em fazer que o estrangeiro, diante da sua obra, não depare com nenhuma barreira que torne absoluta a sua condição de estrangeiro (Baptista, 2009 78).

Para Schwarz, no entanto, muitas são as diferenças e as valorações de um e outro, sendo possível também perceber isso no raciocínio de Baptista, mesmo se muito mais pela alusão do que pela interdição do dissenso. Tal prolegômeno do "Esquema" não se mostra interessante ou sequer citado, valendo muito mais as noções criadas a partir do paradigma da Formação: se um anula o outro em Candido, Schwarz anula previamente a possibilidade de anulamento em

si e segue o ritmo da análise da Formação para justificar a importância da ideia de competição em seu prolegômeno de perguntas a abrirem seu texto, tentando fortalecer a existência de diferenças nas leituras, sendo o sumiço do nacional quase um crime, já que seu raciocínio é a metonímia da consequência do mais rico pensamento crítico brasileiro, do específico, sobre o Brasil. Já para Baptista, essa consequência exclui não só a pluralidade da leitura nacional, feita por quem se interessa pelo Brasil, mas expulsa também a própria chance de que "pessoas de fora" leiam Machado: o duplo apagamento tanto cria um estrangeiro único, ainda que sejam os "não-nacionais" em Schwarz, como impede a leitura nacional de ser, inclusive, mais de uma.

Se as perguntas de Baptista buscam pensar o lugar do estrangeiro nos estudos de literatura brasileira, assim como tentar outra explicação para o humor e o horror em Machado, sua proposta de entendimento da literatura como a instituição da hospitalidade incondicional fica exemplificada e prometida para maiores detalhamentos em outros instantes e produções, dado que o foco ali, talvez, seja exatamente perceber as dificuldades encontradas na própria aproximação entre os campos portugueses e brasileiros, quando a matéria de estudo se torna o segundo. A possibilidade de interpretação de Baptista parece concordar com a argumentação de Wood, um certo "ok, claro... entendemos que a escravidão importa, mas e o humor?" como não explicado em Schwarz e que permanece como ponto de importância para a leitura dos outros leitores de Machado – uma dupla assertividade estranha, por parecer exigir a manutenção da categoria dicotômica, dado que, nesse entendimento, só se interessariam pelas profundas consequências da escravidão no Brasil aqueles a se interessarem por Machado e pelo Brasil, não somente por Machado, quase como o que de fato parece ser certa parte da recepção do autor, tal qual a de Candido no "Esquema", quando o mesmo reforça: raça não importa para que se pensem autores negros na formação do Brasil, ainda mais quando se busca entender a própria ideia da formação como homogeneização via universalização (i.e., em um raciocínio à beira do etnocídio (Moraes, 2023)), o qual, por sua vez, em terras brasileiras, significa também opressão e exclusão do diferente.

Por fim, dois lados, duas medidas, dois inimigos. Se, como cita e reforça Baptista (2009 63-66), a hospitalidade incondicional é kantiana, me apoiaria no dito por Derrida (2000) em torno da mesma. Caso a hospitalidade seja entendida enquanto possibilidade de permanência/direito de estadia àquele que chega, hóspede e hospedeiro continuarão em tensões ad eternum exatamente por cada um deles ser o oposto do outro. A hostilidade, ainda que pareça tão distante da hospitalidade, é sempre o passo seguinte, ou, melhor dizendo, o

passo imediatamente ao lado do dado por quem declara as portas abertas para quem quer que chegue. Amizade e hospitalidade não são somente o diâmetro oposto do outro lado do espectro da inimizade e da hostilidade: são sua mesma moeda, por serem o outro ponto da dicotomia, na qual cada um só pode ser entendido como o oposto do outro, nunca uma coisa outra em si. Uma hospitalidade incondicional precisaria, assim, aprender algumas outras lições a partir dessa própria noção conflituosa que se reforça entre o hóspede e o hospedeiro, o local e o universal, Schwarz e Baptista. Mas ainda não se chegou lá, caso permaneçamos somente lendo os dois, um em detrimento do outro.

Poderíamos encerrar aqui, postulando algo como: em leituras em competição, em uma hospitalidade kantiana, ao vencido, ódio ou compaixão; ao vencedor, as batatas. No entanto, sigamos ainda mais um nó no parafuso espanado.

