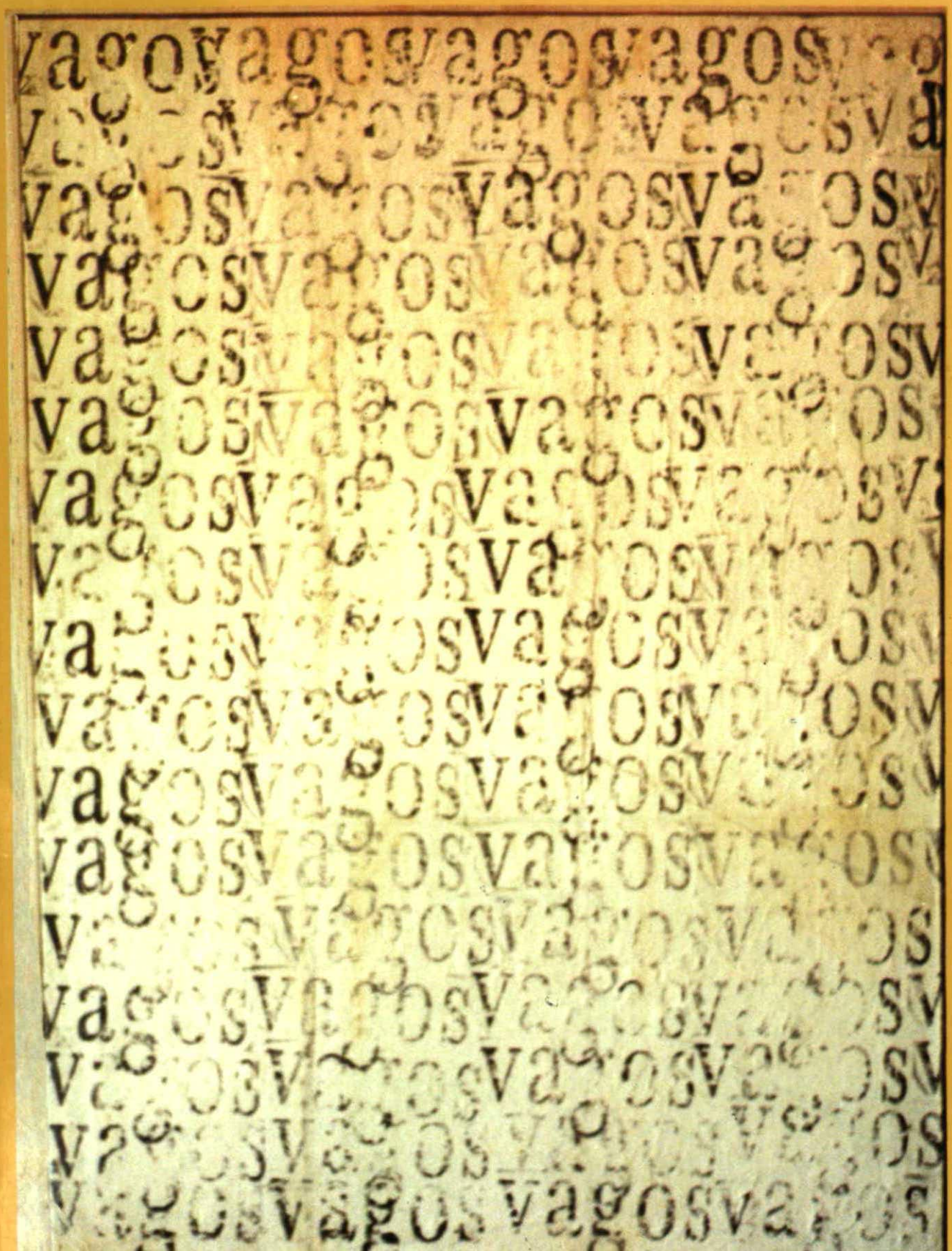
ABEI Journal

THE BRAZILIAN JOURNAL OF IRISH STUDIES



Number 3

June 2001

Humanitas
FFLCH/USP

ERRATA

Voices from Brazil

Page 179: "On the Portuguese-Brazilian Practices of Representation of the Seventeenth Century (1580-1750)" by João Adolfo Hansen.

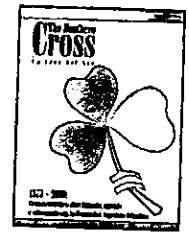
Translated by Cielo Griselda Festino, Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff and Noélia Borges de Araújo

Page 197: **Books Received**

The Southern Cross. (*La Cruz del Sur*). Año 125, Noviembre de 2000.

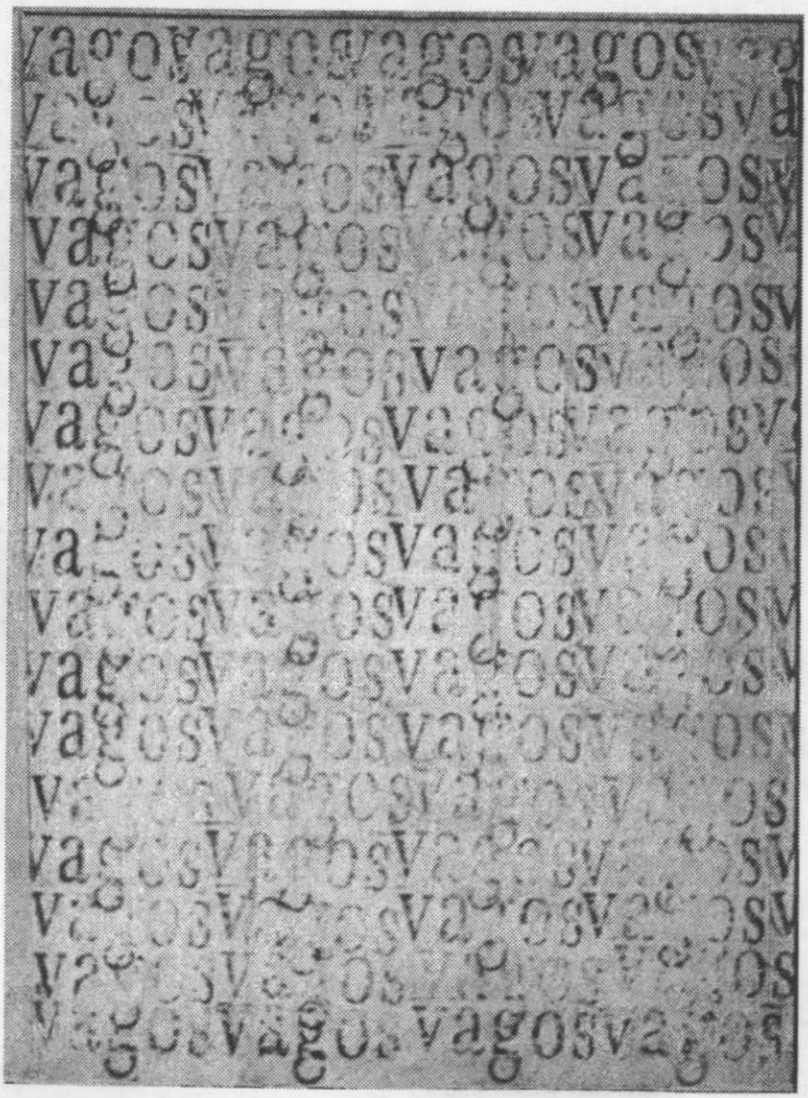
Edición especial. Número Aniversario.

The correct cover is the one bellow



ABEI Journal

The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies



Number 3 **June 2001**

USP UNIVERSIDADE DE SÃO PAULO
Reitor Prof. Dr. Jacques Marcovitch
Vice-Reitor Prof. Dr. Adolpho José Melfi

FFLCH FACULDADE DE FILOSOFIA, LETRAS E CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
Diretor Prof. Dr. Francis Henrik Aubert
Vice-Diretor Prof. Dr. Renato da Silva Queiroz

Vendas
LIVRARIA HUMANITAS-DISCURSO
Av. Prof. Luciano Gualberto, 315 – Cid. Universitária
05508-900 – São Paulo-SP – Brasil
Tel: 3818-3728/3796

ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies is published once a year, in June, by Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses. This issue is co-edited with the support of The Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland - The Cultural Relations Committee. Subscriptions, submitted articles, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Editors.

Submitted articles should normally not exceed 6,000 words and should conform to the method of documentation of the MLA Style Sheet. They should be sent in one hard copy with an abstract at the beginning and biodata at its end and in a floppy disk 3.5" in Word for Windows 6.0, until October of each year.

Subscriptions rates: single issue: US$ 20 inc. postage
Yearly subscriptions: personal: US$ 20 inc. postage
Institutional: US$ 35 inc. postage (2 copies)

Editorial Address
ABEI (Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses)
Universidade de São Paulo – FFLCH/ DLM
Av. Prof. Luciano Gualberto 403
05508-900 São Paulo – S.P.
Brasil
Tel. (0055-11) 3818-5041 or 3818-4296
Fax: (0055-11) 3032-2325
e-mail: lizarra@usp.br

Front Cover: VAGOS XX by James Concagh. *(70 x 50cm. Acrilic, rubber stamp and ink on canvas)*
Photographer: Ian Mac Donald.

ISSN 1518-0581

ABEI Journal

The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies

ABEI Journal, Number 3, June 2001. São Paulo, Brazil.

AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland
Cultural Relations Committee

Humanitas
FFLCH-USP

ABEI Journal - The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies
Number 3, June 2001

Serviço de Biblioteca e Documentação da FFLCH/USP
Ficha catalográfica: Márcia Elisa Garcia de Grandi CRB 3608

ABEI Journal: The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies / Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses. – n. 1 (1999)- . São Paulo: Humanitas/FFLCH/USP, 1999-

Anual

ISSN 1518-0581

1. Literatura irlandesa 2. Tradução. 3. Irlanda (Aspectos culturais) I. Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses II. ABEI

CDD 820

HUMANITAS FFLCH/USP
e-mail: editflch@edu.usp.br
Telefax.: 3818-4593

Editor responsável
Prof. Dr. Milton Meira do Nascimento

Coordenação Editorial, Diagramação e Capa
Mª. Helena G. Rodrigues – MTb. 28.840

Digitalização e Tratamento de Imagens
Selma Mª. Consoli Jacintho. – MTb. 28.839

Revisão
Laura P. Z. de Izarra

Contents

Editors' Introduction

As in the previous issues, *ABEI Journal 3* aims at reflecting on aspects of Irish Studies from a transnational perspective. The front cover shows the art of James Concagh, an Irish painter living in São Paulo that since his moving sculpture piece entitled "The Sherrifs Car" aided by the Living Arts Council Ireland in 1984, continues questioning the function of art in his most recent series *'Vagos'*. Here the spectator is confronted not only with textured canvas but the stamped on word depicting the emptiness of both visual and literal meaning. Concagh goes on to say that "art now has the choice of being incomplete in the widest range possible and that artists should take advantage of this in a physical sense".

Translations bring cultures into contact and explore the *in-between* spaces of "vague" meanings and emptiness. Beckett's *Alba* by Maria Helena Kopschitz and Seamus Heaney's *Personal Helicon* by Millôr Fernandes and Rui Carvalho Homem prove how well these translators transit along the fields of poetic encounters.

This volume offers more than a handful of stimulating articles, opening with *The Critic and the Author* with Peter Harris' comments on *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* by Nicholas Grene, followed by the writer's response.

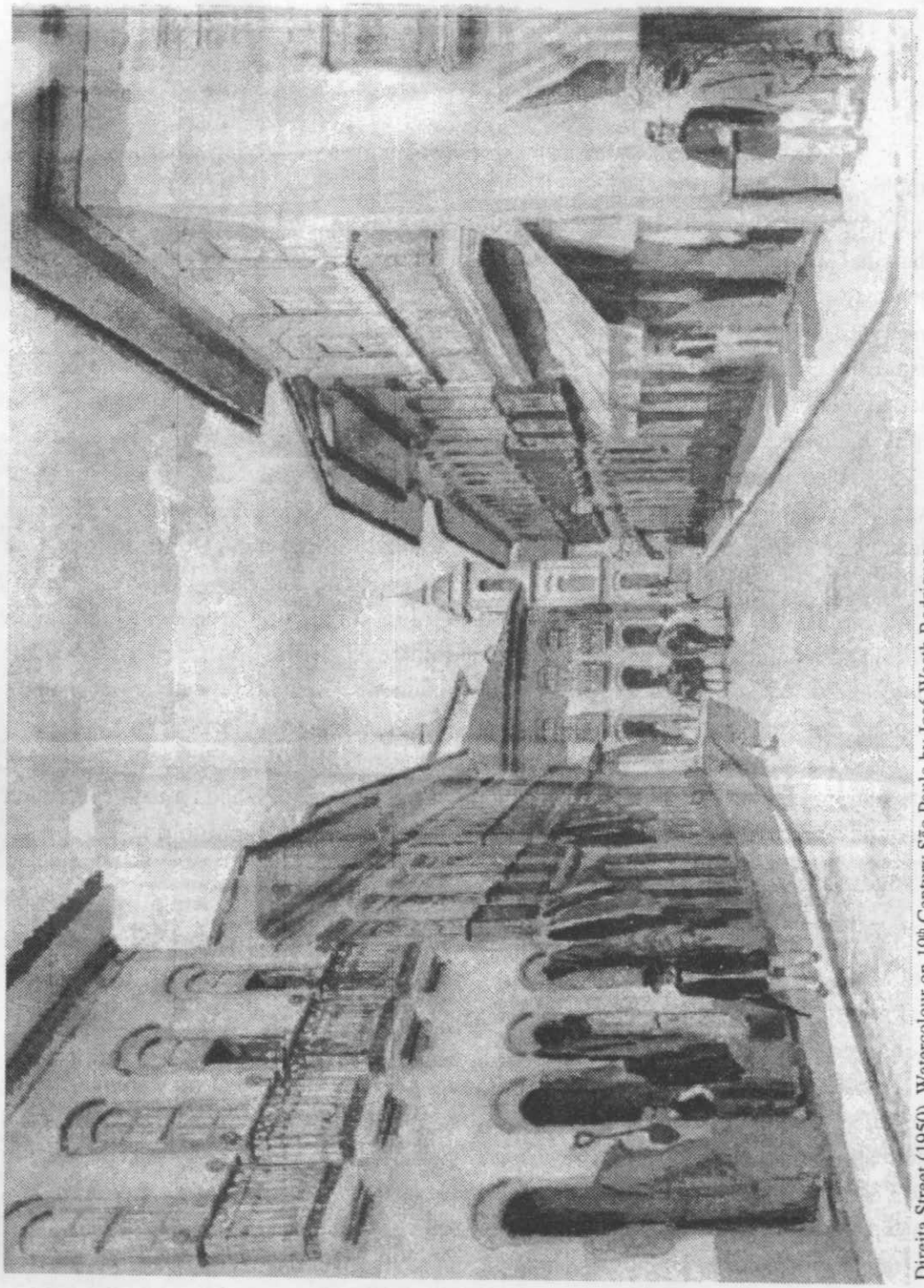
The other sections of the journal contain contributions from the following international and Brazilian scholars: on Drama, Wolfgang Zach and Donald Morse; on Fiction, Dore Fischer, Heinz Kosok and the poet and critic Haroldo de Campos; on History, Jerry Nolan and Eugene O'Brien; in Poetry, Charlie Boland.

The *Book Reviews* section opens as usual with the contribution by Professor Rüdiger Imhof; other scholars working in Brazil like José Roberto O'Shea, Charlie Boland, Luci Colin Lavalle and Magda Veloso Tolentino also enlarge the scope of readings. It is an honour to have also Professor Cronin's discussion on the publication of the Letters of Liam O'Flaherty.

Two important features of the *ABEI Journal* besides *The Critic and the Author* are *Voices from Brazil* and *The Irish in South America.* In the first, João Adolfo Hansen's interesting, erudite reflections on baroque literature and art produced in our country in the 17th century motivate fruitful dialogues between cultures; in the second, Laura Izarra's partial results of her research on diasporic literary studies help to design a map of narratives and critique of the Irish in the Latin southern hemisphere.

Remembering pays homage to Adele Dalsimer's extensive work in the field of Irish Studies with an afterword by her colleague at Boston College, Vera Kreilkamp.

This third volume has been partially supported by the Cultural Relations Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, a sign of the journal's significance among other publications in the same area.



Direita Street (1950). Watercolour on 19th Century São Paulo by José Wasth Rodrigues

Greetings from Brazil

Alba

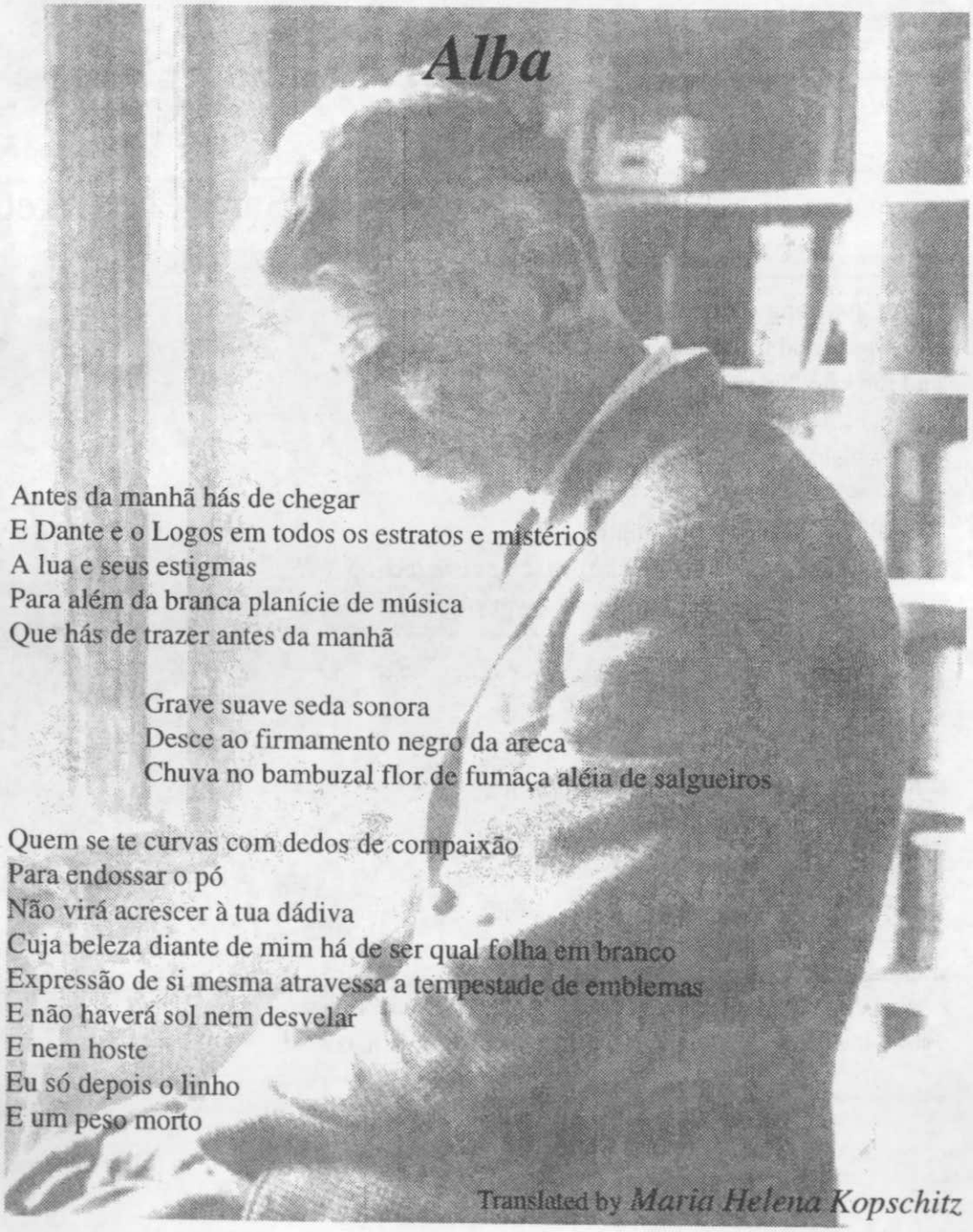
Samuel Beckett

before morning you shall be here
and Dante and the Logos and all strata and mysteries
and the branded moon
beyond the white plane of music
that you shall establish here before morning

grave suave singing silk
stoop to the black firmament of areca
rain on the bamboos flower of smoke alley of willows

who though you stoop with fingers of compassion
to endorse the dust
shall not add to your bounty
whose beauty shall be a sheet before me
a statement of itself drawn across the tempest of emblems
so that there is no sun and no unveiling
and no host
only I and then the sheet
and bulk dead

Janvier, L. *Beckett par lui-même*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969, p. 43.



Alba

Antes da manhã hás de chegar
E Dante e o Logos em todos os estratos e mistérios
A lua e seus estigmas
Para além da branca planície de música
Que hás de trazer antes da manhã

Grave suave seda sonora
Desce ao firmamento negro da areca
Chuva no bambuzal flor de fumaça aléia de salgueiros

Quem se te curvas com dedos de compaixão
Para endossar o pó
Não virá acrescer à tua dádiva
Cuja beleza diante de mim há de ser qual folha em branco
Expressão de si mesma atravessa a tempestade de emblemas
E não haverá sol nem desvelar
E nem hoste
Eu só depois o linho
E um peso morto

Translated by *Maria Helena Kopschitz*

Photograph in: Janvier, L. *Beckett par lui-même*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969, p. 83.

Personal Helicon

For Michael Longley

Seamus Heaney

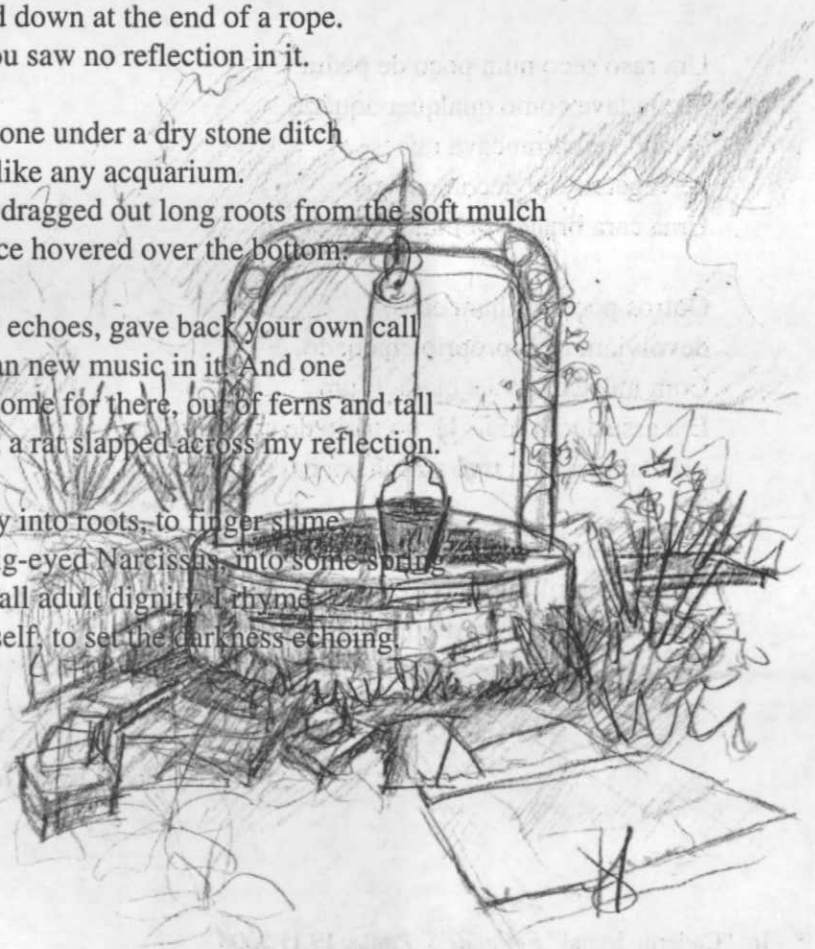
As a child, they could not keep me from wells
And old pumps with buckets and windlasses.
I loved the dark drop, the trapped sky, the smells
Of waterweed, fungus and dank moss.

One, in a brickyard, with a rotted board top.
I savoured the rich crash when a bucket
Plummeted down at the end of a rope.
So deep you saw no reflection in it.

A shallow one under a dry stone ditch
Fructified like any acquarium.
When you dragged out long roots from the soft mulch
A white face hovered over the bottom.

Others had echoes, gave back your own call
With a clean new music in it. And one
Was scaresome for there, out of ferns and tall
Foxgloves, a rat slapped across my reflection.

Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
To stare, big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring
Is beneath all adult dignity. I rhyme
To see myself, to set the darkness echoing.



Hélicon Pessoal

Seamus Heaney

Quando criança, não conseguiam me afastar de poços
E velhas bombas com baldes e cordames.
Eu amava o abismo escuro, com o céu enclausurado,
Os odores de águas mortas, fungos úmidos.

Uma vez, numa olaria, do alto de uma tábua podre,
Saboreei o rico estrondo de um balde
Na ponta de uma corda, caindo direto
Tão fundo que não se via nenhum reflexo.

Um raso seco num poço de pedra
Fecundava como qualquer aquário.
Quando eu arrancava raízes
de vegetais em decomposição
Uma cara branca tremulava embaixo.

Outros poços tinham ecos,
devolviam meu próprio chamado,
Com música nova e clara. E um
Era assustador, pois lá, no meio de samambaias
e dedaleiras, um rato patinhava em meu reflexo.

Hoje, espiar raízes, apalpar lama,
Olhar, com olhos de Narciso, alguma fonte,
Está abaixo de toda dignidade adulta. E rimo
Para ver eu mesmo, e fazer ecoar a escuridão.

Translated by *Millôr Fernandes**

* In: "Caderno Mais!" *Folha de S. Paulo*, 19.11.2000.

Hélicon Pessoal

Para Michael Longley

Seamus Heaney

Em criança, que ninguém me tirasse os poços
E velhas bombas de água com baldes e sarilhos.
Gostava da gota no escuro, do céu preso em água,
De odores e ervas, fungos e musgos húmidos.

De um, numa fábrica, sob tábuas podres,
Gozava o som opulento que um balde fazia
Mergulhando na ponta de uma corda.
Tão fundo que o reflexo não se via.

Menos fundo, à sombra de um talude,
Um outro era fértil como um aquário.
Ao puxar longas raízes de um macio lodo
Pairava sobre o fundo uma face pálida.

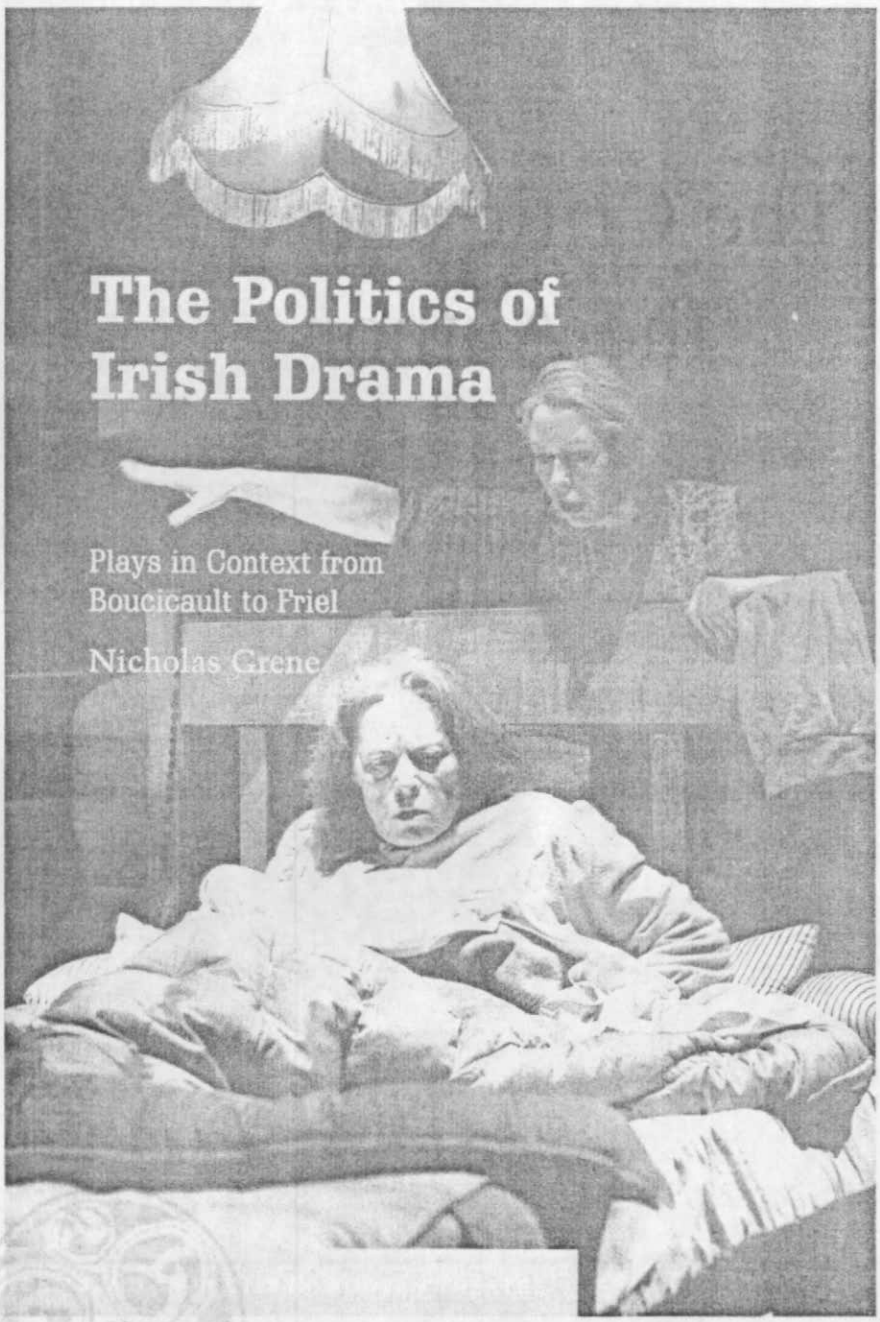
Outros tinham ecos, devolviam-nos a voz
Com música nova e depurada. E havia um
Que assustava, porque lá, de entre fetos e altos
Dedais, uma ratazana bateu na minha imagem.

Agora, perscrutar raízes, pôr a mão na lama,
Olhar uma nascente, qual Narciso esgazeado,
Não o consente a dignidade adulto. Faço a rima
P'ra ver o meu reflexo, e pôr a escuridão a ecoar.

Translated by *Rui Carvalho Homem**

* In: *Seamus Heaney. Da Terra à Luz. Poemas 1966-1987.* Tradução, Prefácio e Notas de Rui Carvalho Homem. Lisboa: Relógio D'Água, 1997.

The Critic and the Author


The Politics of
Irish Drama
Plays in Context from
Boucicault to Friel
Nicholas Grene

The Politics of Irish Drama

Peter James Harris

Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

I am one of those people who will never wittingly leave a loose end untied, and it is thus a source of considerable satisfaction to have been granted this opportunity to bring two projects neatly full circle. In the Acknowledgements to his most recent work, Professor Nicholas Grene refers to the fact that the seed for the book was first planted in his mind whilst teaching a graduate seminar on Irish drama in Brazil in 1993. He goes on to thank Munira Mutran for having invited him to teach the course and for her generous hospitality whilst he was in São Paulo. At that time I myself was in the early stages of my own doctoral research into Sean O'Casey and I managed to catch the first two days of the two-week course before heading off on a lengthy trip to the UK which was eventually to take me over the Irish Sea to Dublin. Having bent Professor Grene's ear in my direction before I left Brazil I was able to call in at his Trinity College study for an impromptu tutorial, after which he kindly invited me to join him for lunch and coffee in the Trinity Staff Common Room. Six years later, 1999 witnessed the fruition of the seeds which had been germinated respectively in Brazil and Ireland with, on the one hand the publication of Professor Grene's book and, on the other, the viva voce for my doctorate at USP. Since Munira Mutran was undoubtedly the Juno to these two projects it is particularly appropriate that this dialogue should be taking place in the pages of the *ABEI Journal*, the Irish Studies mouthpiece which she has been instrumental in bringing into existence. If this preamble seems unduly subjective in the context of an academic journal that is no mere accident, for it seems to me that the subjectivity of interpretation lies at the very heart of Nicholas Grene's book and, for that matter, of my own doctoral dissertation too.

Nicolas Grene opened his own contribution to "The Critic and the Author," in the previous issue of this journal, in which he discussed Christina Hunt Mahony's *Contemporary Irish Literature*, with three obviously heartfelt questions: "Where do you start? Who to include? Who to leave out?" – which must have caused him a few sleepless nights as he drew up his own selection of plays and playwrights for *The Politics of Irish Drama*. It is for this reason, presumably, that he takes the unusual step of placing a Chronology at the beginning of his book, before the Introduction even, rather than as an Appendix. His listing of Irish Theatrical and Political events in the period from 1860

to 1998 serves as a reader's map to the book, the plays selected for discussion being helpfully emphasised in bold text. We are thus introduced to a book whose perimeter is marked at the outset by the staging of *The Colleen Bawn* in New York and which closes with the Good Friday agreement. A more careful examination of the Theatrical events listed reveals that the book's course will be charted from Boucicault's *The Shaughran* in 1874 to Barry's *The Steward of Christendom* in 1995, departing from New York and arriving in London. Ports of call will include 13 playwrights out of the 20 mentioned, and 23 plays out of the 43 listed as Theatrical events. A clear indication of the captain's preferred route may be inferred from the fact that 4 out of the 13 playwrights to be discussed each have 3 plays singled out in bold: Yeats, O'Casey, Murphy and Friel. If this survey appears to be unduly statistical in nature it is intended to draw attention to the clarity with which Nicholas Grene's Chronology reveals the shape and intent of his book at the very outset: the reader is reassured that here is a writer who has the courage to make difficult choices.

The justification for these choices comes immediately afterwards, in the four-page Introduction, admirably succinct and mercifully clear of the cobwebs of theory. Indeed, in setting out to focus upon the reading of a limited number of plays, Grene eschews the "more theoretically inflected analyses of broader cultural manifestations." As someone who finds the convoluted prose of the most noteworthy postcolonial theorists ever more indigestible, I read this introductory announcement with considerable relief. One of the great advantages of *The Politics of Irish Drama* is that it is eminently readable, argued throughout with the elegant simplicity that one would expect from an accomplished and experienced lecturer.

Professor Grene's book, then, may be seen as the advancement of an argument, presented in nine polished and beautifully illustrated stages (his 1993 course was also composed of nine lectures – it's a cabalistic number!). The premise of the argument is that the politics of Irish drama is the term that best describes the complex fusion of poetics and dynamics formed by the amalgam of subject, playwright and audience which occurs during the performance of a play, and that the result of this interaction is a form of representation that goes far beyond mimesis. Having come to university lecturing myself through acting, directing and the teaching of educational drama I am naturally predisposed to accept such a premise. Nicholas Grene recognises the essential difference between drama and other literary forms, which is the remarkable phenomenon of the performance – to attempt to isolate the theory of drama from its practice is, if the Arisotelians will forgive the crudeness of the analogy, to emasculate the Minotaur.

Although the author is at pains to stress that his selection of plays and playwrights is not made with the intention of producing a "linear chain," the nine chapters of *The Politics of Irish Drama* nonetheless represent stages in the development of an overall argument. Thus, the opening chapter lays out the chart for the journey that is about to be undertaken, revealing not only how *The Colleen Bawn*, *John Bull's Other Island* and *Translations* offer different stage interpretations of Ireland but also how each play makes

use of an onstage interpreter, whose perceptions are, in their turn, mediated by the master interpretation of the playwright. The representation of Ireland on stage is therefore shown to be the result of the multi-faceted interpretation fashioned by the interaction of the perspectives of stage character, audience and playwright.

In the following chapters, Nicholas Grene goes on to examine some of the forms this interpretative activity took over the course of the 20th century. Chapter 2 looks at the variations upon the theme of strangers in the house developed by Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*, Lady Gregory's *The Travelling Man*, the Yeats/Gregory partnership's *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, and Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen*. Synge also features in the following chapter which, under the punning title of "Shifts in Perspective," deals with *The Playboy of the Western World*, a supreme case of the impossibility of establishing a common accord between playwright and audience with regard to the representation of Ireland proposed by the former. The following chapter offers a fresh insight into Sean O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* and *Juno and the Paycock*, based on an analysis of questions of class and space in the two plays, and O'Casey reappears in Chapter 5, where *The Plough and the Stars* is considered together with Denis Johnston's *The Old Lady Says 'No!'* and Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* as one of a group of plays advancing reactions to revolution. Chapter 6 moves on to consider two visions of postcolonial Ireland, Yeats's *Purgatory* and Beckett's *All that Fall*, detecting differences but also asserting affinities between, particularly in the sense that the two playwrights are perhaps the least Irish of the writers under consideration in their determination to go beyond the specificities of Irish place and culture. Chapter 7 examines the perspectives upon emigration offered by Friel's landmark success *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and Murphy's *A Crucial Week in the Life of a Grocer's Assistant* and concludes with the versions of pastoral presented in two pairs of one-act plays, Friel's pairing of *Winners* and *Losers* under the title of *Lovers*, and Murphy's *On the Outside/On the Inside*. The penultimate chapter takes a further pair of plays by Tom Murphy, *A Thief of Christmas* and *Bailegangaire*, which offer a reshaping of Ireland's past in order to illuminate its present. Chapter 9 also deals with plays which respond to the past, Frank McGuinness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* and Sebastian Barry's *The Steward of Christendom*, both of which return to the polemical question of the participation by Irish soldiers in the First World War. This is a question of particular interest to me, for my thesis focused upon the rejection of O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* by the Abbey Theatre and upon the impact that the decision had upon O'Casey, both personally and professionally. Grene reminds his readers that McGuinness's play was written in an attempt to expiate what the playwright described as the "curse that came upon the Irish theatre with the rejection of *The Silver Tassie*," a process which may one hope that the successful production of Mark-Anthony Turnage's opera at the London Coliseum in February 2000 has now satisfactorily completed.

This undignified whistle-stop tour of Professor Grene's book obviously omits the most interesting point on the journey, the conclusion. It cannot have been an easy

matter to summarise in a mere eight pages an argument which had set out to embrace such an eclectic collection of drama, seeking to stress the diversity of the chosen plays and the heterogeneity of the representations of Ireland therein presented. Interestingly, inevitably perhaps, he emphasises the shared characteristics of the plays he has analysed, characteristics which make the Irish play "a distinct and distinctly marketable phenomenon," which "constitutes a separable category, fulfilling its own contrastive function in relation to the metropolitan mainstream." He argues that Irish drama is recognisable by its difference, by a sense of otherness which is equally perceptible to audiences abroad and to those in Ireland itself. This latter point is a particularly interesting one for, in drawing attention to the fact that Irish audiences experience a sense of the difference of the worlds portrayed on stage from their own, Nicholas Grene is homing in on one of the most striking features of Irish drama, which is its tendency to portray marginal worlds, depicting spaces and characters which are "always out there, somewhere other than the metropolitan habitat shared (more or less) by playwright and audience alike." The fact that Professor Grene is an Irish academic obviously lends an authority to such an observation that would be unavailable to a foreign critic, and it also gives credibility to the explanation that he offers for this continuing focus on the worlds of poverty, deprivation and oppression.

To the outsider, like myself, it is sometimes hard to understand why Irish writers seem so reluctant to rejoice. Even now, when the Irish economy is enjoying unprecedented rates of growth, prompting the coining of the term "Celtic tiger" (a term that leaves one's heart in one's mouth if the recent fate of the Asiatic tiger economies is recalled), there seems to be no change in the predominant spirit of gloomy introspection. One can not imagine, for example, an Irish collection of verse being published under the title of *Look! We have come through!* In March 2001 the latest overnight success story from Ireland on the United States publishing scene, Nuala O'Faolain, was asked by *Newsweek* whether she was happy with her success. Her reply was symptomatic: "I can't believe it, 'cause it's not sad enough." Professor Grene opens his conclusion by referring to the continuing strength and international success of Irish drama, which is an ever-popular presence on the London stage. He cites Conor McPherson's *The Weir* as an example and also mentions the names of Billy Roche, Marina Carr and Martin McDonagh. It is, of course, too early to say with certainty that these writers will receive canonical status. McPherson's follow-up to *The Weir*, *Dublin Carol*, was unenthusiastically received by London critics, and the jury is still out on McDonagh's merits (judging by the vehement contempt expressed by one notable Irish academic during IASIL 2000, who described McDonagh as a "gobshite," the critical community has yet to reach a point of consensus!). However, the playwrights themselves seem to be united in the gloom and violence that characterise the world they choose to depict. The success of Marie Jones's *Stones in His Pockets*, which won an Olivier Award for Best New Comedy at the 25th Award Ceremony in February 2001, may be no more than the exception which proves the rule. Professor Grene's explanation for this phenomenon, that just as "the partitioned island has continued

to manifest symptoms of its fractured state, so the dramatists have returned repeatedly to probe and to examine, to attempt therapies of self-analysis," is certainly consistent with the tenets of postcolonial criticism, but I can't help feeling that there is something more profound underlying the difference of Irish drama than reaction to the continuing colonial presence of the British in the North. I very much hope to live to see a united Ireland but, at the risk of being dismissed as Arnoldian by Professor Grene, I have a deep-rooted suspicion that the end of partition would not be enough to bring about a sea change in Irish drama.

Professor Grene's book, then, is certainly a most thought-provoking contribution to the literature on 20th century Irish drama. Of course, every reader will have his own reservations about the selection of plays that form the backbone of the study. In my case I found it incomprehensible that Friel's *The Freedom of the City* should not have been included in the central core of the book, but the author is very careful to defend himself against such criticism in the pages of his introduction. What I find more worrying, however, is that there is an issue of profound importance that is being ignored or, rather, denied in the book: the possibility that Irishness may be more ancient than politics and stem from roots that lie even deeper than the country's colonial and postcolonial history.

The Critic and the Author: Response

Nicholas Grene

It is difficult to know how to respond to Dr Peter Harris's generous, lucid and discriminating review, beyond thanking him for the kindness of his praise. It is a great pleasure for me, also, to renew in print a dialogue with him begun in São Paulo in 1993 at a point when we have now both completed the enterprises we were then starting. And I am certainly happy to join with him in saluting Munira Mutran for all she has done for Irish studies in Brazil. For my part, I had to travel to São Paulo to have the opportunity to teach a postgraduate course on Irish drama to a group of advanced students all committed to that subject, and without the catalyst of that experience *The Politics of Irish Drama* might not have been written.

All of Dr Harris's compliments are welcome – you can never overpraise a book to its author or a baby to its parents – but some of them are hardly deserved. He focuses on my selection of plays, and speaks of 'a writer who has had the courage to make difficult choices'. It was not quite like that. I did not take stock of the full wealth of Irish drama in English written over the last century and a half, and pick out what seemed to me the most significant plays. I probably should have done, but I didn't. Instead, I tended to follow the phenomenon that interested me, the politics of the representation of Ireland implicit in the drama, wherever it seemed to lead, whether to major or minor plays. And some of the works that I most admire ended up on the cutting-room floor for arbitrary reasons.

So, for instance, *Faith Healer*, to my mind still Brian Friel's greatest play, was to have been the centrepiece of a chapter, balancing the chapter I devote to Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire*, that other masterpiece of late twentieth-century Irish theatre. But when I came to write that chapter – pressed for space as I was – I realised that I had little to say about *Faith Healer* relevant to my argument that I had not already said earlier in the book. So, to my very great regret, it went. My omission of Friel's *The Freedom of the City* from the central core of the book, for which Peter Harris reproaches me, came about for a somewhat different reason. The politics of that play's reception followed fairly predictable lines: English audiences and reviewers attacked it, seeing in it – quite wrongly I believe – a piece of Republican propaganda; the Irish, raw from the horror of Bloody Sunday and its aftermath, admired it for the forcefulness of its satire. *Translations*, equally applauded by both English and Irish, North and South, for my purposes seemed a more significant case for concentrated attention.

There remains the peculiar phenomenon of Irish drama itself in its contemporary manifestation. Dr Harris ponders the peculiarity of Irish writers' failure to rejoice, even

in the period of our new-found affluence. (He is of course right to see the ominousness in that deplorable phrase, the 'Celtic tiger', in the light of what happened to the Asian tiger economies; the best Irish economists can now hope for is a 'soft landing' when the party's over.) Maybe we have been hard up so long, we can not believe our luck. But marketing, image, the traditions of what is expected of Ireland and Irish writing, certainly come into it. To show upon the stage a characteristic Irish couple *de nos jours*, he a software specialist, she a management consultant, might accurately reflect the social realities of middle-class Dublin, but would not be noticeably different from presenting such a couple from London, New York, or indeed no doubt São Paulo. And it is difference still that Ireland has to offer. So we continue to find tenanting the theatres of the world those pubs in the West of Ireland filled with lonesome characters leading lives of voluble desperation. It's what is expected of Irish playwrights, it's what they do, and in some cases they do it supremely well.

I agree whole-heartedly with Peter Harris that 'there is something more profound underlying the difference of Irish drama than reaction to the continuing colonial presence of the British in the North', or even the existence of a million Irish men and women who want that presence to continue. One of the objectives of my book was to complicate a sense of the politics of Irish drama that had previously equated it simply with colonial and postcolonial politics. However, without wanting to accuse Dr Harris of being an Arnoldian – would that be an accusation? – I am from my end suspicious of an essentialism that defines our Irishness in terms of an ancient inheritance predating our colonial and postcolonial history. I don't think I am as intemperate as Shaw's Larry Doyle, who says that 'When people talk of the Celtic race, I feel as if I could burn down London'. But, given the choice, I would prefer Shaw's semi-spoof theory of climate as the determining condition of Irish identity, rather than an ancestral predisposition to Celtic melancholy. Certainly what we need at present, when the *nouveau riche* Irish society is reacting with quite sinister aggression and prejudice to its first limited experience of multiculturalism, is a view of our culture that is complex, open and flexible. But it may be some time before we get such a view, and longer still before it finds its way into Irish drama, conditioned as that drama is by what others think of us as much as what we think of ourselves.

Drama

Marina Carr's "Heap of Broken Mirrors": The Mai *(1994)*

Donald E. Morse

Glory to Heaven for home and family:
a man, a woman, children.
Nurse in Euripides' *Medea*. Trans. Brendan Kennelly (13)

Abstract: *After writing several plays that showed great promise but were clearly derivative, especially of Samuel Beckett, Marina Carr arrived dramatically with the well-conceived, riveting The Mai in 1994. Her next play commissioned by the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, Portia Coughlan (1996) also garnered many honors and a loyal following. But with the "Midlands Gothic" of By the Bog of Cats (1998) something appeared to go dreadfully wrong. Carr had begun to substitute rhetoric and violence for her formerly carefully plotted acts and well-developed characters. This unfortunate tendency holds complete sway over the stage Irish, melodramatic, over-wrought Irish kitchen drama, On Raftery's Hill (2000). With On Raftery's Hill a new assessment of Marina Carr's meteoric rise in Dublin and international theatre appears warranted, even required.*

Theatre goers in Galway, Washington, D.C., Dublin, and London were recently subjected to one of the most melodramatic, over-wrought contemporary versions of stage Irish in Marina Carr's Irish kitchen drama, *On Raftery's Hill* (2000). The *Guardian* reviewer described the play as "a blackly hilarious piece that suddenly descends into the horror of the enclosed, incestuous world of a widower and his two daughters," but nothing could be farther from the experience of most others watching from the audience. Yes, *On Raftery's* Hill is a tale of multiple incest, barbarous wanton cruelty, and killing, but the play also entertains one cliché after another making it indeed "blackly [and unintentionally] hilarious." The reviewer was certainly correct that the dominant movement of the evening was that of descent, but that sinking was into unrelieved melodrama. And the reviewer's comparison of Garry Hines' production with her internationally successful production of Martin McDonagh's Leenane trilogy is also apt as the earlier production also played upon the clichés of comic stage Irish characters and featured melodramatic plots. The difference between the two, however, lies in the plays themselves. McDonagh's trilogy does not pretend to be other than it is – a broad-based appeal to non-Irish theatre-goers as well as to those who attend popular theatre. Carr, on the other hand, would claim to be tapping the deepest depths of the Irish psyche using

elements borrowed from Greek tragedy. But on both counts *On Raftery's Hill* fails. First, the Irish psyche is far more resilient and vibrant than appears in this play and second, tacking-on references to Greek tragic myths in casual conversational dialogue where they are mostly irrelevant and out-of-character (*Raftery's* 43), does not create Greek or any other kind of tragedy. While there might possibly be enough material in the text for a minor one-act play, the play itself proved interminable as trapped audiences watched the playing out of an ancient curse on Raftery's Hill unto the third generation. One could only sympathize for the poor actors forced to speak their clichés and portray Carr's violently inarticulate characters that arouse little or no sympathy despite the best efforts by seasoned, respected actors. With this debacle, a new assessment of Marina Carr's meteoric rise in the Dublin and international theatre appears warranted, even required.

After writing several plays that showed great promise but were clearly derivative, especially of Samuel Beckett, Carr arrived with the well-conceived, dramatically riveting *The Mai* in 1994. Her next play commissioned by the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, *Portia Coughlan* (1996) also garnered many honors and a loyal following. But with – what director Patrick Mason called – the "Midlands Gothic" of *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) (qtd. in Cummins 8), something appeared to go dreadfully wrong. Carr had begun to substitute rhetoric and violence for her formerly carefully plotted acts and dramatically developed characters.[1] With *On Raftery's Hill* this unfortunate tendency appeared to hold complete sway over the play. Scott T. Cummings accurately describes the main character Red Raftery from several different angles. "To put it morally, he is evil. To put it crudely, he is a jerk. To make a spectacle of his behavior without a broader context borders on the gratuitous and the sensational" (8) which it is. This is Nicholas Grene's "black pastoral" with a vengeance derived from melodrama.[2] As Cummings concludes having brilliantly summarized the play's short-comings: Carr's dramatic thinking . . . is murkey and incomplete. Like the family she writes about, the play falls in on itself" (8).

Rather than dwell on the "decline and fall" of a very promising young playwright who, after all, is still very much in mid-career and hopefully will recover from this bout with stage Irishness and go on to have a long and fruitful career in the theatre, I would prefer to return to what can now be termed her best play thus far, *The Mai*. For it, too, is controversial – a play by a woman playwright with an incredibly strong heroine as the title character, yet one that presents the character as caught in a tragic trap set by falling in love for a man unworthy of her. The play is told retrospectively by The Mai's daughter, Millie and is clearly a "memory play" as defined by Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* (1944).[3] Millie narrates events, much as Tom Wingfield narrates those in *The Glass Menagerie*. Unlike Tom, who appears on stage as both narrator and the central character in his story, Millie rarely appears as a character and then only peripherally, although she does also remain on stage as narrator throughout the whole play.[4] (Tom as actor is present in every scene of *The Glass Menagerie* except for Jim and Laura's conversation when his mother keeps him off stage in the kitchen doing the dishes.) Like Tom struggling with his memories of his sister and his mother, Millie calls up her

memories in order of their importance for understanding her mother's identity as a woman. Perhaps her most significant memory is of The Mai's suicide, since she spends much energy in attempting to account for it. Thus in the middle of act one, as she is telling of the summer of Robert's return, she leaps ahead to describe a trip to town she and Robert took "to buy a blue nightgown and a blue bedjacket for The Mai's waking. . . . No shroud for The Mai" (28). The play's complex sequence of events thus occurs not in order of their chronological happening but in order of their emotional impact on and importance for Millie's memory of her mother, The Mai. Part of this sequence includes "the act of shared memory" which Anthony Roche argues "is the play itself, the thread of affiliation which binds Grandma Fraochlán, the Mai [sic] and Millie together across time, space and the absence of death" ("Women" 162).

Since all memory occurs only in the present, as philosophers from Heraclitus to Augustine to Rosenfield have maintained, Millie at thirty-five narrates the play by recalling events into her present that she witnessed between fifteen and twenty-four years ago. The first thing she recollects is the grand house her mother built to bring her errant husband home or, more precisely: she recalls "a room with a huge bay window" (11). This visual image of the huge bay window dominates Millie's memory of her mother as it dominates the staging of *The Mai* from the raising to the lowering of the curtain. The window frames The Mai's expectations that are, she believes, fulfilled when Robert enters at the beginning of act one. It also frames the retrospective exposition of her longing for him and her summoning him back to her side heard at the end of act one, and it will frame the tableau of Robert with The Mai dead in his arms. In act two, the window frames Robert's betrayal – epitomized by the impersonal birthday card with, worse, a ten-pound note enclosed. And at the end of act two, The Mai will look through its panes one last time before either going to bed or going off to commit suicide by drowning herself in her own lake of tears.[5]

Commenting on the stage design of the 1994 Dublin production, Roche notes about the "dream house she has constructed" that "Its central feature in terms of the staging and Kathy Strachan's design is a huge window centrestage [sic] which gives out to Owl Lake, the pattern of the lake reflected around the stage" ("Women" 161). Repeated references to Owl Lake, which the window looks out on, coupled with the telling of its legend in such a splendidly dramatic fashion has the effect of having the lake, though invisible to the audience, increasingly and ominously dominate the scene. The verbal imagery coalesces with the powerful visual image of The Mai dead carried in Robert's arms backlit by a ghostly light and all framed by the window. Also, the sexual-sensual imagery begun with Robert playing the Mai's body with his cello bow followed by The Mai's appearing in her slip to get the whiskey bottle, culminates here with The Mai dead in Robert's arms in the same or similar slip. Her unattainable idealized love for unfaithful Robert now consummated in death – all framed in the very window she built to summon him back to her side. As the Latin satirist sardonically noted "When the gods want to punish us, they answer our prayers" as they answered The Mai's oft repeated prayer of "Come home – come home" (14).

