The Apotheosis Of Tins And/Or Reinterpretation Of The "Phenomenological" In Irish Literature With Special Reference To The Poetry Of Derek Mahon

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One of the most intriguing features of Derek Mahon's work is his fascination with some of the seemingly less animate, or inanimate (as known), forms of life. It is these variable forms, according to Eamon Grennan, that allow Mahon's speech to surrender its identity to the "simple acknowledged presence of the object" (25). Grennan goes on to say that such surrender involves an "almost programmatic commitment to the phenomenological presence of ordinary objects in the ordinary world" as evidenced by the way Mahon's speech "resists the verb and embraces the adjective and noun—the locations of being, presence" (27, 28). Grennan maintains that this fondness for the phenomenological makes itself felt in an almost "neutral lyricism of naming" and that Mahon's poetic tropes represent an engagement with objects for their own sake (23). What Grennan overlooks in his phenomenological discussion, of course, is that any sustained reference to the acknowledged presence of objects without a corresponding acknowledgment that such objects are anything but simple ultimately falls short of the mark. Hence, even though a poem like "Courtyards in Delft" might serve, as Grennan suggests, to commemorate the phenomenological presence of certain objects —"Immaculate masonry," "broom and wooden pail," "coal /Glittering in its shed" -- these objects are not so much things in themselves as they are representational signifiers nestled within an intricately defined mnemonic discourse.

Where Grennan contends that Mahon offers a commitment to the phenomenological presence of objects, Dillon Johnston takes the view that Mahon's "phenomenological intention is served by metaphors that confuse the living and insensate" (230). Johnston tells us that Mahon's approach, as evidenced in what he calls the phenomenological poems of *Lives* and *The Snow Party*, is predicated on the "unconscious state" of rocks and trees (240). Johnston further claims that Mahon follows Edmund Husserl's "first directive" to return to things in themselves (233). It is unfortunate, to say the least, that in the course of making such a claim Johnston fails to see how much his own prescriptive sense of unconscious exchange never distinguishes between Mahon's culturally-grounded sense of things and Husserl's analytic sense of things in themselves. Apart from anything else, he never once stops to consider how much Husserl's efforts to accomplish transcendental reduction, grasp general essence, or apprehend experience within brackets (*einklammern*), is so very different, in kind, from Mahon's poetic ventures.

Unlike Grennan and Johnston, Andrew Waterman takes the view that Mahon's inanimate poems (or so-called inanimate poems) are nothing more than a load of rubbish. Waterman writes that "Short of wanting to be a stone, and one sometimes suspects Mahon of even that notion, this is about as far as passive quietism disaffected from human endeavour can go" (40). Waterman's related criticism of what he believes to be Mahon's inanimate semiotica as instances of "terminal imaginative impairment" makes even more negative the usual phenomenological applications found among Mahon's critics (47). No great surprise, then, that Waterman's reference to Mahon's preoccupation with the "vestigial and non-vestigial" has him

announce, once he has finished commenting on "The Mayo Tao" and "Nostalgias" — in the former, "the sob-story/of a stone on the road," in the latter, how a "kettle yearns for the/Mountain"—that he does not believe a word of it and does not think the poet believes a word of it either (41).

Whatever his base claims, it must be said that Waterman's position serves as little more than a case of critical legerdemain whereby what he calls frivolous absence is, upon further analysis, something of a near partner to the unfrivolous presence that Grennan and Johnston believe is at work in Mahon's verse. Hugh Haughton, offering a variation on theme, presents a similar reading of Mahon's attachment to inanimate objects as those of Grennan and Johnston, if not Waterman (323). For example, at one point Haughton zeros in on Mahon's poem, "Roman Script," which, dedicated to Pier Paolo Pasolini, takes as its epigraph, "Nei rifiuti del mondo nasce un nuovo mondo" ("in the refuse of the world a new world is born"). Haughton cites Pasolini's Lutheran Letters to make the point that Pasolini was intrigued by the "pedagogical" language of spent things (323). Still, no matter how much Haughton bears down on Pasolini's fascination with physical objects, his accompanying argument that Pasolini's sense of the "dumb, material, objective" is essentially the same as Mahon's use of seemingly inanimate entries per the "sob-story / of a stone on the road," leaves a great deal out of account (323): while Haughton's initial claim that rubbish is one of Mahon's "enduring preoccupations" carries with it a certain appeal, Mahon's actual poetic practice represents something altogether more demanding than the unopposed premise that he is somehow "into" rubbish (324).