Sequestros e conclusões para o porvir... pós-colonial

Um nome estranhamente sequestrado da discussão toda pode, por fim, não só juntar as duas proposições, mas também pontuar e aprofundar uma série de questões que fariam as pontuações de Schwarz e Baptista se entrelaçarem, talvez, de um modo não previsto por ambos, ou ao menos não sendo assumido como possível, exatamente por partirem do pressuposto de que suas formas de análise são antagônicas.

A certa altura do texto de Schwarz, uma cidade é citada, sem paralelo específico à linha teórica que deveria aparecer ali: Nova Deli. Eis o trecho:

> Nessa perspectiva, uma obra de terras distantes, como a de Machado de Assis, na qual se possam estudar com proveito — suponhamos — os procedimentos retóricos do narrador, as ambiguidades em que se especializam os desconstrucionistas, a salada estilística do pós-modernismo etc., estará consagrada como universal e moderna. A natureza sumária desse selo de qualidade, que corta o afluxo das conotações históricas, ou seja, das energias do contexto, salta aos olhos. É claro que não se trata de desconhecer o bom trabalho feito no interior de cada uma dessas linhas críticas, que só pode ser discutido caso a caso, mas de assinalar o efeito automático e conformista das assimetrias internacionais de poder. Por outro lado, a cesta de teorias literárias em voga nas pós-graduações dos Estados Unidos é heterogênea por sua vez, originária em boa parte de lugares tão pouco americanos quanto a União Soviética, Paris ou Nova Déli, e neste sentido

não parece uniformizadora (Schwarz, 2006 66).

Paris representa os desconstrucionistas; os Estados Unidos, os pós-modernistas. E o que faz Nova Deli ali? Quem aparece sem aparecer, quem não tem direito ao nome, nesse movimento? Apostaria em: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak e o pós-colonialismo. Professora de Teoria Literária e Literatura Comparada na Universidade de Columbia, diversos dos projetos de Spivak fariam, creio eu, com que hospitalidade incondicional e entrada do nacional no plano da Literatura Mundial, a partir de locais distantes na periferia do capitalismo tardio, funcionassem de maneira crítica e, ainda assim, potente para o futuro, sem se reforçar a crença na qual a competição e a subsunção do nativo do mundo subdesenvolvido fossem o mecanismo de regra, tal qual prevê, por exemplo, a ideia do etnocídio pela humanização/internacionalização do colonizado para o alcance da universalidade (como em Candido (Moraes (2023))).

Se o mundo como conhecemos hoje é formado pela constante migração de pessoas de diversas partes do globo, de fato estamos o tempo todo lidando com nativos de algum lugar do mundo, deslocados/descolocados de seu lugar de "origem" (Spivak, 2003). A categoria do nativo, inclusive, funcionou e segue funcionando como justificativa colonial perante o colonizado, para que, na invasão, se encontrassem justificativas do "lado de lá" pelos crimes e atrocidades cometidos "do lado de cá": ao considerar que seu Outro, ou seja, aquele a morar e ser "da colônia" pode ser decifrado como uma espécie de folha transparente, sem inscrição alguma de desejos e/ou opacidade, o que se reforça é, ao mesmo tempo, que a opressão da colonização cria tanto um nativo/colonizado facilmente legível pelo colonizador, assim como a própria transparência acima da transparência no colonizador (Spivak, 2014; 2022).

Isso, em termos de literatura e literatura comparada, gera uma instância na qual a própria universalidade da universalidade deveria ser questionada como o ponto gerador de toda a problemática do particular. Se o nacional precisa ser considerado como interessado e interessante somente para/pelo nativo, toda a fantasia só é criada por uma máquina desejante de se ver e ser vista como o outro lado inquestionável (a crítica literária). Se estamos reforçando que é interessante e necessária, de certa forma, a saída dos lados das fronteiras, torna-se necessário abrir-se para a diferença, para o Outro, assim como determinar aquele a nos determinar como outro, como também um outro, não o Mesmo, muito menos o universal.