Although he bears her dead body in the tableau, Robert could not bear The Mai's all-consuming passion. Like Hickey in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* (1940), Robert could not live with The Mai's faith in his ultimate fidelity. "There's a limit to the guilt you can feel and the forgiveness and the pity you can take!" cries Hickey (239).[6] Because Carr focuses on the wife and not, like O'Neill on the husband, we catch only glimpses of Robert's side of the conflict and these occur mostly in the arguments he has with The Mai. But surely he does share Hickman's guilt as well as his feeling the burden of forgiveness, especially in act two when Robert flaunts his tawdry infidelity before her and the small town where they live.

Act one's structure, therefore, is based upon the emotional significance various events have for Millie. As Isaac Rosenfield rightly asserts in *The Invention of Memory*:

> Emotions are essential to the creation of memory because they organize it, establishing its relative importance in a sequence of events much as a sense of time and order is essential for a memory to be considered a memory, and not a thought or a vision of some particular instant, unrelated to past events. (72)

Thus the first because most important event Millie brings forward into her present actually occurred when she was sixteen and her father, The Mai's husband, Robert returned. The second is Robert's departure five years earlier when she was eleven. Then in order of importance appear the events of the summer of Robert's return, after that The Mai's suicide by drowning, and so on through the act.[7] Added to Millie's recollection of events and people are other people's memories which go back another three generations in the family. As Millie tries to understand her mother, how she lived, and why she died, she establishes the criteria by which she admits events as valid, reflects upon how, where, and even why she knows what she knows about The Mai. In this process, she inevitably confronts her own identity as it is bound up in that how and why. Events that once appeared clouded for Millie when they happened appear clearer now years later. For instance, Millie believes she currently understands The Mai's motive for working in London. Similarly, events which appeared clear when they occurred now may seem ambiguous, such as the stories Grandma Fraochlán told of her lover/husband, the nine-fingered fisherman or those she told of her daughter, Ellen's husband or Ellen's marriage. Years afterward, tall tales about local characters have, perhaps, an unexpected relevance they lacked before, particularly tales about Sam Brady and his legendary cow, Billy the Black, which he would ride "like a horse . . . naked except for a pair of red bloomers" (50).

Dreams, whose content had been ignored or laughed at, over time prove hauntingly prophetic. The Mai's dream the night before she and Robert were married is especially significantly as it foretells Robert's desertion of her a decade or so later. In her dream both she and Robert are depicted as children: she smiling and waving and he passing her by saying, "Not yet, not yet, not for thousands and thousands of years." As

he disappears she "see[s] a black cavern and I know it leads to nowhere and I start walking that way because I know I'll find you there" (26). Robert is heading somewhere else, while she determined, dedicated, follows searching for him – all of which "leads nowhere" except to the blackness of her own death. And those ancient local legends about Owl Lake neglected in youth, now appear in retrospect as dire warnings of impending doom which Robert, The Mai, and Millie ignored at their peril as "like sleepwalkers along a precipice . . . [they] walked on and on . . . not listening" (42).

Chronology of events, as noted, becomes rearranged in memory, but Carr also strongly believes that the needs of her drama should shape the sequence in which events occur rather than the more usual notion of the sequence of events structuring the drama. In describing the way Tom Mac Intyre "plays with Time in the piece [*Good Evening, Mr Collins* 1995, revived 1996)]," Carr might well have been describing her own fantastic "playing" with time in *The Mai*. She emphatically declares "Time as we understand it, with all its imposing logic, is merely a construct of The Fallen World and therefore to be treated with suspicion" ("The Bandit Pen" n. pag.).[8] Similarly, in *The Mai*, precipitate non-mimetic shifts of subject, scene, and language occur – most memorably at the end of act one. There, immediately after she recalls a conversation between The Mai and her aunt, Julia about Ellen, The Mai's mother, and her marriage, Millie abruptly shifts subject and language to narrate the legend of Owl Lake. Following "this mythic narrative" (Roche, "Women" 162) an audience is dramatically confronted by the sudden, arresting tableau of Robert with the dead Mai in his arms, which is succeeded in turn by Millie's verbally interpreting the legend in relation to her mother, father, and herself in highly poetic language.

Carr, in writing of Tom Mac Intyre's story "the lap of hay" in *Good Evening Mr Collins*, describes vividly the quality not only of that story but of her own legend of Owl Lake as well:

> Firstly it's the lyricism of it, then it's the simplicity. Finally it's how Mac Intyre [Carr] uses the story, how it resonates through the whole piece, how all of Michael Collins' [The Mai's] life and death is in that story. This is craftsmanship at its best. ("The Bandit Pen" n. pag.)

Like almost all anglicized place names in Ireland, Owl Lake is an English misreading of the Irish name, "loch cailleach oíche, Lake of the Night Hag or Pool of the Dark Witch" (41; compare the many erroneous translations of Irish place names in Friel, *Translations*, 1980). "Every place on the earth's surface [including Owl Lake] is remembered in some way or holds the memory of events which happened there" (Matthews 16). "The legend goes that Coillte, daughter of the mountain god, Bloom, fell in love with Bláth, Lord of all the flowers" and they lived happily through the spring and into the summer. Then "one evening approaching autumn," he mentioned that he had to go to "live with the dark witch of the bog." He would return in the spring which he did do, but too late for by

that time the Hag had pushed Coillte into the lake formed from the copious tears she shed on his leaving (41). The legend parallels the story of The Mai and Robert falling in love, marrying, having children, his sudden leaving and equally sudden return. In the image of the god's daughter drowning herself in her own lake of tears, the legend also foreshadows the play's conclusion when The Mai will go off to drown herself in Owl Lake. The startling visual image of Robert with The Mai dead in his arms which follows the legend confirms this ending: "Ghostly light on the window. ROBERT stands there with THE MAI'S body in his arms, utterly still. MILLIE watches them a minute. Ghostly effect" (42). Immediately after the tableau, Millie eloquently articulates the implications for The Mai, Robert, and herself of the legend of Owl Lake in language often elevated as is appropriate to such legends. Her warning of dark inevitable things to come verbally underlines the visual tableau:

> I knew that story as a child. So did The Mai and Robert. But we were unaffected by it and in our blindness moved along with it like sleepwalkers along a precipice and all around gods and mortals called out for us to change our course and, not listening, we walked on on. (42)

The tableau with which act one concludes appears far out of order in the sequence of the play's chronological events. By placing the suicide – the penultimate event of the play's action – at the end of act one, Carr compels her audience to see all of The Mai's acts and words, including those still to come in act two, as leading inevitably to this tableau of her drowning. This is the kind of "daring and invention" that Ionesco praised as "freedom of imagination [which] is not flight into the unreal, . . . [and] not escape" (qtd. in Heeson 196), but rather a re-shaping of "the reality we thought real" (Malekin 41). Like Tennessee Williams she, too, scorns "the exhausted theatre of realism" employing instead various fantastic stage techniques and set pieces – such as the presentation of events in a non-chronological sequence, the use of mythic and/or prophetic narratives, the violent shifts of subject, and the sometimes arbitrary mixure of times, people, and places – all of which are fantastic in that they depart from what is acknowledged as "consensus reality" (Hume 21) in order to better explore the natural, the possible, the mortal as held in memory. In no sense, however, can *The Mai* be considered a fantasy which Colin Manlove, among others, has carefully defined as: "A fiction evoking wonder and containin a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (ixn).

Throughout the play, Millie uses memory to gain knowledge of how and why events happen in the way they did and how and why people behaved in the way they did. For example, although her father, Robert professes his undying love for her mother (27), Millie through recall realizes that he is no Romeo who, finding his Juliet dead, will commit suicide rather than face life without her. He is, instead, a latter-day Jason who for all his professions of love: such as, "you are and were and always will be the only

one" (27) will yield easily and repeatedly to temptation, especially if it is ego-flattering such as a younger woman's attraction for him.

At the beginning of act two an audience can neither evade nor disregard the palpable inevitability which now hangs over the play. As *Riders to the Sea* (1902) must end with the last man of all the men in the house drowned and buried in a coffin made of "the finest white boards" (5), so *The Mai* must end with Robert being unfaithful, The Mai drowned in the lake of her own tears, her dead body carried in his arms. This sense of tragic inevitability, against which the events play themselves out in act two, although it partakes of what Carr calls "the Greek idea of destiny and fate and little escape" (Interview C23), nevertheless differs markedly from that of Greek classical drama, such as *Oedipus Rex* or, more appropriately, *Medea*. Sophocles and Euripides could count on their audience knowing at least the outline of their story before they saw the plays thus instantly creating tragic irony as soon as Oedipus – "I of the famous name" – appears or fearful anticipation as Medea off-stage rages "Wronged, wronged, I am wronged / in every deepest corner of my being" (20). Carr cannot. But her invented legend of Owl Lake coupled with the tableau at the end of act one helps create in act two the "idea of destiny and fate and little escape" by establishing for the audience a memory of an event which has not yet occurred, an event still to come. As the Greek audience recalls the dead children from the legend of Medea throughout the play, so a contemporary audience – thanks to this fantastic stage technique – recalls the dead Mai in Robert's arms throughout act two.

The cause of The Mai's tragic death – her single-minded passion for Robert – is strikingly similar to that of a Greek heroine, especially when Robert proves incapable of returning such highly charged commitment. His wistful belief that "not everything has to be final and tragic... not everything" (25) rings increasingly hollow coming from a weak, philandering man, especially when spoken to The Mai, this strong, deeply ardent and totally committed woman, for whom events will prove both "final and tragic." Grandma Fraochlán sees Robert as a man who leaves, returns, and leaves again. When he objects, she recalls how "Ya'ar own father left ya'ar mother, didn't he?" To which Robert replies by drawing a fine distinction between one who leaves never to return and one who, like his father and himself, leaves, then returns: "He never left her! He went to America for a few years. It was after the War, he had to get work, but he came back, didn't he?" His argument falls on deaf ears, for as Grandma Fraochlán points out:

> "An' thousands sted, war or no war, or brung their wives an' childer wud em. Buh noh you, no, an' noh ya'ar father, an' sure as I'm sittin' here, ya'll noh be stoppin' long, because we can't help repeatin', Robert, we repeah an' we repeah, th' orchestration may be different but tha tune is allas tha same." (23)

Grandma Fraochlán's contention that "we repeat and we repeat" rests on the Sophoclean assumption of fate as character. Against this fate humans are, if not powerless, then at

least close to helpless. Millie attempts to understand the impotence her parents experienced in the grip of fate by puzzling through the various remembered incidents and recalled stories of her mother's life; such as The Mai's leaving her four children with another woman who already had ten of her own in order to work in London "as a sweeping girl in an Arab hairdressing salon" (45, 46). There she met an Arab princess. She and The Mai "were two of a kind, moving towards one another across deserts and fairytales and years til they finally meet in a salon under Marble Arch . . . Two little prinesses on the cusp of a dream, one five, the other forty" (46). Only years later did Millie understand that her mother in the grip of an all-consuming passion, left her children in order to work to finance her dream: "nothing was going to stop that house being built for Robert" (46). With the grand house completed, The Mai sits in the window "her temples throbbing as her lips formed two words noiselessly. Come home – come home" (14). Everything will be sacrificed for this passion, this dream – even the children.

"Memories," as Rosenfield contends, "are the procedures that are responsible for the organization of perceptions. They are therefore generalizations of previous experiences, ways of organizing sensory stimuli that permit them to be related to past experience" (62). What emerges for Millie out of this process is her understanding of the total desire and complete unwavering commitment of these women for their men.[9] At one hundred years old, Grandma Fraochlán had always dwelt on her great love, her husband, the nine-fingered fisherman then dead some forty years. Asked to choose between him and her children, she would always chose her lover:

> "There's two types a people in this worlt from whah I can gather, thim as puts their childer first an' thim as puts their lover first an' for whah it's worth, tha nine-fingered fisherman an' meself belongs ta tha lahher a these. I would gladly a hurlt all seven a ye down tha slopes a hell for wan nigh' more wud tha nine-fingered fisherman an' may I roh eternally for such unmotherly feelin'." (69-70)

Medea, Grandma Fraochlán, and The Mai all put their lovers first above their children, but only Grandma Fraochlán never regretted doing so.

The Mai is, therefore, not like Ibsen's *The Doll's House* about "the new woman" or like so many contemporary plays about the difficulty of being a woman in the contemporary world. It is, rather, a play about memories of a woman trapped in a one-sided relationship which can only, inevitably end in disaster. The Mai will come to a tragic end no matter what she does or does not do, no matter how well she builds her house, raises her children or selects and keeps her friends, because the object of her monopolizing passion is clearly not worthy of her. The man is weak where she is strong, he will betray her again and again whereas she will choose to remain loyal to him. Medea, confronted by the infidelity of a similarly weak man, Jason, turned her great

passion from love to rage and enacted a horrible revenge on him by killing their children to spite him.[10] The Mai in an almost identical situation discovers her passion turning to despair and so commits suicide: "The ground is gone from under me," exclaims The Mai. "I'm forty years of age... I'm on the downward slope... I'm trapped" (54).

Even the cello playing with which the play opens – beautiful and rich in the Dublin productions of 1994 and 1995 suggesting elegance, romantic lushness, civilized behavior, and order becomes transformed into something ugly, vicious, mechanical as the trap closes in on The Mai. The opening romantic sound image is overtaken by an overtly erotic, physical, sexual one as Robert shifts from playing the cello to playing The Mai's body with his bow – "softer," she enjoins (11). Both images contrast in intensity with the cello playing later in act two where The Mai does the playing in one of the play's most unforgettable, violent visual-verbal images:

> She moves around the study, sounds a note on the cello, takes the bow, begins screeching it across the cello to annoy ROBERT . . . THE MAI sits down and plays a few phrases expertly. . . . She branishes the cello bow all over the place.
>
> ROBERT Look, will you put that down, you'll break it.
>
> THE MAI And so what, you'll replace it, you're good at replacing things.
>
> She taps the bow along her toes, stops, pulls a string from it, looks at Robert, looks away, resumes playing herself: knees, thighs, stomach. Then she stops to snap a string as it suits her. She plays her breasts and makes notes on her throat with her other hand. (48-49)

The Mai's anger over Robert's betrayal evident in the sound image of the screeching bow and the verbal image, "you'll replace it," precedes the visual image of her frustration caused by his indifference in her playing her body which itself culminates in the highly charged sexual image of her playing her breasts while fingering the frets of her throat illustrating sex and violence, intimating possible self-mutilation or destruction.

Assembling these memories, Millie comes to understand that The Mai loved beyond measure, beyond reason, beyond thought, and far beyond the advice of her well-meaning, devoted friends and family. She deliberately eschews moderation

> heaven's fairest gift,
> the very sanity of the gods, . . .
> Moderation keeps
> the demons of excess at bay,
> and makes us grateful for the gift
> of limits. (*Medea* 49)

No one would willingly place themselves in The Mai's unenviable position outside "the gift of limits," but part of her tragedy is that she believes she has no choice but to love this unfaithful man. As she says to Millie at the end of act two " ...no one will ever understand how completely and utterly Robert is mine and I am his, no one – People think I've no pride, no dignity, to stay in a situation like this, but I can't think of one reason for going on without him" (72). The passions and their inevitable tragic or pathetic outcome at the center of *The Mai* are the stuff of myth and legend. If ordinary people do not behave that way, those in the grip of fate, such as The Mai, Oedipus, or Medea, do. Oedipus did kill his father and marry his mother, while, as Iocasta noted, most men only dream of doing so – Medea did kill her and Jason's children because "passion strangles all my love" (66), and The Mai did choose suicide rather than going on alone without Robert.

Grandma Fraochlán, the one hundred year old matriarch of the family, ignoring the parallel to her own all-consuming passion, speaks for many viewers and reviewers when she says to The Mai: "Ya survived this long withouh him, why'a ya bringin' all this an ya'arself agin?" (16). This question or one like it may well have motivated Millie to try and piece together from her and others' memories the story of The Mai. As *Medea* concluded at the end of Euripides' drama:

> .... there's nothing
> left but memory. Some griefs deepen
> with memory, become more real
> than when they happened first. (74)

To tell this story of "griefs deepen[ed] with memory," Carr violates chronology disrupting the sequence of events to better create the link of memory between Millie and her mother "across time, space and the absence of death" (Roche, "Women" 162). As Rosenfield argues: "memories are not fixed but are constantly evolving generalizations – recreations – of the past, which give us a sense of continuity, a sense of being, with a past, a present, and a future" (76). In developing this sense of continuity through knowledge of the past in the present – however partial or incomplete – through Millie's search for the truth about her mother and herself, Carr emphasizes this essential human attribute.

In a letter to Olivia Shakespeare written in 1929, W. B. Yeats declared: "A deep of the mind can only be approached through what is most human, most delicate" (768). In *The Mai* (1994) Marina Carr approaches such "a deep of the mind" through what is arguably the most human and the most essential of all human properties, memory. Through memory, this play presents an attempt to recover and understand that most mysterious of all subjects, another person—an attempt that also proves essential for self-understanding. Millie discovers that not only is she linked by blood and experience, but more importantly by memory to her mother and through her to her great-grandmother. As Jorge Luis Borges so eloquently wrote in "Cambridge":

Those odds and ends of memory are the only wealth
that the rush of time leaves to us.
We are our memory,
we are this chimerical museum of shifting forms,
this heap of broken mirrors.
(lines 43-47)

Notes

This essay draws upon some material published earlier in the *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies.*

1 For a critique of *By theBog of Cats* and Carr's pandering to stage Irishness, see Vic Merriman, especially 313-15.

2 Grene introduced this term in an essay given at the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures in Barcelona in 1999 and apparently also used it to discuss *On Raftery's Hill* at a Washington, D. C. symposium "An Unpredictable Past: Theatre and History in Contemporary Ireland" May 2000 (see Cummings 7-8).

3 Carr says she has read Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* many times (Interview C23). *The Mai* was voted the Best New Play of the 1994 Irish Life Dublin Theatre Festival. Already acknowledged as one of the brightest new Irish playwrights (See Roche, *Contemporary Irish Drama*, 6 and see especially 286-88), her early plays were, however, clearly derivative of Samuel Beckett. With *The Mai* Carr found her own voice leaving behind what she described as "my Beckett phase" (Interview C23). For a clear discussion of contemporary research on mind and memory, see Rosenfield whose book has greatly influenced my thinking about memory.

4 Other well-known instances in contemporary Irish drama of an on-stage narrator who participates in the action are Michael in the successful Brian Friel play, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990, for further comparison see Roche, "Women" 160), and the weak Hugh Leonard play, *Stephen D* (1964), a dramatization of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* conflated with *Stephen Hero*. For a full discussion of the failings of *Stephen D* see Lanters, especially 31-43.

5 The 1995 production differed from the published playscript in that The Mai did not "turn and drift from the room" (72). Instead, she clearly looked through the window, then went outside to reappear directly behind the window. Thus, the audience's last glimpse of her was as seen through the window when she walked outside the house presumably down to Owl Lake to drown herself.

6 Robert, like Hickey, wanders, seeks out other women because of boredom, curiosity, or no reason at all except they are there and available to him. The key distinction between the women lies in Evelyn's pathos as opposed to The Mai's tragedy. Evelyn's naive, if unshakable faith in Hickey's willingness and ability to reform: "you couldn't shake her faith that it had to come true – tomorrow!" (238) contrasts with The Mai's finally understanding Robert's weak personality and her acknowledgment of his self-deception.

7 Chronologically, events in the play occur as follows: 1. The Mai and Robert fall in love, marry, have children, and after years of marriage Robert one day leaves. 2. She works in London to earn money to build her house (early in act two). 3. Five years later Robert returns (opening scene of act one). 4. The Mai "celebrates" her fortieth birthday (opening scene of act two). 5. The Mai talks with Millie (closing scene of act two). 6. Robert carries the dead Mai in his arms (closing scene of act one). 7. Millie and Robert drive to town to buy a blue bedjacket to wake The Mai in

– "no shroud for the Mai" (middle of act one). 8. Millie tells of her life after the death of her mother and of her attempt to understand events in her own life.

8 In *Portia Coughlan* (1996) Carr continues playing with time by radically rearranging the sequence of events.

9 There is, however, a great difference between Grandma Fraochlán's passion for a husband who returns her love, even performing a heroic feat to be with her in childbirth and Robert who does not return The Mai's ardor and who can offer only a lame excuse for not showing up when their son, Stephen was born.

10 Brendan Kennelly in his introduction to his translation of *Medea* reveals that he began his translation at the imperative suggestion of a woman who meeting him in the Peacock Theatre after the production of his translation of *Antigone* admonished him: "You understand women's rage. Do *Medea* next. Many people say the play is about jealousy. It's not, it's about rage" (6). Kennelly adds: "This is the rage I tried to present in *Medea* . . ." (7). His version was first performed on 8 October 1988 and revived in July 1989. Marina Carr's play clearly parallels Euripides' in Kennelly's translation at several points, as discussed in this essay.

Works Cited

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Cambridge." In *Praise of Darkness*. Trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni. New York: Dutton, 1974. 20-23.

Carr, Marina. "The Bandit Pen." Program notes for *Good Evening, Mr Collins* by Tom Mac Intyre. Peacock Theatre, Dublin, July 1996.

_____. *By the Bog of Cats*. Oldcastle: Gallery P, 1998.

_____. Interview with James F. Clarity. "A Playwright's Post-Beckett Period." *The New York Times*. 3 Nov. 1994: C23.

_____. *The Mai*. Oldcastle: Gallery P, 1995.

_____. *Portia Coughlan. The Dazzling Dark*. Ed. Frank McGuinness. London: Faber, 1996.

_____. *On Raftery's Hill*. Oldcastle: Gallery P, 2000.

Euripides, *Medea*. Trans. Brendan Kennelly. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1991.

Friel, Brian. *Dancing at Lughnasa*. London: Faber, 1990.

_____. *Translations*. London: Faber, 1981.

Hesson, E. C. and I. M. Hesson. "Eugène Ionesco: The Fantastic and Social Estrangement." *The Spectrum of the Fantastic*. Ed. Donald Palumbo. New York: Greenwood, 1988. 195-201.

Hume, Kathryn. *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*. New York: Methuen, 1984.

Lanters, José. *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988.

Malekin, Peter. "Knowing about Knowing: Paradigms of Knowledge in the Postmodern Fantastic." *State of the Fantastic: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Fantastic Literature and Film*. Ed. Nicholas Ruddick. New York: Greenwood, 1992. 41-48.

Manlove, C. N. *The Impulse of Fantasy Literature*. Kent, OH: Kent State U P, 1983.

Matthews, Caitlín and John. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom*. Shaftesbury, DO: Element, 1994.

Merriman, Vic. "Decolonisation Postponed: The Theatre of Tiger Trash." *Irish University Review* 29 (1999): 305-317.

O'Neill, Eugene. The Iceman Cometh. 1940. New York: Vintage, 1957.

Roche, Anthony. *Contemporary Irish Drama: From Beckett to McGuinness*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994.

_____. "Woman on the Threshold: J. M. Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen*, Teresa Deevy's *Katie Roche* and Marina Carr's *The Mai*." *Irish University Review*. 25.1 (1995):143-162.
Rosenfield, Isaac. *The Invention of Memory: A New View of the Brain*. New York: Basic, 1988.
Synge, John M. "Riders to the Sea." In *J.M. Synge: Plays*. Ed. Ann Saddlemyer. 1969. New York: Oxford U P, 1980. 1-14.
"Taboo of the madhouse." Review of *On Raftery's Hill*. Guardian 17 May 2000.
Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*. 1945. Harmondsworth, MID: Penguin, 1955.
Yeats, W. B. *Letters of W. B. Yeats*. Ed. Allan Wade. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Helen Waddell's The Spoiled Buddha: *Intercultural and Gynocentric Dimensions of an Irish Play*

Wolfgang Zach

Abstract: *This paper analyses the presence of intercultural elements in Helen Waddell's* The Spoiled Buddha *and discusses its importance for the Irish stage as it breaks with the stage conventions of her time. The analyses also reveals Waddell's antipatriarchal protest and the relationship between man and woman against the male dominated world of Buddhist Japan.*

Helen Waddell: "The most distinguished woman of her generation"

Helen Waddell (1889 – 1965) was one of the most celebrated scholars of her age – a woman who wrote and lectured her way up right to the top of the male-dominated world of learning between World War I and II. Her book *The Wandering Scholars* (1927) and her other works that followed were pioneering studies opening up new vistas into the world and the literature of the Middle Ages in continental Europe. They also won her international fame in the 1930s, so that she was the first woman to be made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature as well as of the Irish Academy of Letters, she also became a corresponding fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, and she received honorary degrees from the universities of Durham, Belfast, Columbia, and St. Andrews. And that was not all which her achievements amounted to, but from early on in her life Helen Waddell was also active as a translator, especially of Medieval poetry and prose (*Book of Medieval Latin, Beasts and Saints, The Desert Fathers*), and as a versatile writer of stories for children, of wartime propaganda, etc. As a writer, her breakthrough came with the publication of a novel, also in the 1930s. This is well described by M. Kelly Lynch who comments on her success: "After *Peter Abelard* (1933), her only novel, was published, Waddell was lionized – in Dublin as 'Ulster's darling,' and in London as 'the most distinguished woman of her generation'."[1]

The Spoiled Buddha: Its failure with the public and its importance for the Irish stage

I do not want to discuss here these achievements of Helen Waddell's, which are well documented, but I should like to concentrate on an early work of hers which is scarcely remembered today, her two-act play The *Spoiled Buddha* (1915/1919), which will be discussed in the context of her Japanese background and her position as a woman writer. First, however, a few facts about the first performance of the play in Ireland and its publication will be in order: *The Spoiled Buddha* was performed at the Grand Opera House in Belfast by the Ulster Literary Theatre in February 1915. Helen Waddell's brother Samuel, who had already made himself a name as a playwright and an actor under the pseudonym Rutherford Mayne, played the title-role, and, in the words of one contemporary critic, "brought great dignity to the part of the Buddha."[2] His acting together with the exotic Japanese design and costume made some impression on the audience but did not save the play. Its esoteric, philosophical and symbolic subject was clearly above the heads of an audience accustomed to homely peasant plays and political burlesques[3], and its lack of action (one of its few critics speaks of its 'inaction' and 'statuesque posing'[4]) as well as Gerald MacNamara playing Binzuru, Buddha's light-hearted disciple, "with a brogue" caused sarcastic comments.[5] The play failed and has never been revived, and many copies of the play, which was printed four years later,[6] were remaindered and were on sale for 'two-pence' in Irish bookshops for years and years.[7]

In contrast to the failure of her play with the Irish public, Helen Waddell regarded her play as important as she persisted in her attempts at having it printed for four years before Talbot Press accepted it for publication. It is my firm conviction that *The Spoiled Buddha* is actually of great significance for various reasons. Most importantly, it was the first play on a Japanese theme written by an Irish author and performed on an Irish stage also preceding W. B. Yeats's Noh-inspired plays.[8] Also, her play is important as an experiment in dramatic form again forshadowing Yeats's innovative dramatic technique. Of course, it. appears strangely out of place on an Irish stage in 1915 as it breaks with all its current conventions of setting (a Sacred Grove in India and a Japanese Temple), characters (the Buddha, his Disciples, Japanese worshippers), plot (stasis), and theme. We can also assume that Helen Waddell was aware of what she did as she was well informed about the Irish stage of her time, above all through her brother Samuel, one of the leaders of the Ulster Literary Theatre, and his successes within the established genre of the realistic peasant play, without any trace of his Japanese background which he shared with his sister. Therefore, her deliberate break with all the stage conventions of her time should not be interpreted as a flaw in the technique of an inexperienced playwright, but as indicative of Helen Waddell's great courage, independence of mind, and her willed nonconformity already at the earliest stage in her literary career.

The Spoiled Buddha is also significant for other reasons which, however, can only be discussed after accounting for the Japanese dimension of her play. In fact, her play cannot be understood without seeing it as her reaction to the Japanese environment in which she and her eight brothers and a sister grew up as the children of a Presbyterian missionary (who was also a scholar) towards the end of the 19th century. Therefore, we will now have to deal with Helen Waddell's encounter with Japan and Buddhism before we can discuss *The Spoiled Buddha* any further.

Helen Waddell's Japanese experience: The basis for our understanding of *The Spoiled Buddha*

Helen Jane Waddell was born in Tokyo on May 31th, 1889, the youngest child of the Rev. Hugh Waddell and his wife, Jane Martin, of Banbridge, County Down. Her mother died when she was two, and her father who had married his cousin Matha Waddell returned to Ulster with his family in 1900 and died a year later. Helen got her education at Victoria College and Queen's University, Belfast,' but her formative years under the influence of her father spent in Japan left a lasting imprint on her. In her autobiographical writings she often refers to her father as *Sensei* (Japanese master),[10] she describes him as "a sinologue and a saint, the Vicar of Wakefield turned Chinese Scholar", and she continues:

> Looking back, the creative memory to me is the murmur of my father's voice, the pacing up and down the verandah in the early light and the household still asleep; the Psalms in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek, the Lord's Prayer in Japanese.[11]

One can now also understand her later interest in the intercultural world of the Middle Ages. She also recounts that her father called her back to life when she was lying in a coma caused by typhoid fever – by talking to her in Japanese, "the language she had been accustomed to since birth,"[12] and so it does not come as a surprise when she writes: "The richest thing in my life has been Japan – outside books, I mean."[13]

Through her father and his enthusiastic preaching of the Christian doctrine to the Buddhists in Japanese she also got to know much about the Buddhist world. She and her brothers and sister were torn between criticism of Buddhism and their fascination with the world of Buddhist Temples, priests, and pilgrims, but especially with the most impressive bronze statue of the Buddha and the golden statue of Kannon (=Kwannon) the Merciful at Kamakura.[14] Two of the experiences from her childhood which she recounts in later years are of special importance, also to our understanding of her views put into *The Spoiled Buddha.* One description is that of the Daibutsu, the Buddha statue at Kamakura, as awe-inspiring and strongly suggestive of infinity, but, as she says, as

less impressive than a big toad which was her best friend when she was eight: "The massive countenance of the Buddha is the countenance of the man who has achieved indifference: the Toad had the unsought directness, the eternity of the symbol."[15] She also observed that many of the common people preferred praying to Kannon instead of the Buddha. Peasants and pilgrims taught the Waddell children that Kannon the Pitiful never refused a supplication made to her, and she also tells us the story how her brother Billy, longing to have a white rabbit, felt that it was of no use praying to the blue-green Daibutsu at Kamakura where they were staying, but went to the Kannon Temple at night with his sister:

> Under the black sweep of her great temple roof a half-burned incense stick sent up a faint spiral of smoke into the moon – steeped air. Billy knelt, clapping his hands together softly. 'Hito Koto Kwannon,' he began; ... and he went on fluently in Japanese.... The rapid utterance stopped. I opened my eyes and looked. Billy was staring at the shrine, his mouth still open, his eyes wide and blank. There was a moment of terrible silence. Then he turned to me. 'I've forgotten,' he choked. 'I've forgotten the Japanese for white rabbit.'... 'A WHITE RABBIT,' he finished in English, very authoritatively, as one speaks to a foreigner. 'A WHITE RABBIT.' There was not any sound within the shrine... There came no white rabbit. Possibly Kwannon, although a goddess, does not understand English.[16]

Here we can observe Helen's and her brother's displacement, torn between their father's Anglo-Irish Presbyterian world and the Buddhist Japanese world surrounding them, and so it may not be as surprising as it may appear at first sight that, in her later scholarly works, she did not deal with England, Ireland, or Japan, but opted for the intercultural but Catholic world of the Middle Ages.

What is also of importance to our understanding of Helen Waddell and *The Spoiled Buddha* is her early and intensive contact with Japanese life, her first-hand acquaintance with the hardship, poverty, and diseases (including epidemics of cholera and typhoid fever) of the poor, who her father particularly cared for.[17] Above all, however, she was struck and personally shocked by getting to know about the low position of women in Japan at the time. It was her Japanese nanny who would make that quite clear to her when Helen asked her questions about her role as a girl:

> Was she going to climb Fujisan with the pilgrims? A burst of laughter. Fujisan was not for women to climb: it was far too holy for that. Girls? What were girls? A girl would marry a husband and worship his ancestors, but if she didn't produce a son, then her husband should divorce her and marry a wife who would give him ten sons. Helen took it all in. Wasn't she the equal of Billy and George? It was a challenge that was to recur in an acute form: why was woman not man's equal?[18]

As we will see, this final question, and especially Buddhist misogyny, is also central to her play *The Spoiled Buddha*, and we may well regard this play as her attack on it, just as we may partly explain her later career not only as a result of the example set to her by her father but also as a consequence of her drive to counteract the discrimination of women as experienced in Japan early in her life.

The Spoiled Buddha: Its intercultural and gynocentric dimensions

In the *Prologue* to her play, spoken by a Buddhist priest, Helen Waddell explains the subject of the play, with the relationship of man and woman at its centre, and its scene of action to the audience:

> The play is about Buddha, in the days before he became a god: and about Binzuru, who was his favourite disciple, and who might have become even as the Buddha, only that he saw a woman passing by, and desired her beauty, and so fell from grace, The scene of the first act is the Sacred Grove of Buddha, and the time is five hundred years before Christ was born. The scene of the second act is the outer court of the Temple at Asakusa, which is a great temple in Japan, and the time is the present day ...[19]

In Act I we are shown the confrontation between the Buddha and Binzuru, the Buddha's favourite disciple, caused by Binzuru's confession of having been distracted from the contemplation of the infinite by the beauty of a woman. The Buddha pleads for the infinite as the annihilation of all desire to attain Nirvana, while Binzuru regards desire as the essence of life and interprets the beauty of a woman as a glorification of the infinite.[20] The Buddha rejects Binzuru's position and, when some women pass by, "tinkling the samisen provocatively", he condemns womankind in no uncertain terms:

> *Buddha.* The Disturber of Integrity is she, the Entangler of the Upright, the Snare of the World.[21]

Binzuru's position is most strictly rejected by Binzuru's rival, Daruma, who has never felt desire and, with the other of Buddha's disciples, wants Binzuru to be cast out. The Buddha, however, who understands the attraction which a woman holds for a man from personal experience (his involvement with the goddess Kannon[22] is hinted at), does not do so, he only excludes him from the inner circle of his disciples but he gives him power "to cure all fleshly ills"[23] and assures Binzuru:

> *Buddha.* They will rub thee away, Binzuru, rid thee of unruly flesh. And so, in the end of ages, though shalt achieve Nirwana. Till then – .[24]

In Act II the time is transposed to the present and the scene is transferred to the grand Temple at Asakusa where we see the bronze figure of Binzuru in the outer court, sitting cross-legged, his hands folded on his stomach, and partly 'rubbed away', while the Buddha, surrounded by his Rakkan, sits in the Inner Temple, the Holy of Holies. Japanese rickshawmen complain of their hard work in carrying heavy Europeans up the hill, sellers of incense complain of the bad times when the people buy hot beans instead of incense sticks, and, interestingly, some girls go to offer their prayers, as some trader remarks, to "Kwannon", not to the Buddha, as "The Buddha maketh no account of women."[25] The Japanese atmosphere of the play is intense, the impression is created that the people are only interested in getting their immediate wordly problems solved, and, as we have also seen, the patriarchal bias of Buddhist doctrine is again pinpointed.

When the temple gong is struck and the gates are closed, the statues of Binzuru and the Buddha come to life, and the Buddha joins Binzuru in the outer courtyard. Binzuru complains of the people having nearly rubbed his back hollow and the Buddha confesses that he is tired of sitting, that he found this dull in the last 2400 years, and that he is glad having managed to put the rigid Daruma to sleep and having escaped for this chat. The Buddha's coming to join Binzuru and the light-hearted tone of their conversation including laughter about a profane joke strengthen Binzuru's wordly, human and humane position further. This is also the final impression which we get when the Buddha and Binzuru return to the subject of women and their beauty at the end of the play.

> *Buddha. (haltingly)* Binzuru – was she very beautiful?
> *(Binzuru eyes him).*
> *Binzuru.* Beautiful? As Kwannon.
> *They gaze at each other and there is a look of final comprehension, before the Buddha returns inside and Binzuru takes up his old attitude.*[26]

Our discussion of the play above leads to the following conclusion: *The Spoiled Buddha* reflects Helen Waddell's childhood experience of Japan and her reaction towards it: her fascination with Japanese culture (especially by Buddhist Temple life and by the impressive statues of Kannon and the Buddha at Asakusa and Kamakura), on the one hand, and her distanced position from it (above all caused by her father's anti-Buddhist preaching and the patriarchal and anti-female bias of Japanese thinking), on the other. She takes a critical stance towards the Buddhist dogma of the annihilation of self and desire as embodied in Daruma's strict position, seems to doubt the possibility and maybe even the desirability of attaining Nirwana, and she certainly sides with life (as she also does with preferring her toad to the Daibutsu), and with the sufferings of the poor and the ill people who look for comfort by rubbing Binzuru's back or by praying to Kannon the Merciful.

Her central concern, however, is with the relationship between man and woman, and she attacks the mysogynous side of Buddhist doctrine and Japanese thinking. Made aware of the discrimination against women in Japan during her childhood, she attacks the patriarchal tradition there also making it clear that the men are responsible for placing women in an inferior position and for robbing them of an identity of their own. Consequently, women play only very minor parts in her play and do not speak a single word. In Act I some women just pass by and are only present in the reactions of men, Buddha and Binzuru, while in Act II girls are bypassing Buddha choosing to pray to Kannon instead and, by doing so, at least rejecting male domination. It is interesting that the women who appear in Act I and Act II may be seen as 'harlots', just as Kannon is called 'the Harlot' by the zealot Daruma.[27] Their role, however, has developed from passive acceptance of male definition and stereotyped subjugation (in Act I) to active rejection of the male value system embodied in the Buddhist doctrine (in Act II) which is not fully supported even by the Buddha herself, who thus becomes *The 'Spoiled' Buddha* of Helen Waddell's play.

In her play, Helen Waddell formulated her antipatriarchal protest against the male-dominated world of Buddhist Japan as she experienced it in her youth, or, on a more abstract level, we can interpret her play as an attempt to undermine any patriarchal value- system, which is of course not restricted to the Japanese tradition. Male fear of, and desire for, women and the resulting stereotyping of women as the embodiment of lust and evil ('harlots') as we find it in the Japanese world of the play is also characteristic of the Western tradition. Also, the opposition in the play between an undesirable, shady logocentric world of ideas and abstractions, dogma and inhumanity, embodied by the Buddha and Daruma, and a desirable concrete anthropocentric world of human relationships, beauty, love and pity, as embodied by Kannon and Binzuru, transcends the Japanese cultural context, This dimension of the play places *The Spoiled Buddha* in the great tradition of works by women writers who attempted to do away with patriarchal ideas and undermine the male definition of the dominant male the *conditio humana* from a woman's position in the early 20th century. *The Spoiled Buddha* makes us see Helen Waddell as one of the pioneers in this field, too.

Notes

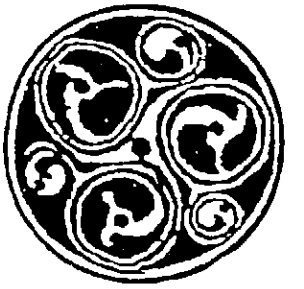
1 M, Kelly Lynch, "Waddell, Helen (Jane)", *The Macmillan Dictionary of Irish Literature*, ed. Robert Hogan et al., London: Macmillan 1979, 671 673. Cf. also G. P. Walsh, "Waddell, Helen Jane", *The Dictionary of National Biography. 1961 - 1970*, ed. E. T. Williams and C. S. Nichols, London: OUP 1981, 1041-1042.

2 Quoted by Sam Hanna Bell, *The Theatre in Ulster*, Dublin and London: Gill and Macmillan 1972, 44.

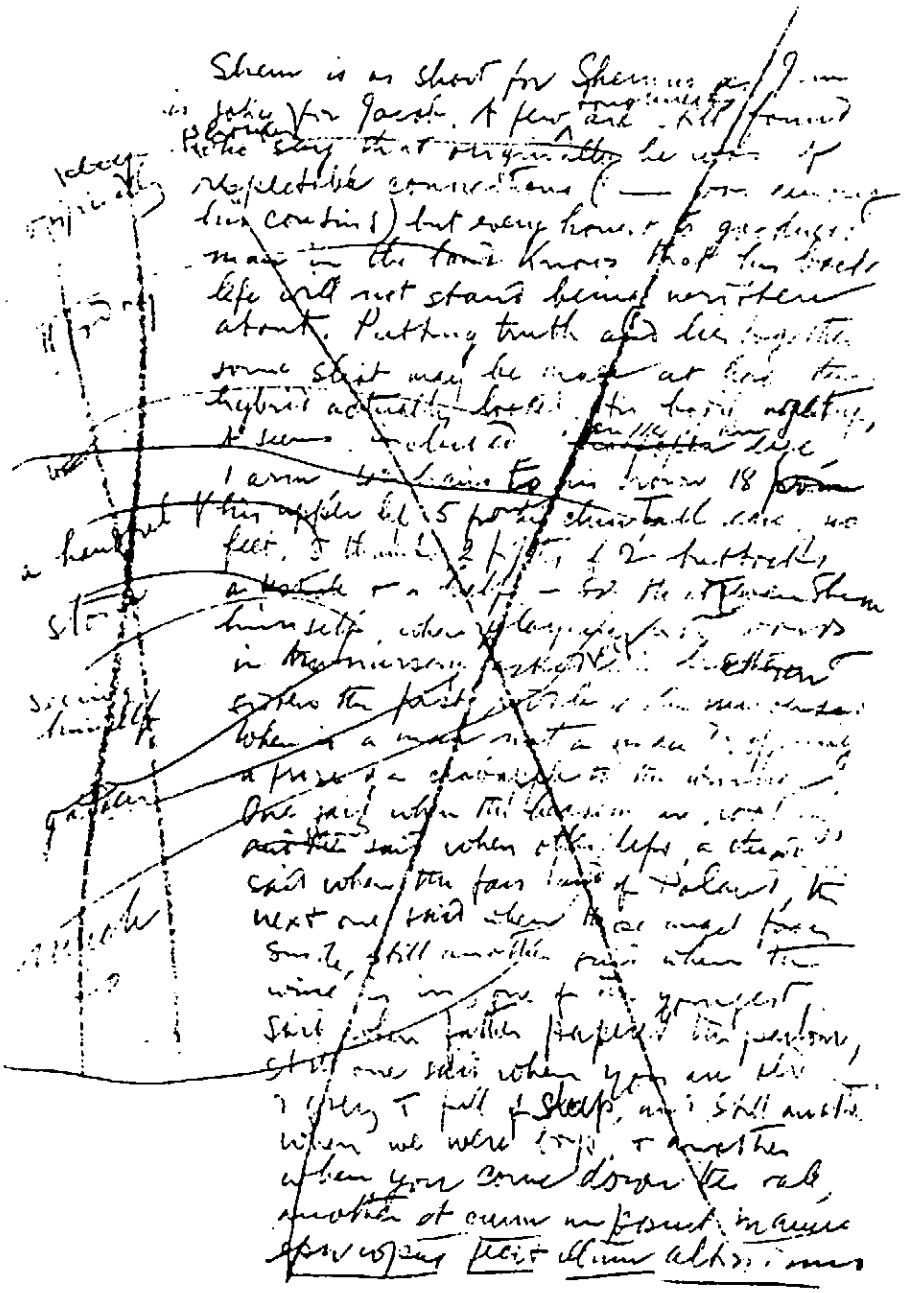
3 Cf. ibid., 44-45.

4 Quoted by Margaret McHenry, *The Ulster Theatre in Ireland,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1931, 37.
5 Cf. Bell, 45.
6 Helen Waddell, *The Spoiled Buddha.* A Play in 2 Acts, Dublin: Talbot, London: T. Fisher Unwin 1919.
7 Cf. Bell, 45.
8 W. B. Yeats dictated *At the Hawk's Well* to Ezra Pound at Stone Cottage in January 1916. Cf. Frank Touhy, *Yeats,* London: Macmillan 1976, 156.
9 Cf. Walsh, 1041.
10 Cf. D. Felicitas Corrigan, *Helen Waddell. A Biography,* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd 1986.
11 Ibid., 24-25.
12 Ibid., 19.
13 Ibid., 26
14 Ibid., 31.
15 Helen Waddell to Dr. Taylor, quoted ibid., 30.
16 Quoted ibid., 16.
17 Helen's mother also died of typhoid fever and Helen also suffered from it but survived. Cf. Corrigan, 19.
18 Ibid., 28.
19 Waddell, *The Spoiled Buddha,* 5.
20 Cf. ibid., 19-20.
21 Ibid., 9.
22 Ibid. The nature of K(w)annon and Helen Waddell's possible misinterpretation of this deity is discussed by David Burleigh in his "The Buddha and the Princess Splendour; Helen Waddell's Childhood in Japan", *Ferris Studies 27* (March 1992), 1-20; here 11-12, 18 notes 43-47.
23 Waddell, *The Spoiled Buddha,* 21.
24 Ibid., 23-24.
25 Ibid., 30.
26 Ibid., 40.
27 Burleigh ("The Buddha and the Princess Splendour") points out that the Kannon Temple at Asakusa was "adjacent to the licensed brothel quarter of Yoshiwara.... It is quite possible, therefore, that the women who passed through the Temple had come from the Yoshiwara, and were actually prostitutes. The *samisen* 'tinkl(ing) ...: provocatively' in Act One suggests this to some extent" (11).

Fiction



In the wake of the Wake



Sanscreed Latinized: The Wake *in Brazil and Hispanic America*

Haroldo de Campos

Abstract: Finnegans Wake *became known in Brazil due to the Movement of Concrete Poetry. Various technical dimensions used by these poets are mentioned here in comparison with Joyce's technique to show how the Irish writer has influenced Brazilian and Spanish-speaking writers.*

The diffusion of *Finnegans Wake* in Brazil was largely due to the movement of Concrete Poetry, launched in the early fifties by Décio Pignatari and the brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos. The latter, by a favorable coincidence—"by a commodius vicus of recirculation"—were great-grandsons of an Irishman, Theobald Butler Browne; he had emigrated from Galway to Salvador, which is the capital of baroque Bahia, northeast of Brazil, and is also called the "Land of All Saints."

Their first articles and manifestoes concerned Concrete Poetry. (See "Poetry: Structure" and "Poetry: Ideogram," 1955, by A. de Campos; "Poetry and Paradise Lost" and "The Open Work of Art," 1955, by H. de Campos; "Concrete Art: Object and Objective," 1956, by D. Pignatari.) Joyce's work—*Finnegans Wake* in particular—was a fundamental point of departure and an obligatory term of reference (along with Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* and Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*, as well as the "gestural" poetry of e. e. cummings) for the developing project of a

new poetry, corresponding to a new, "semiotic" textual conception and akin to new trends in music (serial and postserial) and in painting (post-Mondrian).

The "verbivocovisual" elements of Joyce's prose—the "montage word," regarded as a composite mosaic unit or a basic textural node ("silvamoonlake," for instance)—were emphasized from the very beginning of the Concrete Poetry movement:

> *The Joycean "micro-macrocosm," which reaches its pinnacle in* Finnegans Wake, *is another excellent example of the problem we are discussing. The implacable novel-poem of Joyce succeeds too, in its own manner, as a feat of structure. Here counterpoint is* moto perpetuo. *The ideogram is obtained by superimposing words, true lexical montages. Its general infrastructure is "a circular design, of which every part is beginning, middle, and end" (cf. J. Campbell and H. M. Robinson). The scheme of the vicious circle is the link which joins Joyce and Mallarmé by means of a "commodius vicus of recirculation." Mallarmé's cycle in* Un coup de dés *is very similar to that of Vico reinvented by Joyce for* Finnegans Wake. *The common denominator, according to Robert Greer Cohn, for whom Mallarmé's poem has more in common with* Finnegans Wake *than with any other literary creation, would be the formula: unity, dualism, multiplicity, and again, unity. The circular construction common to both works is evident at first glance: The first sentence of* Finnegans Wake *continues the last, and the last words of Mallarmé's poem are also the first—"Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés."*[1]

> *Joyce is led to the microscopic world by the macroscopic, emphasizing detail—*panorama/panaroma*—to the point where a whole metaphoric cosmos is contained in a single word. This is why it can be said of* Finnegans Wake *that it retains the properties of a circle, of the equidistance of all points on it from the center. The work is porous to the reader, accessible from any of the places one chooses to approach it.*[2]

Décio Pignatari, in his 1956 manifesto "New Poetry: Concrete," reshaped for programmatic purposes a Joycean leitmotif ("'Tis optophone which ontophanes," *Finnegans Wake*, p. 13), with the simultaneous invocation of Dante (". . . *esto visibile parlare, / novello a noi perchè qui non si trova,*" *Purgatorio* X, 95):

> *O olhouvido ouvê*
> (The eareye seeshears).

It is important to accent here a most significant fact. While several American and European scholars and critics were still insisting on considering Joyce's work (in particular *Finnegans Wake*) as a kind of dead end or blind alley, the Brazilian foun-

ders of the Concrete Poetry movement (the members of the 1952 Noigandres group) were using the *Wake* to stimulate and focus their poetical experiments—looking at it not as an apocalyptical finale of Western literature, but rather as an open ground, full of manifold possibilities, seminal.

Quite apart from the theory, they made use of some Joycean devices in their poetry. The montage word is an operative function, for instance, both in D. Pignatari's 1955 "Stèles pour vivre" and in H. de Campos' poems, printed in white ink on black paper, "O â mago do ô mega" ("The core of the omega"; *mago* in Portuguese means also "magician"), subtitled "a phenomenology of composition" (1955–1956). The same is true of A. de Campos' 1953 "poeta menos" ("poetminus") series, which draws its principles of composition from Anton Webern's "*Klangfarbenmelodie*" ("tonecolormelody").

Another dimension of the concrete poets' concern with *Finnegans Wake* is illustrated by the fragments of *Finnegans Wake* translated by A. de Campos and H. de Campos (together or separately) which began to appear in the Brazilian press in 1957.[3] In 1962, both translators brought out the result of their work in book form, under the title *Panaroma do Finnegans Wake*. The 86-page volume consisted of the creative transposition ("transcreation") of eleven fragments (bilingual presentation), accompanied by interpretative comments. In its appendix, besides bibliography and a bio-bibliographic Joycean synthesis, was a companion translation, by A. de Campos, of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" (in Portuguese, "Jaguadarte")—the *cellula-mater* of Joyce's scriptural art. The book also contained a Portuguese version of "Introduction to a Strange Subject" (from *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*) and a critical essay by A. de Campos, "O Lance de Dados do *Finnegans Wake*" ("The Throwing of Dice in *Finnegans Wake*"), dealing with David Hayman's 1956 *Joyce et Mallarmé*.[4] At the time, the Brazilian *Panaroma* and the French selections from *Finnegans Wake* edited by André du Bouchet (1962) were the largest anthologies of translated fragments from Joyce's most challenging work.

It is worth mentioning that *Finnegans Wake* was rebaptized by its Brazilian translators as FINNICIUS REVEM: FIM + INICIO =

END + BEGINNING, onomastically resounding with an echo of both FINN and VINICIUS. The latter is a latinized Portuguese proper name which carries a hint of *vinho / vinum* = wine; RE (AGAIN) + VEM (COMES).

In 1962, Pignatari wrote one of his most ambitious "*stèles*": No. 3, "Cuban stele." It is a "mural poem," a condensed epic pivoting about three typographically marked axes (phrases intermittently in Latin, English, and Portuguese), which reproduces bits of the fable "The Wolf and the Lamb" ("*Lupus et Agnus*"). The three "major syntagms" that semantically and visually govern the entire composition are the following:

LUP	US	STAB	AT SUPER
LUC	ROS	NA BA	SE DE AÇÚCAR
LAMB	USA	ÁGUA DE OUT	UBRO

In the first line: LUPUS STABAT SUPERIOR / US (U.S.) STAB AT SUPER; in the second line, in Portuguese: LUCROS NA BASE DE AÇÚCAR (profits derived from sugar, plus a hint of "nababo" / "nabob," a wealthy luxury-loving person); in the third line: LAMB (corresponding to LUPUS in the first line): USA OUT (in Portuguese: USA/LAMBUSA ÁGUA DE OUTUBRO/[Lamb] uses water of October to splash [lupus].) Differentiated by typographical characters, other subjacent levels of discourse spread over the page—from indistinct chattering rumor (gulping down speech, utilitarian, enervating admonitions from father to refractory son) to a clarifying final statement in which the admonished young man rebuffs the "paternalistic" ("colonialist") peroration and proclaims his struggle for new values. The poem unfolds in a double mood: subjective-existential and politico-satirical. This discussion is, of course, schematic and simplified with regard to the actual complexity and richness of the original text (published as a folder, a *dépliant*, in *Noigandres Anthology*, 1962).

Augusto de Campos, since his 1953 "poetminus" series, has written several works that are of interest from a Joycean perspective. A good example is the trilingual poem *cidade-city-cité* (1963)*—one enormous polysyllabic word, consisting of enchained vocables ending with the suffix *-cidade* and conveying a

* See page 61

somewhat terrifying diorama of a modern "megalopolis" like São Paulo (whose "omnivoracity" emerges in the process). The "one-hundred-letter words," or "thunderclaps," of *Finnegans Wake* are called up by association. Another more explicit instance is the book-poem COLIDOUESCAPO (1971). Its title, a direct homage to Joyce, derives from the phrase, "Answer: À collideorscape!" (*FW*, 143), taken as an epigraph. By combining its unbound pages (each of which contains a different segment of a word), the reader forms new, frequently "portmanteau," words. On the other hand, the reader's expectation is frustrated by words which could appear but in fact never do—words that "collide" or "escape" in a Joycean card game. To give a single combinatory example: EXISPERO (EXIS+PERO), hinting at EXISTO, ESPERO, EXASPERO, or, in English, I EXISPAIR (EXIS+PAIR), suggesting EXIST, DESPAIR, EXASPERATE, EXPIRE.

