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Editors' Introduction

The publication of this issue of the *ABEI Journal* coincides with the hosting of IASIL 2002, the International Conference for the Study of Irish Literatures, by the University of São Paulo. Our expectations are high because this will be the first time that what must be considered as the heart of Irish Studies has travelled to South America.

A similar path has of course been trodden by many Irish emigrants over the years, and our front cover recalls this fact. The lithograph depicts Marion McMurrough Mulhall's nineteenth-century travels and adventures in the countries between the Amazon and the Andes. She's seen on an *igarité* (a large Brazilian canoe), which is manned by local Indians who had to pole upstream about thirty miles a day due to the shallowness of the San Lorenzo river. She and her husband, Michael George Mulhall, editor of the *Buenos Ayres Standard* newspaper, lived in Buenos Aires and visited Brazil many times, recording their impressions of the country in various articles, sketches and books. The lithograph below is a view of Porto Alegre, a city in the south of Brazil, which was made by Mrs. Mulhall to illustrate her husband's book *Rio Grande do Sul and its German Colonies* (1873). The section *The Irish in South America* of this issue contains two articles on Irish presence in Argentina and the Amazon.

This volume, partially supported by the FFLCH (Faculty of Philosophy, Language, Literature and Humanities) of the University of São Paulo, has much to offer in the way of fiction, drama and book reviews, the highlight being our regular feature *The Critic and the Author*. In *Voices from Brazil* Telê Ancona Lopez provides an introduction for Conference visitors to the dawn of Modernism in Brazil.

Finally, in *News from Brazil*, we are honoured to be able to report on the visit paid by the Taoiseach to the University of São Paulo in 2001 and on the opening of a resident Irish Embassy in Brasília this year, thus reinforcing formal links between the two countries.

Porto Alegre.
In: Michael G. Mulhall. *Rio Grande do Sul and its German Colonies.*

The Critic and the Autor

A Critical Study of Sean O'Faolain's Life and Work

By Marie Arndt

The Vanishing Ideas of Sean O'Faolain

Jerry Nolan

Marie Arndt. *A Critical Study of Sean O'Faolain's Life and Work.* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

My conversations with Marie Arndt about Sean O'Faolain began when we had a long interesting exchange about her forthcoming book *Sean O'Faolain's Dilemma: Looking to the Future from the Past* at the IASIL 2000 Conference at Bath Spa University England. What attracted me to the idea of her scholarly work was the promised emphasis on the importance of O'Faolain's non-fiction which has often tended to be undervalued, compared to the attention given to some of the graphic details from his long life as one of the prominent figures to emerge on the Irish literary scene in the wake of the Irish Literary Revival, and to critical comments on an outstanding short story writer who was not a very accomplished novelist. Now that Marie Arndt's book has been published, I can at last focus in detail on how prominently and convincingly the non-fiction is placed and interpreted in her scholarly work. In our Bath Spa conversation, the theme of the increasing relevance of O'Faolain's non-fiction in current Irish cultural debates promised to be revealed in the book. What surprises me greatly is the book's virtual dismissal of O'Faolain as a thinker of substance and originality. Dr. Arndt's concluding indictment is unequivocal: 'His writing is too emotionally and theoretically attached to the past to be the modernising force in Irish literature and intellectual life to which he aspired. The lingering attachment which made him look in vain for an idealised past to apply to the present in order to create a better future contributed to his disillusionment with the present and his consequent inability to achieve intellectual integrity.' (250) Two questions began to form in my mind: why has Dr. Arndt reached such a damning view of the 'intellectual integrity' of one of her purportedly favourite writers and how does one present the case for O'Faolain within the brief span of a review such as this?

The scholar's main diagnosis, regularly repeated throughout the study, is that O'Faolain's intellectual malaise arose from his failure to deal with Ireland's 'post-colonial experience', which inevitably brought about his failure to balance his romantic dream of a Gaelic Ireland and his rational desire for the creation of a modern Ireland open to influences from abroad. A caricature of O'Faolain failing the scholar's test is offered: 'He was sitting on a seesaw, trying to balance the influences of metropolitan and subaltern cultures.' (241) Key literary references are evoked to support the view of O'Faolain's

chronic literary instability. There was his disastrous adoption of Coleridgean and Wordsworthian imagination: 'Through imagination, he often described the apparently real as ideal; creative licence legitimised manipulation of fact in his non-fiction, enunciated as vacillation between imagination and reality.' (244) Again there was his adoption of the historicism of Benedetto Croce which led him to turn Irish history and historical figures into partially manipulated fictional accounts, thereby becoming 'an unreliable narrator, as he is writing out his own alienation and frustration.' (245) Dr Arndt implies that the historical methodology of O'Faolain's famous biographies of Daniel O'Connell and Hugh O'Neill stemmed from personal confusion. The process of unmasking the fatal inconsistency includes bringing on in ragged procession the ideas of John Stuart Mill, Antonio Gramsci, Clifford Gertz, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault and others,all making fleeting guest appearances in the case for the prosection. Only in the case of *Newman's Way*, is there a fair measure of acknowledgement of O'Faolain's intellectual grasp of his subject; but even here there are serious reservations: 'Private and public life are mixed in O'Faolain's account of Newman's long way towards his conversion, paired with narrative interference when the author enunciates parts of his own discourse rather than that of his subject.' (156) O'Faolain's contrast of Continental and Irish Catholicism is given a good airing with a striking interpretation of his attitudes to the two places of pilgrimage Lough Derg and Lourdes; but then is added, almost as an afterthought, the suggestion that his preference for Roman Catholicism of Italy might have a lot to do with the fact that Irish Catholicism bore 'no resemblance to the allegedly sophisticated ways in which Italians handled their carnal affairs.' (114) A dismissive judgement – 'He had failed as a schoolmaster of the nation' (94)- is handed down after O'Faolain's resignation as editor of *The Bell* which he had founded in 1940 some ten years after the demise of AE's *The Irish Statesman* to give a platform for writers to take stock of the intellectual, imaginative and social state of Ireland and to provide an outlet for creative writers such as Patrick Kavanagh, Brendan Behan, Bryan MacMahon, Benedict Kiely, Mary Lavin, James Plunkett and others. This patronising dismissal utterly misses the admirable anger in O'Faolain's 'Signing Off' editorial in *The Bell*: 'I have, I confess, grown a little weary of abusing our bourgeoise, Little Irelanders, chauvinists, puritans, stuffed-shirts, pietists, Tartuffes, Anglophobes, Celtophiles*, et allii hujus generis*…Our task has been less that of cultivating our garden than of clearing the brambles…It is one thing to have a noble vision of life to come and another to have to handle what has come.'

But the most provocative thing for me in this list of O'Faolain's failures as a writer of non-fiction is the view of his book *The Irish* which is predictably squeezed through the established conceptual filter: 'The book profiles major social and professional groups in Ireland from Celtic times to the present. Imagination interferences with his discourse.' (103) I argued in a paper 'The Irish According to O'Faolain' presented to the Irish Literary Society London to mark the centenary of O'Faolain's birth that *The Irish* was O'Faolain's most remarkable work of non-fiction which can still challenge

cultural orthodoxies in Ireland. At this point I recall my analysis of *The Irish,* if only to suggest an approach to discussing O'Faolain as an Irish intellectual in terms which has to go beyond the extraordinarily restricted focus of Dr. Ardnt's thesis.

When he resigned as editor of *The Bell*, O' Faolain was giving himself a breathing space to take realistic stock of his own writing career after some 15 years of a hectic literary output which included numerous articles, short stories, novels, biographies, an Abbey Theatre farce, anthologies of Irish poetry and travel books.What followed was *The Irish*, a paperback Pelican of a mere 143 pages. This little book expressed the main thrust of O'Faolain's view of Ireland's long development, in the form of an extended essay which told the story briefly, audaciously and provocatively of how a thing called Irish civilisation has been developing in a continuum, beginning in the third century B.C. and continuing in the twentieth century and beyond. Preparations for the writing the book began in March 1946 when Penguin Books invited O'Faolain to write a book about the Irish. There had just been *An Irish Journey* illustrated by Paul Henry and first published in 1940 with its vivid evocations of landscape and character, and *The Story of Ireland* illustrated by historic prints and published in 1943 with its picturesque distillation of general impressions of Irish history. The great success on *An Irish Journey* must have convinced the publishers that O'Faolain was their man for all things Irish. Before accepting the commission, O'Faolain struck a bargain with Penguin Books – £50 down and £50 on publication. His immediate instinct in his new space for thinking was to adopt the genre of *History of the French People* by Charles Seignobus which approached its subject by considering the contributions made by various races – Gascon, Fleming, Norman and others – to the formation of France as a nation. Included on the Reading List for immediate close study were Curtis's *History of Ireland,* Kenney's *Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, Tomas O Rathaille's *Early Irish History and Mythology*, Kuno Meyer's *Ancient Irish Poetry*, Bishop Matthews's *The Celtic People and Renaissance Europe*, Estyn Evans's *The Irish Heritage.*

Reading and drafting began immediately. In *King of the Beggars* (1938) O'Faolain had explored a cultural model for developing a modern liberal democracy in Ireland. In *The Great O'Neill* (1942), the cultural message was how the Irish could draw on the resources of European civilisation to develop a national spirit. O'Faolain's intellectual contributions to *The Bell* (1940-1946) were for the most part to polemical and somewhat piecemeal reactions to current Irish affairs, whose highlight remains the record of his utterly courageous battle against the judgements of the Irish Censorship Board which was set up in 1929. In his book *The Irish*, the central theme was set as the complex nature of Irish nationality to be viewed from the standpoint of the Irish people's emergence into the mainstream of European civilisation. The book's epigraph was selected from R.G.Collingwood: 'History proper is the history of thought. There are no mere events in history.' Inspired by Collingwood's philosophical view of historiography which was expressed most cogently in Collingwood's *An Autobiography* (1939), O'Faolain's strategy was set up to uncover the long civilising process of cultural

assimilation in Ireland from the earliest known Celtic history c.300 B.C. to the historical crossroads of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

During the Summer of 1946 O'Faolain was visited by two young American scholars intensely interested in the Irish – Richard Ellmann and John V. Kelleher with whom he doubtless had discussions about the work in progress. O'Faolain took a summer break before applying the finishing touches – he hired a tinker's caravan drawn by a mare called Scarlet, and toured West Cork, including Gougane Barra, in the rain with his wife Eileen and two children, Julia and Stephen. O'Faolain was much amused on occasion by local reaction to his arrival – the family were often mistaken for tinkers and in Skibbereen it was rumoured hat O'Faolain himself might well be the Duke of Windsor travelling incognito! Back home the much corrected ms of *The Irish* was posted off to Penguin Books. During the following year 1947, Sean O'Faolain published two books *Teresa and other stories* and *The Irish*.

My contention is that *The Irish*, for its remarkable genesis, conception and structure, stands as his most original and enduring creation. In the Author's Explanation, the outline structure was described as follows: 'In the first section, I describe the raw material of the Irish nature or genius; in the second, how intelligence begins to burgeon under stress; in the third, the five representative types which have branched from these origins – the peasantry, the Anglo-Irish, the rebels, the priests and the writers. There is a sixth type which I have barely hinted at, the new middle class, or native bourgeoisie: they are the peasant in process of development or final decay, it is too soon to say which.' O'Faolain's titles for the sections evoked the Image of the Great Tree of Ireland: Section 1 was entitled The Roots c.300 B.C. to c.500 A.D., pages 11 to 41; Section 2: was entitled The Trunk c.600 to c.1550, pages 43 to 71; Section 3 was entitled The Five Branches 1556 to 1922, pages 73 to 143. Before each section was a page listing the key known dates in political history, a knowing nod towards to the breed of Irish historian who were most happy getting entangled in the jungle of futile and pointless raids, counter raids, battles, sieges, victories and so forth.

In Section 1 *The Roots*, the most important discussions are focused on two features of the ancient Celtic World: the Otherworld and Regional Society. On the Celtic Otherworld there was this passage: 'The Celt's sense of the Otherworld has dominated his imagnation and affected his imagination from the very beginning. So I see him at any rate struggling, through century after century…seeking for a synthesis between dream and reality, aspiration and experience, a shrewd knowledge of the world and a strange reluctance to cope with it, and tending always to find the balance not in intellectual synthesis but in the rhythm of a perpetual emotional oscillation.' (Perhaps these remarks about the Celts are at the bottom of Dr. Arndt's view of O'Faolain's dilemma?) O'Faolain concluded from his readings that the Celts never formulated a religion beyond the animistic stage of belief and that the dualism between dream and reality has persisted in the Christian era: 'There may be an overlay of stern Christian morality. At bottom there is a joyous pagan amorality.' O'Faolain found a kind of imaginative synthesis in pre-

tenth-century lyrics and the Ossianic tales and poems, achieved only on the personal levels of the individual poets, so that he concluded that 'the heart-beat of genius seems to be the best interpreter of the race.' On the vexed question of the precise nature of Celtic Society, O'Faolain wrote this; 'In three words it was aristocratic, regional and personal, and all three to an extreme degree…This indifference to political unity is a very different matter to the Celts' powerful, racial, linguistic, and sentimental sense of oneness…combining this strong sense of their racial oneness with the equally strong insistence on their regional otherness; which seems to have nourished that fatal delusion that to flourish as a people, it was not necessary to formulate the political concept of the nation.' O'Faolain asserted that the Irish happily fulfilled their genius by means of dispersion and disconnection up to the point when the Danes and the Normans brought into Ireland the three changes – ports, roads and towns – which all peoples on the island could not simply ignore. But O'Faolain also happily asserted that just as the old Celtic paganism was never tamed by Christianity, so the Celtic gift of atavistic individualism survived Normanisation in the still surviving impulse in the Irish to obey no laws at all!

In Section 2 *The Trunk*, O'Faolain interpreted two features which dominated Ireland's emergence from the Celtic Past: Irish Monasticism and the Norman Gift. According to O'Faolain, Irish monasteries were outside the direction of an organised church from the 6th to the 12th centuries. The popularity of the monastic vocation in Ireland, he suggested, was linked to the opportunity afforded for a heroic and extravagant way of life for Irishmen –'pointless peregrinations and penances…true evangelisation…valuable secular learning' – which led many Irish monks to found monasteries throughout Europe: in Brueil, Ratisbon, Wurzburg, Nuremberg, Constance and Vienna. O'Faolain found an image to convey the tension between devotion and adventure within the Irish monk visible in the designs to be found in the *Book of Kells*: 'each example so intricate, so devotedly pursued – one can hardly say constructed – in its own personal waywardness, so magnificent, delicate, lonely, convoluted, spontaneous, so circuitous and unpredictable that it might be taken as an image of the individualistic genius at its most colourful and most tantalising.' Then the Norman invaded and established an episcopal system, cathedral centres and provinces. ' The corporate system thus enters…on the regional scene not through politics but through religion and invasion.' O'Faolain dubbed the Norman invasion of Ireland as the 'Norman Gift' because the Normans started civic life in the country. O'Faolain cited the county of Kilkenny as one of the best examples of Norman civilisation, pointing to the busy River Barrow region where a great Cistercian Abbey once stood and the city of Kilkenny with its 12th century cathedral and other Norman remains: 'It was the Normans who first introduced the Irish to politics. They were our first Home Rulers. They did not think of Ireland as a nation… but they stood as sturdily for their religion and their land, as in the 19th century, an O'Connell for the one and a Davitt for the other; by which time, of course, Norman and Irish were completely commingled.' Later, O'Faolain asserted, in connection with the defeat of the Great O'Neill at Kinsale in 1601: 'Only one positive and creative thing

came out of the last wreck of Gaeldom: Ulster as we know it' and then quoted from Curtis's *History of Ireland*: 'It was not until after 1660 that the Scottish element in Ulster became a pronounced success and it is the only case of a real, democratic, industrial and labouring colony established in Ireland.' O'Faolain revelled in finding historical precedents for a mixture of diverse strains and fertile cross-breedings in that continuum of the slowly evolving Irish: 'We will have to agree that too many strains and influences have have been woven into the tapestry of the Irish Mind for anybody to disentangle them.' Such a cultural ideal for Ireland recalls AE's advocacy of the need for the fusion of diverse elements in his work *The National Being* published in 1916, in which AE dealt in characteristic fashion with the theme of being Irish.

In Section 3 *The Branches*, O'Faolain presented examples of Irish people from the sixteenth century onwards, with the emphasis on strongly defined individual sharing a common identity. Predictably there was praise of O'Connell for the political feat of turning the Irish tenant peasant, which the old bardic aristocratic mind satirised so furiously and understandably, into the recognisable beginnings of modern Irish democracy. There was great acclaim of Wolfe Tone, too, whose autobiography he had edited in the 1930s. O'Faolain praised Tone for his cosmopolitanism, in sharp contrast to Pearse's praise of Tone for his revolutionary nationalism. O'Faolain wrote of Tone: 'This young Protestant Dubliner, educated at Trinity College, that alien nursery of native causes, was to unite the logic of the Northern Scot to the passions of the Southern Irish, to scatter the timidities of the peasants and the vacillations of the tradesmen with his vision of the new revolutionary age…A century before and the fumes of a thousand years were still lingering about us. Almost without warning Wolfe Tone flings open the doors of the modern world like a thunder-clap. Nothing less dramatic can describe a change so great as to see Jacobin ideas spreading, at whatever simplified remove from their original form, among a Gaelic-speaking peasantry.' Tone and O'Connell were not opposites in O'Faolain's reading of the rhythm of Irish history but belonged to that continuum of Irish experience which sas been developed and sustained by European enlightenment.

In the closing pages of *The Irish*, O'Faolain permitted himself the flourish of a final caricature in the memorableyet little remembered comparison between a nationalist like De Valera and Thomas Mann's character Aschenbach in the novella *Death in Venice*. 'Our Nationalism has been our Egoism. It was our lovely, shining youth. Like all the appurtenances of youth it was lovely in its day. After its day, to attempt to wear it is a form of Death in Venice, a middle aged man raddling his cheeks to keep his youthful glow in times of plague. Ireland has clung to her youth, indeed her childhood, longer and more tenaciously than any other country in Europe, resisting change, Alteration, Reconstruction to the very last.'

When *The Irish* was published, the central concept of the book was utterly removed from the immediate concerns of Irish politicians of all parties, and even more remote from the terms of references then being used by the academic historians. For

O'Faolain, the historian should never be regarded as the recording agent outside of, or even above, his material. O'Faolain was taking his cue from Collingwood, Professor of Mataphysical Philosophy in the University of Oxford, when he pondered on the meaning and direction of Irish history and fixed his penetrating gaze, not on the conventional quest of what Ireland had lost during successive invasions but on what the Irish had gained by way of civilisation from the sequence of settler peoples. When *The Irish* was reissued over twenty years later, O'Faolain added a sixth branch to the Third Section Branches entitled Politicians, thereby acknowledging the need for the political initiative, if a new mass movement were ever to unite the varieties of Irishry. There were favourable references to the successors of DeValera, Sean Lemass and Jack Lynch for new directions in the policies of nation-building

In 1947 Graham Greene invited O'Faolain to go to Italy to write a travel book. When he was reassured that Eyre & Spottiswoode would cover all expenses and pay an advance of £500, O'Faolain accepted. It was the beginning of many travels, and a new way of life. Suddenly the cosmopolitan European writer replaced the unwanted Irish intellectual. From 1947 onwards, O'Faolain wrote less about Ireland, even though he continued to write short stories which analysed the Irish, at home and abroad, with irony and sympathy. Occasionally he responed vigorously in *The Bell* to contemporary controversies, as in the case of Dr. Noel Browne's Mother and Child Bill in 1951. After the Eyre & Spottiswoode, commission, there came the offer of a commission from Longmans to write a life of Cardinal Newman on the basis of an advance of £1000. Between 1949 and 1953, O'Faolain published *A Summer in Italy, Newman's Way* and *South to Sicily*. The book *The Irish*, then, did not prove to be a new Irish beginning for its author. Today it seems like a brilliant literary meteor which streaked across Irish skies before vanishing beyond contemporary horizons. O'Faolain claimed to have found Roman Catholicism in Italy and the way in which he explored the conversion of the young John Henry Newman to Rome in the 1840s showed how well he understood the multiple levels of Newman's conversion experience. In some ways, O'Faolain's path to Italy suggests a parallel to the flight of the Great O'Neill when the Earl fled after the defeat of his European project in Ireland; but there was also the path to the USA, first undertaken on a Commonwealth Fund Scholarship to study at Harvard University in 1926 and later in 1959 when O'Faolain the fleeting Director of the Irish Arts Council, O' Faolain accepted the irresistible offer to lecture at Princeton University. The lucrative path to American Academia effectively distanced him from the Ireland of the 1960s where economic developments followed the T.K.Whitaker Report (1958) and religious developments occurred as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962 onwards).

In 1979 – almost 40 years after his previously published novel – O'Faolain published his last novel *And Again?* The central character was Robert Younger who began to live his life backwards from the age of sixty five – only to find lost loves, missing memories and old mistakes as he younged it back through middle-age, youth and childhood ever helped throughout by the woman who as lover, wife and mother

helped him somehow to link up his beginning and his ending. This final *tour de force* was of O'Faolain's retirement into a more restful world of fantasy, comedy and pathos where the old man could amuse himself by parodying the process of searching in the past to take possession of the present and to control the future which had been the very mental process at the conceptual core of *The Irish*. His party political isolation at the time of his death was glaringly exposed by the total absence of members of the Oireachtas from his Memorial Mass at St. Joseph's Church, Glasthule on the 4 May 1991, during the very year when Dublin was the Cultural Capital of Europe. Conor Cruise O'Brien, who gave the address at the Memorial Mass, was much angered by the conspicuous absence and wrote in *The Irish Independent* shortly afterwards: 'If a writer of comparable distinction, belonging to any other nation, were being commemorated in the national capital, the Memorial Service would have been crowned with representatives of the nation's entire establishment.' Doubtless the Sixth Branch of Politicians saw nothing of national importance in O'Faolain's achievements, even as the era of Mary Robinson's Presidency began to unfold to the acclaim of the liberal Irish media. The absence would not have surprised O'Faolain-one of his final reflections in *The Irish* was about the development of the national mind when he remarked on 'the slowness of the process, especially when, as in Ireland, isolation has ossified mental habits over a long period and unrest has subsequently made gradual and natural development and construction impossible.'

Professor J.J. Lee from University College Cork, author of *Ireland 1912-1985*, has written about *The Irish:* 'The full fruits of the seeds O'Faolain scattered so prodigally remain to be harvested…*The Irish* will remain central to our understanding of ourselves as long as we care about history.' As an outstanding academic historian himself, Professor Lee found much to praise in O'Faolain's approach towards a philosophy of Irish history. What strikes me most about *The Irish* is that it was essentially an eloquent plea for the continuation of Ireland's long evolution. Conor Cruise O'Brien, in the Memorial Address, that the three voices of creative dissent in modern Ireland had been: 'Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Hubert Butler and Sean O'Faolain: an agnostic, a Protestant and a Catholic.' (*The Cork Review* 1991 – O'Faolain Memorial Issue) O'Faolain's contribution by way of *The Irish* will remain centrally relevantly as long as there is genuine cultural debate in Ireland. In 1971 O'Faolain was involved in a TV series of programmes, made by Niall McCarthy, under the general title 'We.The Irish': he added further branches to the Irish Tree in three TV programmes 'Saints and Soldiers', 'The Money Men' and 'The Exiles'. In 2002, the major question for the Irish concerns the democratic need for a broad cultural basis for an United Ireland which is confidently open to multi-cultural influences in a globalised world. In the current state of public opinion, there is often a level of debate reminiscent of that which O'Faolain struggled against in the 1930s and 1940s. Here is O'Faolain's summative opinion of the Irish today in the closing sentences of the little book in its 1969 edition: 'I fear that for Ireland much of our history is made of endurances, so that for us moderns to make any meaningful historical synthesis out

of our past, to abstract the basic lessons from our experience, is particularly difficult. However we have achieved one lesson. If, in the long view of history we Irish have thus far learned little, and that slowly, from our actions and our passions, we have at least begun to learn how to learn. We will, painfully, learn more. How beautiful, as Chekhov used to say of his Russia, life in Ireland will be in two hundred years' time!'

I conducted a Focus Interview with Dr.Arndt about O'Faolain, published in the *British Association for Irish Studies Newsletter* (April 2001). My last question was: 'How relevant do you consider O'Faolain's writings in the great cultural debates of the early twenty-first century?' Her reply included a reference to O'Faolain's 'schizophrenic identity' which, she supposed, had originally stemmed from the self-created tensions arising from his desire to embrace both the Gaelic past and modern internationalism. Clearly such a fixed view of O'Faolain's unresolved dilemma underlies her interpretation of his entire *oeuvre* of non-fiction. In the case of *The Irish*, I find no evidence of any such self-created dilemma, nor do I detect any intimations of forms of 'schizophrenia'. What I do find throughout O'Faolain's non-fiction is much evidence of an Irish *dissident's* intellectual and imaginative drive towards preparing the common ground for a cultural commingling of all the traditions on the island of Ireland, a quest which first clearly surfaced in his use of the biographical genre in *King of the Beggars* and *The Great O'Neill*. Neither do I find very credible the case for carving up the writer into John Whelan and Sean O'Faolain whose unresolved conflicts are supposed to make him 'the contradictory writer without whom twentieth-century literary and intellectual would have been at a loss.' (250) What a pity that so many of O'Faolain's challenging ideas about Ireland's past, present and future have vanished from this study – that is indeed a loss!

Author's Response: The Inside Outside Complexity of Sean O'Faolain

Marie Arndt

In his opening remarks Jerry Nolan launches a general critique of my book as a "virtual dismissal of O'Faolain as a thinker of substance and originality."He further objects to the fact that I have the audacity to suggest that O'Faolain's emotional involvement in the matters he wrote about prevented him from being the rational and intellectual force he aspired to be in Ireland. He also, at great length, sets out to convince that I have failed to recognise *The Irish* as O'Faolain's most important book. Taking all these critical remarks into account I wonder if he expected a hagiography. If that had been my intention I would have failed my duty as a critic. Questions must be raised and matters discussed, no matter how disturbing they may be for devotees. Consequently, my book is not intended to preach to the-already-converted to the idea of O'Faolain's enormous stature as a cultural giant in post-independence Ireland. Nor is the book meant to judge O'Faolain with hindsight as a dim-eyed hell-raiser in the Ireland of his day. My agenda – every writer has one, which Jerry Nolan's comments only verify too clearly – is to show that here was a man who could not accommodate both his emotional sentiments about Ireland and his intellectual aspirations for his country into a rational and consistent discourse. It is my belief that these split loyalties were at the heart of the ambiguities and ambivalence often evident in his explicit remarks about Ireland and the Irish, and is largely the cause of the diverse opinions held by many about O'Faolain and his legacy even to this day.

Sean O'Faolain, ten years after his death, is still a controversial figure in Irish twentieth-century cultural life. During the many years I have been involved in research of his work I have heard comments about him ranging from that he has been "neglected," to exclamations such as "he was an evil man." Diverse comments, such as these, can only enhance the scholarly interest in a prolific a man as O'Faolain undoubtedly was. I was first introduced to O'Faolain's work as a student at Trinity College Dublin twenty years ago. My interest was immediately awakened when I began reading his short stories. At that time I innocently thought that he was an uncomplicated and straightforward voice of liberal Ireland, fighting with his pen for intellectual tolerance in an Ireland which in his day had been dominated by a policy which combined sentimental nationalism and morally restrictive Victorian Catholicism. When I later put O'Faolain's fiction

alongside his non-fiction a different picture developed from what I had initially perceived, a more complex and interesting discourse from a critical point of view emerged.

Sean O'Faolain, like so many other writers, drew on his own experience, perceptions and ideas in all his writing, both fiction and non-fiction. Ideologically he was a liberal of the school of John Stuart Mill. He, for example, believed in the role of the intellectual elite as a guide for the masses. He was also steeped in the literary Romantic tradition. His close relationship with metropolitan English culture was established during his schooldays in Cork. From an early age he was taught English nineteenth-century Romantic poetry, mixed with the ideals of the declining Victorian era. His attachment to English literature, culture and liberal ideology remained with him, even though he on occasion voiced criticism against English colonial politics in Ireland. He was also, of course, affected by events in past and contemporary Ireland. But he was also interested in continental thinking, such as the ideas on Catholicism and history by the Italian intellectual Benedetto Croce. Here I would like to point out that I never use the word "disastrous" or any other word to that effect to describe any of these influences, which Mr Nolan disapprovingly implies. What I am doing is simply identifying conflicting aspects of his agenda. The operation of identifying these different sources that more or less influenced O'Faolain's agenda is part of the process of mapping according to Michel Foucauld's method of archaeology. In other words, Mr Nolan's hasty assumption that Foucauld only makes a "guest appearance" is misguided in that he cannot see that this method is a tool for bringing structure to my argument in the book.

The concept of the British Empire was made evident to O'Faolain when he was still a child called John Whelan and did not yet know Irish. His parents were overtly loyal to the British Crown. His father was a policeman with the Royal Irish Constabulary, in other words, indirectly an official representative of the colonial power. O'Faolain was respectful of his father's support of the British Empire. His autobiography, *Vive Moi!* (1964), recapitulates that as a child he shared his father's contempt for those rough countrymen who gave the Irish people as a whole a bad reputation in the eyes of the English. This view formed part of O'Faolain's parents encouraging their son to see himself as apart from the Irish common people. His childhood experience laid the foundation to his life-long ambiguous and ambivalent attitude towards his fellow-Irish and his country, also towards his own parents and his hometown. He often judged Corkonians as half-measured people living half-measured lives, and denigrated his parents as, "two simple souls to whom it never occurred that I would, one day, become part of a complex and challenging world" (Sean O'Faolain, *Vive Moi!* 1964; London: Rupert Hart-Davies, 1965, 21). His remark illustrates his recurring perception of himself as standing above the general Irish population, as his parents wanted him to do. But their son surpassed expectation by also positioning himself above and apart from them. As an adult he continued this behaviour; he placed himself apart from the Irish mainstream. Sean O'Faolain's biographies, travel writing, cultural and historical writing and, not least, *Vive Moi!* disclose a highly ambivalent and ambiguous agenda on several

issues close to his heart: Catholicism, nationalism, Ireland's past present and future, and England, as the previous colonial ruler of his native island. The predominant motifs in O'Faolain's writing evolve from impressions and ideas he formed as a boy and as a young man in his native Cork.

He grew up during the time when Ireland was in transition from English colonial rule to developing into a disparate newly independent country, looking for a national identity. In one of his few direct comments about the time of the Easter Rising, made almost fifty years later, O'Faolain declared his opposition to the rebels because, they "were so shabby, so absurd, so awkward, so unheroic-looking"(*Vive Moi!* 105). These are hardly the words of a committed grass-root nationalist, but of a detached and aloof observer, standing apart from the rough rebels who made up the core of the fighters for Irish independence.

In his first collection of short stories, *Midsummer Night Madness* (1932), O'Faolain explores his disillusionment with the nationalist movement he had himself been involved in as a young man. The character Stevey Long in particular, who features in two stories in the collection, the title story and in "The Death of Stevey Long," personifies O'Faolain's perception of grass-root revolutionaries as rough, non-intellectual and unsophisticated. On the other hand, in the last story of the collection, "The Patriot," an old republican campaigner, Edward Bradley, is portrayed with sympathy as he has been scorned by the ignorant rank and file rebels for being bookish, and for his intellectual approach to revolutionary politics. The main protagonist in the story, the ex-rebel Bernard, is the ventriloquist for the author in his concluding statement that the nationalist movement has lost its impetus among the Irish people because it has changed into a less ideological and cultural movement, compared to earlier days. In that situation the obvious choice is to focus on personal happiness and individual satisfaction, in his case marriage. But there was more to O'Faolain's rejection of nationalism than just an aloof attitude to unsophisticated rebels. Looking into the background of O'Faolain's attraction to nationalism gives clues to why Irish nationalism eventually was not for him.

O'Faolain became attracted to the sphere of nationalism mainly through the influence of Daniel Corkery and his own contemporary Frank O'Connor. For a short time, before he had reached twenty years of age, it was adequate for O'Faolain to be part of a group that placed itself apart from other Corkonians by learning Irish, an ancient language in decline but also an expression of nationalism. Corkery encouraged O'Faolain to learn Irish and influenced him while his interest in the language was at its peak and his sense of imagination had yet not reached beyond Cork. Furthermore, and most importantly, O'Faolain was appealed by nationalism as an intellectual and cultural movement, to secure individual freedom. But Corkery's romantic idealisation of Gaelic culture did not suffice for O'Faolain as he grew disillusioned with insular and restrictive Irish nationalism. His dissatisfaction with Corkery's ideas evolved from his mentor's rejection of English literature and Irish literature in English, and his emphasis on the importance of the Irish language and Gaelic culture as the nucleus of the Irish intellectual agenda.

O'Faolain was instead attracted to the ideas of Douglas Hyde, whose intellectual and cultural emphasis of nationalism allowed space in Ireland for both English and Gaelic literature and culture. O'Faolain early voiced regret that nationalism did not accept England and its culture, although he reproached the former rulers for atrocities against Ireland in historic times (Sean O'Faolain, "Celts and Irishmen," *New Statesman and Nation*, 23 July 1932, 93-94). Equally appealing to him was the Anglo-Irish, urban, middle-class leadership of the Gaelic League, personified by Hyde. He resigned as leader when the movement followed the path of Irish nationalism that turned hostile towards everything British and developed closer ties with the Catholic Hierarchy, which meant stricter morality and less individual freedom. This development added to O'Faolain's decision to resign from active nationalism, which he served in a non-combatant role for a short period. O'Faolain had a great respect for Parnell, who represented a non-revolutionary and polished aspiration for Irish semi-independence. However, as Conor Cruise O'Brien pointed out in the late 1940s, Parnellism to O'Faolain was not only a political movement, but also a revolt against the Catholic Church and its urge for sexual restraint (Donat O'Donnell [Conor Cruise O'Brien], "Sean O'Faolain's Parnellism," *Maria Cross*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952, 103). Parnell's shadow looms large over some of O'Faolain's early fiction, especially his first two novels.

O'Faolain's first novel, *A Nest of Simple Folk* (1934) follows the protagonist Leo from childhood in the countryside, to his final trip as an old man to Dublin to take part in the Easter Rising. Leo's development from a young irresponsible lout to a concerned nationalist activist serves the purpose for the author to portray nineteenth-century nationalism as morally superior to its twentieth-century equivalent. Furthermore, during his boyhood Leo vacillates between the culture of his mother's family background, the declining Anglo-Irish, and his father's Irish Catholic peasant roots. Leo's paternal family name, O'Donnel, also points to a ruined culture of one of the Gaelic prominent dynasties. O'Faolain had throughout his life an ambivalent affinity with aspects of these two cultures. He deplored the cultural decline of the Anglo-Irish as well as the distorted Gaelic heritage he perceived in post-independence Ireland. At the same time he opposed the political superiority of the Anglo-Irish as a colonial class in Ireland.

The novel pre-empts O'Faolain's disillusionment with embryonic post-independence Ireland because intellectual nationalism of, for example James Connolly, had been abandoned. In an article O'Faolain argued that the present leaders – that is, former revolutionaries – were now only interested in materialistic aims and had turned into affluent businessmen with political leverage (Sean O'Faolain, "The New Irish Revolutionaries," *Commonweal*, 11 Nov. 1931, 39). This aspect of post-independence Ireland is also explored in the later story "No Country for Old Men," included in the collection *I Remember! I Remember!* (1961). The story integrates elements from an article in *The Bell* about old rebels turned post-independence Catholic capitalists (Sean O'Faolain, "The Death of Nationalism," *The Bell*, May 1951, 49). An added aspect, used as an ironic device in the story but ignored in the article, suggests that Irish racketeers

adopt a public religious gloss, as an emblem of honesty in business. The story mocks exploitation of the Gaelic heritage that is part of official policy in name only. The businessmen have now abandoned ideological ideals and are acting in the sole interest of personal profit. They have turned Ireland into a metaphorical "tricks and jokes shop" (Sean O'Faolain, "No Country for Old Men," *The Heat of the Sun*, vol. 2 of *Collected Short Stories*. 1982; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983, 254). Neither nationalist heritage nor religion is taken seriously by those who have secured a place among the financially and socially privileged, he argues, and purports that they live on the illusion of nationalist heroism, to catch the faded imagined glorious past.