In light of the foregoing commentaries of Grennan, Johnston, Waterman, and Haughton, it is incumbent on us to initiate a process of (as it were) breaking things down in an attempt to facilitate a more dimensional reading of Mahon's "inanimate" tropes. If nothing else, this means we have to consider how much Mahon's inanimate poems are far less phenomenological than either Grennan or Johnston believes, far less whimsical than Waterman assumes, and far more political than Haughton ever countenances. All of which, in a roundabout way, brings us to David E. Williams who seems to offer an alternative reading of Mahon's supposedly phenomenological verses with his argument that one of Mahon's greatest strengths is his capacity to take on even the most "humble existences" and let them establish "otherwise disregarded autobiographies" -- make his objects "speak for themselves and state their claims for our attention" (88, 89).

But how is Williams so sure Mahon wants his objects to "speak for themselves" -- "themselves"? Conversely, how much credence should we give Williams' unverified assumption that Mahon, by way of imaginative retrieval, awakens in his readers a "new responsiveness to seemingly commonplace objects and experiences which are literally before our eyes" -- "before our eyes"? (91). What is more, when Williams writes that there is a "chameleon-like" quality to Mahon's work which helps him to "lose his own personality and enter into the most disregarded types of existence" it is necessary to stop and ask how, exactly, Mahon does this. How does he lose his personality and enter into "disregarded types of existence"? And then there is the perennial why of the thing. Why is Mahon so taken by "disregarded" types of object existence to begin with? Is it perhaps, just perhaps, because such semiotic variables in some way, or some unbidden sense, harbor the kinds of irreducible Northern experience Mahon cannot quite remember while, at one and the same time, can never -- ever -- forget?

Compared to Williams and his talk of humble existence, Catriona Clutterbuck prefers to talk about the way Mahon gravitates towards the "unseen life" of manufactured objects (7). Clutterbuck argues that when it comes to looking at most of Mahon's object poems the "significance of the numinous and its relationship to the poetic imagination becomes apparent"

(7). Unfortunate for Clutterbuck, her untried sense of the "numinous," once again something of a variation on theme, goes nowhere fast since her assertionist rhetoric that the world of "abandoned manufactured objects challenges Mahon because it declares an independent extradimensional presence with an unashamed, unanswerable stare," makes an unsustainable reference to "extradimensional presence" (7). For the record, Mahon himself has, on more than one occasion, provided a very different sense of the "numinous" with the following statement (in an interview with Paul Durcan) being one such statement with reference to Northern Protestantism and its ascetic bent:

> The culture I grew up in was devoid of barraka. I was brought up deprived of a sense of the holiness of things. Protestantism is a rejection of barraka. The historical sources of Protestantism are rooted in a fear of disease, syphillis and plague. Cleanliness is next to Godliness or, rather, Cleanliness is Godliness. (Durcan)

It comes as something of a relief that close on the heels of her remarks concerning the extradimensional Clutterbuck realizes, or seems to, that the numinous might be viewed otherwise: "Things have an irrevocable independence forced upon them; they are, in their way, another of Mahon's lost tribes" (7). This provisional reference to Mahon's "lost tribes" might therefore prove to be useful in trying to situate the to-and-fro of his supposedly phenomenological pieces. For even on those occasions when Mahon does appear to dally with the phenomenological there is almost always an intrepid pressure, call it political, call it religious, call it sociological, that is brought to bear on the enunciation and situatedness of his object choices. Before we finally get down to reading Mahon's "phenomenological" works in more detail, then, it might be beneficial to first consider, and differentiate, his literary practice alongside a host of other writers who have incorporated a variety of things in their works and who have served as influences, in varying degrees and at different times, on Mahon's work.