In 1963 I began to write my BOOK OF ESSAYS / GALAXIES. Its first fragments were published in numbers 4 (1964) and 5 (1966–1967) of the magazine *Invention* (*Invenção*, S. Paulo). The book was conceived as an experiment in doing away with the limits between poetry and prose, and projecting the larger and more suitable concept of *text* (as a *corpus* of words with their textual potentials). A short introduction, "*Dois dedos de prosa sobre uma nova prosa*" ("Little chat on a new way of writing")—brought out in *Invenção* 4 under a Mallarmé epigraph, "*Tout au monde existe pour aboutir à un livre*"—outlines the project of the book. The *text* is defined as a "flux of signs," without punctuation marks or capital letters, flowing uninterruptedly across the page, as a *galactic* expansion. Each page, by itself, makes a "concretion," or autonomously coalescing body, interchangeable with any other page for reading purposes. There are "semantic vertebrae" which unify the whole, a kind of leitmotiv such as the idea of a book being like travel and travel like a book ("travel" here is taken in all its possible meanings, from a transoceanic geographic voyage to daily peripateia, to a psychedelic "trip"). It constitutes a search for "language in its materiality," without "beginningmiddleend." "Exterior monologue" was the phrase I used to express this "materiality" "without psychology," that is, language that auto-

enunciates itself. The expression is first found in my 1964 introductory essay, and was employed in deliberate contradistinction to Molly Bloom's "interior monologue," to emphasize an intensified concentration on language by itself, as a kind of locutorial outer space. In one of the first fragments, the book, as its own interlocutor, auto-states itself as "*uma álealenda*" ("an alea-legend"), "*um milicoro em milicórdio*" ("a millichorus in millichord"), "*um caleidocamaleoscópio*" ("kaleidochameleonscope").[5] At the time, the more innovative books in French were Michel Butor's *Mobile* (1962) and Maurice Roche's *Compact* (1966), the latter more audacious in its handling of language.[6] Philippe Sollers' *Nombres* (1968) did not offer any noticeable innovation in terms of lexical texture. His first Joycean experiment was *Lois* (1972), parts of which began to appear in *Tel Quel* number 46 (Summer 1971).

In the larger context of Brazilian literature, one cannot help mentioning the work of Guimarães Rosa, especially *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956). (Its English translation, *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, 1963, didn't do justice to the original, missing almost completely its linguistic inventiveness.) Though some Brazilian critics refuse to admit this, the influence of various Joycean processes (from *Ulysses*, in particular) on Rosa's major novel is manifest. And his later work, as for instance the story "Meu Tio o Iauaretè (My Uncle the Jaguar," 1961) or the miscellaneous book *Tutaméia* (*Trifles*, 1967), derives some of its effects from *Finnegans Wake*, or at least from the 1962 Brazilian *Finnegans Wake* anthology.[7]

Recently Paulo Leminski, a young writer from Paraná (southern Brazil), brought out his first novel, *Catatau* (*Chitchat*, 1975). Influenced by Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and its Brazilian translations, by Rosa's *Grande Sertão*, and by H. de Campos' *Book of Galaxies*, it is a wide-ranging monologue using Descartes (Renatus Cartesius) as soliloquist. The author pretends that Descartes was a member of the Dutch expedition commanded by the Prince of Nassau, who in 1636, with his army, invaded the northeastern coast of Brazil and settled down in Recife. While inspecting Brazilian flora and fauna through a glass, Cartesius smokes a miraculous herb (marijuana) and finds himself dissolving into a tropical delirium, conveyed through Joycean rhetoric.

Even in Brazilian popular music (in its sophisticated urban forms derived from the bossa nova), one finds the stimulating presence of *Finnegans Wake*. Having read the translations in *Panaroma*, the singer-composer Caetano Veloso (who lived for some time in London) introduced typical Joycean verbal games into his songs. One of these, for instance, is ACRILÍRICO, which suggests ACRE, LÍRICO, ACRÍLICO (ACRILYRIC = ACRID, LYRIC, ACRYLIC). It plays with the toponymic SANTO AMARO DA PURIFICAÇÃO, transformed into SANTO AMARGO DA PUTRIFICAÇÃO, by changing *Amaro* (the name of a patron saint) into *amargo* ("bitter"), and *Purificação* ("Purification") into *Pütrificação* ("Putrefaction").

The impact of *Finnegans Wake* on Spanish-speaking countries has been more sporadic than systematic. We might mention, however, a forerunner, the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro. His long poem *Altazor* (begun in 1919, finished in 1931) includes in Canto IV a fragment of great imaginative verbal power which anticipates Joycean influence. This fragment, in the author's own French version, was first published in 1930 in *transition*, in which Joyce's "Work in Progress" had been appearing since 1927. Consider, for instance, Huidobro's crisscross word transmutations, like *l'horitagne de la montazon* instead of *l'horizon de la montagne*, or *mandodelle* (*mandoline* + *hirondelle*), *lunaile* (*lune* + *aile*); or in Spanish, *Al horitaña de la montazonte, violondrina, lunala.*[8]

Julio Cortázar, the Argentine writer, continues this tendency in *Rayuela* (1963; translated as *Hopscotch*, 1966), where some passages are written in "gliglic," an invented amorous language. Of course, these are perfectly limited idiomatic "zones," conceived as lyrical moments, emerging autonomously from the book's always imaginative, metaphorical and / or ironical, but otherwise linguistically "normal," fluent prose. More radical from this viewpoint is *Los Tres Tristes Tigres* (1965; translated as *Three Trapped Tigers*, 1972), by the Cuban exile Cabrera Infante. Openly influenced by Joyce's *Ulysses* and by Joyce's forerunners, Laurence Sterne and Lewis Carroll, Cabrera is a master of *calembour* ("punning") and full of verbal wit. As Carlos Fuentes once put it, Cabrera writes in his own "Spunish language." But the clearest example of this sort of transformative language in Castilian is not by a Latin American, but

rather by a very gifted young Spanish writer living in Madrid and London, Julián Ríos. Excerpts from his unfinished novel *Larva* were published in number 25 of Octavio Paz' magazine *Plural* (October 1973).

Given the above, one may question whether the labyrinth-minded, paradox-loving old master Jorge Luís Borges was not being ironical, when, in an interview for the Italian magazine *Il Verri* (number 18, 1965), he called *Finnegans Wake* "a book entirely made up of compound-words." "In Spanish," he said, "this is not possible. It is possible in the German languages, maybe in Greek, a language I don't know. The principal virtue of Spanish, it seems to me, is a certain direct character. . . . Spanish does not lend itself to excessively complex verbal games. At least, in my opinion." But he quickly pointed to an exception in Quevedo's "efforts to introduce Latin effects into Spanish" (" . . . a most arduous task . . . Quevedo was a genius, a great poet"), strategically omitting any mention of the Daedalian "prince of darkness" of Spanish letters, Don Luís de Góngora y Argote.[5]

Notes

1. From A. de Campos, "Poetry : Ideogram." The articles and manifestoes of D. Pignatari and A. and H. de Campos were collected in 1965 as *Teoria da Poesia Concreta/Textos Criticos e Manifestos, 1950–1960* (second ed. 1974; Editora Duas Cidades, São Paulo, Brazil). There is an English translation of *Teoria* by Jon Tolman, still unpublished in book form. The present quotation is from *Studies in the Twentieth Century* (ed. Stephen Goode), no. 7 (Spring 1971).

2. From H. de Campos, "The Open Work of Art." Jon Tolman's translation (unpublished).

3. "Panaroma in Portuguese: Joyce Translated," by H. de Campos, with the version of two exhibits. *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 15 September 1957; "James Joyce in Finneganscope," double page organized by A. de Campos, with an introductory text and six translated fragments. *Jornal do Brasil*, 22 December 1957.

4. Hayman's book, as well as R. Greer Cohn's 1951 *L'Oeuvre de Mallarmé—Un coup de dés*, were invaluable as sources of inspiration for the Noigandres group, both critics being in accord in emphasizing the heuristic, prospective values in Joyce's and Mallarmé's last works.

5. In 1966, fragments of *Galaxies*, translated into German and preceded by my introduction, "Zwei Finger Prosa über eine Prosa," were published as no. 25 of the ROT series, directed by Max Bense and Elisabeth Walther (*Versuchsbuch Galaxien*, Stuttgart). In 1970, through Maurice Roche, some French translations of *Galaxies* were included in the September issue of the Parisian magazine *Change* ("La poétique, la mémoire"), with "Deux doigts de prose sur une nouvelle prose" as introduction.

6. Cf. A. de Campos, "A Prosa é Mobile," *Suplemento Literário de O Estado de São Paulo*, 23 and 30 March 1963 (on Butor's *Mobile*); H. de Campos, "A pele da escritura," *loc. cit.*, 11 October and 1 November 1969 ("The skin of writing," on M. Roche's *Compact*, with a translation of its initial excerpt).

7. Guimarães Rosa was aware of the *Panaroma* translations, and his correspondence with his Italian translator, Edoardo Bizzarri (*J. Guimarães Rosa—Correspondencia com o tradutor italiano*, 1972, São Paulo), reveals his esteem for the critical writings of the concrete poets dedicated to his work. (In A. de Campos, "Um Lance de DÊS do *Grande Sertão*," 1959, and in H. de Campos, "A Linguagem do Iauaretê," 1962, there are several references to Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*; see also Pedro Xisto, A. and H. de Campos, *Guimarães Rosa em Três Dimensões*, 1970, São Paulo.)

8. Cf. A. de Campos, "Vicente Huidobro: Fragmentos de *Altazor*," *Suplemento do Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 3 March 1957.

9. Borges is an admirer of Joyce. In his 1925 *Inquisiciones* there is an essay on *Ulysses*, and he has dedicated two poems to Joyce ("James Joyce" and "Invocación a Joyce"), praising Joyce's courage ("Qué importa nuestra cobardía si hay en la tierra / un solo hombre valiente") and "obstinado rigor." Borges' essay on Flaubert ("Flaubert y su destino ejemplar," *Discusión*, 1957) ends with a tribute to Joyce, "the intricate and almost infinite Irishman who wove *Ulysses*."

Augusto de Campos: Poem

atrocaducapacaustiduplielastifeliferofugahistoriloqualubrimendimultipliorganiperiodiplastipubliraparecirprorustisagasimplitenaveloveravivaunivoracidade
city
cité

Thomas Crofton Croker's Fairy Legends: A Revaluation

Heinz Kosok

Abstract: *the aim of this paper is to revaluate the achievements of Thomas Crofton Croker as a collector of native legends and traditions of the South West of Ireland and as one of the precursors of twentieth-century short fiction in Ireland. The publication of* Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland *in 1825 inspires the Grimms' to develop Comparative Folklore Studies. One of Croker's stories, "The Soul Cages" is analysed here to show the way he strategically shaped his narratives improving the traditional oral storytelling technique.*

The year 1825 saw the publication of a small and unpretentious volume called *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland.* It contained twenty-seven folktales and accounts of country beliefs grouped into five sections, "The Shefro", "The Cluricaune", "The Banshee", "The Phooka" and "Thierna na Oge", most of them situated in specific localities, supplemented with extensive explanatory notes which sometimes seemed to be a direct continuation of the narrative. Published anonymously by John Murray of London, the book appeared to lay little claim to literary fame or notoriety. Nevertheless, over the next hundred years (and beyond) it exerted considerable influence, both in Ireland and abroad. The present paper will discuss some aspects of this influence.

The author, Thomas Crofton Croker, was born in Cork in 1798. If one follows the biographical data in the *Dictionary of National Biography*[1], based on information that Croker himself had supplied, he had begun at the early age of fourteen to collect native legends and traditions in Southwest Ireland. He was therefore among the first of those numerous collectors of Irish folklore who, in the first half of the nineteenth century, began to tap the oral traditions in the Gaelic language with the purpose of making them available in English, both to the general British reading public and to those among their own fellow countrymen who by this time had become Anglicised and had lost contact with the native material transmitted in Gaelic. As a pioneer in the field, Croker needed to establish certain procedures both in collecting and in presenting his material, and it is hardly surprising that his practice caused some resentment, equally based on disapproval of his methods and on personal envy, among his successors. His reputation has suffered from such criticism to the present day.

Croker's first translation from the Irish appeared as early as 1815 in the *Morning Post.* In 1818 a collection of orally transmitted poems which he had gathered led to his acquaintance with Thomas Moore whose first two volumes of *Irish Melodies* had

appeared in 1808 and who by this time was considered by many as the outstanding authority on Irish poetry. In the same year, arranged by a friend of the family, Croker obtained a position in the British Admiralty which he held until 1850. It was, of course, the norm for Irish intellectuals of the time to aim for a position in London, and it would be quite unhistorical to blame them for such an attitude. It enabled them to come into close communication with the editors of periodicals, with publishers, theatre managers and academic societies and provided them with numerous useful contacts at the centre of the British Empire. However, collecting Irish folklore from a London base must have taken on an aura of the exotic and the adventurous, because Croker henceforth had to plan regular expeditions to Ireland.

In addition to his *Fairy Legends*, Croker published a number of books, including his *Researches in the South of Ireland: Illustrative of the Scenery, Architectural Remains and the Manners and Superstitions of the Peasantry with an Appendix containing a Private Narrative of the Rebellion of 1798* (1824). This impressive, if somewhat heterogeneous quarto volume, beautifully embellished with numerous etchings (some of them based on Croker's own sketches) can be seen as the theoretical foundation, what there is of it, of Croker's position as a folklorist, because it contains, apart from travel accounts, anecdotes and a variety of socio-cultural information, a chapter on "History and National Character" where the author makes a serious attempt to define, under the premises of European Romanticism, the national identity of Ireland, thus aiming at a deeper understanding in England for the specific position of Ireland. The same purpose still underlies the extensive notes in his anthology *The Popular Songs of Ireland* (1839). In his later years Croker published, in addition to some amusing narratives and travel accounts and numerous articles in periodicals, a number of textual editions for the Camden Society and the Percy Society; the *DNB* account lists about a dozen such editions.

The *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, however, remained by far Croker's most popular work.The first edition of 1825 was quickly succeeded by a second, newly illustrated issue (1826). The subsequent textual history is summarized quite unsatisfactorily in the *DNB* article: "A second series, under Croker's name, appeared in 1827, and a third edition of the whole, from which Croker excluded all his friends' work, was issued in 1834; reprints are dated 1859, 1862, and 1882" (p. 133). The *British Library Catalogue* (which cannot be considered as complete) lists no less than sixteen editions in English. It emerges that the second edition of 1826 was supplemented in 1828 by two further volumes, Part III containing legends from Wales. A new edition which collected most of the material from these three volumes, appeared in 1838 (irritatingly called "Second Edition") and another volume with forty stories in ten sections, which however lacks some of the texts from the 1825 edition, in 1840.

After Croker's death in 1854, a further edition was published that incorporated a biographical sketch by Croker's son; 1862 saw another issue, edited by T. Wright and designated "A new and complete edition" which again contained the memoir by T.F.D. Croker. Further editions appeared in 1870, 1882 and 1902. Around 1900 a volume called

Legends and Tales of Ireland printed Croker's *Fairy Legends* together with Samuel Lover's *Legends and Stories of Ireland.* As early as 1834 the first *selection* from the *Fairy Legends* had been printed, *adaptations* are listed for 1924 and 1929. At present, a reprint of the first (1825) edition, introduced by Francesca Diano and published by the Collins Press of Wilton, Cork, in 1998 is still in print.

This confusing, and probably incomplete, array of publishing data is further complicated by the fact that the volumes published under the same title are not simple reprints and do not by any means contain exactly the same material. Croker, and after his death his various editors, regularly reshuffled the contents, omitting some texts and adding others; at the moment it can only be conjectured that the complete *corpus* of the *Fairy Legends* encompasses nearly one hundred texts, as compared to the 27 contained in the first edition. A comprehensive survey of all the editions, including a collation of the individual items published under the same title, is a *desideratum* in Irish literary history. Even the present list of publication data, however, conveys evidence that the *Fairy Legends*, in one form or another, have been kept before the reading public for nearly two centuries.

Croker's book provoked various controversial reactions. Towards the end of the nineteenth century when, in the course of improved copyright legislation, the authors' prerogative concerning their texts was given increasingly higher importance, Croker was repeatedly accused of plagiarism. It appears that the first edition did, indeed, contain material that could have been claimed by other writers or collectors. The *DNB* article has a somewhat euphemistic explanation: "No author's name was on the title-page; for Croker, who was responsible for the bulk of it, had lost his original manuscript, and Dr. Maginn and other friends, to whom the legends were already familiar, helped to rewrite it" (p. 133). Later it was doubted whether their cooperation was quite as voluntary as is claimed here, and in his other publications Croker is also said to have been quick in omitting to mention his sources. An article by B.G. MacCarthy, published in 1943[2], is a particularly offensive example. Operating with personal slander, unproven statements and disconnected quotations, it claims that Croker owed practically all his better publications to others and merely succeeded in commandeering them for himself by his clever strategies of disguising his sources. Seen in historical perspective, such personal squabbles lose much of their significance; today it is much more relevant to discuss the *quality* of such texts than their biographical provenance.

The nationalistic phase in Irish literary history, which began before the founding of the Free State and lasted until the nineteen-sixties, furthermore accused Croker of (real or imagined) condescension towards the Irish country people, of a tendency towards comic simplification, and of the attempt to make himself popular with his English readership at the expense of his Irish subjects. At a time when the world of the tenants and small farmers in the West of Ireland had become the standard for a new concept of literature, radically divided from the literature of England, it must have appeared that any negative statement about such people, even if it was based on experienced reality

(as for instance their love of whiskey, their superstition or their delight in fantastic stories) came close to a betrayal of patriotic ideals. The foundation for this type of criticism was laid by William Butler Yeats who, in his early patriotic phase, published his own collection of *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) and, in his Introduction, blamed Croker for an attitude that in truth was much more characteristic of Samuel Lover:

> Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not – mainly for political reasons – take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist's Arcadia; its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing of. What they did was not wholly false; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen's servants, into the type of the whole nation, and created the stage Irishman[3].

The Stage Irishman is, of course, a *bête noire* of the whole of recent Irish literature, and the slightest suspicion that an author has designed his comic Irish characters to confirm an anti-Irish prejudice in England, will suffice to condemn him as a traitor to his country.

The article by MacCarthy mentioned above (published in 1943, at the height of Irish nationalist self-isolation), also criticises Croker for his descent from a Protestant middle-class family that had settled in Ireland as late [!] as the sixteenth century, a descent seen by MacCarthy as an insurmountable barrier for an understanding of the 'true' Ireland:

> He was shut out. Maybe ... for a moment, he had some inkling of an ancient race, of a people who cherished with a deep, secret, fierce tenacity an immemorial culture. If he had, the vision did not last. He determined to look into the matter of Irish poetry, since it might at least afford some curiosities that would interest the English public (pp. 540-41).

When MacCarthy further complains that Croker had attempted "to study the country folk in their habitat – rather as Fabre studied ants" (ibid.), he pigeonholes Croker as belonging to the rationalist/scientific tradition of literature that, in Irish eyes, was typical of the literature of England. Such a classification, however ridiculous it may appear from an international perspective, has sometimes persisted right until the present day; for instance it has evidently led to the unaccountable omission of Croker from the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*[4].

From a wider historical and geographic distance, such accusations appear less than justified. It is true that Croker describes a number of amusing, sometimes exceedingly comic episodes; it is also true that many of his Irish characters show a preference for strong drink, a propensity to fabulation and an allergy to work, but it would require a

considerable degree of narrow-mindedness to overlook that they, in their contacts with the world of the 'little people', are described with a high degree of sympathy and that they become a focus of identification for the reader rather than an object of derision. The repeated reference to Croker's 'condescension' can, it seems, be explained only by an over-sensitivity caused by centuries of semi-colonial domination. The other side of the medal, the *English* attitude to such writers as Croker, was, of course, also informed by a supposed superiority of nation, race and accent. It appears that Croker posthumously experienced the typical fate of the mediator between two cultures: rejected by both sides whose understanding for each other he had tried to advance. If his detractors can be shown to be partially justified, it is in his attitude to the country people's belief in fairies. Croker, whose presence in several of his tales can be clearly felt, does not share his characters' credulity and sometimes even exploits it for comic effect. However, one can hardly expect an enlightened nineteenth-century intellectual to take the confrontation with the supernatural as seriously as his informants did.

Another, and much more relevant criticism that is sometimes levelled at Croker concerns the question of faithfulness to his informants. This is, of course, a problem that Croker shares with all the early collectors of folklore, not least the Brothers Grimm. Vivian Mercier observed correctly: "... neither he [Croker] nor anyone else at the time drew a firm line between recording folklore and writing fiction based on it."[5] All the early collectors smoothed, revised, and sometimes enlarged the material that was related to them. In most countries, however, it is impossible to compare the texts collected in the early nineteenth century with phonographic recordings of the actual story-tellers, so that all discussion of the degree of revision in, for instance, the Grimms' *Fairy Tales* must remain speculative. In Ireland, on the other hand, many a *seanchaí* survived the invention of the tape recorder, and the contrast between the recordings by the Folklore Society of Ireland and the Irish Folklore Commission (originally Irish Folklore Institute) on the one hand and the stories printed by the early collectors like Croker on the other is immediately discernible. Croker's *Fairy Legends* offer considerable evidence for an authorial intervention, both where the style and where the structure of the texts is concerned, and the reduction or even elimination of the first-person narrator in a number of texts is also an obvious indication that Croker interfered with the stories he collected. The *Fairy Legends*, therefore, are hardly suitable as documents of unmodified popular beliefs in Ireland. However, the partial loss of authenticity can be seen as a *gain* in the field of fictional narrative, as will be discussed below.

In view of those largely futile squabbles over Croker's personality and his importance as a collector, it is time for a more dispassionate revaluation of his achievements. It will be shown that the publication of the *Fairy Legends* had major consequences in at least three separate though closely interrelated fields.

The first of these is succinctly summarized by the 'elder statesman' of present-day Irish Studies, A. Norman Jeffares, when he emphasizes the pioneering character of Croker's book as "the first collection of oral legends to be made in the British Isles."[6]

This judgement is confirmed by the authoritative *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* which sees in *Fairy Legends* "a significant contribution to the development of British folklore studies since its materials were collected in the field."[7] While it is indubitably correct to see the Irish Renaissance around the turn of the century as the basis of all further developments in twentieth-century Ireland (not only in the cultural but also the political and social fields), it is also true to say that the 'great' representatives of the Renaissance, W.B. Yeats, Douglas Hyde, John Millington Synge, Lady Gregory and their contemporaries, built upon the material provided by the modest collectors of folklore, beginning with Croker in the early years of the century. Without their spadework it would have been impossible to create a generally accepted awareness of an independent national identity in Ireland which has to be seen, despite all subsequent dissension, as one of the great achievements of the Irish Renaissance. In the course of the eighteenth century the Irish language had largely been lost as a written and printed medium (though not as yet as an instrument of oral transmission), and with it the awareness of a specific cultural tradition encoded in it was also lost. With the one exception of Charlotte Brooke and her groundbreaking bilingual collection *Reliques of Irish Poetry* of 1789, the first attempt to make the heritage of Gaelic *verse* available to an English-speaking public, Croker was the earliest publicly effective mediator between the Celtic culture of the country population and a citified and Anglicised readership. Croker and his near-contemporaries Patrick Kennedy (1801-1873), William Maginn (1794-1842) and Samuel Lover (1797-1868), together with their immediate successors in the following generation, among them William Larminie (1850-1900), Edmund Leamy (1848-1904) and Anna Maria (Mrs. S.C.) Hall (1800-1881), provided the material and created the climate for the dawn of Irish literature in English: for the early poems of Yeats and AE, the plays of Synge and Lady Gregory, the short stories of George Moore and Daniel Corkery. This is *not*, it must be stressed, a matter of specific sources and influence; it would be futile to examine the literature of the Renaissance for direct textual links with the works of Croker and his successors. What they did was to initiate the consciousness of a native cultural heritage that could be reflected through the medium of English. In this way, they achieved an influence that could never be approximated by scholars like George Petrie (1789-1866), John O'Donovan (1806-1861) or Eugene O'Curry (1794-1862) whose strictly academic approach in the fields of physical and cultural archaeology prevented them from achieving the popularity of Croker and his followers.

Croker's second achievement, seen from a longer historical perspective, extended beyond the limits of Ireland and England. On 12 January 1826, less than a year after the publication of the *Fairy Legends*, a review of the book appeared in the influential academic periodical *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*. The reviewer was Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), at the time librarian at Kassel and, together with his brother Jacob (1785-1863), the ultimate authority on the collection and presentation of folklore in the widest possible sense. Their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Grimm's Fairy Tales*), published in three volumes in 1812, 1815 and 1822, have assured their lasting popularity to the present

day, but the collection's success can obscure the fact that they, improving on the often irrational 'folk' enthusiasm introduced by Johann Gottfried Herder, must be credited with establishing the science of Comparative Folklore Studies as a serious academic discipline. Their numerous publications were a major contribution to the rediscovery of the past during the later Romantic Movement in Europe. When Grimm in his review praised the 'tangible authenticity' of Croker's collection and the anonymous author's 'obvious diligence' in its presentation[8], this must have appeared to Croker as heaven-sent encouragement, which was intensified when, still in the same year, the *Fairy Legends* were published in Leipzig in German translation by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as *Irische Elfenmärchen*, to which they had added a lengthy Introduction with a veritable typology and classification of fairies.[9]

Croker on his part, in a letter of 16 June 1826, made himself known to the Grimms as the author; Wilhelm Grimm replied on 29 July 1826, stating that he was already well aware of Croker's *Researches in the South of Ireland*. Croker seems to have been so delighted with the international prestige vouchsafed by the Brothers Grimm that he did not even resent that there had been no previous correspondence with his publisher concerning the translation rights (perhaps less surprising in view of the state of international copyright legislation than it would be today). The recognition by the Grimms was, for Croker, a major step on the difficult path from the obscurity of the Irish provinces into the limelight of the international literary scene. When, in 1828, he published a second part of the *Fairy Legends*, he acknowledged his gratitude in the Preface:

> ... I cannot but feel and express a considerable degree of satisfaction at observing my former volume translated into German by such eminent scholars as the brothers Grimm, whose friendship and valuable correspondence it has also procured me. Their version, which I had not seen when the second edition appeared, is, as might be expected, faithful and spirited; and to it they have prefixed a most learned and valuable introduction respecting Fairy superstition in general.[11]

Part III of the 1828 edition was even dedicated "To Dr. Wilhelm Grimm, Secretary of the Prince's Library, Member of the Royal Scientific Society of Gottingen, &c. &c. &c. at Cassel, in Hessen", and in the Preface Croker entered into a detailed dialogue with the Grimms, describing the limited number of fairy legends he had been able to find in England as opposed to Ireland, Scotland and Wales. He then went on to reproduce, in English translation, the complete essay on fairies (145 pages of it!) that the Grimms had added to their German edition.

The Grimms' interest in the *Fairy Legends* was partly of a folklorist, partly also of a philological nature; it continued beyond the immediate occasion, as can for instance

be seen from their correspondence with Karl Lachmann, who in 1826 had received a copy of their translation.[12] As late as 1856 Wilhelm Grimm referred to it in the context of the discussion of Irish fairy legends and tales.[13] If the German image of Irish folklore in the nineteenth century was largely shaped by the Grimms, it was Croker who had provided the basis for it. How far such an influence went can be seen, for instance, in a highly popular ballad called "Fingerhütchen" by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, the great Swiss poet and novelist. "Fingerhütchen", as one would hardly guess from the title, is a faithful version of Croker's "The Legend of Knockgrafton" from the first edition of the *Fairy Legends* that Meyer had found in the Grimms' translation.[14] However, Croker's influence in Germany did not end with the turn of the century. If one follows Patrick O'Neill, the best authority on Irish-German literary and cultural relations, it lasted far into the twentieth century: The Grimms' *Irische Elfenmärchen* "coalesced with Ossianic mists and the heroics of Lady Morgan and Thomas Moore to form the romantic image of Ireland which persists essentially unchanged in Germany down to the present day ..."[15] This view is confirmed by the fact that reprints of *Irische Elfenmärchen* remained in print in various popular editions and are still available today in unchanged form, except that Croker himself has returned to the anonymity of his original publication: while the Grimms' popular name always appears on the title pages of such editions, Croker's is regularly relegated to a brief reference in an afterword.[16] Even the terminological problems with the German title have done nothing to limit the book's continuing popularity: in the strict sense of modern folklore research, the stories are not *Märchen* (fairy-tales) but *Sagen* (legends) as Croker makes perfectly clear in his own title, because all of them are linked to precisely identified localities.

Croker's influence in Germany would perhaps be of less interest if it had not been for its repercussions in other areas. Through the Grimms' authority in the field of international folklore studies, Croker's name became known in many countries, and his book has continued to be seen as a major contribution to the exploration of the folk imagination in Europe. For instance, a new translation of Croker's book into Italian by Francesca Diano was published as recently as 1999.[17]

The third importance of the *Fairy Legends* – and one that deserves more detailed attention than it can be given here – concerns Croker's role as one of the precursors of twentieth-century short fiction in Ireland. The emergence of the Irish short-story around the turn of the century, nationally and internationally one of the major achievements of Irish literature, is, of course, due in part to a tenacious tradition of *oral* story-telling. However, it is also due to the fact that the whole of the nineteenth century saw the *publication* of a wealth of short narratives. This material is at best ignored, more often derided by literary historians, who regularly treat the beginnings of the short-story proper in Ireland as a burst of spontaneous creativity. In reality, one finds thousands of stories and tales before 1900, ranging from autobiographical anecdotes through character sketches, traditional accounts of country-life, travel sketches, idiosyncratic variations of mythological or legendary material and fairy-tales to the fictional recreation of basic conflicts in contemporary society or the projection of deeply personal problems. The

publication of this material became possible by the proliferation of Irish periodicals in the early nineteenth century[18]; a great deal of it was subsequently republished in book form in various collections. It foreshadows in many ways the modern short-story, although frequently the authors were not fully aware of the specific requirements of the short form. Among the better known writers were Sir Jonah Barrington, Mrs. S.C. Hall, Caesar Otway, Samuel Lover and Thomas Crofton Croker, a list that may suggest the great diversity of the material under discussion, while the outstanding masters of the short form, William Carleton, Gerald Griffin, Joseph Sheridan LeFanu and Somerville & Ross, not only produced a large number of tales but created frame narratives into which, with varying degrees of success, they integrated their individual stories.[19]

All of these writers, and many others, shaped specific strands which merged into the complex web that we know as the twentieth-century Irish short-story. When writers like Daniel Corkery, Seumas O'Kelly, James Stephens, together with George Moore and James Joyce and, slightly later, Liam O'Flaherty, Elizabeth Bowen, Sean O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor, Patrick Boyle, Michael McLaverty, Bryan MacMahon, Mary Lavin and their younger successors, created this genre, they had therefore a number of predecessors to fall back on. This is not only a matter of providing the narrative *material* but also of developing various stylistic and structural devices. Such principles as suggestion, compression, concentration and reduction, the introduction of credible narrative perspectives, the invention of unusual opening devices, the preservation of structural homogeneity, the presentation of symbolic landscapes, the creation of universality from realistic specificity are all prefigured, in varying degrees, in nineteenth-century texts; the great achievement of the short-story proper was not to have invented them but to have brought them together into one artistic whole.

Croker in the various issues of his *Fairy Legends* contributed to this development; many of them are not simple reproductions of oral tales taken down by a collector but strategically shaped narratives, or, as the great Vivian Mercier put it: "... neither he nor anyone else at the time drew a firm line between recording folklore and writing fiction based on it."[20] Some of his texts – for instance "Legend of Bottle-Hill", "Master and Man", "Daniel O'Rourke" and "The Crookened Back" from the 1825 edition or "The Soul Cages" and "Rent Day" from Part II of the 1828 issue would not cut a bad figure in the company of stories by Corkery, Moore or O'Kelly.

That Croker consciously and artistically revised his sources becomes immediately clear from the occasional use of striking metaphors or similes, as when he speaks of "a beautiful laughing red apple, smoking like a hard ridden horse on a frosty night" (p. 42).[21] Similar examples in more detailed form can be found in certain passages where the setting of the events is not simply stated but recreated in poetic and metaphorical terms:

> ... the harvest nights came on, and the moon shone bright and brilliant over the hill, and the cattle were lying down hushed and quiet, and the herdsman wrapped

> in his mantle, was musing with his heart gladdened by the glorious company of the stars twinkling above him, bathed in the flood of light bursting all over the sky ... (p. 4)

or

> The air was hushed and still; and the sky, which was reflected in the serene lake, resembled a beautiful but deceitful countenance, whose smiles after the most tempestuous emotions tempt the stranger to believe that it belongs to a soul which no passion has ever ruffled (p. 355)

or again:

> The moon was up; but though there wasn't a cloud to be seen, and though a star was winking here and there in the sky, the day wasn't long enough gone to have it clear moonlight; still it shone enough to make every thing on one side of the heavens look pale and silvery-like; and the thin white mist was just beginning to creep along the fields. On the other side, near where the sun was set, there was more of daylight, and the sky looked angry, red, and fiery through the trees, like as if it was lighted up by a great town burning below (p. 299).

Such passages, characteristic of a 'citified' and intellectually reflected concept of nature, will be found again and again in the modern short-story, especially in the works of Sean O'Faolain (who, like Croker, came from the City of Cork).

One striking feature of Croker's narratives is the use of the grotesque in the specific sense of the simultaneity of the comic and the terrifying. If, in "The Legend of Knocksheogowna", the herdsman gazes "at these terrible sights until the hair of his head would lift his hat half a foot over his crown" (p. 5), this may be amusing to the distant reader but also conveys, in the ridiculous exaggeration, the very real terror of the situation. Such elements, frequently echoed in the more recent short-story where nothing is purely comic any longer, abound in "Daniel O'Rourke". The mischievous eagle lands Daniel on the moon where he tries to hold on for dear life to a reaping hook sticking out of the side of the moon, "when all at once a door opened right in the middle of the moon, creaking on its hinges as if it had not been opened for a month before. I suppose they never thought of greasing 'em, and out there walks – who do you think but the man in the moon? I knew him by his bush" (p. 285). He succeeds in pushing Daniel off the moon who eventually falls into the sea "when a whale walked up to me, scratching himself after his night's sleep, and looked me full in the face, and never the word did he say, but lifting up his tail, he splashed me all over again with the cold salt water ..." (p. 290). If all this is finally revealed as the mere nightmare of a man close to *delirium tremens*, it is by no means less frightening in the intensity of his experience. Incidentally,

that Croker dramatized this story as a pantomime (performed at the Adelphi in 1826), goes to show how far removed it was for him from a simple story told by country people and how clearly he saw it as an artistic construct.

Another interesting aspect of the *Fairy Legends* is the invention of specific opening devices and the introduction of a fictional narrative perspective. While Croker eschewed, or was perhaps not aware of, the *medias-in-res* technique that many later authors pursued, he sometimes compressed his opening passage to such an extent that it was clearly distinct from the more leisurely beginnings of the traditional tale with its detailed exposition of setting, time, characters and theme. This is true, for instance, of "Legend of Bottle-Hill" (p. 85) and "The Spirit Horse" (p. 267), while in "The Little Shoe" (p. 211) one single subordinate clause suffices to set the scene for the subsequent narrative.

The variations in the narrative perspective have obviously been chosen to supply skilful variety to the volume. In "The Legend of Knockgrafton", Croker employs the traditional authorial approach familiar from thousands of tales: "There was once a poor man who lived in the fertile glens of Aherlow, at the foot of the gloomy Galtee mountains, and he had a great hump on his back ..." (p. 23). By contrast, the beginning of "The Little Shoe" establishes a frame situation in a dialogue between the story-teller and a third party: "'Now tell me, Molly', said Mr. Coote to Molly Cogan, as he met her on the road one day, close to one of the old gateways of Kilmallock, 'did you ever hear of the Cluricaune?'" (p. 211.). Another dialogical structure, introduced by a clearly defined first-person narrator who can quote Shakespeare and Spenser and in the end expresses his own feelings when the mother regains her lost child, prevails in "The Brewery of Egg-Shells". Only occasionally is it possible to identify the speaker as the author, as in "Fairies or No Fairies" which in the beginning establishes the narrator's intellectual superiority over poor Mulligan's credulity and ends with "I hould be sorry if all my fairy stories ended with so little dignity ..." (p. 145).

An interesting variation is the long tale of "The Confessions of Tom Bourke" which begins with a personalized I-narrator speaking in the present tense but after nine pages turns the story over to "my friend Mr. Martin, who is a neighbour of Tom's" (p. 113) who then conducts a dialogue with Tom in the course of which the story proper is narrated in the past tense. If this is damaging to a unified impression of the text, it at least shows Croker experimenting with various narrative techniques. Sometimes Croker introduces framing devices which are not always taken up again at the end, most clearly in "Daniel O'Rourke" where the scene is set with ironic over-precision: "An old man was he at the time that he told me the story, with gray hair, and a red nose; and it was on the 25th of June, 1813, that I heard it from his own lips, as he sat smoking his pipe under the poplar tree ..." (p. 277). "The Crookened Back" is perhaps the most successful tale in dramatizing the narrative situation before the story proper is told.

Croker's collection contains, it should be added, a gallery of interesting and, in some cases, memorable characters. Sometimes they are established at a leisurely pace,

with digressions and irrelevancies, as in the older story-telling tradition, but occasionally one finds portraits which are sharply defined, succinct and wholly to the point as on the first pages of "The Confessions of Tom Bourke".

All this evidence, it should be added, is not marshalled here to claim Croker as one of the great master of modern story-telling. For every successful stroke, one can also point to examples that are annoying in their thoughtlessness or carelessness. What can be claimed, however, is that Croker was at least groping for original and innovatory modes of expression that reemerged, employed with a higher degree of consciousness, in the twentieth-century short-story. It would be unjust not to acknowledge his partially successful steps on the difficult path to the art of O'Faolain and his contemporaries.

To conclude, Croker's achievements can best be summarized by a glance at what is probably his most accomplished story, "The Soul Cages" from Part II of the 1828 issue (pp. 30-52). "The Soul Cages" is the story of Jack Dogherty who lives in a lonely place on the Clare coast and exists as much by the goods he salvages from stranded ships as by his craft as a fisherman. One day, Jack makes the acquaintance of Coomara the Merrow, an ancient merman who had already been friends with Jack's father and grandfather. He invites Jack to a feast in his comfortable house below the sea, where Jack discovers to his dismay that his host keeps the souls of drowned sailors in cages like lobster pots. From then on Jack worries about the means to release the souls. His first attempt at inviting Coomara to his house and making him drunk on brandy fails because the merman is a much more experienced drinker than Jack and "reeled off home, leaving his entertainer as dumb as a haddock on a Good Friday" (p. 47). Then, however, Jack hits upon an infallible device: he invites Coomara again, this time treating his guest with Irish poteen, the "real Mountain dew" (p. 47), and this is something that even a hardened merman cannot stand up to. When the poteen has put him to sleep, Jack takes his cocked hat (without which one cannot dive down to the world below the sea), creeps into Coomara's house, finds the cages and releases the souls, noticing nothing but "a sort of a little whistle or chirp as he raised each of them" (p. 48), because souls, as Jack understands quite well, are invisible. In the course of the following years, Jack frequently repeats this feat until one day, quite unaccountably, the merman has disappeared.

The story is constructed upon the principle of contrast. On the most superficial level, it contrasts the two settings, the real world on the wild coast "in the midst of shattered rocks, with nothing but the wide ocean to look upon" (p. 30), and the surreal world below the sea where Jack finds "crabs and lobsters, of which there were plenty walking leisurely about on the sand. Overhead was the sea like a sky, and the fishes like birds swimming about in it" (p. 39). The contrast is continued in the persons of the two characters, Jack who is apparently an attractive fellow since he had succeeded in persuading his wife Biddy to leave her father's comfortable house in the town of Ennis to live with him, while the merman was "a thing with green hair, long green teeth, a red nose, and pig's eyes. It had a fish's tail, legs with scales on them, and short arms like fins: it wore no clothes, but had the cocked hat under its arm ..." (p. 34). Jack and

Coomara are not only contrasted in appearance but also in their characters: while both of them are good-natured and jolly fellows who enjoy each other's company, the merman is essentially a-moral and therefore quite incapable of understanding the terrible consequences he inflicts on the captive souls, whereas Jack is "thunderstruck" when he realises the secret of the merman's collection and, like a true Christian, immediately devises means to release them.

The story's plot hinges on two motifs, both of which are introduced right at the beginning and in immediate juxtaposition: the motif of strong drink, essentially a comic motif, and the motif of the caged souls which is of course deeply serious. The intertwining of the two motifs identifies the story as a *grotesque* one; while it is highly amusing to observe the two characters diving into the sea or carousing with each other, the presence of the trapped souls throws a dark shadow over their conviviality. In the final analysis, this, therefore, is a narrative about the conflict between humanity and inhumanity, where humanity, against all odds, is finally successful – a theme worthy of Frank O'Connor and his contemporaries, although the modern short-story would have been less optimistic about the outcome than Croker evidently was. In the present context it is also significant to find that it is true *Irish* drink and the courage and determination of a genuine *Irishman* who succeed in liberating the souls of *foreign* sailors. This story, therefore, would suffice to dispel the view that Croker had been hostile to Ireland and her people. It is not only both touching and amusing; it can also serve as testimony for the author's continuing attachment to the country of his birth.

A collection that contains such texts as this one fully deserves a revaluation.

Notes

1 *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)*, ed. Leslie Stephen (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-22), vol. V, pp. 132-134. Another biographical sketch, somewhat more detailed but annoyingly gossipy, is the anonymous article "Our Portrait Gallery – No. LV. Thomas Crofton Croker, F.S.A., M.R.I.A., Member of the United Service Institution, of the Royal Antiquarian Society of Copenhagen, etc.", *Dublin University Magazine*, 34 (August 1849), pp. 202-216.

2 B.G. MacCarthy, cThomas Crofton Croker: 1798-1854", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 32 (1943), pp. 539-556.

3 William Butler Yeats (ed.), *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 2nd ed. 1977), pp. 6-7.

4 Croker is dismissed in one short sentence in the Introduction. See Seamus Deane (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991), vol. II, p. 3. Earlier comprehensive anthologies did include Croker in considerable detail; see Charles A. Read and Katharine Tynan Hinkson (eds.), *The Cabinet of Irish Literature* (London: Gresham, 1902), vol. II, pp. 255-263; Justin McCarthy (ed.), *Irish Literature* (Philadelphia: Morris, 1904), vol. II, pp. 680-738.

5 Vivian Mercier, *Modern Irish Literature: Sources and Founders* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 8.

6 A. Norman Jeffares, *Anglo-Irish Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 125.

7 Jack Zipes (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), s.v. Croker.

8 The review is reprinted in: Wilhelm Grimm, *Kleinere Schriften*, ed. Gustav Hinrichs (Berlin: Dümmler, 1882), vol. II, pp. 370-373.

9 Cf. Eileen Fitzsimons, *Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's Irische Elfenmärchen: a comparison of the translation with the English original, Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland by T. Crofton Croker* (Diss. Chicago, 1978) [not seen].

10 The letter is reprinted in the second version of T.F.D. Croker's memories of his father in the 1862 edition of *Fairy Legends*.

11 T. Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland: Part II* (London: Murray, 1828), pp. v-vi.

12 *Briefwechsel der Brüder Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm mit Karl Lachmann*, ed. Albert Leitzmann (Jena: Frommansche Buchhandlung, 1927), pp. 454, 455, 480, 483, 497-98, 501, 830-31, 847. Cf. also John Hennig, "The Brothers Grimm and T.C. Croker", *Modern Language Review*, 41 (1946), pp. 44-54.

13 *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, rev. by Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka (Leipzig: Diederich, 1930; repr. Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1992), vol. V, pp. 55-57.

14 Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* (Bern: Benteli, 1963), pp. 44-48.

15 Patrick O'Neill, *Ireland and Germany: A Study in Literary Relations* (New York, Bern, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 150.

16 Editions available at present: *Irische Elfenmärchen: In der Übertragung der Brüder Grimm* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1987); *Irische Elfenmärchen: Übersetzt und eingeleitet von den Brüdern Grimm* (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 6th ed. 1988).

17 Thomas Crofton Croker, *Racconti di fate e tradizioni irlandesi/Irish Fairy Tales and Traditions*, tr. by Francesca Diano (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1999).

18 See Barbara Hayley, "Irish Periodicals from the Union to the *Nation*", *Anglo-Irish Studies*, 2 (1976), pp. 83-108.

19 Cf. Heinz Kosok, "Vorformen der modernen Kurzgeschichte in der anglo-irischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 7 (1982), pp. 131-145.

20 Vivian Mercier, *Modern Irish Literature: Sources and Founders* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr., 1994), p. 8.

21 Page references are to the first – 1825 – edition except where otherwise indicated.

Ireland and Europe: the "European Experience" in Selected Works of Modern Irish Fiction[1]

Dore Fischer

Abstract: *The mobility of people within Europe is reflected in a number of works of modern Irish literary fiction. This article explores how the "European experience" is reflected in a selection of short or long prose fiction by younger Irish authors, mainly born around 1950 or after. After a look at the reasons expressed by the characters for leaving Ireland, their "European experience" is analysed, including the impact that their time in Europe has on how they view their own culture. This is followed by an exploration of intercultural encounters between Irish and Continental characters within Ireland. The article concludes with a brief look at the significance of language and communication within these contexts.*

In 1828, *The Continental Traveller's Oracle: Maxims for Foreign Locomotion,* by Dr. Abraham Eldon, warned travellers, especially young single women, not to travel to the Continent.

> Italy was then a dangerous country 'infested with robbers of all hues'. Young women travellers should be taught that the Continent is a lion's den, Frenchmen and Italians little better than two-legged beasts, he said. In fact Eldon is so protective of single women that he believes they should avoid travel, stay at home and read the Bible...[2]

This 170 year old recommendation has rarely been heeded, as we all know, either by women or, in fact, by men. Travel of all kinds and for all purposes has become a normal feature of modern society, with Irish people travelling to the Continent more than ever, and Continentals coming to Ireland in increasing numbers, on short or long-term stays.

This mobility within Europe, like many other developments in modern Ireland, has been reflected in a substantial number of works of literary fiction. But this is only a relatively recent development in Irish literature as Dermot Bolger points out in the Foreword to one of his anthologies *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad:* "With a few exceptions ... the experience of that huge section of Irish people who were shipped off abroad, has

played little part in Irish literature."[3] And Joseph O'Connor states in his introduction to the same work: "Emigration is as Irish as Cathleen Ni Houlihan's harp, yet it is only since the sixties that Irish writers have written about the subject at first hand."[4]

This article concentrates on how the European experience is reflected in works of short or long prose fiction written mainly by younger Irish authors, with a few exceptions born around 1950 or after. The authors I refer to include the following: Sara Berkeley, Dermot Bolger, Philip Davison, Emma Donoghue, Hugo Hamilton, Brian Leyden, Deirdre Madden, Gillman Noonan, Niall Quinn, and others.[5] Aidan Higgins, although born well before 1950, deserves to be mentioned in this context. However, because his work is very complex in relation to intercultural issues, and an analysis of this could not possibly fit into the framework of this article, only his use of language will be referred to.

The term "European experience" is used by Dermot Bolger in two anthologies of modern Irish fiction edited by him, and some of the texts in these anthologies deal with, or at least, touch on that experience.[6] In the Foreword to the anthology *Ireland in Exile*, Dermot Bolger says: "Irish writers no longer go into exile, they simply commute .... The experience of Irish life today is as much of London, New York and Paris as it is of Dublin, Derry or Castlebar."[7] And Joseph O'Connor is quoted in *The Irish Times* in the same year, where he even goes so far as to say: "It sometimes seems to me ... that you almost have to get out of Ireland to be Irish at all...."[8]

Not all European countries or representatives thereof feature equally in these works. Most references were found for Germany and Holland, some for France and other Mediterranean and Scandinavian countries. Very few references were found for any of the Eastern European Countries. There are, of course, numerous references to England. However, the terms "Europe" and the "European experience" usually do not apply to England, partly because of the special relationship between England and Ireland, which has been reflected in many works of Irish fiction. However, England can be seen as a stepping stone, the first stop on the way to Europe or other countries, "a way-side station before the Continent."[9]

This article looks first at the reasons why the characters decide to leave Ireland to go to the Continent. This is followed by an analysis of the European experience of Irish characters outside of Ireland, and the effects which this has on them.

Cultures can differ in many areas, for example people "obey different moral, religious and social codes of behaviour"[10]. The next section of the article explores some of the intercultural[11] encounters between Irish and Continental characters within Ireland. The article concludes with a brief look at the significance of language and communication within these contexts.

Reasons for leaving it all behind

Why do the mainly young Irish characters in novels and short stories leave Ireland to go to the Continent? For many, the external obvious reasons for leaving have

been economic, i.e lack of work at home and employment opportunities abroad. This is evident in many of the works of the authors I looked at.

However, far more interesting are a whole range of other more internal reasons for leaving. The most common one is escape. Europe is seen as a window of opportunity, not just in an economic sense. The protagonists flee from what they perceive to be restricting moral and social values, the narrowness and boredom of their lives at home, sometimes their parents or other personal circumstances.

To quote the I-narrator in Deirdre Madden's *Remembering Light and Stone*: "I had so many unhappy experiences in Ireland, that I wanted to put distance between myself and that place."[12]

Ireland is seen as an impossible place to live in Philip Davison's *Twist and Shout* : "For me, living in Ireland was like trying to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth at the same time – it should be possible, but isn't."[13]

The Aachen School of Comparative Literature has, amongst others, developed and defined the theory of "imagology", a theoretical background for looking at images of one's own and the foreign culture (*das Eigene und das Fremde*). Joseph Leersen[14] and Günther Blaicher[15] point out that when investigating national images and stereotypes, what one is interested in is people's perceptions, and it is irrelevant whether these actually match reality or not.

The perception of Ireland as being "dead" is described by John in Sara Berkeley's *The Swimmer in the Deep Blue Dream*[16]. Europe, however, is full of opportunities and adventures, Europe is the "grown-up world", as described in Dermot Bolger's *The Journey Home.*[17] In this book, Shay tries to persuade Hano, the I-narrator, to come to the Continent with him:

> I'm sick of it, the job, this town, they're just too small and they are making me too small. Can you imagine it Hano, anonymity, losing yourself in some foreign city where nobody knows who you are and nobody cares? ... Take the risk, just once in your life. 'We are the young Europeans' they keep telling us. Screw them Hano, we'll get out. Just think about it, at half-eleven tonight when the pubs here will be closed and the last bus gone, people will be just going out to drink in Amsterdam, strolling down the Ramblas in Barcelona, gawking up at the whores starting work in the Reeperbahn....[18]

The romantic and idealized image of the Continent held by some characters contrasts with the image of narrow and dead Ireland:

> My romantic grand tour: Amsterdam, Provence or the Pyrenees. Paris or Barcelona. Fulfilling that need to get away from home. To escape the parish pump outlook. Leaving the known territory to join that summer migration of young tulip-pickers in Holland, grape-pickers in France, factory workers in Germany, hotel staff in Guernsey.[19]

In Dermot Bolger's earlier book, *Night Shift*, Frankie, one of the main characters, completely idealizes Amsterdam, where he stayed for a short time and to where he wishes to return as soon as possible: "I'm just biding me time in this shithole and then I'm making my escape back to civilisation."[20]

But there are question marks over whether it is possible at all to leave it all behind. In Sara Berkeley's novel *The Swimmer in the Deep Blue Dream*, the narrator says: "I don't know what's right, but however far I've come, it hasn't been far enough."[21] Or Deirdre Madden's I-narrator who is constantly haunted by memories of Ireland and her past.

The experience in Europe

How do the protagonists get on, once they have made that escape to Europe? Certainly the image of the Continent they had before leaving Ireland does not match the reality of their experience.

To quote from one of Aidan Higgins's stories: "..... the traveller is perpetually in the wrong context".[22] This feeling of being out of context in conjunction with the experience of "otherness", or *Fremderfahrung*[23] prevails. The characters are swamped by the disorienting feelings of strangeness, otherness, non-integration, isolation, homelessness, homesickness, loneliness, and displacement, to mention but a few. For example, Deirdre Madden's novel *Remembering Light and Stone* begins with the sentence: "I don't belong here."[24]

The same applies to Kate O'Brien's *Mary Lavelle*[25] whose main character travels to Spain. Her first experiences are of insecurity, strangeness, loneliness. But later she falls in love with the country and a Spanish man. In her degree of involvement and integration she differs somewhat from a number of Irish and English nannies that she meets. Most of them have not integrated into Spanish culture even though some of them have been there for many years. They have no intention of integrating into the foreign culture and reject it, constantly using it as a counter-image to their own culture, of which they have a positive, romantic view. They speak little or no Spanish, complain about the country, its people and its culture. There are also a few examples of this forming of Irish ghettos in other books, such as the foreigners living in Italy not integrating into the local community in *Remembering Light and Stone.*

Against the background of their own culture the characters experience the foreign culture as strange and, sometimes weird.[26] There are many instances of cultural confrontations, clashes, even nightmare experiences, as for example Shay's experience in *The Journey Home* or in Niall Quinn's story *Voyovic* in which the living quarters of guest workers are described as follows: "Forever and ever that savage, wanton, joyless noise screams out from that doomed, homeless army of European Guestworkers."[27] In the same story, the employees in a French factory are portrayed as extremely negative and xenophobic. It comes to a clash between them and the protagonist Voyovic, climaxing in the guest workers being called "scum" and Voyovic calling one of his superiors a "Nazi sow"[28].

If a person has moved and travelled for a number of years, there is evidence of a certain rootlessness:

> I was tasting the listlessness, the inadequateness, the homelessness as I had tasted it so often before. In cities and towns in Ireland, Israel, Norway and France I had supped from this cup. And finally, now, the sense of bereavement at losing yet another country, losing another attempt to establish my life.[29]

Consequences of the stay abroad

Exposure to a foreign culture makes the characters reflect on his/her home culture, and there are frequent comparisons between the home and the foreign culture. As mentioned earlier, against the background of their own culture the characters experience the foreign culture as quite different, often strange. The foreign culture is often seen as a counter-image to the home culture rather than something independent. And the reverse is also true: against the background of the foreign culture the individual develops a new awareness of his/her home culture and how much he/she has been conditioned by it. For example, the I-narrator in *Remembering Light and Stone*, reflects on her stay abroad: "And more than learning anything about Italy, I had found out more about my own country, simply by not being in it."[30]

The criticism of Ireland, which was often the reason for leaving the country, is combined with feelings of loneliness, but also of freedom, of freeing oneself as far as possible from the conditioning and limitations of one's home country, finding one's own identity, and personal growth.