W.B. Yeats's detached and unemotional attitude to Irish mythology, his nationalist focus on Cuchullain and Mother Ireland, as well as his elitist attitude on cultural matters became important points of reference for O'Faolain. Significantly, Yeats's political and literary agenda was also indebted to English Literary nineteenth-century Romanticism and imagination. The younger writer appreciated Yeats's diverse ideas, including his rejection of conventions of the Catholic Hierarchy (Sean O'Faolain, *The Irish*. 1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981, 135-40). In his last published brief story, "Nora Barnacle: *Pictor Ignotus*" from 1984, O'Faolain in retrospect evaluated the Irish Renaissance as qualitatively overrated. The story's main point is that while the older generation has discarded this legacy as a fraud, the young still cling onto mythologised memory of that era (Sean O'Faolain, "Nora Barnacle: *Pictor Ignotus*," *London Review of Books*, 2 Aug.-6 Sep. 1984, 23-24).

O'Faolain often criticised Irish nationalism for playing on imagination of a glorious Gaelic Irish past that was held up as an ideal in culturally claustrophobic Ireland. But he also adhered to a romanticised ideal picture of aspects of Gaelic Ireland, to suit his own agenda. His image of the Gaelic heritage is also a construed image of the past projected onto the present, to supply arguments for an ideal future. Ambiguously he favoured certain aspects of a romantic Gaelic Ireland, but also desired a modern Ireland open to influences from abroad. This is particularly evident in his travel book *An Irish Journey* (1940). In that book he praises the people of the west of Ireland in romantic terms, while he also comments on the narrow-mindedness in rural Ireland that, for instance meant that *The Bell* was sold from under the counter, like an underground publication.

But O'Faolain did not reject the Gaelic heritage *per se*. He favoured the Gaelic past of the time before the Irish gentry was deposed – "the old order of Gaeldom", as he called it. He also relished the concept of the bards in elevated positions at the courts of Irish High Kings. Even Daniel O'Connell, a figure in history that O'Faolain generally admired, did not escape criticism for having allegedly done "a great deal to kill gentle manners in Ireland, to vulgarize and cheapen us" (Sean O'Faolain, *King of the Beggars*. London: Nelson, 1938, 204); a transformation personified in the character Hugh O'Donnel in *A Nest of Simple Folk*. O'Faolain's writing shows that he was clearly taken in by gentrified sophistication and raised the issue with resentment that it had disappeared

among the Irish. To his mind, after the fall of the Irish gentry, mob rule of the common Irish people surfaced and the poets came down on the same level. He was certain that the current leaders in Ireland originated in these ranks. But his ambivalence is apparent, because while he condemned the common people he also insisted on their resourcefulness and their defiance of the English. In addition, he hailed their eagerness to learn, especially about English and European culture.

O'Faolain consistently demonstrated his desire for an elevated position for writers in society. He often complained that writers were restricted in their creativity by anti-intellectual forces in Ireland. But his recurring patronising attitude against the "mob," as he until late in life called the part of the Irish public who did not live up to his intellectual standards, led to that he did not condemn censorship outright. He at one point excused censorship because Ireland was not the only country that imposed such restrictions. This indirect affirmation was curiously followed by doubts about imposed "Puritan Catholicism," due to its restrictive scope (Sean O'Faolain, "The New Direction in Irish Literature," *Bookman*, Sep. 1932, 446-47). For example, he insisted that censorship had a detrimental effect not only on writers but also on the public, as censorship pacified and removed responsibility for action and prevented mature thinking. Furthermore, he thought that removing responsibility from individual cognition was deeply patronising (Sean O'Faolain, "The Dangers of Censorship," *Ireland To-Day*, Dec. 1936, 57-58). But he contradicted himself and proved, as he had done before, not to be adverse to censorship. He declared that "Censorship...has simply done us the good service of isolating us from popular opinion in Ireland to which we feel, now, no responsibility" (Sean O'Faolain, preface, *She Had to Do Something*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1938, 23). In this context, "we" are O'Faolain himself and other neglected intellectuals in Ireland. He willingly created a sharp dividing line between his self-proclaimed elitist intellectual stance and any discourse not in line with his own agenda.

His approach to his involvement with *The Bell* as a kind of school master – I insist on that simile – was linked to that he felt it his duty to safeguard intellectual and creative freedom at a certain standard in Ireland. His attitude further underlines his aloofness towards his fellow-Irish. Nevertheless, he wanted to avoid being in a cultural vacuum in Ireland, because he needed that cultural context to nourish his writing. Yet, he wanted to be regarded as a respected intellectual with an international outlook on Irish literary and current issues, never as an outsider. Clearly his failure to succeed in 'educating' the ignorant people to reach intellectual maturity was like a frustrating mission, where he saw himself as a martyr for intellectual standards. In other words, his repeated discontent did not mainly emerge from social concern. He focused on intellectual change within established society, to achieve a desirable liberal development. His one commitment was intellectual improvement, based on nineteenth-century liberalism.

Although O'Faolain often defied the Irish Catholic Hierarchy he was not anti-Catholic, nor, indeed, anti-Hierarchy. His intellectual aspiration is at the root of his ambivalent relationship with the Irish Catholic Hierarchy. Both his fiction and his non-

fiction often enunciate criticism of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy. In articles he often clearly proposed individual liberal Catholicism. Yet, simultaneously he favoured an ideal situation when the Catholic Hierarchy in liaison with intellectuals like himself together would keep the general population on the straight and narrow road, both regarding Faith and intellectual pursuits. For example, he did not object when the Catholic Hierarchy banned Catholics from attending Trinity College. O'Faolain saw nothing wrong with this ban; the masses should follow their clerical leaders, as long as this conformity did not include the writer himself. He avoided being included in the mass not just on intellectual grounds but, also because he proclaimed himself a Roman Catholic, as opposed to an Irish Catholic. His argument is laid out in the editorial of *The Bell* in June 1944, "Toryism in Trinity." Because he was a man of traditional nineteenth-century values, he believed in authority over the masses. He saw himself on the same high level as the clergy and was disappointed in their failure to join forces to educate the people. Furthermore, O'Faolain implied the writer as a kind of religious missionary.

His deep attachment to Catholicism shows in that religion becomes increasingly important in his stories from the 1940s onwards. Despite recurrent rejection of the Catholic Hierarchy his fiction demonstrates sympathy with individual priests, but continually attacks the hypocrisy evolving from balancing religion with personal desire and material ambition. He claimed that morality foremost but also faith must be included in the creative process (Sean O'Faolain, "Ah Wisha! The Irish Novel," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 17 (1941): 272). He went as far as concluding that all good literature requires "some form of faith," although he did not believe in "divine mercy" and "divine pity" as literary objectives (Sean O'Faolain, *Vanishing Hero*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956, 193, 196, 97). For instance, his analysis of Elizabeth Bowen's characters is heavily burdened with submerged morality. He concluded in a mode of incantation that, "God is the shop-walker who makes her characters pay, and we vulgar citizens, the run-of-the-mill of ordinary people, decent fathers of families, impatient of all youthful aberrations cannot deny His justice" (*Vanishing Hero* 171). This clearly indicates that he was not alien to the writer punishing characters to evoke a form of Divine Natural Order.

O'Faolain's ambivalence regarding religious matters is also evident in his fiction, which repeatedly portrays characters oppressed by Catholic Hierarchy. Priests and lay individuals are both groups pressurised to conform to social convention entrenched in Catholic morality. The narrative intention is generally to convey these restrictive forces as justification for characters' actions and to sustain the reader's sympathy for them. But several protagonists are punished when they try to break free from the strict Catholic social and moral ethos. His fiction at that point instead challenges the liberal individual freedom, and puts the onus on those who react against authority. For example, In "Our Fearful Innocence" from the collection *Teresa and Other Stories* (1947), Jenny is struck down by leukaemia after she has left her husband for an independent life. The much later story "Brainsy" from the collection *The Talking Trees* (1971), includes forceful

criticism of Church dogma and punishment of opposing individuals within the sphere of influence of the Church Hierarchy. The story reveals the fate of Brainsy, a monk with a weak vocation and a flexible intellect, who is physically and mentally destroyed after having implemented his religious doubts into his teaching. Although these two stories can be read as critiques of restrictive Irish society, they become ambiguous when considered in the context of O'Faolain's inconsistent explorations in writing regarding Catholicism. It was part of his problematic relationship with Ireland.

Despite O'Faolain's objections to conditions in Ireland he stayed and used it in his writing. He claimed that a truly creative writer must feed off conflict (*Vive Moi!* 283). He insisted that, "Unawareness...eliminates the element of self-conflict, which alone gives meaning to any theme" (Sean O'Faolain, "Fifty Years of Irish Literature," editorial, *The Bell*, Feb. 1942: 102-3). The idea of conflict as a *modus vivendi* for his writing is a complex part of his discourse. He stated that, "Contradictions do NOT 'lie quite comfortably together in the human mind.' They are the richest source of conflict. Conflicts lie quite fruitfully together" (Sean O'Faolain. Letter to Richard Ellmann. 29 Dec. 1953. Richard Ellman Papers. McFarlin Library. University of Tulsa). His *oeuvre* shows that conflicts added to his creativity. But at the same time his work was also marred by the conflicts he constantly tried to come to terms with, conflicts all relating to Ireland, either through personal recollection or his concept of history. But he could not leave Ireland permanently, because it was the platform from where he conducted his "life search" in writing.

He looked to his own past and to history for solutions in order to cope better with the environment in which he lived. His emotional attachment to the past and to his country is particularly evident in the fact that he did not live permanently outside Ireland after his return in 1933 from the United States and London. After morally and intellectually restrictive politics had been firmly established in Ireland, O'Faolain attempted escape from disillusionment. This process often led to idealist romanticism, and disregard for social diversity or individual priorities, apart from his preferences. He consistently compared Ireland to other countries, Italy in particular. For O'Faolain, Italy mainly fulfilled the purpose of negotiating integration of the past and the present, Catholicism and liberal morality, and thereby offering an ideal for Ireland to emulate, not least the Italian kind of Catholicism, which he found less morally restrictive and more intellectual than its Irish counterpart. He expands particularly on this issue in his book *South to Sicily* (1953). Renaissance Catholicism, as outlined by Croce, was particularly appealing to O'Faolain as he focussed on that culture and intellectual aspirations had been high during that era. For O'Faolain Cardinal Newman was an ideal Catholic closer to his own time. *Newman's Way* (1952) O'Faolain's biography about Cardinal Newman stands out as the most significant single source in order to understand his complex attitude to Catholicism. In the book Newman is portrayed as artistic, imaginative but also rational, especially in his deliberations before deciding to convert to Catholicism. Newman is portrayed as the personification of the biographer's ideal,

expressed in *Vive Moi!* as a "longing to blend the intellect and the imagination into a simple force in literature" (*Vive Moi!* 192). These driving forces are demonstrated in all his writing throughout his long productive life. To O'Faolain Newman was the ultimate combination of emotion and rationality, which he aspired to achieve for himself.

Newman's Way is only one example of O'Faolain's writing where he appears to be writing about issues seemingly apart from himself, such as biographies and travelling, but where these works repeatedly reveal more about his own dilemmas than he would have wished. Consequently, he most often chooses his topics with the purpose of writing out his own anxieties. Likewise, in consequence with my aim, when he in *The Irish* enhances elements such as individuality and liberalism as parts of Gaelic society he is no doubt projecting his own ideal onto the past. I therefore see *The Irish* from a different perspective than does Mr Nolan, who, to my mind, takes too much of what O'Faolain says at face value, without applying a critical eye to the text. In history O'Faolain was searching for an ideal past to emulate in present Ireland. In this context Hugh O'Neill, Wolfe Tone and Daniel O'Connell represent romantic historic heroes. Part of this heroism is also that they are portrayed as intellectuals whose intentions for Ireland had not been fulfilled because the ignorant people had not been ready to accept their proposals, especially poignant examples are O'Neill and Tone. This interpretation parallels the way O'Faolain regarded his own position in current Ireland.

O'Faolain also enunciates his predicament in fiction. One of Sean O'Faolain's later stories, "An Inside Outside Complex," is a subtly metaphorical story about Irish post-colonialism. But on a private level it is also about an Irishman living in the past, detached from society, but with an envious look into the cosy middle-class world that he wants to be a part of yet resents. Bertie Bolger is a restless and isolated split personality who tries to both avoid his own self and also to detach himself from his environment, like an alienated internal exile. Through a window he observes a woman in her home and from the outside turns her into an imagined ideal and her living-room transforms into a warm and inviting womb that appeals to his "desolation, his longing. He wanted only to be inside there, safe, secure, and satisfied"(Sean O'Faolain, "An Inside Outside Complex," *Foreign Affairs and Other Stories*, vol 3 of *Collected Short Stories*. 1982; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986, 218). He is literally an outsider desperate to get inside and be part of the comfortable Dublin suburban world that is established post-independence Ireland. But he cannot commit himself to call a place home, with which he cannot identify fully and that does not accept him. Although the story's protagonist personifies the new unprincipled Irishmen, Bertie's general isolation stands out as the complicating factor of this story, a critique of both the outside and the inside. This isolation also fictionalises the ambiguous position of the author himself in relation to Ireland**.**

In both fiction and non-fiction O'Faolain tried to come to terms with public as well as personal issues that engaged him, both emotionally and intellectually, sometimes simultaneously. He claimed that "when a man sets out to write a book he sets out on an

adventure which will affect him unpredictably. If he is writing anything at all that arrests him, or will arrest others he is writing himself "(Sean O'Faolain, *Newman's Way*. London: Longmans, 1952, 187). This statement indicates clearly that O'Faolain was well aware of that writing for him was a kind of catharsis. His *oeuvre* merges into a highly personal discourse, confirmed by the author's own claim that, "All true criticism, all literature, is a kind of extension of autobiography" (*Vive Moi!* 26). O'Faolain's ambivalent and ambiguous discourse is a result of his aspiration to be detached while yet, being more or less overtly fixed on emotional attachment to his country, the persistent source of themes and motifs explored in his writing. He claimed that when he decided to leave Cork he recognised that he could only be figuratively naked outside the town. But, unlike Corney in O'Faolain's second novel *Bird Alone* (1936), who remains in Cork, the author himself could not deny either Cork or his country emotionally, although he was in at least two minds about both. This ambivalence and ambiguity that evolved as a result of his confusion created his personal inside outside complex in relation to Ireland.

To my mind O'Faolain was too much of an individualist to be a nationalist, rather he was a patriot. He was too much an Irishman to be a fully-fledged internationalist. I am not Irish by birth, so I have no cultural excess baggage to control in my considerations about the writer in question. But like him I have been an individualist in not following the road most often taken in O'Faolain scholarship. If Jerry Nolan thinks that is a pity, I can only commiserate. Had he read what I actually do say about O'Faolain he might have realised that there is not just one way to enlightenment but several. Sean O'Faolain discovered just that, that the road to knowledge and understanding is thorny. This fundamental awareness plays a major part in his contradictory agenda. I have not judged O'Faolain, instead I have declared my findings and left O'Faolain sitting on the fence between past and present Ireland, looking towards a future Ireland with more international influences but, with a firm commitment to matters traditionally Irish he felt were worth preserving.

I have tried to explain briefly the task I set before me in the book, to untangle O'Faolain's contrasting views on certain discursive key issues and map his discourse over time. My solution to this project is more fully in evidence in the book that has been somewhat fleetingly under scrutiny by Jerry Nolan. What seems to annoy him the most about my book is that I do not oblige and comply with his agenda about O'Faolain. To my mind Nolan follows the conventional trail of the already converted; he focusses on the writer as the intellectual giant in a provincial backwater in peripheral Europe that was Ireland at the time and does not want to complicate the picture. But if I had stayed with the conventional agenda I would only have repeated what has already been said by most of those few critics who have previously taken the trouble to comment on O'Faolain's achievement. If I had gone along that avenue I would have failed my duty as a critic, which is to find alternative approaches in order to increase understanding. Because I wanted to explore a different route I consequently drew different conclusions from O'Faolain's *oeuvre*. The fact that my arguments and conclusions are substantiated

with extensive use of quotations from O'Faolain's huge production seems only to make my case more difficult for Nolan to digest. To my mind he has missed the whole point of my study, because he is too focussed on his own preoccupation with O'Faolain as a public figure, whereas my aim has been to divulge a more rounded picture of the writer by taking his whole production into consideration. He cannot accept that there is another way to appreciate O'Faolain through a less conventional exploration of his work.

The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce

by Eugene O'Brien

Deconstructing the Question of Irish Identity

Tony Corbett

Eugene O'Brien. *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce.* Lewiston New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001. pp. 281. ISBN: 0-7734-8237-7

This book interrogates Irish literature written in English, refracted through the lens of postmodern theory. The application of the ideas of Derrida, Lacan, Levinas, and others to Irish literature is not new, but it is a branch of criticism which is still in its infancy. The use of theory divides critics sharply. More traditional critics see theory as an unnecessary intrusion on literary scholarship, while younger critics dismiss the older as liberal humanists, unable to come to terms with radical ideas. Irish scholarship is complicated further by the incursion of politics at almost every level of both literary output and critical comment. O'Brien's book will prove, I think, an interesting addition to the debate, and to the field of Irish studies. His status as unreconstructed, indeed, enthusiastic, postmodern theorist will irritate as many as it will impress, but this is, when all is said and done, an impressive first book.

The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce is a cumbersome but accurate title. The book is at least as much about notions and definitions of national identity as it is about Yeats or Joyce. In fact, 122 of its 251 pages of main text are concerned with the means by which national identity in general, and Irish identity in particular, is constructed. Having spent the initial two chapters exploring these constructs, O'Brien's central thesis is that the constructs are, if not deconstructed, then certainly problematised in the writings of Yeats and Joyce. To further this end, O'Brien employs a variety of theoretical perspectives.

One of the principal deconstructions of the book is of the fixed idea of nationalism. The importance of this cannot be overestimated in the field of Irish Studies, and, perhaps, for conflict studies in general. By challenging the idea of a fixed, immutable centre, by demonstrating the instability of such sacral national touchstones, the absurd contradictions, and elisions at the heart of all nationalism become exposed.

The first section of the Introduction is entitled 'Negative Identity: Adorno, Levinas, Derrida'. In this he begins, not with any of his theorists, but with Shakespeare's

line, spoken by the Irish captain M from *Henry V*: 'what ish my nation?' (O'Brien: 1). Using this oft-quoted question as his beginning, O'Brien proposes a theory of negative identity for the Irish, following Adorno. This in itself is not a new idea. The notion that the uneasy and often violent relationship of Ireland with neighbouring Britain was a crucial factor in solidifying notions of Irishness has emerged before, it was recently reiterated by Declan Kiberd. What O'Brien does, and I think this one of the most important contributions to the debate, is that he gives the definition a theoretical framework, reaching out to continental thinkers in a manner that avoids the Irish-not-British-not-Irish loop. In the Introduction, O'Brien establishes his 'two vectoral imperatives at work in the process of defining national identity' (6). These are the centripetal and centrifugal vectors. These he carefully and minutely defines in a densely argued Chapter One. Beginning with the Greek 'kentron,' meaning 'goad' or 'spike' (34), he illustrates how, in the centripetal vector, the centre defines the circumference. In this model of nationalism, one is continually looking inwards towards a fixed, identifiable, and unchanging core of national characteristics. Balanced against this is the meson, the midpoint of a Greek shield, where the weight was equally balanced. This, O'Brien maintains, is a circle which is defined by its circumference, in opposition to the mathematical model, which defines the circumference by the position of the centre (42). These diametrically opposed versions of the relationship between the midpoint and the circumference become for O'Brien images of the different models of nationalism. The first, which he refers to as the centripetal vector, is the model which, in Derridean terms is logocentric (37). It focuses inward to a 'predefined central *locus* which is itself beyond the play of…time, place, social class, or historical situatedness' (37). Taking his impetus from Derrida, Lacan, and Adorno, O'Brien calls the opposing vector 'centrifugal'. Here, the centre is not an invariant core, but a point in a set of relations, any of which may change, with the consequent change of relations with all the others. In other words, new centres of national identity arise in response to changing social, political, and historical forces. Applied to Irish history, these become an essentialist and a theoretical reading, respectively. The essentialist reading would see Irish history in traditional terms, as largely the history of the struggle to repel the invader, the 'hated Saxon foe', to coin a phrase. A theoretical reading recognises the alterities of history. The original invaders were Norman, or as O'Brien puts it: 'variously called English, Normans, Anglo-Normans, Cambro-Normans, Anglo-French, Anglo-Continentals, Saxons, Flemings, Men of Saint David's [*sic*], Men of Llanduff' (47). Each of these titles places a different emphasis on the essentials of Irish history, questioning the received core.

The attempt to define Ireland negatively is pursued in the third section of Chapter One, 'Tara to Holyhead: The Centrifugal Vector'. According to Joyce, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 'the shortest way to Tara was *via* Holyhead'. Stephen is, in O'Brien's reading, leaving Ireland, not because he wants to eschew Irishness, but because Holyhead as a *locus* gives room for alterity, beyond the centripetal, hypostatised view

of ur-nationalists. O'Brien neatly connects the political points he has been making with the literary investigation he is about to undertake, by reference to Bakhtin's comment in *The Dialogic Imagination* that language also has centripetal and ineluctable centrifugal forces. In Bakhtin's words: '[a]longside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work…the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward' (Bakhtin, in O'Brien: 53). In the remainder of the section, O'Brien applies Bakhtin's model in terms of Derrida's concept of *ontologie/hauntologie*, a pun which works better in French than it does in English. Briefly, Derrida, in *Specters of Marx*, claims that all discussions of *ontology* are fundamentally affected by traces, differences, other discussions, and the interference of the past; in other words, by alterity. He calls this a haunting, and coined the neologism *hauntologie* to encompass the pressures on discourse occasioned by culture, context, slippage of meaning and the structure of the language itself. O'Brien very adroitly applies the Derridean concepts to the writings of P.H. Pearse. Pearse, in a pamphlet entitled *Ghosts* (quoted in the aptly names *Ancestral Voices* by Conor Cruise O'Brien), makes the point that the only way to appease a ghost is to do what it asks of you. In Pearse's case, he felt that the ghosts of the earlier Irish nationalists had enjoined him to rebellion. Pearse concludes that the ghosts will take 'a little laying' (O'Brien: 54). Throughout O'Brien's book, hauntology returns as a central concept, underlying his thesis on the presence of alterity in the works of Yeats and Joyce.

He summarises his political and historical stance in the fourth and final section of Chapter One, 'Defenders and United Irishmen: Two Views of Irish Identity'. He characterises the centripetal vector of Irishness from the section in *Chapter Five of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which John Alphonsus Mulrennan encounters the old man in the west of Ireland, and the centrifugal vector in a quotation from the United Irishman newspaper *The Northern Star*. He politicises the centripetal vector further by quoting Padraic O'Conaire and Peadar O'Laoighre, both authors who wrote in Irish, the latter a priest, who expressed a desire that Ireland might have a wall built around it to exclude foreign influence. Although O'Brien does not say it, this aspiration was also expressed in a speech in 1928 by Eamonn De Valera, the man who, less than a decade later, framed the Irish constitution, and spent a considerable amount of time and energy trying to keep the infant nation safe from English 'contamination'.

The vector represented by the United Irishmen, on the other hand, is one which not only accepts, but was founded on, alterity, in its embracing of American and European revolutionary ideals. O'Brien traces the historical process by which the centrifugally oriented United Irishmen were absorbed into the *mythos* of the fundamentalist nationalists.

I realise that I have dwelt at some length on the first chapter, but it is the key to the whole book, particularly it is the key to the book's classification, which will pose a problem for librarians. The main Library of Congress catalogue data lists it as 'English Literature – Irish authors – History and criticism'. It lists also sub-categories such as literature and society, Irish national characteristics, Yeats, and Joyce. The first chapter

dwells at some length on these topics, but it is also a work of sociology, of philosophy, of historiography, of poststructuralist literary and social theory, of sociolinguistics. The opening chapter contains all of these elements, in almost equal measure. Classification of the book has escaped the present reviewer, but it would be interesting to note if a consensus emerges among university librarians.

Chapter Two concerns language, and to language is applied the same deconstructive apparatus as was applied to history in Chapter One. In O'Brien's own words: 'what is being argued is that…linguistic signifiers of identity can, and do, change over a period of history, but very often, the essentialist *Weltanschauung* refuses to acknowledge these changes, and the result can be the ossification of certain cultural stereotypes' (88). The chapter opens with the politicisation of the Irish language. That the language was politicised at an early point in its development is not in dispute. Even as far back as the Statutes of Kilkenny, the injunctions on native Irish speakers drove a rift between the language and the centres of power. In return, Irish poetry in particular became deeply political. The example O'Brien quotes, from Geoffrey Keating complicates the issue more than the main text admits (89):

> Milis an teanga an Ghaedhealg
> Guth gan chabhair choigcríche
> (So sweet a language is Irish,
> a voice untainted by foreign aid)

The quotation and the translation are taken from Joep Leerson's *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael* (Cork University Press/Field Day, 1996). The translation is, of course, politically skewed. The source of the translation is not immediately apparent from Leerson's critical apparatus, and I assume it is his own, assisted by Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha. O'Brien notes in an endnote that the word 'untainted' appears not at all in the Irish version. A literal translation might run: 'A sweet tongue is Irish/A voice without foreign help', which is seriously altered by the translation. Whereas he acknowledges that this is another layer in the politicisation of the Irish language, O'Brien does not pursue the issue in true Derridean fashion – to deconstruct his own discourse even as he is discoursing upon it. The fact that the English language has been used to politicise the Irish poem is a point he does not pursue. While acknowledging that it is not the main thrust of his thesis, it would have been more satisfactory for a reader had he paused to consider what it represents. In this case, it appears that translation from Irish into English is an attempt to introduce an essentialist element not present in the original verse, an attempt to circumvent the drift towards alterity represented by translation.

The Irish Revival, considered in the second section of Chapter Two, is characterised as a centripetal revival. O'Brien is careful to distinguish between the Irish Revival as a *portmanteau* term, and the Gaelic, Celtic and literary revivals of which it was composed. He uses the revivals to interrogate the contested ground of Irishness,

seen by some as necessarily Gaelic-speaking and Catholic, while others, such as Douglas Hyde, himself a Protestant, sought to find a niche within the definition for his tradition, while still excluding other (specifically, Northern) Protestants. O'Brien unearths many examples of ur-Irish prejudice and delusion, a fair example of which is Peadar Ua Laoighre's contention that: '[t]here is enmity between the Irish language and infidelity….If Irish is inside, infidelity must remain outside' (103). Although these kinds of belief were extant in the more trenchant of Irish *chauvinistes* until very recently, they do belong to the outer fringes of the revivalist movement. There were, and are, many balanced and dedicated adherents of the Irish language to whom the above statement would appear merely ridiculous, if not embarrassing. The anti-English sentiment which forms part of the same centripetal belief-structure is scrutinised, and it is at this stage in the book that we realise why O'Brien began with the quote from *Henry V*: the idea of language and nation defined in relation to the other is very strong in this section. If I have a complaint, it is that there are rather too many examples, and some judicious pruning of the quotations, delicious though they may be, would result in a more focused section.

The Third section of Chapter Two begins an exploration of the redefinition of both Irishness and Irish literature, and leads into the final two chapters. Using Derrida's *hauntology*, O'Brien examines a passage from Padraic Pearse in which he criticises Yeats as 'a poet of the third or fourth rank', but thinks, because of Yeats' proposal of an Irish literary theatre in English, that he deserves to be 'crushed' (109-10). By proposing a specifically 'Irish' literature in the English language, Yeats was, according to O'Brien, changing the centre to a *zentrum*, progressing from a model where the centre defines the circumference, to the model where the circumference continually shifts and modifies the centre. This version of the revival was, according to O'Brien, a redefinition of the parameters of Irish culture. The Irishness of Yeats, Synge, Lady Gregory and others would be immensely different from that of Pearse and An t-Athair Peadar. It would, through its acceptance of the English language, be haunted by alterities which, even as it wrote of Irish themes and translated Irish sagas and myths, spoke in and of a language beyond Gaeldom.

Towards the end of the chapter, O'Brien introduces, from the writings of Levinas, the term 'ethics', which Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity*, defined as a questioning brought about by the presence of the Other. In the sense in which it is used by O'Brien, it is very close to 'hauntology', but with the semantic advantage of connection with the logic of moral discourse. It is this ethical aspect of the voice of Yeats which he explores in Chapter Three.

For O'Brien, translation from Irish to English is an ethical act, in that it presupposes the presence of the Other, in this case the other tradition existing on the island. In this sense, translation from Irish to English is subversive of the centripetal vectoring of Pearse and the Gaelic revivalists. According to O'Brien 'it destabilizes the essentialist concept of selfhood that was underwriting the Irish-Ireland outlook, and instead introduces a role for alterity'. It is probably for this reason that he subtitles the

third chapter 'Voices of Myth – Voices of Critique', and concentrates on Yeats' version of Irish sagas.

O'Brien makes the very interesting point that critics have tended to dismiss Yeats' early Celtic twilight writing as inauthentic. He cites Harold Bloom who accused Yeats of working from 'a version of a version' in *The Wanderings of Oisín*, producing only English romantic verse with an Irish flavour. What they failed to notice, according to O'Brien, is the transitional nature of the work. Yeats was attempting to inscribe his English-speaking tradition in Irish folklore, and vice-versa. From this point of view, the 'version of a version' decried by Bloom becomes a necessary part of the centrifugal vectoring of Irish culture, the haunting of Celticism by the English language, and, by definition, an act which embraces alterity. This gives one a strong impetus to re-read Yeats' early Celtic poems by a newly politicised light.

In relation to the early poems, O'Brien takes as an example *The Ballad of Moll Magee*. He sees in this a development and an inversion of the political *Aisling*, in which the old woman is not representative of the heroic Gael, but tells a squalid story in which she accidentally smothers her baby, and becomes unhinged as a result. The poem is, as he says: 'a powerful deconstruction of the glib trope of Ireland-as-mother, demanding the sacrifice of her children…' (148). One might also make the connection between Moll Magee and Joyce's 'old sow that eats her farrow', referred to later in the book. O'Brien may go too far in his attempts to rescue the poems, taking issue, if obliquely, with John Unterecker's comment that the poems were not very good in themselves. It is perhaps enough to have placed them in the continuum of Yeats's political development. They do not need to be good poetry. *Moll Magee*, I would contend, is sentimentalised, despite the reality of the horror of death which inheres in it. Likewise the rhythm is gauche, causing stresses to fall awkwardly in the second line. This is a feature of the folk ballad, but is evidence here that Yeats had not yet achieved mastery in his craft. This is a small criticism, but evidence of O'Brien's occasional over-enthusiasm, to which I will return at the end of the review.

The second section of Chapter Three turns on the interpretation of the short poem *A Coat*. O'Brien discusses various interpretations, and finally offers his own, which is very much in line with the interpretation he has taken of the other poems. He sees it a Yeats' dissatisfaction with the narrow interpretation of Celtic mythology, and a declaration of ethical openness. O'Brien sees the end of the poem as Yeats' assertion that he will be open to alterities. Whereas he does not disown the coat at any stage, he appears to have outgrown it, in a sense.

'Cuchulain discomforted' is the title of the final section of Chapter Three. The relationship between Yeats and Cuchulain is a complex one, because he is both the adaptor of the myth, and the artist who gave it impetus for the Irish revival. O'Brien builds the section around a reading of *Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea*, and its relationship with the models of Irishness that he has been espousing since the opening chapter. He identifies the parthenogenetic relationship between Emer, the mother and her, son, the Freudian overtones of parricide and phallic mother, the violence and unheroic behaviour

that are at the core of the poem, and the use of language as a tool for control. He makes again, a seminal point that the poem is, in its vision of the Celtic twilight, far from the golden age envisaged by some. Adroitly connecting the poem with the political subjects of the earlier chapters, O'Brien then examines the influence of the Cuchulain myth on Pearse, and the different uses which the two men made of the same myth. Pearse saw in Cuchulain a Celtic Christ, ready to sacrifice himself for his people. Yeats' picture was more complex, and drew on the European mythological and psychological traditions. If I have a quibble with the section, it is that, in his haste to see the details in the political landscape, many of the details of the poem are lost. O'Brien notes how Emer smites the messenger with a 'raddled' fist, but neglects to tell us that raddle is a red dye, so that, even at the opening of the poem, Emer's hands are steeped in red, as in blood. Given that the emblem of Ulster, where the Ulidian cycle is set, is a red hand, there are political implications in this also, but ones not pursued by this book.

The final chapter deals with Joyce. Joyce's uneasy relationship with Ireland has been documented *ad nauseam* by both scholars and students, and it is difficult to find anything new to say about it. It is one of the strengths of O'Brien's book that his theoretical approach has allowed him to deal with basically the same pieces of text in a fresh way. He begins, not with Davin, Mulrennan, or the paedophagous sow, but with the first story in *Dubliners*, *The Sisters*. He compares the originally published first paragraph with the revised one which appeared in book form. O'Brien begins by asserting, somewhat tendentiously, that the changes in the first paragraph of *The Sisters* are:

> proleptic of the linguistic difficulties of *Finnegans Wake*, and point towards that work in terms of a reading practice and method. They also point to his notion of a theory of Irishness that parallels Derrida's notion of the *hauntological*, Adorno's immanent and transcendent dialectical cultural critique, and the oscillation between the centripetal and centrifugal that has been part of this book's interrogation of differing notions of Irish identity (185).

It seems like a great deal to extrapolate from some paragraph revisions. The argument which follows is, however, ingenious. Picking the word '*gnomon*' from *The Sisters*, and the words '*epicleti*' and '*hemiplegia*' from a letter Joyce wrote about *Dubliners*, O'Brien constructs a teleological syntagmatic chain, in which the Irish subjects of Joyce's work is haunted both by the English language, and by the spectre of foreigness inherent in Joyce's mature work. The theory thus developed, and it is developed in detail, presents a coherent overview of Joyce and Irishness, which is both refreshingly new and satisfyingly complex. A complaint, however, analogous to the manner in which Yeats's works are treated, is that the three touchstone words which begin the divinations appear to have been chosen at random, rather in the manner of a mathematician solving a problem in the real world by using the square root of minus one. Once inside the calculation, it is both utilitarian and elegant, but it is nonetheless an imaginary value.

O'Brien's words are plucked from the huge *corpus* of Joycean writings, and used, persuasively, and, indeed, elegantly to build a theory more solid than its imaginative foundations.

It would be impossible to approach Joyce's vision of Irishness without visiting the famous quotation from Chapter Five of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: 'When the soul of man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets' (Joyce 1993: 177; O'Brien 207). It is used here as a means of exploring Joyce's overt references to Irishness, and his complex relationship with the country and its people. This section collects a deal of the oft-quoted pieces from the canon, and, while workmanlike, is probably the least original section of the book. It is followed by a section entitled *Emigration as trope*, which leads, by *commodious vicus of recirculation*, to the final section of the main text, entitled *Patrick W. Shakespeare*. This section explores the alterity inherent in Joyce's writing, taking the *Cyclops* episode of *Ulysses* as its starting point. O'Brien's contention is that, in his list of 'Irish' heroes, Joyce posits alterity in the midst of sameness. O'Brien points out that the list of heroes is analogous to the genealogical tables in Genesis or the lists of warriors in the *Iliad*. These lists also occur in Irish literature; one thinks immediately of the placenames on the route of the Táin in *Táin Bo Cualnge*, or the list of warriors slain by Cuchulain later in the same work. This, of course, merely adds to the point made by O'Brien, that Joyce is manipulating both form and content in pursuit of alterity.

An undoubted fault in the book is the attempt to relate the subject matter to every school of theoretical discourse. While O'Brien is undoubtedly erudite and his comparisons apt, the constant hammering home of the point by reference to Derrida, Lacan, Adorno, Levinas, Bakhtin and so forth is enthusiastic, but unnecessary once the initial point has been made. The arguments and readings proffered by the book are quite strong enough without continual reference to theoretical first principles. There is also a sense of imbalance in the book, if one is expecting a book of literary criticism. This leads back to an earlier point about the difficulty with the book's classification. If one is expecting a close reading of the works of Yeats or Joyce, one will be disappointed. O'Brien approaches few works by either author, but manages at the same time to make his political, social, philosophical, and theoretical point.