A categoria utilizada para isso se torna a própria figura do planeta, dentro de seus trânsitos, assim como a junção de duas áreas: Estudos de Área (Area Studies) e Literatura

Comparada (Spivak, 2003). Ao se suplementarem, algumas coisas se tornam necessárias. O primeiro passo é a não-dependência somente do acesso à literatura "particular" via tradução, diferentemente, por exemplo, do sugerido por Franco Moretti (2000). É necessário o passo do estudo e entendimento da língua do Outro como ela mesma se estrutura e se diferencia, para se perceber e se outrizar de uma forma não prevista pelos mecanismos de entendimento, por exemplo, do inglês (WReC, 2020), no caso apresentado desde o início dessa descendência argumentativa (Spivak, 2003; 2012).

O outro passo, a partir do momento em que as ferramentas dos Estudos de Área se suplementam à área da Literatura Comparada, é a apresentação e a leitura dos registros literários de alhures. Dado o intenso nível de internacionalização, por exemplo, de algumas universidades no mundo, assim como a recepção de alunos estrangeiros em partes, mesmo se escassas, no Brasil, é possível notar como estamos o tempo todo permeados por noções calcadas na diferença, criadas a partir da perspectiva de que o Outro, de certa forma, já nos define, mesmo se não temos tal noção. A saída de si, mediante a leitura e o ensino de literatura, assim como a chegada do sujeito nativo a partir da perspectiva de que ali se encontra um Outro, é também já a chegada de alguém que é sim um sujeito nacional, seja ele de qual parte for, desse tal processo de mudança e exclusão de suas próprias fronteiras, mas que, ao mesmo tempo, não representa nem a nação como um todo, pluralizando, assim, não só a forma de ler, mas também de ser o nacional (Bhabha, 2013); além disso, pluraliza-se também o que de fato se poderá construir a partir de todos esses encontros, sendo reconhecidos como tais (Spivak, 2003; 2016).

Essa estrutura, no entanto, precisa se mostrar como aberta, incerta, mesmo sendo, mais uma vez, seletiva, construída a partir da exclusão. Dada a desigualdade do acesso, na medida pela qual as instituições fundantes da Modernidade se constroem a partir do evento da colonização, da subsunção de uns perante outros e da construção de conhecimento em redes intrínsecas que tentam transformar toda a experiência moderna em uma espécie de Destino Manifesto metafórico, vendo a Europa como quase uma espécie de faroleira do Mundo (Derrida, 1991), tentar entender a posição na qual se pode analisar, inclusive, a Literatura como reflexo desse mundo, não deveria precisar de um movimento de subsunção de critérios como raça, gênero, entre outros, para a preferência da classe, como parece fazer Schwarz quando supõe no último uma espécie de ferramenta-modelo que já engloba todos os outros fatores e formas de opressão.

Se acompanharmos, através de Spivak (2003; 2012; 2022), notaremos que, tanto os Estudos de Área, quanto os de Literatura Comparada, se suplementam, sendo possível ver como também o próprio marxismo pode ser foco de tal movimento. Dessa forma, observar as desigualdades do acesso como a maneira pela qual, no Ocidente, a partir da época colonial, são determinadas diversas categorias (como a própria noção de literatura, de nacional, de valor, etc.) a partir da subsunção de uns perante outros (chegando na aproximação já suplementada de Schwarz), podemos pensar outras maneiras pelas quais a hospitalidade incondicional, em sua forma já globalizada e planetária, tendo que lidar com intensos fluxos permeados por uma diferença ignorada por Baptista (a racial, de gênero, etc.), seria possível já começar a testar, rever e imaginar, dando importância a cada uma dessas categorias, a sempre necessária conta de "Quantos [e quais] somos nós?" (Spivak, 2003), levando em consideração a própria necessidade de se rever, a todo e qualquer instante, como contamos, como delimitamos espaços e como determinamos o que pode, ou não, entrar no grande espaço do ensino, da pesquisa e do pensamento em torno da Literatura.

Como promessa, portanto, este texto se encerra na abertura da própria experimentação, entendendo que o porvir é, assim, aquilo a conseguir determinar, de outra forma, como todos esses problemas podem ser tensionados de uma maneira outra, totalmente outra. Como encerra Spivak (2003): simples assim.