These factors can result in a reluctance or unwillingness to return to Ireland, as expressed in Emma Donoghue's story *Going Back*: "Listen, I felt more of an exile for twenty years in Ireland, than I ever have in the twelve I've been out of it."[31] However, after living in France and Italy for a number of years the I-narrator in *Remembering Light and Stone*, comes to terms with herself and her past and decides to return to Ireland.

Characters who do return to Ireland may feel uneasy about being back or they feel like outsiders, as in Brian Leyden's *Return Ticket*: "I am back, but I still feel like I'm outside all this, standing on the sidelines....."[32]

Intercultural encounters within Ireland

For the category of intercultural encounters between Irish and Continental characters within Ireland many more references in the literature were found, than for the previously discussed category of the experience outside Ireland.

Since Ireland joined the EEC in 1973, Europe and the European context has been mentioned in many works of Irish fiction. There are numerous examples of references to people working in Europe, the EEC or later the EU, European funds, tourists and foreign industrialists coming to Ireland, Continentals buying Irish businesses, land, farms, holiday homes.

Many foreign characters are stereotyped and often portrayed in a negative way, with marginal characters more stereotyped than central characters. For example, in *The Test,* Chapter 5 of *Finbar's Hotel,* Maureen Connolly sees another guest in the hotel who is actually Irish, but she does not know this:

> Suddenly she wondered if she had been wrong to think him insane. It came into her head that he might be something to do with the Dutch rock star who had apparently bought this tumble-down place some time ago. He looked, she thought, a bit like a Dutch rock star himself or at the very least a Dutch rock star's associate. Yes, perhaps she had been mistaken about his lunacy. Rock stars, after all, frequently did appear quite disturbed when one saw photographs of them in the newspapers, their associates even more so; indeed, if it came to it, Dutch people generally looked more than a little unstable, if not downright psychotic, not that she was anyone to talk. He stopped at the room two doors before her own and went in. She realized then that she was relieved to be rid of him.
> Alone at last in her bedroom, she felt suddenly quite giddy with anticipation. She found herself thinking dreamily for a moment or two about the strange grinning Dutch rock star, and wondering what he was doing right at that very moment down the corridor. Perhaps he was composing a song. Maybe he would be taking drugs; the combination of Dutchness and musical creativity certainly did not give grounds for optimism...[33]

Characters engage in arguments about the benefits of the EU, intercultural confrontations, feelings and attitudes of ethnocentrism, xenophobia, Europhobia or at least scepticism of a United Europe, as in *The Journey Home* where at the end of the novel Hano has a vision of what Ireland is going to be like in the future when he will be released from prison:

> For a while longer the lorries will keep coming, widening the roadways with their tyres, dumping the plastic sacks into the quarry until the holiday homes grow so close that the continentals will object. Our role is to offer tranquillity, not rivers awash with the eyes of dead fish. Some day soon a law in Brussels will silence the convoy, will close down the factory. ...
> In time, some workers will die from contamination, the rest subsist on the dole or merge into the exodus, stand in the foreign production lines where Shay once stood. The paint will peel on the bungalows, the multinationals will buy out the

building societies and foreclose. .... A foreign accent will supervise the bulldozers burying the last of the waste; an Italian expert shaking his head before the television cameras. No more fires will begin accidentally here, no more trees in the wind path will wither up. The last corner of Europe, the green jewel free from the paths of acid rain. A land preserved intact for the community. German tongues clicking in amusement at how it was run in those last years. .....
... Motorists gliding silently through the woodlands, the drone of Dutch and French over the car telephones.
And the chosen million Irish left: red-haired girls in peasant aprons bringing menus to diners in the converted castles, at the one end of the scale; at the other, middle-ranking civil servants who will close their eyes at night, knowing that once we could have stood up as equals, not been bought out like children by the quick lure of grants....[34]

Language

Finally, a brief look at the significance of language and communication in the context of the European experience.

In many of the texts, the foreign language plays an important role with Irish travellers reporting problems with the languages of their host countries. (Even as a reader, you sometimes cannot get very far in some of the works if you do not know the foreign language. This applies in particular to many of the works of Aidan Higgins. His "macaronic" style, i.e. his mixing of different languages within the text, often within a single sentence, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to follow the meaning of the text without understanding the languages concerned.[35] Some of the other authors also use this style to a lesser extent.[36])

Some characters can speak only a few key words in the foreign language, such as in German, for example, *Autobahn, Gastarbeiter, Wurst*, etc. This inhibits their communication with the native people or makes it farcical. In Philip Davison's *Twist and Shout* two of the main characters, Terry and Avril, live temporarily in Germany:

> Neither Avril nor myself can speak much German. We did a lot of pointing. We had trouble with the kilos. Worst of all, however was buying the minced meat. Minced meat is not always on display in German butcher shops. They mince while you wait. It is very hard to mime minced meat...[37]

The main character of Gillman Noonan's story *Dear Parents, I'm working for the EEC!*, works as a translator in Brussels. He stumbles over the word *Pensionskuhhaltung,* a bureaucratic, technical term which he finds impossible to translate:

Peter closed his eyes, propped his forehead against his hands and tried to keep out the lowing babble. Now two enormous cows in Bavarian dirndls were sitting cross-legged on a bed licking ice-cream, their udders hanging down obscenely. *'Kuh!'* said one, *'die Pension ist ganz grosse Klasse, was?' 'Prima,'* said the other, reaching for her Kleenex. *'Und gar nicht so teuer, was?' 'Das Essen scheint mir auch wirklich wiederkäuerlich zu sein.' 'Moo, es geht.'* They finished their ice-cream and, burping and rumbling, settled back to have it all over again.....[38]

In stories and novels describing intercultural encounters within Ireland, foreign words and phrases also appear. But even more frequent are mentions of foreign accents, which are often a source of mockery. In the following example, an unfortunate Irish male quite obviously had not heard about, or if so, did not pay any heed to Dr. Abraham Eldon's warning of some 170 years ago, cautioning young travellers about contact with Continentals. In Gillman Noonan's story *A Sexual Relationship* an Irish male, Sean Kenny, meets a German female, Helga Liebig. During an unsuccessful sexual encounter, she refers to his private parts as *"A klitzekleine Bockwurst"*[39] , which would translate into "an incy-wincy little sausage".

After this encounter Kenny has the following dream:

Towards dawn he slipped into a shallow dream in which there were a lot of sausages hiding under rashers from a German Flying Fork. But one of the sausages was his prick and it was having trouble appearing to be as natural as the other sausages all huddled together. Overhead the Flying Fork was escorted by two Messerschmidt nipples. An evil, guttural German voice came over the air. 'Nipple vun to Flying Fork. Enemy Wurstprick sighted. Avait instrkshuns to destroy protective rasher.' 'Flying Fork to Nipples vun and two. Go ahead.' The nipples zoomed down and his prick began to scream, 'No, no! I'm a sausage! I tell you, I'm a sausage! A neutral Irish sausage!' To no avail. With a crash the rasher was split apart by bullets. All the sausages wriggled away under other rashers leaving the prick exposed and squirming like a worm. Then it began to distend into a huge tottering erection, while he shouted at it, 'Get down, you bastard! Get down! Do you want to get us all killed?' He awoke, gasping for air, as the glittering prongs were streaking down.... [40]

The ultimate intercultural nightmare!

Notes

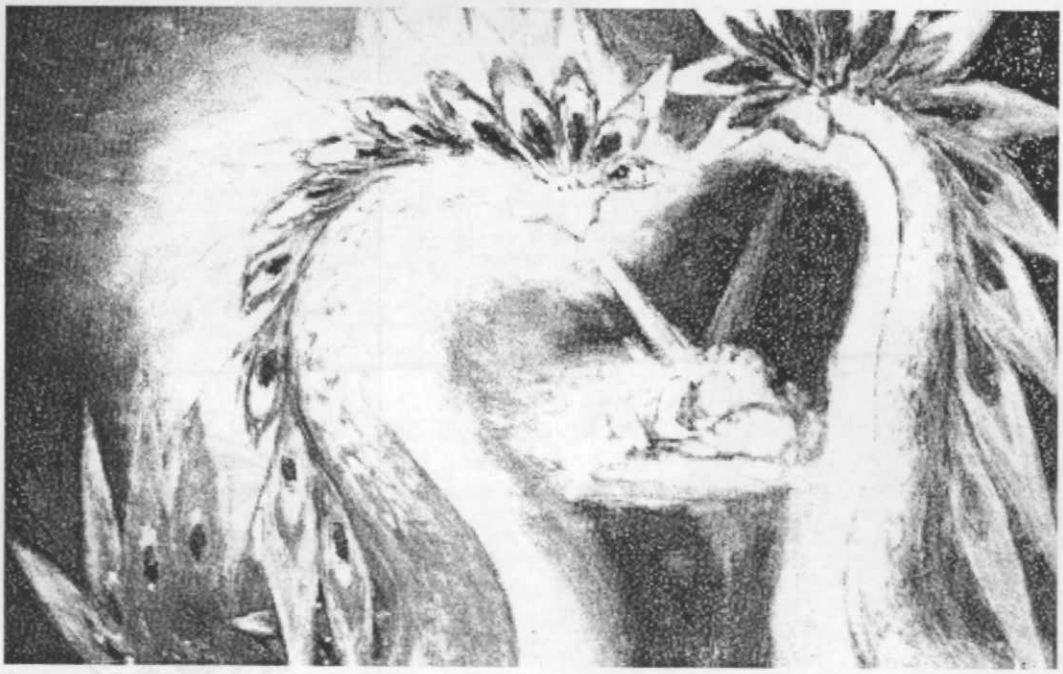
1 This article is based on a paper which was presented at the Annual Conference of IASIL at the Universtiy of Limerick in July 1998.

2 Quoted from: A.A. Kelly, *Wandering Women. Two Centuries of Travel out of Ireland*, Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1995, 8.
3 Dermot Bolger (ed), *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad*, Dublin: New Island Books, 1993, 8.
4 Dermot Bolger (ed), *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad*, Dublin: New Island Books, 1993, 16.
5 Apart from these authors, which are quoted in this paper, the following authors are also important in this context: Seamus Dunne, Neil Jordan, Patrick McCabe, Eilis NiDhuibne, Ronit Lentin, Liam Lynch, Michael O'Loughlin, and others.
6 1. Dermot Bolger, *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad*, Dublin: New Island Books, 1993, 9.
2. Dermot Bolger, *The Picador Book of Contemporary Irish Fiction*, London: Pan Books, 1993, xxiv.
7 Dermot Bolger, *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad*, Dublin: New Island Books, 1993, 7.
8 Quoted from: Victoria White, "Home Thoughts from Abroad", in: *The Irish Times*, 18 September 1993, 8.
9 Brian Leyden, "Return Ticket", in: *Departures*, Dingle: Brandon Book Publishers, 1992, 92.
10 A. Furnham, "Communicating in Foreign Lands: The Cause, Consequences and Cures of Culture Shock", *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, VI/1 (1993), 91-109, 92.
11 The term "intercultural" seems to me the most appropriate in this context. "Intercultural Communication" is frequently cited as one of the key research areas for the next century, and I think it is both interesting and useful to apply its concepts to literature.
12 Deirdre Madden, *Remembering Light and Stone*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992, 37-38.
13 Philip Davison, *Twist and Shout*, Dingle: Brandon Book Publishers, 1983, 8.
14 Joseph Th. Leersen, *Mere Irish & fíor-ghael*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia,, 1986, 1-12.
15 Günther Blaicher, *Das Deutschlandbild in der Englischen Literatur*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992.
16 Sara Berkeley, *The Swimmer in the Deep Blue Dream*, Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1992, 132.
17 Dermot Bolger, *The Journey Home*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, 213.
18 *Ibid.*, 83-84.
19 Brian Leyden, "Return Ticket", in: *Departures*, Dingle: Brandon Book Publishers, 1992, 92.
20 Dermot Bolger, *Night Shift* (1985), London: Penguin Books, 1993, 20.
21 Sara Berkeley, *The Swimmer in the Deep Blue Dream*, Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1992, 136.
22 Aidan Higgins, "Lebensraum", in: *The Penguin Book of Irish Short Stories*, ed. by Benedict Kiely, London: Penguin Books, 1981, 362.
23 This expression originates from Hugo Dyserinck; quoted from: Joseph Th. Leersen, *Mere Irish & fíor-ghael*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1986, 3.
24 Deirdre Madden, *Remembering Light and Stone*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992, 1.
25 Kate O'Brien, *Mary Lavelle* (1936), London: Virago Press, 1984.
Although the author is older than most of the other authors mentioned in this article I decided to include her for two reasons. Firstly, one of the novels main themes is the intercultural contact between an Irish woman and Spain. Secondly, Kate O'Brien is from Limerick which was the location of the conference at which the paper, which forms the basis for this article, was read.
26 For example in: Hugo Hamilton, "The Compound Assembly of E. Richter", in: *Dublin Where the Palm Trees Grow*, London: Faber and Faber, 1996.
27 Niall Quinn, "Voyovic", in: *Voyovic and Other Stories*, Dublin: Wolhound Press, 1980, 8.
28 *Ibid.*, 10-11.
29 *Ibid.*, 11-12.
30 Deirdre Madden, *Remembering Light and Stone*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992, 2.
31 Emma Donoghue, "Going Back", in: *Ireland in Exile. Irish Writers Abroad*, ed. by Dermot Bolger, Dublin: New Island Books, 1993, 160.

32 Brian Leyden, "Return Ticket", in: *Departures*, Dingle: Brandon Book Publishers, 1992, 98.
33 Dermot Bolger (ed.), *Finbar's Hotel*, London: Picador, 1997, 161-62.
34 Dermot Bolger, *The Journey Home*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, 292-93.
35 The works I am referring to are:
1. Aidan Higgins, *Langrishe, Go Down* (1966), London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1987.
2. Aidan Higgins, *Balcony of Europe*, London: Calder and Boyars, 1972.
3. Aidan Higgins, *Lions of the Grunewald*, London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1993.
36 For example Hugo Hamilton and Gillman Noonan.
37 Philip Davison, *Twist and Shout*, Dingle: Brandon Book Publishers, 1983, 49-50.
38 Gillman Noonan, "Dear Parents, I'm working for the EEC!", in: *The Penguin Book of Irish Short Stories*, ed. by Benedict Kiely, London: Penguin Books, 1981, 532.
39 Gillman Noonan, "A Sexual Relationship", in: *Body and Soul*, ed. by David Marcus, Dublin: Poolbeg press, 1979, 34.
40 *Ibid.*, 35.

History

Pegasus alado. In: Peter Kuch. *Yeats and A.E. "the antagonism that unites dear friends"*. New Jersey: Gerrards Cross, Bucks & Totawa, 1986.



Serpents of Wisdom. In: Peter Kuch. *Yeats and A.E. "the antagonism that unites dear friends"*. New Jersey: Gerrards Cross, Bucks & Totawa, 1986.

The Awakening of the Fires: a Survey of George Russell-AE's Mystical Writings (1897-1933)

Jerry Nolan

Abstract: *A chronicle of the development of George Russell-AE's philosophical and theological powers is established by means of a survey of seven of his major mystical prose works between 1897 and 1933. The exploration of the profound relationship between AE's mysticism and the turbulent Irish politics of the period suggests that AE was indeed a most remarkable Hindu-type teacher in Ireland where the power of his message should still inspire followers.*

AE wrote a letter, dated the 2nd June 1896, to W.B.Yeats from 3 Upper Ely Place Dublin which was then a small residential community of theosophists: 'Dear W.B.Y- I am not going to bother you about any derned thing this time but simply tell you some things about the Ireland behind the veil. You remember my writing to you about the awakening of the ancient fires...The gods have returned to Erin ... They have been seen by several in vision, they will awaken the magical instinct everywhere, and the universal heart of the people will turn to the old druidic beliefs...Out of Ireland will arise a light to transform many ages and peoples...I believe that a new Avatar is about to appear...It will be one of the kingly Avatars, who is at once ruler of men and magic sage...'[1] The 30 year old AE would go on to develop these ideas over the remaining 37 years of a very active life in the service of Ireland's national enlightenment.

AE wrote seven mystical books between 1897 and 1933 wherein may be traced the line of AE's philosophical and theological development during a period of great changes in the state of Ireland . The first work was the essay *The Future of Ireland and the Awakening of the Fires* – in essence, an elaboration of that 1896 letter to W.B.Yeats. The second work was the 1905 collection of short stories *The Mask of Apollo* which showed AE freely drawing inspiration from Greek, Indian, Irish and Jewish sources. The third work was the 1916 social and economic study *The National Being* which put most emphasis on the spirit behind national movements. The fourth work is the 1918 philosophical study *The Candle of Vision* about the nature of mystical vision and imagination with a special emphasis on Ireland's ancient myths and legends. The fifth key work is the 1923 novel *The Interpreters* which presented a lively debate between

people with different views about the new Ireland where the politics of the characters was traced back to motions in Anima Mundi. The sixth work is the 1932 autobiographical reflections *Song and Its Fountains* about the search for the fountain-source of poetry in his own experiences. The seventh work is the 1933 novel *The Avatars* which was AE's valedictory variation on his favourite recurring dream, that of the possible appearance of Hindu-type Avatars in Ireland.

The Future of Ireland and the Awakening of the Fires expressed a strong sense of national *mission*.[2] AE began began with a provocative comparison between general attitudes in the Ireland of the late nineteenth century and the mentality of a child: 'Though so old in tradition, this Ireland of today is a child among nations...There is all the superstitions, the timidity, the lack of judgement, the unthought recklessness of childhood; but combined with what generosity and devotion, and what an unfathomable love of its heroes.' AE's dream was that the Irish people would live up to the destiny of 'The Sacred Isle'-'not to be a petty republic, nor a miniature duplicate in life and aims of great material empires.' AE glimpsed the opportunity for Irish revival after 'its long cycle of night'; but warned in particular, against the threat of industrialisation and mechanisation already looming across the sea in England: 'those black centres of boasted prosperity, factory smoke and mine, the arid life and spiritual death.' The visible lives of the urban workers in industrial Britain caused AE to warn the Irish about going down such a route with some of the apocalyptic fury of a William Blake or a Thomas Carlyle: 'Do you call those miserable myriads a humanity?...There is nothing but a ceaseless energy without; a night terrible as hell within. Is this the only way for us as people?' AE put three suggestions forward as the better way forward for Ireland: learn from the love of nature to be found in Druidic religion; adopt the ancient Celtic heroes as models of human action; and gather wisdom from the lore preserved in Celtic legends and fairy tales.

In 1897 AE was introduced by P.Hannon to Horace Plunkett who was seeking an organiser to set up the rural cooperatives which would enable the Irish farmer to become independent of profiteering moneylenders. AE was happy to become assistant secretary in the Irish Argicultural Organisation Society, or the IAOS, a post which he held for the next thirty years, most notably as the editor of *The Irish Homestead* from 1905 to 1923 and as the editor of *The Irish Statesman* from 1923 to 1930. From the 1890s AE sought to expess heroic ideals not just in literature but in social and political action. [3] For AE, economic problems were never merely economic because he regarded the economic exploitation of workers as primarily the problem of how to address their spiritual degradation in mechanical employment. AE firmly believed in a cooperative commonwealth based on the inherent dignity of every Irish person's ancestral self.

While he may be said to have been a theosophist all his life from the first moment he joined a Theosophical Society in 1890, AE was well aware of the sectarian excesses of the followers of Madame Blatavsky but ever remained true to the promptings of his inner self. This fidelity was sealed in the choice of the name AE. In 1888, George William

Russell saw the word AEON in a book and later discovered that it was a word used by Gnostics to represent the earliest being separated from the gods: AEON, finding himself mirrored in space, became master of the world. Russell's pseudonymn was planned as the full AEON, but when the compositor at the printers split the dipthong and omitted the last syllable, Russell took the printer's error as a divine prompting to use AE as the symbol of his individual emanation from the world-spirit. [4]

The openness of AE to various world cultural influences was made clear in his collection of short stories *The Mask of Apollo*. [5] The title story ,'The Mask of Apollo', was based on the Greek legend about the God Apollo descending to earth in the form of a village priest to explain to the villagers how all human beings have a spiritual origin and destiny. (3-6) In 'The Cave of Lilith', a parable derived from Rabbinical literature and the Kaballah, there was an account of the evil possibilities of the man who settled only for sexual appetite under the influence of the seductress Lilith. (9-13) In 'The Story of a Star', there was reference to the Indian philosophy of Maya, or illusion, when the central character Robert in a little cathedral town saw in a vision the birth of the planet and learnt that life on earth could become a divine breath in the infinite life of God. (17-31) The story 'A Dream of Angus Oge', taken from an Irish legend, was about a boy who had a vision of life among the Immortals. (25-30) In 'The Meditation of Ananda', an Indian tale, recounted the amazing results of an Indian ascetic's love of meditation: a king forgave an enemy; a prisoner was given hope by children's flowers; an old woman was reminded of her happy youth by two lovers; and a leper began to feel happy in the presence of a guru teaching his disciples. (33-37) In 'The Midnight Blossom', another Indian tale, four pilgrims accompanied a yogi up a mountain where they see the holy flower, the midnight blossom, as it turns into the symbol of the lost innocence of the world and the promise of universal harmony. (41-45) In the last story 'The Childhood of Apollo' there was the simple telling of the story of how Diotime, the sybil, first reveals to the Greek God Ancient Beauty in the form of a light from Heaven. (49-53) All of the stories in *The Mask of Apollo* were short and simple, and clearly showed how AE was seeking not just a Celtic Past but the Past of Humankind wherein each culture could be seen as partial manifestation of the great world spirit.

In his capacity as editor of *The Irish Homestead*, the official newspaper of the IAOS, AE developed his own economic and social theories all of which were grounded in his mystical view of the place of human beings in the universe. Above all else, AE hoped that Revival or Rebirth in Ireland would not be based on violent hatreds but would grow out of a love of the universal gods and a remembrance of Ireland's heroic past. AE argued relentlessly in the columns of *The Irish Homestead* about the desirability of building up a just rural civilisation in Ireland by means of the slow consolidation of small cooperatives into general purpose societies wherein the Irish of every background would work together and wherein an aristocracy of talent would replace the politics of the demagogue. The period beginning in 1913 was a confusing and disappointing time for AE as events began to happen in Ireland which distressed him. Until 1913 AE had

mainly stayed out of what he called 'the politics of time'; but then his great preoccupation with rural matters was transformed by the Dublin Strike and lock-out. The perceived tragedy of labour in Dublin, in particular the behaviour of Murphy and the arrest of Larkin, provoked AE to speak out: he wrote an article for *The Irish Times*, spoke in London's Albert Hall and published an article in the London *Times* when it was turned down by Dublin newspapers. [6] Yet AE had mixed feelings: on the one hand, forebodings about the probable violent alliance of labour activists and republican nationalists, of the Citizen Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, united in the face of such massive injustice; but on the other hand, a sense of a new beginning for his own mission as he found himself at last including both the rural and the urban workers in his plans for the New Ireland.

AE began to respond to the Third Home Rule Bill of 1914 by contemplating the prospect of a free Ireland under Home Rule in the new world order which would follow the ending of the First World War. He titled the work in which he gathered together his ideas about the New Ireland *The National Being*. The mystical term 'The National Being' referred to the soul of the Irish people waiting to express themselves distinctively in new civilised institutions. AE was hopeful that Ireland might achieve a civilisation comparable to the ancient Greeks. To achieve that distinction, Ireland needed to produce original thinkers and trusted leaders, at a time when AE had to admit that Ireland seemed an intellectual desert 'where people read nothing and think nothing'. In the vanguard of national development were the challenges facing rural and urban workers who needed to grow in the ways of cooperation. For AE, the only true emancipation of labour would be achieved not by revolution but by evolution towards the creation of cooperatives which would eventually be independent of interference from the state, the press and the banks; and capable and confident enough to foster the civic virtues of a common citizenry.

AE argued an Irish National Being which would combine democracy and aristocracy as in ancient times: 'Any system which would suppress the aristocratic independent intellect should be regarded as contrary to the Irish genius, and inimical to the national being' [7] A little later AE asserted:'An aristocracy of lordly and chivalrous heroes is bound in time to create a great democracy by the reflection of their characters in the mass, and the idea of the divine right of kings is succeeded by the idea of the divine right of the people.'[8] According to AE, the urge to express nationality came from the divine world; and the creation of a national being was the best way to release the incorruptible spiritual atom of each free citizen into the universe: 'The spirit in man is wrought in the likeness to Deity, which is the that harmony and unity of Being which upholds the universe; and by the very nature of the spirit, while it asserts its freedom, its impulses lead it to a harmony with all life, to a solidarity or brotherhood with it.' [9] The voice of AE in *The National Being* was predominantly prophetic, rather than very specific: he was striving to anticipate the forms of the institutions of an Irish state which would create a Gaeldom made up of a commingling of various races, peoples and creeds on the island. *The National Being* presented a rare vision of a harmonious fusion of cultural

and political nationalism which seemed not only desirable but which was beginning to work in the activities of the cooperative societies.

But the politics of the time continued to diverge from AE's politics of eternity. The brutal executions of the 1916 leaders greatly increased popular support for revolutionary violence as the only way of achieving Irish independence. At first AE wrote nothing about the Rising. In 1917 the British government convened a Home Rule Convention in July to which AE was invited to represent the nationalist viewpoint, in the absence of the Sinn Fein delegates.[10] AE attended a few meetings of the convention, but resigned as the way towards Home Rule seemed to be increasingly blocked by politicians on both sides. Then AE stood back from the politics of time to explore further the politics of eternity: this he did in his longest book about mysticism *The Candle of Vision*.

The Candle of Vision began with AE's reminiscences of the discovery of the spiritual life within himself when he was sixteen or seventeen years of age: 'I began to be astonished with myself, for, walking along country roads , intense and passionate imaginations of another world, of an interior nature began to empower me. They were like strangers who suddenly enter a house, who brush aside the doorkeeper, and who will not be denied. Soon I knew they were the rightful owners and heirs of the house of the body.'[11] The image of 'The Candle of Vision' represented the consciousness of divinity within the self, achieved by the means of vision and imagination. AE referred to Plato's idea of the One in his description of the source of the divine vision which was 'a memory greater than our own, the treasure-house of august memories in the innumerable being of Earth.' AE's idea was somewhat similar to the Yeatsian idea of 'anima mundi' or 'spiritus mundi'. According to AE, there was a great range of images to choose from in the vast storehouse of Humanity's Great Memory: 'The beauty for which men is still shining; Helen is there in her Troy, and Deirdre wears the beauty which blasted the Red Branch.'[12] In his only play in 1902, AE had portrayed Deirdre as a seeress in the manner of a Greek tragedy.[13]

AE's interest in the origin of creation led him to speculate on the origins and nature of dreams which often became windows into the ancient and primitive archtypes of human experience. In the chapter 'The Architecture of Dreams', AE suggested that dreams had their origin in transcendental forces at work within individuals. In sharp contrast to Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams', where dreams were mostly explained in terms of repressed sexual desires, AE's interpretation lay most emphasis on dreams as the preordinated method of releasing visionary energies.[14]

There was speculation in *The Candle of Vision* about the nature of language and the nature of power. One of AE's great hopes was that the primitive language, the language of the gods which must have once mirrored more clearly visions of divinity in the universe, might be one day discovered and deciphered . For AE, power, which could be used for good or ill, was at its most potent in the poet's visionary power which AE dubbed 'The Candle in the Forehead'. In the chapter 'Celtic Cosmogony', AE used his

own visionary power to conjure up the gods from the Celtic storehouse of memories. His God of All Creation was Lir. Out of Lir came Mananan Mac Lir , the god of divine imagination associated with the sacred hazel which was the Celtic Tree of Life. There was Dana, the mother of the gods and the first spiritual form of beauty. There was Angus, the god of love. *The Candle of Vision* climaxed in the celebration of Celtic deities because AE expected the new Gaels to wish to reclaim their lost birthright. Such a wish needed to replace a Christianity which had failed to inspire vision and imagination in Ireland: 'Our religions make promises to be fulfilled beyond the grave because they have no knowledge now to be put to the test, but the ancients spoke of a divine vision to be attained while we are yet in the body.'[15]

The Interpreters, published in 1922 during the year in which AE refused to become a member of the Irish Free State Senate, had a Preface in which AE distanced himself from the contemporary turmoil by claiming that the action was set in an European city and in a future century; but clearly for the Irish, the historical context can be only Dublin at the time of the 1916 Rising. All the emphasis fell on ideas: 'I am not interested in the creation of character but in tracking political moods back to spiritual origins.'[16] The narrative started with a young poet Lavelle hurrying through the streets of the unnamed European city on a mission connected with the revolt of a small country against the tyranny of an empire which had long held it in subjection: 'After centuries of frustrated effort the nation long dominated by an alien power which seemed immutable, had a resurrection...It would become like Egypt, Assyria, Greece, or Rome.'[17] Lavelle's band of rebels managed to commander a city arsenal only to find that the unguarded gates were an inviting trap. As the rebels were arrested, airships appeared over the city to quell the insurrection. The airships were like 'winged shapes of dusk and glitter' suggesting a perverted vision of extraterrestrial winged beings. Lavelle and the others were thrown into prison. During a long night, the prisoners rehearsed the reasons for the abortive rebellion which revealed various interpretations of events. AE linked the speakers with viewpoints which can be easily linked with prominent figures at the time: indeed, one critic has claimed justly that *The Interpreters* is a virtual handbook of attitudes in Revival Ireland.[18] What was most exposed in the symposium-type discussion were the differences in the disunited nation; 'the scattered portions of the one nature dramatically sundered as the soul is in a dream.' The one very contrived addition to the prisoners was the character of Heyt who was included to represent the imperialist standpoint.

Lavelle, poet and idealist, had a vision of a heroic society and a strong sense of group identity. Leroy, anarchist and idealist, wanted to escape from imperialism and nationalism. Lavelle's most eloquent defence of the rebellion was set out in term of a heroic and spiritual culture struggling against an alien and mechanistic culture. Heyt, the President of the Air Federation, spoke passionately in favour of the ideal of a controlled world state as the inevitable result of evolutionary processes in an age of complicated scientific and technological development – even as he spoke, Heyt's airships were continuing to obliterate all traces of rebellion in the society outside of the prison cell.

Lavelle and Leroy were in agreement about about opposing an unitary world state but for opposite reasons. Lavelle's argument was cosmic: 'if the universe is a spiritual being, everything finally must be in harmony with it, and wild creatures, the elements even, undergo a transfiguration, fierce things becoming gentle.' Leroy's argument was individualistic: 'The Shark becoming vegetarian...There would be no place in your universe for an individualist like myself. I would be a gnat irritating its spiritual body.'[19]

The book's central cultural debate crystalised in the debate between Lavelle and Heyt: between myth, history and patriotism, on the one side; and science, moderisation and internationalism, on the other side. Other prisoners joined in the debate. There was Rian, the architect dedicated to beauty in this world. There was Culain, the socialist, who argued that the common people's demand for beneficent institutions to relieve human suffering and injustice must be addressed not by individual effort, nor by legends of the past, nor by a world state but by policies of enlightened social planning where altruism must replace selfishness. A prisoner named Rudd interjected at one stage to say that say that he depended on his priest to tell him all about matters like God and the next world. Finally, the historian Brehon was asked to reconcile somehow the conflicting ideas. Brehon began by claiming that he himself had held all these views at some stage or other of his life and went on to declare a reconciliation in terms of the dialectic of human intellectual evolution: Lavelle was the earth spirit celebrating the differences in nations and cultures; Culain was the power of Logos, the moving spirit in history which wins equality and welfare for the oppressed; Leroy was a Promethean figure who stood firm for the absolute autonomy of the individual and the the integrity of the indefinable element in each soul; Heyt was the agency of materialist science subordinating individual interests in the name of progress. Brehon himself stood for evolution not revolution in human affairs: 'The avatars of the spirit, the Christs and the Buddhas, do more by single gentleness than conquerors with armies fo, and build more enduring kingdoms in the spirit of man.'[20] In listening patiently to the warring opinions of his fellow-prisoners and in separating the essential from the incidental patterns, Brehon in his judgements became like Socrates in prison surrounded by his argumentative followers.

One of the most important moments in the prison-cell symposium occurred near the end when Lavelle was inspired by Brehon's judgement to add lines to his already composed poem 'Michael'.[21] The completed poem was one of over 400 hundred lines written in four beat couplets. In the poem, Michael comes from Donegal where medieval tales of voyages inspire him to embark on a visionary voyage to Ildathach, the many-coloured land of ancient Irish myth. Afterwards Michael has to work in a city's dingy air in a warehouse where he feels like a wild creature in a net. After Michael has read about one who 'with his single sword/stayed a great army at a ford', Michael becomes a revolutionary at Easter who is shot among the city's burning piles: 'Yet Michael felt within him rise/ the rapture that is sacrifice.' The lines added in prison by Lavelle included: 'So it may be that Michael died/for some far other countryside/than that grey island he

had known./ Yet on his dream of it was thrown/ some light from that consuming fire/ which is the end of all desire...all shadows are thy of one thing/to which all life is journeying.' Through this final imagery, Lavelle was endeavouring to transform even revolutionary violence by the consuming fire of an AE vision of the National Being.

At dawn, the prisoners were informed that the arsenal in which they were imprisoned was about to be destroyed just as they themselves were about to be destroyed. Then Lavelle revealed the identity of Heyt: The prisoner is not one of us. He is here by error. He is for empire and is not worthy to die with us', whereupon Heyt left 'to make the world in his own image'.[22] AE left a question hanging fire at the end of the work: how would the dream of the martyred rebels catch fire in the National Being of the new Ireland?

Inevitably Irish readers will reflect on the 1916 Easter Rising in the light of *The Interpreters*. AE felt so passionately involved in the sentiments of Lavelle's poem 'Michael' that he printed it in Selected Poems, immediately followed by the poem 'A Prisoner (Brixton, September 1920) about the death of Terence MacSweeney on hunger strike. In the latter poem MacSweeney's will power was compared to the Promethean Will 'even as the fabled Titan chained upon the hill' and later there was a salute to Mac Sweeney as Hero: 'The candles of God already are burning row on row:/ Farewell, light bringer; fly to thy fouuntain again.'[23] AE's attempts to transfigure the republican violence of the contemporary maelstrom in terms of heroic myth, Celtic and Greek, now suggests to me a form of blindness, rather than of vision.[24] With the gift of hindsight, the Rising itself is probably best seen mystically as an enactment of the heroic Christian blood sacrifice on Good Friday in the hope of an Easter resurrection. The ultimate consequences of Patrick Pearse's 'triumph of failure eventually led to a narrowly-based version of the National Being very far removed from AE's Ideal for Ireland What most outraged AE was that the new Irish Free State tended to disguise its true self behind pseudo- Celtic heroic masks. AE never convincingly confronted this triumph of republicanism ; the less painful alternatives were to encourage the new Irish realist writers like Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain, or to imagine the triumph of Heyt which he did in his last prose work *The Avatars*.

Before *The Avatars*, there was *Song and Its Fountains*. From the vantage point of a mellowed late middle age, AE ranged through his life reflecting on incidents, friendships, visions, books, his own poetry. In contrast to *The Candle of Vision,* there is less emphasis on the persuasion of others to find the truth and much more emphasis on the desire for intellectual understanding of himself. At the root of the central quest lay the urge to find the fountain-source of his experiences of invisible worlds: 'to see our lives over again is to have memories of two lives and intentions of many others, to discover powers we had not imagined in ourselves who were the real doers of our deeds, to have a sense that a being, the psyche, was seeking incarnation in a body.'[25] AE clearly demonstrated that his approach to life's ultimate questions was by now far removed from the Western preoccupation with formulating the laws of physical nature; what lay

at the heart of his enquiry was an understanding by means of self-analysis and devotion which had as its goal, that final state of spiritual freedom and harmony in the Hindu-god Bramah.

In remembering his life experiences, AE found much evidence of a dual nature in the psyche; 'it was a being in part avidly desirous of life, while another part was cold to this, but was endlessly seeking for the Spirit.' Everywhere there was evidence of intuitions in instants when 'we receive, according to our capacity, vision, imagination, knowledge of past and future, illuminations about the nature of things, wisdom and poetry. The fountain of all these lies within us where the psyche in ceaseless ecstasy responds to the Will that moves the Universe.'[26] From his reflections on the multitudinous intuitions in his life, AE's most paradoxical discovery was that as he became aware of himself as an enlightened and compassionate individual, his soul became aware of the Soul of the World, of the Divine Essence, which permeates and informs everything from the smallest atom of matter to men and gods.

Believing himself to be an enlightened and compassionate, AE still longed to be a powerful instrument in the service of Ireland. In *The Avatars*, AE claimed to be writing a futurist fantasy, but he was actually going back to the time when he believed in the close connection between the kindling of the fires and the future of Ireland. The strongest impulse in the work was the quest to recapture the excitement, the romance and the faith of the summer of 1896 when AE and friends prepared for the coming of the Great Avatar, in anticipation of Madame Blavatsky's prophecy of an imminent great growth of cosmic consciousness and human solidarity. The Avatar in Hindu belief is a god who descends to earth in human form: the word is from the Sanskrit which means literally 'he hoes down or passes beyond'. For Hindus the avatars are the creative geniuses of the human race, as well as the compassionate heroes and enlightened leaders who decisively affect the destiny of cultures. The work of the Avatars is always in visible and hidden and is recognised only in the human lives which they have utterly changed. The earliest Avatar in recorded history, in the Hindu Sacred Book 'The Bhagavad Gita', was Lord Krishna who descended amidst humanity on the eve of the Age of Iron to reveal the attributes of the Sage. AE story was set in a country where the scientific state exercised strict technological control within the cities but were prepared to yield the rural areas to protest minority groups. Two friends escape from the nightmare city and head for the West of Ireland. Paul Heron is a painter and Michael Conaire is a philosopher. A community of artists develop who are visited by avatars in mysterious and elusive ways – the avatars are Aodh, a changeling youth with magic powers, and Aoife, a beautiful girl fires with vision all about her: 'The strangers had come to those communities who were creating through the arts a culture in harmony with their spiritual intuition.'[27] In addition to Paul Heron and Michael Conaire, other members of the community include Felim Carew, a poet; Mark, a sculptor; and Michael Gregor, a skeptical philosopher among the mystics. Gregor is the one who warns Heron about the state's sudden decision

to crack down on all rebels. At a festival in honour of Aodh and Aoife, the state police strike: Has any beauty been in the world which was not pursued by beasts?'[28]

In the skirmishes which follow, Gregor is killed as the first martyr for a faith he did not hold. The state fails to crush creative dissent. The dissenters put themselves under the protection of the Avatars and plan to build a great temple, filled with works of art, to honour their gods: all of which will be made possible by the financial support of an American millionaire by the name of Clubborn. A musician Rory Lavelle, the nephew of the rebel Lavelle in *The Interpreters*, joins the community and proclaims that the rebellion must now be against a monstrous state which is stifling human creative energies. While the philosopher Conaire warns against the beasts within the movement who may distort the mysteries into forms of sentimental or sexual gratification, the greatest problem for the community is that the artists have to live on the margins of a state, while ideally they should be at its active centre. Yet the novel ends on a note of supreme personal fulfilment for Paul: 'He thought of that great adventure he and his friends were beginning, and what transfiguration in life and nature it would mean...He knew out of what anguish of body and soul, through what dark martyrdom, came the resurrection and the life but he thought of these in peace.'[29]

A perceptible sadness coloured *The Avatars*: AE was only too aware of how far short of his National Being the Irish Free State had fallen; and of the fact that so many of his old idealistic friends had passed out of his life by the 1930s as he himself recognised in an introductory note: 'The friends with whom I once spoke of such things are dead or gone from me. If they were with me, out of dream, vision and intuition shared between us, I might have made the narrative to glow. As it is, I have been able to light my way with my own flickering lantern.'

To sum up: Undoubtedly AE remained passionately interested in cultural ideals throughout his life. As an intellectual, he explored, most often in the context of the Irish Revival, three important areas of philosophical interest: the cultural centrality of a heroic ancestral self; the cosmic challenge to the individual to develop visionary and imaginative powers; and the daunting political task for states to create living communities for citizens within nations and across nations in an increasingly state-centred scientific age. The method of discourse most favoured by AE was debate, an approach which an editor who inspired many differing writers to want to be published in 'The Irish Homestead' and 'The Irish Statesman'. AE's strong tendency to practise inclusiveness worked best as an editor , but was less successful in his attempts to harmonise too quickly serious political differences within the National Being. Nevertheless AE's intellectual drive towards cultural synthesis was the great strength in his form of cultural nationalism.

The prophetic and apocalyptic tones of AE's writings suggest a religious teacher. The lines of his poetry which best reveal the first awakening of AE's fires of perception were included in the 1897 pamphlet when he was at the very beginning of his formation as a Hindu-type teacher in an Ireland whose concerns became his concerns:

The child of earth in his heart grows burning
Mad for the night and the deep unknown;
His alien flame in a dream returning
Seats himself on an ancient throne.
When twilight over the mountains fluttered
And night with its starry millions came,
I too had dreams; the thoughts I have uttered
Came from my heart that was touched by flame.[30]

Notes

1 *Letters from AE*, ed. Alan Denson (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1961), 17-18.
2 'The Future of Ireland and the Awakening of the Fires' was first published in *The Irish Theosophist* and then as a pamphlet in 1897 (12pp at 3p). The text appears in *The Descent of the Gods* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Symthe, 1988) ed. Raghavan Iyer & Nandini Iyer, 354-361.
3 See Chapter 111 'The Disciple Becomes an Irishman (1894-1897) in Henry Summerfield, *That Myriad-Minded Man: a Biography of G.W. Russell-AE* , 59-85.
4 *ibid.*, 30-1.
5 AE, *The Mask of Apollo* (London: Macmillan, 1903).
6 Summerfield, *op.cit.*, 160-166.
7 AE, *The National Being: Some Thoughts on Irish Polity* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1916), 131.
8 *ibid.*, 165.
9 *ibid.*, 163.
10 Summerfield, *op.cit., 182-186.*
11 AE, *The Candle of Vision* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 4-5.
12 *ibid.*, 61.
13 AE, *Deirdre* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1907).
14 *The Candle of Vision*, 89-101.
15 *ibid.*, 156-161.
16 AE, *The Interpreters* (London: Macmillan, 1922), viii.
17 *ibid.*, 5.
18 John Foster Wilson, *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival* (Sycracuse: Univ.Press, 1987), 68.
19 *The Interpreters*, 20.
20 *ibid.*, 140.
21 *ibid.*, 161-172.
22 *ibid.* 179-180.
23 AE, *Selected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1935) for 'A Prisoner', 128; and for 'Michael', 129-139.
24 For an interesting critical comment of AE's view of the 1916 Easter Rising ,see 'Writing "Easter 1916"' by Peter Kuch in *That Other World*, ed. Bruce Stewart (Gerards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998), Vol. 2 , 1-17.
25 AE, *Song and Its Fountains* (London: Macmillan, 1932), 2-3.
26 *ibid.*, 66-7.
27 AE, *The Avatars* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 114.
28 *ibid.*, 172.
29 *ibid.*, 188.
30 *The Descent of the Gods*, 354.

Reflections, Misrecognitions, Messianisms and Identifications: Towards an Epistemology of Irish Nationalism[1]

Eugene O'Brien

Abstract: *This essay attempts to offer a critique of the mode of knowledge through which nationalism exists, and by which it operates. Placing nationalism within Lacan's concept of the imaginary, it traces the dyadic structure of a people and a place through various examples of Irish nationalist discourse. It also analyses the epistemological structure of nationalism in terms of the creation of a specular image of the ethnie which acts as a point of origin, and a telos, of that ethnie.*

Etymologically, the word nationalism can be traced from the Old French *nation*, which was a learned borrowing from the Latin *natio, nationis*, meaning "stock" or "race", back to the root term *nasci*, "to be born" (Bernhart 1370). In Roman law, issues of nationality were adjudicated in terms of the *jus sanguinis*, the "law of blood", based on the principle that a person's nation is the same as that of his or her parents, and the *jus soli*, the "law of the soil", based on the principle that a person's nation is that in which he or she was born. What this suggests is that the roots of nationalism lie in racial, territorial, linguistic and ideological homogeneity, a homogeneity expressed and solidified by linguistic, cultural and religious practices, and by the exclusion of any other racial input[2]. In an Irish context, if one lives on the Falls Road, one is a nationalist, if one lives on the Shankill, one is conversely a unionist.

The question here, of course, arises when one attempts to isolate the constitutive factors that make one a nationalist or a unionist. Are such designations merely signified by one's address, or are there other factors which produce these subject positions? What, in other words, are the modalities of knowledge at stake in defining nationalism? The attempts to clarify and define such identities, keeping in mind all the time the etymological derivation of "nationalism", are surely central in any study of this topic. As Katherine Verdery remarked, during the 1980s and 1990s, the scholarly industry built up around the concepts of nation and nationalism became "so vast and so interdisciplinary as to

rival all other contemporary foci of intellectual production."[3] Paul Treanor has outlined nine academic disciplines which study nationalism and the concept of the nation state: political geography; international relations; political science; cultural anthropology; social psychology; political philosophy; international law; sociology and history (1.5).[4]

Ironically however, despite their number, definitions of nationalism are notoriously vague. For example, Benedict Anderson, in his *Imagined Communities*, defines the nation, and by extrapolation, nationalism, as an "imagined political community". This definition has achieved widespread currency, but its conceptual force would seem to be etiolated by a *caveat* in the next paragraph, where Anderson notes that all communities larger than primordial villages, are "imagined". Hence, the "imagined community" can hardly be seen to be synchronous with any specific definition of nationalism in itself. Other attempts at defining nationalism are similarly fraught with difficulty.

John A. Hall provides a conspectus of some contemporary notions in his essay "Nationalisms, Classified and Explained". Drawing on the work of Breuilly, Gellner and Hobsbawm[5], he offers what he terms an omnibus definition, seeing nationalism as the "primacy of a particular nation" (9). Hall notes that this definition is dependent on a further definition of "nation", one which he sees as more problematic, going on to cite Gellner's comment that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist" (*Thought and Change* 169)[6]. However, these definitions tell us comparatively little about the mode of knowledge that is enunciated through nationalism, its *ordo cognoscendi*. Indeed, the title of the essay suggests that nationalism *qua* nationalism is beyond definition; as Hall puts it, the use of the plural in his title indicates that, for him, "no single, universal theory of nationalism is possible" (8). Of course, if this is true, then one needs to define each "nationalism" separately, and any form of connection between different "nationalisms" collapses: what is left is a relativistic series of definitions, each of which is contextually unique, and which has at best, paratactic relationships with other definitions of nationalism[s].

Gellner, on the other hand, offers a different perspective, briskly defining nationalism on page one of *Nations and Nationalism*:

> Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of this principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind. (1)

While this definition achieves clarity in terms of stressing the emotive dimension of nationalism, it begs the question of the epistemological status of nationalism by taking

"political" and "national" as givens, and by also taking notions of ethnicity as overt and in no need of explication. Later in the same page, he restates his definition by asserting that: "nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones" (1). The problem here is the collapsing of the categories of ethnicity and politics. If ethnicity becomes the dominant factor, then politics can never develop beyond a basic binarism of selfhood and alterity, with alterity being seen as wholly alien, resulting in the predication of all political endeavour on ensuring the sanctity of the *status quo*, as defined by the criteria of ethnicity.

In other words, politics as the practice of allowing people to live together in some form of social structure, becomes attenuated to a self-replicating orthodoxy where notions of the people, of the *Volk*, are the *terminus a quo* from whence all activities are initiated. Interestingly, Gellner utilises affective criteria in his definition, adverting to nationalist "*sentiment*" as involving the "feeling of anger" or the "feeling of satisfaction" aroused by the thwarting or fulfilment of its aims. His ultimate definition of a "nationalist *movement*" as one which is "actuated" by such sentiment, seems to me to come close to what we might see as important facets of the epistemology of nationalism. These emotive and affective factors are, I would suggest, seminal to the constitution of the nationalist *Weltanschauung*, and also to the imperative which creates the selfhood which I see as central to the functioning of nationalism.

If there is to be a core definition of nationalism *qua* nationalism (*pace* Hall), then surely it must focus on the mode of creation of the ethnic group, or on the methods used in imagining the identity of the community in question, or on the rhetorical and suasive strategies used in terms of creating nationalistic sentiment. In many ways, this "gathering", what Heidegger has termed *Versammlung*, a notion to which he always grants special privilege, is seminal in terms of how nationalistic discourse operates. As Julia Kristeva remarks: "I don't know who I am or even if I am, but I belong with my national and religious roots" (2). It is the epistemological nature of this *Zusammengehören*, "belonging together"[7], that is the subject of my inquiry in this paper. Narrative, both in terms of its enunciation and its audience, is a seminal trope, as it offers a verbal mirror in which the *Versammlung* can be seen, reified and hypostasised.

The modality of these creations or inventions, what Anderson terms "the style in which they are imagined" (6), is crucial if we are to come to any understanding of how nationalism utters and fashions itself. To quote Geoffrey Bennington: "[a]t the origin of the nation, we find a story of the nation's origin" ("Postal politics" 121), and there can be no doubting that this reflexive form of narrative is a seminal constituent of the epistemology of nationalism. Narratives create the myths of nationalism, and these are both protean and similar in that they feature a telling to the self of the self, a telling which, in the process, is performative in that it is creative of that self, at both conscious and unconscious levels.

Such myths of selfhood, or of the *Volk*, are I would suggest, part of the kernel of the nationalist *imaginaire*[8]; indeed narratives can be seen as examples of "the institutional

uses of fiction in nationalist movements" (Brennan 47). Bennington's focus on narrative allows us to overcome the antinomies already observed in terms of the problematics of defining nationalism. Every culture defines itself through a process of narrative imagination, a re-telling of stories about its own past which reaffirms the ritual unities of the culture in question. For example, Irish people remember the 1916 Easter rebellion as a nodal point in the political and cultural reaffirmation of Irishness *per se*. Around this period, the major political parties, or their precursors, were founded, and the Gaelic, Celtic, Irish and Irish Literary revivals were set in motion. The Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association were set up, and the gradual adequation between the nationalist movement, both political and cultural, and the Catholic church came into being. This period of colonial upheaval – with the almost standard attendant processes of nationalist consciousness-raising, independence movement, armed rebellion, war of independence/liberation and an ensuing civil war – became part of the process of a national *imaginâire*, defining Irishness as it emerged from the colonial shadow of Britain. This whole period, or more correctly, the narrative enculturation of this period, became a nodal point, or *point de capiton* from which particular notions of Irishness were traced.

As Richard Kearney has suggested, such a process of "ideological recollection of sacred foundational acts often serves to integrate and legitimate a social order" (*Imagining* 166). However, he goes on to cite a warning note sounded by Paul Ricoeur, who points out that such a process of reaffirmation can be perverted "into a mystificatory discourse which serves to uncritically vindicate or glorify the established political powers". Ricoeur's point is essentially that in such instances the symbols of a community become fixed and fetishised; they serve as lies (29). Ricoeur has noted that imagination can function as two opposite poles. At one pole is the confusion of myth with reality brought about by a "non-critical consciousness" which conflates the two into a societal "given". At the other end of the axis, where "critical distance is fully conscious of itself", "imagination is the very instrument of the critique of reality", because it enables "consciousness to posit something at a distance from the real and thus produce the alterity at the very heart of existence" (*Imagining* 147).[9]

I would argue that the narrative structure of nationalism is clearly allied to Ricoeur's initial pole, that of the confusion of myth with reality through a "non-critical consciousness." Such a narrative structure functions mainly at an unconscious level in culture and society, creating structural effects in terms of ethnic and racial stereotypes which function as reflective images of the *ethnie* (an organic community, wherein social, cultural, religious and ideological practices cohere in a synthesis which promotes self-definition) (Smith chapter 6)[10]. Logic, reason and critical thinking allow us to discriminate between the value of stories as fictions, and their constative, truth-telling status. However, by functioning at an unconscious level, through formal and informal apparatuses of communication, narratives and myth create a powerful drive, through which nationalist ideology can be disseminated. They create an imaginary selfhood which is reflected back into society as an ideal form of identity.

The stock example of such a process is Nazi Germany in the 1930s, but there are multifarious examples to be found of the unconscious effect of narratives that are uncritically equated with constative discourse. In an Irish context[11], perhaps the *locus classicus* of this type of nationalist narrative operating at a pre-critical, unconscious level is Patrick Pearse's rewriting of the history of the United Irish rebellion of 1798. Pearse was a central figure in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a sub-grouping within the Irish Volunteers, who organised a rebellion against the British Government in 1916[12]. In his efforts to create a narrative of nationalist resistance to British rule in Ireland, Pearse specifically set out to "*remember*" the 1798 rebellion in highly specific terms.

The 1798 rebellion was led by Theobald Wolfe Tone[13]. Tone, a product of the French Enlightenment, had little time for religion, and saw the aim of his organisation, The United Irishmen, as the creation of a country where the terms Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter would be subsumed under the common name of Irishman (O'Brien *Irish Identity* 66). Tone himself, as Marianne Elliott has observed, was a deist, "who disliked institutionalised religion and sectarianism of any hue". More importantly in the present context, she makes the point that based on his writings, he had "no time whatsoever for the romantic Gaelicism that has become part of Irish nationalism" (1). Hence, if Pearse wished to create a seamless narrative wherein Tone was a historical nationalist avatar, and a Pearsean precursor, he would seem to have some factual historical difficulties with which to contend.