To begin with there are some obvious things like Richard Wilbur's poem, "Junk," as a poem that considers things which "Have kept composure,/ like captives who would not/Talk under torture" (10). Other examples include Theodore Roethke's "The Waking," "Her Becoming," and "Dolor" with Roethke's references to "inexorable sadness"—"I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,/Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper-weight,/All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage"—rekindling the "unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher" that signatures Mahon's texts (51, 143, 165-167). As well as Roethke, some James Merrill poems, for example, "The Broken Bowl" and "Stones," also come to mind (7, 72). Next, and this in no particular order, there are several pieces by Carl Sandburg whose "Manufactured Gods" ("They didn't know a little tin god/Is as good as anything in the line of gods"), "Dusty Doors" (consider the resemblance between this and "A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford"), and "The Hammer" ("Today/I worship the hammer"), all bear witness to what is commonly referred to as the inanimate (182, 187-188, 650). We might also mention, in this regard, W.S. Merwin's "Eyes of Summer" (4) and Charles Tomlinson's "The Insistence of Things" and "Elemental" (23, 29-30). A similar interest in fashioning a statement by way of things is true of Wallace Stevens who writes that he would like to be "a thinking stone" ("Le Monacle De Mon Oncle"), celebrates "The rhapsody of things as they are" ("The Man with the Blue Guitar"), runs down a consideration of the human person as a "Socrates/Of snails, musician of pears" in Part 1 of "The Comedian as the Letter C," 'The World Without Imagination,' and, as

something of a set piece, does a quick bit about a "florist asking aid from cabbages" in Part IV of "The Comedian as the Letter C" under title as 'The Idea of a Colony' (13, 183, 27, 37)

Mahon's takeaway, relative to the aforementioned, is to incorporate miscellaneous object types in order to express the difficult exigencies of his people as a demographic under siege. The same can be said of his engagement with some French materials as when he toys with Comte de Lautréamont's (Isidore-Lucien Ducasse's) description of the "chance meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissection-table" — from *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1869)— which is given a new lease on life in Mahon's "A Kind of People." Of course what separates Mahon from Lautréamont in "A Kind of People" is, as soon becomes clear, the "kind of people" he has in mind. For his are a people who look after "their own" and who "have shivered/In the cold draught of despair." They are, as the poem makes ever so clear, a people who know a thing or two about "old navy raincoats." More to the point, the poem's "stripped down" version of reality, and this is not very hard to imagine, is reminiscent of a city known for its "Sirens, bin-lids/And bricked-up windows." So much so, in fact, that even though the poem features occasional French descriptives -- "parasols," "promenades," etc. -- Mahon, more often than not, gravitates towards the kinds of functional tools and implements that are ever so familiar (some might say totemic) to any Protestant who grew up in Belfast.

"A Kind of People" is, in the end, a poem where one of its opening gambits, "Stripped down in tool-sheds / Or behind basement boilers," not only offers an *entrée* into a Belfast of machines and machine parts but it presages a "We" of lasting endurance; a we that is inextricably bound to an embattled sectarian order which strives to grow "clean and new" in a place renowned for linen mills and "Taut linen drenched with sunlight." It is, moreover, a poem that states, and states categorically, that such implements are "really a kind of people" who are well versed in the utilitarian for theirs is a place of industrial production and frequent rains; a forlorn but gritty people who dwell in a world of shipyards, factories, back streets, back entries, outside toilets, and hard times amidst the tools of the trade with an admixture of umbrellas, old navy raincoats, sewing machines, shovels, tool-sheds, and the like.

Closer to home than either the American, British, or French influences just cited, some of Mahon's Irish precursors on the "phenomenological" front include the likes of Jonathan Swift whose poems Mahon has published as selection with

Faber's *Jonathan Swift: Poems Selected by Derek Mahon*, and who, according to Sophie Gee in Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination, filled his writing with "waste matter: excrement, snot, sweat, nail clippings, garbage, dead dogs" (91). As Gee likens it, Swift favors waste matter not because it can be "converted into glorious spoils" but rather because it tells a story of Englishness that he wanted to evidence as and when he envisions an Ireland "literally covered in burdensome residues dispatched from England" (91, 92). Probably the best known expression of this "waste matter," what Gee calls Swift's "satirical substitution of plenitude for waste in his Irish writing," is *A Modest Proposal* where the dialectic between plenitude and waste implicates a determinate set of paradoxes: "waste is animated by paradoxes. It is empty but full. Abject but life-intended. It putrefies, and it proliferates. Perhaps most importantly, we want to dispose of it, and we long to hold on to it. Waste is a sign that our lives are beset by loss" (93, 108).