Nota

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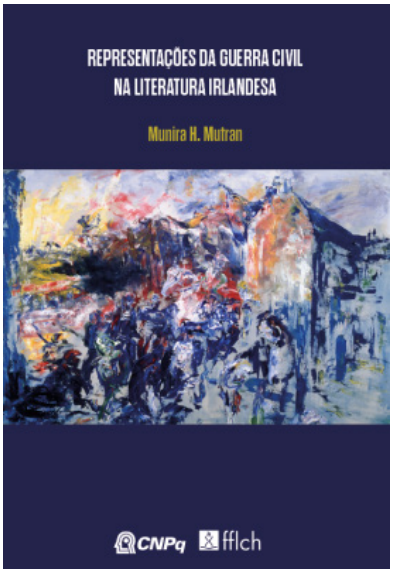
ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies, v. 26, n. 2, 2024, pp. 117-119.



MUTRAN, Munira M. *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa*. São Paulo: FFLCH/USP, 2023, 130pp.

Munira H. Mutran's *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* [*Representations of the Civil War in Irish Literature*] (2023) presents the culmination of a research endeavor conducted by the author in Trinity College Dublin's Long Room Hub on "Violence in Irish literature through myth" in 2016. Focused specifically on the period of the Civil War, Mutran scrutinizes how a group of writers perceived, comprehended, and narrated the conflict in their literary works. Across the three chapters comprising the book, Mutran delves into the oeuvres of prominent writers such as Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Casey, and Elizabeth Bowen, examining how they utilized realism as a narrative tool to portray the complexities of the era. Mutran contends that despite their disparate backgrounds, these authors collectively employ realism as a means to critique the fanaticism and social schism engendered by extreme allegiance to nationalism ideals.

In the introduction, titled "Os conflitos de 1916-1923 no conto irlandês: idealismo e violência" ["The 1916-1923 conflict in the Irish short story: Idealism and violence"], Mutran dissects the portrayal of the period between the War of Independence and the Civil War in select short stories by Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty, and Sean O'Faolain. Skillfully navigating through the texts, Mutran unveils a common thread wherein these writers, despite their distinct vantage points, offer scathing critiques of the idealism and zealous fervor that precipitated the Civil War, resulting in the fracturing of friendships and families. For instance, in "Guests of the Nation" (1931), O'Connor employs realist techniques, including vernacular

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speech, to depict characters disaffected by the nationalist fervor driving the conflict. Similarly, O'Flaherty's works such as "The Sniper" (1922), "Civil War" (1924), and "The Mountain Tavern" (1929), adopt a naturalistic lens that aims to expose how nationalism blinds individuals, reducing them to "behave like animals" (Mutran 36, my translation). Additionally, Mutran elucidates how O'Faolain, in stories from his 1932 collection such as "A Midsummer Night Madness," "Lilliput," "The Death of Stevey Long", "The Bombshop," "Fugue," and "The Patriot," condemns both the Anti-Treaty and Pro-Treaty factions, likening their fervor to madness and underscoring the futility of patriotism.

The second chapter, "O fanatismo divide" ["Fanaticism divides"], centers on the novels *The Informer* by Liam O'Flaherty (1925) and *The Last September* (1929) by Elizabeth Bowen, which explore the social divisions caused by the Civil War. Beginning with an examination of James Joyce's engagement with the Irish question, Mutran delineates how Irish writers, particularly Bowen and O'Flaherty, critique the societal schisms exacerbated by the Civil War. Mutran delves into O'Flaherty's choice of setting in *The Informer,* arguing that, in O'Flaherty's view, the paranoia over power obfuscates the underlying socioeconomic disparities faced by the working class. Conversely, Bowen's narrative, from the perspective of the Anglo-Irish, elucidates their waning influence amidst the turmoil, symbolized by the demise of the properties they had inherited. Despite their insulation, the Anglo-Irish find themselves involved in the broader social upheaval, with the conflict encroaching upon their doorstep.

The final chapter is devoted to Sean O'Casey's "Dublin Trilogy", where Mutran highlights the "unity of space, characterization, theme, and an anti-heroic view of life" (Mutran 83, my translation) present in O'Casey's plays. The playwright offers a poignant commentary on the revolutionary years, informed by his personal experiences and ideological leanings. Mutran elucidates how O'Casey, disillusioned with nationalism, espouses socialist ideals, evident in his Dublin plays – *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923)*, The Plough and the Stars* (1926)*, and Juno and the Paycock* (1929). Mutran contends that, through scathing satire and irony, O'Casey dismantles the romanticized notions of heroism and patriotism, portraying male characters as ineffectual and women as the pillars of resistance.