One caveat which must be inserted is, I think, the *a priori* assumption that one is either a centripetal essentialist or a centrifugal pluralist, and that to be an essentialist is an ethically untenable position. Indeed, if one uses Levinas's definition of *ethics* (see above), then the essentialist position is, by definition, untenable. Levinas's definition is not, however, the only one available. I am not quarrelling with the position, I merely point out that O'Brien's is undoubtedly siding with the agents of centrifugal pluralism, and this must raise doubts about the ability of postmodern theory to assume an objective position.

The application of theory to Irish literature in English will undoubtedly please some, alienate others, and infuriate a small coterie who still think of Irish literature in

narrow, essentialist ways. To an extent, the measure to which one is attracted or repulsed by this book is an index of the extent to which one's own centripetal attitudes are deconstructed by the book. For those who approach this book with an open mind, and a reliable dictionary, there is an immense amount of value.

Author's Response: Theory as Agent

Eugene O'Brien

Firstly, I would like to begin by thanking Tony Corbett for a generous and detailed reading of this book. One always hopes for readings which will engage with the seminal aspects of a text and in this case, I have been fortunate in my reader. His essay has raised many thought-provoking issues and in this response I hope to address some of these. His point about the sometimes difficult relationship between the areas of theory *per se*, and Irish Studies is well taken. Despite the proliferation of theoretical courses in the academy, and the gradual increase in theoretically driven papers at gatherings like the IASIL and ACIS conferences, there is still, I would contend, a *lacuna* in the area of theoretical engagement with the motivating issues of the study of Irish literature. Even the last phrase, 'Irish Literature' is a hermeneutic minefield (as indicated by the change in nomenclature from IASAIL to IASIL some years ago), and it is in need of constant conceptual unpacking.

Such conceptual unpacking was a motivating factor in the writing of this book, concerned as it is with those almost hoary tropes of Irish identity and the writings of Yeats and Joyce. As Corbett has suggested, these issues have been discussed *ad nauseum* and yet, it seemed to me, not within a theoretically driven intellectual paradigm which might tease out some of the nuances within them. It was my hope to defamiliarize some of these 'givens' in a discourse paralleling that of Brian Friel, who, in *Translations*, acknowledges the need for constantly renewing our relationship to language and the images of the past embodied in language. Otherwise, as he puts it, 'we fossilize.' My own efforts in the field of renewal relate both to language and ideology, using theory as an agent of defossilization in terms of Irishness in general and Irish nationalism in particular.

The particular *organon* of theoretical approaches to be used presented something of a difficulty. The postcolonial is very much the theoretical paradigm of choice in terms of methodology in contemporary Irish Studies. Through scholars such as Declan Kiberd, Gerry Smyth, Shaun Richards, David Cairns, David Lloyd and Colin Graham, postcolonial theory has become fruitfully intertwined with the matter of Irish writing, shedding new light on hitherto darkened corners. However, in attempting to examine Yeats and Joyce with respect to Irish identity, I deliberately used an alternative theoretical focus, as Corbett outlines. The connection of the thought of Derrida, Adorno and Levinas was a motivated one, as I felt that each of these writers has undertaken Friel's defossilization in different areas of epistemology. Corbett

has offered an intelligent conspectus of my *raison d'être* for choosing all three, and in so doing, he raises the interesting and crucial question of categorisation.

The theoretical *ordo cognoscendi* of Derrida's differential and relational epistemology was crucial to my reading of Yeats and Joyce. Perhaps the ground of the methodology is provided by his transformation of his now axiomatic '*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' in *Of Grammatology* into '*Il n'y a pas de hors contexte*' in *Limited Inc*., which validated a reading of Yeats and Joyce against their cultural context of the Gaelic revival and the rise of nationalism. These central tenets of the early 20th century Irish identity construction have been taken as givens, with Yeats being commonly seen as a participant in the creation of essentialist Gaelic and nationalist attitudes, while Joyce, in Dedalan manner, is seen as avoiding them almost completely, history being the nightmare from which both author and character are trying to awake.

However, the thrust of this book is to demonstrate the levels of transformative engagement between Yeats and Joyce and these twin centres of nationalism and Gaelicism. Derrida's *hauntology*, as pointed out by Corbett, offered a model of a difference within the core of sameness which is crucial to my reading of the Yeatsian and Joycean critique of essentialism in terms of Irishness, and his discussion of my use of the centripetal and centrifugal as metaphors of different vectors of Irishness is an intelligent conspectus of my argument. The same can be said of his comments on Levinas:

> O'Brien introduces, from the writings of Levinas, the term 'ethics', which Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity*, defined as a questioning brought about by the presence of the Other. In the sense in which it is use by O'Brien, it is very close to '*hauntology*', but with the semantic advantage of connection with the logic of moral discourse.

Given that so much of Irish history and literature has been defined adversarially in terms of what Corbett terms the 'Irish-not-British-not-Irish loop,' I was anxious to find a theoretical parallel to the role of the 'other' in the work of Yeats and Joyce, and Levinas provided that role. His complication of the identity of selfhood and alterity allows for an interstitial ethical relationship which I have found throughout the work of both writers, whose work 'is the location of a point of alterity…that cannot be reduced to the Same.'

Given Levinas's view that the imperative to enter into some form of relation with alterity can turn poetry from an aesthetic discourse into an ethical one, which brings forth the necessity of critique then literature as genre can serve as a penetrating critique of the ethicity of socio-political discourses. This view of literature is one which figures largely in this discussion. The works of Yeats and Joyce stimulate readings which critique the narrow essentialisms of a centripetal notion of identity which looks to the past or to pre-existing categories as sacrosanct, almost quasi-religious *doxa* in which one must believe. Instead, their work protreptically invokes the other in a dialogue which explicitly opens a place, or a site, for the voice of alterity.

The term 'protreptic' derives from the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, who tellingly puts it that 'language is conversation: one must look for the word that can reach an other person.' Gadamer cites the theory of Jacques Lacan that a word not directed at another person, at an 'other' is empty, and goes on to define language as grounded in this notion of answerability, stating that it is only the answer, 'actual or potential, that transforms a word into a word.' This notion of language as a dialogue with the other, as protreptic discourse, is seminal to Yeats and Joyce, as all of their work predicates an Irishness that is thoroughly open to different forms of alterity. These two British citizens, who saw themselves as Irish, went on to define that Irishness otherwise in order that it should have a place for them within its compass, and it is this process of transformative redefinition that is at the core of my argument. Their negative definitions of Irishness offer a future-oriented paradigm which will allow for diversity and heterogeneity as opposed to a monological narrative of the past which is largely intolerant of anything outside the privileged components. In this context, Corbett's deconstruction of the translation from Joep Leerson was very much a *tour de force* which I would have included had it occurred to me at the time.

The theoretical paradigm constructed in the opening chapter is necessary if one is to read Yeats and Joyce against the grain of much received opinion, hence the constant oscillation in the book between theorists and texts, a point raised by Corbett who sees it as 'unnecessary' and an example of 'over-enthusiasm.' From the perspective of style, he is undoubtedly correct: literary criticism is not in the habit of foregrounding its theoretical *substrata*. Indeed, as Christopher Norris has put it: 'literary critics interpret texts. By and large they get on without worrying too much about the inexplicit theories or principles that underwrite their practice.' Corbett develops this point by stressing that the theoretical strand is disappointing for a reader 'expecting a book of literary criticism.' Again, I would agree, but with the *caveat* that this is *not* a book of literary criticism, rather is it an articulation of theory and literature in order to provide a different, not necessarily better, perspective on issues of Irish identity formation.

Corbett makes the further point that 'classification of this book has escaped the present reviewer', and goes on to muse that it would be interesting if a consensus emerged among university librarians, and here he points to one of my central objectives in the writing of this book, namely to merge generic and disciplinary structures that had hitherto remained largely disparate. The theoretical structure which is set out in the opening chapter is deliberately applied to pieces of literature and to ideological structures which are very often literary in essence and enunciation, but which are often not subjected to a literary analysis. By positing an intersection between the literary decentralizations of Yeats and Joyce, and the theoretical decentralizations of Derrida, Adorno and Levinas, the book points to alternate readings of Irishness through the work of all of these writers. So, if this causes certain classificatory head-scratchings, so much the better, as part of the function of the book is to challenge the hypostasized nature of classifications and categories in general. The book, while not being able to answer all the questions raised,

posits a reformulation of these questions, which as John Banville says, 'in art, is as near as one ever gets to an answer.'

I argue that the work of Yeats and Joyce challenges insular and reactivist aspects of the different Irish revivals which tended to enact a Manichean paradigm of Irishness as not Britishness, constructing nativist centres composed of Gaelic, Catholic and nationalist strands. Both writers offer culturally-driven definitions of Irishness where the Irish-British binarism is deconstructed through the creation of broader intertextual nexus which positions Ireland within pan-European notion of identity. So Yeats, by looking to renaissance Italy, can imply a connectedness between Ireland and Europe and Joyce, by tracing the ghostly shape of the Danes, early colonisers of Dublin, can enact the same parallel, and can also, writing in *Finnegans Wake*, tell how he 'murdered all the English he knew' by translating the imperial tongue into a new language which is 'nat language at any sinse of the world.' Both are paralleling Derrida's *hauntological* epistemology as well as the negative notion of identity promulgated by Adorno in his writings.

In conclusion, I must thank Tony Corbett for a fair-minded and thoroughly scrupulous engagement with my book. He has pointed up its strengths and its flaws: for example an over-didactic approach to the intersection of theory and text which can often result in a metaphorical belabouring of the reader. In my own defence, I can only say that I was anticipating a different form of criticism: namely that the conceptual framework was overly dense and did not fully connect with the readings of the texts. That Corbett should make precisely the opposite critique means that this particular hurdle, at least, has been avoided. His final point, that the book 'will undoubtedly please some' while alienating and infuriating others sums up what one would wish from a first book, as well as one's hope for subsequent works.

Drama

Italy, Garibaldi and Goldoni Give Lady Gregory 'a Room with a Different View'[1]

Carla de Petris

***Abstract**: This paper analyses the complex influence of Italy on Lady Gregory's imagination. On the one hand she considered the Italian fight for independence a good example for Ireland. Reading* Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic *was "comforting" to her. On the other, she looked at Eleonora Duse's efforts to create a national theatre with sympathy and with pride as she succeeded where the Italian actress had failed. She had a wide knowledge of Italian literature which she could read in the original. In her youth she even translated passages from Dante's* Commedia*, but what is more important and revealing is that, at the height of her own creative career, with the intention of providing a more international repertory for the Abbey Theatre, she translated Goldoni's* La Locandiera*. The choice of this play and the technique adopted for the translation cast new light on her view of life and on her work.*

Lady Gregory's relationship with Italy was a long and profitable one and her biography as well as her literary work provide evidence for this fact which still has not been investigated.

As for her life: I shall quote extensively from her journals and her autobiography *Seventy Years*,[2] which consists of a series of long narratives of strong dramatic quality, as the writer objectifies her world in a dynamic context of interrelated voices. She speaks of herself in the third person singular and gives us either a smiling or thoughtful or ironic "portrait of a Lady" in relation to the people or events she comes across.

The following paragraphs are her avowal of love for Italy:

> While in her early twenties […] being given the charge of an elder brother, whose health had failed, she left the large household […] for a quiet hotel on the Riviera. […] As she saw it, Cannes was not France, it had no history, no national life […] But with the springtime in each of these three years there came what made up for all, a few weeks of Italy. (SY, 19)

As many girls of her social background she had a good knowledge of Italian literature. She could read it in the original and in accordance with the taste of her age she always kept in her room a bust of Dante which had been given her by Sir William for their engagement. She remembers that during her first visits to Italy before marrying:

> […] having begun to learn its language, and to know a little of the grammar, with the audacity of the young she began to read Dante, at first with the help of a French translation, and then, making her own, she wrote it out to the very end of the *Purgatorio* and the triple stars. And the beautiful sound of the language was added to the other unbounded joys of those blossoming Italian Aprils. (SY, 19)

Isabella Augusta Persse, born in Roxborough, Co. Galway, in 1852, married Sir William Gregory, former Governor of Ceylon, in 1880. He was then sixty-three years old and could have been her father. As a father he started caring for her education since the beginning of their relationship:

> After my marriage my husband told me that very soon after he had first met me, and when I knew him but slightly, he had, in making his will, left to me the choice of any six books in his library at Coole. And after marriage he directed in his later testament, that not six, but all, should be mine through my lifetime.[3]

Among the books of the library at Coole[4] sold in 1972, there are over fifty titles related to Italy and to Rome and to Roman antiquities in particular, collections of prints of Roman monuments, history books etc. Most of them were published in the 1830s and must have been in the library long before Sir William turned over the pages of Domenico Amici's *Raccolta delle principali vedute di Roma* (1835) or Feoli's *Raccolta delle più insigni fabriche di Roma antica* (1810), eager to follow with his new and intelligent wife either Luigi Canina's *Indicazione topografica di Roma antica* (1831) or James Hakewill's *A Picturesque Tour of Italy* (1820). No wonder that Lady Augusta began her married life in Italy:

> Rome, and then Athens, Constantinopole, a wonderful wedding journey. In Rome the pictures and statues and churches were too many and too confusing for a short visit. I was rather bewildered by it all. There were too many ages huddling on one another in Rome – 'the exhaustless scattered fragmentary city' as it is called by Goethe. (SY, 30)

On the same occasion she thus describes her social life:

> My first real dinner party (at the Embassy in Rome) was a sudden entering into society after my quiet years […] My first ball also was at the Embassy, it was in honour of the [Princess Royal of England] and in honour of her the

> Roman Princesses had brought out their tiaras from bankers' strong rooms. Of my few balls it was the most dazzling and glittering and brilliant.[…] On another day to be remembered we went to the Pope's reception at the Vatican and received his blessing, which he gave very solemnly […] I had brought rosaries with me that I might give them to some devout old women at home, when they had received Leo the Thirteenth's blessing.(SY, 31)

But Venice was the place she preferred, "so long as [she] lived, Venice was to [her] as home" (SY, 285), since Augusta had often been Lady Enid Layard'[5]s guest at Palazzo Cappello on the Grand Canal.

At the end of the nineteenth century Venice was under Austrian rule. Napoleon had offered Venice and its territory to Austria as a token of peace, after the short unfortunate experience of a Republic, inspired by the French Revolution. Having lost its international trading supremacy, the city was then facing the first signs of its unending decadence, but kept all its charming atmosphere, as it does still today.

During the Easter 1907 Lady Gregory spent "a beautiful month" in Italy with her son Robert and with William Butler Yeats, who had joined them for his first visit to Italy. With incredible care she planned their tour of Venice:

> I, having in mind what that other poet [Robert Browning] had said, [i.e. that Venice should be seen from the sea], arranged an easier voyage to the same end. […]taking a steam-boat at Chioggia we came before the sun had set to our haven, not to the jangle and uproar of the railway station, but to set foot first upon the very threshold of the city's beauty, the steps leading to the Grand Piazza, to the Duomo of St. Mark (SY, 201-2)

Back in Venice in May 1909, she writes to Yeats:

> I am in my old state room, at the corner of the water floor, looking through four ivy trellised windows at the sunlight on the water, and only hearing the splash of oars and a gondolier singing. The room is full of beautiful furniture, and when I came in last night, at midnight, from the long dusty journey and found the Italian housemaid who has welcomed me for twentyfive years, on the steps to kiss my hand, and other servants bringing Chianti in a flask and soup in a silver bowl, it felt like fairyland! (SY, 440)

Unluckily Italy was not always to be fairyland nor fair to her. On 23 January 1918, according to the official records of the Royal Flying Corps, Robert Gregory was shot down in error by an Italian pilot, who thought him German, as he had gone bravely across the lines and was flying back (cf. SY, 556n.) The following passage is very moving and is taken from the chapter of her autobiography entitled "My grief":

On 22 Nov.1917. Robert has gone – probably to Italy […]

On 3 Dec. [Margaret] had a cheery letter from Robert yesterday from Milan […] In Italy all along the line, the people cheered them and brought fruit and flowers […] I am glad he had such a good time after being so long at one place in France. There is danger in both countries, but Italy seems more worth fighting for, and has beauty everywhere. (SY, 551-2)

Passing to less personal matters, from the political point of view she thought Italian history, namely that long struggle for independence called the *Risorgimento*, a counterpoint to Irish history as she was witnessing it during her lifetime, mainly during the dark hours of the Black and Tans terror. In fact on 24 October 1920 she writes in her *Journals*:

I am reading Garibaldi's *Defence of the Roman Republic*, very comforting, because so many a praise of Italy's fighters and martyrs taken from its contents could stand as justly for ours. Men who would have been called to make her laws and lead her armies and write her songs and history when their day came, but they judged it becoming to die there in order that her day should come.[6]

A few days later she still reports:

27 Oct. I go on reading *Garibaldi and the Thousand*, this is not so near to our case as the Roman Republic.[7]

And finally, after a bitter remark on the satirical magazine *Punch*, she writes:

30 Oct. Reading Garibaldi still, with envy.[8]

It is very interesting to analyze the relationship between Lady Augusta and her Ireland. She identifies with her country at an almost subconscious level. Once again Italy is a useful foil to this complex feeling that creates a short circuit between nationality and subjectivity.

During her glittering days in London as wife of Sir William she met Robert Percy Ffrench, who must have been a bore and a terrible chatter-box but she adds:

Yet he would often tell things worth hearing […] Bismarck, he said, had spoken of races, "Europe is divided into two sexes – the female countries, Italy, the Celts, have their soft pleasing quality and charm of a woman and no capacity of self-government. The male countries must take them in hand." (SY, 99-100)

She was deeply offended by this patronising view that doomed both women and races to the same subjection. One should add that the question of the 'sex' of races

and the consequent 'war of sexes' as a perfect counterpoint to colonial exploitation and colonial wars was in fashion among philosophers and intellectuals at the turn of the nineteenth century. Ernst Renan, for instance, in a famous essay on "The Poetry of the Celtic Races" affirms that "the Celtic race is an essentially feminine race", while the socialist thinker Guglielmo Ferrero, whose book *L'Europa giovane* had a great influence on Joyce[9], wrote of the importance of a new role for women for the advent of a new – "young" Europe.

Augusta was a proud, bright woman. Writing her autobiography many years later, she almost inadvertently passes a serious judgement on the subject. In fact in the same page where she mentions Mr Percy Ffrench she recalls saying to herself in her youth: "I hope never to marry anyone I shall have to make small talk for," which she in fact managed not to do and married a man whose stimulating presence made her intelligence bloom. She ends the chapter by ironically turning Bismarck's patronising remark upside-down: "Ireland is a female country with masculine ideals and England is a masculine country with female ideals". (SY, 351)

* * *

The first part of my paper provides a mannered portrait of an accomplished Victorian lady, visiting Italy and enjoying its landscape and language, its culture and historical past – nothing new – but in her later years our lady was to become one of the leaders of the Irish Dramatic Movement, a woman of action and strong will, a friend of poets and artists; she was to reveal an artistic talent of which she was the first to be astonished. But her interest in Italy and Italian culture never failed and provided new stimuli.

At the beginning of her own fruitful adventure, in 1899, Lady Gregory wrote of Eleonora Duse's plan of building an open air theatre near Rome in the Alban Hills, where Italian literary plays might be produced. She was fully aware of the practical difficulties of such an ambitious project, which she was to face soon after on her turn and says:

> [Duse's] idea was to find forty noble ladies – Signore Nobili – who would give or guarantee each a thousand francs. But Italy is passing through a time of financial stress and strain. There were not enough noble ladies, or they were not noble enough. Duse has given up, for the time, the idea of a material building.[10]

She concluded her article in *The Daily Express* by thus commenting: "We have, indeed, no Duse as yet, but as in Italy the actress called forth the play, perhaps in Ireland the play may bring an actress into being".

To this Ann Saddlemeyer rightly adds: "In later years the plays did produce the actors in Ireland, but the theatre [the Abbey] called forth more playrights".[12]

Moreover Lady Gregory was fully aware of the differences between the two schools of acting, Italian and Irish. In an interview in *The New York Daily Tribune* of November 26, 1911, she says:

> Last year I saw the Sicilian players [she is probably speaking of the company of the famous actor Angelo Musco who was then touring England] and was deeply interested in their use of gesture. So wonderfully sensitive are these people's hands to form and action that their plays could have been understood by watching their gestures only. The directors of that company had realized the natural trait of the people and had developed it into an art that was full of meaning. In the same way we [she is obviously referring to herself and Yeats] realized that the Irish are not light and graceful in movement and quick of manner and action, so we did not try to cultivate these traits in them. We realized that they had beautiful voices naturally, so we let gesticulation count for very little and developed the subtle shades of the voice and depend on their vocal power for dramatic effect.[13]

And *Spreading the News* of all her plays provides a wonderful example of how hers is not a "comedy of manners" nor a "comedy of humours" but in fact is a "comedy of rumours", of voices.

Yeats and Gregory have often been accused by critics of having created a nationalistic theatre, narrow in its scope and therefore doomed to implosion after the glorious years. This is not true if we look carefully at their plans and experiments as reported in *Our Irish Theatre.* They were fully aware of the need to introduce the whole Western Dramatic tradition in their repertory. In *Paragraphs from Samhain, 1909*, we read:

> The creation of a folk drama was,[…], but a part of the original scheme, and now that it has been accomplished we can enlarge our activities, bringing within our range more and more of the life of Ireland, and finding adequate expression for the acknowledged masterpieces of the world. A theatre, as we conceive it, should contain in its repertory plays from the principal dramatic schools. We have begun with three plays by Molière, – as their affinities with folk drama have made them easy to our players. During our next season we shall add to them one of Goldoni's comedies. Our players have, however, given a good deal of their time to the speaking of verse, and we are about to produce *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles.[14]

This is how Goldoni came into her life. By the end of 1909 after spending her spring holidays in Venice, Lady Augusta set about translating Goldoni's *La Locandiera*. It was a difficult task, as Gabriele Baldini points out in his OUP edition of the play:

> Goldoni is one who, with others such as Rabelais and Joyce, is doomed to lose much in translation.[…] the reader should be warned from the beginning that, to get at the very heart of Goldoni's gift as a dramatist, he ought to learn or polish up his Italian, and indulge in long stays in Venice in order to grasp all the subtleties of Venetian dialect. Indeed, some experience of Venice and of the Venetian atmosphere is more necessary to an understanding of Goldoni than any knowledge of the literary and theatrical background.[15]

One might say that Lady Gregory was well-equipped for her job. Not only she knew Venice but moreover Palazzo Cappello-Layard was exactly opposite the Teatro S. Angelo on the other side of the Grand Canal. In this theatre Goldoni worked from 1747 to 1752 and there *La Locandiera* opened on the eve of 26 December 1752. *La Locandiera* was, in fact, Goldoni's last play for the company of Girolamo Medebac, who exploited him with a binding contract, but whom he left in 1753 after having made a new contract with the Noble Vendramin, owner of the Teatro S.Luca at the other end of the sestiere of St. Mark.

If these are mere coincidences, there was at least one good reason for choosing *La Locandiera* and that is that Lady Gregory always remembered Eleonora Duse's performance as Mirandolina in London at the turn of the century:

> Many years ago I had the joy of seeing Duse in the ironing scene; and the lovely movements of her hands and the beauty of her voice that called 'Fabrizio'! are still clear in my memory.[16]

The 1910's were important years for the Abbey. While Lady Gregory was probably busy translating Goldoni's play, which she entitled *Mirandolina*, the beginning of 1910 brought new theatrical ideas to Yeats. Gordon Craig, the English stage-manager and experimentalist, had agreed to produce *Hamlet* for Stanislavsky's Moskow Art Theatre and had already begun planning it to be staged with his screens, the "thousand scenes in one scene", and had also begun to work on designs to illustrate Yeats's *Plays for an Irish Theatre*. When they met on 7 January 1910, Craig's description of his system fired Yeats's enthusiasm. Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory:

> *8 Jan. 1910*: I am to see his model on Monday at 5 – I think I shall, if it seems right, order one for us.[…]I asked if we would get his scene in time for Oedipus but he wants us to play about with his model first and master its effects. If we accept the invention I must agree, he says, to use it for all my poetical work in the future. I would gladly agree. […]That we shall have a means of staging everything that is not naturalistic, and that out of his invention may grow a completely new method even for our naturalistic plays. I think we could get rid of side scenes even for naturalistic plays.[17]

We shall see how Yeats's intent was faithfully accomplished by Lady Gregory, who used her *Mirandolina* as guinea-pig for Yeats's experiments, getting rid of side scenes and – in a second version of the play – actually getting rid of two characters, the two actresses.

But now let us see in some detail what Craig's method was. Edward Gordon Craig speaks thus of his invention:

> [It] consists in the use of a series of double-jointed folding screens standing on the stage and painted in monochrome – preferably white or pale yellow. The Screens may be used as background and […] may be so arranged as to project into the foreground at various angles of perspective so as to suggest various physical conditions, such as, for example, the corner of a street, or the interior of a building.[18]

Yeats plotted the results of his experiments with the model stage and the screens in a small quarto notebook, which remains in the possession of the Yeats family and reveals how intensely he worked at the application of Craig's principles to the needs of the Abbey Theatre stage. As I had no opportunity of seeing the notebook myself, we have to rely on what Liam Miller tells us about the pages dedicated to the staging of *Mirandolina*:

> The notebook opens with a series of sketches and notes based on Lady Gregory's play *Mirandolina* which was first produced at the Abbey on 24 February 1910. Yeats arrived back in Dublin for the first production of The Green Helmet on 10 February and looked at the rehearsals of *Mirandolina*, full of enthusiasm for Craig's scenery. He revealed his new view of stage presentation in a note printed in the Abbey Theatre programme of the first performance: "The rather unsatisfactory scenic arrangements have been made necessary by the numerous little scenes, and the necessity of making the intervals between them as short as possible. We hope before very long to have a better convention for plays of the kind."
>
> The *Mirandolina* notes occupy pages 1 to 11 of the notebook and begin with a blurred watercolour sketch, probably a front elevation, with the word "kitchen" on top left and, below a drawing, a note that seems to read "spotty lemon yellow".[19]

The rest is more or less a list of possible colouring of screens carefully registered by Miller. It is clear that the Abbey Theatre producers had to cope with many difficulties in staging a play that needs two scenes in Act I, another two in Act II and two more in Act III. This first performance of Lady Gregory's version of Goldoni's play might have persuaded her to cut the scenes with the two strolling players, but as it was the shortened version that she chose for the first edition published in 1924, the cut must be seen in the perspective of her more mature artistic awareness.

When speaking of a play, one should take into account whatever is available of its first performance and we are very lucky to have a first-hand report of the evening of February 1910. Joseph Holloway, the Abbey Theatre equivalent of Samuel Pepys, is openly harsh on the "unsatisfactory scenic arrangements" for which Yeats himself had apologized in the programme of the first performance. Obviously the notes on *Mirandolina* were not included by Robert Hogan and Michael J. O'Neill[20] in their published selection from Holloway's journals, so we are quoting directly from the manuscript, which is in the Dublin National Library. It was difficult to make out Holloway's handwriting, but it was worth doing so. He begins by referring to Duse's performance in London mentioned by Lady Gregory:

> Eleonora Duse made a big hit in the role of the beautiful hostess of the Inn – Mirandolina – in the original Italian comedy and when I saw her play in it eight or nine years ago in London I remember I was charmed with her vivacity and coquettry. […] Miss Irene Vanbrugh appeared in an English version of the comedy as the fair bewitcher in England with a fair amount of success, though she was overshadowed by the charm of Duse's portrait.[21]

Then he speaks of the Dublin production with exceptional skill and competence:

> In a pièce so much out of their line as this – a comedy of manners – the Abbey players did remarkably well and when they fairly got started entered merrily into the spirit of the fun of things. The pinkcloths with the lavatorylike arrangement of doors and crude untrimmed windows were very trying to play in front of, but one nearly forgot them in the brighteness of the playing. I think Maire O'Neill as the coquettish, yet prudent Mirandolina, would have looked more captivating had she worn a cap and made less a feature of her patience. She was particularly good in her scenes of fascination with the at first unwilling Captain [Cavaliere Ripafratta] and her playing foretold that when she became more accostumed to the role she would be a right-merry little witch of an innkeeper […] a few performances make a great difference with the artistic perfection of the playing of this company as a rule. […] The dresses were good but the terrible scenery killed their effectiveness. Pink in this case was not the pink of perfection! […] Eileen O'Doherty and Eithne Magee, as two strolling players acted well but without sufficient sparkle. Two such merry maids would surely have more of the devil of mischief in them![22]

It is time to move from the stage to the page as the scene of the Abbey production had been entirely due to Yeats's choice. Holloway notices that Lady Gregory was not even present that night. He adds:

> It is a merry delightful comedy well translated into English by Lady Gregory. Luckily for the success of the pièce the English was not kiltartanized as in her translations from the French of Molière.[23]

If the critic preferred the neat polished English of the 1910 production, Lady Gregory worked in a quite different direction in successive re-writings of the play as she writes in the introductory note to the 1924 first published edition: "I translated Goldoni's *La Locandiera*, calling it *Mirandolina*, for the Abbey Theatre, thinking it in key with our country comedies".[24]

The choice of this one play among the others written by Goldoni was definitely hers and this is very interesting, as it is interesting to notice how constantly she went back to her translation which became an adaptation, a creative re-writing. With the passing of time Gregory's artistic awareness became more sophisticated. Sometimes she seems to anticipate Yeats's "minimalist" later plays. One thinks of *Purgatory* in reading the following passage:

> […] I wrote *Grania* with only three persons in it […] I may have gone too far, and have, I think, given up an intention I at one time had of writing a play for a man and a scarecrow only, but one has to go on with experiment or interest in creation fades.[25]

In the introduction to the first published edition of *Mirandolina* Lady Gregory speaks of a later production I could not find note of. On that occasion she cut down the number of parts. Due to Kathleen Barrington's great kindness I was given an unhoped-for piece of information, taken from the Abbey's unpublished archives in which the play is mentioned again after 1910 in the year 1914. Thus Gregory speaks of her decision:

> When we were putting it on again I left out two characters, the actresses, as I found the scenes into which they come delayed the action and were not needed. And I gave the whole play at that time an Irish setting, so getting a greater ease in the speaking and in the acting. And even now that it is back again in Italy, the dialogue is in places less bound to the word than to the spirit of the play.[26]

From what she said of the difference between Italian and Irish actors, "the shades of the voice", the spoken word was the most relevant element in her dramatic theory. She was aiming at naturalness, at simplicity; the ease of the spoken word is characteristic of her best plays. This was also at the root of her translations. In 1923 she was again working hard on *Mirandolina*, re-writing the missing part of the two strolling players, as she writes in her journal:

> *24 Aug. 1923*: Fagan writes asking if he may use my *Mirandolina* for his Oxford Theatre. 'It is so full of life and charm and so infinitely better than the wooden one beautifully published by Clifford Bax.' But he wants to put back the Dejanira scene, and to call the play *Mine Hostess*. I am agreeing reluctantly to the scene but refusing to change the name as Putnam is publishing the play under that name and my chief desire in translating or indeed writing a play is to get it into a spoken language, and I don't think 'Mine Hostess' belongs to any language I have heard.[27]

Fagan is referring to the Palmer edition of *Four Comedies*, one of which is *Mine Hostess* translated by Clifford Bax, published in London in 1922 and reprinted in the OUP edition of *Three Comedies* with an introduction of Gabriele Baldini. Lady Gregory's – though a truncated version – is far better than the literal translation of Bax. As further and perhaps funny evidence it is worth mentioning that the first translation of the play in Chinese by Chias-Chu-Yin was based on the English of Lady Gregory, published in Pekin in 1927 and reprinted in *Selected Plays* in 1957.

Her refusal to use Bax's title for the play is also very significant as it implies a sort of affectionate possession of the hostess, the female subjugation she would never accept. For much the same reason her dislike of the scenes with the two strolling players is also worth noticing, as the two actresses are stereotyped versions of female coquetry without brains.

Going back from page to stage, we have the reviews on *The Manchester Guardian* (18 Aug. 1925) and on *The Saturday Review* (22 Aug., same year). The reviewer speaks of a production of Lady Gregory's "shortened" *Mirandolina* directed by Edith Craig, with Miss Ruth Bower in the leading role at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, London. After having gone into a long comparison between Molière and Goldoni, affirming that "comparisons of Goldoni with Molière are as senseless as contrasting a sugar dainty with a joint of beef" – the reviewer obviously being a "Beef-eater" – he thinks that: "Lady Gregory has not been fair to little Carlo. He wrote a thin play and she has made it thinner",[28] adding that

> This narrowing of canvas is a mistake. Without the playful ladies the jejune quality of the intrigue is emphasised, and Lady Gregory has taken from Goldoni without adding at all richly from her individual and powerful resources of comic invention. It needs an obstinate faith in the eighteenth century to carry one with relish through such a pièce as *Mirandolina*, but that faith is burning strong at the moment and Goldoni should profit by its warmth.[29]

On the contrary, Lady Gregory's translation is still very modern: it has a fast pace and a pleasant rhythm. It is less than half its original length. It is divided into three acts and five scenes instead of sixty one. It requires only two scenes: large room at an

Inn, with rough furniture and three doors; in Act III, a table and linen to be ironed; Captain's Parlour in Act II is furnished with a table laid for dinner.

Some observations are to be made. The famous aside of Act I, sc.ix which is Mirandolina's *manifesto* and sums up her intentions, is dispersed into bits and pieces in dialogues with other characters, with the result that she never speaks directly to her audience, losing the wonderful explicit accomplicity with her public which was a feature of the *Commedia dell'Arte* that Goldoni thus skilfully uses:

> Scena nona
> *Mirandolina sola.*
>
> Uh, che mai ha detto! L'eccellentissimo signor Marchese Arsura mi sposerebbe! Eppure, se mi volesse sposare, vi sarebbe una piccola difficoltà. Io non lo vorrei. Mi piace l'arrosto, e del fumo non so che farne. Se avessi sposati tutti quelli che hanno detto volermi, oh, avrei pure tanti mariti! Quanti arrivano a questa locanda, tutti di me s'innamorano, tutti mi fanno i cascamorti; e tanti e tanti mi esibiscono di sposarmi a dirittura. E questo signor cavaliere, rustico come un orso, mi tratta sì bruscamente? Questi è il primo forestiere capitato alla mia locanda, il quale non abbia avuto piacere di trattare con me. Non dico che tutti in un salto s'abbiano a innamorare: ma disprezzarmi così? È una cosa che mi muove la bile terribilmente. E' nemico delle donne? Non le può vedere? Povero Pazzo! Non avrà ancora trovato quella che sappia fare. Ma la troverà. La troverà. E chissà che non l'abbia trovata? Con questi per l'appunto mi ci metto di picca. Quei che mi corrono dietro, presto presto mi annoiano. La nobiltà non fa per me. La ricchezza la stimo e non la stimo. Tutto il mio piacere consiste in vedermi servita, vagheggiata, adorata. Questa è la mia debolezza, e questa è la debolezza di quasi tutte le donne. A maritarmi non ci penso nemmeno; non ho bisogno di nessuno; vivo onestamente e godo la mia libertà. Tratto con tutti, ma non m'innamoro mai di nessuno. Voglio burlarmi di tante caricature di amanti spasimati; e voglio usar tutta l'arte per vincere, abbattere e conquassare quei cuori barbari e duri che son nemici di noi, che siamo la miglior cosa che abbia prodotto al mondo la bella madre natura.

In Lady Gregory's hands it becomes:

Mirandolina. That man is no better than a bear.
Count. Dear Mirandolina, if he knew you he would be at your feet.
Mirandolina. I don't want him at my feet, but I don't like to be made little of.
Count. He is a woman hater. He can't bear the sight of them.
Mirandolina. The poor foolish creature! He hasn't met yet with the woman who knows how to manage him – but he'll find her – he'll find her or maybe…maybe…he *has* found her! I hope she will punish him and put him

down…and conquer him and get the better of him and teach him not to run down the best thing Mother Nature ever put a hand to![30]

[…]

Marquis. By all that's damnable…I would marry you! (*Goes out*)

Mirandolina. (*looking out of door after him*). Oh! What is it he said? Your High Excellency the Marquis Misery would think of marrying me! But if you should wish to marry me, there is one little bar in the way…I myself would not wish it.[31]

[…]

*Fabrizio.*But I am someway thin-skinned. There are some things I cannot put up with. Sometimes it seems as if you will have me, and other times that you will not have me. You say you are not giddy but you always take your own way.