In contradistinction to Swift's formative engagement with waste and noxious byproducts, Mahon, more often than not, shies away from degenerate organics and unseemly messes. W.B. Yeats, another obvious precursor in the world of things, and such, is someone who (as we know full well) uses discarded materials, notably, refuse and rags, on an as-needed basis with one of the most obvious instances of Yeats doing just that being "The Circus

Animals' Desertion" which creates what Michael Wutz has referred to as the "recycled raw materials of masterful images" (501). In so doing, claims Wutz, Yeats expresses a certain disdain for the modes of consumption that came "to constitute the economic system of the Western industrial complex" (502). Yeats's lines, though familiar, are worth quoting here if only to emphasize the fact that unlike Swift he tends to steer clear of noxious waste material and is much more inclined, as is Mahon, to talk about things that are contained and fixed, even if somewhat scuffed, in appearance ... "Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can, / Old iron, old bones, old rags" (346-348).

Elizabeth Bowen, for her part, takes the fascination with things to a whole new level than Swift or Yeats in the way she positions furniture, and an array of other household items, to ensure that they (as Elizabeth C. Inglesby puts it) "register opinions and have relationships with one another, regardless of whether or not a human mediator is present to act as the source of inspiration of or inspiration for such acts of personification" (307). As a writer who has an avowed interest in discovering the "secret lives of things," it is perfectly reasonable for Bowen to embrace what Inglesby calls "literary animism" (306). Inglesby further writes that in Bowen's view each and every human mind has an "'objective correlative'" relative to the material world, i.e., all the things in the world "compete with people for the right to claim personalities" (324, 313).

Whatever the similarities between Bowen and Mahon, there remain a number of striking differences between the two. Thus when Inglesby says that Mahon shares in Bowen's "animistic sensibilities" it is necessary for us to draw a hard and fast distinction between, and across, the animistic sensibilities of an Anglo-Irish writer like Bowen and the requisite values of a Northern Protestant like Mahon who writes, as he does (and must), from under quite different circumstances than those of Bowen considering the industrial and political -- inexorable -- heritage that comes with life in the North (307). Hence, although it is true that Mahon can, and sometimes does, afford his discarded objects the semblance of autonomy this is different in kind from the near reverence Bowen brings to bear in talking about her most cherished items as embodiments of eminent worth. What really counts in all this, therefore, is not so much the outside possibility that Mahon might be concerned with things in themselves but rather that his first and final concern has to do with endurance: the endurance of his people as if things, the endurance of things as if his people.

According to Edna Longley this recurring and culturally-affixed use of objects enlists "the stigma of industrial, commercial and domestic Belfast" (293). Robert Taylor takes much the same approach as Longley when he writes that Mahon's "catalogues of trash and archeological odds and ends manifest the defunct culture of a modern city not unlike Belfast, gutted by the disasters of war" (389). Christopher Moylan offers a similar reading to those of Longley and Taylor though he enters a cautionary tale about what is going on with Mahon's referential use of material things by judging the poem, "The Apotheosis of Tins," to be a verse which uses available items to speak from somewhere inside "the safety of inert voluble things removed from conflict" (258, 250). Every bit as important, Moylan writes that in Mahon's hands metamorphosis "represents a displacement of identity from the social to the detritus of material culture" (258). This last point is an important one except that it stops short and fails to consider in any detail how much Mahon's detritus not only displaces Protestant identifiers, but, in the same transversive acts of displacement, ensures that his material leftovers are able to withstand the perils, sanctions, and sectarian woes that ring true of Protestant experience in inanimate guise -- as Moylan likes to put it, whatever Mahon's interest in detritus it is

inescapably "grounded in the specific circumstances of the North of Ireland" (259).