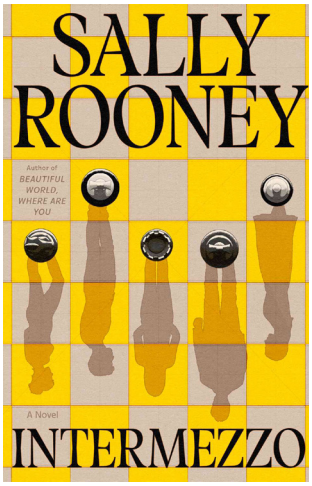
In the Epilogue, Mutran extends the discourse to contemporary representations of the Civil War, laying ground for further research. Referencing works such as Brendan Behan's play *An Giall – The Hostage* (1957), Tom Murphy's stage adaptation of O'Flaherty's *The*

Informer (1981), Christine Reid's play *Joyriders* (1986), Tom MacIntyre's play *Good Evening, Mr. Collins* (1996), and Martin McDonagh's movie *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022), Mutran underscores the enduring relevance of the conflict in contemporary literature and arts. Through intertextual references and thematic continuities, these works serve and poignant reminders of the enduring legacy of the Civil War, echoing its reverberations in modern Irish society.

In sum, Munira H. Mutran's meticulous analysis in *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* sheds light on the multifaceted portrayal of the Irish Civil War in literary works. Through her examination of various authors and their texts, Mutran skillfully demonstrates how themes of idealism, fanaticism, social division, and disillusionment permeate Irish literature of the period. By delving into the intricacies of realism, naturalism, and satire employed by writers such as Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Faolain, Elizabeth Bowen, and Sean O'Casey, Mutran unveils the underlying critiques of nationalism and the human cost of conflict. Furthermore, her exploration of contemporary representations of the Civil War underscores its enduring relevance and the ongoing dialogue between past and present. *Representações da Guerra Civil na literatura irlandesa* not only enriches our understanding of Irish literary heritage but also invites further inquiry into the intersection of history and literature.

Camila Franco Batista

ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies, v. 26, n. 2, 2024, pp. 121-123.



Rooney, Sally. *Intermezzo*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024. 431 pp.

The Evolution of Sally Rooney's Writing in Intermezzo

It is becoming a tradition. For the second time in three years, September has turned into Sally Rooney's month. Just as it happened in 2021 with Beautiful World, Where Are You, the writer's most recent novel, Intermezzo, was published with a series of events around the world. A launch worthy of big-budget films, complete with parties and advance copies for the lucky few. I was one of them. Thus, surrounded by excitement and a bit of unease, I began the first pages about twenty days before the book hit the shelves.

Immersing oneself in a story can be challenging when overwhelmed by expectations. And I had many. I didn't fall in love with the previous novel. What to expect from this one, then? Nothing and everything. Such is the tension of a reader. A trifle for an outsider, but very real for those who feel it. But it only took a few pages before *Intermezzo* enveloped me, especially through Peter, the oldest of the two brothers. His voice permeates the narrator throughout, blurring the line between what is mere thought and what actually left his lips. A profusion of reflections that leap from one to another without warning, much like our own minds: a bit chaotic, yet recognizable. And Peter thinks/speaks as he walks through Dublin. He observes the streets, the people crossing his path. It brings to mind the frenetic rhythm of Leopold Bloom's mind in *Ulysses*, by James Joyce. The capital of Ireland as a character amid the anxieties stirred by his journey. The memory of mourning his father, as well as grieving a relationship that can no longer be what it was. The absence of sex as a point of disturbance, of separation. A mutual decision, but one that neither of them can fully commit to. Sylvia, the perfect woman in every way – except for the need he cannot suppress. And that is what attracts

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him to Naomi, ten years younger. A young, sensual, happy woman, also full of problems, awaiting rescue. Financial rescue. A relationship tainted by money. He thinks of himself as superior, only to later feel disgusted with himself.

Then there's also Ivan, the younger brother, considered socially inadequate. Incapable of getting involved with women. Of engaging as one should, as everyone expects. Basic interactions are a mystery to him. He prefers chess to life. Chess has clear rules; life does not. But he no longer plays as he used to. Grief has affected him, causing him to play fewer matches. He is no longer a genius. So, what's left? He has no father, no longer the family home, nor the companionship of his dog. He resents Peter for how easily he navigates people, how little is expected of him. Suffocated by doubts about how to exist properly, Ivan meets Margareth, 36 years old, thirteen years his senior (in Sally Rooney's universe, being in your thirties seems like a very advanced age). Newly separated, she quickly gives in to his awkward advances. Longing to feel good again, even if only for a short while. And without planning, somewhat unaware, Margareth finds in Ivan a lifeline. She celebrates the "simple physical sense of being in the world again: renewed, as if after a long absence" (231).