Mirandolina. But what sort of an owl do you take me for? A bit of vanity? A fool? I'm astonished at you…What are strangers to me, that are here to-day and gone to-morrow? If I treat them well it is for my own interest and the creditof the house. I live honestly and I like my freedom; I amuse myself with everybody but I fall in love with nobody. […][32]

Act I gives us another example of Lady Gregory's manipulation-adaptation of Goldoni's play to her ideas. The two suitors, the mean Marquis and the prodigal Count give Mirandolina gifts after the practice of courtship in Goldoni's age, but our Lady's practical and puritanical attitude to money prevents her from putting up with such an irrational liberality; therefore she inserts a reason for their generosity: the gifts are given Mirandolina on the eve of her birthday!

A little further on the translator unwillingly censors the text. After having openly declared her intentions to make the Captain, a woman-hater fall in love with her before night, Mirandolina goes to his apartment with the excuse of giving him a better set of linen.

Captain. (*turns his back*) Give the things to my servant, or leave them there. You need not put yourself to so much trouble.

Mirandolina. (*making a grimace behind him mimicking his manner*). Oh, it is no trouble at all, when it is for someone like you.

Captain. Well, well, that will do; I don't want anything more.

Mirandolina. I will put it in the cupboard.[33]

Goldoni was much more malicious than the Irish lady and knew 'the way of the world' and the tricks of erotic charm, as his Mirandolina answers: "La metterò nell'alcova.", which was in fact a built-in cupboard covered with a curtain near the bed, therefore *alcova* means that particular cupboard and metaphorically also '*bed-chamber'*. Mirandolina is therefore threatening the Captain's own privacy. At the utmost efforts of her coquetry she reveals the strength of her determination, an almost male attitude to

conquer and possess. Remembering what Gregory made of Bismarck's words about races, Mirandolina is here represented as a woman "with masculine ideals".

This brings about the final point that this article aims at: to understand the reason of Lady Gregory's partiality for *La Locandiera* among Goldoni's plays.

Mary Lou Kohfeldt in her *Lady Gregory – The Woman Behind the Irish Renaissance* very perceptively writes:

> As usual, even the plays Augusta chose to translate were part of her creative process of the plays she wrote, adding sidelights, presenting themes in another light, and while she was working on [*Grania*], she translated Mirandolina […] the plot of which is a comic parallel to Grania. In it the charming inn-keeper Mirandolina, in no hurry to marry the suitable man to whom her father betrothed her before he died, discovers a woman-hater lodging at her inn and sets out to conquer him. Her wooing is a comic version of the mysterious fated love Grania feels for Diarmuid, Mirandolina telling her woman-hater she feels for him 'this sympathy, this feeling for one another…sometimes found even between people who have never met.' She succeeds so well with him that his attentions frighten her. She sends him away and gives her hand to Fabrizio, her father's choice, saying of her suitor: "He is gone and will not return, and if the matter is over now I call myself lucky[…]" Mirandolina side-steps love, gives up her dangerous freedom and makes the conventional marriage her father chose for her. Grania insists on having her love and gets into all sorts of trouble because of it, but in the end she too makes the conventional marriage her father chose for her.[34]

I do not entirely agree with Kohfeldt. Mirandolina is the comic equivalent of Grania but the comparison works at a deeper level than their acceptance of their fathers' choice. Lady Gregory was perfectly aware of the fact that Mirandolina belongs as well as Grania to "the strong people of the world"[35] she liked best. Of her tragic heroine she said: "Grania had more power of will and for good or evil twice took the shaping of her life into her own hands".[36]

In 1973 the Italian critic Arnaldo Momo passes a similar judgement on Mirandolina:

> The locandiera hides behind the mask of honest love and acceptance of her dead father's will, her truly feminist choice of a life of independent, self-supporting work, that only her marriage to Fabrizio, a servant at her inn, cannot seriously threaten.[37]

Grania shares Mirandolina's clear-mindedness and determination – no matter if to a different aim – Grania tells the old king to whom she has returned after her tormented love affair with Diarmuid:

> You are craving to get rid of me now, and to put me away out of your thoughts, the same as Diarmuid did. But I will not go! I will hold you to your word, and I will take my revenge on him […][38]

What the two women are fighting for is their right to be taken into account, not as means of pleasure or service, but as human beings, mates or partners even in tyranny or business. In fact, they both want to be in a man's "thoughts", not in his heart.

The protagonists of Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, the masterpiece of eighteenth century libertinism, are nearer to Lady Gregory's heroines than any Romantic counterpart. Life has little to do with love and a lot to do with strong will and control both of oneself and of others. Lady Augusta Gregory, neé Persse, eminent member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy had reasons to look back at Neo-Classicism, the age of reason and empiricism: Hobbes, Burke, Congreve, Molière but also Goldoni loom in her background.

Notes

1 This paper draws upon some material published earlier in Italy, namely the article "Lady Gregory, l'Italia e Goldoni", in *Il Veltro – Rivista della civiltà italiana*, 5-6, Anno XXXIV, Settembre-Dicembre 1990, pp.494-503 and upon a lecture given at University College Dublin in May 1989 at the joint invitation of the English and Italian Departments.

2 Lady A. Gregory, *Seventy Years – Being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory,* edited and with a foreword by Colin Smythe, New York, Macmillan, 1974. [We shall refer to this work as SY.]

3 Lady A. Gregory, "Coole", Colin Smythe ed., Dublin, Dolmen, 1971, quoted in *Catalogue of Printed Books Formerly in the Library at Coole – the Property of the Lady Gregory Estate*, sold by auction by Sotheby & Co. on 20-21 March 1972.

4 Cf. *Catalogue*, cit.

5 Bernard Hickey, "Lady Gregory: Coole and Ca' Cappello Layard", *Yeats the European*, A.Norman Jeffares ed., Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1989.

6 Lady A. Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals*, vol.1, Daniel J. Murphy ed., Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1978, p. 195

7 Ibid., p.196

8 Ibidem. The books she mentions were among those sold in 1972 and are thus described in the *Catalogue of Printed Books formerly at the Library at Coole – The Property of the Lady Gregory Estate*: "Trevelyan (G.M.) *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, 1914; *Garibaldi and the Thousand*, 1916; *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy*, 1919, all plates, cloth, a little worn, with Lady Gregory's bookplate."(cit., p.60)

9 Cf. Giorgio Melchiori, a cura di, *Joyce in Rome – The Genesis of 'Ulysses'*, Rome, Bulzoni, 1984, pp. 31-56.

10 Lady A. Gregory, "An Italian Literary Drama", *The Daily Express*, 8 Apr. 1899,

11 Ibidem.

12 Ann Saddlemeyer, *In Defence of Lady Gregory*, Dublin, Dolmen, 1966, p.17

13 "A Repertory Theatre", *Lady Gregory – Interviews and Recollections*, E. H. Mikhail ed., Totowa, New Jersey, Rowman and Littlefield, 1977, pp. 49-50

14 Lady A. Gregory, "Paragraphs from Samhain, 1909", *Our Irish Theatre – A Chapter of Autobiography*, with a foreword by Roger McHugh, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1972, p.198.
15 Carlo Goldoni, *Three Comedies*, selected and introduced by Gabriele Baldini, Oxford University Press, 1961, p.VII
16 Lady A. Gregory, *The Translations and Adaptation of Lady Gregory and Her Collaborations with Douglas Hyde and W.B. Yeats, Collected Plays*, vol.IV, edited and with a foreword by Ann Saddlemyer, Gerrards Cross, Colin Smythe, 1979, p.360
17 Liam Miller, *The Noble Drama of William Butler Yeats*, Dublin, Dolmen Press,1977, p. 148
18 Ibid., p.151
19 Ibid., pp. 154-5.
20 Robert Hogan – Michael J. O'Neill, eds., *Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre*, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1967.
21 Joseph Holloway, *Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer*, Ms Holloway 1809, vol.I, 1910, NLI, Dublin.
22 Ibidem
23 Ibidem
24 Lady A. Gregory, *Collected Plays*, cit.
25 Lady A. Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre*, cit., p. 57
26 Lady A. Gregory, *Collected Plays*, cit.
27 Lady A. Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals*, cit., p. 474
28 *The Saturday Review*, 22 Aug. 1925.
29 *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 Aug. 1925.
30 Lady A. Gregory, *Mirandolina, Collected Plays*, vol.IV, cit., p.200
31 Ibid., p.201
32 Ibid.,p.202
33 Ibid., p.205
34 Mary Lou Kohfeldt, *Lady Gregory – The Woman Behind the Irish Renaissance*, London, André Deutsch, 1984, pp.213-14.
35 Ann Saddlemeyer, cit., p63
36 Lady A. Gregory, *Note to 'Grania',The Tragedies and Tragic-Comedies of Lady Gregory, Collected Works*, vol.II, cit., p.283
37 Arnaldo Momo, "Goldoni e i militari", *Il punto su Goldoni*, a cura di Giuseppe Petronio,Bari, Laterza, 1986, p.140
38 Lady A.Gregory, *Grania*, Collected Plays, vol.II, cit., p.44.

Teenagers' "Gender Trouble" and Trickster Aesthetics in Gina Moxley's Danti Dan

Mária Kurdi

Abstract: *Recently a type of drama has emerged in Ireland with characters representing isolated social groups that were overlooked or considered as marginal. It includes plays with teenagers as protagonists, conceived by writers who seem to be inspired by the realization that the treatment of, and possibilities for children and youth are indicators of a society's moral health. Christina Reid's* Joyriders *(1986),* Brownbread *(1986) by Roddy Doyle, and Enda Walsh's* Disco Pigs *(1996) are a few notable examples.* Danti Dan*, Gina Moxley's 1995 play is set in rural Ireland during the summer of 1970, with the parents not yet conscious of the fact that their children respond to a rapidly changing world and its sexual challenges in ways very different from the traditional patterns.*

The present paper applies the trickster aesthetics as its main theoretical position, to create a discursive space for the investigation of a set of issues surrounding and underpinning the central concern of the play, the "gender trouble" of teenagers in the particular Irish context which has a still largely patriarchal structure. As a parallel, the analysis relies on the trickster signification in Toni Morrison's novel Sula *(1973), deploys the feminist psychology of Nancy Chodorow, and draws from Teresa Lauretis's discussion of gender representation in "Technologies of Gender."*

Context and Introduction

Charting the three main trends in the history of twentieth century Irish drama Fintan O'Toole argues that by our time Ireland itself has ceased to be "one shared place" (57), but is regarded as one stratified and plural. This changing view seems to be catalytic

to the evolution of a type of drama in which the characters represent relatively isolated social groups that have been overlooked or considered as marginal before, for instance immigrants, class, gender, or other minorities identifiable by profession, status, or age. Some recent plays choose teenagers as their protagonists, and expand the scope of Irish drama through negotiating the space available to children and young people as an indication of the society's moral functioning. Using this particular focus, the plays offer a considerable variety of situations in which the interaction between groups or individuals so far neglected in the theatre, and their social environment becomes highlighted and problematized. Christina Reid's *Joyriders* (1986) addresses sixteen- to eighteen year-old youngsters' common vulnerability and lack of adequate economic prospects in the Troubles-ridden context of Northern Ireland; *Brownbread* (1986) by Roddy Doyle presents how a few teenage boys abduct and hold a priest hostage by way of rebellion. Set in the uninspiring milieu of a run-down Cork neighbourhood, Enda Walsh's *Disco Pigs* (1996) portrays the fragility of two seventeen year-olds' emotional relationship.

In *Danti Dan* (1995), actress Gina Moxley's first play, all the five characters are young people in their teens. The whole action is set outdoors, on and near a bridge with a low parapet, signifying the characters' transitory space between childhood and adulthood, reinforced also by the quotation from Derek Mahon's poem "Girls on the Bridge," which serves as an epigraph. Apart from its overt symbolism, Moxley's choice of this outside location for her drama about teenagers evokes a sense of freedom but also a measure of insecurity, due to the absence of a home in terms of shelter which, according to Hanna Scolnicov, can be "redefined as the child's space" in contemporary women playwrights' work "concerned with the well-being of children" (159). The emotional homelessness of Moxley's youngsters is further enhanced by the fact that no adults appear on stage whom they could rely on for help or guidance. In rural Ireland, where the action takes place during the summer of 1970, most parents were as yet completely unaware of the intensity with which their children responded to a fast changing world and its diverse challenges, including the consequences of the sexual revolution, and continued to presume unsophisticated innocence and expect "no accountability" as Moxley remarks in her afterword to the play (73).

Left to their own resources, the teenage characters of *Danti Dan* become entangled in various sexual activities and the unfolding story climaxes in a catastrophic event. Sixteen-year old Ber(nadette), who is going out with eighteen-year-old Noel, soon must discover her unwanted pregnancy. Her younger sister, Dolores is friends with an uncommonly intelligent thirteen year-old girl nicknamed Cactus, who eagerly tries to involve her in the sexual games she initiates. The fifth of the cast is fourteen-year-old Dan, a mentally retarded boy with a functioning age of eight who plays cowboy, and can easily be manipulated. Cactus and Dan emerge as central characters: in spite of their well-marked intellectual difference, they both experience isolation and loneliness which gradually locks them in a fatal connection. Bribing the boy to perform whatever she wants, Cactus uses him as an accomplice to satisfy her sexual curiosity and, finally,

enraged because Dan no longer keeps their secret, pushes the capping stone off the pillar of the bridge where he is standing. Witnessed by all the others, Dan falls into the river with a thud and drowns there.

A notable parallel to the strategically gendered tragic outcome of Moxley's drama can be traced in the contemporary ethnic American novel. The crucial early scene of Toni Morrison's novel *Sula* (1973), also set in summer, has twelve-year old bosom friends Sula and Nel, for whom "the new theme" (55) is the discovery of men, watch boys at swimming, and become intoxicated by the lushness of nature in the forest. In this context of sexual awakening, by an act both performative and transformative, the excited Sula helps a small boy, nicknamed Chicken Little for his awkwardness, to climb high up on a tree and gain satisfaction and pride through the adventure. Then, grabbing him by the hands, she swings him outward, and while he is shrieking in "frightened joy" (60) she releases his hands to let his body fly in the air, only to see him, together with Nel, fall and sink in the water of the nearby river in the next minute.

Re-Gendering Victimization: Enter the Trickster

In Moxley's drama it is a girl who hurts and humiliates a boy, and even causes his death in the process of, and as a result of, adolescent sexual activities. John Fairleigh, a critic of the play rightly observes that here the playwright "reverses the gender stereotypes usually associated with stories of agressive sexuality" (xi), by contesting the conventional, male representations of the issue, in which the girl's body becomes the site of victimization. For the latter kind of treatment Frank Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* constitutes a classical example which, in 1891, shocked the audience with its dramatization of the highly unorthodox subject of uncontrolled adolescent sexuality, entailing the death of a girl caused by an unprofessionally performed abortion. Revolutionary because of its theme, yet Wedekind's portrayal can be challenged by applying the propositions of Teresa De Lauretis about gender representation. Admitting the influence of Michel Foucault's theorizing of sexuality, she claims that gender is (a) representation, it is constructed through representation, therefore is the product of various "institutionalized discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life" (2). To select the girl as victim in *Frühlings Erwachen* was in accordance with mainstream ideologies, ingrained social stereotypes, and a range of other aspects of the ethos of the author's time, which determined the ways that femininity was constructed/represented.

Moxley has chosen a different path, in that she experiments with the representation of gender in *Danti Dan*. By introducing new configurations into the portrayal of young people, the play subverts the expectations that conventional narratives about the subject of gender relations tend to evoke. The dramatic strategy she deploys is best assessed in terms of Jill Dolan's formulation:

> Theatre might become more of a workplace than a showplace. Our socially constructed gender roles are inscribed in our language and in our bodies. The stage, then, is a proper place to explore gender ambiguity, not to expunge it cathartically from society but to play with, confound, and deconstruct gender categories. If we stop considering the stage as a mirror of reality, we can use it as a laboratory [...]. (Senelick 7-8)

Considering the theatre as one of the "social technologies" (De Lauretis 1987, 2) that produce gender through ways of representation and self-representation, the individual character of a play can be discussed in view of his or her relation to the process.

The reversal of the stereotype of the victimized teenager as a girl is reinforced through Moxley's investing Cactus, the young female victimizer, with certain traits of the trickster figure. The present article applies the trickster aesthetics as its main theoretical position, to create a discursive space for the investigation of a set of issues surrounding and underpinning the central concern of the play, the "gender trouble" of teenagers in the particular Irish context which has a still largely patriarchal structure. As in the Irish cultural tradition the trickster has been male and adult; the choice of a female teenager for a similar function underscores the subversive nature of the strategy. On the one hand, the girl's trickster features will be seen against the author's native heritage that Alan Harrison's book, *The Irish Trickster* analyzes. The parallels between Cactus and Sula, on the other hand, facilitate the consideration of Moxley's character as a dramatic realization of the postmodern trickster, recurrent in the fiction of contemporary American ethnic women writers like Morrison, Louise Erdrich, and Maxine Hong Kingston, as discussed by Jeanne Rosier Smith's study *Writing Tricksters: Mythic Gambols in American Ethnic Literature*. According to Smith, the use of trickster figures like Sula makes sense when "embedded in a cultural context" (xii). Though without ethnic signification, Moxley's drama provides a unique context for the revitalization of the trope, insofar as Cactus is member of a kind of minority culture in her society, namely of youth.

The trickster character in literature is usually presented as an outsider who does not fully belong, refuses to conform, and, therefore, incites and mobilizes certain feelings and attitudes in his/her community. In the Irish context, where the tolerance of otherness is still relatively fragile, the outsider's anomalous status can serve to expose the nature of individual reactions, and the underlying communal values for scrutiny. Unmistakably, Cactus bears the mark of being an outsider on several levels. Her deliberate eccentricities manifest themselves even in her looks and clothing, since she has the kind of "ragged appearance" that Harrison attributes to the trickster (77), entering in the third scene "*tomboyishly dressed, [with] sticky out hair*" (7) and later "*in her usual duds, and wearing sunglasses*" (37) beside Dolores who, as required by the occasion, is wearing her Sunday's best. Moreover, like that of Sula, Cactus' behaviour shows disregard if not overt contempt for most social values (see Smith 115). On her first appearance in the play she busies

herself by carefully arranging slices of ham along the parapet of the bridge, as if in mockery of the practice that the grocery shop of the village is eager to sell out the meat goods because of the uncommonly hot weather. In addition, Cactus is treated as an outsider right from the beginning: the first reference to her contains Ber's abusive label "that snobby little bitch" (7), and the wish that she and Dolores cease to talk to each other. Even the two teenagers closest to her own age, Dan and Dolores, form a party that excludes her: she arrives at the bridge in scene seven to find that "*They shoot at her from either side*" (30) for a joke. These details involve unsubstantial prejudice, as well as an amount of insensitivity toward Cactus as a person.

Cactus' difference must be, to a considerable degree, bound up with the loss of her mother, which corresponds to the twelve-year old Sula's disappointing experience of overhearing her mother say: "[...] I love Sula. I just don't like her" (57). While never mentioning her father with whom she lives, Cactus, in her turn, remembers her mother's figure a couple of times, once mentioning that she "didn't want me" (21), which suggests that she probably never got emotional support from her. In want of a reliable and caring mother figure or at least the memory of having had one in the past, both girls' female socialization can be seen as meaningfully deviating from the ordinary process that Nancy Chodorow studies in which women are "initially brought up in a feminine world, with mothers seemingly powerful and prestigious, a world in which it is desirable to acquire a feminine identity" (41). The feminine training of Sula and Cactus primarily just to "be" like most other women remains, thus, incomplete, and they appear to wish to retain the "natural inclination" of their early childhood to "do" like men, create, "risk their lives, have projects," in the manner that Simone de Beauvoir distinguishes the two contrary positions (qtd. in Chodorow 33). They embody restless characters who have no reverence for qualities like loyalty, acceptance, and motherly caring for the weaker.

Ostensibly existing on the margin of her social group, Cactus assumes the liminality and spirit of wandering attributed to the trickster figure, which gains visual representation in the drama. Able to move between spaces and levels with uninhibited freedom, she favours to occupy or cross threshold-like passageways and territories, climbing through the gate that leads from the bridge to the riverside and the cornfields, or perching herself on its capping stone. Broken and dangerously loose, the stone signifies the link between her precarious situation and, as she implies in her final denial of responsibility for Dan's death, the County Council's neglect to have replaced it, which she summarizes by the judgement that "Something was bound to happen" (70). Her capacity to transcend also the boundaries of time in trickster fashion as discussed by Harrington (25) is indicated by her lack of concern about time. She does not allow herself to be confined by a schedule of social duties, in opposition to the other characters whose conspicuous obsession with time derives from the deep-seated sense of obligation to observe the rules and expectations of the surrounding culture. Ber, Dolores, and Dan frequently check their own or someone else's watch, so as not to be late for their respective occupations and programs, even when it means just having the afternoon tea in the

family circle. Cactus' professed lack of hunger at teatime (8), so unlike a teenager, invites being interpreted in terms of Lilian R. Furst's consideration of the signifying potential of disorderly eating habits. It seems to function as "a vehicle for self-assertion as a rebellion against a dominant ethos unacceptable to [her]," and reveal the compulsion to "exert pressure on others" (Furst 1992, 5), which becomes more and more manifest in the girl's behaviour.

Cactus embodies the paradox of being simultaneously heroic or powerful, and liable to be degraded into a scapegoat, an aspect of the trickster pointed out by Smith (1997, 22). The unwavering belief in her own unique power: "I'm like God, I see everything" (21) enables her to gain influence and control over Dolores and Dan. In initiating and organizing intricate sexual games that involve the other two, she appropriates the skills of the director, a role in drama Sarah Wright links with the trickster, who tries to imitate the power of God (25). When Dolores has brought a sentimental novel with her it is Cactus who takes the lead and reads out the detailed account of a fictional couple's amorous encounter and embrace from the book with great relish to arouse themselves. She also invents new rules for playing poker with Dan, which call for the performance of a range of sexual acts at certain stages of the game. Despite their unease and fear, probably even hatred of Cactus, the other two adolescents succumb to her commands, both lacking the stamina to assert themselves as her equal. Dolores, because she is dominated by the older women in her family, and Dan, because his vulnerability is further aggravated by the fantasies Noel feeds him. Unemployed, the older boy is lounging about bored and hungry for adventures, or at least for talking of imagined ones, and incites the mentally handicapped teenager to cherish the outdated dream of emigrating to America: "Maybe the two of us should fuck off out west together Dan, what do you think, huh? Saloons bursting with young ones called Lulu, their tits falling out of their frocks" (25). Believing in the attainability of this glamorous prospect, Dan is ready to do anything for its fulfillment.

The power of Cactus is shown at its height in a carnivalesque scene where she reverses Dan's solitary cowboy game by riding on the boy's back and slapping him on the bottom with the rope he had been using as a lasso, then dances around him as a kind of prey. Dan's subjection is brought into focus by mentioning his body parts in a way of fragmentation, with special emphasis on his nose, an important site of corporeal openness to outside effects. Clearly, the boy's body functions as "the vessel for domination" in the scene which collapses sexual desire and violence as a characteristic of the carnival, to borrow from Wright's observations (111-12). Yet the celebratory nature of the carnival deriving from Cactus' absolute power over the boy is disturbed by a touch of anxiety and hysteria, the corollary of the breaking of boundaries and moral taboos by force. Under the pressure of her commands and threats, the vulnerable and simple-minded boy consents to act out her scenario of kissing as well as fumbling each other now in the open and no longer under the bridge in secret, but his reaction is just revulsion from her body:

> CACTUS. [...] What are you afraid of? I told you, everyone does what I tell them to do. Did you forget? Hmmm? Did you? Come on, I haven't got all summer you know. Do it Danti-dan.
> *He kisses her, his arms stiffly by his sides. She thumps him to make him more active. [...] She gropes in his pockets and down his trousers. Dan starts coughing and breaks away.*
> DAN. I'm suffocating. (53)

Inversion and disorder do not evoke here the benign character of the carnival understood in the Bakhtinian sense; the boy as the object of uninhibited as well as cruel mockery and insults does not represent any authority figure, but one definitely marginalized by his society on account of his mental backwardness (see Morris 22). Whereas disruptive of rules and sanctified customs, the carnivalesque action in Moxley' play, as part of the trickster aesthetic, manages to foreground and give expression to a cluster of contradictory feelings and sensations like pleasure, disappointment, ambivalence, humiliation, as well as pain, latently present in the gender relations of the teenager community.

Regarding the negative side of the paradox informing Cactus' trickster character, in the both restricted and restricting cultural milieu the mysterious deviance of the girl tends to provoke her peers to blame her for (mostly) imagined harms and evils. Ber's case is telling in this respect: stepping on a sizeable bundle that she finds lying at her foot, she takes fright because the object reminds her of the carcass of a discarded and abandoned baby. On having learnt that the suspicious-looking bundle contains just Cactus' swimming suit and towel, the older girl, suffering from bad conscience because she already senses her own pregnancy, vents her anger on the younger one without a thought: "It's after putting the heart crossways on me. [...] I'm in no humour now. What's she doing leaving her togs here, stupid bitch. I wouldn't be surprised if she did it on purpose to scare the lard out of me" (14). Apart from pointing to the psychological roots, and to both inconsiderate and biased routines of scapegoat formation, this incident of the play serves to bring into focus a disturbing phenomenon of rural Irish life continuing well into the 1970s and 1980s, as testified by the notorious discovery and concomitant media representations of two secretly murdered infants in county Kerry.

Rhetorical Agency and Cultural Critique

Smith contends that "tricksters are not only characters, they are also rhetorical agents," and their "linguistic operation has serious ideological implications" (14) or "signals a cultural critique of the most radical kind," while being central to their strategy of resistance (2, 14, 16, 155). An inquiry into the idiosyncrasies of Cactus' discourse and style finds them permeated with both subtle and distinct manifestations of this aspect of the trickster positionality. Moxley has her employ subversive strategies to mock the

linguistic routines of the other characters, which are shaped and influenced by the inculcated complacencies of the mainstream culture and its worldview.

In general, Dan's retardation and vulnerability are not paid due attention by the teenagers, except for the cliched phrase "Ah God love him" (8, 41) that Dolores keeps on repeating. Cactus ventures to ridicule its meaningless irrelevance by imitating the other girl: "You sound like your Granny, 'sure gawney love him' " (8). The parody here targets the practice of responding to the handicapped state of a person in a way that does not seem to have changed for generations, despite the rapid changes in the other, mainly material aspects of life. Abandoned to do whatever he chooses as long as he does not harm himself or his environment, the treatment Dan suffers in this community is acutely summarized by Noel's stigmatizing the boy as "mental" (27) because of his strangeness. While apparently neglected and ignored as a person, the boy is subject to certain social obligations imposed on him by his parents, whose constrictive nature is ruthlessly unmasked by another of Cactus' ingenious turns of language in the following:

> DAN. I have to get Trigger [his imaginary horse] and go home. I have to go in for my tea.
> CACTUS. You don't have to do anything Danti-dan, except die (44).

By the same stroke, Cactus' insight complicates her trickster function in that it presents the girl as a "potential visionary" due to her "dissociation from the social fabric," to borrow from Smith's discussion of *Sula* (119).

As a rhetorical agent Cactus demonstrates uncommon concern for precise wording as well as sophisticated phrasing, which offers a sharp contrast to the careless slang expressions, grammatical errors or even vulgarities frequently occurring in the other characters' talk. In the following exchange Cactus dares even to correct Noel. Though she is evidently right, she earns only a rude retort from him to silence her, as his manly pride could by no means allow him to give credence to the superiority of a girl with regard to the use of language, the tool of patriarchal authority:

> NOEL. You should go on away in home girl and take them togs with you.
> CACTUS. Those togs. Not them togs, those togs.
> NOEL. Watch your fucking lip you, I'm warning you. (16)

Another scene places Cactus' correction of Dolores' misuse in the context of 1970s Ireland, allegedly less "permissive in sexual matters than other Western societies" (Greene 1994, 365), where girls are expected to carefully guard their virginity until marriage. Nevertheless, highly paradoxically, the teenagers appear to be misled or left ignorant about basic questions of women's healthcare:

> DOLORES: Use tampoons.
> CACTUS: Tampons, isn't it?

BER. Mammy'd kill me if she caught me with Tampax.
CACTUS. Why?
DOLORES. 'Cause you are not a virgin anymore after them or something like that. (23)

Here the off-stage mother's implied attitude calls attention to the parents' responsibility. The family, considered to be the "the primary social context [...] given pride of place in the Irish Constitution" (Greene 1994, 357), is shown by Moxley as having become disfunctional, unable to offer sufficient emotional and intellectual support for the teenagers. Ber and Dolores mention their mother as an agent of authority, who expects proper behaviour and obedience. Her vigilant control of the children is complemented by the father's clatters to remind them of domestic rules and requirements whenever he judges it appropriate. In this respect, Moxley's play harks back to the dual focus of Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen*, insofar as it also contains allusions to the conservativism and hypocrisy of both the parents and the school system. Miss McInerney, a teacher of the local school is said to have difficulties when referring to sex, which signals the traditional Irish evasiveness about the subject of intimate relations going hand-in-hand with the lack of adequate, let alone progressive sexual education for adolescents, since it "is not an official feature of the primary or secondary school curriculum" (Greene 1994, 365).

In addition to her linguistic manoeuvres that stir up some vital and critical aspects of individual discursive practices as they are entrenched in a world of fossilized customs and patriarchal ideologies, Cactus is also the character who refuses to keep girls' secrets according to convention. Unwilling to promote hypocritical behaviour in the interest of keeping a boyfriend, when Noel joins their company she casually blurts out that Ber is in the habit of talking about their plans of marriage to other people, and has even a mock engagement ring hanging from her neck underneath her dress. Moreover, she hints at the so far tactfully concealed suspicion of Ber's pregnancy in front of the boy. These revelations infuriate Noel first to verbal, then to physical abuse, and put Ber on the defensive to the extent that she starts begging him not to be cross with her. For Cactus the erupting conflict of the two qualifies as just a "good hack," and Noel "a gutty boy" (52), their relationship being, at least to a great part, based on lies and pretensions.

In Harrison's view "the erotic play on language" constitutes one of the typical elements of the traditionally male trickster discourse (82-83). Cactus' penchant for verbal games and gimmicks involves the varied use of word plays, and the inspired concoction of puns, which demonstrate her joyful revelling in the possibilities of language to allude to sexuality and gender configurations in unusual ways, turning conventional attitudes to these on their head in the meantime. The lines below from the girls' conversation points to Cactus' ability to blur the boundaries between the terrains of fear and sexual experiences, suggesting that they may actually overlap:

BER. You give me the willies sometimes, you do.

CACTUS. I thought it was Noel was giving you the willies.
DOLORES. That's a good one. Never thought of it like that.

Cactus's pun on gender alternatives, "Lesbe friends and go homo" elicits a response from Dolores which, with a tinge of derision in it reduces the creative ambiguity of the phrase to a one-dimensional, simplifying interpretation: "Haha, very funny. You think you're it don't you" (38). The girls' exchange lends a particular edge to the embedded critique of the limits of the culture whose values underwrite Dolores' indignation. The playful "confusion in gender" such a pun may involve is not recognized by her, neither does she appreciate its potential "to reach out and complicate the smooth face of binary oppositions," to deploy the terms which appear in Wright's discussion of the stylistic means of riddling difference (102).

Androgyny: Sexual Excesses and Crossing the Boundaries of Gender

The liminality of the character of Cactus is present also in her androgyny, an alleged feature of the trickster, which facilitates the character's mastering as well as crossing the boundaries of both gender roles and prescribed sexual behaviour, as interpreted in Smith's discussion (xii). Cactus practises the notorious sexual freedom of the Irish trickster (see Harrington 26) first with a girl, her reluctant friend Dolores, then with the childish Dan as a male partner, inventing more and more daringly licentious forms and games of bodily contact. Her "unrestricted sexuality" makes Cactus resemble Morrison's Sula, who "recognizes no common morality and no social boundaries, asks people rude questions" (Smith 118) and, most importantly, switches from one sexual partner to another without feeling of shame, and the least consideration for the human consequences, even when they affect her best friend, Nel. As in the case of Sula, Cactus' socially unacceptable and iconoclastic sexual behaviour, which falls well within the trickster paradigm, develop from her personal experiences. Significantly in this respect, she proves to be a keen and sensitive observer of the gender roles as performed by the other characters. De Lauretis's view that gender is the representation of a set of social relations, therefore it is " [...] a primary instance of ideology" (9), provides a framework to delineate the broader implications of her peers' attitudes for Cactus.

Granted no space to have its normal privacy in the society since the lovers are not married yet, Noel and Ber's sexual activities take place in the open, usually on the nearby cornfields, therefore more or less on display for the eyes of the younger characters. On the whole, their relationship enacts a kind of gender representation fitting the conventional patterns of a fundamentally patriarchal society. During their first encounter on stage, witnessed by the hiding Cactus, the boy urges the girl to have bodily contact: "put your hand in me pocket there a minute. [...] The front one, you fucking eejit" (13). Instinctively, Ber takes the inferior position by accepting the rude label uttered in his

fury over her own clumsiness. In her turn, she fantasizes about the engagement ring she wishes they will soon buy, and wonders where the wedding reception should be held.

Noel is more than eager to construct himself as the irresistible, *macho* type male, who attracts any woman, and can conquer all female hearts in his environment. Manipulating Cactus' alert *voyeurism*, his manhood derives satisfaction from deliberately arousing her:

> [...] Cactus watches Ber and Noel as they approach.
> CACTUS. Oh God. He has her bra open. That's... oh God... look... Dan, Dan?
> *She continues to watch them. It's clear that Noel is doing this for Cactus's benefit.*
> (29)

What further sharpens the adolescent girl's curiosity is that Noel's exchanges with her abound in ambiguities that sexualize her self as well as commodify her body, while they do not fail to provoke her imagination either. The addresses "And look at you, two fucking blackberries up your jumper" (15), and "you little prick teaser" (27) from his mouth effectively tell on his attitude toward her. At another point of the action Cactus asks Noel a question, but he just tickles her, complementing the unmistakable gesture with a remark which carries the tone of both patronizing contempt and depersonalization: "She's very fucking funny this one, isn't she?" (48).

The fact that Noel considers the female partner as a sexual object and unquestionably inferior to him as male in a relationship is well demonstrated by his reaction when he hears about Ber's pregnancy. Tellingly, Noel employs a style and vocabulary similar to the one in which he refers to the accident that has recently happened to his dog, whom he chose to name Naked Lady, woman and dog being of the same category for him. His disdain for the wounded and obviously suffering animal summed up in the abusive phrase "poxy dog," he comments on the misadventure: "Stupid fucking cunt, got her leg caught in the trap [...] only fit for the Chinese place [...] Sweet and sour naked lady and chips" (48-49). Yet the news about Ber expecting their baby fuels his rage even more, and he instinctively takes the view that the girl must have conceived a child on purpose, to hook him for a husband. Feeling outmanoeuvred, he assaults the girl: "You lying little pox bottle. [...] Even if you are [pregnant], don't think I'm marrying any ol' flah bag who's after getting herself in trouble" (51). He denigrates both dog and woman through applying the label of a disease, pox, which grossly disfigures the skin and renders the patients' looks ugly and despicable. The two are not merely objects for the misogynist Noel but also abjects who, considered in light of Julia Kristeva, insult his superego with their acts of corruption and misleading (15): the dog has failed to win the Bitch Classic competition for him, and the girl's condition imposes unexpected duties on him.