His response to these difficulties is a classic *exemplum* of what I have termed nationalist narrative. In an oration given at the grave of Tone, in Bodenstown, County Kildare, in 1913, Pearse enfolded Tone in the following narrative structure:

> We have come to one of the holiest places in Ireland; holier even than the place where Patrick sleeps in Down[14]. Patrick brought us life, but this man died for us. He was the greatest of Irish Nationalists.... We have come to renew our adhesion to the faith of Tone: to express once more our full acceptance of the gospel of Irish Nationalism which he was the first to formulate in worldly terms. This man's soul was a burning flame, so ardent, so generous, so pure, that to come into communion with it is to come unto a new baptism, into a new regeneration and cleansing. (II, 58)

Here there is no attempt to commemorate the historical Wolfe Tone, the "child of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment" whose hope was that Enlightenment rationality would supplant what he regarded as "superstitious beliefs" (Cruise O'Brien 100). Instead, Tone is suasively captated into Pearse's own vision of Irish history, a vision which will be used to create a nationalist *imaginaire*. It is not accidental that Anderson has noted a "strong affinity" between nationalist and religious imaginings (10). Indeed, he has made the valid point that the dawn of the age of nationalism coincides with the dusk of religious thought (11). Both tend to work with some form of "sacred text". The notion of a sacred text is important here, as the response to such a text is not that of close reading, or of

some form of rational critical engagement; rather is it an acceptance, a belief, and a ready acknowledgement of the "truth" that is revealed by this text, and an attempt to structure identity so as to mirror that truth.

In many ways, the effects of nationalist and religious texts can be seen as allomorphisms of each other, as both can eschew rationality and veridical discourse in order to create a mystical synthesis which transcends such prosaic matters. In an Irish context, and speaking specifically in terms of the Gaelic and Celtic revivals, mysticism was part of the cement that helped to "energise the ideologues of the revival and shape their thoughts" (Jackson 172), and it is this mystical imperative that we see at work in Pearse's discourse.

His frame of reference is directed at an audience whose unconscious is saturated with Roman Catholic religiosity. The rhetorical device *polyptoton*[15] is used to cement the adequation of Tone with Saint Patrick in the opening line. This adequation transforms Tone from an historical figure, subject to the veridical discourse of history, into a mythico-religious one, comparable to the legendary Saint Patrick, about whom comparatively little is known, apart from his spectacular religious success. The connection between the two, the hinge or *brisure* upon which the whole rhetorical structure turns, is based on this comparison in terms of the holiness of a specific place. This connection is then developed in the contradiction that while Patrick "brought us life", a phrase which clearly implies religious life, Tone "died for us". By now, the adequation has done its work, and the unconscious religious background fills in any blanks in the narrative. In Catholic teaching, the notion of sacrifice, the one for the many, is a central tenet. The adequation between Tone and Saint Patrick is now elided and a stronger connection is set up. Given the religious frame of reference (reinforced by the lexical field of the paragraph: "faith"; gospel"; "soul"; "communion"; "baptism"; "regeneration"; "cleansing"), the notion of someone dying "for us" implies an adequation between Tone and Christ, and at a broader level, between nationalism and religion. In a manner that is paradigmatic of nationalist epistemology, both the narrative, and the image of these heroic figures contribute to the creation of the "us" in question. This *Versammlung* is predicated on the narrative, with its religious and mythical overtones.

A further dimension of this classic example of nationalist narrative is to be found in the anagogical vision of nationalism as a force which ultimately transcends issues of real-world politics and discourse. "Irish Nationalism" (the double capitals are indicative of the status of the term), is seen, not as a political set of principles, nor as a response to historical pressures and circumstances; instead it is seen as a "faith", a belief-system which, by definition, is not subject to any form of rational or intellectual critique. As a "faith", nationalism is not required to set out its aims, goals and methodologies; all that is needed is for the people (and Pearse constantly uses the vatic "us"), to give it their "full acceptance". Tone's special value, and it is here that the unconscious religious agglomeration of images is used to full effect, is his ability to "formulate" the "gospel of Irish Nationalism" in "worldly terms". It is as if this nationalist gospel has some form of mystical existence, and requires some form of elite interpreter, some clerisy, to reveal

its truth to "us". Here one thinks of Ernest Renan's aphorism that a "nation is a soul, a spiritual principle" (Renan 19), as this is precisely the realm of discourse which Pearse utilises, as it has shaping power over our notions of the present[16].

In terms of this use of the personal pronoun, first person plural, the relationship between the people, "us", and this "gospel" is reflexive and mutually constitutive. We become "the people" through our shared allegiance to the narrative in question, at both conscious and unconscious levels. The "adhesion to the faith of Tone" is what creates the notion of the Irish people, or at least those of the people who merit the designation "Irish Nationalists". Tone, like Saint Patrick and Christ, becomes one more character in this messianistic, nationalist narrative. His rhetorical captation from historical figure into mythico-religious icon has been achieved; communion with him brings about "baptism", "regeneration" and "cleansing". Pearse clearly saw, like Renan, that "a heroic past...is the social capital in which one bases a national idea" (Renan 19); however, unlike Renan, he clearly felt that a religious capital would consolidate this investment. This point is explicitly outlined by Pearse later in the same year:

> The people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah, the people labouring, scourged, crowned with thorns, agonising and dying, to rise again immortal and impassable. For peoples are divine and are the only thing that can properly be spoken of under figures drawn from the divine *epos*. If we do not believe in the divinity of our people we have had no business, or very little, all these years in the Gaelic League. (II, 91-92)[17]

The significance of such ethno-religious nationalistic adequations has been the subject of much discussion. Hugh Seton-Watson, writing about the influence of Zionism on Israeli politics, makes the point that "religious heritage...directly reinforces national consciousness" (403), and in the case of the above quotation from Pearse, this is very clear[18].

For Pearse, and we must keep in mind his notion of Tone as the first to formulate in worldly terms the gospel of Irish nationalism, there is something quasi-sacred about the nation. Régis Debray, in an attempt to study the constituent factors of the historical nation-state, has traced, in nationalism, the process whereby "life itself is rendered untouchable or sacred. This sacred character constitutes the real national question" (26). The teleology of Pearse's rhetorical transformation of the people into their own Messiah is to render them "immortal and impassable". Nationalistic selfhood creates a people, a *Volk*, which transcends time and death. The religious overtones of this message, allied to strong unconscious influences, combine to create a linguistic and suasive dimension to the epistemology of nationalism which can never be fully examined in any analysis which is not grounded in literary, linguistic, and psychoanalytic techniques. This, I would argue, is why the already discussed definitions will always fail to analyse the workings and imperatives of nationalism. It is only by looking at its modality of expression, and its epistemological status, that we can come to clearer perceptions about its nature.

At no stage in his writing has Pearse offered a scintilla of reasoned argument or evidentiary proof, as to the adequation of Tone and any of the religious figures with whom he is compared. Instead, his rhetoric relies on the unconscious fideism of his largely Catholic audience. Also, by expressing nationalist goals in religious terms, issues of history and politics are removed from the realm of discussion and debate, instead becoming part of a belief system, validated by a circular structure of unconscious associations of faith, transcendence and messianistic phantasies. Evidentiary proof, or persuasion based on reason, is not part of his *raison d'être*; he never aspires towards any constative, truth-telling status. Instead, his discourse functions performatively, creating an unconscious phantasy, and enacting through its narrative, the identificatory associations that make the *Volk* the *Volk*.

I have deliberately chosen the adjective "messianistic" as opposed to "messianic" to describe the thrust of Pearse's ideologically driven memory process. Jacques Derrida has defined the messianic structure as being predicated on a promise, on an expectation that whatever is coming in the future "has to do with justice" (23). The messianistic, on the other hand is culturally and temporally limited and constrained to the "determinate figures" of "Jewish, Christian, or Islamic messianism". He goes on:

> As soon as you reduce the messianic structure to messianism then you are reducing the universality and this has important political consequences. Then you are accrediting one tradition among others, and a notion of an elected people, of a given literal language, a given fundamentalism. (23)

I would propose that it is precisely this form of messianism that is part of the religious aspect of nationalism in that it selects one tradition, one set of salvific heroes and binds them into a fusion of place, belief and race, a fusion that is, in fact, a phantasy.

I use the term "phantasy" here in its strict psychoanalytic sense, as defined by Anthony Easthope. He has noted that phantasy specifies an "imaginary scene or narrative in which the subject is present"; however the scene is in some way "altered or disguised so that it may fulfil a wish for the subject" (11). In fact, at both the conscious and unconscious levels, phantasy describes the effect of Pearse's rhetoric, as he attempts to change the perception of Irish history, in order to create a unified narrative and an optative connection between Tone, Pearse himself, the Irish people and the Messiah. The phantasy sets out to fulfil a desire in the structure of the subject through a form of alteration or disguise, and I will suggest that the Lacanian mirror stage and imaginary order are paradigms of this essential structuration of the epistemology of nationalism. Pearse's messianism can be seen as part of exactly such a structure – through narrative, he creates an image of Irishness towards which he can then aspire.

In *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, I have already traced the messianistic imperative of Pearse's thought, and adduced a number of quotations to demonstrate that the culmination of this process was

the transformation of Pearse himself into a messianistic figure. In his play *The Singer*, he has his hero, MacDara, make the overt statement that "one man can free a people as one man redeemed the world", and he goes on to say: "I will stand up before the Gall as Christ hung naked before men on the tree" (1, 44)[19]. Here we see the nationalistic phantasy in action, as the religious trope of death-resurrection is transferred to an Irish political situation through the use of the specific Irish-language signifier "Gall", meaning "foreigner", but referring here specifically to the British. MacDara can be seen as a surrogate for Pearse himself, whose own crucifixion would, he hoped, bring a similar salvation for his version of the chosen people.

Keeping this description of phantasy in mind, let us observe Pearse on the steps of the General Post Office in the centre of Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, when he inscribes his act of rebellion against the British under the rubric of a nationalistic, rhetorical reading of Irish history:

> Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom. (Dudley Edwards 280)

The imagery here is similar to that of Pearse's earlier quotations[20]. Through the use of a rhetorical structure largely underpinned by transcendental and personified imagery, Pearse avoids the discourse of reason or of political debate, and instead appeals to the unconscious signification of the powerful images of "God", the "dead generations" and the notion of Ireland as a mother, calling her children to her flag. The phantasy invoked here is telling. As Easthope has noted, phantasy turns ideas into narratives (11), and the proclamation of a provisional government, while encapsulating a certain social doctrine – universal suffrage, and guarantees of "religious and civil liberty, equal rites and equal opportunities to all its citizens" (Dudley Edwards 281) – is largely premised on a narrative structure which creates and defines selfhood in its own terms. Keeping in mind his notion of the people as their own messiah, it is noteworthy that the proclamation concludes by stressing the sacrificial, and ultimately salvific, nature of this struggle. He concludes:

> We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called. (Dudley Edwards 281)

The unconscious, pre-critical element, that I maintain is a central tenet of the epistemology of nationalism, is evident here through close reading. The proclamation seems to come to a logical conclusion. Pearse's prayer is that the Irish nation must prove itself worthy

of the "august destiny" to which it is called, and this seems to make the act of rebellion almost preordained. Of course, on looking back to the beginning of the proclamation, we find that it is "through us"[21], namely the splinter group within the Irish Volunteers, who defied their own command structure in order to undertake the Rising, that the personified notion of Ireland initially summoned "her children to her flag" and struck "for her freedom"[22]. Consequently, the seemingly impersonal "august destiny" is, in fact, part of a suasive rhetorical device which exemplifies the circularity and reflexivity of nationalist epistemology. The "we" who are called into service as the children of a personified Ireland, are the very "we" who have personified that notion of Ireland in the first place. In terms of an imaginary scene, which is altered in order to fulfil a wish for the subject, this whole exercise can be described as a *locus classicus* of phantasy, a phantasy which is constitutive in terms of defining the national subjectivity in question. This definition is brought about through the reflection of the "we" in the invoked imagery of sacrifice, defence of motherhood and desire for freedom.

The suasive and rhetorical effect of this process, when repeated, is to allow a linguistic performative to achieve a constative function. Here, myth and reality are fused in a nationalist *imaginaire*, and the mutual reflection of one in the other combines to create a narrative structure which is constitutive of what we might term nationalist identity, given that it reflects a particular type of subjectivity that is deemed to be Irish. No matter how much evidence of Wolfe Tone's attitude to religion is instantiated in biographies, he is still seen as part of a Catholic, Gaelic, nationalist pantheon, as narrated by Pearse, and it is to his grave in Bodenstown that the Provisional IRA, and Provisional Sinn Féin, have trooped in pilgrimage every year. The fact that their sectarian murder campaign over the past thirty years was the antithesis of everything that Tone stood for, is not seen as any impediment to this process. What Pearse has been attempting is a narrative which will create trans-rational, unconscious, ethnic bonds between the past and the present, and between the image of a certain type of Irishness and the reality. The facts of history are not part of such a discourse; they are only of value in selected instances, and if they reinforce the agenda of the narrative: they are creative of an identification, they are creative of an "us" through a process of continuous reflection, and it is in analysing the epistemological structure of such identification, in both individual and group terms, that the work of Jacques Lacan will be of value to our discussion.

The self, says Lacan, is defined in terms of a misrecognition (*méconaissance*) of an image of itself in the mirror, a process which he terms the "mirror stage". He goes on to outline what he terms the "*méconaissance*" of the individual self. He pictures a child becoming aware of its own image in a mirror, and goes on to discuss the "jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child" as it aspires to the totality of that image:

> This...would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in

> the universal, its function as subject. This form would have to be called the Ideal-I, if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register. (*Écrits* 2)

The important point to note about this identification is that the image is ideal, it orients the "agency of the ego" in a "fictional direction", it is something towards which the ego may aspire, but which it can never attain. It is also an identification that has no place for anything else outside of its scopic field. Lacan's point here is that the ego is constituted: "by an identification with another whole object, an imaginary projection, an idealisation ('Ideal-I') which does not match the child's feebleness". It is this "alienated relationship of the self to its own image" that Lacan terms the imaginary order (Sarup 66).

Interestingly, Samuel Weber situates this process in terms of temporality. He makes the point that for Lacan, the future anterior is of seminal importance in his discussion of the construction of identity, as it is through time that such notions are developed. Lacan himself stressed the importance of the future anterior to any discussion of identity:

> I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object. What is realised in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming. (*Écrits* 86)

Lacan, Weber notes, locates the time of the subject as an "inconclusive futurity of what will-always-already-have-been...a 'time' which can never be entirely remembered, since it will never have fully taken place" (9). In other words, in the mirror stage, the identification of the subject with the *imago* sets up a desire for imaginary wholeness in the future, a future towards which the subject strives, but which it can never reach. Hence, Lacan's vision of the *imago* as an "alienating destination", which is reached by facing towards a "fictional direction" (*Écrits* 2), wherein the specular image "traps the subject in an illusory ideal of completeness" (Sarup 66). This ongoing process of captation and misrecognition is a performative through which the ego is created and defined, a performative process very similar to that which we observed in Pearse's nationalistic discourse, where the specular image was comprised of Tone, Saint Patrick, a personified Ireland, and messianistic fantasies, and the ego being reflected through these images was Pearse's own, and by extension, his version of Irish identity.

What we see in Lacan's investigation of the mirror stage, then, is that he radically transformed a psychological experiment into a "theory of the imaginary organisation of the human subject" (Roudinesco 143). This stress on the imaginary as a structural ordering of human relationships is important in our discussion of nationalism. It begins in the mirror stage, but continues into all aspects of our lives. Elizabeth Grosz makes the telling point that imaginary relations are dyads, "trapping both participants within a

mutually defining structure" (46). Here, we see a further symphysis between the Lacanian imaginary and the epistemology of nationalism. At a basic level, this reflective captation of the subject by an image is what constitutes the imaginary order. Imaginary relationships are predominated by ambivalent emotions; a desire to become the image in the mirror, and, on realising the futility of this aim, a resultant aggressivity against both the image, and anything which intervenes with, or blocks, the desired identification with that image. The image, as well as being a source of desire, is also, because it is fictional as well as external and can never be fully internalised, a source of hatred. The displacement of this hatred on all that is deemed to be outside this binary specular relationship is a possible explanation of the violence that seems to be inherent in practically all enunciations of nationalist ideology throughout history. Hence, the relationships between the Orange Order, and the act of marching down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown is an imaginary one in the sense that it performatively validates their sense of identity. Analogously, the Provisional Republican movement's imaginary relationship with the Republican doctrine enunciated by Tone is a further reflection of their selfhood, with Bodenstown functioning as the site of this reflective *Versammlung*.

The importance of the two-dimensionality of this relationship cannot be overstressed: in the nationalist *imaginaire*, a fixed, hypostasised image of the self, be that individual or societal, is held out both as a *terminus ad quem* towards which all identificatory processes should be progressing, and conversely as a *terminus a quo* from which all deviation should be prevented. As Grosz has pointed out, imaginary relationships are mutually defining, and she has used the mother-child example as archetypal of these relationships, a point that would strengthen the force of this paradigm in the context of Irish nationalism given the prevalence of defining Ireland as a mother, or female figure, a process achieving its apotheosis in Pearse's proclamation of 1916.

Nationalist narratives very often read as coherent and teleological, leading cohesively from past to future. In this sense, Lacan's notion of the future anterior is important as history, rather than being a record of events of the past, becomes a temporal mirror through which the nationalist *imago* is seen and reinforced: "the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming" (*Écrits* 86). Hence, the suasive captation of Tone into a nationalist selfhood. The fixity of the reflected image of the self becomes the goal of the ego. In the narrative of history, this fixity becomes the *telos*. In a search for such wholeness and unity, as Bhabha notes, the subject assumes a "*discrete* image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, samenesses, identities, between the objects of the surrounding world" (*Culture* 77). The driving force behind these identities is what Bowie terms: "the false fixities of the imaginary order" (Bowie 99). The imaginary order attempts to hypostasise and hypertrophy the specular image of itself, and to block any development of this position of fixity: it is "tirelessly intent upon freezing a subjective process that cannot be frozen" (Bowie 25). So the two-dimensional image of Tone is frozen in Pearse's nationalist discourse, as is the notion of marching down the Garvaghy Road because "we" have always done so, in an Orange Order context.

Similarly, a specific narrative of a past event can also be used as a position of fixity in this imaginary relationship, as witnessed, in our final example, by the rhetoric of the imaginary that is to be found in the *Green Book*, the training manual of the Provisional IRA. Here, the imaginary identification of a whole people with a minority movement is enacted through the creation of a temporal *point de capiton* which anchors a particular reading of Irish history:

> Commitment to the Republican Movement is the firm belief that its struggle both military and political is morally justified, that war is morally justified and that the Army is the direct representatives *[sic]* of the 1918 Dáil Éireann parliament, and that as such they are the legal and lawful government of the Irish Republic, which has the moral right to pass laws for, and claim jurisdiction over, the whole geographical fragment of Ireland...and all of its people regardless of creed or loyalty. (*Long War*, 350)

This is the discourse of nationalism *par excellence*, embodying its imaginary epistemology. Time is frozen in a specular identification with the "Dáil of 1918", a term which is a *point de capiton* in Irish Republican narrative. All subsequent elections and democratic expressions of will are null and void; they do not correspond to the totalising image and must therefore be destroyed. It is, I would suggest, a *locus classicus* of the epistemology of nationalism, narrating a story of selfhood which is performatively recreating that very selfhood as it progresses. For the Provisional Republican movement, a two-dimensional, hypertrophied, hypostasised, imaginary image of Ireland is the source of their selfhood – anything outside of this scopic field is, by definition, erroneous. Hence, their references to the "Dublin" government, or the "Free State" government or the "26-County" government, as opposed to the "Irish government" (which they see as time-locked in the specular temporal image of the Dáil of 1918). I would contend that such performative misrecognitions, creative as they are of two dimensional images of history and culture, are constitutive of the nationalist *imaginaire*, a fact of which we must remain fully cognisant if we are to subject nationalism to any form of ameliorative critique.

Notes

1 This article is part of a longer work in which I discuss the epistemological structures and status of the discourse of nationalism *per se*. By using the theoretical work of Jacques Lacan, specifically on notions of identification, misrecognition and the imaginary order, I trace the cognitive and linguistic structures that comprise nationalism. This book, provisionally entitled *The Epistemology of Nationalism*, will be published by the Edwin Mellen Press in early 2001, as part of the *Ireland in Theory* series.

2 My own focus in this study will be on how such notions of homogeneity are created. In a similar manner, when looking at Benedict Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities*, I will be examining exactly how such imaginings are set in motion.

3 Interestingly in terms of this point, the four authors whose work has come to dominate the study of nationalism all hail from different disciplines: Ernest Gellner (*Nations and Nationalism*) worked in the philosophy of sociology; Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) taught international relations; Anthony Smith (*The Ethnic Origins of Nations*) is a sociologist, while Eric Hobsbawm (*Nations and Nationalism since 1780*) is a social historian.

4 As this is an internet publication, I have cited the date and paragraph number in parenthesis, as well as giving the full details of the journal, *Sociological Research Online*, Volume 2, Number 1, and the web address. I have followed the same procedure for all other internet publications referenced in this work.

5 Hall provides the following references to these works: Breuilly, chapter 1; Gellner, chapter 1 and Hobsbawm, 9-13 and chapter 1.

6 I would not necessarily agree with this, as both terms are mutually dependent, and therefore impossible to separate. I will demonstrate that, etymologically and epistemologically, these terms share a notion of selfhood which is both fabricated, and predicated on a sense of hypostasised sameness (validated by a similar concept of difference), and which is politically and socially regressive as its focal direction is always fixed on the past, and wary of a future which could threaten this sense of selfhood.

7 For Heidegger's analysis of identity as a belonging together, see his book *Identity and Difference*.

8 This term is used in a specific, theoretical sense. It is part of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theoretical apparatus, as the imaginary order and will form a central plank of this discussion.

9 I have taken this quote from Richard Kearney's translation of "L'imagination dans le discours et dans l'action". I can think of no better introduction to the work of Ricoeur than Kearney's *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*. Two of Kearney's other books, *Poetics of Modernity* and *Poetics of Imagination* contain excellent discussions of Ricoeur's work, as well as contextual placements of that work in terms of contemporary critical debate.

10 Smith distinguishes between post-eighteenth-century nationalisms and nations, and earlier ethnic communities and ethnic sentiments, which he terms *ethnie*. I would question this temporal16:24 differentiation, as to my mind, there has been little epistemological difference to be found in terms of this particular temporal parameter.

11 Here, I would cite the *caveat* mentioned by Benedict Anderson in the acknowledgements to *Imagined Communities*, where he notes that his own academic training, specialisation in Southeast Asia, accounts for 'some of the book's biases and choices of examples' (ix). My own academic specialisation is in the area of Irish Studies, so this will, similarly, account for many of my own choices of examples, as well as for some of the biases in the book.

12 Perhaps the best available biography of Pearse is by Ruth Dudley Edwards, and is entitled *The Triumph of Failure*.

13 Marianne Elliott's *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Irish Independence*, is an excellent biography of Tone, and the monumental *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, compiled by his son William T. W. Tone, and edited by Thomas Bartlett, has been reissued by Lilliput Press.

14 This reference is to Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

15 The repetition of a word with varying grammatical inflections.

16 While agreeing with Renan in terms of the spiritual, unconscious dimension of the nation, I would take issue with his view, stated in 1882, that religion was no longer a defining factor in the epistemology of the nation. His point that religion has: "ceased almost entirely to be one of the elements which serve to define the frontiers of peoples" (Renan 18), does not hold true in the case of Ireland, where different religious practices are very much indices of socio-political borders.

17 I have quoted this same passage, and discussed it under a different, but related agenda, in my *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*, 25-33. In this book, I look at different formulations of Irish identity and at the different Gaelic and Celtic revivals at the turn of the century which are an important aspect of this topic. There is not a specific focus on nationalism *per se*; instead, the notion of identity, both political and cultural, is discussed.

18 Seton-Watson's study is a monumental study of nationalism. However, I would take issue with his contention that: "English nationalism never existed" (Seton-Watson 34); as we have seen, it was very much alive and well, certainly in Ireland.

19 For a fuller discussion of Pearse's messianistic perspective, albeit discussed in a different context, see my *Question of Irish Identity*, 30-33.

20 While the text of the proclamation was agreed in discussion with the other members of the military council, the proclamation itself was 'mainly Pearse's work' (Dudley Edwards 279).

21 It is possible that this construction, 'through us', is a conscious or unconscious homage to the Great Doxology for the Mass Liturgy: 'through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever.'

22 For a comprehensive bibliography of the 1916 Rising, and issues associated with it, see Dudley Edwards, 363-369.

Works Cited

Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Tone, Theobald Wolfe (1998) *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone: Memoirs, journals and political writings, compiled and arranged by William T.W. Tone, 1826*. Edited by Thomas Bartlett. Dublin: Lilliput Press.

Bennington, Geoffrey (1990) "Postal politics and the institution of the nation", in Bhabha (ed.) (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 121-137.

Bennington, Geoffrey and Derrida, Jacques (1993) *Jacques Derrida*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Bernhart, Clarence L. (ed.) (1972) *The World Book Dictionary*. 2 volumes. Chicago: Doubleday.

Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.) (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bowie, Malcolm (1991) *Lacan*. London: Fontana.

Brennan, Timothy (1990) "The national longing for form", in Bhabha (ed.) (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 44-70.

Breuilly, John (1982) *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Cruise O'Brien, Conor (1994) *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*. Dublin: Poolbeg Press.

Debray, Régis (1977) "Marxism and the National Question", *New Left Review*, 105 (September-October), 25-41.

Derrida, Jacques (1997) *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. John D. Caputo (ed.). New York: Fordham University Press.

Easthope, Anthony (1989) *Poetry and phantasy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elliott, Marianne (1989) *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Irish Independence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gellner, Ernest (1964) *Thought and Change*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Gellner, Ernest (1997) *Nationalism.* London: Phoenix.

Grosz, Elizabeth (1990) *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Hall, John A. (1995) "Nationalisms, Classified and Explained" in Periwal (ed.) *Notions of Nationalism.* London: Central European University Press, 8-33.

Heidegger, Martin (1969) *Identity and Difference.* Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1990) *Nations and Nationalism since 1780.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, Alvin (1999) *Ireland: 1798 – 1998.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kearney, Richard (1994) *Modern Movements in European Philosophy: Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Structuralism.* Manchester: Manchester Press.

Kearney, Richard (1995) *Poetics of Modernity: Towards a Hermeneutic Imagination.* New Jersey: Humanities Press.

Kearney, Richard (1998) *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-modern.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kristeva, Julia (1993) *Nations Without Nationalism. European Perspectives Series.* Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lacan, Jacques (1977) *Écrits - A Selection.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock.

Lacan, Jacques (1993) *The Psychoses: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, 1955-1956.* Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.). Translated by Russell Grigg. London: Routledge.

O'Brien, Brendan (1993) *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin from Armed Struggle to Peace Talks.* Dublin: O'Brien Press.

O'Brien, Eugene (1998) *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce.* Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press.

Pearse, Patrick (1917-22) *Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse: Political Writings and Speeches.* 5 volumes. Dublin: Phoenix.

Renan, Ernest (1990) "What is a Nation?", in Bhabha (ed) (1990) *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge, 8-22.

Ricoeur, Paul (1973) *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur.* C. Regan and D. Stewart (eds). Boston: Beacon Press.

Roudinesco, Elisabeth (1990) *Jacques Lacan & Co.* Translated by Geoffrey Mehlman. London: Free Association Books.

Sarup, Madan (1992) *Jacques Lacan.* Hemel Hempsted: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Seton-Watson, Hugh (1977) *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Smith, Anthony D. (1995) *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Tone, Theobald Wolfe (1998) *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone: Memoirs, journals and political writings, compiled and arranged by William T.W. Tone, 1826.* Edited by Thomas Bartlett. Dublin: Lilliput Press.

Treanor, Paul (1977) "Structures of Nationalism", *Sociological Research Online*, Volume 2, Number 1. http://www.socresonline.org.uk.socresonline/2/1/8.html.

Verdery, Katherine (1996) "Whither "Nation" and "Nationalism"? in Balakrishnan (ed.) (1996) *Mapping the Nation.* London: Verso, 226-234.

Weber, Samuel (1991) *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan's Dislocation of Psychoanalysis.* Translated by Michael Levine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Poetry

Greetings to Brazil in Our Friends! People, Place and Tradition in Paul Durcan's Poetry

Charlie Boland

Abstract: *It would probably be fair to say that Paul Durcan is best known for his satirical poetry of social protest and for his performance of it. This is reflected in the fact that his work has been all but ignored in terms of academic criticism with only one full collection of relevant essays published. It is telling that, whilst not a few Irish poets have hailed their respect for Durcan, Edna Longley has been in the academic minority in noting his importance. Though Irish Studies in the South has generally overlooked Durcan's contribution, Longley summarises her introduction to* The Selected Paul Durcan*: "Durcan's poetry seems in touch with the deepest wells of Irish sensibility, yet radically challenges their pollution. In addition to his other achievements, he has developed the conscience of the race".*[1]

Durcan is a prolific writer in that he has produced, and continues to produce, enormous bodies of poetry. With an ear to the ground, Durcan's writing has confronted most aspects of Irish socio-cultural debate. It may well be however that titles such as 'Priest Accused of Not Wearing a Condom' or 'The Divorce Referendum, Ireland, 1986' from Going Home to Russia *have come to define the popular image of Durcan as a satirist whose basic relevance is to the immediate social situation. I argue that this view limits the possibilities of his aesthetic which in fact works to challenge the much larger questions of identity that Longley refers to above and that will be my concern in the following pages.*

Writing Durcan's Ireland

By 1990 in Ireland we'd been adolescents for seventy years
Obsessed with the Virgin, automobiles, alcohol, Playboy, unity.
The Commander-in-Chief issued her first and only commandment:
First and last you must learn to love your different self.[2]

The above four-lined poem from *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* honouring Mary Robinson and her presidency, 1990-1997, is a compact exposition of the main concerns of Paul Durcan's poetry; religion, materialism, personal excess and despair, sexuality and nationalism. Durcan positions Robinson as a kind of new-age Moses descending with great new insight, a potential reformer guiding Ireland towards self-discovery. The implication that the solution to Irish social problems and the key to the development of a mature Irish culture lies within an understanding of the same self that is being brought into question is interesting. The emphasis on a "*different self*", as opposed to a new self or the search for an *other*, suggests a belief in the untapped potential within that which already exists. This faith in the subject, I will argue, underwrites Durcan's art which, although often stylistically postmodern, retains a more traditional unifying instinct. I have inverted the title *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* to *Greetings to Brazil in Our Friends*, for in Durcan's poetry inner and outer landscapes converge, the "different self" lies within the self as a suppressed element – a potential awaiting realisation.

Durcan has repeatedly used his own father as a symbol of the patriarchal society that he seeks to challenge. His father, the poetry insists, was firmly of his generation, ever-loyal to the value-system of post-independent Ireland. 'Poem Not Beginning With a Line From Pindar' from *Daddy Daddy* details exactly what that fact meant to Durcan who depicts him:

> The President of the Circuit Court
> Of the Republic of Ireland,
> Appointed by the party of the Fine Gael...
>
> The party of the Fine Gael is the party
> Of respectability, conformity, legitimacy, pedigree,
> Faith, chivalry, property, virility.
> The party of Collins, O'Higgins, O'Duffy, Cosgrave.
> Great men queuing up at the bride's door.
> Walk tall to the altar rail in pinstripe suit and tie.
> Talk the language of men – bullshit, boob, cunt, bastard –
> And – teach the Protestants a lesson.[3]

His challenge to his father mirrors a challenge also to the sexist, bigoted attitudes of the society that his father represents. It is important however that at no time does Durcan simply reject his father, a point that will be examined in more detail later.

Durcan's poetry works on two levels; one that functions as an outward address to society and another introspective challenge to the self. It could be said that in his poetry the social and private are inextricably linked. Coleridge once wrote of Aristotle that he "required an involution of the universal in the individual".[4] Similarly Durcan's subjects take on a double role; firstly they become characters in his social dramas and

secondly they come to represent repressed parts of his own psyche which he seeks to explore. Durcan's writing of women, for example, confronts the feminist concerns of women in society yet it is also an attempt to explore the feminine residual, along with the patriarchal masculine, in the self. Durcan has shown a belief, as our opening quote highlights, that both society and the self require sexual and cultural boundaries to be challenged if the full potential for self-expression is to be realised. This self-expression depends upon a mind-state that is outward looking, tolerant of difference and also aware of its various internal components. The path to its achievement therefore necessitates both an outward search and an inner-voyage.

Fintan O'Toole has recognised that Durcan can be seen as a Stephen Daedalus trying to awake from the nightmare that is history.[5] I propose that early experience drove Durcan to mount his own search for a Bloom-figure and that he found one in Patrick Kavanagh who was to become a great inspiration to him, as the title of the later poem 'Surely my God is Patrick Kavanagh' from *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* declares. Kavanagh's influence upon Durcan's art was essential in encouraging him to be courageous in speaking his own true voice:

> While other poets my comic light resent
> The spirit that is Kavanagh caresses my soul[6]

Yet his status as an alternative father-figure is apparent also in 'Waterloo Road' from the same collection:

> And I rowed my oar by the star of Patrick Kavanagh.[7]

It has therefore been his own personal Telemachian search that has driven Durcan's odyssey forward and so far it has journeyed through eighteen collections, the latest stop being Brazil. Each collection and the exotic locations within them offer an epic setting for Durcan's heroes' self-challenging tasks. Ultimately however, unlike Daedalus, Durcan has displayed a belief that the potential to become the Bloom-figure has resided within his own father, a potential awaiting realisation:

> Reading Ulysses myself
> I found it as strange as my father
> And as discordant...
> It was not until four years later...
> That Ulysses began to sing for me
> And I began to sing for my father.
> Daddy, Daddy,
> My little man, I adore you.[8]

Again Durcan displays a faith in that which he criticises. He also recognises his own role in becoming a more understanding reader.

Durcan also follows Joyce in his instinct to liberate the female subject. The emancipation of Molly from the stereotypical *Penelope* role is as important to Bloom's gaining an understanding of himself as is the alternative unification of father and son. Bloom's introspection in *Ithaca* and the equanimity that he deems himself to feel with regard to the Molly and Boylan's affair is his triumphant moment in that he overcomes the dominant, possessive instinct typical of his peers to accept subject equality. Durcan's work is similar in its attempt not merely to renegotiate with the father-figure but also to rewrite the role of the female, would-be-mother figure, to discover a greater means for universal understanding. This is evident in autobiographical poems such as 'The Pieta's Over' from *The Berlin Wall Café* where the wife challenges her passive role by turning the romantic male hero away:

> I will admit it is difficult for a man of forty
> Who has spent all his life reclining in his wife's lap...
> A man cannot be Messiah forever,
> Messiahing about in his wife's lap...
> Painful as it was for me, I put you down off my knee
> And I showed you the door...[9]

'The Pieta's Over' frees the female subject from the traditional confines of the canvass, and of the dominant patriarchal social order, in ways similar to Eavan Boland's 'Tirade for the Mimic Muse'[10] or Paula Meehan's 'Not Your Muse'[11]. Durcan's position as a male feminist offers a valuable perspective on the negative effects of inherent sexism on the male, as well as on the female, subject. His admitted misunderstanding of the female subject, I argue, is partly the result of the patriarchal mindset that he has inherited. That is not to say that Durcan may use society as his scapegoat, rather that he must recognise and challenge his own part in a prevailing culture of patriarchal self-righteousness.

Durcan's poetry repeatedly confronts the restrictions upon women in Irish society and promotes the importance of female input. 'Edenderry' from *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* identifies the emerging female voice as being able to offer an insight into conflicts that have become stuck in the residual mud of imperialism. Having situated Edenderry in a feminine sphere, by reference to "The Edenderry Women's Association", Durcan writes:

> Edenderry is the source of the Boyne:
> Spawning fields of Boyne Salmon –
> The salmon of wisdom[12]

This alternative "source" offers wisdom and life as opposed to the historical narrow-mindedness and sectarianism synonymous with the Boyne region. Furthermore, by this return to a feminine source the contested appellations Derry / London-Derry, though not actually referred to, are eclipsed by "Eden" with its suggestion of paradise, of a time before "the fall" for which the male as opposed to the female now becomes culpable. This notion of an alternative source links Durcan's feminism with his approach to tradition by suggestion of hidden residual potential.

Patrick Kavanagh's influence upon Durcan in terms of finding a voice for his beliefs has been underlined, Mary Robinson's influence is of similar importance in that she has actually provided a working model for those beliefs. *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* is in many ways a book about friendships, Mary Robinson and Patrick Kavanagh have sections dedicated to them while Francis Stuart; "Alone, important and wise",[13] Brian Friel; "the only man in Ireland who knows how to dance",[14] Marie Foley, Seamus Heaney and others get similar tributes in section eight. The collection celebrates those whose intellectual journeying has furthered the self-understanding of their culture. It is noteworthy that precisely the centre section of *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* is dedicated to Kavanagh where as the Mary Robinson poems close the collection; their importance is therefore formally noted. Durcan's belief in Robinson's capacity to break down the limiting structures of Irish culture and society is based upon her own visions for the presidency as outlined in her inauguration speech:

> The Ireland that I will be representing is a new Ireland, open, tolerant, inclusive. Many of you who voted for me did so without sharing all my views. This, I believe, is a significant signal of change, however modest, that we have already passed the threshold to a new, pluralist Ireland.[15]

Durcan's celebration of Robinson as a cultural role model is therefore based upon real, self-defined possibilities. The poems from the section dedicated to her are often set to parallel and to answer earlier poems of protest. Therefore 'Making Love Outside Áras an Uachtaráin' from *Sam's Cross*,[16] one of Durcan's most telling critiques of post-independent Ireland's church-controlled value system, becomes 'Making Love *Inside* Áras An Uachtárain':

> Instead of making love *outside* Áras an Uachtaráin
> We are making love *inside* Áras an Uachtaráin
> Power is conditional on love. Acton![17]

Equally upbeat in announcing Robinson's inclusiveness is the collection's closing poem, 'The Mary Robinson Years', which celebrates an Irish society that has developed the confidence to "come out" and declare an open sexual identity unto itself. The poem encounters a "Six foot tall, Mulatto, red hair down to her hips" on Copacabana beach who turns out to be a transvestite, relief aid worker from Co. Tipperary. The image is of

a new Ireland that celebrates pluralism as highlighted by the hybrid of the woman's racial as well as sexual identity. The poem is particularly optimistic:

> She turned her smouldering spine on me
> And strode off into the night of Rio,
> The gigantic, ocean waves of the south Atlantic
> Breaking in rainbows of fireworks around her.[18]

The poem's optimism is testimony to Durcan's faith in Robinson's achievement. It is worth noting however that this is already an historical poem, the Mary Robinson years a past moment. "The Functions of the President" acknowledges this:

> And but then! – and but how! – we repaid her!
> In '97 we staged a presidential election
> In which we defiled the status of women.
> In her stead we elected the Celtic Elk
> Whose hooves are the hooves of a hairy economy.[19]

While the poem laments that Irish society has missed out on a great opportunity for change it nonetheless insists upon Durcan's unchallenged faith in Robinson's abilities.

The poetry also recognises a need to achieve a greater balance between masculine and feminine elements within the self to move towards the Bloom celebrated by Declan Kiberd as "the androgynous hero of the future".[20] Later poems such as 'Geronimo' from *Daddy, Daddy* look to renegotiate with the suppressed feminine in a bid to express a truer, more complete self that may advance towards reconciliation:

> Although we were estranged lovers
> For almost thirty years,
> When Daddy knew he was going to die
> He asked that we marry[21]

Durcan's writing practices an ongoing process of divination to recover suppressed elements within the subject matter. These suppressed elements, he implies, possess a potential for cultural change and advancement. This belief that the repressed elements of the self and society are the key to the "different self" or, in Joycean terms, that the potentials of the Bloom figure reside within the natural father-figure drives Durcan's aesthetic always towards a reconciliatory approach to tradition. Furthermore Durcan has underlined the *impossibility* of extricating oneself from one's own cultural tradition.

The point was made at the outset that Durcan's poetry may be seen as both inward search and outward journey, the focus so far has been on cultural introspection but the wider view is also extremely relevant, indeed both movements are essentially

linked. Titles such as *O Westport in the Light of Asia Minor*, *Going Home to Russia* and *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* highlight the centrality of the notion of a global or common human experience in Durcan's thought. Each of the titles essentially involve a movement, a journey, or a shift of focus from one site of interest to another. The positive nature of this shift is underlined by such welcoming links as "Light", "Home", and "Friends". Durcan's vision has much in common with that of Edward W. Said who advises in *Culture and Imperialism*:

> We must speak of overlapping territories, intertwined histories common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries, past as well as present and future; territories and histories can only be seen from the perspective of the whole of secular human history.[22]

It is vital that such "overlapping" experiences are carefully emphasised while writing different cultures in any same sphere. If not the *foreign* culture inevitably becomes the practical *other* to the home experience. It is such a danger, I argue, that Durcan works to avoid. 'Oh God, Oh Dublin', a poem that on one level laments Ireland's cultural insularity, links Irish and Ethiopian experience through the shared tragedy of famine:

> Why did I marry an Irishwoman?
> God knows in Dublin in 1967
> Ethiopians were not thick on the ground.[23]

The word play on "thick on the ground" is effective in that the link, crop shortage, is ironically suggested through the medium of a colloquial Irish phrase (this is not the first time that Durcan has employed such a device in his writing[24]). Similarly the choice of Lilly as the name for "A woman, black" is an obvious contradiction. Furthermore, the poem's irony lies in the fact that while the narrator despairingly asks "Why do Irish marry Irish?" it may be overlooked that within the poem an Irishman actually *does* marry an Ethiopian; Lilly's husband. Although not actually stated in the poem one can infer that Lilly and her husband are both economic emigrants, or at least the descendants of economic emigrants, unified in the "New world" by a common historical experience. 'Oh God, Oh Dublin' is a poem laced with contradictions that undermine racial stereotyping.

The poem 'Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil' embodies a journey within itself. Much of the poem deals with the act of driving; moving from one place to the next. The landscapes encountered by Durcan in the poem are reflected by the changing formal landscape of the poem itself. The cluttered prose-like narrative and run-on lines of the first four sections reflect the populated social sphere wherein Durcan passes his Sunday afternoon. There is then a movement into a bleak Beckettian no-land in section five; "[a] Siberian, Saharan, Gobi drive back to Achill Island". The narrative content is

gradually whittled down to barer, more darkened imagery. The sparse lines of the final section reflect the West of Ireland landscape whereupon Durcan has "landed". It is within this sphere that Durcan is relieved of the contradictions, competitions and confusions of the day and is finally enabled simply to "hear". It is the surrounding landscape and the voice of nature itself that speaks:

I hear the tempest o'er the mountains and the seas.
I hear the silence of the spheres....
I hear sheep baa-baaing to sheep on the mountainside:
Genocide, genocide.
I hear raven's diving the peaks:
Ethnic cleansing, ethnic cleansing.
I hear tied-up terriers barking:
Thoughtlessness, thoughtlessness...
Let me pray:
Greetings to our friends in Brazil[25].

The West of Ireland landscape upon which the closing section is set has been traditionally employed by Irish writers to embody the struggles of the Irish past. Nationalist writes have continually appropriated "Mother Ireland" with qualities useful to their requirements. Durcan however, by reference to the "German soldier" and "our friends in Brazil" insists upon, and emphasises, a global human experience as opposed to an insular Irish one. Rather therefore than permitting a society to become insular by result of a self-created notion of its own uniqueness, Durcan's global vision unites through a shared history of conflict, suffering and, potentially, friendship.

Current Climates: (Post)Modern Ireland, the radical and the traditional

In his essay "In light of Things as They Are, Paul Durcan's Ireland" Fintan O'Toole observes that "One of the peculiarities of Irish culture is that there has been no real division between the mainstream and the avant-garde".[26] O'Toole later adds that Irish writers such as Durcan; "write out of a society that has become post-modern without ever becoming modern, a place in which the global village is still a one-horse town".[27] Edna Longley's description of contemporary Ireland is more tongue-in-cheek: "Holy Ireland battling it out with the forces of pluralism, secularisation and liberalisation".[28] It could be argued that there is a resulting tension within Irish art, and specifically within Durcan's poetry, between radical and traditional elements. Romanticism, historically speaking, can be defined as an attempt to cope with the fragmentation caused by the advance of modernity in society through the provision of unifying concepts of identity. Postmodernism, on the other hand, works to expose romantic concepts of unity as discriminative, detrimental fallacies and to celebrate fragmentation as a liberating aspect

of modernity. Durcan, one can argue, is caught between the two in his desire for both change and reunion. It is for this reason that the father / son relationship is a predominant aspect of his work and that *Daddy, Daddy* in particular strives to reconcile the radical and the traditional.[29] Although Durcan may be often considered a postmodern writer for reasons of style, in that he promotes such concepts as fragmentation, multiplicity and the dissolution of borders, he does not, I argue, necessarily comply with the anti-humanist ethic predominant in postmodernism.

Certain elements of contemporary Irish cultural debate, arguably for valid reasons such as the ongoing sectarian conflict in the North, have shown a desire to dispose of the baggage of a problematic past and of the romanticism associated with that past.[30] Derek Hand, in his lecture "Knowing Your Place, James Joyce's City in Contemporary Irish Writing", has given the example of two Irish writers, Sebastian Barry, *The Whereabouts of Encas McNulty*,[31] and Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*,[32] whom he believed to be "consigning history to the dustbin" in their treatment of modern Irish history in an altogether negative light. Hand argued that rather than turning from the past it would be more helpful to develop a proper relationship with it, "not to be imprisoned by it but rather to discover how it can be used to make the move into the future".[33] I argue that Durcan's poetry, in seeking a greater understanding of his father, works to reconcile with his father's tradition along the lines that Hand has suggested as being helpful in terms of advancing with it into the future. To give an example of an opposite approach, Patrick McCabe's novel *The Dead School* is perhaps the darkest example of modern Irish social paralysis in its portrayal of the simultaneous emotional collapse of two men representing different generations of Irish society.[34] McCabe's book highlights the uncrossable divide between traditionalist schoolmaster Raphael Bell and the young, demoralised, trainee teacher Malachi Dudgeon. Each man comes to focus his frustrations upon the other with tragic consequences. McCabe's novel highlights the vulnerability of the individual within a society dominated by myths, traditional and contemporary. It highlights too the necessity for a society to (re)develop an understanding of itself and of the various parts integral to it. The tragedy of the book lies in the failure of two generations to reconcile. The conclusion would seem to be that only by overcoming this failure can a modern Irish society gain the self-confidence to progress.

Having noted Durcan's reconciliatory approach to tradition and having identified suppressed elements such as the feminine and the indigenous as potential links back to a unifying cultural source, it is necessary to consider what tradition actually implies in the Irish context being dealt with. In view of the Northern conflict "tradition" has become a highly charged word upon the island. In her inauguration speech Mary Robinson proclaimed that:

> The best way that we can contribute to a new and integrated Europe is by having a confident sense of our Irishness.[35]

This idea points a return to the article title, "Greetings to Brazil in Our Friends", for the emphasis is once again upon self-awareness and self-discovery as a prerequisite to outward advancment. Robinson's vision for a globally active modern Ireland of the future requires first and foremost an interaction with the traditional at home. Declan Kiberd's evaluation of Robinson is telling:

> She effected a brilliant reconciliation at the level of symbolic politics of the best native traditions with a thoroughly renovated modern consciousness.[36]

Kiberd notes the dual importance of the native and the modern in Robinson's outlook. I argue that this is also an essential aspect of Durcan's aesthetic. The Mary Robinson poems from *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* help to define Durcan's visions for Irish culture, 'Functions of the President' is typical:

> Dream, we dream – we've got you in our bloodstream –
> Of unique spirals, abstract, functional,
> As Ireland was in 3500 BC
> And became again in AD 1990.[37]

Durcan's return to 3500 BC puts his attraction to the potentials of the indigenous into historical perspective. By that period Gaelic culture had already established itself, to which artefacts such as the tomb at Newgrange, 3200 BC, bear testimony. Durcan, I argue, relates to a past that pre-dates imperialist moulding and he returns to such a point seeking to expose the man made politico-cultural borders that history has developed.

'Before the Celtic Yoke' from the second collection *Teresa's Bar* marks out specifically Durcan's reading of Irish history. Its non-binary emphasis is essential. Irishness is not defined here as non-English but the Anglo-Irish relationship is noted as being but an episode in a larger story, the emphasis is upon deimperialisation :

> What was it like in Ireland before the Celtic yoke –
> Before war insinuated its slime into the forests of the folk?
>
> Elizabethan, Norman, Viking, Celt,
> Conquistadors all:
> Imperialists, racialists, from across the seas...
> Thrusting their language down my virgin throat....
>
> My vocabularies are boulders cast up on time's beaches;
> Masses of sea rolled stones reared up in mile-high ricks
> Along the shores and curving coasts of all my island;
> Verbs dripping fresh from geologic epochs;
> Scorched, drenched, in metamorphosis, vulcanicity, ice-ages.[38]

The indigenous voice or "virgin throat" is a voice that is at one with the natural landscape. Landscape and qualities of landscape merge with the subject to create a composite organic identity. The self achieves a kind of purity through its bond with nature. Language itself remains natural, as yet unaffected by imperial moulding. The voice speaks from the past with a message for the present:

So go now brother – cast off all cultural shrouds
And speak like me – like the mighty sun through the clouds.[39]

Here Durcan extends the Irish historical experience beyond the disenabling confines of the post-colonial trap. His vision is grander and has a greater unifying potential. Edna Longley describes this as "Perhaps [Durcan's] most comprehensively therapeutic poem ... primal dream rather than primal scream".[40] It could be argued however that one must be careful in supposing that there was a particular point in history where all existence was harmonious.

A more sceptical Derek Mahon in his poem 'Lives' has confronted Seamus Heaney for such notions, and for his impulse to dig:

First time out
I was a torc of gold
And wept tears of sun...

...It all seems
A little unreal now,
Now that I am

An anthropologist
With my own
Credit card, dictaphone.[41]

The poem undercuts possible romanticism by presenting instead a more shallow reality. Mahon's sceptical realism is similar to much of Durcan's work, I suggest that the difference between the two is Durcan's desire to engage with what he sees as the healthy potentials of the past. It can be argued that Durcan at least attempts to offer a unifying language where as Mahon has, in works such as 'The Last of the Fire-Kings', chosen to opt out:

I want to be...

the man
Who drops at night
From a moving train

And strikes out over the fields
Where fireflies glow,
Not knowing a word of the language.

Either way, I am
Through with history[42]

I have stressed throughout this dissertation that Durcan realises the impossibility of breaking out of history and instead seeks to reconcile with it. Similarly Seamus Heaney has defended his approach in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech:

> Even if we have learned to be rightly and deeply fearful of elevating the cultural forms and conservatisms of any nation into normative and exclusivist systems, even if we have terrible proof that pride in the ethnic and religious heritage can quickly degrade into the fascistic, our vigilance on that score should not displace our love and trust in the good of the indigenous *per se*.[43]

Heaney's emphasis on a "love and trust" of the indigenous is fundamental to Durcan's writing also. Durcan's poetry displays a belief in the unifying potential of art, he quotes Yeats in 'Portrait of Winston Churchill as Seamus Heaney, 13 April 1999'; "The end of art is peace".[44] The stylistically post-modern Durcan, as I have already noted, is grounded by a faith, a "love and trust" that is contrary to the post-modern (stressing its position after modernism and the ideological catastrophes of the 20th century) ethos of scepticism. If Durcan is a heretic who shatters established structures he does so because he is also a romantic visionary looking to reunite the fragments in a more harmonious situation.

Durcan has noted that "poetry is of its very essence part of an age-old oral and placename tradition (known in Irish as dindsenchas)".[45] That he links places with the language of those that inhabit them is significant. As a student at University College Cork Durcan quit English literature to devote himself to Geography which, he says, "reintroduced me to the reality of my native land".[46] At this time Durcan read Welsh geographer Estyn Evans' book *The Personality of Ireland* which, in his foreword to the 1992 edition, he considers to be one of the most important he has read. Durcan was inspired by Evans, he writes, because "he had an instinctive as well as an intellectual grasp of the affinity between Gaelic and African culture. He was an environmentalist who believed with all his heart that a landscape and its people cannot be understood except in relation to each other".[47] Similarly Durcan's poetry links his characters with their environment as qualities of local landscape are internalised to become personal characteristics. Durcan's vision for the global landscape, as read for example in the poem 'Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil', aims to realise landscape as a unifying rather than dividing factor in human history. His work underlines the man-made nature of political borders and of the imperialist mindsets that maintain them.

'The Mayo Accent', from *Daddy, Daddy,* questions the imperialisation of culture that occurred in Ireland and its effect upon the individual:

> Have you ever tuned into the voice of a Mayoman?
> In his mouth the English language is sphagnum moss
> Under the bare braceleted feet of a pirate queen:
> Syllables are blooms of tentativeness in bog cotton:
> Words are bog oak sunk in understatement...
>
> Why then, Daddy, did you shed
> The pricey antlers of your Mayo accent
> For the tree-felling voice of a harsh judiciary
> Whose secret headquarters were in the Home Counties or
> High Germany?[48]

The poem is multi-layered in that it includes centuries of cultural change in a very short space. The present concerns of class-conscious Ireland are identified in the father's adoption of, we may assume, the 'Dublin 4' accent, and yet this seemingly small-scale personal change is linked with centuries of cultural upheaval by reference to the "tree-felling voice". The poem implicates the father in the process of cultural deforestation, the son in reaction vows to return to Mayo, "Your son has gone back to Mayo to sleep with the island woman".[49] It must be recognised however that the father remained the poet's link back to what the Mayo accent represents; Durcan is not a native Mayo man, his father was.

Durcan therefore seek to provide an alternative to the patriarchal structure that persists in modern Irish culture. He does so by looking back into the available Irish heritage to unearth unifying elements for modern society. During her presidential inauguration speech Mary Robinson refered to the mythological Fifth Province of Irish folklore, her message followed lines similar to what we find in Durcan's poetry:

> The recent revival of the old concept of the Fifth Province expresses an emerging Ireland of tolerance and empathy... as everyone knows, there are only four geographical provinces on this island. So where is the fifth? The Fifth province is not anywhere here or there, north or south, east or west. It is a place within each of us – that place that is open to the other, that swinging door that allows us to venture out and others to venture in."[50].