From the very beginning of "The Apotheosis of Tins" we are told of a "we" who have "spent the night in a sewer of precognition." The same "we" (the poem's purposive tins) are described as a marginalized community waking up "among shoe-laces and white wood." Such rubbish, if such it be, is "Deprived of use" and liberated from the horrors of history: "we are safe now / from the historical nightmare." In tandem with such a thing-likened freedom there is also an awareness of what their world, as a distinct "we," comes to: "This is the terminal democracy / of hatbox and crab, / of hock and Windowlene." No less telling, the many inhabitants tins which/who are scattered throughout the verse's "terminal democracy" -- "labels," "Promoted artifacts," "Imperishable by-products" -- are things we "can learn from." In other words such tins, in the midst of their mute but urgent meaning, invite us to concentrate less on Mahon's objects as things and instead turn our critical gaze on the attendant gaps, lapses, and silences which permit such objects to be deemed superficial nonsense, or inauspicious object, rather than being treated as symptomatic expressions of a repressive and endarkened cultural inheritance.

Any such symptomatic reading, if undertaken, might in due course stir us to take another look at Mahon's prolific terms of reference rather than accede to Eamon Grennan's position that poems like "The Apotheosis of Tins" have to do with how "presence registers in the world." To accomplish this, or even get close, it will first be necessary to reappropriate the concave/convex politics of the "we" Mahon likes to use and remember that his suppositionally phenomenological lines accommodate parapractic traces bound to the social, historical, political, and religious facts of life in Northern Ireland. So, all right, who (who, as in plural~singular) does Mahon have in mind when he foregrounds material objects in "The Apotheosis of Tins" and related verses? Do such object figures personify his fire-loving people? Or what, pray tell, should we make of the phenomena he refers to as mute? And do they, as happens in "The Mute Phenomena," instill or install metaleptic references to a social and political world -- "Already in a lost hub-cap is conceived / The ideal society which will replace our own" -- Mahon feels he must, as necessity, remember "not to forget"?

So what, one wonders, is there to glean from Mahon's poems as an attendant series of textual parapraxes involving different and differential iterations of so-called phenomenological, whimsical, or deconstructive reference lines? How, if at all, are we to accommodate poems ranging from "Consolations of Philosophy" with its "integrity of pebbles," "The Antigone Riddle," with its "Shy minerals," or "Light Music" with its vigilant stone watching "snow fall/on the silent gate-lodge"? Or what are we supposed to make of verses like "The Small Rain," from The Hudson Letter, and how it opens up with an emphatic statement about objects being linked to a community of material things scattered through an otherwise unidentified city of first encounter: "The objects too are conscious in their places— / lamp, chair, desk, oil-heater and bookcases / brisk with a bristling, mute facticity / connecting them to the greater community / of wood and minerals throughout the city."

A necessarily incomplete answer to all this is that Mahon actually spends a lot less time looking at the eidetic makeup of things than he does looking at the imminent perils which might befall them, given the time. As case in point just consider "The Studio," based on a photograph of Edvard Munch's studio in Oslo, that offers a series of everyday household goods or appliances which serve as a kind of echo chamber for the myriad conflicts and tensions known to inhabit so many of Mahon's thing-apportioned poems. For those who would like to dub "The Studio" a venture in the phenomenological there is, not to put too fine a point on it, cold comfort. Cold comfort because the poem's "deal table," "ranged crockery,"

"oilcloth," "bulb," and "cracked porcelain" are, as durable points of reference, not so much essentialist commodities as they are objects which/who try to survive within the confines and legislations of an enclave known for its "dark origins." In point of fact, each and every object's referential semiotic is cast in a state of near-turmoil while the evangelical turn of the poem's isolated and woe-begotten objects recalls a Protestant population in dire need of denominational worship and final answers -- "To meet, sing and be one."

As is, the poem's object catalogue is not so much grounded in fixed notions of empirical matter as it is steeped in the "oblique" relationship of a person, or people, to historical circumstances set amidst "violent and complex political upheaval" (Egan 80). Throughout, Mahon exercises a liberal use of household goods and manufactured objects -- "bulb in the ceiling," "all-purpose bed-, work-, and bedroom," "door-knobs" -- to reinforce how much the poem's protagonist is at his wit's end given the violence and fractious circumstances he faces under conditions of political flux: "The ranged crockery freak and wail/ Remembering its dark origins, the frail / Oilcloth, in a fury of recognitions, / Disperse in a thousand directions." Add to this the poem's "occasional cries of despair" and it soon becomes painfully obvious that we could just as well be reading one of Mahon's earlier "inanimate" poems, for example, "Nostalgias" -- "The kettle yearns for the mountain / The soap for the sea/ In a tiny church / On a desolate headland / A lost tribe is singing 'Abide With Me' "-- except that this time around we are treated to a different (as in the same but different) version of "dark origins" and "mourning faces."