Ber's femininity is represented in such a way that it embodies the complementary opposite to Noel's masculinity as "its extrapolation," underpinned by "the patriarchal or male-centered frame of mind," to deploy De Lauretis' terminology (14). On the one

hand, she allows him to dominate and bully her as long as marriage to him is in sight, since she "Can't wait to move out, to give up work" (22). Noel, in the meantime, envisages their prospective marital life with himself as a domestic tyrant of unquestionable power: "[...] then I can flah you crosss-eyed whenever I like" (12). On the other hand, the self-effacing character of Ber's femininity is revealed by her ambivalent attitude to their sexual relationship. Listening to her proud narrations of their affair, Cactus is curious to know about the details of lovemaking, and the sensations involved, asking what Noel does to her during their encounters. The older girl's tentative or evasive replies to such questions testify to the lack of self confidence and a personal voice concerning the subject, a possible result of adolescent girls becoming aware of "[...] the crushing realities attached to the culture's definition of womanhood," and that less value is placed on them than on boy children in Ireland, as Sheila M. Greene's analysis points out (365). Under the circumstances Ber, though regularly having sex with her boyfriend, is still immature both emotionally and sexually. Her relative lack of interest in the subject of sexual fulfillment renders her passive and careless, not bothering about the possible consequences of unsafe sex. At sixteen she considers herself "far too young for that [pregnancy]," and calms herself by the thought that "Anyway, it was only standing" (23). Her response to sexual experiences parallels the findings of Rachel Thompson and Janet Holland's research about lower class British teenage girls' behaviour in their culture which privileges male sexual pleasure. The scholars reveal that these "[...] young women who are unsure of their own sexual potential and agency" become easily disadvantaged in their relationships (28).

Cactus remains disappointed with Ber's unimaginative references to sexual pleasure, but has to find Dolores an equally, if not more uninspiring partner with whom to explore the field that fascinates her so much. Advanced in the process of her female socialization, Dolores is shown to develop her attitude to both the subject and practice of sex by adapting the model that her elder sister mediates to her. Submissively, she accepts Cactus' leadership in the game of kissing that the other girl initiates, and it is only after some embarrassed hesitation that she admits that the whole thing leaves her indifferent at best:

> CACTUS. [...] what did it feel like to you? [...] Did it make you want to go to the jacks?
> DOLORES. Eh... no. For a pee like? No.
> CACTUS. And what about your chest? Did you feel anything there?
> DOLORES. In my chest? A while ago, you mean. Eh... no.
> [...]
> CACTUS. And that's just with you. God. (35)

Characteristically, Cactus' chief interest lies in the details which are closely linked with the sensation of orgasm. Yet this is the area where she runs into the walls of silence, and becomes further dismayed by the blunt refusal to discuss sexual intimacies as an

unmentionable subject in relation to Ber's lovemaking with Noel. In her unbridled curiosity Cactus inquires of Ber "Did you have to touch his thing? His knob! [...] what did 'it' feel like?" (40). Before the older girl could fabricate some irrelevant answer, Dolores eagerly attempts to terminate Cactus' further questioning by the curt interference: "Ah stop, the thought of it" (40).

Cactus' experiences of the hierarchical structure of gender roles, and disappointingly conventional attitudes to sexuality inherent in the practices and discourses of the given culture provoke a kind of self-representation from Cactus (see De Lauretis 19) which diametrically opposes that of the other female characters. Instead of assuming a submissive position which, in her case, would be waiting for a partner to approach her, and also for some time to pass because she is still too young by the standards of her community, she empowers herself to initiate bodily contact with whoever she can. Her recklessly free sexual experimentation, which never weighs the human consequences, corresponds to the style of the amorally licentious trickster. Confronted with the kind of masculine gender construction offered in the figure of Noel, she begins to mimick him by choosing a partner of the opposite sex as object of her desire, and also her abject, whom she despises for his weakness, and treats violently whenever she fancies to do so. Her act of mimicry exposes the oppressive tendencies inherent in the masculine model Noel represents, rooted in the patriarchal society. Dan, whose childlike and gullible character evokes features traditionally attributed to the female by the male gaze is the only compliant person available for Cactus with whom to practise her wildest sexual fantasies, since he hopes to have his own dream fulfilled in the bargain.

Chaos and the Restoration of Order

Harrison's analysis points out that the traditional trickster is "[...] devious, deceitful, and ruthless, [...] destructive for the sake of being destructive, and for his own whimsical amusement" (24), characteristics which are well recognizable in Cactus' actions. By psychologically manipulating, and even dehumanizing a helpless boy as an instrument of her whimsical sexual experiments, her asocial and disruptive acts come full circle, and culminate in inevitable disaster. The chaos she has created is illustrated most expressively through the breakdown of Dan's confession into incoherent images of horror, and shreds of thwarted hope under stress, when the games of the teenagers have been eventually found out about by Ber: "She made me... made me take out my winkie. The man's going to give me money for my books. For Fort Knox. She was pinching it" (67). Like the traditional trickster character as viewed by Harrison's study (71), Cactus falls into her own trap, and suffers humiliation by Ber's open cross-questioning and investigation of what must have transpired between the adolescents.

In her interpretation of Sula's tricksterism, Smith contends that her "evil" ways "actually make the community stronger, as they unite against her as pariah. [...] and the

trickster's amorality sharpens the community's sense of a moral code. By constantly violating societal norms, Sula paradoxically helps to define the social fabric" (116-17). Morrison reports about these changes in terms of moral improvement: "Once the source of their personal misfortune was identified, they had leave to protect and love one another. They began to cherish their husbands and wives, protect their children, repair their homes and in general band together against the devil in their midst" (117-18). Moxley's drama registers comparable individual and communal changes as well as processes by way of resistance to the disorder created by the trickster. While intent on revealing Cactus's transgressive operations, Ber manages to secure her feminine identity as a grown-up woman shortly to be married, and assumes authority to question the younger girl. Recalling the famous Wildean aphorism that daughters always replicate their mothers, Ber's behaviour testifies to the completion of her feminine socialization in the same patriarchal mould, as observed by her fiancé: "She's the image of the mother when aroused" (65). From a teenager who definitely crossed certain boundaries when starting to practise premarital sex Ber, confronted with a situation that upsets her notions of order, Ber grows into an adult whose interference reinforces societal rules and requirements opposed to unruly behaviour. On his part, now a young man who has found a job, Noel denies he has anything to do with Dan's fatal ambitions to collect money by whatever means for his journey to America.

The epilogue part of *Danti Dan* suggests that although Cactus' trickster deceits and mischief-making have led to tragedy, the community assumes strength, and even renews itself. Dolores claims to belong to a swimming club now, where she probably meets several other teenagers, and can make new friends. Dan's funeral and the prospective wedding of Ber and Noel are mentioned as significant events that, according to established communal traditions, bring people together and strengthen the bonds among them through sharing grief as well as celebration. These events also function to exclude Cactus, the outsider, who is not allowed to, or has no chance to participate in them. Her father, hardly just by accident, is said to have got a transfer and the family will soon move to a distant town. By casting out the troublemaker, the community manages to renovate itself which, however, does not seem to involve any humanly significant change in their ethos and practices. In fact, the conditions that engendered the tragedy are likely to become reproduced. Yet the drama ends on a note of mystery, not unlike Morrison's *Sula*, where Nel gazes at the trees in search of her dead friend, Sula, whispering her name. The intangible yet somehow powerful ties of a shared girlhood assert themselves in the way Cactus and Dolores "*stare at each other*" (71) as a coda to *Danti Dan*.

Conclusion

Realizing trickster features, functions and linguistic operations, Cactus's rebellion in Moxley's drama reflects the roots and routes of the crisis an Irish teenager may experience, as if through a magnifying glass. The youth culture to which the girl belongs

to is recognized as a distinct one within the larger society mainly through consumerism, a fact the great variety of pop songs played in the drama highlights. Notably, however, they are rarely if ever in tune with the complex relationships, and concomitant feelings of the teenage community in general, and Cactus in particular. Forming another kind of the "social technologies" De Lauretis refers to (2), the music transmits superficial, soothing gestures that reinforce institutionalized norms, conventional gender roles, as well as romantic notions about love and sexuality. Caught between the other teenagers' gender representations which, in spite of their urge to contradict them just reproduce old patterns, and her own ambition to achieve autonomous subjectivity, Cactus is left without a viable model for radical gender revisioning. Her choices to enact resistance are made within the confines of the patriarchal structure, but operate through modes of inversion which entail danger, disruption, and even destruction.

Smith's conclusion to her study of Sula applies also to *Danti-Dan*, emphasizing that the trickster aesthetic offers a culturally aware, and also socially critical approach, which links "fluidity and specificity, individual and community, alienation and intercourse, and substance and form" (152). Through its provocative subject, and technique drawing inspiration from the native Irish traditions while reaching out to international postmodernism, Moxley's drama interrogates a network of contentious issues regarding the unevenness of the changes affecting Ireland in the recent decades. The "hospitality to different voices within the old structures," which has been characterizing contemporary Irish drama as much as its great antecedent works in the words of Christopher Murray (246), forms an inspiring context for innovative ventures of this kind.

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*"Traitors to the Prevailing Mythologies of the Four Others Provinces"?: A Tribute to Field Day on Their Twentieth Anniversary**

Martine Pelletier

Abstract: *Focusing on border-crossing as central to Field Day's agenda, this article will try and assess the contribution made by the Derry-based company in terms of having created or enabled movement, both literally and metaphorically in the artistic and cultural scene in Ireland. To what extent have Field Day actually proved instrumental in challenging orthodoxies, in crossing or shifting critical boundaries, in clearing a new space ? Three main domains of intervention can be identified, starting with the most obvious : their challenge to the existence of partition in the way they toured Ireland and the theoretical counterpoint to this literal - though highly symbolic - spatial mobility, namely the company's exploration of the fifth province. Another form of border crossing was Field Day's insistence on imagining and articulating itself as a committed theatre company in which artists would not shy away from the political but would welcome it, would acknowledge their responsibility in shaping perceptions and generating debate. Thirdly, Field Day initiated a move within Irish studies towards the emergence and efflorescence of post-colonial analyses through their relentless efforts to examine the causes of the crisis as part of the legacy of a colonial situation, placing the emphasis on the northern crisis as central to any discussion of Irish identity and cultural politics.*

At the end of Brian Friel's *Translations*, Field Day's first production which opened in Derry in 1980, Jimmy Jack ponders the likely consequences of and reactions to his decidedly most unlikely union with the Greek goddess Pallas Athene ; her parents are not going to like it at all since marrying outside the tribe is tantamount to breaking a taboo: "you don't cross those borders casually, both sides get very angry".[1] Focusing on border-crossing as central to Field Day's agenda, I would like to try and assess the contribution made by the company in terms of having created or enabled movement,

both literally and metaphorically in the artistic and cultural scene in Ireland. To what extent has Field Day actually proved instrumental in challenging orthodoxies, in crossing or shifting critical boundaries, in clearing a new space?

Three main domains of intervention can be identified, starting with the most obvious: their challenge to the existence of partition in the way they toured Ireland. "Trespassing", denying the existence of political borders was indeed the company's mandate from the outset. Stephen Rea and Brian Friel, the original founder members were both very keen that whatever productions Field Day put on stage in Derry should tour the whole of Ireland. As Stephen Rea recently put it "It was essentially, I guess, a political statement: we were northern but we belonged to the whole country, whatever we were talking about we wanted to address the whole country. By touring Ireland north and south we were doing something nobody else had done before."[2] Affirming an Ireland culture, beyond partition marked Field Day off as a nationalist project in essence, or was bound to be read in those terms by anyone eager to keep the border checkpoints in operation…

The theoretical counterpoint to this literal – though highly symbolic – spatial mobility was the company's exploration of the fifth province of the mind, the mythical centre of gravity of the island. This idea, pioneered by Field Day members in the early 80s in the wake of Richard Kearney and Mark Patrick Hedermann's *Crane Bag* version was developed into a thought-provoking conceit, influencing Heaney's *Sweeney Astray* in particular, though this ill-defined, imaginative space, "this place for dissenters, for traitors to the prevailing mythologies of the four other provinces"[3] as Friel elegantly and eloquently put it, proved, in the long run, most elusive, as Shaun Richards, among others, has shown. It was a useful concept though as it did combine many of the qualities I would tend to associate with Field Day material – the impulse towards creation and adaptation instead of straightforward appropriation, the hankering for a place that could by-pass the dichotomies and polarities of the existing situation, a taste for the liminal, the in-between – though of course such a space, off-centre, off the map could easily degenerate into the fifth province "or what you will"… The way the phrase gained currency in the cultural and political vocabulary of the period – though it disappeared from "Field Day speak" after 1986 – shows that there was indeed a space to be imagined (and since Anderson's *Imagined Communities* we all know how central imagination is to social and political identity formation) though whether the fifth province was a form of "deterritorialisation" in the Deleuze/Guattary version or just another name for the intangible nation of Ireland ("a cultural state out of which the possiblity of a political state might follow" in Friel's idiosyncratic version[4]) remains open to discussion, not so much a place outside history perhaps as a place very much inscribed in history, contemporary Northern Irish, Derry history even…

Another form of border crossing was Field Day's insistence on imagining and articulating itself as a committed theatre company in which artists would not shy away from the political but would welcome it, would acknowledge their responsibility in shaping perceptions and generating debate. Seamus Deane in particular has consistently

argued against the separation of politics and literature or culture: "politics is a danger to us but then we're maybe a danger to politics as well, in a sense. There's no freedom from politics. We are politicians in a sense by being artists"[5]. A perfect symbol of this interaction could be the company's use of the Guildhall in Derry as a theatrical space. Having shouldered that burden, Field Day went on to devise a double channel of communication with the audience; first the plays and tours engineered by Rea and Friel, then the pamphlets which started being published after 1983. Here again they were crossing boundaries, initiating a dialogue or rather a dialectic between the two mutually supportive sides of their activities. Deane, the chief architect of the critical enterprise, sees the two parts of the project as nevertheless having the same aim:

> I see both the pamphlets and the plays as exercises in the critique of various forms of authority that have become illicit or ineffective or anachronistic and yet refuse to concede to new conditions (or to conspire in their own demise). Our belief then was that the northern state never had legitimacy and the Republic's legitimacy was severely qualified. This is still my opinion.[6]

Two things need detain us here. First the emphasis placed on the combination of modes of expression: both the page and the stage were to be used to explore ideas, each genre drawing on its specific language and strength and here I would second Marilynn Richtarik's overall assessment of the language of the pamphlets as being more controversial than that of the plays[7]. This mobility between the creative and the critical, the realisation that it is vital to foster analysis as well as creation has meant that many Field Day members themselves were happy to cross the borders between genres, between creative and critical practice in an effort to promote self-definition instead of leaving it to others from the outside to come and offer analyses. They happily took on different roles, with critics turning poets or playwrights and vice-versa. It is largely within this context that one should consider Paulin's reworking of the *Antigone* or Heaney's later adaptation of Sophocles – *The Cure at Troy* (1990) – and the focus placed on the adaptation of classics, in practice a crossing of linguistic, temporal and spacial borders. They were bringing nineteenth-century century Russia and Ancient Greece to Ireland, to tease out what those plays had to say about Ireland there and then, releasing the subversive potential of those time-honoured classics by freeing them from the conventional (ie. English) modes of representation. And first and foremost they wanted to have them ring out in an idiom that was recognisably Irish, a basically very nationalist though also very pragmatic claim (for who would deny that in terms of accent, lexicon and even syntax the Irish variety of English does not have its specificity?) though it is a far cry from the backward-looking nostalgia of an Irish-speaking Ireland.

The other point of the Deane quote I used earlier is of course the nationalist or more accurately republican element it contains: Field Day's reiterated challenge to the authority of both Northern Ireland and the Republic proved unsurprisingly unpopular in many quarters. Such a stance smacked not only of northerness, as Field Day claimed,

but of republicanism, and this at a time when the IRA and Provisional Sinn Fein, in the wake of the hunger strikes, were gaining in popularity. The relentlessness with which Deane and the others kept returning to the South's doubtful legitimacy was also uncomfortable for those in the Republic who saw it as having either fully recovered from the colonial trauma, or even never having had a colonial experience in the first place.

And this enables us to move to the third point I would like to raise since it was also largely Field Day who initiated a move within Irish studies towards the emergence and efflorescence of post-colonial analyses through their relentless efforts to examine the causes of the crisis as part of the legacy of a colonial situation, a crisis that had to be diagnosed accurately and faced up to honestly. Central to an exploration of the complexities of Ireland's history on the stage was Friel's sensitive and ironic dyptich, *Translations* and *Making History*. Post-colonial readings of Ireland's literature and society are now commonplace, for better and for worse, but one needs to remember that this was not the norm when Field Day started out, back in the early 1980s. In this instance, the company did succeed in its role as agent provocateur, performing a consciousness-raising exercise and hammering out versions of truths that had become unpalatable in the Republic in particular. Their emphasis on the northern crisis as central to any discussion of Irish identity, their version of cultural politics constantly hinging on this facing up to the colonial legacy caused them to lose favour not only with northern critics with a broadly unionist outlook, like Edna Longley or John Wilson Foster, but also with those who, in Deane's words "would seek to deny the realities of colonial rule in Ireland – the neo-liberal, ex-Marxist Official IRA and glib journalists."[8] At a time when revisionism was becoming the new orthodoxy, Field Day's rhetoric did prove a major irritant though, needless to say, promoting a post-colonial model of analysis is not risk-free and can lead to oversimplifications. Many historians would be loath to include Ireland in the list of "colonised" countries or would legitimately seek to qualify that label in many ways because of what it is now politically correct to call "the totality of relationships within these islands". Though there is little doubt that patterns of colonial rule obtained in Ireland, an additional and by no means negligible problem in the real world is that the vocabulary of imperialism and colonialism has been taken over and largely discredited by Sinn Fein.

Hence Deane's interest in a critic like Said, or the production by Field Day of plays like Tom Kilroy's *Double Cross* and Terry Eagleton's *Saint Oscar*. To my mind, *Double Cross* (1986) deserves to be seen as axiomatic, central to the whole Field Day canon: this brilliant play fulfills Field Day's cultural-political bill while remaining so controlled and dazzling a piece of theatre that no critic could overlook its virtuosity. Like *Translations*, *Double Cross* keeps drawing attention to itself as drama, as play, making it impossible to focus on the politics of the piece without fully taking on board its experimental audacity. The "political core", the exploration of the instability of Irish identity, is deeply inscribed in the form of the play itself with its two acts and shape-changing protagonists; it is not superimposed nor in any way separable from it. The

play in many ways ironises borders; by looking at identity in a colonial/postcolonial situation through a double perspective, by twinning or yoking together the two personae of Brendan Bracken and William Joyce, Kilroy teases out the absurdity and tragedy of a re-constructed identity, a self-fashioning based on denial: "When a man wipes out his past and invents his own future he may have criminal or artistic tendencies. On the other hand he may be simply acting out a condition of the culture from which he is trying so desperately to escape. Both men left Ireland in the twenties. At the precise time when Ireland declared its independence of England."[9] The movements of Joyce and Bracken, from Ireland to England, from England to Germany, from loyalty to betrayal and vice-versa are mirror images of each other, reflections of the colonial trauma they have internalised, via the roles their fathers played in Ireland (IRA volunteer vs "loyal" informer), a condition that haunts them and that they are doomed to repeat:

> Actress: Ladies and gentlemen ! We cannot vouch for the accuracy of anything that is going to follow – […] It has been put together to make a point.
> Actor: Why does the victim always try to imitate the oppressor?
> Actress: Women are well aware of this condition
> Actor: Men only discover it when they are political underdogs
> Actress: Imitate that you may be free
> Actor: There is also the momentum of colonialism which operates like an inverted physics.
> Actress: The further out on the periphery, the stronger the pull to the centre.
> Actor: Every metropolis is thronged with provincials.
> Actress: Each trying to be more metropolitan than the other. And so, to play.[10]

With plays of that calibre, Field Day did raise theatrical standards in Ireland and, in the process, attracted the attention of academics and commentators from within and from outside Ireland who were drawn to the theatrical achievements of the company while also proving increasingly interesting to cultural commentators eager to take up or challenge the post-colonial mode of analysis pioneered by Field Day and Seamus Deane in particular.

Yet there are also areas in which one can rightly feel that Field Day's record is less obviously satisfactory. What about the reality of their supposedly pluralist agenda, the inclusiveness or otherwise of the fifth province ? What about their contribution to bridging the sectarian divide ? And what about women? In 1984 Deane was already alerting his Field Day colleagues to the limits of their influence: "It's no good just performing our plays and selling pamphlets to people we know. There's no point in continuing unless we can get through to Unionists."[11] One can speculate whether the presence on the board of directors of three protestants and three catholics (more or less all lapsed anyway) was a sectarian balancing act or an accident; Marilynn Richtarik says Heaney claimed it was done on purpose, Stephen Rea swore to me it was sheer luck, no doubt both are right… The nature of Field Day's activities and rhetoric however left little doubt that they were working from a broadly nationalist – or at least non-

unionist – perspective which may have appeared more or less reconstructed and sophisticated to their many critics and supporters. The years 1984-85 saw a structuring of the opposition to Field Day and their discourse which they should have anticipated. It was at that point that they decided to commission a less well-known series of pamphlets that also testifies to their "border-crossing" urges, their desire for intervention outside a strictly literary sphere : with the series entitled "The Protestant Idea of Liberty" they were effectively handing over to the other side or tradition, and seeking to refresh memories as to the importance of the Presbyterian influence in the 1798 United Irishmen revolution. No great gesture towards the unionist community but still an acknowledgement of a branch of the protestant tradition Paulin and Rea in particular were particularly proud to have encouraged. They went on to try and alter the public and critical perception of the group as too green by asking Stewart Parker, the Belfast protestant playwright (a fellow student of Heaney's at Queen's) to write *Pentecost* for them, an admirable play in which translating out of one's prejudiced way of thinking becomes the key to redemption. Parker promoted spiritual movement more than political action, seeking to transcend or bypass the political as an inadequate response to a deep crisis of faith, faith in the power of forgiveness, faith in oneself and in the future. *Pentecost* rings true with a profoundly humanist, protestant message of hope, of change made possible at a time when everything in Northern Ireland looked stagnant and bleak.

Now it is hard, impossible actually, to deny that Field Day were six (and later seven) men in search of… whatever, and that not a single woman had a place on the board of directors. Worse still, with one exception only, no woman director or playwright ever contributed to a field day production. Whether that should be read as mysogyny or the result of circumstances is for each individual to decide. I would venture to suggest that such a glaring absence was first and foremost an all too accurate reflection of the place of women in Northern Irish society in theatre and in academe at the time… Since then, the Northern Ireland's Women Coalition has highlighted the abysmally small space offered to women in the political sphere… Whatever the cause, it certainly was a pity and Field Day were made to pay the price for this all-male cast when the long-awaited *Anthology of Irish Writing* came out, as we all know since the limited (though by no means inexistent) place granted to writing by women in the three volumes became an object of public debate and vilification. The ideological underpinnings of the project were most glaringly exposed: here was one major "division", the gender gap, that Field Day had visibly not set out to explore or even take into account, and as ill-luck would have it, precisely at a time when the Republic, long deaf to women's demands in very basic areas, was suddenly waking up to the reality and existence of women and feminism! Part of the "feminist" reaction was no doubt orchestrated and rather disingenuous but there was a genuine case to be answered and Seamus Deane, in his role as general editor was and still is not prepared to deny it as his decision to commission a fourth volume devoted to women's writing – in preparation for many years and rumoured to be about to be published, at long last – instead of seeking to justify himself amply demonstrates.

Born twenty years ago out of an instinct between two extraordinarily gifted and committed theatre enthusiasts, Field Day expanded and set about imagining their community, their constituency as Friel would no doubt have put it and it has been Ireland's good fortune that they were thus empowered to put forward their version of cultural politics, making an exemplary creative and critical contribution to Irish culture. I would like to share Mary Holland's conviction that "Field Day helped to promote a more inclusive concept of what it means to be Irish [and made] it possible to talk about nationalism without seeming to pose a threat to others"[12] but I am not so sure. What is clear, however, is that they made rethinking the complexities of ideological stances like nationalism within an Irish and northern Irish context both necessary and more rewarding. Not since the Irish Literary Theatre had such an ambitious project been thought out and given expression. Their success should not be measured solely in terms of what they themselves achieved or produced, though that in itself is considerable (twelve plays, six series of pamphlets and a massive anthology) but also in terms of the reactions and oppositions they have generated over the years: the many positive reactions of those who followed in their footsteps, the negative, often virulent reactions of those who wished to contest the company's discourse and found they had to create a critical idiom and perspective that moved beyond the old stereotypes to do so. Increasingly I find myself wondering what one – myself included – could possibly mean when assessing whether or not Field Day has been successful? It is tempting, and no doubt true, to say that they surely could have been more genuinely pluralist but then would they have mounted so powerful a challenge to stereotypes and ways of thinking if they had been less adversarial in some of their pronouncements ? Their intervention did amount to a seismic shift in Irish cultural politics: whatever discussion was taking place in the eighties simply could not bypass them; they had become an almost compulsory point of reference. They were ubiquitous, and even today their legacy is everywhere visible. Most major commentators on Ireland's literature and culture have a direct or indirect, friendly or antagonistic connection with Field Day: Deane and Paulin of course, but also Declan Kiberd, Terence Brown, Terry Eagleton, Luke Gibbons, John Wilson Forster, Roy Foster, Edna Longley, David Lloyd and contless others.

In his recent study, *Modernisation: Crisis and Culture in Ireland 1969-1992*, Conor McCarthy blames Field Day for what he calls "its failure to forge a new, truly popular theatre.[13] There is indeed some truth in this criticism; Field Day were not into agit-prop or indeed into straightforward community theatre like the Belfast women of Charabanc… yet even if the company proved only partly successful in extricating theatre from its affluent, middle-class Dublin "ghetto" at least they did try… They did go to the people, taking plays to small towns where no play had been put on for years, thereby reaching out to an audience for whom going to the annual Field Day production was an experience, an event. Liam Neeson, now a star of the screen, recalled touring Carrickmore, in Co. Tyrone with Field Day back in 1980 when he was starting out as a professional with *Translations* (he played the part of Doalty): "I learned that the play would start at nine.

That was so the cows could be milked and the farmers would have a chance to get washed up before coming to the play"[14]. A company that can take that kind of daily reality into account cannot have been the elitist coterie it is sometimes made out to be…

Field Day did energise, though not single-handedly of course, an Irish theatrical and cultural scene which was, in many ways, stagnant until they came along. They put Northern Ireland and Derry centre-stage, commissioned and produced a dozen works by Irish playwrights of the highest calibre, generated a lot of reactions in the literary, cultural and political quarters. They toured Ireland, north and south with plays that did address burning issues, forging a theatre that was relevant to the people they were addresssing. I would suggest that the success of Irish theatre in London since the mid-1980s is due in no small part to their sustained policy of transferring Field Day productions across the water to London venues, Hampstead Theatre, Tricycle, Royal Court, English National Theatre, thus helping to build up an audience with an appetite for Irish plays.

Sadly, the theatre part of the project has attracted but limited attention so far, which is in keeping with the company's own insistence on its role in the field of cultural politics, meaning that the pragmatic, practical but also aesthetic contribution made by Field Day in their truly dazzling theatrical productions often went virtually unnoticed. Stephen Rea recently expressed his regret that the extraordinary quality of the costumes and lighting for example in early Field Day productions – *Three Sisters* in particular – should have passed many Irish critics by; though wasn't it inevitable when all the interviews given by Friel and Rea himself at the time focused on the importance of the play using an idiom Irish people could feel comfortable with, thus laying the emphasis once again on the politics of the project as against the theatrical quality and actual performance of the piece? The two were inexorably linked in both the company members' and their audience's/ critics' minds, and as the years went by this tendency was only reinforced, culminating in the anthology which overshadowed the other activities. The overall coherence of the project came at this cost: the success of Field Day's intervention in cultural politics depended heavily on the productions highlighting the centrality and relevance of the political, a feature that justifies Desmond Bell's claim that Field Day had gradually moved "from a politicised aesthetic towards an aestheticised politics"[15]. That the importance of the literary/ critical part of the project gradually superseded the theatrical impulse is fairly obvious, but let us be thankful that it did not happen until Field Day had made a more than significant contribution to Irish and European theatre. To quote *Translations* again and thus come full circle, Field Day deserves to be seen, in hindsight, as " a worthy enterprise" indeed…

Notes

* This article is a revised version of a paper given in July 2000 at the IASIL Bath conference.

1 Brian Friel, *Translations* (London: Faber, 1980), 68.

2 Martine Pelletier, "'Creating Ideas to Live By': An interview with Stephen Rea", *Sources*, N°9 (Autumn 2000), 48-65.
3 John Gray, "Field Day Five Years On", *The Linen Hall Review* (Summer 1985), 7.
4 Friel interviewed by Fintan O'Toole, "The Man from God Knows Where". *In Dublin*, 28 October 1982.
5 "Brian Friel and Field Day", RTE programme broadcast on 14 February 1983. Text printed in Paul Delaney's *Brian Friel in Conversation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 190.
6 Deane, letter to the author, 25 May 2000.
7 See Marilynn Richtarik's *Acting Between the Lines, Field Day and Irish Cultural Politics* 1980-84 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 239-242.
8 Deane, letter to the author, 25 May 2000.
9 Tom Kilroy, *Double Cross* (London: Faber, 1986), 19.
10 *Ibid*., 22.
11 Ciaran Carty and Richard Kearney, "Why Ireland needs a fifth province". *Sunday Independent*, 22 January 1984.
12 Mary Holland, "The Trouble With Peace: Times Have Changed for Derry's Cultural Provos" *The Observer*, 26 February 1995.
13 Conor McCarthy, *Modernisation: Crisis and Culture in Ireland 1969-1992* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), 227.
14 "The Big Fella", *Irish America*, January 1996.
15 Desmond Bell, "Culture and Politics in Ireland: Postmodern Revisions", *History of European Ideas*, Vol 16, n°1-3, 141-46; quoted by Conor McCarthy, 227.

Fiction

The Construction of Identity in John Banville's The Book of Evidence

Cielo Griselda Festino

In the present paper, I propose to discuss how I read *The Book of Evidence* and, echoing Robert Scholes's words, how I inscribe it into the textuality of my life. Scholes actually says that "...each text can only be read by connecting it to the unfinished work of textuality..." (6) that each person's reading represents. Therefore, as I read *The Book of Evidence*, it immediately reminded me of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Capote's *In Cold Blood.* At the moment I read these novels, I thought my reading of them complete and closed. Dostoyevsky's narrative had opened my eyes to the deep psychological anguish of a young man who feels trapped in his social plight and commits a murder only to confirm the famous cliché that crime does not pay and the path of goodness should always be chosen. I remember turning the pages expecting to find some relief after so much despair. Many years later I dared read Capote's novel. The scene of the merciless massacre of the Clutter family remained with me after a long time as well as the sordid and marginal existence of the murderers and their hopeless path to death. When I took up *The Book of Evidence* I was ready for the same kind of reading experience. But, in spite of its deep intertextuality with Dostoyevsky's novel, the unexpected tone of the narration suggested that I should generate a substantially different reading strategy in order to make sense of it.

Definitely, the treatment of the theme of crime and retribution in each one of the novels mentioned is essentially different as a result of the time and the literary tradition in which they were written. While *Crime and Punishment* is one of the most outstanding exponents of nineteenth-century Russian Realism – with its distinctive psychological streak – and *In Cold Blood*, written in the 1960's, is an example of the postwar American novel concerned with public events, *The Book of Evidence* is a post-modern novel that takes as its basic assumption the fictional quality of experience.

As regards point of view, *Crime and Punishment* and *In Cold Blood* are narrated within the convention of the third person omniscient narrator. In the case of the first novel, the distinctive feature of the narrative voice is its deep psychological penetration, that reveals Dostoyevsky's attempt to create human consciousness in order to analyze human nature. With regard to Capote's novel, what sets it apart in the use of the narrative voice is that in the section dealing with the murderers, point of view is consistently

presented through their intelligence. I believe that in fleshing these unusually heard voices, Capote was trying to portray the inherent differentiation in human kind. Banville, on the other hand, gives another turn to the screw since he tells his story from the perspective of a first person narrator in order to stress the subjective quality of the narrative. Freddie, his narrator, like Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikoff, is an educated man who is fully aware of the power of discourse and its elusive quality. To him "...writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being..." (Deleuze1997, 225), the perfect strategy to narrate his fragmented self from different perspectives. Hence, after being hailed by the tradition – his text is part of his legal statement – this narrator assumes Foucault's author function and becomes the object of his own discourse. From this perspective one would expect him to portray himself as the stereotype of the repentant criminal and, by extension, a unified self. However, what arises from his narration is a mocking account of Humanist values and the Cartesian subject and, by extension, a deconstruction of the concept of criminality. Therefore, fully conscious that he is fictionalizing his own life, he makes the pretence of giving the jury and judge what they thrive for, namely the hidden meaning of his actions that will satisfy their morbid curiosity.

In this light, while Dostoyevsky's narrative has as its main theme the notion of redemption through suffering and Capote's is an attempt at understanding the motivations that lead marginal men to perpetrate crimes against the bourgeoisie, Banville's novel is founded on the idea that repentance and redemption are two questioned beliefs in a society whose institutions are in crisis. In the same light, Dostoyevsky's and Capote's novels abide by the notion of the essential subject while Banville's disowns it altogether as it illustrates the fragmentation of the self in a post-modern society.

Consequently, what makes the reading of Banville's novel so different is the fact that it presents the concept of identity from a radically different perspective as it problematizes deeply ingrained assumptions about crime, guilt and retribution. In this light, I read *The Book of Evidence* as, basically, the construction and deconstruction of its narrator's identity, or better, his multiple identities through the successive rereadings and rewritings that he makes of some events that, paradoxically, bear witness to his life but are only indirectly related to his crime.

This game of identities takes the shape of a series of portraits of members of his family and friends that reflect the way he perceives others and, simultaneously, the way he perceives himself through the look of the others. All these portraits are interspersed with frozen descriptions of nature, always glanced at through a window, which have the texture of a painting and thus suggest the fictional quality of life at the time that lend unity to the narration. The 'crevices' left in-between these pictures are 'asides' directed to the jury and, ultimately, to the reader in which the flow of the narration seems to be in suspension as the narrator reflects upon his evidence, contradicts it but rarely reconfirms his own assertions. Rather, the only thing he seems intent on stressing is the multiple selves into which his identity is fragmented, a fact that pervades his narration with a

never receding feeling of uncertainty and instability. The epitome of these pictorial images is embodied in the centripetal and centrifugal reading he makes of a certain Dutch painting – located at the core of his crime – that acts as mirror to the whole story since he rereads and rewrites it in the same fashion that he recreates the story of his life.

Then, unlike the other novels about murder that make up the textuality of my reading experience, the differentiating quality of *The Book of Evidence* resides, precisely, in its portrayal of the fragmented subject of the post-modern world and its consecutive critique of the concept of identity as one which stabilized the world.

The Construction or Deconstruction of an Identity

I understand that an analysis of the theme of identity in the context of a post-modern world, then, calls for a discussion of the relationship between discourse and the subject as construct since one of the most important tenets of Postmodernism is that the subject is constituted by and constitutive of language.

From the start, it could be said that *The Book of Evidence* is a sharp critique of the notion that through language we are able to represent "the truth" of the world as if this were one and immutable. This is implicit in the quality of Freddie's narration since he never pretends to give a definite account of the murder he has committed. Rather, he endeavours to show that there is not only one way of interpreting and, therefore, telling the events. He succeeds in creating this effect by constantly making references to the fact that as he is constructing his "evidence" in the realm of language, the meaning of his story – the way he narrates his self – is very unstable and, therefore, resists closure. Very revealingly, at a certain point in his narration he exclaims: "I am just...losing myself in a welter of words"(38), thus stressing his lack of control over language.

This might help explain why he is deliberately contradictory in his own narration: he claims not to be homosexual but he would like to find a sodomite in prison; he does not believe in the stability of knowledge but, as a young man, he wanted to study science to be able to grasp truth, paradoxically adhering to the humanist notion that science is a transcendental activity; he longs to be out of any possible system but after he commits the crime he is eager for the hand of authority to locate him back in his right place. This attitude produces a discourse that is elusive and equivocal. It seems almost transparent but when analyzed in detail, it is hard to ascertain facts because no sooner has Freddie stated something that some posterior reflection upon it seems to contradict what he has just said.

Clearly, Freddie's strategy to resist the tradition consists in showing the constructed quality of its discourse and, by extension, the instability of its fundamental tenents. To pursue his point, then, he deconstructs some of society's basic beliefs such as the notion of truth as represented in the discourse of the judiciary. Hence, he stereotypes it through its reduction to one of the most famous clichés of court jargon: "Do you swear

to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?". His afterthought – "Don´t make me laugh" (7) – disowns it altogether.