Intermezzo brings these new stories, yet it still carries the elements for which Sally Rooney is known. The ever-sharp dialogues; the seamless weaving of text messages into the narrative; discussions about faith, of how to reconcile beliefs with raw reality; conversations about art, music, literature, and politics. There are, for instance, many references to Dublin's housing crisis, most recently represented by exorbitant rents and illegal tenant evictions. Rooney wrote a passionate article on the issue in 2023, for the *Irish Times*[1], and now we see the literary work she has done with the theme. In my opinion, it is successful. It appears in the plot not only as a nod to the historical moment but as a driving force for changes in the dynamics between the protagonists. However, some political comments seem scattered, like flags the author waves to say, "look how much I care about this." We know. We've seen it in *Conversations with Friends* and *Normal People*.

Still, nothing tarnishes the evolution of Sally Rooney's writing, seen especially in the refinement of the narration, which oscillates significantly between the characters, delivering what each one needs. With Peter, it is more fragmented. With Ivan, more organized. When there is a mental health imbalance in one of them, tempered with the inadvertent use of medication, it becomes noticeable in the rhythm and construction of the text. This is something that, if not handled with care, could go very wrong, but Rooney avoids the trap and maintains the

quality until the end. Here, it is essential to highlight the work of translation into Portuguese. In comparison with the English excerpts, one can see how Débora Landsberg was careful to maintain the cadence of the original writing – a significant gain for Brazilian readers.

In short, it's a book with an original flavor that leads you from one page to the next, sometimes in a fast flow, sometimes in a more conventional narrative. As if it opens breathing spaces only to push the reader — who always finishes Rooney's novels with a tight heart, hoping for many more to come. And the best part is when they come with technical advancements like this. Like an unexpected move, like an *intermezzo*.

Bárbara Bom Angelo

Notes

[1] The article "Renters are being exploited and evictions must be stopped", by Sally Rooney, can be accessed via this link: https://www.irishtimes.com/life-style/2023/03/18/sally-rooney-renters-are-being-exploited-and-evictions-must-be-stopped/

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ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies, v. 26, n. 2, 2024, pp. 125-129.

Holloway, Patrick. *The Language of Remembering*. Brighton: Epoque Press, 2025. 240 pp.

The Language of Remembering is Patrick Holloway's first novel, originated from a short story of the same title, which was awarded the 2023 BSSA (Bath Short Story Award). Holloway is a talented young Irish writer raised in Cork, Ireland, who holds an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow and a PhD in Creative Writing from Porto Alegre. His work has appeared in several literary journals, such *The Stinging Fly, Carve, Overland, The Irish Times, The Illanot Review, Scoundrel Time, Poetry Ireland Review, The Lonely Crowd, Write Bloody Publishing, New Voices Scotland, Papercuts,* among many others, and in *The Irish Time* and he is currently the editor of *The Four Faced Liar* (Eliggi, 2021).

The Language of Remembering depicts the homecoming of Oísin, his Brazilian wife Carolina, or Nina, and his daughter Ailish, who is a toddler born in Brazil. Several aspects of the novel derive from facts and memories of Holloway's life, as it depicts the process of moving back to Ireland with his family after having lived 10 years in Brazil. In an interview about the 2023 BSSA prize, Holloway describes the effects of this experience:

> When living in Brazil I became slightly obsessed with language and identity, sameness and otherness. I was trying to understand and explore how a person can change through another language, whether it be because they are suddenly 'the other' or because they feel inherently different in that new language. (Holloway 2024 n.p.).

The feeling of otherness and the complexities of language forming the subject are captured in the novel, which can be rendered as a form of life writing, or autofiction, a genre that has grown in popularity in recent times. However, as Anna Faedrich explains, it is not easy to pin down what makes a piece of work autofictional:

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> To say that autofiction is a literary exercise in which the author transforms himself into a character in his novel, mixing reality and fiction, is a necessary but not sufficient condition . . . . different aspects of autofiction need to be considered: a contemporary literary practice of fictionalising the self, in which the author establishes an ambiguous pact with the reader by eliminating the dividing line between fact/fiction, truth/lie, real/imaginary, life/work, etc. (Faedrich 240, my translation).