I propose that within Durcan's poetry landscapes such as Brazil, Russia, Westport and other symbolic settings, embody the potentials of the "Fifth Province" referred to by Robinson. Such symbolic locations provide a harbour for the "different self". Durcan's journey to Brazil is the discovery of a different culture that may help to progress the

development of his own, yet it is also journey into the self, a rediscovery of the self's repressed elements:

> Born Paul Durcan
> In '44
> I began,
> When I was eleven
> In 56
> Unearthing
> The goldmine of my body,
> To undergo
> A change
> Of name...
>
> I write
> Under the pen name
> Paul Durcan
> But my real name...
> Is Tinkerly Luxemburgo.[51]

Durcan refers above to "Unearthing / The goldmine of [his] body" in search of a different self. Similarly he has dedicated himself to unearthing the goldmine of Irish culture and of an historical experience that may possibly be reinterpreted to provide for all the inhabitants of the island.

In a climate where Ireland, for the first time in modern history, is experiencing large-scale immigration rather than losing its people to more rewarding foreign economies, tolerant voices such as Durcan's have become all the more crucial. Media attention to the growing racial tension within the state has exposed a certain fear-factor with regard to identity within the Irish mindset. Durcan's stress upon the importance of both the traditional *and* the modern is the key to the development of a culture that may feel secure enough of its own inherited identity to enable it tolerate difference in others. Furthermore, the haunting presence of the Northern poems, and the tragic 'Omagh' in particular, in *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* underlines the need for given concepts of identity and tradition to be continuously interrogated and developed to promote tolerance and acceptance. The key to this acceptance, as read in Durcan's poetry, lies in rediscovery, rereading history and redefining relationships.

Notes

1 *The Selected Paul Durcan*, p. 15.

2 'The First and Last Command of the Commander-in-Chief, *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 236.

3 *Daddy, Daddy*, p. 140.
4 Lillian R. Furst *Romanticism in Perspective*. p. 90.
5 Fintan O'Toole, "In Light of Things as They Are", *Kilfenora Teaboy*, p. 33.
6 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 127.
7 *Greetings to Our Friends In Brazil*, p. 132.
8 *Daddy, Daddy*, p. 99.
9 *The Berlin Wall Café*, p. 54.
10 Eavan Boland, *Collected Poems*. p. 55.
11 Paula Meehan, *Pillow Talk*, p. 24.
12 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 235.
13 "The Stoning of Francis Stuart", *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p.155.
14 "Dancing with Brian Friel", *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil, p. 158.*
15 *Great Irish Speeches of the Twentieth Century*, p. 369.
16 *The Selected Paul Durcan*, p. 85.
17 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 226.
18 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 256.
19 *Greetings to Our Friend in Brazil*, p. 252.
20 Declan Kiberd, *Men and Feminism in Modern Literature*. p. 171.
21 *Daddy, Daddy*, p. 147.
22 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 72.
23 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 49.
24 The play on "Blue Man" (*Fearr Ghorm)* in "Dun Chaoin" from *O Westport in the Light of Asia* is similar.
25 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 3.
26 *The Kilfenora Teaboy*, p. 26.
27 *The Kilfenora Teaboy*, p. 32.
28 "Poetic Forms and Social Malformations", *Tradition and Influence in Anglo-Irish Poetry*, p. 176.
29 See 'Ulysses', *Daddy Daddy*, p. 99. for example.
30 Kevin Myers' attack on Patrick Pearse in "An Irishman's Diary", *Irish Times*. July 22, 2000 is a recent example
31 Sebastian Barry. *The Whereabouts of Encas McNulty*. New York: Viking, 1998.
32 Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*. New York: Viking, 1999.
33 Derek Hand's lecture took place at The James Joyce Summer School, Newman House, Dublin, July 2000.
34 Patrick McCabe. *The Dead School*. London: Picador, 1995.
35 *Great Irish Speeches of the Twentieth Century*, p372.
36 Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p579.
37 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p251.
38 *Teresa's Bar*, p. 45.
39 *Teresa's Bar*, p. 45.
40 "Poetic forms and social malformations", *Tradition and Influence in Anglo-Irish Poetry*, p. 178.
41 Derek Mahon, *Collected Poems*, pp. 44-47.
42 Derek Mahon, *Collected Poems*, p. 64.
43 Seamus Heaney *Crediting Poetry*. p. 21.
44 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 162.
45 Paul Durcan, "The Drumshanbo Hustler, A Celebration of Van Morrison", *Magil Magazine* 1988.
46 Extract from Durcan's foreword to *The Personality of Ireland*, p. 8.
47 Fwd. *The Personality of Ireland*, p. 8.

48 *Daddy, Daddy*, p. 139.
49 *Daddy, Daddy*, p. 139.
50 *Great Irish Speeches of The Twentieth Century*, p. 369.
51 *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*, p. 105.

Works Cited

Primary Sources:

Durcan, Paul. *O Westport in the Light of Asia Minor*. Dublin: Anna Livia Press, 1975.
_____. *The Berlin Wall Café*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1985.
_____. *Teresa's Bar*. Dublin: The Gallery Press, 1986.
_____. *Going Home To Russia*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1987.
_____. *Daddy, Daddy*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1990.
_____. *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil*. London: The Harvill Press, 1999.
Heaney, Seamus. *Crediting Poetry*. County Meath: The Gallery Press, 1995.
Joyce, James. *The Essential James Joyce*. London: Grafton Books, 1986.
Longley, Edna. Ed. *The Selected Paul Durcan*. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1982.
Mahon, Derek. *Collected Poems*. County Meath: The Gallery Press, 1999.
McCabe, Patrick. *The Dead School*. London: Picador, 1995.

Secondary Sources:

Evans, Estyn. *The Personality of Ireland*. Fwd. Paul Durcan. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1992.
Furst, Lillian. R. *Romanticism in Perspective*. London: MacMillan, 1969.
Hand, Derek, "Knowing Your Place, James Joyce's City in Contemporary Irish writing". James Joyce Summer School. Newman House Dublin, July 2000.
Kiberd, Declan, *Men and Feminism in Modern Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1985.
_____. *Inventing Ireland*. London: Vintage, 1996.
McGowan, John: *Postmodernism and Its Critics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991.
Toibin, Colm. Ed. *The Kilfenora Teaboy A Study of Paul Durcan*. Dublin: New Island Books, 1996.

The Irish in South America

Irish Diasporic *Literary Voices in South American Border Narratives*

Laura P. Z. de Izarra

Abstract: *This paper is part of a larger project that maps the Irish literary diaspora space in Argentina and Brazil. It is a reflection upon the recurring constitutive elements in the process of construction of an Irish-Argentine identity represented by the Irish diasporic voices of Juan José Delaney's narratives. The Irish immigration is one of the main concerns of the Irish-Argentine writer. Some of his short stories from* Tréboles del Sur *(1994) (Southern Shamrocks) and his first novel* Moira Sullivan *(1999) are analysed here from a transcultural perspective.*

The Irish immigration to South America has been studied from few historical perspectives and very little has been done to trace contemporary Irish literary diasporic voices in this geographical location. Avtar Brah, influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa's theorisation of borders and borderlands, advocates in her book *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996) that if borders are arbitrary constructions and exist as social relation and subjectivity, they are directly related with questions of identity, ethnicity, class and gender, and thus, with geographic and psychic demarcation of territories. Border writings can elucidate many social and political aspects of border encounters articulating a textual strategy of translation as opposed to representation (Hicks, 1991). Consequently, such narratives give the diasporic writer in particular, as well as any reader, the possibility of practising multi-dimensional perception and experiencing various cross-cultural realities. Juan José Delaney is an Argentine writer descendant of Irish immigrants who arrived in Argentina in the second half of the nineteenth century and settled out on the rich farmlands of Buenos Aires province until they moved to the city to work. Still in his teens he wrote his first collection of short stories, *La Carcajada* (1974), which was highly praised by Jorge Luis Borges who "congratulated the boy" and said "he has the obligation to continue" (*Buenos Aires Herald*, 21 Nov. 1999). Delaney admired Oscar Wilde and Borges and believed he could write like them. With the sense of a need for recovering his family roots, he focuses on diasporic themes and characters that were already introduced in the narratives of William Bulfin, Benito Lynch and Kathleen Nevin in the last decades of the nineteenth and first ones of the twentieth centuries. However, his work is different because he translates the pain, loss and frustration of the Irish immigrants

in a revisionist way intertwining historical documents, letters and diaries in his fictional narratives. Thus, he transcends the theme of geographic dislocations and explores the inner human conflicts that arise not only out of the duality of the self but mainly out of the encounter of two cultures producing an art of his own or "cross-border writing" where reality, diaspora history and fiction are in constant tension.

According to Terence Brown in *Ireland, A Social and Cultural History 1922-1985*, the 1840s saw the beginning of "modern Irish diaspora with its perennial emigration which by the 1920s meant that 43 per cent of Irish-born men and women were living abroad." (1985:19). Though various historical and political reasons provoked the Irish emigration to the continent, the Americas and other distant countries before and after the Great Hunger, the disillusionment of the first two decades of independence encouraged artists and intellectuals to reach the conclusion that "Ireland was no longer an interesting place in which to live." (Kiberd 1996):

> War and civil war appeared to have drained all energy and imagination away: there was precious little left with which to reimagine the national condition. (263)

This attitude, strengthened by economic and political problems faced by the Irish state in the post-world war period and the crisis in the countryside, reflected a stagnation which was unacceptable. The traditional utopian thought in search for a better world and better conditions of life "elsewhere" rekindled the continuing exodus of emigration towards countries that would challenge people's imaginary. Some Irish emigrants *imagined* South America as a geographical space where the *reinvention* of their hopes for freedom and better economic and social status, was possible though they would have to face a foreign language and culture.

There were different phases of emigration to the Southern countries. First, in the sixteenth century the Jesuit missions in the North of Argentina, Paraguay and South of Brazil led by Father Thomas Fehily, an Irishman from Limerick who arrived to the River Plate in 1587, strove to make the Christian utopia become real. Secondly, British-Irish arrived in the country as soldiers in unsuccessful military expeditions, such as the English invasions in 1763 to Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) and in 1806 and 1807 to Buenos Aires; many of them decided to stay in the country and were later incorporated to General San Martín's Army of Liberation in 1817. Thus, political dissenters and patriots such as Admiral William Brown, who founded the Argentinian Navy, and Generals O'Brien and O'Higgins, who led the campaigns for independence of South American countries, were historically recognized by their deeds in the adopted land. Thirdly, after the exodus provoked by the Great Hunger, the Irish immigration in Argentina has played a decisive role in the configuration and transformation of the country's agricultural structure and the formation of a small bourgeois rural class in Buenos Aires province (Korol & Sábato, 1981). The majority of them came from

Westmeath and Longford and gathered under the spiritual and administrative support of Father Anthony Fahy who arrived in 1844 and became the protector of their traditional values. He helped them to settle, find a job and get married with people of their own community thus retarding their integration to the Argentine society. According to some statistics, there were 20.000 Irish in Argentina by the end of the 19th century (Wolf & Patriarca, 1991). In few years the Irish community became an important group of landowners feeling rewarded from the dispossession they had suffered by the English in their motherland. Though not all the stories were of success, the Irish that settled in the "new lands" of South America and their descendants dreamed of going back to their motherland knowing that it would never happen. So, utopian narratives, also called "awakened dreams" (Anzaldúa, 1987), helped them to reread their past and reconceptualize their future in a diaspora space that allowed them to construct the promising present of the largest Irish community in a non-English speaking country. Finally, according to MacLoughlin Bréard (*The Southern Cross*, 2000) "other" Irish arrived from the United States, Canada and Australia as well as from France, Russia and Austria. The "Irish-Yankees" who in the 1820s "became part of the craftsmen of the city of Buenos Aires" distinguished themselves from the Irish elite who avoided cities and settled in the countryside without mixing with the natives. Delaney portrays the Irish immigrant experiences mainly from the third and fourth phases and deals with the psychological, social and ideological effects of the tensions produced by the diaspora and the local while living in social and political borders.

The words *diaspora, border* and *politics of location* are immanent and "mark conceptual connections for historicised analyses of contemporary trans/national movements of people, information, cultures, commodities and capital" (Avtar Brah 1996, 16). The concept of *diaspora space* is distinct from diaspora because it is the intersectional location of three immanent elements – diaspora, frontiers and (dis)location, and it is inhabited "not only by diasporic subjects but equally by those who are constructed and represented as 'indigenous'." Brah's new concept is linked to the idea of 'difference' and also establishes a politics of intersectionality where multi-dimensional tensions and (dis)locations occur, including not only the geographical but the psychological dislocations as well. The Argentine *diaspora space* is inhabited by many people of different ethnic origins with a Spanish-Italian majority. However, according to Juan José Delaney (*ABEI Journal, Nº2*, 2000), nowadays 350.000 Argentines claim to be of Irish ascendancy and there is a corpus that "can be called Irish-Argentine Literature", written first in Irish-English and then, gradually, in Spanish. But, how do these descendants define themselves? Do they really adopt a hyphenated identity as Delaney has said? Why? What does "Irishness and/or Argentineness" mean to them? How are they being represented? How do they translate those representations into their own voices? Which tensions are present in the process of *becoming*?

Definitely, the Irish in Argentina did not experience the same *politics of transfiguration* that Irish migrants strove for in nineteenth-century United States where

they used labour unions, the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party to become part of the White Republic (Ignatiev, 1995). They were not either identified as "black Europeans" as they were defined by the English. Paradoxically, in South America they were identified as "English" due to the language they spoke and, at first, they certainly profited from it getting better jobs than the natives. Thus, in his short stories like "The Return" and "The Other Informer", Delaney shows the ambiguous feelings provoked by the social and economic rising of Irish immigrants who were employed by English companies due to their knowledge of English, while he re-reads and re-writes the historical past looking for recognition of their own roots and the various routes taken by their ancestors in relation to former migratory movements. He also portrays them mainly in relation with their own community and very few stories narrate the interaction with the 'indigenous' or other ethnic groups as in "First Love" or "The Founder". Only in his first novel, *Moira Sullivan*, he establishes connections with the German immigration and describes the Argentine 'indigenous' in very brief passages - her husband's secretary's hypocrisy, the Argentine army's influence on the civilian population, a "joker" who explains her the use of the bidet, a dwarf who guides them through the cemetery in Junín and a letter to the president Juan Domingo Perón.

In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie affirms that the effect of mass migrations has been the creation of "radically new types of human being":

> people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves – because they are so defined by others – by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves. (124-125)

This is true to the experience of the first Irish migrants who established new imaginative relationships between the utopian thought that provoked their transatlantic and transhemispheric diaspora movements and the possibilities they found in the *imagined* new country in South America. They were moved by a desire or "politics of fulfilment" (Gilroy, 1993) that is "the notion that a future society will be able to realize the social and political promise that present society has left unaccomplished." (op. cit. p.133). However, those illusions about the land of exile somewhat vanished once settled due to their suffering of departure from their homeland, to the difficulties in learning a foreign language, and to the fact of finding themselves isolated, dislocated and "unclassified" – as Bourdieu says when referring to the immigrant being an *atopos* (Sayad, 1991). Moreover, the immigrant had to cope with narrative fantasies told by former emigrants who had gone back to their homeland. These narratives disclosed completely different "realities" to the ones they encountered when they arrived at the "new land". Kathleen Nevin in her autobiographical book *You'll Never Go Back* (1946) writes:

> She gave us an astonishing account of Buenos Aires, a place we had never heard of and never expected to see. (And God forgive Maria, when we did see it, it wasn't at all what she had led us to expect.). (p.10)

Though Sayad affirms that the word "immigration" is always seen as "a problem" from the point of view of the society that receives the foreigners, the Irish immigrants under the Southern Cross were not seen like that, even being protagonists of chain migration. Besides, the Irish were conscious of being emigrants because they kept alive both an emotional attachment to their homeland and a strong awareness of the causes of their departure. However, this attachment to their roots provoked many problematic interrelations between the politics of desire and imagination triggered by the utopian thought and the politics of heritage and nostalgia triggered by the myth of the return. A good example of the ambiguity of feelings provoked by these tensions is Maureen Murphy's title of her book on Irish-American servant girls called *Hope from the Ocean* where it is not only appropriated the idea of the proverb "There is hope from the ocean but not from the grave" which discloses the meaning of the "promised land" (hope for the migrant and for the family at home who would benefit from immigration), but it is also implicit the myth of the return (a desire to go back homeland, proper of the diaspora). Thus, "diasporas always leave a trail of collective memory about another place and time and create new maps of desire and attachment" (Appadurai & Breckonridge, 1989. p. 484). Immigrants must constantly negotiate within a diaspora space the cultural tensions provoked by a sense of "placelessness"/displacement and of various "remembered" futures (utopian thoughts) while searching for their "imagined" pasts:

> In the remote Pottsville (a very dear and small town in Pennsylvania) she had to look for the seeds of her future, what was already past. (*Moira Sullivan*, p.12)

Thus, the diaspora space discloses a "diaspora consciousness" (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999) in the present. This is a state of mind and a sense of identity generally implicit in transnational communities where a psychological and geographical territorialization of the mind is experienced by a positive identification with a historical heritage. Generally, people who left their country due to different reasons, even political ones, loved it strongly and this feeling is passed down to their descendants. As Rushdie says, the shape of the country is also our shape: "the shape of the way you think and feel and dream" (*The New Yorker*, June19 & 26, 2000: 94). So, diasporic writers in general create utopian narratives or "awakened dreams" which, according to Anzaldúa, have a shamanic power that turns them into "shape changers", those who look to transform the social imaginary here and now. In the case of Delaney, he gives shape to the various Irelands of the mind of the immigrants and resignifies their past images when translated into new experiences of cultural encounters. Even though he mainly portrays them in

interaction with their own community, his writing elucidates certain aspects of border encounters that become constitutive elements of the process of construction of an Irish-Argentine identity. Using the vitality of bricolage, he *transcreates*[1] many experiences of lives taken from historical sources and different narratives, such as letters and even postcards published in the Irish-Argentine newspaper *The Southern Cross*[2]. This weekly newspaper founded in 1875 used to be the vehicle for communication within the Irish community and it has published articles about their social life in the new country and news from Ireland since the beginning of its existence. Now as a monthly publication, its present motto comprises a relatively balanced diasporic tension: "*Since 1875, expressing our Argentine plenitude from the Irish ancestry.*"

In *Tréboles del Sur* (*Southern Shamrocks*, 1994), a collection of short stories, Delaney draws "delicate vignettes of the tragedy and comedy of Irish-Argentina, its nineteenth-century immigrants and their descendants." (*Buenos Aires Herald,* November 21, 1999). Recurring themes of loss, migration, grief, acculturation, isolation provoked by the unknown language, oppression, nostalgia of the past and intermarriages, form a intricate narrative web where the narrator creatively reconstructs the processes of the Irish immigrant's self-fashioning from a collective perspective. Thus, his stories introduce the utopian thoughts of the voiceless Irish people – single men and women – enacting non-synchronous collective memories that represent the different jobs and experiences they had when they arrived. Governess, teachers of English language in rural Argentina, labourers, land planters, cattle-raisers, widow(er)s and priests inhabit his narratives while characters like the dreamer, the informer and the traitor – cultural figures born within the Irish nationalist movement – echo stories with Irish protagonists written by Borges.

In "El Otro Delator" ("The Other Informer"), the narrator introduces Jack Donovan, once an Irish conspirator who fought for his country's independence and emigrated to Argentina to get married with his beloved who was already there. The romantic view of his revolutionary past ironically counterpoises his present as a salesman executive of an English cold storage plant called Swift, where he has worked for a long time thanks to his knowledge of English. Though this metaphoric subordination to the dominator's company is not explored by the writer, the reversing roles of traitor/ revolutionary judge and fact/fiction are focused when Donovan sees John Ford's film "El Delator" based on Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Informer.* The Irish executive discovers that the actor who played the rebel judging the informer was the traitor himself in real life and whose betrayal nearly caused Donovan's own death. The protagonist gets to know later that the informer escaped to the United States and expiated his deeds in an ironic turn in celluloid leaving Donovan reflecting upon the contradictory role of a traitor enacting "culpability as well as penitent will." (82) Delaney closes his narrative comparing the "fragile celluloid scenario" as "another grotesque spot in the sinuous reality."

"El Otro Delator" is sown with reminiscences of Borges's informer in "The Shape of the Sword" and "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero"[3]. The former is a double-

bounded story where "the image of the hero is broken and demystified" when he reveals himself as a traitor and tells "fictional Borges the story of his infamy to be blamed forever."[4] The latter interlaces history with fiction (Julius Caesar's death and Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*) and questions the consequences of history plagiarizing fiction and turning the whole world into a stage. The narrative is about an Irish conspirator who was discovered as traitor and asked his friends to kill him in circumstances that would redeem him so that his death would become an instrument of emancipation for their national cause. When Borges introduces isolated characters from romantic revolutionary Ireland to the Argentine reader, he focuses the *dual* and *paradoxical nature* of the Irish mind that has "two thoughts at a time" subverting the established modes of linear and sequential thinking. The Irish characters of his short stories are taken from nationalistic contexts where the dyads treason and loyalty, as well as shame and honour, play the central function of the narrative. However, Borges explores these dyads in a metaphysical and metafictional level straining them to reach the crucial Derridean moment of *aporia* where final meanings turn into partial truths.

In "El Otro Delator", Delaney follows the master's way but this time he portrays the reverse of both of Borges's stories: his traitor plays the role of a hero and the narrator transforms the main concept of the second story – life imitates art - into the consequences of art 'reconstructing' life. This idea of reality and fiction as constructs is also present in his story "La vida imita al arte" ("Life Imitates Art"), where the Irish-Argentine writer explores the theme of the title with a simple narrative technique of story-within-story and describes the ambiguous feelings of death and life, reality and art. It is about chain migration: an Irish orphan girl is sent to Buenos Aires by her single aunt to live with her uncle's family. She suffers loss and rejection in Ireland as well as in the new land, works as a teacher for an engineer's only daughter, falls in love with him and lives similar situations as the protagonist of *Jane Eyre*. Film, reality and fiction are intermixed and Delaney uses the image of symmetry reflected by a mirror in a symbolic and metaphoric way to question who she is and how she is seen by the others.

Immigration is an aesthetic agent in Juan José Delaney's pen. It is an imaginative resource capable of influencing the writer's literary choice when he is intertwining the historical past with individual stories about it and the character's present. He uses different voices to portray the immigrants' awareness of the process of transformation of the self at the encounter of two cultures and of the various responses to the tensions generated by it. His stories also reflect the doubleness of the Irish mind which goes beyond the analytical dialectical reasoning of "either/or" and shows the Irish constitutive experience of "both/and". This provokes a plurality that defies and denies the violence implicit in bipolar oppositions and creates a "new consciousness" which, in the case of Delaney's stories, is not still free from cultural domination and psychological frontiers that constitute the "enemy within". His characterizations ambiguously correspond more to the diasporic subject rather than to the immigrant. According to James Clifford, "immigrants may experience loss and nostalgia, but only en route to a whole new home in a new place"

while "peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be 'cured' by merging into a new national community" (Clifford 1997: 250). The diasporic subject settles 'elsewhere' with the strong desire for a future return though this would never happen while the immigrant constructs a new home in a new land to stay though keeping in mind the myth of return. Delaney's characters isolate themselves. They have their own community and do not struggle for different ways to be "Argentine" – ways to stay and be different, to be Argentine *and "something else* complexly related to shared histories of cultural survival" (op. cit.). They are aware of some inner transformation but their identities seem to be crystallized in the past nation identity while living in a different geographical space with no explicit desire to return to their motherland.

Moreover, the issue of utopianism present in his work seems to go beyond the psychological and linguistic isolation faced by his characters and sometimes, it somewhat proposes Gilroy's politics of solidarity which brings the Irish community together to achieve the recognition they aspire within the new society. Clifford defends this concept saying "the term diaspora is a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement." (252) However, Delaney's characters are not concerned in defining the local and when this happens, as in "El Fundador" ("*The Founder*"), they fail in the attempt. For example, this story introduces an Irish immigrant who arrives in the country with a "novel project" inspired in Thomas More's *Utopia*. Though he spent three hard years trying to "change reality from literature" he did not succeed. He had to re-conceptualize the hopes of his awakened "Irish dreams" when he realized the impossibility of fulfilment inherent in his project. His utopian world created a new conceptual space that the natives rejected as being socialist and he had to "imagine different ways of conceptualizing the past, present and future" of his former utopian thought in order to be accepted (Sargisson 1996). Finally, he created a new project which came true when he got married with a schoolteacher who supported him in his worst moments, even when he lost his job and was taken to prison. Thus, the character of the story, instead of "founding an exemplar city he founded a home worthy of that ideal society" (44).

Delaney's first novel *Moira Sullivan* is about a silent film Irish-American script-writer who moved to Argentina with her second husband, an Irish-American executive of a multinational company. Living in a home for old people in Buenos Aires, she recalls her past in a desperate impulse of understanding her own "self". The writer uses several narrative techniques and chooses various discourses to reconstruct Moira Sullivan's life in flashbacks through her film-scripts, her first husband's diary, her own letters to her parents and her friend Allison, and her own memories. Isolation and silence mark Moira's life. The first half of the novel is about her relationship with her first husband, Konrad Storm, a German musician living in New York whose untimely death interrupted all their plans. What language could not express, his music and her film scripts illuminated their mutual understanding. They loved each other and the effects of immigration and

the immigrant's soul are deconstructed through the *new art* - the cinema - which is "the refuge of immigrants, solitaires, sceptics , beings without language and deserters of temples and religious places in general."(39) Changing the point of view of the narrative from Moira's to Konrad's the narrator tells their life as if it were a full-length movie where communication is always interrupted and silence is privileged.

Delaney's main narrative technique is intra-textuality. In a postmodern fragmentary style, he incorporates some of his own stories from *Tréboles del Sur (Southern Shamrocks).* For example, Moira's letters to her friend Allison echo "Destinies"; the moving story told by the gaucho Abraham Mullins (son of a Jewish mother and Irish father) is the rewriting of "First Love"; reminiscences of "Madge on Fridays" appear when the dwarf at the cemetery of Junín retold them the story while they were looking for Irish tombs; and the narrative of her second husband's death caused by a horse accident recalls "The Return". Sometimes he chooses overused metaphors such as "those objects were like remains of a wreckage"(29) which he immediately improves adding "broken things, incomplete, divorced from each other"; or like Moira "left herself to be carried by the waves of life" (55); or when Moira "opted to observe the daily tragicomedy. Those from life were nearly all first-class actors" (110); or "I started being a marionette of unknown forces, a sailing boat at the mercy of the wind and the waves" (116). However, there are masterly passages of great creativity and aesthetic value throughout the whole novel like the very opening of it, the way he articulates the excerpts of the film scripts and the character's own thoughts while the story itself is being told in fragmentary postmodern brush-stroke narratives. Delaney successfully ties them up producing a final aesthetic effect where plurality predominates over the unifying force present in the process of the construction of an illusory single identity. Another passage that shows Delaney's excellence is the entry of Konrad's diary of 27th December 1925 where he synthesizes the anxiety of an immigrant. The German asks "What things can music communicate? Music reveals deep anxieties of the self." (69) Then he writes the musical notes of the first five bars of his own composition and asks "who would discover that they enclose the core aspects of his life? Nobody. Perhaps Moira." (69) He explains how that specific musical rhythm represents the proper dynamism of life and how each chord expresses his will of accommodating to new experiences; dissonance prevails in his sad childhood and then, there is a return to peace through the reverse of the initial chord as if it were an attempt to confound life and death, beginning and end. Also Moira's imaginary talks with her dead husband on the imaginary phone show Delaney's experimental technique of using broken language to construct a literary image which metonimically represents her broken feelings and the process of resignification of her own life through the ritualistic action of calling the dead.

It is in the second half of the book that the question of identity and immigration is strongly addressed, linking Moira's experience in the Argentine diaspora space with Konrad's in New York, both suffering the contact with an unknown language and culture

respectively. It is only at this point that Moira asks herself what such experience means. Argentina is introduced as a utopian world – fascinating place with "Natives. Indians. Savages. Adventures. Challenges. The possibility of growing ..." (102). The latter is the common denominator element present in all diasporic narratives of oppressed people: they would be able grasp an opportunity and change their future with hard work and sacrifice as some of Moira's second husband's relatives did in Buenos Aires. Cornelius Geraghty was a brilliant Irish-American executive sent by his company to Buenos Aires. Moira followed him but "she chose to marginalize herself from the Spanish magic". She wanted to be "only a tourist, a strange and amazed tourist" in Argentina as if she were a tourist of the world (104). Instead of learning Spanish she decided to learn German to understand more about Konrad's philosophic questionings and their life together in New York.

It is through the letters to her friend Allison that the narrator gives voice to Moira to register her first impressions of the country and its people. The encounter of both cultures is evidently counterpoised in binary oppositions: Argentina's non-identification (due to the plural origin of the natives) versus Irish identification (only one root); English ancestral cynicism versus Argentine natives' secret admiration of them; English versus Irish though some Irish wear the mask of the English to progress in their jobs; the imagined utopian "land of gold" versus the immensity of the pampas (109). The Irish immigrant's ancestral need to possess land moves Cornelius to the countryside to visit his relatives and find his own death. The question of identity is again re-enacted by an Irish couple living in the camp and running an Irish pub or tavern and by the Irish living in Buenos Aires who are all united through the weekly *The Southern Cross*, though they still do not know who they are. The mixed language is the worst result. However, it is with Moira's broken thoughts in the last imaginary communication with Konrad on the phone that the immigrant's identity is defined while its meaning is simultaneously blurred by the religious connotation of the immigrant soul at the moment of death: "feeling of dispossession ... idea that we come to suffer ... that we are not legitimate inhabitants of this world ... yes, of course, words lose ... harmonies defeat... hello! Hello! ... I believe that we'll see each other very soon ... hello! Hello?" (144) She realizes that tango is the music of the immigrant in Argentina because words are not necessary to communicate its deep meaning; music is above all. This insight discloses that tango resembles Konrad's ragtime and reveals her the transcendence of his musical compositions in their past moments of silent communion. Assuming various masks, Moira could discern that an identity is not fixed or unique, it explodes in its plurality. Despite her isolation she has been transformed by reality, by Konrad's, Cornelius's and her own geographical and psychological dislocations.

However, the migrant suspects reality because "having experienced several ways of being, s/he understands their illusory nature." (Rushdie). Moira wants to translate that reality through an identity essence but she fails. To see things clearly she has to cross the frontiers of temporality and space; she has to deterritorialize her mind. Delaney

translates this act through the use of various discourses that overlap along his narrative but it rather helps him to construct an identity for his art of writing. Gloria Anzaldúa affirms that the identity of a story is constructed through word, image and feelings: "an image which is the bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge." Delaney's attempt to reconstruct an Irish-Argentine identity looking backwards to the Irish roots places him in the first stage of the process of identification: the Irish interact among themselves to preserve their cultural heritage in the diaspora space because they implicitly see the natives' inferiority. However, he also looks forward to construct a plural identity, not of the nineteenth-century Irish immigrant he is representing but, of his own narratives which encapsulate past time trying to translate "who", "what" and "the needs and hopes" of his own Irish-Argentine community of the present. In doing so, his narratives become utopian attempts to reinvent an Irish-Argentine literature recovering the power of the Irish ancestry. I think that his aim will only be attained if he goes further beyond the intricate borders of a fixed identity attached to origins and focuses his future writings on the tensions provoked by the interaction between cultural heritage and locality. This would bring him to interrogate the various processes of translation at the encounter of two cultures and the psychological, social and political consequences in the process of transfiguration towards a hyphenated identity or cultural hybridity.

Irish "estancieros". A photograph by Martin Parola. In: *The Southern Cross*, 2000, p. 13.

Notes

1 "transcreates" is a term used by Brazilian poet and translator Haroldo de Campos to affirm that a translator does not translate but transcreate a text, thus opening a wide net of implications in the process of translation.

2 *The Southern Cross* was founded in 1875 for the Irish community after *The Standard* (1861) which was the first Anglo-Irish newspaper for the British living in Buenos Aires. *The Southern Cross*, first published weekly, is still being published monthly.

3 For an analysis of these stories see Izarra, Laura. "The Irish Under the Southern Cross" in: *Crop 1*, São Paulo: Editora Humanitas, 1994; pp. 50-55.

4 Ibid. p. 53.

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands. La Frontera. The New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities.* London & New York: Routledge, 1996.

Clifford, James. *Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century.* Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Delaney, Juan José. *Tréboles del Sur.* Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1994.

_____. *Moira Sullivan.* Buenos Aires: ediciones Corregidor, 1999.

_____. "Language and Literature of the Irish in Argentina". In: *ABEI Journal,* N°2, June 2000: 131-143.

Gilroy, Paul. *Small Acts. Thoughts on the politics of black cultures.* London: Serpent's Tail, 1993.

Hall, Stuart. "New Ethnicities" & "The Transformation of a Diasporic Intellectual". In: Morley, David & Chen, Kuan Ksing. *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies.* London: Routledge, 1996.

_____ & Paul du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity.* London: Sage Publications, 1997.

Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White.* London & New York: Routledge, 1995.

Izarra, Laura. "The Irish Under the Southern Cross". In: *Crop 1.* São Paulo: Humanitas, 1994, 50-55.

Korol, Juan Carlos & Hilda Sábato. *Cómo fue la inmigración Irlandesa en Argentina.* Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1981. pp.9-10.

MacLoughlin Bréard, Guillermo. "La Inmigración Irlandesa a la Argentina". In: *The Southern Cross 1875-2000. Edición Especial.* Año 125, Noviembre 2000: 4-8.

Nevin, Kathleen, *You'll Never Go Back.* Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc. 1946.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1891-1991.* London: Granta Books, 1991.

Sargisson, Lucy. *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism.* London & New York: Routledge, 1996.

Sayad, Abdelmalek. *A Imigração ou os paradoxos da alteridade.* [*L'immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité.* (1991)]. Trans. Cristina Murachco. São Paulo: Edusp, 1998.

Vertovec, Steven & Robin Cohen. *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism.* Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA: An Elgar Reference Collection, 1999.

Wolf, Ema & Cristina Patriarca. *La gran inmigración.* Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1991. p. 105.

Book Reviews

The Fiction of Colm Tóibín

Rüdiger Imhof

Colm Tóibín's first novel, *The South* (1990), came along with a eulogistic cover comment from John Banville: "*The South* is a daring, imaginative feat; the world it conjures is at once familiar and strange, and strangely moving. A splendid first novel". One must be forgiven for entertaining some doubt as to whether Banville was being serious when penning the blurb. More likely, this was a case of one Wexford man doing a good turn for another Wexford man. For the novel is anything but a daring, imaginative feat, and that verbal juggling resulting in the phrase "at once familiar and strange, and strangely moving" would seem to give the game away.

The South offers the story of Enniscorthy-born Katherine Proctor, starting in 1950 and ending somewhere around 1971. At the opening, Katherine is in Barcelona to work there as a painter. She has separated from her husband and boy-child, who have remained in Ireland. The precise reason why she left them remains unconvincingly vague. It appears that she did so because her husband was not prepared to stop a court case against some neighbouring farmer whose animals had invaded his grounds. In Barcelona she strikes up with one Miguel, a fellow-painter, who is still traumatised by the Spanish civil war and the sufferings he underwent. Before too long, the couple is joined by an Irishman, called Michael Graves, who likewise hails from around Enniscorthy, and from early on the reader may surmise that Graves will at a later stage become embroiled with Katherine, which, sure enough, is the case towards the ending of the narrative. Meanwhile, Miguel has an exhibition of his work in which a highly compromising portrait of Franco plays a conspicuous, though in the final analysis inconsequential, part. Miguel and Katherine go to live in a house in Pallosa, where Miguel had frequently stayed during the civil war. The police come to check on Miguel and start harassing him. As a result of what the text calls their being ravenous for each other, Miguel and Katherine produce a daughter. Five years after her arrival in Spain, Katherine pays a fleeting visit to Dublin to see her husband about financial matters.

Then one of Miguel's friends from civil war days dies after having being severely maltreated by the police; Miguel himself is beaten up in prison; slowly but surely things begin to fall apart; the centre cannot hold; and in the end, Miguel is killed in a car accident together with his young daughter. Regrettably, that accident is delineated in a very feeble manner. Fourteen years after the opening, Katherine is back in Barcelona, pointlessly and insipidly talking to the dead Miguel: "Miguel, I am the woman who wanders about inside the port as the daylight goes, carrying a canvas, an easel and oils" (p. 163) and telling him that she is not in love with Michael Graves. Next she settles in

Dublin, spends a holiday with her mother in Portugal, comes partly to live with her son and his family near Enniscorthy, painting the sea, has an exhibition in Dublin before the narrative folds in a vexingly, inconclusive way:

> 'It used to be garlic. When I knew you first you wanted a woman tasting of garlic.'
> 'It's age. Now I want gin. That's what age is doing to me.' He stared into the fire for a moment, then turned and looked at her again. (p. 238)

In toto, it unfortunately amounts to pretty small beer.

Some ado is made about the fact that Katherine's family was burnt out during the Troubles, after which event her mother left to live in London, abandoning her husband and daughter. The latter aspect may explain the fraught relationship between Katherine and her mother, which, God be praised, is eventually patched up, as is Katherine's relationship with her son and his family. Yet, the political dimension of the historical event during the Civil War is left curiously unfocused. Moreover, the novel is permeated with cracker-barrel disquisitions on painting and the use of colour, such as this one: "Rogent talked about colour and form, he talked about beauty, he spoke about using paint for its own sake" (p. 61). Technically, the narrative account is seriously marred by numerous inadequacies. There is, to begin with, a gratuitous hopscotching among different points-of-view, alternating between third-person and first-person, without any discernible conceptual necessity or any thematic gain. In addition to the perspectival shifts, the narrative employs letters and diary entries, as if in exemplification of the school of thought which suggests that when one has nothing of substance to say, one had better fool around with different textual modes. Some of the dialogue passages have a distinctly fatuous note to them. Here is one:

> 'So you're going to stay in Spain?'
> 'I don't know.'
> 'You'll be able to come and visit us.'
> 'I've enjoyed meeting you. I like you,' he said, and then he grinned. 'In fact, I almost love you.'
> 'Every time you start to be serious you make a joke,' she said.
> 'You grasp things quickly, don't you? You grasped the differences between us more quickly than I did.'
> 'That wasn't hard, was it?' (p.79)

Too frequently, the text groans under the weight of vapid stuff that is all as interesting as the next man's meanderings about his outdoor jakes. What *is* "the effortless throb of orgasm" (p. 27)? A first novel, to warrant the praise heaped upon it by the blurb, needs more matter with less art, as Gertrude famously said. The Blackwater Lighthouse, one

of the two lighthouses near Enniscorthy, is mentioned (p. 214). It will lend its name to Tóibín's fourth novel to date. But, again, that, as well as other things about *The South*, is of little consequence.

At first, the narrative discourse in Tóibín's *The Heather Blazing* (1992) may put one in mind of how H.G. Wells characterised Henry James's prose style: "It is a magnificent but painful hippopotamus resolved at all costs [...] upon picking up a pea which has got into the corner of its den". Exceptionally slow-paced, labouring at the tiniest of details, dried out to a monkish purity, Tóibín's way of telling his story has a curiously tedious effect about it, not unlike that emanating from specimens of the *noveau roman*. Upon reflection, it may strike one that the distinctive prose style of the novel could be designed to mirror the consciousness of Tóibín's protagonist, Eamon Redmond, an Irish High Court judge, a man obsessed all his life with the letter and spirit of the law, with his mother's death when he was a child, the death of his uncle from tuberculosis, the slow, lingering death of his father, and more recently the death of his wife, Carmel. He is haunted, too, by his own country's past, his family's involvement in the 1916 Rising and the mayhem of the War of Independence, the founding of the Fianna Fáil party and its coming to power (de Valera and Charlie Haughey put in cameo appearances). Eamon's life unfolds in painstaking images as he seeks consolation in the strange beauty of the slowly eroding landscape of his childhood on the east coast of Ireland.

The Heather Blazing is not a stream-of-consciousness novel; instead it is – very much like Henry Jamses's novels – a novel with a central intelligence, that of Eamon Redmond, a reflector through which everything is relayed. The fastidious, painstaking narrative style characterises a fastidious, painstaking person; the austerity of the discourse typifies a man of few words, tight-lipped even with his wife, a man who has "learnt never to need anything from anyone", who has "never asked anyone for anything" lest he should be turned down (p. 228).

The Heather Blazing is a finely structured narrative. The chapters, alternately presenting the past and the present, as well as the three parts into which the book if divided, are cleverly dovetailed. Myriad parallelisms in the arrangement of events are effected; correspondences abound. Thus, for instance, the opening sentences of Part III are the first sentences of Part I *verbatim*. The parallelisms and correspondences intimately link the past to the present, throwing into relief the multiple similarities.

> The title 'the heather blazing' is taken from a rebel song:
> A rebel hand set the heather blazing
> And brought the neighbours from far and near. (p. 74)

The rebel aspect is quite significant, denoting a romantic nationalistic and patriotistic Ireland. Eamon's grandfather, interestingly, was regarded as "the last of the Fenians" (p. 76). When Eamon asks his uncle whether they burnt any houses during the War of Independence, the uncle replies: "'We gutted a good few of them all right [...] Wulton,

old Captain Skrine, the Proctors of the Bunclody Road, Castleboro [...]'" "Were they all Protestants?'" Eamon then wants to know. "'They were'", his uncle says. "'And they were all up to their neck in the British Army who were on the rampage here, and the British Legion and the King and the Queen. It's all gone now.'" (pp. 171f.) That last sentence: 'It's all gone now' offers a clue – gone, just as the receding shoreline will be gone in a number of years.

Eamon Redmond represents a generation for which that romantic, rebel-rousing Ireland has ceased to exist. He is a most decent, ordinary man, standing for an Ireland which is not idealised and is free of romantic claptrap, or so it would seem. There is a telling little scene in which an historian who is doing research on the response of the Irish government to the violence in Northern Ireland wants some information from Eamon, but is fobbed off by him. Notably, Eamon had written an analysis of Irish nationalist feeling for the government. He had warned that public opinion should never be allowed to become inflamed in the Republic by events within its own borders. Now he is quite happy that the analysis never came to light. As Julia O'Faolain astutely notes, honest according to his lights, Eamon "represents an Establishment riven by bisected consciousness whose brief is to keep the peace while paying obligatory tribute to the rebel nationalism of the old songs".[1] Acting as judge in a case involving a sixteen-year-old pregnant girl who is not allowed by the authorities to return to her Catholic school the following term, he realises „that he [has] no strong moral views, that he [has] ceased to believe in anything" (p. 90), that he is „not equipped to be a moral arbiter" (p. 92). He rules on cases calling for a changing morality, taking a conservative line and irritably dismissing the liberal views of his daughter and son.

The Heather Blazing may have been intended as an analysis of an Ireland as represented by Eamon's generation, an ordinary, hidden Ireland. But first and foremost, the novel offers a brilliant study of a solitary man, immensely moving in scenes such as those treating of Carmel's illness and incapacitation, or the ones presenting the grief-stricken protagonist trying to get over his wife's untimely demise.

Tóibín then published *The Story of the Night* (1996) , a novel that reminds one of Abraham Lincoln's comment on the *Memoirs* of one G.W.E. Russell: "People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like". It is an excruciatingly insufferable book about a gay young man, half English and half Argentinean, living in Buenos Aires during the time of the Falklands war, when Carlos Menem gradually came to power, as Argentina emerged from the shadows of the seventies and the legacy of the Generals. He gets involved in the privatisation of Argentina's oil industry and becomes embroiled with assorted lovers. All that buggering waxes decisively boring in the long run. What presumption on the part of the author to assume that anyone, apart from himself, could be interested in observing his protagonist venting his sexual hang-ups! The most disparaging deficiency of the novel is that the twin thematic skeins - the protagonist's activities in the political events and his personal sexual problems - only intertwine in a rather unsatisfactory manner. Over large stretches, the former strand is pushed into oblivion by the latter, which clearly preoccupies Tóibín's interest.

Part I of the book, charting Richard Garay's youth and adolescence and featuring quite prominently the slow dying of the mother, is of spurious significance for the rest of the narrative account. Tóibín piles up matter upon matter. Unfortunately a good deal of what he amasses remains rather inconsequential. There is a trip to Barcelona, when Richard is twenty-one, with a friend called Jorge, who has sex with two girls from a group of Chilean refugees, while Richard is lying in bed in the same room, pretending to be asleep. What the ado about one of the Chileans, named Raúl, who was badly tortured in captivity, is meant to contribute to 'the story of the night' is left uncertain. By the same token, the political dimension of the events in Argentina is too vague to make a noteworthy impression. Richard's involvement with the two Americans, Susan and Richard Ford, who are working for the Institute for Economic Development and who help him land a lucrative job, basically serves to establish a social context within which he can play his sexual pranks. Essentially they spend their time together eating and drinking, apart from a single occasion in which Susan entices Garay into her bed. Her seductive powers are of course to no avail, given his homosexual bent. So she is forced to have herself serviced by other male acquaintances. Her husband, you see, is a bit of a dud.

Then Richard falls in love and conducts a lengthy affair with one of the sons of the Canetto family. His name is Pablo. His brother, the priapic Jorge, is meanwhile having a carry-on with Susan Ford. Almost inevitably, both Richard and Pablo contract AIDS. The account of that period in the two men's lives, which takes up the last forty or so pages of the novel, is quite moving, if you go in for that kind of thing. It is about the only part of the book that can be said to be (mildly) compelling in a disappointing performance that shows its unsatisfactory nature not least in its ending, a vexing let-down in that the narrative simply stops, as if Tóibín had had no real idea as to how to finish 'the story of the night'. Richard and Pablo, after having been discharged from hospital, go to Richard's apartment, and here is the last sentence: "He asked me to wake him in an hour or two if he was still asleep" (p. 312).

Tóibín's next novel, *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999), was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, if that is anything to go by these days, when exceedingly incompetent novels become elevated in this fashion, so that a place on the shortlist is no longer a distinction. A none too well-meaning critic could supposedly argue that the whole narrative set-up in *The Blackwater Lightship* serves to create an occasion for Tóibín to deal with the topics of homosexuality and the problems related to it – here in the form of AIDS. Good for those who are interested in what seems of pressing significance to Tóibín himself and too bad for the rest.

There still is some validity in the tenet according to which to capture the general in the particular is the true distinction of a good novel, or a convincing piece of literature. But take away the particular from *The Blackwater Lightship* and nothing much is left. And there is another aspect: Helen, her mother, Lily, and her grandmother come together in Granny's house in Cush to take care of Helen's brother, Declan, who is dying of

AIDS. Present are also Declan's friends, Larry and Paul, who have been looking after him for some time. Not only have the three women up to now been unaware of Declan's illness, but, more is the pity, they have not hit it off too well with each other during the last ten years or so. In particular, Helen's relationship with Lily has been fraught with severe problems ever since her father died of cancer. Helen was still a girl then and when she and young Declan were sent off to stay with Granny, while her mother in Dublin was looking after her husband, who was dying in hospital, Helen felt that she and her brother had been abandoned for good.

Not surprisingly, in the course of their confinement to the house in Cush and their nursing of Declan, Helen and her mother are finally able to effect a reconciliation. Pretty much the same applies to the relationships between Declan and his mother as well as to that between the two older women, who have not been on good terms either. It is a fairly ordinary family affair, I hear you say; probably, but what is even more disparaging is that we certainly have been here before: people who for long have fallen out become reconciled again *in extremis*. But perchance there is something commendable in the manner in which Tóibín has rendered this relatively olde chestnut. Not really, one regrets noting. There is a discernible attempt to mark the narrative with motific echoes, as when the scene involving young Helen and Declan in Granny's house, which Helen remembers towards the beginning of the Book, is evoked once more towards the close by the set-up in the same house and by Helen and her mother's discussing it. Or Lily's supposed neglect of her children is counterpointed with Helen's consideration for hers, who are with their father in Donegal while she, like her mother years ago, is elsewhere looking after a dying member of the family. There are also certain narrative sections which pay tribute to Tóibín's competence as a writer, Yet, in all, he has not refrained from seasoning his account with a good deal of inconsequential matter, such as the party at the opening, as well as with what may be felt to be too lurid and too frequent descriptions of Declan's suffering. Perhaps the latter are necessary to generate the appropriate situation and atmosphere in which the three women have to make up. Even so, the question remains: is this a novel about someone dying of AIDS or about a family reunion? It is both, Tóibín would presumably argue. Yet, such an argument smacks of a "have your cake and eat it" case, for the main focus is unquestionably, or so it would seem, on the familial relationships and the fact that Declan is dying of AIDS is of secondary importance or even less. He might just as well be the victim of some other incurable disease. But, then, of course Tóibín could not promulgate a cause that seems dearest to his heart.

One man's meat is another man's poison. We have known as much for a long time. It, therefore, cannot come as a surprise that readers will come away from *The Blackwater Lightship* with different impressions. My preference is decidedly for the manner in which the narrative solves the conflict between, first and foremost, Helen and her mother; how, in other words, Helen overcomes the bitter resentment against Lily which has clouded most of her life. Second, there is the riven relationship between Lily and *her* mother, which must take second place, because a) the narrative is largely rendered

from Helen's third-person perspective, thus placing greater emphasis on her experience, and b) that relationship is not strung out in such a colourful and complex way as that in which Helen and Lily find themselves. Thirdly, of course, we have Declan's problems with his mother and their resolution, which is not devoid of a tinge of sentimentality when Declan eventually manages to whisper: "'Mammy, Mammy, help me, Mammy'" (p.258), with his friend Paul chiming in: "'He's been wanting to say that for a long time'" (p. 259).

In this reading, the novel has its shortcomings. Thus, for instance, the book starts rather inconspicuously, not to say unpromisingly. Some of the things offered in the first two chapters are curiously slow-paced and of tenuous significance. Not least because of this does it take about one hundred pages (more than one third of the book) to establish the relevant situation in the grandmother's house in Cush. Furthermore, some of the material woven into Helen's story, if we may call it that, reads somewhat spurious, or reads as if it were an end in itself: for example, Larry's and Paul's stories concerning their lives as gay men or Paul's marriage to his partner by a priest in Brussels. In both cases, Tóibín takes occasion to rail at the bigoted attitude to homosexuality in Ireland. There is, moreover, the indistinct business concerning the recurrent references to the erosion of the coastline around Cush yet again. The land is being eaten up by the sea and some metaphorical or symbolical meaning seems to be attached to that fact, though what this meaning may be remains pitifully obscure. One must, however, also note that the novel has its positive moments, among them, naturally, that conflict between Helen and Lily, or the admirable manner in which Tóibín succeeds in depicting the scene in the house in Cush, where Larry and Paul competently take care of Declan's corporeal difficulties while the women around them are tearing into one another.

The Blackwater Lightship, the second lighthouse near Cush, has disappeared like much of the coastline. But it is still in the memory of the characters, as is their past which with they have still failed to come to grips past. Measuring the novel's merits against its deficiencies leaves one with the problem of making sense of why it should have been shortlisted for the Booker Prize. The shortlists of the last years have always featured a token Irishmen who, apart from Roddy Doyle (what a choice!), never won. Could it be that Tóibín was one of that ilk?

In the rambling Introduction to his *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction* (1999), which is distinctly dropsical with quotations from other critics' writings and which serves up a plethora of Ye Olde Chestnuts and wrong-headed ideas, such as these:

> there is almost no version of domestic harmony at the end [*sic*] of an Irish novel; there is almost no version of domestic harmony at the beginning of an Irish novel; there is no Irish novel which ends in a wedding or a match being made. Irish fiction is not like that; Irish fiction is full of dislocation and displacement.[2]

(as if Tóibín knew them all!) – in this Introduction, then, Tóibín, after noting that "[i]n much Irish fiction there is a reticence on sexual matters" (p. xxvi), has this to say:

> Irish writing and gay writing have the myth of a tragic destiny in common. It is easy to see why homosexuality as a theme has attracted so many Irish writers. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* still remains the greatest gay novel ever written [...] (p. xxvii)

Has homosexuality as a theme really attracted so many Irish writers? And to call *Dorian Gray* "the greatest gay novel ever written" presupposes a curiously idiosyncratic reading, or misreading, of the novel, in which a host of thematic concerns other than homosexuality (if it really figures at all) are of incomparably weightier significance. Tóibín goes on to underpin his contention thus:

> It is remarkable how many times in Irish fiction of the past twenty years the theme [*i.e.* homosexuality] has emerged: in the work of John Banville, Val Mulkerns, Ita Daly, Desmond Hogan, Mary Dorcey, Patrick McCabe, Dermot Bolger, Frank Ronan, Joseph O'Connor, Colum McCann, Emma Donoghue. (p. xxvii)

Ah, well, it would appear that Dominie Tóibín kens them a', after all, to adapt the ruminations someone else made in a different context. Tóibín may be only too modest to include himself in the list, and yet the above comments read as if he is blowing his own trumpet. At the heel of the hunt, it is of course no so much a matter of whether one likes his kind of music, it is rather a matter of whether the music is played well. Tóibín started out as a journalist, and he is probably a good journalist, but there is a great gap between a journalist and a novelist worth his salt. Tóibín still has to earn the reputation that has been foisted upon him in these hyping times of publicity.

Notes

1 Julia O'Faolain, "Keeping the peace", *TLS*, Sep. 4, 1992, p. 19.
2 *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction*. London: Penguin, 1999, p. xxiii.

Works Cited

Colm Tóibín, *The South*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1990.
_____. *The Heather Blazing*. London: Picador, 1992.
_____. *The Story of the Night*. London: Picador, 1996.
_____. *The Blackwater Lightship*. London: Picador, 1999.

Liam O'Flaherty's Letters

John Cronin

The Letters of Liam O'Flaherty. Selected and edited by A.A.Kelly. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1996, n.p. pp. 458. ISBN 0 86327 380 7.