From this post-modern conception of the world, then, Freddie acknowledges that truth is highly subjective and very much depends upon the speaker. He knows that "The question isn't simply: can a "reality" be re-presented exactly through language? But also: in the attempt at representation, whose story gets told?" (Marshall 1992, 53). This, in turn, is one of the "truths" that emerges from *The Book of Evidence* once and again. Very significantly, at the very end of the novel, he asks the police inspector to add his written testimony – his book of evidence – to his file "...with the other, *official fictions*..." [my emphasis] (220). Skeptically, the inspector – sketched as the romantic stereotype of the whodunit – asks him: "Did you put in about being a scientist...and knowing the Behrens woman and owing money and, all that stuff?" to which Freddie, from the logic of the post-modern subject, answers "It's *my* story...and I'm sticking to it"[my emphasis] (220), since he knows that the "true" story is not defined solely by its content but also by its frame of reference, namely the teller.

From this standpoint, it becomes clear why Freddie starts his statement by mocking the judge's appeal: "My Lord, when you ask me to tell the court in my own words, this is what I shall say" (3). He knows that the innocent "in my own words" does not lead to some transcendental truth shared by everybody but to his own conception of reality that, in turn, will shock more than persuade jury and judge altogether. This is coupled with his meaningful "this is what I shall say" where "this" stands for one possible account out of infinite ones. Consequently, Freddie speaks of his own life conscious that it is constituted by language and shaped by him, its narrator, thus showing that reality exists as a function of the discourse that articulates it (Marshall 1992, 54).

This insurmountable gap between Freddie's and the establishment's beliefs gives rise to the hybrid discourse of his narrative which becomes, as Nikos Papastergiadis underlines "...a means for critique and resistance to the monological language of authority" (267). Hybridity also accounts for the parodic and, at times, even comic quality of his narration. As an example, we can quote the instance when he sarcastically tells the clerk at court: "...please note that, clerk, it may mean something (8)". In a Derridean fashion he deconstructs, at the time that he parodies, the notion that the meaning of a text is to be found in some presence outside the text, that which it is fundamentally about. Through irony, then, Freddie unmasks the essentialist discourse of tradition.

The instability of meaning is also made explicit in *The Book of Evidence* through what might be considered as a dramatization of the Derridean notion of 'differánce'. According to Derrida, despite the efforts of every speaker, meaning can never be fixed because every statement entails its opposite. So, there is always a supplementary meaning that is always out of control and will arise and subvert our attempts to create fixed and stable worlds (qtd. in Hall 1992, 55). In this context, Hall points out that "Our statements are underpinned by propositions and premises of which we are not aware, but which are, so to speak, carried along in the bloodstream of language" (55). Freddie seems to be very much aware of this fact since, many times as he feels carried away by his own

narration, he interrupts himself in the middle of a sentence in order to render the opposite of what he has just been telling as if he wanted to discipline these supplementary meaning that escape his control. Hence, his text becomes highly paradoxical as it considers two opposing meanings at the same time and, by extension, does not fit the patterns of coherence usually expected of a narration. Let's consider the instance when he narrates his father's death:

> I put my arm around him, laid a hand on his forehead.He said to me: Don't mind her [his mother]. He said to me-
>
> Stop this, stop it. I was not there. I have not been present at anyone's death. He died alone, slipped away while no one was looking, leaving us to our own devices (51).

By deconstructing his own statement – and, thus reveal his complex relationship with his father – he shows that he is fully aware that he cannot control language because discourse is permanently destabilized by what it leaves out. Therefore, he makes the opposite meaning explicitly overt. As he does it, he brings to the surface 'the unspoken', 'the silent', that which is not voiced but is also part of the text, a notion that he emphasizes by leaving the sentence purposely unfinished, indicated by dashes.

If reality exists as a function of the discourse that articulates it, then "discourse is the power to be seized" as Foucault has pointed out in "The Order of Discourse". Having committed a crime and, consequently, ended up in prison, words are the only resource left to Freddie for his own defence. Banville has him say: "For words in here [in jail] are a form of luxury, of sensuousness, they are all we have been allowed to keep of the rich, wasteful world from which we are shut away" (38).

Therefore, as already highlighted, Freddie writes an account of some outstanding facts of his life in an attempt, one would expect, to present his crime in such a way that it might persuade judge and jury of his innocence or, at least, attenuate his guilt in their eyes. However, what emerges is a narrative that takes the form of an "oppositional discourse convention" that resists and deconstructs the "dominant discourse convention" (Fairclough 1991, 45) of judge and jury, and, therefore, aims at shocking rather than convincing. In other words, he exercises the power conferred upon him by discourse in an attempt of defense against being reshaped by the desire of the other.

This explains why, throughout his narration, he is bent on mocking the "process of confession" (Foucault as qtd. in Usher and Edwards 1994, 122) as that which will lead him to moral emancipation since, accepting it compliantly, would mean letting the establishment tie him up to the stereotype of the criminal. Therefore, in an almost impudent tone, he acknowledges to judge and jury the responsibility for his crime:

> Please, do not imagine, my lord, I hasten to say it, do not imagine that you detect here the insinuation of an apologia, or even a defense. I wish to claim full

> responsibility for my actions – after all, they are the only things I can call my own – and I declare in advance that I shall accept without demur the verdict of the court (16).

Then, such an acceptance of responsibility does not imply a submissive attitude on the part of the narrator as if once and for all he were going to abide by the establishment´s values. Rather, by refusing to repent of his crime, he rejects the community's moral standards:

> After my first appearance in court the newspaper said I showed no sign of remorse when the charges were read out. [...] Remorse implies the expectation of forgiveness, and I knew that what I had done was unforgivable. I could have feigned regret and sorrow, guilt, all that, but to what end? (151).

By showing no sign of remorse and eagerly demand society's forgiveness, Freddie rejects the interpellation of the official discourse that wants to make him fit the subject-position of the criminal. I think that, in this way, he actually creates a conflictive power relationship with the establishment. Foucault has pointed out that "It is not enough for the Law to summon, discipline, produce and regulate, but there must also be the corresponding production of a response from the side of the subject" (qtd. in Hall 1996, 12). Now, Freddie's response to the discourse of power is really singular. On the one hand we might say that he hails it when he actually feels a certain relief at being manacled and taken to prison. But, on the other hand, he cannot be actually disciplined by it because as he thinks there is nothing to feel contrite for, he cannot be constructed like a 'normal subject'. By extension, though he is jailed for life, the corresponding punishment that should make a new man of him is clearly ineffective.

In order to prove his lack of moral responsibility for the crime he has committed, he goes to the extreme of actually deconstructing the concept of "badness". To do this, he steps out of the boundaries of the discourse of tradition in order to show that – as Foucault points out in "The Order of Discourse" when discussing the arbitrary distinction between "true and false" – the concept of badness is capricious and, therefore, modifiable. As he does it, his discourse also becomes a critique of the logocentrism of language:

> ...leafing through my dictionary I am struck by the poverty of the language when it comes to naming or describing badness. Evil, wickedness, mischief, these words imply an agency, the conscious or at least active doing of wrong. They do not signify the bad inits inert, neutral, self-sustaining state.[...] Is this not a queer state of affairs?
>
> It makes me wonder. I ask myself if perhaps the thing itself – *badness* – does not exist at all, if this strangely vague and imprecise words are only a kind of ruse. Or perhaps the words are an attempt to make it be there?
>
> Or, again, perhaps there *is* something, but the words invented it (55).

Having consistently denied the Cartesian man's cogitative power since the beginning of his narration, his main point now is to try to dissociate 'badness' from man's responsibility as if instead of 'human badness' there were some type of 'natural badness' that existed of its own independent of man's action. In this light, man is deprived of his freewill and, therefore, cannot be held responsible of any conscious wrongdoing. In other words, human badness does not exist. Rather, it is some type of illusion created by language, a mirage produced by the logocentric nature of language.

Then, all this discussion – through which Banville once again mocks all Humanist assumptions – serves to devoid Freddie's action of any type of moral responsibility, as he himself points out: "I am [merely] asking, with all respect, whether it is feasible to hold on to the principle of moral culpability once the notion of free will has been abandoned" (16).

This all goes to show that instead of "seizing discourse" in order to persuade the jury of his innocence, he takes advantage of the power it confers him in order to resist the system even more. From this perspective, rather than becoming critical of his own deeds, he becomes even more critical of the establishment. It is as if he were assuming Foucault's strategy of "reversal" in order to deconstruct the establishment's assumptions about criminality. This seems to be the implication of his words when he startles the inspector and the policemen, who are questioning him, by saying: "I killed her because I could, I said, what more can I say?"(198). In his words, there is neither the revelation of some hidden, though expected, motivation nor the faintest hint of repentance or desire of being forgiven. Rather, through his brazen reply, he refuses to be disciplined by placing himself beyond the boundaries of Humanist ideology.

Consequently, from the jury's standpoint, the discourse he produces is not considered truthful since it resists existing power formations. It is only when he is imprisoned and subsequently interrogated that his discourse is made to conform to the official discourse by the inspector who takes down his confession. When Freddie reads it, he is dazzled by the inspector's 'artistry' at creating fiction:

> I peered in bafflement at the ill-typed page. That's your confession. [...] I marvelled at how he [the inspector] had turned everything to his purpose.
> [...] He had taken my story, with all its [...] frills and fancy bits, and pared it down to stark essentials. It was an account of my crime I hardly recognised, and yet, I believed it. He had made a murderer of me (202-203).

Thus, by exercising all the authority granted him by the "disciplinary power of discourse" (Foucault as qtd. in Hall 1992, 56), the police inspector models Freddie's declaration to make it conform with the authoritative legal discourse. In this way, he manages to bring Freddie, the subject, under strict discipline and control by tying him to the identity of the criminal. However, later on, Freddie's own fiction will embody his attempt at disentangling himself from it.

The sharp disharmony between the way he represents himself through his own fiction and the way he has been represented by the official discourse points to the constructed quality of the subject. Stuart Hall has pointed out that "...the theoretical work cannot be fully accomplished without complementing the account of discursive and disciplinary regulations with an account of subjective constitution" (13). Therefore, I will now focus on the way in which Freddie, through his own discourse, constitutes himself as a post-modern subject.

As already suggested, one of the basic assumptions underlying *The Book of Evidence* is Banville's deconstruction of the idea of the autonomous and unified individual of Humanist ideology as exemplified by his narrator. From this perspective, the novel could be understood as a movement from centering to decentering, from the narrator's image of himself as a 'normal' individual, or better a "masterbuilder" who could "...[determine] the course of [his] life according to [his] own decisions..."(16), to a subject fragmented into multiple selves who problematizes the concept of agency and recognizes himself as a construct constituted by and constitutive of the symbolic order of language.

To begin with, the way in which Freddie dramatizes himself encompasses all the theories on the constitution of the subject. As a young man he portrays himself as a Cartesian man – male, European, Christian – the rational individual who "...took up the study of science in order to find certainty..." (18) and, thus, exercise his rationalistic control over the world. However, later on he questions this conception of the subject and denies himself, as highlighted above, the possibility of any type of agency. Also, if at the beginning of the narration he pictures himself as some type of Romantic hero, seat of intelligence and beauty, whom the "...American [universities] spotted..." (18), throughout his narration he suffers a process of degradation – a kind of Darwinian evolutionary process in reverse – and at the very end of his statement he likens himself to an animal:

> Here I sit, naked under my prison garb, wads of pallid flesh trussed and bagged like badly packaged meat. I get up and walk around on my hind legs, a belted animal, shedding an invisible snow of scurf everywhere I move (144).

Finally, he portrays himself as a Freudian man, deliberately and knowingly making references to his macabre dreams as if he were in a therapist's session.: "The dream. (The court will hear about my dreams)" (54).

Through his identification with all these subjects, he becomes the embodiment of the decentered post-modern man who is a mixture of the different selves enunciated above. Therefore, from a Lacanian perspective, he does not perceive himself as an entity with a unitary identity but, rather, as a being constituted within a matrix of identities (Marshall 1992, 94).

In this context, the novel becomes a critique of the concept of identity as one which stabilized the world by showing how Freddie's identity, composed of several unresolved parts, is highly fragmented. Hence, he is far from the Enlightenment man who was supposed to have a unified and fixed essence from birth to death that shaped his identity. This becomes clear in the narration of his evidence because, in this process, he deconstructs himself as a 'normal' Cartesian man and, successively, reconstructs himself as a post-modern subject whose self has been divided into many contradictory identities that render him transient and unstable.

In fact, what Freddie constructs out of his own narration is an "identification", more than an identity with all the implications that this concept has. In his article "Who needs identity?" Stuart Hall defines 'identification' as

> ...a process of articulation, a suturing [...] an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality [...] it is subject to the play of *differánce*. And since as a process it operates across difference, it entails discursive work, the binding of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier effects'. It requires its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process (3).

This process of identification can be clearly seen in the way Freddie constructs himself through his statement since the multiple selves that make up his identity are in a constant process of articulation due to the play of differánce. Hence, as his identification consists of the 'suturing' of all the 'subjects' enumerated above, it becomes '...open-ended, variable and problematic...' (Hall 1992, 50). This fact explains the paradoxical quality of his narration, as every new fragment of evidence, i.e. every new self, that he adds to his fiction contradicts the previous one. In this light, Freddie confirms the analogy between language and identity as pointed out by Derrida (qtd. in Hall 1992, 55).

In his discussion of the process of 'identification', Hall also calls attention to the 'constitutive outside'. In the case of *The Book of Evidence*, it is present in Freddie's obsessive awareness of the "look of the other" which is highly decisive in the way he 'sutures' his different selves as he constructs his own identification.

In redefining the concept of identity, Stuart Hall points out that the notion of the sociological subject was proof that "...the inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient but was formed in relation to the 'significant others', who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols – the culture – of the worlds he/she inhabited..." (49). In other words, he clearly states that identity is formed in the "...continuous dialogue..." between the self and society which in the case of *The Book of Evidence* seems to be embodied in this game of looks. Paradoxically, instead of relating Freddie to the others, these looks seem to isolate him even more since he understands them as society's desire to discipline him into some of its field roles.

In his narration, Freddie problematizes them through his portrayal of the different characters of his fiction. This becomes clear when, in his account of his prospective

trial, he calls his wife and mother to the witness stand as evidence of why he has committed his horrid deed. As he fictionalizes their relationship, he curiously characterizes them as stereotypes of Cartesian subjects frozen in portraits that, he feels, stare back at him. Thus, for example, when he narrates his return to Coolgrange, his parents's estate in Ireland, he thinks that after their long separation his mother will see in him "...a man of parts, with a wife and a son and an impressive Mediterranean tan..." (42). However, she only seems to notice that he has got fat. Thus, on the spot, he regards himself likewise.

The epitome of all these portraits and looks, as suggested above, is embodied in the centripetal and centrifugal reading he makes of Frances Hal's painting "Portrait of a Woman with Gloves". This vignette acts as synecdoche to the whole novel since Freddie rereads and rewrites it in the same fashion that he constructs the fiction of his own life.

When he first encounters it, Freddie starts by deconstructing the woman on the canvas as "a mere figure". In a very detached and economical way, he describes her in terms of what first meets the eye of the beholder: clothes and features, thus likening his first impression to that of the members of the jury: "You have seen the picture in the papers, you know what she looks like" (78). Until he comes to decoding her look. Here, he becomes fully involved as the texture of his narration – tinted by own obsession, namely seeing and being seen – shows: "Her gaze is calm, inexpectant, though there is a trace of challenge, of hostility, even, in the set of her mouth" (78). The words 'calm' and 'inexpectant', on the one hand, and 'challenge' and 'hostility' on the other render the woman aloof and invulnerable. Little by little as his own look gains in intensity and concentration, he invests the figure of the woman with some powerful life to the point that he feels she is intently looking back at him:

> I stood there, staring, for what seemed a long time, and gradually a kind of embarrassment took hold of me, a hot shamefaced awareness of myself, as if somehow I, this soiled sack of flesh, were the one who was being scrutinised, with careful, cold attention (79).

Freddie is so overpowered by the woman's penetrating stare that he not only sees himself reduced to a degrading physical condition but also feels that the whole picture has become alive and is staring back at him: "Everything in the picture, that brooch, those gloves, the flocculent darkness at her back, every spot on the canvas was an eye fixed on me unblinkingly" (79). It is as if Freddie saw in her powerful gaze the embodiment of an essence, a unity that distinctly contrasts with his own fragility and disintegration. Consequently, instead of feeling as the one in command – the one who has the power of representing the other through his fiction – Freddie feels that he is being represented by the portrait's intent stare. This game of identification seems to prove Stuart Hall's theory according to which

> ...identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails [...] that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely, what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the positive meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed (4)

In this context, Freddie endows the woman in the portrait with a substance that he lacks because in voicing this 'presence' – that is silenced in him – he, at the same time, makes the play of difference overt.

In his predicament, the figure on the canvas is more alive to him than any real person in the world. This might explain why he, literally, feels hailed by her: "It is as if she were asking me to *let her live"* [my emphasis] (105). And in a way he does endow her with a new life because though he fully acknowledges that "...[she] is only an organisation of shapes and colours..." through his interpretation "... [he tries] to make up a life for her" (105). Hence, from his centripetal reading of internal evidence, particularly the woman's clothes which are dated between 1655 and 1660, and her physical features, as it has already been discussed, he unfolds a centrifugal reading that, at the beginning, seems to be a stereotype of all the grand narratives associated with that period.

From this perspective, he portrays her as a plain, motherless woman who has all the traits of the spinster and is pampered by her widower father. Predictably, she bossily runs their household, visits the sick and, very often, is sickly herself. Everything points to an uneventful existence, as if she were dead in life. Until she has her portrait painted. At this moment, Freddie breaks away from the style of the grand narratives and his centrifugal reading begins. His 'Woman with Gloves' actually acquires a new identity as he imagines the painter imprinting her with the intensity of his own penetrating eye.

Curiously, the scene when she first sees her image on the canvas parallels the scene when Freebie reads the police inspector's account of his statement. Like him, she also becomes prey to a deep feeling of estrangement:

> For a second she sees nothing, so taken is she by the mere sensation of stopping like this and turning: it is as if -as if she had walked out of herself. [...] She looks and looks. She had expected it would be like looking in a mirror, but this is someone she does not recognise, and yet knows... (108).

Thus, Freddie's creative, open-ended reading of the portrait denounces the way he understands his own identity because, once again, the relationship that she establishes with her own image on the canvas is the same that he has with the little man 'Bunter' who lives inside him and leads him to commit the crime. As in Freddie's case, it is someone she knows but does not recognize. The irony of the situation resides in the fact that while this unfolding of her self brings "The Woman with Gloves" back to life, the little man Bunter incites Freddie to murder and, consequently, to death.

I understand that what Freddie has done through his centrifugal reading is to deconstruct the almost defying seamless unity, embodied in the woman's stare, that he perceived when he first approached the painting. In this way, he has managed to show the central rupture at her core – like him, the woman turns out to be a divided self – produced by the intense look of the painter, her constitutive other. In turn, the same could be said of the painter because if his look has provoked this rupture in her identity, it means that his unity must also be fragmented by his own constitutive other. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that Freddie never identifies the author of the painting: it could be Vermeer or Hal or Rembrandt (104).

Throughout his narration, Freddie stresses this split in the self's identity by his use of the image of 'turning' that functions as a refrain to his story. Though Daphne and his victim also 'turn' at certain moments in their lives, only himself and the woman in the portrait seem to be aware of its signification, namely that in so doing, they have become contradictory and different new selves that will become 'sutured' to their own identification.

This many-sided quality that he lends to the painting, then, he denies to all the subjects that surround him by freezing them in the closed identity of the Cartesian subject. This might count as an explanation of his 'reading' of his victim when he first encounters her:

> A maid was standing in the open french window. She must have come in just then and seen me there and started back in alarm. Her eyes were wide, and one knee was flexed and one hand lifted, as if to ward off a blow (79).

Paradoxically, his description of the flesh and bone woman has a rigidity that the painting lacks. She does not look at him but involuntarily 'sees' him. This is why he does not describe her 'gaze' – that would imply action – but the size of her eyes, as if they were static. Finally, her posture suggests more a statue than a human being.

Later on, when he is already in prison, he sees a photograph of his victim in a newspaper that very much resembles the portrait of the 'Woman with Gloves': "...she was wearing a long, ugly dress with an elaborate collar, and was clutching something, flowers, perhaps in her hands. Her name was Josephine Bell"(148). Only when he sees her fictionalized in the picture, he is able to reconstruct her as a human being who actually 'looks' at him: "And suddenly I was back there, I saw her sitting in the mess of her own blood, looking at me..."(148). Therefore, Freddie killed her because he could not reconstruct her identity as that of a human being. In his mind her look and that of the painting merged to the point that the line dividing reality from fiction became fully blurred.

This goes to show the deep dislocation in Freddie's process of identification as he can only represent life from the perspective of art.

This dislocation of the concept of identity in Freddie's narration should be reconsidered in terms of the wider process of change that is subverting the main cultural and social structures in modern society that act as its foundation (Hall 1992, 48).

Consequently, as Freddie tries to give evidence of why he has committed his crime, most cultural and social identities come 'under erasure' (Hall 1996, 2) because he does not feel represented by them any longer. In this context, he becomes critical of family and class by depicting his decadent parents as the last remnants of a perished social order suggested by the run down Coolgrange estate. He also questions sexuality as, with a brazen disregard for social mores, he deals with traditionally taboo subject matters like homosexuality and multiple sexual relations. The conflictive Irish national question is also present at the background of his narration in the continuous references he makes to terrorist assaults. Institutions also come under the spot light in his sarcastic criticism of university teachers. He presents them as men whose lack of genius "...had condemned to a life of drudgery at the lectern..." (18), thus revealing his scorn for 'enlightened men' who are supposed to be the path breakers of society.

His rejection of central social structures, then, displaces him not only from himself – as has already been discussed – but also from his place in society (Hall 1996, 49). In his text, this feeling of estrangement is made explicit in the unbridgeable distance he perceives between himself 'I' and his fellow men 'they':

> I watched them, wide-eyed, wondering at their calm assurance in the face of a baffling and preposterous world. [...] They understood matters, or accepted them, at least. They knew what they thought about things, they had opinions. [...] they did not realise that everything is infinitely divisible. They talked of cause and effect, as if they believed it possible to isolate an event and hold it up to scrutiny in a pure, timeless space.[...] Oh, they knew no bounds (16-17).

From his perspective, 'they' are the agents of the main beliefs of modernist, progressive society that he rejects like the concept of presence manifested in their absolute certitude about things; inviolable truth expressed through opinions that do not accept contestation but are to be meekly accepted; the concept of unity that, again, does not admit of difference and stifles the world; the fake coherence that appears as natural. Finally, the logical relationship between cause and effect that he consistently denies throughout his narration in the construction of his evidence.

Then, by problematizing all these beliefs, Freddie is also questioning the concept of 'pastness' as one which ensures the continuation of consolidated systems of values. As Wallerstein points out, "Pastness is a mode by which persons are persuaded to act in the present in ways they might not otherwise act" (78). And this is, precisely, what Freddie refuses to do by disowning consolidated social and cultural identities. From this perspective, he reflects about the murder he has committed in the context of his past life:

> The myriad possibilities of the past lay behind me, a strew of wreckage.
> Was there, in all that, one particular shard – a decision reached, a road taken, a signpost followed – that would show me just how I had come to my present state? No, of course not (37).

Clearly, he denies any type of cause and effect relationship between his past – as an ordinary citizen – and his present life – as a criminal – because as he adheres to the view that the 'social past' is 'inherently inconstant' (Wallerstein 1991, 78) – and, therefore, a construct too – it can be deconstructed in infinite ways depending on the frame of reference i.e. the narrator. Thus, by denying the possibility of viewing the past from a single and unquestionably true perspective, Freddie is not only questioning the permanence of the social landscape but also the old concept of identity which stabilized the world.

Conclusion

According to our discussion, then, Banville seems to abide by the notion that as the social environment is highly fragmented and unstable, values can only be momentarily fixed since they lend themselves to multiple interpretations. Then, as his portrayal of Freddie as a murderer shows, the significance of crime and the identity of the criminal also come under erasure. At this point, one might wonder whether Banville is actually condoning crime. I believe that in order to answer this question, *The Book of Evidence* should be considered at two levels.

On the one hand, as I have already tried to show, I understand that Banville actually adheres to the view that as tradition is always in an undergoing process of becoming, always modified by some new supplementary meaning, the subject cannot have a stable sense of self from birth to death thus giving rise to the multiple identity of the post-modern subject. But, on the other hand, – also consistent with this view – he aims at desacralizing the serious beliefs of the Western world. Hence, he gives another turn to the screw of his narration by framing it from the perspective of an unrepentant murderer who carnavalizes all social mores by confusing fiction with real life.

Consequently, considering the story from Banville's, not Freddie's author function, I think that its main aesthetic feature is his skillful use of hybridity that brings Western culture under erasure as, through his pointed use of irony, he not only dislocates the Humanist notion of the unified subject and the concept of transcendental truth but also the grand Western narratives since his discourse parodies some of the popes of canonical fiction like Blake, Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, Borges, Dostoyevsky and Whitman. Therefore, from the start, the sarcastic tone of this polyphonic narration suggests a different type of aesthetic experience.

As I have already hinted at in the introduction, when I first approached the book I expected to experience the same type of anguish produced by other novels of the genre. However, in spite of the narrator's plight, I never felt suffocated by the narration. This brought to my mind my reading experience of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* At the time I read them, I remember wondering how I could bear all the obscenity portrayed in them – murder, rape, miscegenation, incest – while I

was almost afraid of reading some novels of the nineteenth-century Realism that dealt with the same subject matter. And my conclusion was that it was due to their aesthetic quality since Faulkner's use of form and vocabulary downplayed the crudity of the scenes.

My reading experience of Banville's *The Book of Evidence* goes along the same lines, only that his experimentation – his distinctive aesthetic feature – resides in the ironic quality of his text that provokes its pronounced dislocation. In this context, it is difficult for me as a reader to see in Freddie the prototype of the criminal. What's more, at certain moments of his narration, I could not help smiling at the jokes he cracked at the expense of some well-known social stereotypes. Thus, Banville's novel becomes an example of Bakhtin's carnavalization because, through laughter, he establishes a dialogic relationship with the inviolable beliefs of the Western world that clearly dislocates them.

It is, precisely, from this perspective that I believe crime should be considered in Banville's novel since its parodic quality not only sets it apart from other novels of the genre but also makes it almost impossible to treat it as a serious allegation on crime. To pursue my point, I would like to draw a brief comparison between *The Book of Evidence* and *Crime and Punishment.*

Let's consider the two parallel scenes when both murderers explain the motivations that led them to commit murder. The scene in Dostoyesvky's novel takes place in a sordid, miserable room where Sonia, Raskolnikoff's beloved, lives. To add to the somber tone of the narration, it should be pointed out that Sonia, a religious girl who believes in the goodness of the world, has had to prostitute herself in order to make a living for her consumptive stepmother and children since her father is a drunkard. In this context, Raskolnikoff explains to the gentle and stoical girl the dark motives that have led him to commit his horrid deed. Thus, '...prey to a gloomy fanaticism...' he tells her that he had not killed for money in order to help his poor mother and sister but because he had always wanted to commit some daring act that would gain him men's respect, thus setting him above all of them:

> ... power is only given to the man who dare stoop to pick it up. Nothing more is needed, except courage. From the moment this truth had dawned upon me – a truth as clear as the light of the sun – I longed to dare, and I committed murder. All I wanted was to do some daring thing, Sonia; that was my sole motive! (332).

His words are really breathtaking. Here is a man who, with real pathos, actually confesses that like Hawthorne's Ethan Brand, he consciously cut the chain that linked him to humanity to prove himself more powerful than any man or woman alive.

Throughout the gloomy scene, prey to a mixture of fear and compassion for his extreme suffering, Sonia, the loving Samaritan, is fully persuaded that Satan has induced him to commit the crime. By the end of the novel, her love and faith in God, as well as

all the hardships he undergoes, make a new man of fallen Raskolnikoff. So much so that the story finishes when he has been disciplined into the role of the convict, ready to do his time, with Sonia's Bible under his pillow and the hope that her faith and love will regenerate him. Therefore, after stretching the boundary between good and evil, Dostoyevsky's discourse clearly adheres to the forces of good as its clear admonitory tone stresses humanist values:

> They [Sonia and Raskolnikoff] did not know that a new life is not given for nothing; that it is to be dearly paid for, and only acquired by much patience and suffering, with great future efforts. [...] but now a new history commences: a story of the gradual renewing of man,

In a similar scene in *The Book of Evidence* Freddie, after all the hardships he has endured, pretends to have had 'a glimpse of a new world' and thus converted to Humanist ideology. Consequently, in a mock heroic tone, he explains the motivations for his crime at the time that he proclaims himself a new man. In his new seriousness, he feels full of regard for the others and, hence, portrays the characters in his fiction in a different light. He thinks that his mother disinherited him as a way of teaching him about the ways of the world. Joanne, his mother's protégé, who has inherited everything that was legally his, comes to visit him and, rather than considering her a usurper, he only sees good intentions in her. Then it is his wife's turn. The cold, detached woman has overnight become sentimental and, like Raskolnikoff's Sonia, tells him how much he has always meant to her.

If, at this point, the reader is suspicious of Freddie's newly acquired contrition, his next words clearly confirm it when, in the same mocking tone, he reconsiders his murder of Josie Bell and proclaims that he killed her because he could not imagine her '...sufficiently alive...'and, therefore, '...that failure of imagination is his real crime...' (215).

One might wonder at the cruelty of the statement! This is a real Ethan Brand! But, wait a minute!I think that *The Book of Evidence* is a real parody of Hawthorne's 'Unpardonable Sin' for what do you make of a narration in which the main character finds that a portrait is more alive than a human being? Shouldn't his statement be understood as a line from a parody rather than from a novel seriously dealing with murder? Freddie himself seems to confirm it when, in the same sarcastic tone, he triumphantly proclaims:

> I seem to have taken on a new weight and density.
> I feel gay and at the same time wonderfully serious
> I am big with possibilities. I am living for two.
> (216) [the rewriting of the paragraph in blank verse is mine]

I think that at this point Banville's carnavalization of Western grand narratives and, by extension, Humanist ideology reaches its highest pitch. To begin with, he seems

to be echoing Foucault in his embedded criticism of the regenerating power of prison. But, on top of that, he does it through the decentering of one of the founding texts of Western culture such as Whitman's "Song of Myself" that in a grandiloquent manner predicates the birth of the New Man.

Hence, Freddie's words mock Whitman's persona poetica – after its emergence from the dark night of the soul – since he pretends to come out of the crisis of identity that led him to crime as a totally new man, with renewed energies for himself and, ironically, for his victim too. Undoubtedly, Freddie's words would sound outrageous if one forgot the function that underlies them in Banville's text, namely to stress the subject's crisis of identity against a disintegrating social landscape through the use of a caustic irony that, clearly, dislocates a system of values that seemed fixed and closed for ever.

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James Joyce and the Life Cycle: The Unfolded Picture

Donald E. Morse

"*To discuss the problems connected with the stages of human development is an exacting task, for it means nothing less than unfolding a picture of psychic life in its entirety from the cradle to the grave*."

Karl Jung (3)

"*We are faced all the time with the indelible reality of the past*."

Jennifer Johnston (4)

Abstract: *Joyce in his fiction ambitiously attempted to capture the whole of the human life cycle "from infancy through maturity to decay," as he graphically phrases it in* Ulysses *(697). Beginning with the child's earliest memories in* A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man *and progressing through the vicissitudes of childhood, recorded in that novel along with the early stories in* Dubliners*, Joyce went on to analyze adolescence and early adulthood in the middle stories in* Dubliners*, as well as in the bulk of* A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. He then memorably depicted the middle mature years in his portrait of Leopold and Molly Bloom in* Ulysses*. Finally, he pictured the evening of life in "The Dead" and its end and re-beginning in Finnegans Wake. Joyce's works taken as a whole from* A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and* Dubliners *through* Ulysses *and* Exiles *to* Finnegans Wake *– embody Erik Erickson's "meaningful interplay between beginning and end as well as some finite sense of summary and, possibly, a more active anticipation of dying."*

Most writers work by exclusion rather than inclusion. Almost alone among prominent authors writing in English, William Shakespeare and James Joyce practiced inclusion; that is, they "put it all in," as Joyce proclaimed in *Ulysses* as well as "Jakes

McCarthy, too." Encountering either Shakespeare or Joyce a reader cannot then retreat to a smaller, more comfortable, and much more manageable plane of thought, emotion, or experience for both Shakespeare and Joyce aim at giving readers nothing less than all of human life.[1] John Middleton Murry in reviewing *Ulysses* in 1922 became one of the first readers to object to this very quality that I am defending. He wrote: "The curse of nimiety, of too-muchness hangs over it as a whole," he observed (qtd. in Dettmar 49n58). Joyce, like Shakespeare, wrote works of "excess" – to borrow Tom LeClair's useful term – or "what Thoreau in *Walden* called 'extravagance'" (LeClair 4). His is the art of mastery. Le Clair enunciates "three essential criteria of mastery, mastery of the world in which they were written, mastery of narrative methods, and mastery of the reader" (5). With Joyce, as with Shakespeare, his mastery enables him to explore in depth the human life cycle. Where Shakespeare dramatized the "seven ages of man" throughout his plays, Joyce explored the various stages of life in his fictions.

The American developmental psychologist Erik Erikson following in Karl Jung's footsteps spent a productive lifetime studying and reflecting upon the human life cycle. Each step on life's way, he concluded, involves its own challenge to be faced, its own task to be done. For example, the task faced by adolescents, such as Stephen Daedalus faces in chapters two to four of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is to achieve identity. Part of that task must take place socially or as Erikson defines the problem: "To be oneself (or not to be) [and] to share being oneself" (Erickson, *Identity*, "Worksheet" 178). Stephen struggles with being himself and with sharing himself throughout the last section of the novel and into the first chapters of *Ulysses*. Offered several different role models from which to choose, he declines to choose any. Nor has he friends that might by any stretch of the definition be grouped under Erikson's rubric "Partners in Friendship" (178). Buck Mulligan, for instance, is no friend of his but one who will use him for his own ends. He takes the key to the tower, for example, and will dispose of him when he is no longer of use. Having drunk Stephen's money, Mulligan deliberately loses Stephen on the way to Nighttown. Worse, according to Bloom, Mulligan may have put a narcotic in Stephen's drink in the Lying-In Hospital.

Joyce in his fiction ambitiously attempted to capture the whole of the human life cycle "from infancy through maturity to decay," as he graphically phrases it in *Ulysses* (697). Beginning with the child's earliest memories in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* and progressing through the vicissitudes of childhood recorded in that novel along with the early stories in *Dubliners*, Joyce went on to analyze adolescence and early adulthood in the middle stories in *Dubliners* as well as in the bulk of *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. He then memorably depicted the middle mature years in his portrait of Leopold and Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*. Finally, he pictured the evening of life in "The Dead" and its end and re-beginning in *Finnegans Wake*.

The Growth of Consciousness and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road" (*Portrait* 176). This is Stephen's earliest memory. "His father told him that story [...]." "The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt" (176). This first recollection of Stephen's obviously partakes in its innocence of what Karl Jung describes as "the paradise of unconscious childhood" (5). Yet even this early, the problem of self-identity begins to surface at first simply: "*He* was baby tuckoo [emphasis added]." Then more complexly as Stephen's barely acknowledged identity comes up against the question of his father's identity: "his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face." And the identity of Betty Byrne: "she sold lemon platt" (176). Separating himself from his father and then his father in turn from other humans – represented concretely by Betty Byrne – begins for Stephen what will become a life-long process of comparing like or similar people and things and contrasting unlike people and things. Making distinctions between like or similar things – two adults in this instance – so basic to the acquisition of human language, the growth of knowledge, and the stimulation of learning leads Stephen to greater consciousness.

Joyce records a second process by which Stephen takes his first steps towards increasing consciousness in Stephen's song.

> *O, the wild rose blossoms* [...].
> He sang that song. That was his song.
> *O, the green wrothe botheth*. (176).