Faedrich alleges that autofiction is marked by an undecidability between what is fictional and what is not. Furthermore, the movement of autofiction is from the work of art to life, and not from life to the work, as in autobiography. This, according to the critic, enhances the text as a creative language.

The Language of Remembering offers a profound reflection on grief, love, memory, language and about the the choices one makes (of having a child, getting married, moving countries) which might have long lasting consequences. Temporality is a key issue, for the novel is written as two seemingly unconnected stories, which alternate between the present ("Now") and the past ("Then"). Both narratives, while depicting the individual lives of characters, they also highlight social issues that take place in Ireland "Then" and "Now".

"Then" is set around 1970s-1980s in rural Ireland, and it is narrated in the third person. It tells the story of the teenage pregnancy of Brid by her also young boyfriend James. As a consequence of her new state, Brid should get married at once and postpone her dreams of teaching at a university.

"Now" takes place in twenty-first century Dublin, and it is narrated in the first ("I") and second person ("you"). Holloway's use of the second person is worth pointing out: "The first two days you had to wait for buses that were always late. It was strange being on a bus again, it brought back memories you hadn't thought of in years" (Holloway 2025 21), or "Every time you thought of visiting your mum, you found something else to do. You had to buy wheelie bins, a lawnmower, warmer clothes for Ailish" (Holloway 2025 22). There is the issue of conveying distance when the author employs the second person, but at the same time, it emulates the way one talks to oneself yet implying another listener.

As Oísin arrives in Ireland and is met with his mother's suffering from onset Alzheimer's disease, he realizes that coming back home is not a smooth process. He seems to struggle to fit in and he misses Brazil more than he had imagined:

> You say the word saudades, which has extra layers to the simple English of I miss you. Saudades, she says, muitas. You wonder if she is saying it about you or him. Just hearing the lovely swollen sounds of Portuguese come from your wife's mouth and throat and nose makes you miss Brazil. (Holloway 145).

The word "saudades", which is so uniquely Brazilian and which has no direct translation into English makes Holloway reflect about the intricacies of language, and way it is tied to culture which provides a sense of belongings:

> Not even able to decipher the space between spoken words; they were all just a gooey flux of sound. And you were so timid in how you reached out your hand to introduce yourself. So embarrassed when they laughed and put their arm around you, or if it were a woman, hugged you and kissed your cheek. The smell of tangy summer in their touch in the very air around you. The cold, sugary sorbet of açaí, how good it tasted with strawberries and granola as the sun stretched prickly hot against the distant midday sky. . . . There is a part of you that wants to go back and a slice of resent for your mother slips from you before you can hold it back. (Holloway 145-146).

In the novel, language is about connection. As his mother's health and cognition starts to deteriorate, Brid speaks less English and more Irish, which hinders communication between mother and son:

> 'Mo pheata.'
> The sound of Irish unsettles you.
> 'Come on now, you know I've no Irish, mum.' (Holloway 44).

The fact that he can no longer understand his mother leads Oísin to take evening Irish classes in order to face his own loss of the language he was once familiar with. Apart from trying to connect with Brid, learning Irish makes Oísin revisit his past and heal the trauma of the loss of his father "Then" and of his stillborn baby "Now".

In terms of style, as is characteristic of life writing or autofiction, Holloway's prose is mostly realist, with a cadence of Hiberno-English, speckled with words and sentences from Portuguese and in Irish. Thus, by means of his relationship with his daughter and wife who

spoke Portuguese, and with his mother who spoke Irish, it can be said that Holloway shows how humans are affected by language and the way they are empowered by it. And, in reverse, how one feels less empowered and less connected to others when one does not know a language.

In terms of the genre, the main narrative is written as a memoir, interspersed with letters, poems, e-mails and WhatsApp messages with emojis, which also mark the different ways people communicated "Then" and "Now". Furthermore, the past and present perspectives also expose social issues that shaped the socio-historical context of those times. The prospects of women in face of pregnancy out of wedlock in "Then" highlights the importance given to the Catholic church and morality; whereas the anxiety of Oísin's new family being able to pay a mortgage in "Now", brings to the fore the real Estate and housing issue in Ireland after the decline of the Celtic Tiger and into the post-boom era.