Dr. A.A. Kelly, who published her useful study, *Liam O'Flaherty, the Storyteller*, in 1976, compiled this selection of the writer's letters for publication in 1996, the centenary year of his birth. She and Wolfhound are to be congratulated. In the absence of a definitive biography of this most colourful of Irish writers, this selection of his letters and Dr. Kelly's careful annotations provide invaluable insights into O'Flaherty's mind and career. There is so much of interest here, that it is difficult to know where to begin. One might, perhaps, note first the formative effects of his colourfully diverse parentage. His father, an Aran man, was a Fenian and active in the Land League. His mother, a noted storyteller, was descended from a family of Plymouth Brethren from Co.Antrim who had come to Aran to build lighthouses. To add to this parental antithesis, the boy grew up between two languages. A letter sent by O'Flaherty to the *Irish Statesman* in 1927 makes this point rather colourfully:

> English was the first language that I spoke. My father forbade us speaking Irish. At the age of seven I revolted against father and forced everybody in the house to speak Irish.

The pattern of contrasting allegiances and conflicting tongues was to persist throughout his long life (he died in 1984 at the age of 88). Educated to the priesthood, he became fiercely anticlerical. A natural rebel, he organised the seizure and occupation of the Rotunda Theatre at the top of Dublin's O'Connell Street in 1922, hoisted the red flag of revolution, dubbed himself the 'Chairman of the Council of the Unemployed' but fled to Cork after three days to avoid bloodshed. Earlier, he had abandoned his studies at UCD, enlisted in the Irish Guards under his mother's name, Ganly, and been blown up at Langemarck in 1917, an experience which was to affect his entire life. Discharged from the British Army, he was diagnosed as suffering from *melancholia acuta* and spent over a year in a military hospital. "You have to go through life with a shell bursting in your head", he said and it seems clear that the frequent bouts of depression and other illnesses which one notes throughout the letters stem back to his horribly traumatic,

wartime experience. Dr. Kelly, in a revealing note, recounts a meeting with O'Flaherty at her own home just before Christmas 1917, when he was already old and ailing:

> The pseudo-British accent (abandoned completely in his last years) seemed more marked than on our last meeting. The adoption of this seems part of his false front, his divided attitude to life and others, but he also has an admiration for the long-gone Great Britain of the twenties, especially London.

The assumed British accent is a curious detail and one notes that, in the letters, O'Flaherty not infrequently employs a kind of outmoded Noel Coward-ish slang. (acknowledging a visit from his daughter, Joyce Rathbone, who had come to see him after he broke a hip in a street accident, he tells her "your gesture was tophole"). This kind of thing from the author of *Dúil* (the last complete book he published) has an odd ring, particularly since he seems to have continued to enjoy the native Irish of his youth. A letter of 1961 says:

> Padraig Concannon just phoned after a lapse of about three years and invited me to go with him to Croke Park tomorrow for the Kerry-Down match. It was nice talking Irish to him. He's so charming and genuine.

His assumed English mask seems to have irritated him at times. In 1944, he writes

> I really am a whore when I write in English, no matter how I try to gild the lily with pretensions to art structures, etc. In the Anglo Saxon world literature is a form of commerce. I am tired, tired of the Anglo Saxon-world.

He had good reason, however, to be grateful to the Anglo-Saxon literature world, for it was there he met Edward Garnett, who recommended publication of his first novel, *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (1923) and continued to encourage and support O'Flaherty with remarkable generosity for over a decade. Clearly, O'Flaherty's debt to this good man is immense. The other main correspondent in this volume is Kitty Tailer, a New York divorcée whom the writer first met in Santa Barbara in 1934. The bulk of the later letters are to Kitty, who was on hand to support him in every way during the sadly sterile thirty years after the publication of his only Irish-language collection of stories, *Dúil*, in 1953. In April, 1952, O'Flaherty took a lease on a flat in Wilton Place, Dublin which was to remain his base until his death in 1984. He struggled to complete a final novel which was to be called *The Gamblers* but failed. Dr. Kelly supplies a useful summary of the uncompleted manuscript on pp.443-45. What we have is a dismayingly protracted example of writer's block, dragged out over thirty miserable years and many harrowing letters. O'Flaherty, as he aged, became lonelier and more idiosyncratic. Reading the letters written from the mid Fifties onwards, one veers between profound pity and intense

irritation. The pity is for the death of a talent, the irritation is provoked by his infuriatingly casual anti-semitism (numerous references to "Yids", "Kikes" and "Sheenies") and his increasingly tasteless anti-Catholicism. On 24 July, 1960, in a letters to Kitty Tailer, he writes:

> Lots of fun at the moment in the Congo... As I get no papers except *Le Monde,* which is always two days late, I try to listen to the radio which is very amusing if you listen to Paris, Brussels, Moscow and Schenectady altogether, more or less. These buck negroes are having quite a ball with nuns, etc. according to some sources. One fellow claims they held a priest tied to a stake and made him watch twenty nuns being raped several times by all ranks of the local Forcee Publique...There is a very grave problem involved, if the report is true. Should these nuns, if they become pregnant as a result of being raped by negroes, produce and rear their children? Or should they abort? Or should they give away into fosterage the newborn? Let John XXIII work it out.

This shocking crudity, along with the recurrent anti-semitism may (one would like to believe) have a regrettable consequence of the crude, almost Mosley-like Britishness which he seems to have assumed as one of his public personae. Incessant attempts to *épater le bourgeois* tend to overspill of this king. The letters of his last thirty years make melancholy reading and whet the appetite for a full biography which would, one hopes, eventually make sense of this turbulent, talented, tormented life.

Playing Boal in Northern Ireland

José Roberto O'Shea

Augusto Boal's theory and practice of the Theatre of the Oppressed have generally been received with enthusiasm in the United States and in Europe as a model of revolutionary theatre. No doubt, since the first publication of *O Teatro do Oprimido* in 1974 (English translation 1979), the book has come to be seen as a "classic" and has had a major impact on theatrical theory and practice inside and outside the Brazilian post-colonial context. Now that twenty six years have gone by since this seminal work first appeared in print, we can look back to reassess the ways in which theatre practitioners have deployed the book's charged argument for theatre's revolutionary potential and in some cases have transformed Boal's radical techniques.

It seems impossible to address the Theatre of the Oppressed *ex nihilo*, especially given its important connections with pedagogy. To be sure, one area in which post-colonial thought has been fertile is the theory and practice of pedagogy. And foremost in this field, we recall, stands the work of Paulo Freire, mainly his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (English translation 1970), in which Freire aligns political oppression with oppressive pedagogy. Against oppressive models, Freire calls for a dialectical pedagogy in which all subjects are thought capable of active contribution to society. As is known, Freire's pedagogical ideas have been applied to the theatre in Boal's work. Further to understand the poetics of the Theatre of the Oppressed, in its major new forms of radical theatre, i.e., Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre, and Forum Theatre, we must keep in mind its main objective: to change people, i.e., the spectators, from fearful, oppressed, "passive beings" inside (and outside) the theatrical phenomenon into agents, transformers of the dramatic (and non-dramatic) action.[1] This "liberated spectator", as a whole person, freed to think for her or himself, launches into *action*. No matter that such action is fictional; what matters is that it is *action*. For Boal, as for Brecht, the oppressive ideology and passivity of the theatre are highly complicitous. Again, for Boal and Brecht, the manipulative ideology of the status quo prevents the audience from thinking for itself, and the audience's passivity as spectators prevents it from acting for itself (Fortier 140). However, for Boal, Brecht's thoughtful, critical spectator is not enough, because, as such, the barriers between spectator and actor – more than ever – still remain. For Boal, "all must act, all must be protagonists in the necessary transformations of society" (*Theatre of the Oppressed* Foreword).

In fact, the passive spectator must be replaced by the active *spect-actor*. "I believe", says Boal,

> that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilise them. The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it. (*Theatre of the Oppressed* 122)

Besides, Boal argues that theatre has become a form of ruling-class control and has lost its place as a form of communication and expression for the people. And he proposes to turn theatre from an ideological state apparatus into "a rehearsal of revolution" (qtd. in Fortier 141).

The publication of Boal's second book in English, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, was welcomed in 1992. This book backs up and comments on *Theatre of the Oppressed*, bringing together a collection of games and exercises, as strategies for the implementation of the theories, all designed to facilitate the development of theatre as a democratic arena. To be sure, Boal's theories have not exactly been required to stand on their own, as the dramatist has travelled extensively giving workshops, lectures, and demonstrations about the Theatre of the Oppressed and The Rainbow of Desire. Moreover, as is known, Boal's enthusiastic, highly personal delivery style has greatly influenced the way in which his ideas and techniques have been taken on by other practitioners.[2]

Surely, the recognition of the appeal and the value of Theatre of the Oppressed is still apparent. Yet, when applying its theories to different theatrical and cultural contexts, it seems advisable to use caution and bear in mind important questions. To this extent it is helpful to consider the queries advanced by Frances Babbage, in her excellent Introduction to *Working Without Boal*:

> Have we become over-confident in our use of these techniques? Are we too ready to define 'the oppressed' as the *other*, ignoring or blind to the oppressive structures we ourselves operate within and are perhaps complicit in maintaining? Are we so familiar with Theatre of the Oppressed games and exercises that we might overlook the ways in which they impact on different groups? (Introduction)

Cultural approaches to drama have clearly demonstrated that theatre is culturally marked, and materially localised in history and geography. Therefore, it is small wonder that as individuals attempt to use techniques and concepts of the "Brazilian, Rio de Janeiro-generated" Theatre of the Oppressed in their diverse cultural contexts, they have had to the test Boal's theory against their specific problems, in their own cultural contexts. As would be the case, in this process, ideas and exercises from Boal's poetics are adapted, stretched, questioned, and even rejected. We must realise that the theory will not remain static, but will necessarily be rethought, if it is to remain relevant.

And the creative – I dare say, exciting – rethinking of Augusto Boal has been live and kicking in Northern Ireland. Chrissie Poulter, lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin,

has led a group-devised production from its initial building of an ensemble through to performance and post-performance, integrating techniques learnt from Boal with her own approaches to theatre-making. Two case studies are here singled out. The first pertains to a youth theatre project in Enniskillen, the second involves a Forum Theatre piece created by young people fighting bullying in schools of Belfast. Poulter acknowledges Boal's influence and does resort to games and exercises as a means of building theatre-making skills and group bonding, but she identifies important points of departure. She stresses that care must be taken when "borrowing" from Boal, as, in her view, many of his "warm-up games", for instance, actually replicate oppressive structures. In fact, Poulter submits that unless an ensemble is working explicitly with ideas of oppression and power, the use of some of the games could undermine the development of group bonding. And she stresses the need to contextualise Boal's methods and to prevent them from becoming lost in a "general wash" of workshop processes.

Tom Magill provides two further case studies, in sharp contrast, examining the application of the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques in Belfast. The first project, dated 1991, involved a daring move: introducing theatre skills to a cross-community group of young people, leading to their constructing a production of *The Wishing Well*, which the group proceeded to play locally in both Loyalist and Republican districts. The play's title, of course, expresses a belief in the possibilities for change. Now, if theatre can serve an important function in its ability to stage wishes, i.e., to present the far-fetched, the wishing well was clearly a meaningful image for the Belfast group, a wish-image which peace treaties attempt to turn into a reality. For the second project, Magill worked with a group of single parent Catholic women, using Forum Theatre to address their common concerns, particularly the need to reject the label of "second-class citizen", and also the telling acknowledgement of their collusion in their own oppression. From these contrasting case studies, Magill draws some common 'Boal' themes: finding and using a personal voice through theatre, the importance of expressing needs and desires, and the raising of self-esteem and self-confidence through developing abilities in communication.

Augusto Boal has been grouped with other community-oriented "reformers", such as Stuart Brisley, Joan Littlewood, and Welfare State, in England, and Armand Gatti, in France, whose art merges with daily activity not just for experimentation, but as a means of exploring social situations and of developing leadership and coping skills in the participants/audience (Carlson, *Performance* 120). Whether, as some have argued, social and political concerns have become central to theatrical performance in the 1990s, there is no question that the extent of such interest has vastly grown in recent years. Among Declan Kiberd's brilliant deductions to the complex research question he poses as to who "invented" an identity for Ireland, whether the Irish, as suggested by the words *Sinn Féin* (ourselves), or the English, or even both, one conclusion seems particularly cogent and applicable in the case of this remarkable Irish re-invention of Augusto Boal: "the fact that identity is seldom straightforward and a given, more a

matter of negotiation and exchange" (Introduction). More and more, in a globalised present, intercultural, or culturally confrontational, theatrical experiences become paramount in negotiations of identity.

Notes

1 Boal has recently revisited these issues in *Legislative Theatre* (1998), especially section One, chapters 1, 2 and 3 (see bibliography).

2 As I myself had the chance to attest, participating in one such workshops, led by Boal with actors and directors of the Royal Shakespeare Company, at The Other Place, in Stratford-upon-Avon, in July '1997.

Works Cited

Babbage, Frances, ed. *Working Without Boal* (offprint).

Banham, Martin. *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. New Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.

Boal, Augusto. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. Trans. A. Jackson. London: Routledge, 1992.

_____. *Legislative Theatre: Using Performance to Make Politics*. Trans. Adrian Jackson. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

_____. *Méthode Boal de théâtre et de thérapie: l'arc en ciel du désir*. Paris: Ramsay, 1990.

_____. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Trans. Charles A. & Maria-Odilia Leal McBride. London: Pluto Press, 1979.

Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1996.

_____. *Theories of the Theatre*. Expanded Edition. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1993.

Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury, 1970.

Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. London: Vintage, 1996.

Pavis, Patrice. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. Trans. Christine Shantz. Toronto and Buffalo: U of Toronto P, 1998.

Poulter, Chrissie. *Playing the Game*. London: Macmillan, 1987.

Greetings to Durcan

Luci Collin Lavalle

Paul Durcan. *Greetings to our friends in Brazil.* London: The Harvile Press, 1999.

Born in Dublin in 1944, Paul Durcan is one of Ireland's foremost contemporary authors. A prolific writer – with 20 published works – he began his career in 1967 with a collection of poems entitled *Endsville*. In the 1970's he settled in Cork where he got a degree in archaeology and medieval history from the University College. He has won the 'Patrick Kavanagh Award' (1974), the 'Irish American Cultural Institute Poetry Award' (1989) and the 'Whitbread Poetry Prize' for his book *Daddy, Daddy* (1990). Presently, Durcan is a member of Aosdána, an affiliation of distinguished artists, and lives in the Ringsend area of Dublin.

A genuinely inventive poet, Durcan anatomises both public and private ills. A balance between opposites distinguishes his poems: the usual and the bizarre, the joy of the quotidian and the insight on the absurdity of existence, the provincial and the cosmopolitan at the same time. This feature makes his a highly distinctive and fascinating poetry. Another of Durcan's achievements is a vivid idiom, in a conversational mode sometimes resembling the Beat style. Marked by a language of startling directness, rarely his poetry is obscure, rather, it is approachable and consistent with the honest records Durcan makes, be it of weird or of familiar subject matters. Durcan is a great listener, indeed, a writer gifted with a fine ear for the sound of colloquial speech. Besides, what also impresses in Durcan is the humorous dimensions some of his poems acquire. In several instances the poet is an ironist (with the habit of self-ridicule) exploring surrealism as a satirical weapon.

Published em 1999, *Greetings to our friends in Brazil* is a prodigious collection of one hundred playful, open and sometimes irreverent poems, most of them with a considerable poetic quality. The 257-page book is divided into eleven sections, according to different themes developed in each of them. This hefty work presents an impressive amalgam of varied subjects; from his native Ireland, Durcan ventures far beyond the strictly local and his concerns include also international politics, cultural diversity, art, love and religion as well, revealing that many combined interests shape his vision of the world.

As for the title, Durcan commented that he intended to call the book "The Nineties" or "The Mary Robinson Years" and one may argue that these would be too explicit titles, lacking the singularity the chosen title conveys. The name "Greetings to

Our Friends in Brazil" is derived from a real quotation from Mícheál Ó Muircheartaig's radio commentary on 1997's All-Ireland football final between Mayo and Kerry, which is reproduced in the long initial poem of the book. As it reads:

(...)
On my watch it says two minutes and fifty – three seconds left but
We haven't had time to send greetings to our friends in Brazil
(...)
"Mercy is by definition exclusively divine.
Mercy is a divine, not a human term."
I feel ready to go to bed.
Let me pray:
Greetings to our friends in Brazil. (p. 3-12)

Some poems in the second section deal with social problems in Brazil, a country Durcan travelled to in 1995 for a month's tour?? (a series of readings under the auspices of the British Council). While in this country Durcan visited Catholic missions working with to?? the poor of Brazil and met several Irish nuns and priests who, due to the nobility of their efforts, he came to consider true contemporary heroes and heroines. The poem "Recife Children's Project, 10 June 1995" portraysits Father Frank Murphy, Founder of such Project:

(...)
Che? Frank?
No icon he –
Revolutionary hero of the twentieth century. (p. 16)

Yet in this visit, as Durcan mentioned in an interview, the number of Presbyterians he met in Brazil astonished him. In the poem "Brazilian Presbyterian" Evandro, a young man in Fortaleza, is questioned about the nature of heaven:

(...)
The Brazilian Presbyterian
Began to think aloud:
"Heaven... is a place...:
That... would *surprise* you." (p. 32)

Together with religion, Brazilian soccer teams also became a source of inspiration for Durcan who, in a few poems, explored the theme of soccer playing. As the poet once said, a soccer match is "like a poem", and added: "It's beautiful. It's the body speaking".

In this same section of *Greetings* there are some poems about the North-American poet Elizabeth Bishop. A notable one is "Samambaia", in which the persona is Bishop addressing her lover Lota Macedo Soares. One of the most beautiful poems of the whole book is "The Geography of Elizabeth Bishop", that presents the poet autobiographically, through a first-person speech:

> Reared in New England, Nova Scotia,
> I was orphaned in childhood.
> (...)
> There is a life before birth
> On earth – oh yes, on earth –
> And it is called Brazil.
> Call it paradise, if you will. (p. 24)

Eight poems about and for Patrick Kavanagh are to be found in one of the following sections and this tribute reflects (sometimes in hilarious and surrealist ways) Durcan's admiration for the great Irish poet. The last stanza of "Surely My God is Kavanagh" says:

> (...)
> Surely my God is Kavanagh!
> Who is content with feeding praise to the good.
> While other poets my comic light resent
> The spirit that is Kavanagh caresses my soul. (p. 129)

Besides Bishop and Kavanagh, a whole society of writers is made alive through references found in the book: Francis Stuart ("The King of Cats"), Brian Friel ("Dancing with Brian Friel"), Seamus Heaney ("Portrait of Winston Churchill as Seamus Heaney, 13 April 1999"), Virginia Woolf ("Notes Towards a Necessary Suicide"), and still others such as William Butler Yeats, Jack Kerouac, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett and William Carlos Williams.

As *Greetings* illustrates, Durcan not only contextualises the heterogeneous *dramatis personae* of his poems in varied worlds (thus reflecting his travels to the U.S., Somalia and to several European countries) but presents an exotic cast of characters, from institutional figures to unknown people he talks to in public places. Princess Diana is in "The Night of the Princess", as the persona who says she used to listen to the gutter dripping:

> I saw each drop coming out of nothing.
> I put my hand over my mouth.
> I could see the embryo of each drop.
> (...)

The drop drops and I switch on the bathroom light.
Switch it off. Switch it on.

Dead. Dodie, dead. Die, Di, die. (p. 167)

Among all these peculiar voices, in several poems one may find Durcan's – the intentional fallacy properly considered – describing episodes in a voice that seems his "own". Also self-portraiture is a recurring descriptive technique explored by Durcan as in "Self-portrait '95":

Paul Durcan would try the patience of the Queen of Tonga
When he was in Copacabana he was homesick for
Annaghmakerrig;
When he got back to Annaghmakerrig
He was homesick for Copacabana. (p. 119)

Probably the most remarkable section of the book is the one which brings poems that chart the Irish situation, especially of the 1990s, revealing Durcan's engagement with Irish social, political and religious issues. Extremely moving is a suite of poems about bombings, their victims, and politicians' "pious chant". With 14 Parts, the long poem "Omagh" describes the misery caused by the Omagh bombing. Quoted below is Part 9, "What Ben says", which resembles a litany to the dead:

Do not talk to me of "death
Giving birth to life".
Do not talk to me
Of "post-trauma management"
Do not talk to me. (p. 205)

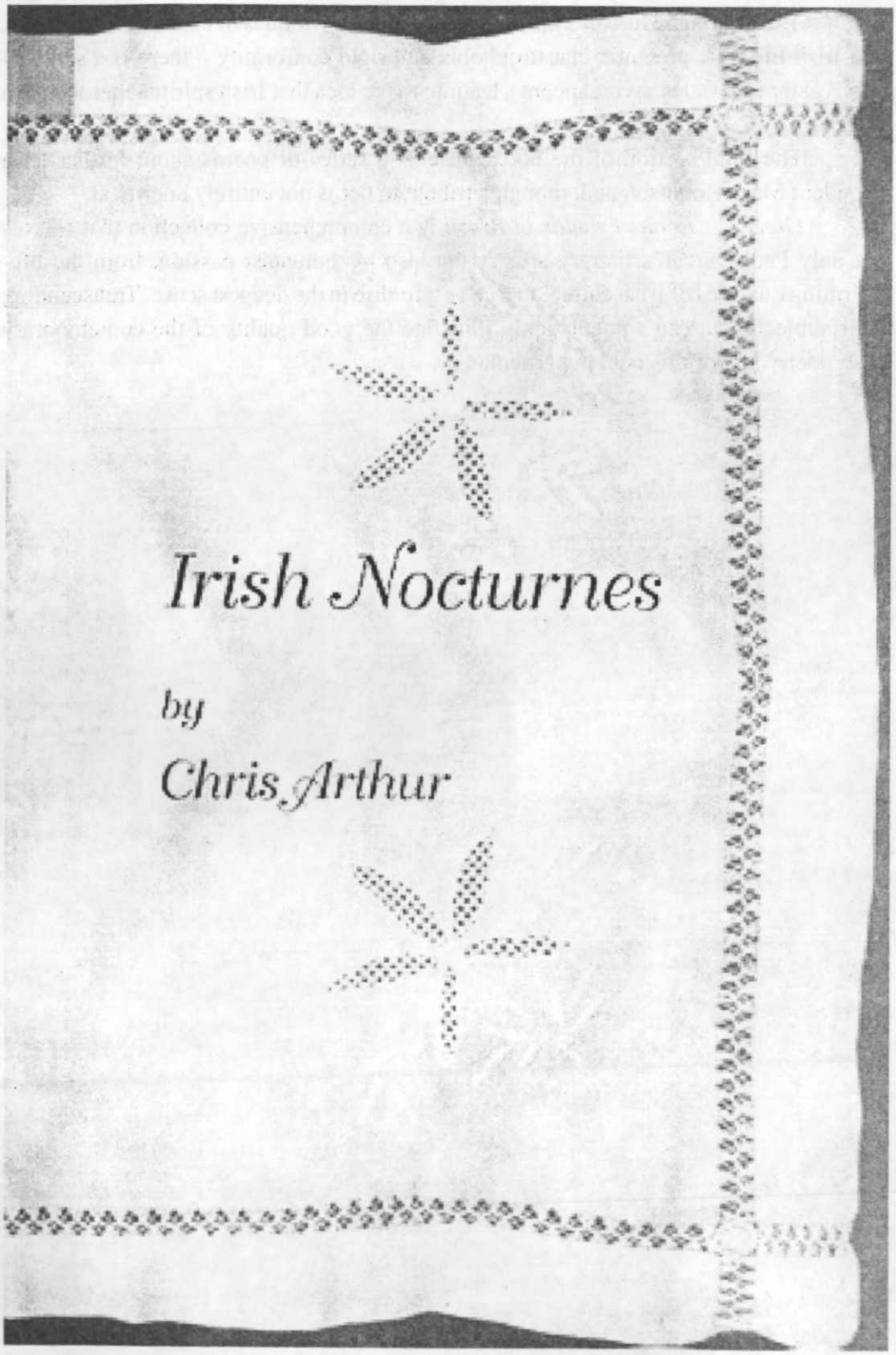
Other poems offer vituperation for the IRA, criticising Gerry Adams, the President of Sinn Féin, condemning all the savagery with no justification and thus probing the hypocrisy, selfishness and potential destructiveness of human behaviour. "The Bloomsday Murders, 16 June 1997" is particularly meaningful:

Not even you, Gerry Adams, deserve to be murdered:
You whose friend at noon murdered my two young men,
David Johnston and John Graham;
(...)
I am a Jew and my name is Bloom.
You, Gerry Adams, do not sign books in my name.
May God forgive me – lock, stock, and barrel. (p. 177)

But although Durcan's poems bring out frank critiques of establishment follies and Irish life – its pressure, claustrophobia and rigid conformity – there is a sense of survival that pervades several poems, leading to the idea that Irish spiritual heroism can flourish again.

The final section of the book presents a series of poems about former Irish president Mary Robinson and, though a tribute to her is not entirely uncritical.

Greetings to our Friends in Brazil is a comprehensive collection that reveals not only Paul Durcan's literary artistry but also his humanist passion, from the life-affirming qualities of Irish culture to true zest for life in the deepest sense. Transcending their subjects, Durcan's poems aptly illustrate the good quality of the contemporary Irish poetry and of this poet in particular.



Irish Nocturnes

by

Chris Arthur

Irish Nocturnes

Magda Velloso Fernandes de Tolentino

ARTHUR, Chris. ***Irish Nocturnes***. USA: The Davies Group, Aurora Co, 1999.

The word *nocturne* reminds us of nightly wanderings, soft music, nostalgic dreams – and that is precisely the effect the selection of texts in this book conveys to the reader.

The book presents a collection of narratives about Northern Ireland; the author nostalgically weaves his memories of family and country in such a way that he tells the story not only of his own part of the Emerald Island, but of the whole of it and, in its wake, the history of humanity itself. The *nocturnes*, as he calls them, are presented in a form that gives rise to the question of how to call them – chapters, episodes, excerpts, articles, essays or – perhaps – sketches?

In each of these – shall we say – sketches, the author takes aspects of everyday life which induce him into remembering his childhood, and from the reflections about such everyday pieces and experiences he metaphorically traces history back to the beginnings of mankind, building, as he goes, his own perception of the development of his county.

In the first narrative, for example, through a description of linen, he goes back to the time man first started to manipulate the fibre into what was later to become Ireland's great marksmanship, the linen that is not only part of Arthur's memories of infancy, but in a broader way the fabric every foreigner pursues when visiting the country, either in its primitive form or turned into tablecloths, carvers (as the one Arthur uses as a starting point for his reflections) and handkerchiefs, plain or embroidered, the pride of the Irish. He uses linen as a metaphor, both of the fabric of language and of the development into civilization.

In the same vein he metaphorises other objects, as the ferrule he describes in the second essay, whose sound is indelibly carved in his memory, but which is used here to depict part of the culture of the time of his youth in Belfast. But it is also the instrument through which he is telling of the wounds of war, as well as dating his remembrances and reminding the reader that such things as he is describing took place at a determined time. He does not simply include the ferrule as a subject for one of the *nocturnes*; in

order to introduce it he rambles about the acquisition of language which, all things considered, would seem to have nothing to do with the subject in hand.

In all the *nocturnes*, he rambles around the Northern part of the island, going from town to town and from place to place, picking one aspect here, another aspect there, from Lisburn, where he lived as a child, to Belfast, to the castle at Antrim, with all its historical allusions, to Ballinderry , Londonderry and so many other specific places around Belfast. In the "Kingfisher" episode, he maps different parts of Ireland even though, when he describes the bird, he owns at having seen it first in Armagh. But the bird is the pretext he uses for describing a bombing he witnessed in his town of Lisburn, and this description stands out in building his picture of the Ireland of his childhood, in all her struggles, throughout difficult times, to make her own history.

The first words of "Invasions" gives the tone of the whole book: it starts with *Often, without warning and for no reason I have ever been able to detect, my thoughts are invaded by some segment of the past.* The whole book is constructed with segments of the narrator's past which invade his thoughts at pointed times. What makes his remembrances most interesting is the fact that he no longer lives there. As in so many cases, distance sharpens the senses of the exile, and he often sees more acutely the things he no longer contemplates at first hand.

The last sketch dwells painfully on the plight of the exile, which is a poignant aspect of Irish history, mainly in the nineteenth century, but even before that. This last *nocturne* reflects on the difficulty the Irish faced when leaving the land, as the land itself was so ingrained in their beings as to make them feel lost and deprived of identity when obliged to leave it, never thenceforward finding themselves at home again either elsewhere or back in their homeland.

The author describes his own leaving as a different experience from those who had to leave home to make a living elsewhere, and we, as readers, notice his endeavour at depicting his wanderings away from Northern Ireland in an unromantic way, perhaps trying to make sense himself of his dealing with the Mother Country, as he calls it, and in an attempt at positioning himself as a human being.

The book *Irish Nocturnes* is well worth reading. Beautiful, poignant, his mapping of Ireland, though not all encompassing, is thoughtful and deep. The language, straightforward at times, lyrical at others, leads us on in an easy and fluent reading, sharply goading us into sharing his remembrances and his musings about himself and his relationship with Ireland.

Richard Blake Martin, A novel

Charlie Boland

Bernard O'Grady. ***Richard Blake Martin.*** São Paulo: Olavobras, 2000.

Richard Blake Martin, reluctant heir to the diminished Castle Wallscourt estate, returns to the Galway of his birth to encounter a society fractured by history. Educated in the London metropolis young Richard is only instinctively aware of the traditional divisions at the heart of Irish life; nonetheless those divisions, and the forces that maintain them, will come to influence his own destiny.

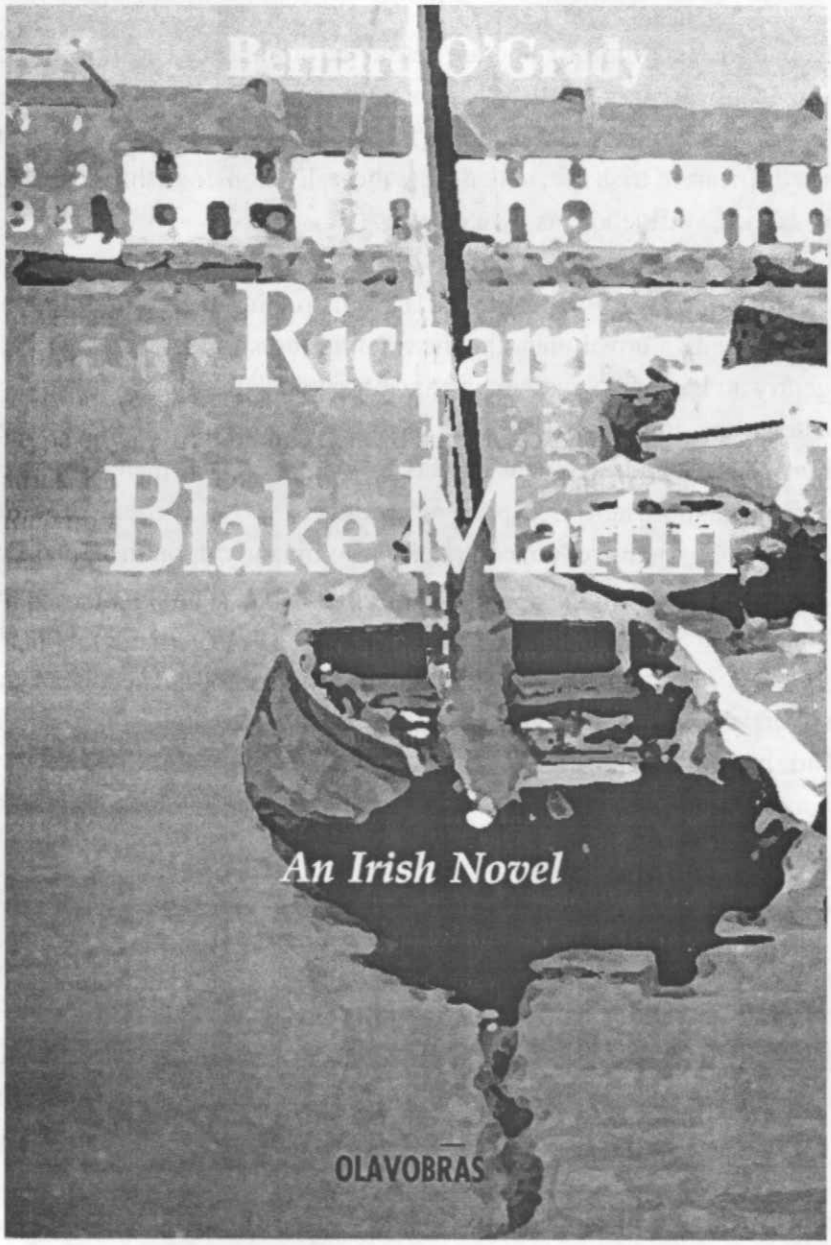
O'Grady writes an eclectic Galwegian society basing many of his characters upon the town's actual historical figures. Deconstructing the traditional Anglo \ Irish dichotomy O'Grady's novel unearths the Semitic roots of influential members of the Galway gentry and points to overlapping and obscure religious histories. O'Grady works also to write an anti-insular version of Irish history, highlighting the state's position in a broader European and indeed global network by inclusion of German University students, Irish-Americans and Eastern European refugees.

Set in 1936 the novel concentrates predominantly upon the experiences of the young Blake Martin and his contemporaries at University College Galway. Representative of the collapsing aristocracy, Blake Martin's crisis of identity contrasts boldly with the self-confidence of his mainly Catholic middle-class colleagues. History and conflicts of tradition overshadow the otherwise amiable relationships within the group. The young students are more aware of the positions of their fathers than of their own position as potential makers of the future. The "Lit. and Deb. Society" meetings betray almost inevitable partisanship. Interesting is the history class on the Spanish Armada in chapter 20 wherein the subjective nature of history is underlined through varied readings of the event.

In his preface O'Grady notes his difficulty in finding proof-readers and, presumably, editorial advise for the novel here in Brazil. The type errors are indeed hard to ignore and the text in general could do with refinement. The shift into first-person narrative in chapter 11, for example, is difficult to understand. *Richard Blake Martin* being his first novel, O'Grady's main interest is history and indeed his writing seems most self-assured in essentially historical passages. Character development is a detail often too quickly brushed over in and inter-character relationships are at times confusing;

the Richard / Eileen relationship being a good example. Ultimately I suggest that there are simply too many aspects and characters for so short a novel. *Richard Blake Martin* seems caught between genres; O'Grady unsure as to whether he wants to write a *Dubliners*-type city portrait or an extended historical saga.

Patrick Kavanagh once wrote of an Ireland "that froze for want of Europe" similarly *Richard Blake Martin* points a finger at the socio-cultural politics that would stifle Ireland's development for much of the last century. The "Economic War" with England in particular comes under attack. That a book subtitled "An Irish Novel" ends with German University College Galway student, Gunther Wormholdt, contemplating the growing tension in his homeland is, to this reader's mind, O'Grady's central message.



Richard Blake Martin, A novel

Charlie Boland

Bernard O'Grady. ***Richard Blake Martin.*** São Paulo: Olavobras, 2000.

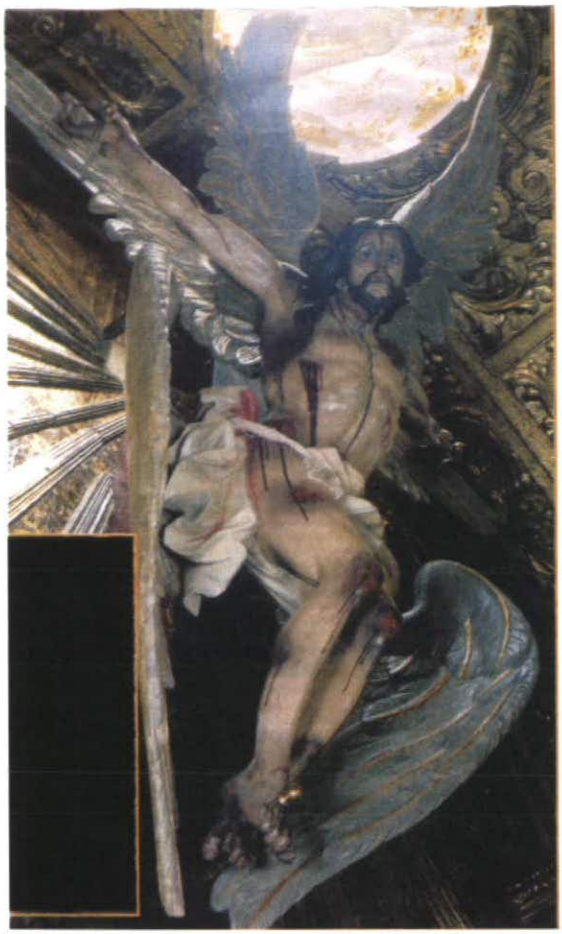
Richard Blake Martin, reluctant heir to the diminished Castle Wallscourt estate, returns to the Galway of his birth to encounter a society fractured by history. Educated in the London metropolis young Richard is only instinctively aware of the traditional divisions at the heart of Irish life; nonetheless those divisions, and the forces that maintain them, will come to influence his own destiny.

O'Grady writes an eclectic Galwegian society basing many of his characters upon the town's actual historical figures. Deconstructing the traditional Anglo \ Irish dichotomy O'Grady's novel unearths the Semitic roots of influential members of the Galway gentry and points to overlapping and obscure religious histories. O'Grady works also to write an anti-insular version of Irish history, highlighting the state's position in a broader European and indeed global network by inclusion of German University students, Irish-Americans and Eastern European refugees.

Set in 1936 the novel concentrates predominantly upon the experiences of the young Blake Martin and his contemporaries at University College Galway. Representative of the collapsing aristocracy, Blake Martin's crisis of identity contrasts boldly with the self-confidence of his mainly Catholic middle-class colleagues. History and conflicts of tradition overshadow the otherwise amiable relationships within the group. The young students are more aware of the positions of their fathers than of their own position as potential makers of the future. The "Lit. and Deb. Society" meetings betray almost inevitable partisanship. Interesting is the history class on the Spanish Armada in chapter 20 wherein the subjective nature of history is underlined through varied readings of the event.

In his preface O'Grady notes his difficulty in finding proof-readers and, presumably, editorial advise for the novel here in Brazil. The type errors are indeed hard to ignore and the text in general could do with refinement. The shift into first-person narrative in chapter 11, for example, is difficult to understand. *Richard Blake Martin* being his first novel, O'Grady's main interest is history and indeed his writing seems most self-assured in essentially historical passages. Character development is a detail often too quickly brushed over in and inter-character relationships are at times confusing;

Voices from Brazil



Winged Christ. In: *Veja*, 4 de abril, 2001, p. 79.

Nossa Senhora da Conceição. In: *Veja*, 4 de abril, 2001, p. 78.

Litografia colorida de C. Legrand, 1641. AHU. Pe. Antonio Vieira. In: Aníbal Pinto de Castro. *António Vieira - Uma Síntese do Barroco Luso-Brasileiro*. CTT Correios de Portugal, 1997, p. 103.

On the Portuguese-Brazilian Practices of Representation of the Seventeenth Century (1580-1750)

João Adolfo Hansen

Abstract: *Nowadays, the Portuguese-Brazilian representations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are stylistically classsified as "baroque". The classification is anachronic, for it generalizes, in a transhistoric fashion, the neokantian, positivist-romantic conception proposed as a deductive pattern of description for the art of the seventeenth century, by Heinrich Wölfflin in his works Renaissance and Baroque (1888) and Fundamental Principles of the History of Art (1915). As practices pertaining to Ancien Régime, the Portuguese-Brazilian representations are not "baroque" and the deductive usage of the "baroque" category for classifying them is not historically pertinent. In the present text, I deal with representations in a historical sense and I propose that it is useful to examine the historical specificity of the practices in those centuries considering the material and institutional conditionings, the bibliographical as well as the rhetorical-poetic and theological-political codes of these representations. I believe it is obvious that the colonial past is not something positive, that can be just simply recognized. I briefly recollect here that, as presented in this text, it results from a particular reconstitution, i.e., the colonial past to which I schematically refer to is represented as a verisimilar construct, produced by my usage of materials from Portuguese and Brazilian files.*

I will deal here, mainly, with colonial *lettres*, making a few references to the plastic arts produced in the State of Brazil, as well as in the State of Maranhao and Grão Pará. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the State of Brazil corresponded basically to the capitancy of the Northeast, Bahia and Pernambuco. Throughout the seventeenth century, they were, mainly, economic centers based on the great sugar plantations. The State of Brazil also included the capitancies of the Southeast, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Vicente (today São Paulo). These divisions, particularly São Vicente, were little developed. The village of São Paulo de Piratininga, located in São Vicente, was inhabited by "bandeirantes", men known for their continuous

attacks upon the Jesuitic reductions of Guairá and Paraguai, where they would imprison the Indians and sell them as slaves to the whole Colony.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Spanish government founded the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará, whose territory corresponded, approximately, to what are now known as the States of the Northeast and the North of the country, Ceará, Maranhão, Piauí, Pará, Tocantins and part of the Amazon. When talking about the Portuguese colonization, we should bear in mind two economic and administrative areas, the State of Brazil and the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará. At the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, gold was found in the interior of the territory, where today the States of Minas Gerais and Goiás are. Soon afterwards, diamond ores were discovered. The initial wealth furnished by gold and precious stones financed the enterprises of religious sodalities and administrative authorities in these regions. A great number of religious monuments were built in Vila Rica, Congonhas do Campo, São João d'el Rei, Catas Altas, Sabará, Santa Bárbara, etc. Gold also financed the building of the convent-palace of Mafra in Portugal, as well as the luxurious court of King Dom João V.

In this text, the expression "seventeenth century" is used to refer to the colonial period of the Spanish and Portuguese "Catholic policy" in Brazil and in Maranhão and Grão Pará. This "Catholic policy" is characterized by the intimate fusion of theology and counter-reformist action. It radically denies Luther's thesis that original sin prevents the Almighty's natural light from illuminating human choices. Furthermore, it also denies Machiavelli's thesis that proposes that God is not necessary to establish the effective reality of power. The Portuguese and Spanish texts produced in Brazil in the seventeenth century always assert the presence of the Almighty's natural light in nature and in history, stating that political action *should have* an ethical basis. This is the case of the Jesuitic texts that defend the humanity of the Indians, arguing that despite their primitive habits, Divinity illuminates their will, memory and intelligence.

I suggest as time boundaries for the duration of the so-called 'Catholic policy" in Brazil and Maranhão the year 1580, that marks the beginning of the Iberic Union, and 1750, year of the death of the Portuguese King Dom João V. As it is well-known, the Portuguese King Dom Sebastião died in 1578, in a crusade against the moors in the North of Africa. He was single, took the vow of chastity and had no descendants. His cousin, the King of Spain, Felipe II, was considered the legitimate heir and came to the Portuguese throne in 1580, ruling the country as Felipe I of Portugal. The Spanish sovereignty of the Habsburgs lasted until 1640, when the Restauration wars for the independence of Portugal broke out or 1668 when independence was officially recognized. Throughout these 60 or 80 years, Spanish literary and artistic models were adopted by poets and craftsmen in Portugal, Brazil and Maranhão and Grão Pará. The Spanish authors of the *Siglo de Oro*, such as Góngora, Quevedo, Lope de Vega and Cervantes, were then very much imitated. Also, Italian artistic models reached Brazil through Spain. During this time, bilingualism was a common practice.

The second date, 1750, corresponds to the year of the death of King Dom João V and the beginning of the political and cultural transformation of the Catholic Illustration led by the Marquis of Pombal, Sebastião de Carvalho e Mello. In 1759, after the Jesuits were expelled by the Marquis, elementary and higher education in the country underwent changes that aimed at the substitution of the academic tradition based on the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle by English empiricist science and French Illuminist philosophy. From 1760 on, the models of artistic representation known today as "baroque" were replaced by French, Prussian, Italian and Austrian neoclassical ones.

The two dates that delimit the object of study are merely indicative. When classification and unification made by deductive stylistic categories such as "baroque" are disregarded, it is possible to move these imaginary boundaries backwards and forwards considering that, in the case of *lettres* and the arts, many different and diverse cultural references coexist in the object of study. They are long-lasting references, such as Greek, Latin, Patristic, Scholastic and Neoscholastic patterns –among others— repeatedly imitated by colonial poets and craftsmen before and after the time span comprehended by these dates. Such is the case of Antônio Francisco Lisboa, the most famous colonial architect and sculptor, who came to be known as 'Aleijadinho'. Son of a Portuguese man and a slave woman, he created his masterpieces at the end of the eighteenth century in the gold and diamond region of Minas Gerais. He also died there in 1817 after having produced countless religious masterpieces such as sculptures, church ornamentations, altars, pulpits and churches.

Aleijadinho's sculpture works present deformations of the *figura serpentinata.* The bodies of the saints usually have the shape of the letter S revolving around an imaginary axis that goes from head to toe. The face, hands and gestures are very dramatic and represent intense passion. The raiments of the saints generally have flat folds, geometrically disposed, which contrast with the crooked shape of the bodies. Nationalist interpretations, articulated after the romantic imagery created around the figure of the genius-artist, attribute the stylistic deformation that characterizes Aleijadinho's art to the author's disease, leprosy. This illness was put down to his being a mulatto in a slave society where the stereotype of 'blood cleansing', a common belief among the Portuguese and the Spaniards, classified the Africans and their descendants as inferior beings.The deformations would be the expression of the affliction and revolt against the privileges of the Portuguese *Ancien Régime*. In the 1930's and 1940's, however, European researchers demonstrated that the sculptures romantically attributed to Aleijadinho's disease and race imitate the images of carvings that reached Minas Gerais from Italy, countries in Central Europe, such as Tchecoslovakia and regions from the south of Germany, as is the case of Bavaria. The same stylistic pattern of deformation can be observed in carvings that, evidently, were not done by sick mulattos in their countries of origin.

Aleijadinho. Pormenor do púlpito. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 21. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)

Aleijadinho. Profeta Isaías. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 28. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)

Aleijadinho. Atlante suporte do coro. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 49. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)

Aleijadinho. Pastor, figura de presépio. In: Affonso Ávila. *Iniciação ao Barroco Mineiro*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984, p. 68. (Foto de Benedito Lima de Toledo)

In 1640, the Portuguese war of Restoration against Spain broke out and only ended in 1668. Also in 1640, the Duke of Bragança was proclaimed King of Portugal and was crowned as Dom João IV. He died in 1656 and his widow, Luisa de Gusmão, exercised the regency until 1662, when their son came to the throne as Dom Afonso VI. He was dethroned in 1667 by a coup led by his brother Prince Pedro who was appointed Regent in 1668. In turn, Dom Afonso VI's wife, Marie-Françoise-Isabelle of Savoy, cousin of King Louis XIV of France, had their marriage annulled, pleading her husband's sexual impotence in order to marry her brother-in-law. In 1683, when the dethroned Dom Afonso VI died, the Prince Regent suceeded as Dom Pedro II. As his Queen died, leaving him without male heirs, he married Maria Sofia Isabel of Neuburg, who gave birth to his son, João. In 1661, when one of Dom João IV's daughters, the infant Catarina, married King Charles II from the House of Stuart, Portugal definitely came under the influence of England. According to one of the marriage clauses, the English were granted countless commercial privileges in the Portuguese colonies. Many historians have demonstrated that the gold found in Brazil at end of the seventeenth century, once en route to Portugal, was diverted to England, hence becoming one of the main economic factors for the constitution of the British Empire in the eighteenth century.

Between 1580 and 1750, there is a great number of literary representations that deal with the political, economic, religious, hierarchical, and administrative questions of the Colony. I shall refer here to only four of these questions namely, the subjection of the Indians to the condition of slaves, encompassing the years that go from 1580 to 1662; the wars against the Dutch from 1624 to 1654; the sugar economic crisis between 1675 and 1700; the gold and diamond cycle between 1690-1750. Due to the scope of the present work, these subjects will be referred to in a schematic way.

When the first Jesuitic mission commanded by Father Manuel da Nobrega arrived in Bahia in March 1549, the Society of Jesus started to organize the Indians from the Brazilian coast in settlements in order to indoctrinate them. As a religious order subordinated to the Portuguese crown, the Jesuits had jurisdiction over the catechized Indians, fact that brought about a head-on confrontation with the settlers who needed slave manpower for agriculture as well as other jobs. In *Descriptive Treaty of Brazil in 1587*, book written in the style of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Gabriel Soares de Sousa, landowner from Bahia and staunch enemy of the Jesuits, supplies interesting information about the fauna and the flora of the region, the Indians and the process of colonization.

Openly revealing his antagonism against the priests, Gabriel Soares wrote *Chapters by Gabriel Soares de Sousa against the Fathers from the Society of Jesus who live in Brazil.* This work synthetizes the settlers' motivations for their fight against the Jesuits. As they are poor, they need hand work. But, as they cannot buy African slaves since they are too expensive, they need to enslave the Indians. According to de Sousa, the Jesuits compete disloyally with the settlers, for they keep the Indians under their control in order to exploit them in their sugar mills and plantations.

Between 1570 and 1600, the Jesuits staged sacramental plays, written after the Portuguese and Castilian Medieval plays. One such example would be the texts by the Portuguese writer Gil Vicente. They represent Catholic mysteries, sacraments and principles and were aimed, mainly, at catechizing the Indians as well as moralizing the settlers. The values being portrayed in them pertain to the Iberian "Catholic policy", already referred to, in its struggle against Luther, Calvin and Machiavelli in Europe and against traditional Indian practices, defined by priests as evidence of the Devil's actions, in Brazil. Hence, these religious plays dramatize the endless fight between God and the Devil. In their colonial expression, they take shape in the representation of sins that have to do with the Indians' cultural practices, namely xamanism, nomadism, intertribal wars, polygamy, nudity and ritual cannibalism. They also portray the settlers' sins, mainly, sexual ones, as a consequence of the freedom in their relations with Indian women. A proverb of the times asserted that *Ultra aequinoxialem non pecari* (*there is no sin below the equator*). The Devil generally speaks Tupi, the language of the Indians that inhabited the Brazilian litoral in the sixteenth century; devils usually have names of Indian leaders that allied with the invaders of the territory, such as the French Huguenots of Villegagnon, who occupied the Guanabara bay in Rio de Janeiro. On the other hand, the angel that fights against the Devil speaks Portuguese and Spanish and, sometimes, Latin. The Jesuits adapted the Tupi language and the indigenous ritual instruments to the representations, decontextualizing them through the Christian usage.

The texts produced by the Jesuits are utilitarian and Brazilian literary histories do not ascribe to them too much importance.They are very much appreciated, though, by historians and anthropologists as documents that attest to the initial processes of territory occupation and spiritual conquest of the natives. Controversy on the matter of Indian slavery appears again in the works of the Jesuit Antonio Vieira, written between 1651 and 1662, topic that will be duly discussed in the present paper.

According to literary histories, the "baroque" in Brazil begins with the publication of *Prosopopéia*, a short epic poem by Bento Teixeira, written in 1601. It is an imitation of *Os Lusíadas*, by Luis Vaz de Camões, and it celebrates Jorge de Albuquerque Coelho's war deeds. He was the owner of the Pernambuco hereditary capitancy. During the Dutch wars many genres were prolifically produced such as Jesuitic letters, sermons, chronicles and narratives. In 1624, the Dutch invaded Bahia. They were sent by the WIC, the *West Indische Compagnie* – the Company of the West Indies – that belonged to the commercial corporations of the Netherlands which, at that moment, were at war with Spain. The Dutch came with the double objective of getting hold of the sugar plantations and dominating the slave trade. At that moment, the traffic of black people, brought from Angola and Guinea Bay by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, was a very profitable business due to the fact that the Crown had the monopoly of this trade and sold the slaves not only in Brazil but also in the three Americas. The Dutch were expelled from Bahia in 1625. In 1626, Antonio Vieira, who was by then 18 years old and a seminarist at the Society of Jesus, wrote in Latin *Carta Ânua*, in which he reports the invasion and

resistance of the inhabitants of Salvador. The superior stylistic quality of *Carta Ânua* foreshadows the magnitude of his later works: sermons, letters and prophetic texts. Father Vieira's long life and action (1608-1697) covers the entire seventeenth century and, amazingly, deals with *all* the controversial issues that involved Portuguese trade with Spain, France, Savoy, Rome, Naples, Austria, England, Holland, Angola, Guinea, Birmania, Japan and India during this period of time. The Dutch came back in 1630 and invaded Pernambuco. From there, they occupied other regions of the Northeast, until they were definitely expelled in 1654. During the Dutch occupation, the priests from the Society of Jesus and other religious orders would deliver sermons to the white, indian, black, mulatto and *mameluco* (name given to the descendants of white and indian) populations, expounding on the moral, political and religious need of facing the Calvinist enemy. The sermons were based on "predicable concepts", i.e., excerpts from the Old and the New Testament that were applied to the local circumstances. Temporal matters, such as wars, were interpreted prophetically through biblical texts and canonical authorities who had commented on the episodes. Vieira is famous for his "Sermon for the Success of the Portuguese Arms against Holland" in 1640. Quoting a biblical passage in which Moses addresses himself to God, demanding from Him an explanation of why He sleeps while he asks for help against the Pharao's army, Vieira audaciously speaks to God, telling Him that if He does not wake up in time, the world will end up by saying that "God is Dutch". On the Dutch side, many naturalists such as Marcgraff, Piso, Barleu and painters, like Franz Post, Zacharias Waguener e Albert Eckhout devoted themselves to the painting of landscapes and produced magnificent canvases that document the habits of indians, blacks and mulattos as well as the everyday life in the sugar plantation areas of Pernambuco and Cidade Maurícia, name attributed to the city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco, initially ruled by the Prince of Orange, Mauricio de Nassau. He sponsored the arts, made urban reforms and allowed freedom of cult to the Sephardic Jews, who could then have their synagogues in the Northeast. When the Portuguese and Spanish people took over the region once more, the Jews fled from the Inquisition and headed for Manhattan or New York. The episodes of the wars against the Dutch as well as the human types involved in them – Portuguese, Spanish, indians and blacks – were treated by many authors, such as Duarte de Albuquerque Coelho in his *Daily Memoirs of the War of Brazil*; Diogo Lopes Santiago's *History of the War of Pernambuco* and Frei Manuel Calado's *The Courageous Lucideno*. These historical texts imitate Latin historians, such as Titus Livius, Suetone and Tacitus. Having been written by Catholic Portuguese-Brazilian authors, they interpret the experience reported by means of a ciceronian model that defines history as *magistra vitae*, master of life, proposing the war deeds of the Portuguese, Spanish and even indian and black heroes as ethical-political examples to be imitated because they embody the distinctive quality of Iberian chivalry. These texts generally interpret events as signs of the divine Providence in favour of the Catholics in history.