When Stephen speaks of himself "objectively, in the third person" (Jung 7) – "that was *his* song" (emphasis added) – we, as readers, share in his dawning sense of himself as a discrete individual that derives from his recognition of self to song. "*He* sang *that* song." The opening of *A Portrait* records what Jung calls an "initial series of contents [...]" (7) in Stephen's seemingly unconnected discrete memories. (Only later as memories become continuous will Stephen develop strong feelings of subjectivity.)

In the next stage of growth, Stephen will begin to make connections between memories. This process of perceiving connections and drawing distinctions through comparison and contrast will continue throughout the *Portrait*. A similar progress occurs with the various characters in *Dubliners* from the young boy confronting death in "The Sisters" to the schoolboy learning of evil in "An Encounter," from the young woman paralyzed unable to act in "Eveline," and the young men acting without thinking of the consequences in "After the Race," through those in middle years such as Little Chandler in "A Little Cloud" until we reach the old sisters in "The Dead."

Because all life is a process of growth – and when growth ceases, the process stops, death occurs – we can meaningfully speak of the ages of life (Shakespeare) or the stages of life (Jung) or a life cycle (Erikson). Stephen's growth from boyhood to adolescence remains the compelling human story of the coming of age of a young man

in a highly repressive society. Within the whole oeuvre of Joyce's fiction, however, it forms the early part of Joyce's depiction of the human life cycle where each stage becomes recapitulated, examined, probed, illuminated.

The Mid-Life Crisis and *Ulysses*

Joyce's great achievement remains the complex fictional portrait of Leopold and Molly Bloom in mid-life. When Bloom was born, male life expectancy was under fifty.[2] (Joyce himself would die before reaching sixty.) Leopold Bloom, therefore, although relatively young by twenty-first century standards, is a model of a person in mid-life at the turn of the nineteenth century. Without exaggeration he muses "Soon I am old" (285). Much has been written of the Blooms as fictional characters, as "humors," as symbols, such as The Wandering Jew and the Earth Mother, as classical motifs, such as Ulysses and Penelope, and so on and so forth, but the true power of Joyce's portraits rests on their humanity. "It is the sound of humanity that reverberates throughout [...] *Ulysses*," as Morton Levitt contends (5-6).

Characteristically of those in mid-life, both Molly and Bloom recall their dead parents who can no longer shield them against the knowledge of the end that will now become more and more present. With their parents' death, each has become the exposed link in the family chain. A second characteristic of mid-life adults shared by Molly and, more especially, by Bloom lies in the sense of pervasive loss. Loss rather than opportunity will come more and more to dominate the remainder of their lives. Third, the Blooms experience what Americans call "the empty nest syndrome" that occurs when children leave home. Rudy died several years before the novel begins and Milly has recently gone to live and work in Mullingar. Yet both children are present to both Bloom and Molly in thought and memory. The memory of Rudy shadows Bloom's day as the dead son proves never far from the father's thoughts and feelings. Moreover, Rudy, the dead son may well be the reason for the present day of crisis during which Molly will commit adultery for the first and only time since they were married.[3] Her mixed motives range from physical, sexual desire – "Thanks be to the great God I got somebody to give me what I badly wanted to put some heart up into me" (758) – to the possibility of shocking Poldy into returning as sexually active partner in the marriage. She wants him back. Not least she wants him back as her sexual partner – "Poldy has more spunk in him" (742), she observes using a low Dublin idiom as she compares him most favorably to Blazes Boylan. But Bloom cannot return. The "years dream return" but for him the reality of his dead son and the responsibility he assumes for Rudy's non-survival if not for his death overwhelms all else: "Could never like it [sexual intercourse] again after Rudy [died]" (168) he reflects honestly. Thus the necessity to procreate conflicts with the impossibility of procreating within Bloom. As father he is responsible for the health of his newborn son and that son died – "my fault perhaps. No son" (285). In effect, Bloom assents to the ancient Jewish belief that "if it's [the child is] healthy it's from the mother.

If not the man" (96). Or, more specifically: "the health of the child is a reflection on the virility of the male" (Gifford and Seidman 111). As husband, Bloom does not wish to participate in procreation. Molly's later miscarriage only confirms him in this feeling. And yet he recalls with pleasure and affection making love with Molly. "The most moving event in the book, for both Molly and Bloom, is their love-making at Howth, which took place sixteen years previously, but which ends the book with its resounding affirmation," as Joseph Ronsley maintains (118). Anxiously anticipating Molly's adultery, Bloom reconciles himself to this "inevitable" event by returning in his mind to those past events on the hill of Howth where he and Molly first made love. By recreating that moment in the present, by bringing it into the present through memory he acquires "a sense of continuity, a sense of being, with a past, a present, and a future" (Rosenfield 76) that leads to his equanimity.[4]

Life must be lived forward but can only be understood backward, as Søren Kierkegaard once wisely observed and, therefore, great epics, such as *Ulysses*, begin traditionally *in media res* or at that moment when there is enough of a life to begin to be understood. Yet since the unity of narrative embodied in a single life becomes fully apparent only after that life is over, Bloom and Molly continue to look forward while also remembering backwards. "I remember that I was happy when I am not happy now, and I recall my past sadness when I am not sad now; [...] I can recall a desire I had once, when I have it no longer," was St. Augustine's classic formulation of the problem. During his long and difficult day, Bloom pauses several times to observe: "Me. And me now" (176). "I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I?" (168). The Heracleitian River flows in one direction only yet "the way up and the way down are the same" as both Heracleitus and St. Augustine knew full well.[5] Both living and memory can be experienced only in the present tense of the present moment. Both Bloom and Molly attempt to understand their lives by calling up memories of one another from their earlier, perhaps less complicated and certainly less troubled life together. When Bloom and Molly recall past events, thoughts, and emotions now in this moment, their recollection colors this moment.

Through memory Bloom proves exceptional – even heroic – in being able to integrate the suffering, pain, and loss he has experienced in the past (generativity in Erikson's terms, *Identity*, "Figure III" 129), while at the same time avoiding the emotional pitfall of becoming self-absorbed ("Figure III" 129). "The past is not to be repeated but *redeemed*, because it has the power yet to redeem the future," Declan Kiberd contends (475). The key to such redemption lies in generativity without self-absorption, according to Erikson. Carrying with him his memories of all his days and ways, Bloom proceeds energetically from the known to the unknown or as Joyce more wittily wrote "from the unknown [that is, the mystery of birth] to the known [the certainty of death]" (*U* 572).[6] Like most people in mid-life, he does a day's work under difficult circumstances. At the end of the day, his accounts balance. He has done works of charity and mercy – in fact, he has performed all seven of the works of corporal and spiritual mercy. Don Gifford contends that

> In retrospect the significance of trivial things and of things understated, omitted, or neglected [in *Ulysses*] suggest that Bloom, the heterodox Jew-Protestant-Catholic-Freemason, is the only reasonably fallible, unself-consciously devout, practicing Christian (or, rather, "anonymous Christian" in Karl Rahner's phrase) in Dublin. [...] Devout Catholics were instructed by the Maynooth Catechism that each morning they should pray to be able to perform one or more of the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy during the day. [...] Bloom [has] performed [...] all fourteen. ("Memory" 45)

Rather than the transient futile sensation of triumph, Bloom ends his day with equanimity. He accepts himself, Molly, his children both living, and dead, his lot in life for which he blames no one and for which he offers no excuses. Bloom neither despairs nor appears resigned. Nor is he disgusted with himself, his lot in life, or with life itself. Instead he remains a picture of integrity. Unlike his fellow Dubliners, he spends his energy not in "reinforcing their narrow range of consciousness [but...] in shattering it in the tension of opposites and building up a state of wider and higher consciousness" (Jung 10). And, in that "higher consciousness" lies, I believe the key to Bloom's attractiveness not merely as a fictional character but also as an example of "right conduct."

A devoted husband and father, Bloom opposes evil, stands up and speaks out, however haltingly, for justice and love, mourns his dead son, attends to his daughter's needs, and returns to his wife at the conclusion of a long and difficult day. Throughout he displays a marvelous ability to function as a whole, healthy, and productive adult – Joyce's "competent keyless citizen" (*U* 697). Bloom recognizes, however intuitively, the truth in Jung's assertion that "the meaning and purpose of a problem seem to lie not in its solution but in our working at it incessantly. This alone preserves us from stultification and petrifaction" (11-12). The serious problems life presents can never be solved fully or resolved once and for all. The gifted American psychotherapist Sheldon Kopp remarked ruefully that given his talent and worth he expected as a young adult to be invited to sample the cream of life but instead was given a bucket of sour milk with some sketchy instructions on how to make yogurt. Bloom similarly works at his problems "incessantly." Yet he realizes there can be no solution to his greatest "problem" – the death of his son in infancy. Rudy's death rather than Blazes Boylan's sexual activity becomes the event that shadows the Blooms' marriage. Blazes Boylan is, after all, merely a distraction from or at most a symptom of that shadow whereas the death of Rudy inevitably and substantially altered Leopold and Molly's relationship with one another (*U* 168). And that alteration became their first step into what Jung aptly calls "the afternoon of life" (17).

"[W]e cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning; for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie," as Jung astutely observed (17). It becomes self-defeating for adult development to continue into the afternoon of life "with the false

assumption that our truths and ideals will serve us as hitherto" (Jung 17). Leslie Fiedler eloquently acknowledges that "[I]n the middle of life, as the day wears on, we who began as sons and lovers look around to discover that we have become fathers and husbands; that somehow we have learned that exile is not what must be sought but what must be endured, and what therefore joins every man to every other man" (207-208). New conditions call for new actions and reactions. Bloom "as a competent keyless citizen [...] had proceeded energetically from the unknown to the known through the incertitude of the void" (*Ulysses* 697). Acting in existential knowledge of the "parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity" that becomes more and more apparent the longer a person lives in "irreversible time" (728), Bloom in the afternoon of life as father and as husband successfully devises different strategies and affirms different values from those of his youth. His equanimity (433), for example, arises from his intimate knowledge acquired at some cost in the afternoon of life of "the futility of triumph or protest or vindication: the inanity of extolled virtue: the lethargy of nescient matter: the apathy of the stars" (734).

Bloom also illustrates Erickson's contention that, for adults, the temptation to social or individual isolation must be resisted in favor of "solidarity" with others and intimacy within relationships (*Identity*, "Worksheet" 178). The deepening crisis in Bloom's marriage centers on the nature of his and Molly's solidarity with one another as well as on their failure to communicate with one another over the past nine months. Both the solidarity and communication figure hugely in what Erikson would describe as the intimacy or lack of it – "isolation" – within their relationship (*Identity*, Figure III 129).

In discussing works of mastery, Le Clair insists that "I am ultimately concerned with survival value [...,] books that know and show what we as a people and a species need to understand in order to have a future" (viii). Joyce's *Ulysses* has, I believe, enormous survival value, although located in a, perhaps, surprising area – that of ordinary, everyday life.[7] In his deeply etched portrait of personal heroism in an ordinary life, Joyce demonstrates that "the ordinary is the extraordinary" (Ellmann 3). "The ordinary is the proper domain of the artist," Joyce once asserted, "the extraordinary can safely be left to journalists" (Ellmann qtd. in Kiberd 470).

The Cycle of *Finnegans Wake*

Joyce having himself set foot on the "sill of shade" in the afternoon of life would spend the next seventeen years after the publication of *Ulysses* enduring considerable emotional and physical pain and suffering. Facing the known end with neither disgust nor despair, he energetically – some would say, possessively – wrote his great comic epic *Finnegans Wake*. A work more discussed than read but one that faces squarely and unflinchingly the ultimate end of human life without despair but with great equanimity.

The challenge of *Finnegans Wake* lies, I believe, in its vision of the totality of all life seen from the perspective of a most creative life. Going beyond the intellect, Joyce employs "primordial images [...] symbols which are older than historical man, which [...] still make up the groundwork of the human psyche" (Jung 21) to give us the whole of the human life cycle. Joyce's single story in the *Wake* is in fact that very cycle of life: birth, growth, maturation, fertility, decline, and death and then the cycle repeats like Vico's road "to end where it began." "There extand by now one thousand and one stories, all told, of the same" (5). "Hush! Caution! Echoland!" (13). Hence the heart-wrenching sadness of the ending mixed with joy of the re-beginning of *Finnegans Wake*. "Soft morning, city! Lsp! I am leafy speafing" (619). "There'll be others but non so for me" (626).

> Yes, you're changing, sonhusband, and you're turning, I can feel you, for a daughterwife from the hills again. […] And she is coming. Swimming in my hindmoist. Divetaking on me tail. Just a whisk brisk sly spry spink spank sprint of a thing theresomere, sultering. Saltarella come to her own. I pity your oldself I was used to. Now a younger's there. Try not to part! Be happy, dear ones! May I be wrong. For she'll be sweet to you as I was sweet when I came down out of me mother. […] End here. Us then. Finn again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps.the keys to. Give! A way a lone a last a long the (627-28)

In undermining and even doing away with traditional notions of character and time in *Finnegans Wake*, in attempting to get at the essence of action, rather than the more traditional novelist's goal of reproducing or creating a single action, Joyce chose to concentrate on the life cycle, "the movement from birth through maturity to death, with the renewal of movement resulting from the seed planted in each completed cycle" (Peake 354). Charles Peake rightly contends that

> The terms, "birth," "maturity," "death" and "seed" are metaphors; the same cycle is followed by inorganic as by organic existence; it applies equally to the atom and the physical universe, to all objects, plants and animals, and to man, his groupings, his institutions, and to all he creates or experiences. [...] It depends on the interplay of opposites and illustrates their underlying identity, since the first moment of birth is the first moment of dying and the same cyclic movement produces simultaneously ascent and descent. (354)

Similarly, at the end of *Finnegans Wake*, A.L.P., Anna Livia Plurabelle leaving life – the river Liffey flowing out to the sea – returns in the life-giving rain that fructifies the earth allowing seed to grow and the cycle of birth, life, death, regeneration to begin again: "Us then. Finn again! [...] A way a lone a last a loved a long the (628) riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs" (3). Phoenix-like the cycle begins again but with different players – "there'll be others but non so for me" (626).

"It's Phoenix, dear. And the flame is, hear! Let's our joornee saintmichael make it" (621). The life cycle is now complete.

Wisdom and the Life Cycle

"Where is the wisdom of our old people, where are their precious secrets and visions?" Jung asked at the beginning of the last century (18). Not surprisingly, it is this wisdom maturing from what Erikson describes as "the dominant antithesis in old age [of] *integrity* vs. *despair*" (*Identity* 112) that Joyce reflects – however obliquely – in his last work, *Finnegans Wake* as well as throughout his work taken as a whole. Erikson insists that

> The dominant antithesis in old age […] we termed *integrity* vs. *despair*. […] Integrity, however, seems to convey a peculiar demand – as does the specific strength that we postulate as maturing from this last antithesis – namely, *wisdom*. This we have described as a kind of "informed and detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself" […]. […] wisdom rests in the capacity to see, look, and remember, as well as to listen, hear, and remember. (61, 112)

Remembering is, therefore, crucial. "Our eyes register the light of dead stars," André Schwartz-Bart so memorably wrote in *Le Dernier des Justes* (*The Last of the Just* 1960), as our days and nights are lived by the light of all our previous days and nights. The person we are today is, in part, made up of the memory of all previous days: "In a man's single day are all the days of time" as Borges wrote in "James Joyce."[8] Or, as he vividly pictures 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.

"We are this chimerical museum of shifting forms" in the sense that today we are the sum total of all our previous experience yet that experience is held but imperfectly in memory waiting to be brought forward into today. Memory becomes more important and more treasured the longer life continues. The infant can recall little having experienced little – "there was a moocow coming down the road," for instance, is a charming but infantile memory. Those in mid-life, such as Leopold and Molly Bloom, have, in contrast, much to recall as they wrestle with loss and the memory of what has gone before. Those at the end of life, like Anna Livia Plurabelle, have, however, the most to recall and so become almost totally preoccupied with memories of what they will shortly leave.

What has gone? How it ends?

Begin to forget. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures, in each our word. Today's truth, tomorrow's trend.

Forget, remember! (*Finnegans Wake* 614)

"To grow old is a great privilege," wrote Erikson at the end of his very long life. "It allows feedback on a long life that can be relived in retrospect. With the years, retrospect becomes more inclusive; scene and action become more real and present. Sometimes the distant scenes and experiences are close to bewildering, and to relive them in memory is almost overwhelming"(*Completed* 128). "Forget, remember!" wrote Joyce at the end of his expressing a similar sentiment. Both suggest the wisdom to be found in old age.

Joyce's works taken as a whole from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Dubliners* through *Ulysses* and *Exiles* to *Finnegans Wake* – embody Erickson's "meaningful interplay between beginning and end as well as some finite sense of summary and, possibly, a more active anticipation of dying" (63). If inclusion, together with mastery of the world and narrative methods, sets Joyce apart from other twentieth-century writers, so does his depiction of the totality of the human life cycle so evident throughout his work.

Notes

An earlier version of this essay will appear in *Focus* (Hungary).

1 Harold Bloom maintains that Shakespeare "essentially invented human personality as we continue to know and value it."

2 Tom Kirkwood describes the huge increase in life expectancy between the 1880s and 1990s: "life expectancy at birth in England and Wales has nearly doubled from some 46 years in the 1880s to around 76 years in the 1990s. [. . .] Life expectancy has doubled because many fewer people are dying young" (5).

3 José Lanters summarizes Bloom's feeling of guilt over Rudy's death and its effect on his relationship with Molly: "it is evident that the event [of Rudy's death] was a crucial factor in the deterioration of the Blooms' sexual relationship and that Leopold Bloom feels he is somehow to blame for his son's demise" (530).

4 Molly in her monologue returns to exactly the same moment of their love making on Howth (782). "The reader in turn joins these two memories of Bloom and Molly widely separated by hundreds of pages and many hours of reading time by actively linking them – recalling them then bringing both together into the present which of necessity alters that very present, that act of reading the last words of *Ulysses*. The reading time itself for the end of *Ulysses* thus partakes of all three of Augustine's times present" (Morse, "Days of Time" 92). In *The Confessions* Augustine concludes: "It is, now, however, perfectly clear that neither the future nor the [past are in existence, and that it is incorrect to say that there are three times – past, present, and future. Though one might perhaps say: 'There are three times – a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.' For these three do exist in the mind, and I do not see them anywhere

else: the present time of things past is memory; the present time of things presents is sight; the present time of things future is expectation" (273).

5 Heraclitus refers to the future as "the way up" the river, in that, to be experienced the future must come into the present while the past becomes "the way down" the river when brought into the present through memory.

6 "Life, he himself said once, (his biografiend, in fact, kills him verysoon, if yet not, after) is a wake [. . .] a phrase which the establisher of the world by law might pretinately write across the chestfront of all manorwombanborn" (*Finnegans Wake* 55).

7 Like Fiedler "I have been living Joyce for a long time now, and especially I have been living *Ulysses*, not outside of but within the very texture of my life, as a part of a process of growing up and growing old. *Ulysses* was for my youth and has remained for my later years not a novel at all, but a conduct book, a guide to salvation through the mode of art, a kind of secular scripture" (196-97). I am not wholly convinced by that last pirouette but I certainly do agree with Fielder's description of *Ulysses* as a "book of conduct" in large measure because I have found Joyce's extremely detailed, intimate portrait of Bloom in mid-life a good guide.

8 For a detailed discussion of Borges' complicated relationship to James Joyce and his work, see Thomas J. Rice who discusses at length "Borges' anxious relationship to the influential figure of James Joyce [. . .]" (56).

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The Irish in South America

Re-Writing the Irish Immigration

Those who Arrived by Sea

Irish Immigration into Argentina[*]

*Guillermo MacLoughlin Bréard***

The "Spanish Irish"

Many Irish settled in this country having arrived as part of the colonial administration as soldiers or in commerce, specially during the XVIII century.

Their descendants still hold important positions in Argentine society. Many of them cannot be identified as being of Irish descent since their last names were adapted to Spanish or were simply translated to the latter language.

The following names appear among the founding families: **Barsfield, Butler (Butler), O'Donnell, French, Warnes, O'Ryan, Dogan (Duggan), O´Gorman, Cullen** and **Lynch**, who arrived from different parts of the island by way of Spain. We can also point out **Campana** and **Cuell** from the original **Campbell** and **Kelly**.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Irish presence goes back to the very origins of the country. Cities such as Buenos Aires, which was founded in 1536, or Corrientes, founded in 1588, had Irish people among their population. The first Irish known to have set foot in Argentina were the members of the expedition conducted by Admiral Hernando de Magallanes, in Southern Patagonia, in 1520.

The "British-Irish"

The "British-Irish" would be those that, in one way or another, arrived in the country as members of military expeditions, such as the English invasions in 1806 and 1807 and the hardly known 1763 invasion, which, under the leadership of **Captain Juan MacNamara**, tried unsuccessfully, to conquer Colonia del Sacramento. As a result, 78 soldiers were imprisoned and deported to the interior of the country. Some of those soldiers worthy descendants asked General San Martín, in 1817, to be incorporated into the Army of Liberation being formed in the Province of Mendoza. Among them were the descendants of **Heffernan, Manahan, Lynch, Brown, Young, Hughes, Carr** and **MacGaughagan.**

At the time of the so-called "English invasions", many of the officers and soldiers

were Irish-born. Some of them played a very active role while others took the opportunity to desert and settle down in this country.. (ref. *"Amores en la Historia Argentina" - Martina Céspedes y sus hijas*, by Horacio Salduna).

In the first group, Irish-born General **Beresford** played a leading role when he was in charge of the expedition: he claimed the title of "Governor of Buenos Aires". Among the officers we find **Browne, Nugent, Kenny, Donnelly, Murray, Mahon, Cadogan** and **Duff,** undoubtedly of Irish origin. Among those who switched sides we can mention Peter **Campbell,** a "gaucho" from Tipperary who was later to govern the province of Corrientes and who eventually founded the Uruguayan navy. We could also mention Patrick **Island**, root of the **Isla** family with important branches in the province of Buenos Aires and Miguel **Skennon.**

Irish at the Time of Independence

Among those who attended the open town council meeting held on May 22 we find several of Irish blood, as is the case of Joaquín **Campana (Campbell)** who spoke eloquently demanding the resignation of the Viceroy, Cisneros. In turn, Colonel Domingo **French** entered history by distributing cockades with the national colours. Admiral **William Brown** was undoubtedly the Irishman most closely linked to Independence, as the founder of the national navy. To this brilliant seaman fell the honour of defeating the Spaniards at sea in the Battle of

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Montevideo. On this memorable occasion, before attacking, he had the band play "St. Patrick's Day in the morning" which later became one of the official navy themes. Among the officers who fought with him we find **Craig, King, Kearney** and **Turner**, among others.

As to the Army, General San Martín could always count on the invaluable cooperation of General **John T. O'Brien,** who developed several enterprises in different Southamerican countries and who was one of the promoters of the Irish immigration to this country.

Other Irishmen joined the Army of General Belgrano, including Dr. **Juan Oughan,** a distinguished doctor who, several years later, would become the first president of the Irish Catholic Association in Buenos Aires.

The Visionaries

Before and after the time of Independence, several Irishmen arrived in the country, individually, started prosperous businesses and in many cases married into local society.

To increase trade, which was their objective, they needed to develop the available raw materials, basically meat and hides. Some modern techniques for cattle improvement were adopted by former soldiers of the Irish invasions, who had been recruited in the military barracks of Mullingar and Athlone, the Irish sheep center.

It is in this context that, in the years prior to independence, we record the arrival of several Irishmen who brought a certain amount of money with them and settled down in Buenos Aires, where they noticed the lack of human resources to develop sheep-farming as well as the salting industry. Therefore **Patricio Browne**, born in Wexford, **Pedro Sheridan**, born in Cavan, **,Guillermo Mooney and Patricio Bookey**, both from Westmeath, born in Cavan, began to contact their fellow countrymen, urging them to settle in these promising land where work was guaranteed. The visits to Ireland of General O'Brien and Tomás Armstrong, an influential trader of Buenos Aires, contributed further to the flow in immigration. Many of these first immigrants were sons and daughters of Irish farmers, and with a good level of education were able, in a few years, to become important Argentine ranchers.

The Great Immigration

As a consequence of this business process, the flow of immigration grew, increasing yearly, aided by the Irish Catholic Church, which regularly sent chaplains to Argentina. Father Anthony Fahy stood out among them. He arrived in our country in 1844 and, in addition to providing spiritual assistance and celebrating numerous marriages between Irishmen settled in the countryside and newly-arrived Irishwomen temporarily residing in th cities, he became a counselor, financier and administrator of the goods of many members of the Community. To such end, he had the generous assistance of a friend of his family, Tomás Armstrong, a prominent business man in Buenos Aires, who was a protestant. Together they established a model which kept the community separate from the rest of the population, delaying its integration. Father Fahy would keep in touch with the Irish while Armstrong handled relations with traders and authorities. Most of these Irishmen and women would have come from two specific areas of Ireland, the counties of Westmeath and Longford as well as from an area near the city of Wexford, in the county of the same name (see map).

In numerous towns of the provinces of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe, the Irish built their own churches, school and clubs. The big immigration flow lasted until the 80's when the crisis in international wool prices, among other factors, slowed it down. Slowly and progressively, the total integration with the national community took place simultaneously with the settling of Irish families in towns and cities, and, above all, with the beginning of mixed marriages.

The "Other" Irish

Under this arbitrary classification we will place the Irish or Irish descendants who arrived in our country from English-speaking countries, the United States, Canada and Australia, while others arrived from France, Russia or Austria, some of whose last names were already transformed. In this group the "Irish Yankees" stand out, especially those who arrived in the 1850's, and who became part of the craftsmen of the city of Buenos Aires. Among other occupations, they became tailors, hotel owners, coachmen and even teachers. In that they differed from the main group, which, following the dictates of the local Irish elite, avoided cities and settled in the countryside.

The Recently Arrived Irish

After the great immigration wave of the last century, it continued at a much slower pace. In some cases they were the relatives of those already settled in Argentina. Even nowadays Irishmen and women continue to arrive from different parts of the island, in search of work opportunities. Others are members of international companies, who later settled here.

The Distinctive Symbol

At present, more than half a million Argentineans with Irish blood are totally integrated to the national community.

Many of their descendants, as shown in this special edition of "**The Southern Cross**" have been outstanding in many different activities. Their origins and relations can be traced in **Eduardo Coghlan's** remarkable work "Los Irlandeses en la Argentina - Su actuación y descendencia" (*The Irish in Argentina - Their performance and descendants*) including the genealogy of 3887 Irish who settled in this country. The last census, sponsored by the **Federation of Argentine Irish Societies** has already counted 4.800

members of the Community. Compared to other emigrations, those who arrived in our country , though not great in number, had particular characteristics that make it stand out . First, it was the largest emigration to a non-English-speaking country. Most of the immigrants knew little or nothing of Spanish. Their social insertion was different. They were very well received in Argentina, and furthermore, many of them became prosperous in a very short time, integrating with the higher social classes.

There are Irish descendants from every spot of the island, but in their majority, they come from two specific areas. Unlike popular belief, the immigration to our country is not directly related to the Famine of the 40's. The Irish who arrived from the above areas were not running away from hunger and, in many cases, brought a certain amount of money with them, although their principal treasure was their educational level.

Due to several reasons, mainly economic, the immigration wave was interrupted, as different to other destinations which continued to receive Irish immigrants until a short time back. This fast resulted in most families losing contact with their relatives in Ireland.

The great majority of Irish immigrants were of the Catholic faith, although some protestants also came.

Lastly, there was a special model of immigration, designed by the local Irish elite, with the support of local authorities, which planned to populate the countryside, and develop the salting-houses and the wool industry. For this reason, several generations concentrated in the rural areas and later moved to the cities.

We wanted to briefly describe the Irish presence in Argentina, which is proud of its Irish roots and the contribution which their ancestors made to the creation of the Argentine Nation.

**I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, Heriberto E. MacLoughlin, who recently passed away, and who was able to transmit the love for everything Irish and who guided me in my first steps in my investigative work.*

From the Putumayo to Connemara: Roger Casement's Amazon Voyage of Discovery [1]

Peter James Harris

Abstract: This article examines the evidence provided by Roger Casement's accounts of his voyage to the Putumayo in the Amazon rain forest in 1910, in order to reveal the Odyssean complexity of his personality and to suggest that, in a metaphorical sense at least, this journey represented the beginnings of an Irish homecoming for Casement, just as the wanderings of Homer's hero led him to the recovery of his house and kingdom in Ithaca.

Roger Casement's hanging as a traitor at Pentonville prison, London, on 3 August, 1916, placed him amongst the most prominent martyrs of the Irish nationalist cause. Yet, just five years previously, he had received a knighthood from the British government for his investigations into the methods of white rubber traders in the Peruvian jungle. The dichotomy in his character represented by these two moments has been charted as a life-long series of ambivalences and paradoxes in Roger Sawyer's biography *Casement: The Flawed Hero* (1984), and was judged to be of paramount significance by the prosecution in his trial for treason. A compulsive journal-writer, Casement was to find his diaries used at the time of his trial in order to sully his reputation and to ensure that he was denied the chance of a reprieve. To this day, opinion continues to be divided between those who believe that his "Black" diaries are a genuine, albeit clandestine, account of his homosexual activities, written at a time when such activities were a prisonable offence, and those who claim that they were the calumnious work of the British Secret Service.[2] The controversy which began at time of the trial was not settled by the publication of extracts from the diaries in 1959, and it was shown to be still very much alive in 1997. In that year Angus Mitchell published *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*, introducing the text of the "White" diary for 1910 with a lengthy commentary in which he sets forth the arguments justifying his conviction that the "Black" diary is a forgery. In the very same year Roger Sawyer published *Roger Casement's Diaries – 1910: The Black and the White*, referring to much the same evidence

as that utilised by Angus Mitchell in order to draw the opposite conclusion and attest to his certainty that the diary is genuine.

Finding myself more swayed by Roger Sawyer's line of argument, I shall work from the premise that the "Black" diary is genuine and, as such, reflects aspects of Casement's complex personality. It is my intention, therefore, to examine the text of both the diaries covering the period of Casement's 1910 journey to the Putumayo in order to demonstrate that the months spent in the South American rain forest represent a crucial stage in the process of Casement's recognition of his Irishness and may therefore be seen as a form of homecoming. Some 3000 years previously, one of the very first works of European literature had also been concerned with a homecoming. In *The Odyssey*, Homer depicts his eponymous hero as a man of exceptional courage, eloquence, endurance, resourcefulness and wisdom. But he also shows him to be a wily master of disguise and deceit, prepared to be lashed as a beggar in order to enter Troy unseen,[3] able, with Athena's aid, to approach the palace of King Alcinoös unnoticed by the citizens of Scheria,[4] and, of course, capable of concealing his identity from his own wife Penelope and her suitors when he returns to Ithaca. According to Virgil's *Aeneid*, it was Ulysses who gave the order for the Trojan Horse to be built, which has provided an abiding metaphor for undercover action, so much so that it has even been incorporated into the nomenclature of computing as a term for a program designed to breach the security of a computer system while ostensibly performing an innocuous function. It therefore seems appropriate to describe Casement's voyage to the Putumayo as an odyssey, for it combines the elements of the heroic, the homecoming and the duplicitous in equal measure.

There is much in Roger Casement's background that serves to explain the ambivalence that characterised his life. Born on 1 September, 1864, in Kingstown, later to change its name to Dun Laoghaire, his parents embodied the schism that bedevils Ireland to the present. His father was descended from an Ulster family of landed gentry of that particularly Puritanical strain known as "Black Protestants," while his mother was a Jephson, a well-established Roman Catholic family. In the course of genealogical research that he himself undertook, Casement was to discover that the Jephsons were, in fact, derived from a Protestant family, two of whose members had been charged with treason at the time of King James II's Catholic parliament in 1688 and had lost their estates, although not their lives, for having joined forces with the Prince of Orange. Despite the fact that Casement's mother died when he was only nine, and was therefore to affect his life more through her absence than her presence, she took one action which, by its very subterfuge, made a significant contribution towards her son's ambivalence. Whilst on holiday without her husband in Rhyl in North Wales, in a ceremony of the utmost secrecy, she had her three-year-old son baptised as a Catholic. Casement affirmed himself to be a Protestant throughout his life but he was to return to the church of the majority of his countrymen shortly before his execution, being received into the Catholic church *in articulo mortis* and receiving his first Catholic Holy Communion shortly before he was hanged. As Roger Sawyer points out, "in a remarkable number of ways

Casement was Ireland in microcosm.'[5] He argues that, "particularly when seen in terms of familial, religious and political influences, and even, though less obviously, on a physical level, throughout much of his life there appears an interesting parallel between his own divided loyalties and those of his nation.'[6] Indeed, Casement's life can be interpreted as the progressive resolution of his divided loyalties, so that his last-minute "conversion" to the Catholic church may be seen as all of a piece with the magnificent speech he had made on the final day of his trial just over a month previously, in which he had spoken eloquently of his loyalty to Ireland and of the ineligibility of the English court to try him.

Following in a family tradition Roger Casement was a compulsive traveller. In 1883 he became ship's purser on the SS *Bonny*, which traded with West Africa and, by the time he was twenty, when he went out to work in the Congo, he had already made three trips to Africa. Roger Sawyer suggests that his work "was to lead to a life-long belief in the virtue of travel as a means to improving relations between peoples.'[7] After eight years of varied activities in Africa he obtained his first official British Government position, in the Survey Department in the Oil Rivers Protectorate, later to become Nigeria. Three years later, in 1895, he obtained his first consular posting, to Lorenzo Marques in Portuguese East Africa, and was to remain in Foreign Office service until his resignation at the end of June 1913. During his eighteen years of consular service Roger Casement went on to serve the British Government in Portuguese West Africa, South Africa, the Congo State, Portugal and Brazil – where he occupied consular positions in Santos, Pará (now known as Belém), and finally rose to the post of Consul-General in the then capital, Rio de Janeiro. Although he was periodically frustrated by the limitations imposed by the Foreign Office upon the Consular Service, always seen as a poor relation of the Diplomatic Service, Casement suffered no conflict of loyalty provoked by his Irish nationality and his duty to his British employer. For the most part, his Irish identity manifested itself in such matters as adherence to "buy-Irish" campaigns when equipping himself for his many expeditions, with the result that he was able to offer Irish Whiskey to ailing indians in the middle of the Amazon jungle,[8] as well as trying somewhat ineffectually to protect himself from a tropical storm with "a Dublin "brolley'."[9] It was as a result of his experience and competence, particularly as demonstrated in his investigation of the enslavement and torture of native rubber-gatherers in the Congo in 1903, that he was called upon, in 1910, to accompany the commission investigating the alleged atrocities of the British-owned Peruvian Amazon Company, which collected rubber in the region of the River Putumayo.

The territory in question is an area of some 12,000 square miles which is largely confined to a triangle formed by the Putumayo and two of its tributaries, the Cara-Paraná and the Caquetá (known in Brazil as the Japura). The easternmost point of this triangle lies some 400 miles up the Putumayo from that river's confluence with the Amazon. It is the Putumayo which now delimits the frontier between Peru and Colombia. This region of tropical rain forest was inhabited by native tribes of indians who were

coerced into harvesting the local second-grade of rubber known as "sernambi," whose commercial value depended on the virtually free labour of the gatherers. The system had been set up by Julio Cesar Arana at the turn of the century and in 1907 he took advantage of the rubber speculation on the London stock market to set up a limited company with a capital of G1,000,000. (The 12,000 square miles of forest that he had acquired by 1906 had cost him a total of G116,700.) The first English-language news of the atrocities practised by the Peruvian Amazon Company was published in the magazine *Truth* in September 1909 and it was these accounts by the American railway engineer Walter Hardenburg, who had been held prisoner by the company, which prompted the British Foreign Office to request that Casement accompany the investigating commission sent to Peru by the London board of directors the following year.