It can be said that the novel is about the closing of cycles (his mother's disease and nearness to death) and new beginnings (Oísin's multicultural and multilingual family starting a new life in Ireland and, as an only son, having the chance to live in his mother's (and his childhood's) house, where his father has died. Thus, it is also a story about bonding, overcoming grief and trauma.

To conclude, Holloway's prose is gripping as is his character development. They are complex, they change, and they adapt. However, the fact that the novel starts in medias res, in the middle of things, and that there is an open end to the novel, leaves a few gaps concerning certain aspects from the characters' lives, which are not essential, but that I wish would have been more deeply developed. For instance, Brid's continuing her studies and becoming a teacher, and Oísin's reasons for leaving Ireland for Brazil. However, the way the story ends, when "Then" catches up with "Now", makes us to forget about these minor gaps which we fill in with our own imagination. This is what makes the reading of Holloway's first novel so enthralling and us eager for his next one

Mariana Bolfarine

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Contributors

Beatriz Redmond is an undergraduate at São Francisco Law School of the University of São Paulo and member of the Research Group "Crossings and feminism(s): identity studies of female authorship" (CNPq).

Bárbara Bom Angelo is a journalist and a master's student in the Programme of Linguistic and Literary Studies in English at the University of São Paulo. Under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Laura Izarra, she is researching the portrait of Irish youth after the 2008 financial crisis in Sally Rooney's novels.

Camila Franco Batista holds a PhD (2021) in English Language and Literature from the University of São Paulo and is an assistant professor at the Federal University of Rondonópolis, state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. She is also a researcher of the W.B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies and a member of the ABEI board of directors. Camila is the author of the book *Recordar é imperativo: memória no romance irlandês contemporâneo (2000-2020)* [*Remembering is Mandatory: Memory in the Irish contemporary novel*], published in 2023. E-mail: francob.camila@gmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6991-3674

Elisa Abrantes is Associate Professor of English Language and its Literatures at the Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a researcher of the W.B.Yeats Chair of Irish Studies (USP) and Vice-president of the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies (ABEI). She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the Fluminense Federal University (2010) and publishes on the field of Irish Literature.

Fabián Bustamante Olguín is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Religious Sciences and Philosophy and Department of Theology of the Universidad Católica del Norte, Coquimbo. E-mail: fabian.bustamante@ucn.cl Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6495-6122

Fabio Pomponio Saldanha conducts a doctoral research at the Department of Literary Theory and Comparative Literature (DTLLC), at the University of São Paulo (USP), with funding from the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP process 2022/15480-7). He has a degree in Literature (Portuguese-Japanese) from the same university. E-mail: fabio.saldanha@usp.br Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8655-1334

Hedwig Schwall, University of Leuven (Belgium) is emerita professor with formal duties at the University of Leuven. She publishes on Irish literature, psychoanalysis and art. She teaches an interdisciplinary course on "Art in Europe: a History of Emotions" in which literature, psychoanalysis and art history are combined, and serves on the editorial board of the series Art and Religion (http://www.peeters-leuven.be/) In 2019 she edited *The Danger and the Glory* (Arlen House), an anthology of 60 contributions from Irish fiction writers about the art of writing (also available at https://kaleidoscope.efacis.eu/); its second instalment was *About Europe in Ireland* | Kaleidoscope II (efacis.eu), the third will focus on "Faith, spirituality and art: new perspectives for the twenty-first century?". She was director of the Leuven Centre for Irish Studies from its foundation (2010) till 2021. She has been a founding member of the European *RISE*, the *Review of Irish Studies in Europe* and is on the advisory board of the *IUR, Nordic Irish Studies, Estudios irlandeses, Studi irlandesi, the Brazilian Journal for Irish Studies*, etc. She is also series editor of *Irish Studies in Europe* and has published widely on Irish fiction and other genres. After having led three international translation projects she is now preparing a book on parent-child relations in contemporary Irish fiction. She runs the EFACIS Book club and is co-organizer of the international EFACIS PhD seminar.

Nícea Nogueira teaches at Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais. Her post-doctorate research was on Literature in English at State University of Rio de Janeiro, and her PhD was on Literary Theory at State University of São Paulo (Unesp).

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