From 1675 on, due to customs restrictions imposed by England, France and Holland, on the distribution of Brazilian sugar in European markets, stocks soared in the warehouses in Lisbon. The Portuguese Crown, then, ordered that prices be lowered, so that Brazilian sugar would be more competitive in European markets. In Bahia and Pernambuco, the decrease in prices had an immediate impact on the payroll of clergymen and the bureaucracy. The value and price of African slaves, as well as of the materials used in the sugar manufacturing areas increased astronomically. Landowners ran out of money and started to depend on credit loans. Soon, though, due to their inability to meet their debts, they went bankrupt and had to close down their sugar mills. The decrease in Brazilian sugar prices also affected the collection of doles and tithes, fact that intensified poverty amongst the population which was chronically in a miserable condition. The crisis worsened when the Portuguese gold and silver currency was rated at a nominal value inferior to the currency in circulation in Brazil. This measure caused the evasion of metals from Brazil to Portugal, coupled with a great price increase in the products of that kind. In 1688, after the 20% devaluation of the Spanish *pataca*, the Portuguese currency became more vulnerable to smuggling, as well as other illegal practices It was common, for example, for goldsmiths to cut the coins'edges and melt the gold and silver chips, for the production of ingots, table-ware and other luxurious objects made of such metals. Together with tobacco and white rum, sugar cane brandy was bartered for slaves in Angola and in the Gulf of Guinea. In 1692, the governor Luis Gonçalves da Câmara Coutinho wrote to the king to communicate that the crisis was so intense that there were no coins left to give alms to the poor. He demanded measures to put an end to this lack of charity. Besides, between the 1680 and 1700, there had been a high number of deaths amongst the African slave population of Bahia and other places in the Northeast. These deaths were caused by the *bicha*, the yellow fever, brought by slave ships. Therefore, the Northeast and Bahia faced countless misfortunes: the moaning of the sick and hungry mob; the upsurging of unpaid soldiers from Salvador's infantry whose task was to protect the city against the attacks of English, French and Dutch pirates; the rebellion of slaves who would then seek refuge in the *quilombos* (African name given to the redoubts where slaves fleeing from slavery took sanctuary); attacks from Indians like the Aimorés who resisted the Jesuits' indoctrination and would assault Portuguese villages, setting the sugar mills on fire and beating the settlers to death or killing them with arrows to finally canibalize them.

In those days, merchants and members of mechanical orders considered "inferior", mainly, Jews and New Christians, obtained nobility titles and got a position among the aristocracy in exchange for loans given to the Crown. Many of them, New Christians'sons, would thus get access to the University of Coimbra and with a doctorate degree, would obtain jobs in the bureaucracy, getting closer to the circles of central power and the Court. The old aristocracy associated with the Holy Office of the Inquisition strongly resisted them. Father Vieira had already returned to Brazil in 1681. He had previously been a preacher at the Roman court of Queen Cristina of Sweden. Vieira had

gone to Rome in 1669 to obtain the Pope's protection, after having been made prisioner by the Holy Office of the Portuguese Inquisition between 1663 and 1667. He had been to Maranhão e Grão Pará between 1651 and 1662, leading a Jesuitic mission. There, he had defended the freedom to practice the Christian faith by the Indians settled by the Society of Jesus, coming into conflict with the settlers who expelled the Jesuits in 1662. In his heated defence of the Indians, Vieira preached audacious sermons, such as the sermon of the lies, in which he uses the letter M, from "Maranhão" ("*maranha*" means "trick", "lie", and "*Maranhão*" can be understood as "big lie") to accuse the people of Maranhão of "hypocrisy". Or the sermon of Saint Anthony to the Fish, in which he employs images of several species of sea animals, in an allegorical fashion, in order to accuse governors, settlers and Carmelite priests of greed and avarice and, also, to make dangerous insinuations against the Portuguese Inquisition. It is said that when he was preaching this sermon, he dramatically abandoned the church and went to the beach, asserting that he was going to preach to the fish, because it would surely be easier to be listened to by sea beings rather than by such wicked people. Resorting to the use of witty metaphors and allegories as well as plastic antithesis – characteristic of the literary style of the times – Vieira states that the population of São Luis de Maranhão is responsible for the death of thousands of Indians. The worst part of it is that, being Catholics, these people allowed the Indian souls to go to Hell without Baptism. In 1662, back in Portugal, he preached to the whole congregated Court the "Sermon of the Epiphany", in which he again accuses the settlers and talks about the Portuguese Catholic mission around the world. The sermon moved the audience deeply. Nevertheless, the measures adopted on the issue of the Indians' indoctrination did not favour Father Vieira who was not allowed to return to Maranhão. In 1659, in the Amazon, Vieira had written a letter to another jesuit, André Fernandes, who was named Bishop of Japan. The main theme of the letter was the prophetic interpretation of *Trovas* or poems by a sixteenth century Portuguese shoemaker, Bandarra. The letter, known as "The Bishop of Japan's Letter" was intercepted by the Inquisition. According to Vieira, Bandarra's *Trovas* demonstrate that a "Hidden" or "Fatal Prince" will eventually come back. It is King Dom João IV and the following one, whose *persona mystica* will turn Portugal into the Fifth World Empire (the others were the Chaldaic, Persian, Greek and Roman empires). His interpretation is a new version of Sebastianism, the Portuguese messianic belief in the seventeenth century.

According to Vieira, God firstly creates the world all by himself; secondly, He helps Portugal to discover Brazil, for Portugal had the prophetic mission of guiding the New world as well as the Indians to Christianity. That is why subjecting the Indians to the condition of slaves is regarded as a sin. Considering that the Indians were renowned for their ability at archery, Vieira came to propose that they could fight against the Ottoman Empire in Europe before Christ's second coming. For the success of that prophetic mission, it was necessary to boost the Portuguese economy, very much weakened after the wars against Spain and Holland, through the founding of a Brazilian Trade Company. Judaeo-Portuguese funds were, in their most part, in Holland where

Jewish and the persecuted New Christians found refuge. The Judaic funds were very often used to finance Dutch expeditions to attack Brazil. Vieira had often made contact with Jews from Rouen, Amsterdam and the Hague, negotiating with the Crown and the Roman Curia for a "general forgiveness" from the Inquisition in exchange of loans. In Amsterdam, he had discussed theology and the destiny of the lost tribes of Israel with the rabbi, Menassesh ben Israel, whose prophetic book, *Hope of Judah*, inspired his letter to André Fernandes, text which also came to be known as *Hopes of Portugal.* In 1663, the Inquisition arrested Vieira, on the grounds that his interpretation of Bandarra was an heterodox one. When he returned to Bahia in 1681, Vieira started writing letters to the King, proposing various political and economic measures, which met an unfavourable response.

Due to the general crisis between 1675 and 1700, the hierarchy undergoes a steadfast instability in Portugal and Brazil, particularly in Maranhão. All these important questions are dealt with in Vieira's letters, sermons and prophetic work and that is why he is certainly the most remarkable author of Portuguese-Brazilian colonial letters. His work is quite long – about 700 letters, 300 sermons and prophetic work, such as *Hopes of Portugal, History of the Future* and *Clavis Prophetarum,* along with a great number of texts with his views on various topics known in Portuguese as '*pareceres*'. The most controversial one authorizes the destruction of the *quilombo* of Palmares – a hiding place for thousands of runaway slaves in Pernambuco. In 1697, this *quilombo* was destroyed by the members of an armed band from São Paulo (the *bandeirantes*) and thousands were killed or arrested. It was Vieira who wrote the *parecer* in favor of the military expedition against the 'quilombo', stating that the runaway slaves resisted being converted to the Catholic faith as well as yielding to the power of the Crown.

Many of the issues related to the sugar crisis, such as the continuous exchange of social roles, are represented in the satires attributed to Gregório de Matos e Guerra, poet from Bahia who came to be known as "Mouth of Hell". He was the son of one of the wealthiest sugar plantation and mill owners in Bahia, where he was born in 1636. He studied Canonical Law at Coimbra University and worked as a lawyer for many years in Lisbon until he moved back to Bahia in 1682. For unknown reasons, Gregório de Matos was deported to Angola in 1695. He returned to Brazil in 1696 and died in Recife that same year. Nowadays Gregório de Matos as well as Father Vieira are considered as the most prominent names of Brazilian "baroque literature". As in the case of "Aleijadinho", the most notorious interpretations of Gregório de Matos' poetry are from the romantic-nationalist tradition. These texts follow a biographic and psychological criteria which is permeated by a strong political interest in 'inventing traditions' (Hobsbawm's concept), and they anachronically state that Gregório de Matos was one of the heralds of the Independence of Brazil (September 7th, 1822). There is no consistency in the romantic-nationalist criteria, since there are no autographic texts by the poet. Furthermore, as he never published during his lifetime, all that has been said about him is merely hypothetical. Indeed, the poems ascribed to him are apographs. They were collected by men of letters

from Bahia, who wrote a great deal of codices in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fact that comes to demonstrate that there was a culture of scribes dedicated to handwriting. The poems, which circulated among the people of Salvador either orally or in leaflets, remind of the Spanish *pliegos sueltos*. Quite often, these leaflets were anonymously stuck on the door of churches very late in the evening. As they were read aloud by a man of letters to the illiterate mob, many local residents as aristocrats, common people, slaves, nuns and priests came under the poet's obscene attack. The satires comprise the two Aristotelian variants of the comic: the ridicule and vilification. When the vices of the types satirized were minor and, hence, only deserved ironic scorn, the poems imitated Horatius' Roman satire. By contrast, when the vices were serious and harmful to the community, the poems became examples of vilification. The use of eschatology and verbal abuse is very common in this sort of poetry which has as its target a family's name, race discrimination, sexual preferences and the dignity of those who are satirized. In this sense, this kind of satire comes to imitate Juvenal's Roman poetry. Most of these poems circulated orally. The codices encompass a great number of writings that reproduce the oral quality of the poems, leading us to believe that the name Gregório de Matos refers to some type of anonymous, colective subject.

Circa 1690, expeditions from Bahia and São Paulo set foot in the interior of the territory of Brazil where they discovered gold and diamonds – wealth which came to guarantee the pomp of the court of King Dom João V in the first half of the eighteenth century. The King sponsored the arts and donated some land for the construction of the Roman Arcade in Rome. He also loved opera, becoming one of the Patrons of a great number of musicians, architects, painters, sculptors as well as men of letters, mainly those from Germany, Austria and Italy, who worked in Portugal and were responsible for a great deal of artistic programmes there. During Dom João V's reign, Italian style and artistic precepts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were applied to architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, theater and music, following the teachings of Borromini, Palladio, Pozzo, Scamozzi, Serlio, Ripa, Possevino, Tesauro, Gilio, Marino, Guarini, Bernini, Monteverdi, among others. In Brazil the same styles appear in the academies, which were officially instituted from 1724 until the middle of the eighteenth century. At that time, the term "academy" meant not only an ordinary assembly of people but also a permanent association based on rules and statutes. The Academies were the first attempt to organize the colonial culture systematically. The first of them, *Academia Brasílica dos Esquecidos* (The Brazilic Academy of Forgotten People), was founded in Bahia in March 1724. The purpose of that institution was to write the various administrative, military and ecclesiastic histories of the Portuguese conquest of Brazil. The work of Sebastião da Rocha Pita, *History of Portuguese America*, written in 1730, resulted from that project. From 1750 onwards, as seventeenth-century Portuguese schemes of political theology and rhetoric were exhausted, they came to be replaced by models from the Arcadian Illustration. However, they were still followed in Brazil until the arrival of the French

Mission in 1817. This was a group of artists, scientists and French men of letters who were sent to Brazil by King Dom João VI. In 1808 the Portuguese Court moved to Brazil as it fled from Napoleon Bonaparte's troops which invaded Portugal due to the fact that they were allied to England in the war against France.

A typical example of the prevailing seventeenth-century models is *Poetic Works,* published in 1768 by the Arcadian poet Cláudio Manuel da Costa. This text imitates the pastoral style of Metastasio's neoclassic operas as well as the ingenious metaphors of Gongora's Asiatic style through its references to the mining landscapes. Also, the paintings of Manuel da Costa Athayde, who worked with Aleijadinho in several architectonic projects in the region of Vila Rica, could be considered as a similar example at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He painted the roof of the church of São Francisco de Assis in Vila Rica, after the style of the roof of Gesu, the church of the Society of Jesus in Rome, painted by Pozzo.

It is worth remembering that, unlike Spanish America, where universities were founded in Mexico City and Lima as early as the in the 16th century, universities came into existence in Brazil in 1930s. The great part of the colonial population was illiterate (more than 97%). Intellectual censorship became intense (texts for publication underwent three censorships: from the Holy Office of the Inquisition, the Ordinary Office of the regular church and the office of the Court (the Crown)). Between 1580 and 1750, censorship came to prohibit the publication and the reading of the Bible as well as of the works of Erasmus, Maquiavelli, Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Newton, Locke and Hobbes, among others. Along with these works, the seventeenth-century French libertines, Spanish picaresque novels and theatrical texts together with the 'indecent' ancient poets were also censored. In the eighteenth century, after the so-called "*reformas pombalinas*" (reforms carried out by the Marquis of Pombal, Sebastião José de Carvalho), censorship became milder. However, it still tried to bar the access of heterodox texts, which might deny or go against the Catholic dogma as well as subvert the hierarchy of the empire.

We are well aware that a great number of censored works were actually read as they were smuggled into Portugal and Brazil. A common way of bringing into the country prohibited texts was by hiding them in cod-fish barrels, boxes of sugar and containers of all sort. A very common Brazilian saying, "*Santinho do pau oco*" – name given to a religious image often made of hollow wood – is nowadays used to allude to someone of deceitful appearance and behaviour. In colonial times, the interior of these religious images used to be filled up with diamonds, gold, coins and other precious or prohibited objects. As Bourdieu points out, every interdict produces its own subversion.

Colonial *lettres*, currently classified as "baroque", are, indeed, neo-scholastic versions of *Book III* of Aristotles' *Rhetoric* and the new conceptualizations of dialectics and rhetoric in the second half of the sixteenth century in Rome, Florence, France, Spain, etc. At that time, dialectics had the task of stating the definition and counter-definition of the topics which were attributed exclusively to rhetoric. Then rhetoric underwent some modifications as a renewed doctrine of elocution or of the theory for

the 'ornamentation' of themes and sub-themes which are achieved through dialectical analysis. All the major rhetorical poetic essays of the seventeenth century that reached Brazil, mainly, through the Society of Jesus, such as *Artificio y Arte de Ingenio,* by Baltazar Gracián (1644); *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico*, by Emanuele Tesauro (1654); *New Art of Conceptualizations* by Francisco Leitão Ferreira (1718), revert to *Organon* and *De anima*, proposing the ten Aristotelian categories and specifications on the syllogistic reasoning as schemes to define and arrange dialectically the arguments of the representation. By the same token, all of them recover, neo-scholastically, both the Aristotelian doctrine of metaphor, as presented in *Book III* of *Rhetoric*, and its readings made by Cicero and Quintillian, in order to deal with the ornamentation of the ten different themes gotten through the dialectical application of the categories to the subjects of the representations. Thus, it is very common to find in Spain, New Spain, Peru, the Kingdom of Naples, Rome as well as in Portugal essays written by Greek authors reproduced in Europe at the end of the sixteenth century in its Byzantine versions, such as those written by Longinus, *On the Sublime*, as well as those by Demetrius Falereus, Denis of Halicarnasse and Hermogenes on elocution. In the seventeenth century the readings of those Greek authors enriched the three styles based on Cicero and Quintilian – the high, medium and low – very much in vogue in the sixteenth century. They came to constitute the various styles of the arts which today are classified and unified deductively as "baroque".[1] These arts are technically regulated and apply verisimilitude and decorum, which are specific of genres and styles, adapting the effects of meanings to the occasions of hierarchy as adequate representations of human types and affects for the centralization of monarchic power. This is what stands out when we read Vieira's work, the poetry attributed to Gregorio de Matos, the chronicle of the Dutch wars, and the documents of the eighteenth-century academies. The "baroque arts" are far from the rich individualism of Romanticism since they foreground precodified types, characters, actions and passions. Thus, they imitate texts of ancient authors, mainly the Latin ones, such as Martial, Persius, Lucan, Juvenal, Petronius, Seneca who, in turn, were related in the seventeenth century to the authors they imitated from the sixteenth century, such as Cicero, Horatius, Ovid and Virgil.

The main technical procedure of colonial representations is the analogy, neo-scholastically defined as the metaphysical and logic participation of the language in God. This is the same procedure that can be observed in the metaphysical poetry of the English poets, John Donne and Andrew Marvell. In a metaphysical sense, through the analogy of attribution, only God '*is*', a complete *Being*, while all other entities are merely His image and resemblance. Working the analogy of attribution – A:B:C – from the perspective of logics, the colonial men of letters set a relationship between two mental images or two metaphors through a third term common to both of them. For example, in poetry, words such as *snow* and *lily* are associated through a word common to both, such as *whiteness.* This is what helps the colonial poet say that snow is *the lily of winter* and the lily is *the snow of the meadow*. They consider this analogy too banal though and they, thus, prefer to evince erudition and wit by bringing together words semantically

remote. This is done through the analogy of proportion that metaphysically sets the hierarchical degrees of participation of the entities in the Being of God and logically establishes a relationship of resemblance between two genres common to two species – A:B::C:D – so that the relation between them is not clear in the first instance.

Manuel B. de Oliveira, poet from Bahia who is well-known for his book *Music of Parnasus* (1705), states in one of his sonnets, dealing with the cruel love of Anarda, his muse, that 'A serpent is a wandering May of twisted flowers'. In the first instance, the relationship between the metaphor of the reptile 'serpent' and the month of May is opaque. However, if we strain our interpretative skills, we understand that what Botelho de Oliveira is trying to point out is that in the same way that the serpent moves and slides, time also moves as it passes by. In turn, due to the resemblance of both movements, physical and temporal, Botelho establishes an equivalence between the two species arguing that 'serpent' is 'May'. Metaphorizing Fine Arts, it can be said that discourse becomes visual as Botelho de Oliveira puts forward that the month of May has its skin spotted with 'twisted flowers' just as a serpent that carries the European spring tatooed in its skin.

Consider now the example of an analogy of proportionality. Metaphysically, proportionality foregrounds that all living creatures concur in God. It logically sets up the relationship between A:B::C:D, though among terms which are rather distant semantically. The result may sound like a fantastic incongruence, as in the case of the sermons preached by Brother Antonio de Rosario in Bahia in 1699. He uses the names of more than twenty local fruits as an allegory of God's love namely, peanut, ananás (pineapple), strawberry, guava, "*areticuapé*", banana, the golden-yellow plumlike fruit of cajazeira, cashew, "*camboi*", sugar cane, "*capucaia*", coconuts, sugar apple, "*gargaúba*", jaboticaba, genipap, juá, papaya, fruit of "*mangabeira*", passion fruit, "*moresi*", "*mucujé*", "*mupurunga*", "*oitiroco*", "oitiruba", "*piquiá*", soapberry, imbu. In those days, as can be seen in *The Fair of Anexins* by Dom Francisco Manuel de Melo, it was usual in Portugal to write speeches using metaphors of sweets, heads, vegetables and fruits among others. As in the poetry attributed to Gregorio de Matos, where "banto" and "tupi" terms come together, imitating Quevedo's satires against Gongora's poetry, Antônio do Rosario also imitates the European style, adapting Catholicism to the tropical conditions. He writes that "Ananás" is the king of fruits, because its thorns and red color stand for the royal crown and cloak. Furthermore, he understands *ananás* as a metaphor for the rosary. He resorts to the same analogy when he states that "*'Ananás' is the same as Annanascitur. God's mother was born of Saint Anne. Anne means grace; a hundred and fifty times Anne's daughter, full of grace, is mentioned in the rosary*". [2]

In the seventeenth century, from 1580 to 1750, the Portuguese colonial empire comprised, besides the State of Brazil and the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará, other regions of Africa and Asia. Numerous African, Arabic, Chinese, Birmanese and Hindu artistic styles were adapted in Brazil. These adaptations help us describe the colonial representation produced in those centuries as the historical result of the technical and

political processes of integration of various cultural codes, which came to adapt and distort the European as well as other models with patterns locally used. Between 1580 and 1750, the religious orders, tradesmen, members of guilds, travellers, smugglers etc. internationalized the models of rationalization of the Monarchic Catholic and absolutist court, leading men of letters and artisans, who then lived in Naples, Rome, Spain, Portugal, Bavaria, Peru, Mexico and, mainly, Brazil, to become acquainted with some of the rhetoric, theological and political references. Who were these colonial men of letters? They were generally white people or people classified as such. In general they were men who belonged to the bureaucracy or the clergy. These people were often graduates in Canonical law from the University of Coimbra or other courses of Theology taught by the Jesuits in Brazilian Seminars. As the artisans who worked for the brotherhoods and other religious orders, men of letters used to depend directly on the patrons of the arts or sponsors. From the time of the *Academy of the Forgotten*, in 1724, the sponsorship of men of letters by Viceroys was a common practice. The artisans were quite often "mulattos" and black people who were inhumanly scorned. Manual work, involved in the plastic arts, was belittled in the old Portuguese society as an activity characteristic of inferior people. Furthermore, black people and 'mulattos' were considered to have "dirty blood', according to the stereotype of "blood cleansing' which was used to discriminate against 'non-white' types initiated in the heresies and idolatries namely, Jews, Arabs, mulattos, blacks, Indians and Orientals, among others.

The appropriation of 'high' cultural models by black artisans and mulattos can be regarded as an example of cultural ambiguity. This is the case, for example, of the use of shells, phallus, horns of goat, tubercles of yam as representations found in the altars of Santa Ifigênia, church built at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Vila Rica, Minas Gerais. In the carvings of the altars, the black artisans encrusted shells – ornaments which not only come as erudite references to ancient iconography, such as the myth of Aphrodite's birth, but also to Christianity, for the labyrinthine structure of the shell is an allegory to the mysteries of Incarnation of Mary's Love. In the churches of the black community, that worshipped Negro Saints, shells problably had the same values as they have nowadays in the ritual of the *candomblé* (religious rites) – one of African religions still practiced in Brazil. They have been recently studied by a Brazilian researcher, Professor Lázaro Francisco da Silva.[3]

In those days, the colonial man of letters did not partake of the social standing associated with the social imaginary.[4] He was not yet an "author" or "writer", in the Enlightenment and post- Enlightenment sense of the terms. On the other hand, he was no longer the ordinary scribe of the Medieval guilds. To outline his profile, the relevance of his representation in the society of the times should be stressed since that was a society in which the individual and his social role were defined as *representations* and *through representations*, i.e., bearing in mind the hierarchy of the individual in a group or social class. The social identity of the colonial man of letters was not defined within the field of letters, but in other ones. The few iconographic documents in which writers

appear are clear evidence of this fact. A sign of the conditions of the man of letters at the time is, then, the complete absence of such terms as 'author', 'writer' or 'man of letters' in the documents of the Portuguese administration. The writer was designated through professional categories (General Auditor, Judge from the Outside, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Priest, Colonel of Militia, etc.) or, through social positions (noblemen or plebeians) and, also, through professional qualification. For example, in Portuguese documents, 'a man of letters' quite often refers to a "graduate in law from the University of Coimbra". That is to say, the position of the man of letters was determined by the hierarchical and professional categories of his inclusion and subordination to the mystic corps of the State rather than by his authorial autonomy, disinterested contemplation, aesthetic autonomy, literary invention and originality as they are understood today. This form of inclusion of the man of letters within the hierarchy conditioned and determined the practice of the letters. The colonial men of letters wrote in Portuguese as well as in Spanish, Italian, Latin and Tupi. The representations they produced imitated the models of ancient authorities while adapting them to the local circumstances. These adaptations produced distortion of various degrees and values, which systematically reproduced the prescriptions of the schemes they imitated. The adaptations were material, institutional, formal and personal differences that functioned as particular interventions to the collective pattern. As already stated, they were substantialistic practices, metaphysically justified. In their utilitarian uses, they did not reflect the division of discursive regimes brought about by the Enlightenment.

Accordingly, the sociological scheme *author-work-public* was conceptualized in terms of "Catholic policy" which gave it its sense. In other words, these adaptations were neither "literature" nor "baroque" and they demand that their original norms be considered when a descriptive literary history is made of them and their uses after the eighteenth century.

Notes

1 Cf. Grigera, Luisa Lopez. *Anotações de Quevedo a la Retórica de Aristóteles.* Preliminar study, edition of Quevedo's notes on Aristotle's *Rhetorica.* Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, 1998, p. 83.

2 Rosário, Brother Antonio do, *Frutas do Brasil numa Nova e Ascética Monarchia, Consagrada à Santíssima Senhora do Rosário. (Brazilian Fruits in a New and Ascetic Monarchy, Acclaimed to the Most Holy Lady of Rosary).* Lisbon, Antonio Pedroso galram, 1701, p. 21.

3 Silva, Lázaro Francisco da. "Conjuração Negra em Minas" ("The Negro Conspiracy in Minas") in IFAC MAGAZINE. Ouro Preto, IFAC-UFOP, 1995. No. 2, pp. 68-78.

4 Viala, Alain. "Du caractère d'écrivain à l'Âge Classique" in *Textuel - Images de l'écrivain.* Paris, Université de Paris VII, 1989. No. 22, pp.51-52

News from Brazil

Visiting Professors at the University of São Paulo (USP)

Professor Heinz Kosok. September 2000.

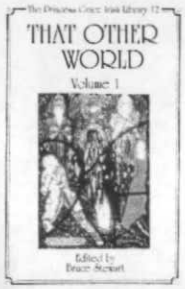
Professor Maureen Murphy. Seminar with postgraduate students. July 2000.

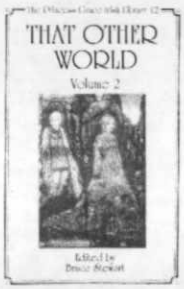
Books Received

The Southern Cross. (La Cruz del Sur). Año 125, Noviembre de 2000. Edición especial. Número Aniversario.

O'Brien, E. *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*. Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998.

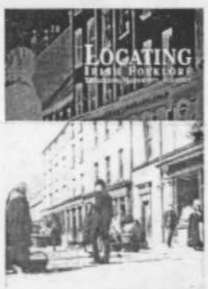
Bruce Stewart (ed.). *That Other World*, Vols. 1 & 2. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1999.





Oliver Marshall (ed.). *English-speaking Communities in Latin America*. London: Macmillan Press, 2000.

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin. *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition. Modernity, Identity*. Ireland: Cork University Press, 2000.

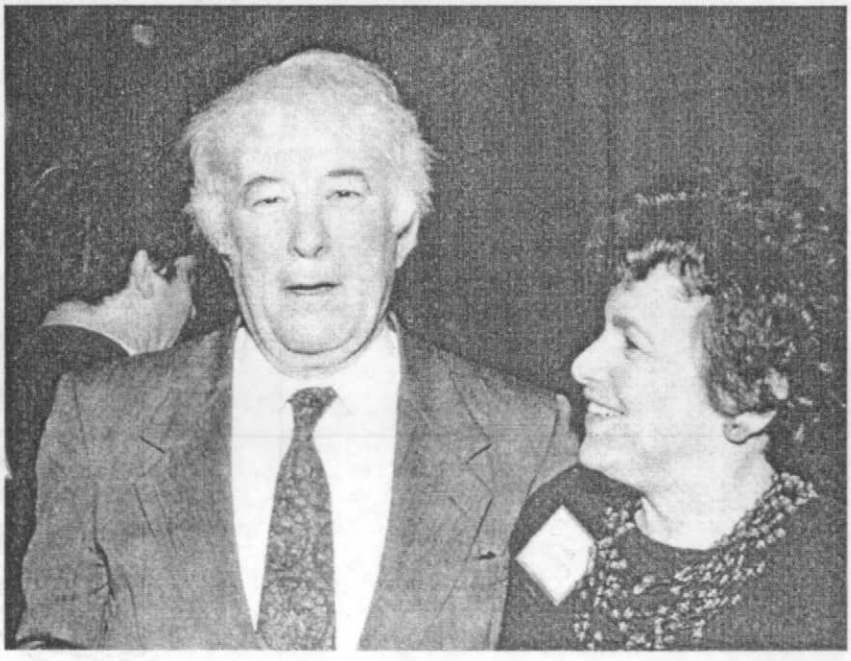


Remembering

Celebrating 20 Years of Irish Studies: A Symposium

10 October 1998
The Irish Room at Gasson Hall
Boston College

Photo by Gary Gilbert and Lee Pellegrini, courtesy of Boston College Office of Publications and Print Marketing



Seamus Heaney and Adele Dalsimer at Boston College

*Looking Forward: the Future of Irish Studies**

Adele Dalsimer

Recent estimations of contemporary Irish culture are alarming. Viewing Ireland's growing internationalisation as the end of the country's distinctiveness commentators claim that the New Ireland is up for sale. A country so redefined, reimagined, reinvented, restructured and recreated, it has become detached from its own traditions. The Ireland of today, critics charge, has lost its moorings, and a stroll down Grafton Street with its Beneton, Gap, and Burger King store fronts certainly *can* suggest that the country has been transformed – as one writer laments – from a protectionistic national "container" of all things Irish" – to a "flood plain" across which an unending flow of international detritus pollutes an indigenous culture. The citizens of this New Ireland are, according to this argument, people more attached to global symbols and brand names than to real places and organic traditions.

But I reject these jeremiads and want to offer a more optimistic view of modern Ireland. Rather than mourning the wholesale detraditionalization and deculturalization of the nation, I support the nuance view of tradition offered by a recent critic: "tradition can be understood as a kind of reservoir, from which the living repertory of culture is drawn, rather like the relationship between the stagnant pool and the stream, the passive and the active. Active traditions may be put away, passive traditions may be revived and new traditions may be borrowed from outside or created from internal resources, but always within the context of the cultural flow".

Although Ireland is certainly changing at a rapid pace, I see the nation as far more resilient and distinct than the Grafton Street shopping mall implies. Let me give an example of how native and external traditions interact to create a dynamic cultural flow. In describing the relationship of traditional Irish music to the world music scene, musicologist Michael O'Sullivan describes the spread of American country music to Ireland: "There's another kind of country music in the Connemara Gaeltacht, and it's all

* This talk was delivered on October 10, 1998 at Boston College: "Celebrating 20 Years of Irish Studies: A Symposium." The event marked the twentieth anniversary of the Boston College Irish Studies Program.

sung in the Irish language". The songs are about Irish migratory labourers who go over to London, work on the sites and then return home. "It's cassette industry", says O'Sullivan, "it doesn't appear on CD and never gets played on radio, but it's very big up there [in Connemara]". When the *sean nos* singers in the Gaeltacht perform these songs, they use an American country style, but occasionally ornamental motifs from their indigenous tradition slip in. Here O'Sullivan demonstrates that Irish identity, musical or otherwise, is open ended and heterogeneous. Or as Fintan O'Toole asserts, "the only fixed Irish identity and the only useful tradition is the Irish tradition of not having a fixed identity".

But what does such cultural permeability mean for Irish Studies? What does it say about the evolution of the field we celebrate today? When we began twenty years ago, we saw our work in simple terms: we sought to free Ireland and its culture from the enclosing and distorting framework of the American academy's Anglophilic lens. Our task was to teach the nation's history from an *Irish* perspective, to present Yeats and Joyce, Wilde and Shaw as Irish, not British, luminaries. We were separatist and essentialist, struggling to define and isolate a unique national experience. Thus we added courses to our curriculum about writers notably excluded from the English canon: Patrick Kavanagh and Austin Clarke, Liam O'Flaherty, and Lady Gregory. We added courses in Irish language and literature, and more recently – in the context of our museum's growing attention to Irish painting and sculpture – we developed the first American survey course of Irish art. Our courses and programs in traditional Irish music and dance are similarly unique.

But as we worked, we realized how complicated – if not impossible – was the essentialist task to which we had set ourselves. Pure Irish culture, like "traditional Irish values", was a chimerical construction, and a recent construction at that, formed in the devotional revolution of post-Famine Ireland. As far back as we look, Irish identity had, in fact, been porous and heterogeneous: Celts, Gaels, Vikings, Normans, English conquerors, English Quakers, Scots settlers – even small numbers of Italians, Jews, and French Huguenots – left their mark. All had their say, and all had their stories incorporated into the complex narrative of Irish identity. There was no possibility of undoing the warp of this history. We could not remove the residue of multiple incursions and invasions to find what Luke Gibbons has referred to as a "pristine pre-colonial identity", free of the "accretions of conquest". Our task had, in fact, become just the opposite, that of demonstrating that Irish identity was hybrid and syncretic, even at those moments when that hybridist was submerged in shared adversity and oppression.

And in the past decade, as the unquestioned probity of Church hierarchy and State leaders, has been publicly challenged we have had to consider a hybridity that includes formerly marginalized groups in the nation – those who do *not* fit into Eamon de Valera's ideals of community, family sanctity, faith and fatherland. We have had to explore not only the history of the heterosexual family in Ireland, but the more isolating cultural experiences of gay and lesbian citizens living in a country that decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting adults only in 1993. Recent exposes of sustained

child and marital abuse have forced us to look more closely at behaviour ignored by an idealizing nationalionist narrative that denied the existence of unwed mothers, battered wives, and pedophilic priests. Dermot Keough's recent revelations about Ireland's refusal to grant asylum to doomed European Jews during WWII reminds us that today's racism directed at Romanian refugees must be viewed within a wider context of Irish xenophobism and prejudice.

But what about the future?

In the coming decades, Irish Studies scholars must continue to deconstruct the narrow ideal of racial purity and exclusivity. They must reckon with the poverty, urban blight, rural decline, and class inequality that are visible stripes on the Celtic tiger. They will have to concentrate less on the effects of Anglicisation on Irish society, and more on the impact of, not only Americanisation, but globalisation as well. What new symbols of Ireland will we be deconstructing? Will the thatched cottages and green hills of Bord Failte's posters give way to harborside images of the Pfizer drug company's plant in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork – the only plant manufacting Viagra for an insatiable world market?

Finally, Irish Studies will need to consider the fullest implications of the permeability of Ireland's borders by including Diaspora Studies within *its* margins. The map of the New Ireland must include the island's entire elsewhere: it cannot omit those places where the Irish are always landing and from where they return. As Joyce's Leopold Bloom said, "a nation is the same people living in the same place", but then added "or living in different places". "Irish" now includes all those people, born in Ireland, but living around the globe. In the next twenty years, Irish Studies will have to examine what it means to be Irish and live in North America, in Australia, in South Africa, or England – even distinguishing between Irish-American identity here in Boston, in Chicago or San Francisco. For as Fintan O'Toole has asked, "We live in different places, are we the same people?" Irish Diaspora Studies – with its necessarily comparativist methodology – can provide an answer and enable us to "understand sameness in a way that incorporates difference and brooks contradictions".

A decade ago Declan Kiberd argued that "the seamless garment once wrapped like a green flag around Cathleen Ni Houlihan had given way to a quilt of many patches and colours, all beautiful, all distinct, yet all connected too". More recently – this year in fact – Michael O'Sullivan added the Diaspora to Kiberd's quilt of many colours. In the past, the green wrap, he said, was "a lie, a dangerous lie", a "suffocating device" that disabled the search for identity. But now – in 1998 – the green wrap is a magic carpet, enabling the Irish to travel anywhere and return. The kind of culture that O'Sullivan claims for Ireland no longer fears that its young will not return, or – as he says – "that they'll come back with exotic fruits that might be poisonous". His Ireland may be already here since last year immigrants' outnumbered emigrants by about 15.000, many of whom were Irish nationals returning home from Britain and the United States.

I see the Irish Studies of the future riding O'Sullivan magic carpets in whatever direction they fly. Maybe in the coming century Irish exploration, even emigration, will reach beyond earth itself? Perhaps it is the mobility of the Irish people that inspired the Minor Planet Centre in Cambridge, Massachusetts to give Planet 5029, recently discovered somewhere between Mars and Jupiter, a new name – "Ireland". Will the people who left their homeland in "coffin ships", only to return a century and a half later in jet planes emblazoned with "Aer Lingus", be travelling in space rockets from earth to planet Ireland, and back. If they do, Irish Studies students will fly with them.

In Memoriam

The Place of Images in Irish Studies

Dedicated to the memory of Adele Dalsimer. July 22, 2000*

Vera Kreilkamp

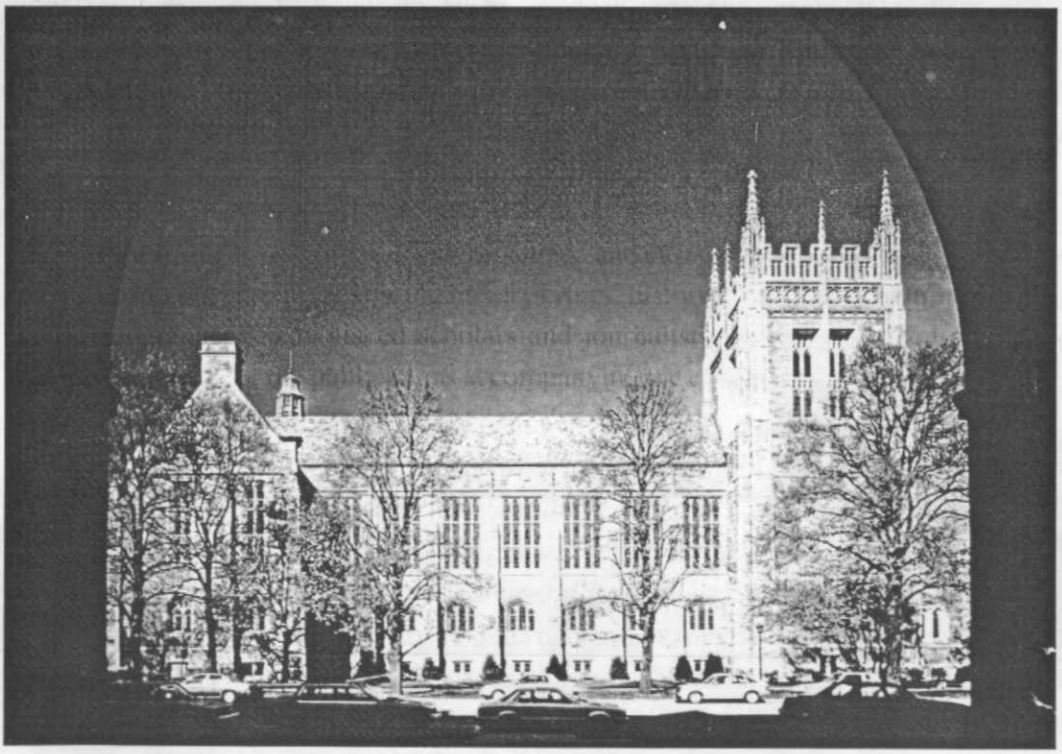
As many of you know, Adele Dalsimer, long a member and often a member of the executive board of IASIL, died in Boston last February, after a seven-and-a-half year struggle with multiple myeloma. All of us on today's panel worked closely with her and conceive of this occasion – not so much as a memorial to Adele – but as a celebration of her achievements, particularly during the years of her illness. Above all, we want to mark Adele's talents in convincing those she worked with – several without a trace of Irish ancestry – of the cultural and political richness of Irish Studies. In being here, we bear witness to her extraordinary persuasiveness.

Adele Dalsimer's academic background was resolutely literary; her dissertation at Yale, under Harold Bloom, developed into the book *The Unappeasable Shadow: Shelley's influence on Yeats* and was followed by a monograph on the Irish novelist Kate O'Brien. But when Adele came to Boston College, she discovered, to her chagrin, that she was expected to teach Yeats to classes of Irish-American students within the structure of English literature courses. In a characteristic reaction to this problem, with historian Kevin O'Neill, Adele established the first truly interdisciplinary Irish Studies programs in North America. For her major contributions to the field, she was recognized with honorary degrees from Mount Holyoke College (1995), from the University of Ulster (1998), and from the National University of Ireland (1999).

When Adele was diagnosed with a fatal blood cancer in 1992, she had already begun to shift her attention from literary criticism to visual art, but art always in the context of Irish literature, history, and politics. A frequent visitor to Dublin's galleries and museums, she long felt that the awareness of Ireland's spectacular literary achievements had overwhelmed its considerable visual traditions – which included, to the surprise of many Americans, more than Jack Yeats and the Book of Kells. With her characteristic optimism and courage, (mind you, she was a member of an English not an art department) Adele did something about that problem. During the seven years before

* Introduction to panel at IASIL, Bath, 2000.

her death, often while she was undergoing debilitating chemotherapy – she worked with the director of Boston College's McMullen Museum, and its curator to bring four major exhibitions of Irish art to Boston. She also encouraged the Fine Arts Department at the university to offer a course on Irish art, co-taught by panelist Katherine Nahumn. In 1996, Adele and I co-curated *America's Eye: the Irish Art of Brian P. Burns* – an exhibition that went on to the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin, to Yale University's Mellon Gallery of British Art, and this spring, to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. For that project, as well as others – for example, *Re/Dressing Cathleen*, a memorable 1997 exhibition of Irish women artists organized and curated by Alston Conley – Adele convinced not only art historians, but literary critics, historians, linguists, cultural critics, even a geographer – established scholars and journalists, as well as gifted graduate students – to write for the publications accompanying the exhibitions. In 1993 she edited *Visualizing Ireland*, a groundbreaking interdisciplinary collection of essays on Irish paintings, and in 1996 Adele and I edited a similarly interdisciplinary catalog for *America's Eye*.



Boston College

Before I introduce today's panelists, I want to offer a final example of Adele's extraordinary ability to convince her colleagues that working in Irish Studies – and especially the visual arts – was their destiny. In the fall of 1998, Boston College's McMullen Museum contemplated an exhibition, *Irish Art Now: From the Poetic to the Political*, a travelling show of contemporary art from the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Still recovering from a bone marrow transplant, Adele called a meeting of, as she put it, interested parties at the university – several of them sitting before you. During the ensuing discussion, it became clear that the exhibition came with its own catalog from Ireland. Perhaps, I thought, with some small relief, there was nothing at all for us to do. But by the time I staggered out of the meeting, I had committed myself to publishing a special issue about Irish art for *Eire-Ireland*, the Irish Studies journal I co-edit. Although the issue had to be out within a year, in time for the October opening *of Irish Art Now*, I had learned from years of collaboration with Adele that all things were indeed possible. On this project, however, she was too ill to serve as a guest co-editor. Still she agreed to write an essay with me for the cover art – a mysterious drawing by Alice Maher – and, between frequent hospital visits for transfusions and further chemotherapy, she gave endless advice and encouragement. Within a year the 319-page issue of twenty-five contributions, responding not just to one, but to four different art exhibitions visiting North America in 1999, appeared on schedule. In it, Ireland's major museum directors described their plans; poet Seamus Heaney unpacked a contemporary painting; art historian Fintan Cullen explored the politics of Irish art, historian Perry Curtis reported on his new research in iconography. In response to Adele's forceful encouragement – I called on her for this one – a political historian from the North who had never tackled visual material before analyzed Belfast photography about the troubles. But Adele's greatest triumph came when her closest colleague in the English Department of Boston College, a colleague who had, for almost twenty years, managed to resist every effort to be drawn into Irish Studies, contributed an essay about the Irish surrealist artist Dorothy Cross. And since Adele's death, this colleague – and panelist, Robin Lydenberg, has decided to write a book-length monograph on Cross's work; Robin's capitulation suggests how thoroughly we have all been not only persuaded, but also transformed by Adele, how even now her influence makes things happen – and how very much we will miss her.

Contributors

CHARLIE BOLAND, born in Waterford, Ireland, recently completed an M.A in Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin with a thesis on Paul Durcan supervised by Catriona Clutterbuck.. He is currently working as an English language teacher in Rio de Janeiro.

HAROLDO EURICO BROWNE DE CAMPOS. Poet, translator of poetry, essayist and theoretician of literature, co-founder of the International Concrete Poetry Movement (1956). Guggenheim Fellow, Emeritus Professor of Semiotics at the Catholic University of São Paulo. He has received many prizes: *Jabuti* (Brazilian Literary Prize), five times since 1991; *Octavio Paz*, Mexico 1999, *Roger Caillois*, Paris 1999. Selected bibliography: *Galaxies* (Prose Poem 1963 – 1976); *Xadrez de Estrelas (Chessboard of Stars,* 1976); *Signantia: quasi coelum* (1976); *The Education of the Five Senses* (1979); *Crisantempo*; *A Máquina do Mundo Repensada* (2000); Transcreations from Dante, Mallarmé, Göethe, Maiakovsky, James Joyce (fragments from *Finnegans' Wake*), Pound, Octavio Paz and Biblical Poetry.

JAMES CONCAGH has been a resident artist in São Paulo since 1986. After a one year Foundation Course at Chelsea School of Art, London, Concagh went on to study at the National College of Art e Design, Dublin. In 1984 he received his degree in Fine Art and went on to have five major Exhibitions with the art group 688 around Ireland. Since 1987 he has exhibited in São Paulo at Centro Cultural Vergueiro, USP, SESC, Cultura Inglesa and Paço das Artes. Concagh has also exhibited his work at the 250 years N.C.A.D show in 1996 Dublin and at the Limerick Self-Portrait Exhibition. His art work has included working with Institutions such as Mapes (Espírito Santo) São Bernardo "Objeto Encontrado", Museum of Contemporary Art, FABEC and Casa da Cultura Vila Prudente. Concagh has also worked with and received Irish artists here in Brazil such as Alanna O'Kelly and Brian Maguire.

JOHN CRONIN is Emeritus Professor of English at the Queen's University of Belfast. Since his retirement from the Chair of English, he has been an Honorary Fellow at the university's Institute of Irish Studies. He is the author of critical and biographical studies of the Irish writers, Gerald Griffin and Somerville & Ross. He has also published studies of the Anglo-Irish Novel of the 19th and 20th centuries as well as numerous articles on a wide range of Irish fiction.

ADELE DALSIMER, internationally recognised Irish studies scholar and co-director of the Boston College Irish Studies Programme, died in Boston on February 13th 2000, aged 60. She received a Master's degree from Hunter College and a doctorate in English literature from Yale University. In 1978, in collaboration with historian Kevin O'Neill, she conceived and developed the Irish Studies programme at Boston College which received notable visitors including Nobel laureates Seamus Heaney, John Hume and David Trimble. She published and lectured widely. Her books include *The Unappeasable Shadow: Shelley's Influence on Yeats* (1988) and *Kate O'Brien: A Critical Study* (1990); she also edited a number of volumes dedicated to the interdisciplinary analysis of art. She served on the boards of the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) and the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) for many years, and played a central role in the development of both organizations. In 1999 she received an honorary doctorate from the National University of Ireland, for her "unique and outstanding scholarly contributions to the field of Irish Studies". She was also awarded honorary degrees by the University of Ulster (1998) and Mount Holyoke College (1995).

MILLÔR FERNANDES is translator, journalist and contributor to *Caderno Mais! Folha de São Paulo*. Among his translations that of *The Playboy of the Western World* by John M. Synge is well known.

DORE FISCHER graduated from the Christian-Albrecht-Universität, Kiel (Germany) in 1980 in German and English philology. Since 1983 she has been teaching at several Irish third-level institutions. She is currently a lecturer at the Dublin Institute of Technology where she teaches German and Intercultural Studies. Her major areas of research are in modern Irish literature, German migrant literature and Intercultural Studies.

NICHOLAS GRENE is Professor of English Literature at Trinity College, Dublin and the Director of the Synge Summer School. He has been an invited speaker on Irish literature in many countries, including Brazil in 1993. His books include *Synge: a Critical Study of the Plays; Bernard Shaw: a Critical View, Shakespeare's Tragic Imagination, The Politics of Irish Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), and most recently, he published the edited collection *Interpreting Synge: Essays from the Synge Summer School 1991-2000* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2000).

JOÃO ADOLFO HANSEN, Professor of Brazilian Literature at Universidade de São Paulo and author of many books, received the national prize Jabuti 1990 for *A Sátira e o Engenho, Gregório de Matos e a Bahia do Século XVII* (Companhia das Letras, 1989). He has given many courses, seminars, and lectures on bibliographical and rhetorical poetic Luso-Brazilian codes of 16th, 17th and 18th centuries at EHESS; Sorbonne-Paris, France; Freie Universität Berlin; Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg; Katholische

Universität Eischstätt- Germany; Universidade de Coimbra-Portugal; Yale University, USA; UNAM- Mexico; Universidad Nacional de Colombia and various Brazilian universities.

PETER JAMES HARRIS lectures in English Literature and English Culture at the State University of São Paulo (UNESP). Born in London he has an M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia and a Ph.D. in Irish Studies from the University of São Paulo (USP), with a thesis entitled *Sean O'Casey's Letters and Autobiographies: Reflections of a Radical Ambivalence.* He is currently researching into the presence of Irish dramatists on the London stage in the period from Independence to the present day.

RÜDIGER IMHOF is Professor of English at Wuppertal University in Germany, where he specialises in Anglo-Irish literature. He has published widely on contemporary Irish drama and fiction, including *Alive-Alive O!* a study of Flann O´Brien´s *At Swim Two Birds* (Wolfhound Press, 1985) and *John Banville: A Critical Introduction* (Wolfhound Press, 1989).

LAURA P. ZUNTINI DE IZARRA teaches English Literatures at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, where she got her M.A. and PhD in the programme of Irish Studies. She is co-editor of *ABEI Newsletter* and author of *Mirrors and Holographic Labyrinths: The Process of a "New" Aesthetic Synthesis in John Banville´s Work* (Bethesda, MD: International Scholars Publications, 1999) and several articles on Irish fiction (mainly on James Stephens' and John Banville's writings) and on the teaching of literature. Her present research is on Irish diaspora writings in South America.

MARIA HELENA PEIXOTO KOPSCHITZ, Emeritus Professor of Literatures in English at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Niterói, Brazil, where she taught most of her professional life. She broadened the scope of the traditional English syllabus by developing Specialisation Courses on Anglo-Irish Literature. She spent a term at Queen's University of Belfast in 1985. Her current interests are literary translation and poetics. She has published many articles on Samuel Backett and a translation of *PING* with Haroldo de Campos.

HEINZ KOSOK is Professor of Literatures in English at the University of Wuppertal. PhD. Dissertation on Herman Melville, "habilitation" (postdoctorate degree) with a book on Sean O'Casey. In the period of 1973 and 1974 he was Dean of Faculty of Languages and Literatures at the University of Wuppertal and, from 1982 to 1985 was Chairman of IASIL.

LUCI COLIN LAVALLE teaches 'Literatures in English' at the Federal University of Paraná and attends a Doctorate Course at the University of São Paulo. Author of eight published books of poetry and fiction.

DONALD E. MORSE, Visiting Professor of American, Irish, and English Literature, Kossuth University, Hungary, is also Emeritus Professor of English and Rhetoric, Oakland University, Michigan, USA. The author or editor of nine books and over ninety scholarly essays, he is also well known as an international lecturer on a variety of subjects including Irish literature. With the Hungarian scholar, Csilla Bertha, he wrote *Worlds Visible and Invisible: Essays on Irish Literature* (1994) and edited *A Small Nation's Contribution to the World: Essays on Irish Literature and Language* (1993), and *More Real than Reality: The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts* (1992). He has been awarded two Fulbright fellowships to Hungary (1987-1989 and 1991-1993), two Soros Professorships (1990, 1996-1997), a Rockefeller Study Fellowship (1991), and an honorary doctorate from Kossuth University (1999).

JERRY NOLAN is a London-based freelance writer. He is on the national Council of th e British Association for Irish Studies and editor of the association quarterly newsletter. He is involved in on-going research into marginalised figures of the Irish literary revival such as Edward Martyn, Standish O'Grady, George Moore, AE, James Cousins and James Stephens.

EUGENE O'BRIEN teaches in the University of Limerick and at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. He also works as a tutor for *Oscail*, the Irish distance learning project. He has published articles in *Imprimatur, Minerva, Hermathena, Irish Studies Review, International Review of Modernism, H-Net*, the Humanities on-line book review project, and *Event Horizon*. He is editor of Mellen's Irish Studies and Studies in Irish Literature series, as well as editor of Oak Tree Press's new Studies on Contemporary Ireland series.

JOSÉ ROBERTO O'SHEA has a PhD in English and North-American Literature from the University of North California and teaches modern English prose and poetry as well as Shakespearean drama at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Among his translations are Thomas Cahill's *Como os Irlandeses salvaram a civilização* (1999); Joyce's *Os Dublinenses*, Harold Bloom's critical texts – *Shakespeare: A Invenção do Humano* (2000), *Como e por que ler* (2001) – and annotated translations of Shakespeare's plays like *Antony and Cleopatra* (1997), *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*.

MAGDA VELLOSO FERNANDES DE TOLENTINO lectures in English Literatures at the university FUNREI, Minas Gerais. Her PhD. Thesis is on Joyce (*James Joyce and the Formation of the Irish Nation*); her present research is on Irish Drama 1850-1950. Among her recent publications is "Songs and Ballads in the Literature and History of Ireland." In: *Voices and Viewpoints, Fourth Annual International Symposium.* Gadsden State Community College, Gadsden, Alabama, USA, 1999.

Ficha Técnica

Divulgação	Humanitas-Discurso
Mancha	14 x 24 cm
Formato	21 x 27,8 cm
Tipologia	Times New Roman 12/16
Papel	miolo: off-set 75 g/m²
	capa: supremo 250 g/m²
Impressão da capa	Gráfica Provo
Impressão do miolo e acabamento	Gráfica da FFLCH/USP
Número de páginas	214
Tiragem	300

ABEI

Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses

Number 3

June 2001

ISSN 1518 - 0581