In "Stone and Driftwood" (uncollected) Mahon tracks another memorable line in objects that includes a "stone," a "piece of driftwood," a "torn-off bough," a "dawn shingle," and a "twisted stick" (16-17). Here, much as before, Mahon's items reference their troubled pasts as a matter of some urgency with Mahon describing the poem's driftwood as "tragic" before assigning it a strict scriptural notation as a "Bone-brittle, corpse-pale" branch that "thrusts deformed limbs/outward as if to cry,/'Why hast thou forsaken me?'" Among the questions that could be asked about this piece is how or how much, while never forgetting why, does Mahon endow this poem's driftwood with a "unique dendritic self" which lies "beyond ventriloquism"? Put another way, why does he want his readers to consider a certain "vocative gesticulation" as having a gnarled sense of teleological existence? Also notable when it comes to reading "Stone and Driftwood" is how the same kinds of material objects we have encountered throughout the course of this article are here present and accounted for as, and by way of, a standing stone that "seems to rebuke / ideation, to invite / intransitive perception." The same goes for the aforementioned driftwood that, as we quickly realize, points to "more than itself, / insists on its own past / and that a tragic one" -- as so often happens in Mahon's poetry the treatment of an isolate, that is thing, fashions a likeness which bears a striking resemblance to a group of Ulster Protestants who have been known to cry out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"

At this point in our argument it might be instructive to mention Stan Smith who, in "The Twilight of the Cities: Derek Mahon's Dark Cinema," argues that Mahon feels most at home when he treads the "margins among the residual bric-à-brac of the real" and that at the heart of such bric-à-brac Mahon secures an imaginal space where he can posit a "kind of survival" (267). In a limited or liminal sense this is certainly so. And it is so because here is where Mahon's objects actuate the stringent social and political circumstances of a Protestant writer who grew up in a world of sectarian gable-ends and well-scrubbed stoops. Michael O'Neill agrees that Mahon's tins and tatters can never "jettison" their longing for lasting significance and that no matter how much Mahon might try to extricate himself from the

inordinate influence of his people, a "fire-loving people" their, and his, experience determines and defines everything he ever writes about even when the opposite seems to be the case (216).

The same recurring search for some kind of survival finds another means of expression in "Shapes and Shadows" where Mahon celebrates the remnants of a community -- a "long-sought community" -- that, from beginning to end, identifies with "the nitty-gritty / of surfaces and utensils." And this, give or take, is exactly what gives " 'Shapes and Shadows' " its preferred outline as it delves into the textured hues of a William Scott oil painting and revisits a familiar kitchen setting which, à la Mahon, comprises the inevitabilities of a "black kettle and black pot." The same ekphrastic verse also features a certain respect, more properly, reverence, for everything to do with a "communion" of frying pans which are said to dwell in a "polished interior space." Protestant through and through this is a Scott painting, and Mahon poem, about a circumspect and centrifugal world that throws into sharp relief the manic cleanliness of Ulster Protestantism with its talk of purification as something that underwrites -- indemnifies -- the utensils Mahon so loves.

From the poem's opening lines Mahon takes us from "shapes deft and tranquil, / black kettle and black pot" to the strictures of simple manufacture. After all, this kitchen is not just any old kitchen. It is, as set out in print form, a Northern kitchen that counts among its inhabitants "spoons, / colander and fish-slice / in a polished interior space." More, it is Mahon's intrepid belief that within the "furniture, function," etc., there stirs a new beginning -- "the fresh / first morning of the world / with snow, ash, whitewash" -- that in turn evidences the verities of "limestone," "bleach," "soap," and "foam." All these items, and cleaning aids, not only betoken the quintessential cleanliness of an Ulster Protestant scene but ask us to find "in the nitty-gritty / of surfaces and utensils" a certain something. And that something, or, if preferred, that "other," is what the painting and the poem's goods and services are all about since hidden inside the corresponding items of household zeal, and stringent cleaning products, there resides an enduring desire to secure "the shadow of a presence" -- the "long-sought community" that Mahon's myriad objects have alluded to from the genesis of his career.

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