Thus it was, then, that Wednesday, 21 September, 1910, found Roger Casement on board the *Liberal*, steaming very fast up the River Igara-Paraná, one week after leaving Iquitos, and almost exactly two months after setting sail from Southampton on the *Edinburgh Castle*. The "White Diary," which records his findings in harrowing detail, covers the period from 23 September to 6 December, when he left Iquitos again, this time on his way downstream to Manaus and thence to Europe. The parallel "Black Diary," which includes details of Casement's sexual encounters, covers almost the whole of 1910, from 13 January to 31 December. Those in search of prurient titillation will almost certainly be disappointed with the content of the "Black Diary," whose sexual information is largely limited to reports of penis sizes and shapes and accounts of associated financial transactions. Given that Casement's homosexual preferences no longer arouse the horror expressed by his contemporaries, the diary is far more interesting for the light that it sheds upon the thought processes that are set down in its companion volume. According to Angus Mitchell, "Casement's 1911 Amazon voyage has been rather briefly passed over by biographers as little more than a sexual odyssey – an officially sanctioned cruise along the harbour-fronts of Amazonia.'[10] In fact, even the "Black Diary" makes it clear that, during the period of the investigation itself, Casement not only refrained from sexual activity himself but urged that his companions should do the same.

This is not to say that he did not conceive of his journey as an odyssey. On 6 October, just two weeks into the investigation, but at a time when Casement had had ample opportunity to observe the harems of indian women enjoyed by the Peruvian Amazon Company's slavemasters, Casement warned his three Barbadian witnesses that "there must be no tampering with the morals of the Indian girls," since this might subsequently invalidate their testimony. He goes on to say that he had been "talking of the dangers of sleeping *en garçon* in these halls of Circe!"[11] It is not unreasonable, then, to argue that Casement cast himself in the role of Odysseus, protecting his men from the wiles of Circe and her four handmaidens. Since Circe refers to Odysseus as "the man who is never at a loss... never at fault... never baffled,"[12] we may perhaps gain a notion of the way in which Casement saw himself on this journey, a notion which he himself

confirms when, towards the end of the investigation, he writes that the employees of the Peruvian Amazon Company had come to look upon him as "a sort of Enquirer Extraordinary, who has got to the bottom of things.'[13]

Within the period of the investigation itself both diaries give us some insight into the Puritan standpoint from which Casement viewed the decadence and horror in this heart of darkness. A much-quoted and, in my opinion, much-misinterpreted passage from both diaries is that for 4 October, when Casement observed three serving boys involved in a homosexual frolic in a hammock at nine o'clock in the morning. It has been argued that the comment in the "Black Diary" for that day, "A fine beastly morality for a Christian Coy,"[14] is evidence of the supposed forger of the diary making a mistake and forgetting the homosexual character that he was "creating" for Casement. However, a reading of the "White Diary" for the same day reveals that Casement was not shocked by what the three boys were doing in the hammock so much as by when they were doing it, at a time when they should have been working. This is consistent with his repeated observations of the hypocrisy of the slavemasters at the various rubber-collecting colonies that he visited, who did no work themselves, whilst utilising the most barbaric forms of torture to extract superhuman effort from their indian slaves. In this sense, the Protestant work ethic that was instilled into him in his youth is clearly informing his revulsion, which is directed in equal measure at the Peruvian villains, whose barbarity he uncovers, and at the so-called civilisation of the English company and its shareholders, whose complacent complicity underpins and authorises the whole corrupt system.

As Casement's journey progresses, we find him setting Ireland against England as a point of reference, its purity contrasted with the rotten workings of the Imperial system into which he is plunging, as can be seen in this central passage:

> But this thing I find here is slavery without law, where the slavers are personally cowardly ruffians, jail-birds, and there is no Authority within 1200 miles... And, yet, here are two kindly Englishmen not defending it – that I will not say – but seeking to excuse it to some extent, and actually unable to see its full enormity or to understand its atrocious meaning.... The world I am beginning to think – that is the white man's world – is made up of two categories of men – compromisers and – Irishmen. I might add and Blackmen. Thank God that I am an Irishman...[15]

Although he does not go as far as to equate the situation of his oppressed countrymen with that of the tortured indians that he is investigating there are a number of indications that he perceives a parallel between the two. Thus, for example, when he visits the "Nation" of Meretas indians, whom he greets with his customary present of cigarettes, he is struck by the word that they use to express their gratitude, "Bigara." To his ear this is strongly reminiscent of the Irish "begorrah," so he writes that he christened his hosts "the Begorrahs.'[16] A couple of weeks later, when he comes across a rubber-carrying party of indians from the Andokes and Boras tribes, all of whom have been

badly flogged, he describes the wounds suffered by "one big splendid-looking Boras young man – with a broad good-humoured face like an Irishman...'[17] His revulsion at what he sees is such that he states that he "would dearly love to arm [the indians], to train them, and drill them to defend themselves against these ruffians,'[18] going on to reiterate his readiness, which almost serves as a leitmotif in the diaries, to hang many of the Company's staff, if necessary with his own hands.

It is no surprise that Casement was to find that the nightmarish images of this expedition had been seared indelibly into his mind and, almost three years later, as Roger Sawyer records, "he witnessed physical resemblances to the Putumayo in Connemara, where starvation and squalor caused an outbreak of typhus."[19] The fate of the indians he had seen in Peru and that of the Irish peasants seemed to him to be so similar that he described the region as the "Irish Putumayo" and wrote that "The "white Indians" of Ireland are heavier on my heart than all the Indians of the rest of the earth."[20] (Seventy-five years later, in Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments*, Jimmy Rabbite was to echo this idea, with his affirmation that "The Irish are the niggers of Europe... An' Dubliners are the niggers of Ireland... An' the northside Dubliners are the niggers o' Dublin."[21])

On 15 October, 1914, just over a year after he had described the typhus-stricken Connemara peasants as "white Indians," Roger Casement and his treacherous manservant Adler Christensen set sail for Norway on the *Oskar II*, en route for Germany and the ill-conceived, ill-fated attempt to enlist support for the Irish independence struggle from amongst Irish prisoners-of-war who had been captured by the German army. In April 1916 he was to return to Ireland with a token member of his Irish Brigade and a donation from the Germans of 20,000 elderly Russian rifles[22] and 50 rounds of ammunition for each gun, all lost when the *Aud* was scuttled in Tralee Bay.[23] As his Amazon diaries suggest, Roger Casement's German excursion was not the result of an inexplicable, schizophrenic personality shift – from loyal British diplomat to treacherous Irish rebel. It is better seen as the logical end-product of a long and gradual process in which his investigations of slavery in the African and South American jungles enabled him to understand the extent to which Irish enthralment to the English was actually not so different from that of peoples in the more distant parts of the Empire, and that armed rebellion might be the only path to freedom. Although his treachery, as defined by an Act drawn up in 1351, resulted in the death of no British subjects, he nonetheless paid for it with his own life.

At the time of Casement's arrest in 1916, Julio Cesar Arana, the man whose greed had caused the suffering and death of thousands of indians at the hands of the British-owned Peruvian Amazon Company, was living a life of luxurious impunity in Peru. To ensure that the irony of the situation was not lost on Casement, Arana sent him a long telegram in his prison cell, urging the erstwhile investigator of his company to recant. History does not record Casement's reaction but, if there is any justice to be

found in this story, it may derive from the fact that Casement's name, like that of Odysseus, has acquired heroic status, whereas that of Arana is destined to oblivion.

Casement 1 – "Putumayo Indians wearing bark costumes and masks, one of the few surviving photographs taken by Casement during his 1910 journey (courtesy National Museum of Ireland and National Library of Ireland)"

Casement 2 – "Putumayo Indian rubber-gatherers chained and imprisoned in the stocks (from W.E. Hardenburg, 'The Putumayo: The Devil's Paradise – Travels in the Peruvian Amazon Region and an Account of the Atrocities Committed Upon the Indians Therein', ed. C. R. Enock, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.)"

Notes

1 This article, with some modifications, was first presented in the form of a paper at "IASIL 2001 – Odysseys" at Dublin City University, under the title of "The Wily Hero: Roger Casement's Amazon Odyssey."
2 Although Roger Casement has not generated quite so much attention of late as Michael Collins, it is certain that Neil Jordan's forthcoming film, scripted by John Banville, will rekindle the controversy surrounding his life and death.
3 Homer, *The Odyssey*, W.H.D. Rouse (trans.), (New York: New American Library, 1937), p. 49
4 Homer, *The Odyssey*, p. 81
5 Roger Sawyer, *Casement: The Flawed Hero*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 1
6 Sawyer, *Casement*, p. xi
7 Sawyer, *Casement*, p. 21
8 Roger Casement, "White Diary," 22 October 1910, *Roger Casement's Diaries – 1910: The Black & the White*, Roger Sawyer (ed.), (London: Pimlico, 1997), p. 204
9 Casement, "White Diary," 17 October 1910, p. 183
10 Angus Mitchell, "The Diaries Controversy," in Roger Casement, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*, Angus Mitchell (ed.), (London: Anaconda, 1997), p. 35

11 Casement, "White Diary," 6 October 1910, p. 153
12 Homer, *The Odyssey*, pp. 119-22
13 Casement, "White Diary," 18 November 1910, p. 238
14 Casement, "Black Diary," 4 October 1910, *Roger Casement's Diaries – 1910: The Black & the White*, Roger Sawyer (ed.), (London: Pimlico, 1997), p. 91
15 Casement, "White Diary," 6 October 1910, pp. 159-60
16 Casement, "White Diary," 9 October 1910, p. 169
17 Casement, "White Diary," 21 October 1910, p. 195
18 Casement, "White Diary," 25 October 1910, p. 213
19 Sawyer, *Casement*, p. 92
20 These comments were jotted down by Casement on a letter, dated 6 June 1913, which had been sent to him by Charles Roberts, the chairman of the Select Committee on the Putumayo. (National Library of Ireland, Casement (Misc.) Papers, NLI 13073.)
21 Roddy Doyle, *The Commitments* (1988), in *The Barrytown Trilogy*, (London: Minerva, 1993), p. 13
22 At Casement's trial, Colonel Nicolai Belaiew, of the Imperial Guard, identified the rifles as having been manufactured in Russia in 1905. See Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias, *The Black Diaries*, (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 477
23 It is interesting to note that Roddy Doyle's fictional account of the Easter Rising refers to the loss of the *Aud*, but makes no mention of Casement as being responsible for the shipment of arms. See Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*, (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 110.

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Book Reviews

That They May Face the Rising Sun: *The Apex of John McGahern's Fiction*

Rüdiger Imhof

John McGahern can look back on an extensive corpus of most admirable stories, which are gathered in *The Collected Stories* (1992) and many of which superbly celebrate the significance of the mundane, the ordinary – that strangest of phenomena. In much of his writing, he is preoccupied with death, suffering, pain, lost faith, sex and love, the futility and transience of life, showing an awareness of the emptiness of existence as well as a sense of love's labour lost. Characters suffer from intellectual isolation and as a consequence choose internal exile. Often we find an embittered father and a put-upon mother; the son is almost always at loggerheads with his sexually frustrated, callous, egotistical bully of a father.

This constellation of characters is exemplarily realised in *The Barracks* (1963), which covers the last sixteen months in the life of Elizabeth Reegan, focusing above all on the ordeal the woman undergoes after the discovery of cancerous cysts in her breasts – an ordeal that leads her through disappointment, isolation, despondency and desperation, while at the same time helping her gain insight into her own life and the sense of life in general. The novel charts Elizabeth's development from an existence characterised by unhappiness, futility and monotony, a lack of purpose and a hatred of her husband, Reegan, to moments of contentedness, redemptive resignation and a positive emotional commitment to Reegan. *The Dark* (1965) was immediately banned in Ireland under the Censorship Act, not only for employing the f-word on its very first page, but more so for including masturbation scenes. The adolescent protagonist is caught up in two conflicts, in both of which he has to assert himself. One is the conflict with his father and the other consists of an inner struggle between a positive approach to life, in which the joys of life may be enjoyed to the full, and a fear of death and the Last Judgement indoctrinated by the Catholic Church. In a world of patriarchal, clerical and societal repressions, he searches for the right course through the darkness of his adolescence. *The Leavetaking* (1974) falls into two parts, the first showing the narrator-hero, Patrick, coming to terms with the symbolic shadows that have haunted the greater part of his life, and the second focusing on his beloved, the American woman Isobel, who also has to shake off the shadows which have made her life a misery. The story unfolds in the mind of Patrick, on his last day at a Catholic school in Dublin from which

he is about to be dismissed for moral reasons, his offence being that he was living with a woman in ‚unholy' matrimony. *The Pornographer* (1979) charts a figurative journey that the unnamed first-person narrator undergoes as he matures from a writer of smutty pornographic stories to a serious-minded author of autobiographical fiction. Life in the city, as experienced by the narrator, his friends and his lover is pitted against life in the country, represented by the narrator's aunt and uncle and Nurse Brady. *Amongst Women* (1990) offers a penetrating critique of patriarchy as the refuge of a socially maladjusted and emotionally immature man and asks probing questions about the cult of the family. Moran has transformed his inadequacies into a show of strength by making his home his castle. Denied a role as founding father in the Irish state, he has set up his own dominion. He is sustained solely by his desperate clinging to the fiction of family. His behaviour is conditioned by a frantic desire to preserve the *status quo* and keep the family together as a bulwark against change. He is portrayed frozen in time and incapable of adapting to face the threats to his precarious position of authority.

That They May Face the Rising Sun,[1] McGahern's recent novel after a twelve-year silence, observes the quiet lives, during one year, of a group of characters who live around a lake in what could most possibly be the author's own county of Leitrim. No spectacular, or even world-shaking, events occur, as is the case in most ordinary people's lives. And that is the beauty of it. In a considerable section of his *œuvre* to date, McGahern has shown himself as a supreme celebrator of the ordinary, that strangest of phenomena, and nowhere has he done so more admirably than here. The narrative opens in the summer, when Johnny, the brother of one Jamesie, habitually arrives from England, where he is working in a Ford plant, to spend some time with his relatives. At the close Johnny has once more returned to Ireland, but never to go away again. For soon after his arrival his heart gives out and he dies. He is buried so that when he wakes he may face the rising sun. Which is to say: he is laid into the ground with his feet pointing eastwards, so that he can look to the resurrection of the dead. In between these two visits of Johnny's, the characters are shown saving the hay, building a shed, selling their cattle and sheep, engaging in conversational play, partaking moderately, though frequently, of *uisce beatha*, preferably of the Powers class, chasing women and, most importantly, being good neighbours and caring for each other. In short, they are journeying through life as best they can, as if they were following Strether's advice to Little Bilham in Henry James's *The Ambassadors*: „Live all you can; it's a mistake not to". It is good advice, for after all there is death to contend with, and McGahern's characters are forced to acknowledge the Grim Reaper.

At the centre of the motley crew of figures are Joe Ruttledge and his wife, Kate, who have come to Ireland from London in search of a different life. Joe's uncle, nicknamed the Shah, bought the farm for the Ruttledges, whose every move, when they first arrived, was carefully observed by the locals, resentment fuelling an innate intolerance of anything strange or foreign. Now, however, they have been fully accepted, not least on account of their good relationship with Jamesie and his wife, Mary. Joe Ruttledge used to be a copy writer in London and he now supplements his income

through freelance writing. Kate is a designer, good enough at her work for her old boss to visit, in the hope of tempting her back to London. Significantly, they came to live in Ireland when others left for England or America. They work their land, raise embarrassingly well-tended stock, keep bees, are open to each event or small local drama as well as each neighbourly drink. They are, in fact, ideal witnesses. Much of what we learn about them is derived from watching them engage with their neighbours.

The Shah never learned to read or write, but was already in business of some kind when he was a boy. At twelve he made his first shillings by borrowing the family horse to draw stones to make a road to the new national school where his sister taught. His first job was in the local sand and gravel pit, where he learned to weld and fix machinery. Soon he was driving a sand lorry for the pit, and then purchased an old lorry of his own, delivering merchandise to and from Belfast and Dublin. At the outbreak of the war he switched into tillage contracting and made serious money. At thirty he owned a small empire and had no debts at a time when only the old established traders, the priests, the doctors, the big farmers had money. Now he is at an age where he wants to retire and sell his business, preferably to the man who has been working for him for over twenty-five years. But that is not easy because the two men have not exchanged a single word between them during all that time. Eventually the deal is managed with Ruttledge's help. Yet before that comes about there is much cause for involuntary mirth. Every Sunday, the Shah comes cruising in his big Mercedes to the Ruttledges' house to enjoy his dinner there and indulge in pleasant conversation. There is nothing the Shah likes better than eating.

The gentle Jamesie and his wife, Mary, embody the spirit of the place. They have never left the lake and know everything that ever stirred or moved there. Jamesie is a great talker and a simple philosopher, with a crude, good sense of humour, a love of gossip and a joy of life. For example, when the Ruttledges bemoan the accidental death of a late black lamb, which shortly before the incident they saw with its mother as a picture of happiness, Jamesie sensibly remarks: "'These things happen. Anybody with livestock is going to have deadstock. There's no use dwelling. You have to put all these things behind you. Otherwise you might as well throw it all up now and admit that you're no good.'" (251) Mary's frame of mind is well captured by one of her own statements: "'People we know come and go in our minds whether they are here or in England or alive or dead. [...] We're no more than a puff of wind out on the lake.'" (115)

Jamesie's brother, Johnny, was a capital shot, in fact "the best shot this part of the country has ever seen" (4), as Jamesie acknowledges, and a dab hand at darts. He followed the woman he loved to England and found himself in for a sore disappointment, because "'[compared] to what he saw in her he put no value on his own life. He thought he couldn't live without her'" (6).

There is Bill Evans, one of life's innocents, a simple soul of a farmhand, who as regularly as clockwork pays a visit to the Ruttledges when fetching water from the lake in two pails, each time cadging food and drink and a contingent of cigarettes, which he is given to smoking furiously. His kind is now as extinct as the corncrake. Bill exists in

a small circle of the present. Remembrance of things past and dreams of things to come are instruments of torture to him. Jimmy Joe McKiernan is an undertaker, auctioneer and the head of the IRA, under permanent surveillance by two detectives, a man who would not harm a fly unless it stood in his way or the way of the Cause.

John Quinn, adhering to what the Lord God has said in the Holy Book: "'Tis not good for man to live alone", will stop at nothing to ensure a flow of women. When he married his first wife, he caused a scandal by possessing her in full view of the wedding guests in a nearby meadow. After her untimely death, he had other women, and in the narrative present, he marries a well-heeled widow in her fifties, who to his utter amazement soon shows him who is wearing the trousers in their relationship: a day or two after the wedding, having made love to him, she realises that she has made a mistake, and she leaves him. He follows her, tail between legs, to her own place for a time, but they fail to make a success of things, and John returns, continuing in his usual unperturbed manner to observe his favourite Commandment.

Patrick Ryan is a kind of will-o'-the-wisp and one of the most unreliable of builders imaginable. The Ruttledges have, for an inordinately long period of time, been waiting for him to finish their shed. At the opening of the book, he puts in an appearance and does some work to the place, but then he disappears again, and by the time the narrative comes to a close, the building still awaits its completion. However, the Ruttledges do not mind. Things are simply done differently around the lake. Patrick drives to Carrick to visit his dying brother in the hospital, not because he cares for him, but in order to forestall any chance for the people to wag their tongues.

The crew of the characters is a motley one, indeed. Perhaps Patrick Ryan is right when he remarks to Joe Ruttledge: "'After us there'll be nothing but the water hen and the swan'" (45). This is a novel of voices. For much of what we learn we gather from the conversations of the characters, and each one of them has their own superbly idiosyncratic blend of colloquial speech. This, however, does not mean that McGahern is not so successful at description. For, indeed, the opposite is the case. There are most exquisite passages, often when nature itself is the subject. Nature and the landscape are rendered in a way that helps them assume the power of living presences. Here is one example:

> The warm weather came with its own ills. The maggot fly had struck, each stricken sheep or lamb standing comically still as if in scholarly thought. Then suddenly they would try to bite back at the dark, moistened patch of wool tantalising out of reach. (56)

Mary's father was in the habit of driving to town every Thursday in the pony and trap in order to do some shopping and after that have a few drinks in Hoy's Hotel. This is how McGahern beautifully describes the old man's death:

> On a wet soft evening in October, veils of mist and light rain obscuring the hills as well as the water, the pony trotted safely home from the Thursday outing to the town, but life in the trap had died somewhere along the road. (90)

Here is one of those wonderful descriptions of the natural scene:

> The hard burnt colour of the freshly cut meadows softened and there was a blue tinge in the first growth of the aftergrass that shone under the running winds. The bullfinch disappeared with the wild strawberries from the bank. The little vetches turned black. The berries on the rowans along the shore flowed with such redness it was clear why the rowan berry was used in ancient song to praise the lips of girls and women. The darting swifts and swallows hunted low above the fields and the half-light brought out the noisy blundering bats. (147)

Furthermore, there is the marvellous delineation of the mart on Monaghan Day and the convivial drinking after the selling and buying. But the most impressive, even haunting, scenes involve poor Johnny's death, wake and burial near the close of the book, scenes to whose excellence it is impossible to do justice by summarising them here in a few lines. They show McGahern at his very best.

The novel is crafted in masterly fashion. Ring-like compositional patterns inform its structure and lend it formal shape. Thus, there are Johnny's visits at the outset and the close. Moreover, Patrick Ryan and the infamous shed figure both at the start and the finish. Jamesie twice mockingly reprimands Kate for having employed "wilya", according to him "a very bad word" (pp. 3 & 239). Twice, too, Jimmy Joe McKiernan's opinion about whether or not Ireland is free is of relevance (cf. pp. 7 & 286). Everything is enclasped by time. *That They May Face the Rising Sun* is a pastoral of the first order. It is a pastoral in the sense in which Ivan Turgenev's *A Sportman's Notebook*, that most excellent collection of tales, is a pastoral. In fact, McGahern, through a distinctive similarity of narrative approach, testifies to the impact of the great Russian master storyteller and novelist on Irish fiction, an impact fully acknowledged by Frank O'Connor in his study *The Lonely Voice*. The book makes one wish that McGahern will not keep us waiting for his next offering another dozen years.

Note

1 John McGahern, *That They May Face the Rising Sun*. London: Cape, 2002.

Continente Irlanda

Storia e scritture contemporanee

A cura di Carla De Petris e Maria Stella

Carocci

Continente *Irlanda*

Aurora Bernardini*

Carla De Petris and Maria Stella (eds.). *Continente Irlanda. Storia e scritture contemporanee.* (Roma: Carocci Editore, 2001).

Undertaking this fascinating trip through ***Continente Irlanda*** (***The Irish Continent***), which goes from the episodes of ***History*** to the poems of ***Farewell***, passing through the analysis of ***Words***, through Theatre and Cinema (***Scenery*****),** and finally through the essays of Prose & Poetry (***Writings***), I wanted to stay a little longer in the places that seduced me more... Driven, as one could expect, (being myself a "woman of letters") by the Bakhtinian dialogue with "the other", but also by the Aristotelian conviction that in its particulars lives the universal,I started from Poetry.

I started looking for Ireland from the ***Farewell,*** in "Petrarch's Laura"*, by* Desmond O'Grady (translated into Italian by Maria Stella): "*She was born of good name and came from that/ Hill country twenty miles outside the city/In which she settled; secure after they got/ a well made marriage for her. [...]She mothered children, but painfully died of fever;/Wrinkled, withered. Her name lives forever".* and in "Pigmalion's Image" by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (with an Italian translation by Carla de Petris): " *Not only her stone face, laid back staring in the ferns,/But everything the scoop of the valley contains begins to move/(And beyond the horizon the trucks beat the highway.)/ [...] The lines of her face tangle and catch, and/A green leaf of language comes twisting out of her mouth."*— but I started interpreting Ireland from Francesca Romana Paci's "*Seamus Heaney*: The Ripple and The Riddle*"*

Referring to *Crediting Poetry* (Heaney's Stockholm speech of l995, when he was granted the Nobel prize) – a kind of balance the poet makes of his work –, Paci uses as a key to penetrate the dualism (" the binary phenomenology of experience") which seems to distinguish Heaney's poetry (*denlife/ outside world; archaic/modern; aerial wire/wireless; local accents/resonant English tones; pen/gun; spade/pen; etc.*), a very keen model of poetic world: the image of the ***ripples***, the small concentric undulations of the water surface, in a bucket – which would correspond, in its whole, to the mind's centre and its circumference. The intricate way from centre to circumference is the

ideal map she finds to follow the passage from pre-conscious silence to conscious thinking, that is, to language.

But beyond the *ripples* you need the ***riddles,*** to complete the image of the poetical world of the author. "Riddle", which is also the title of a poem in one of the latest collections of the poet, means not only "puzzle" (a *quaesitum* from man to man about the things of world and life, about the value and the means of knowledge "), but also "sieve", "to sift the sense of things from what's imagined", as Heaney says in one of his verses

In another crucial point of his poetry, "From the Frontier of Writing " (in *The Haw Lantern*, the same collection where "The Riddle" can be found) there's a discussion, now philosophical, about how to separate the concrete factuality of things from the way they appear when imagined, when transformed into mental images (" 'The frontier of writing' is the passage from mundane order into poetical order, where the thing happens again, transformed into fiction, and both converge in their search of what is 'true' ")

From the universals of Poetry I passed to the particulars of History.

The editors, in their ***Introduction,*** give us the script where there is one Ireland for each interpreter: a Protestant one for the German people, a Gaelic and revolutionary one for the French, a Catholic one for the Spanish, and others, more contemporary, but over all of them looms the ancient Ireland of the first Celts, a kind of Atlantis of the European consciousness. However, they opt for one only *partitura,* able to maintain the effect of continuity, notwithstanding the multimediatic and interdisciplinary character of their research.

So, after Joseph Small's view of the perspectives for Ireland in the third millennium, we may read a series of essays by Italian professors who deal with Irish culture.

Eva Guarino establishes a relation among the facts that happened in Ireland in the years of'98, from the episode of 1598, known as *The Battle of the Yellow Ford* (a fight between English and Irish during Queen Elizabeth's reign), to the repressed rebellion of 1798 (*United Irishmen),* which proposed the cause of a republican and independent Ireland, and which gave birth to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland that lasted more than a century. Finally, after the vicissitudes which led Ulster Catholics to find in Sinn Fein a political guide and in the IRA a military structure, we arrive to the *British-Irish Agreement* of 1998, which gathers (successfully) representatives of the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and of the various political parties of Northern Ireland, *Sinn Fein* included.

Donatella Abbate Badin tells the fascinating history of the 2 years voyage of Lady Morgan to Italy, described in her 1821 book (*Italy),* where the writer discovers parallels between the Irish revolt of the United Irishmen ant the attempt to institute a Neapolitan Republic.

The series of essays which compounds the chapter called ***Words*** starts by the research of glottologist Diego Poli about the impact of Celtic tradition over the Christian

one (Latin Christianization), and about the consecutive meetings/ collisions: Vikings x Normans, Gaelic x English, that will constitute the Irish cultural speech.

The way this speech runs into the twentieth century is the object of Clara Ferranti's essay, about the manifestation of *la langue* (Ireland's English) in the rhythmical poetical record of *la parole* (the speech) of J.M. Synge and Frank Mc Court, as it is the object of the next essay: Fiorenzo Fantaccini's analysis of the novel *The Commitments* by Roddy Doyle, as linguistic representation of the new Dubliner generations.

Among the ***Sceneries***, the first belongs to the nationalistic parades (*unionist*) of Northern Ireland, studied by anthropologist Ciro De Rosa; the second one is a valuable analysis of the phenomenon which led "Celtic" music to its recent revaluation, undertaken by musician Kay McCarthy.

Moving to theatrical scenery, Margherita Giulietti proposes an original confrontation between author and actor, having no-one less than Samuel Beckett and Jack MacGowran as protagonists; and Carla de Pretis, when discussing the perennial success of Irish playwrights on the English scene, focuses on Marie Jones' voice, that leads us to an unusual reading of the cultural civilization produced by U.S. cinema, in her recent work *Stones in His Pockets.*

Finally, Ruth Barton thinks of a relation between " Irish cinema and gender identity" studying the *clichés* formation process as is the case of the *feisty colleen* and of the *faithful son* and their transformation into new icons of masculine and feminine.

Here we are back to ***Writings.*** Agostino Lombardo studies Joyce's relation to Italian writers: Italo Svevo, Tomasi di Lampedusa, Debenedetti, Montale, Calvino and contributes to explain why and how *Ulysses* has become, nowadays, an Italian classic. Joan FitzGerald studies Yeats'usage of *aisling* (vision of gaelic tradition of jacobite age) stressing in it the emphasis given to the figure of the Goddess of Sovereignty, who comes back in Yeats's drama as old Cathleen, who incites the Irish youth to die in the 1798 revolt.

Guiuseppe Serpillo proposes a reflection about some linguistic and semantic aspects of the *Elegy*, from seventeenth to twentieth centuries; and e Romolo Runcini, from a sociological point of view of literature, sees the *fantastic* in Wilde, Yeats and Stoker, who, though being Protestants, present a perfect hierarchical gradualism, more proper to the Catholic world, and responsible for the distance from the *gothic* ("nearer to Protestant radical ethics") and for the vicinity to the *marvellous.*

The type of archetypical interior landscape of the Anglo-Irish women is the object of Maria Stella's essay " Islands: spaces in Elizabeth Bowen's narrative", and of Viola Papetti's, that studies the work of novelist Molly Keane in her essay: "Cruelty in the *big house*: Molly Keane's case". The critic focuses the novel *Good Behavior*, where the *big house* theme (the big residence of the *haute bourgeoisie* of those times, in palladian or georgian style, "brown and imperial outside, refined and womanly *rococó* inside"), which makes essential part of the imaginary of the Ascendancy (the Anglo-Irish *haute bourgeoisie*), is inclemenally scrutinized in details, as strictly tied to the life of its inhabitants. As a matter of fact, the numerous Catholics in servitude were made an

integral part of the family, with its secret hybridizations, as happened in Brazilian *Casa grande e senzala*, in the classic description of Gilberto Freire. The *casa grande,* as the *big house,* fades into decay and transforms itself: the first, living as the symbol of *Coronelismo* (the status of the political fazendas' owner, called *Coronel)* in many of the feudal properties which still exist in Brazil*;* the last, remaining as an interior symbol or "phantasm" of the *Ascendancy,* transforming itself into a *torched house*, burnt by the IRA, or finally deserted or destroyed.

A cruel novel, *Good Behavior,* can be read – as critics say – as an extreme paradigm, however necessary, to the history of this so close to us Ireland: *acid humour,* nostalgic fascination of sweet familiar perversions, cancellation of morbid remembrances, but also tentative of redemption, impossible perhaps, but rich in hope, for us also.

The Alphabet According to Paul Muldoon: **To** Ireland, I

Ruben Moi

Paul Muldoon. *To **Ireland, I.*** **(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).**

***To** Ireland, I* [sic], ventures the present Oxford Professor of Poetry, Paul Muldoon, and continues in his Clarendon Lectures many of the experimental procedures that have earned his poetry both laurels and lashes since his debut volume, *New Weather* in 1973 to his most recent volume of poetry, *Hay* from1998. The title reveals the devotion to Irish matters that in Muldoon's poetry runs parallel with his international interests and explorations of literature, nation and subjectivity. In this ironic and irenic survey of Irish writing Joyce becomes the vital omnipresence and in the eternal recurrence of Joyce's *The Dead* we can feel the vibrations of untimely meditations and philosophy from the margins. Art only justifies itself as a linguistic phenomenon and Muldoon's Finneganesque conglemowrtitng of Irish literature is an Erinised one *per se*. ***To** Ireland, I* is a creative book of critical analysis in which the performative quality contributes to scholarly novelty. In the recent processes of inventing Ireland, or presenting Ireland from the Oxford pulpit, Muldoon offers a new sense of linguistic acuity and theoretical awareness. The resistance of the semi-italicised title to the ordinary conventions of citation is an early indication of his jocular subversion that blurs the many traditional lines of literary interpretation.

The titular citation from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, evokes tralatious lines of verse and violence and indicates canonical recontextualisation. The title's peripatetic and paratactic features also point to how Muldoon's crossings of geographical, historical and literary lines are frequently characterised by linguistic leaps and associative alacrity more than conventional procedures of literary analysis. 'I begin at the beginning – "like and old ballocks, can you imagine that?" – with the first poems by the first poet [Amergin] of Ireland', runs the book's first sentence, in which Muldoon disrupts his poetic point of departure with Beckettian prose by alliterative drive and dual identification brimming with self-deprecatory irony and literary lines. The initial statement also adumbrates the poet-critic's double duties of inexpressible artistic energies and public office, the artistic catch 22 of aesthetic solipsism and social commitment, as exemplified by Amergin: 'a

mandate... to speak on national issues' and 'dealing with ideas of liminality and narthecality that are central, I think, to Irish experience.' In Amergin Muldoon discerns not only the habitual paradoxes of art, but also the generative powers of writing: 'I take my title, "Wonder-birth", from what is supposedly a direct translation of Amergin's name (the 'gin' is cognate with *genus*).' Muldoon's explanation evinces his frequent serioludic confluence of multilingual streams, literary sources and alliterative intoxication. More often than not, the critical revelations of the poet who can rhyme a cat with a dog are more driven by linguistic enchantment and textual pleasure than biographical facts, social situations and historical circumstance. Lucia, Lewis and Lucy appear as entirely text-fuelled correspondences between Joyce's daughter, MacNeice and the previous Irish Oxford professor and his Narnia, an associative swirl propelled mainly by Muldoon's high-octane mind continuously running as an interpretative outboard motor at full speed. 'This double use of "Christmas" emphasises the Christian veneer of *Imram Curaig Maíle Dúin*, while the *Mal* in "Malins" itself brings to mind the *Mael* in Mael Duin' says Muldoon of Freddy Malins in Joyce's *The Dead* in a macaronic fashion that indicates the essays' shifting positions and mannerist 'imarrhage'. 'a stable candle' bleeds into '*stable*-born Christ, "the light of the world"' and horse transforms into '*cheval*-glass'. Muldoon's linguistic oceanography runs deep in his detection of an anagrammatical 'crypto-current' (one of his favourite words), of Swift in '*wa*ft and *st*ink'.

In his review of Muldoon's *Mules*, Muldoon's predecessor in the Oxford chair, Seamus Heaney, complains of 'the hermetic tendency', 'puzzles rather than poems' and that his 'patience with the mode [Muldoon's persistent use of metaphorical names] gets near to the breaking point.'[1] Those who sympathise with Heaney will be exasperated by Muldoon's exasperated discursions on the authors' and characters' names that are infrequently extravagant, tenuous and fanciful. He writes of the names in Joyce's *The Dead*: 'A second ghostly presence here is Alfred Nutt (1856-1910) who appears as the *nut*meg on the table at the banquet...I am not going to try here to crack Nutt...because I know you already think I am totally nuts.' Undoubtedly, many readers agree. Nevertheless, Muldoon's namecropping revitalises with great wit the interest in the author that has long been declared dead and his textual freeplay suggests numerous new concurrences in canonical texts, Joyce's short story in particular. Above all Muldoon's explorations disclose the cryptic Gaelic layers and celebrate the Joycean wordwhorl of Irish writing. His nuts of knowledge are prolific.

The book's superimposed abecedarian order incorporates an element of the arbitrary and supplements the habitual methods of chronological order and authorial positioning in ordinary canon-building. This fascination with letters shimmers with Muldoon's persistent exploitation of the *OED* and gives shape and significance to the panorama of Irish literature. Contrarily, the alphabetic cynosure does not only define and delimit, but also indicates the importance of the single letter to Muldoon's auditory imagination and its semiotic signifiance in the all-encompassing processes of language. In the title, for example, the subject is phonetically and visually inscribed at the inception

of the nation, and conversely, separated as a distinctive entity in a double-spaced position inside and outside the margins of collectivity and nationality. Likewise, the apparent facility of alphabetic arbitration is counteracted by a range of connections between all the chapters that are carefully linked by coincidence, Amerginian link techniques, technical and thematic concerns, repetitions, rhyme and fanciful transgressions. The procrustean bed is also a cat's cradle.

In this intensified reading the attention to syllables and single sounds extends almost endlessly in expansive textual intricacies in which interpretation becomes retextualisation of the author's critical and creative ancestors as well as continuous cross-referencing between all parts of his essays. This vertiginous textual introspection threatens to leave the reader annoyed and dizzy, but it also instigates astonishing connections. This is seen in the exact thematic and *verbatim* concurrences Muldoon uncovers between almost all writers and Joyce's *The Dead*, although one might feel that he makes too heavy weather of the snow metaphor.

In most of the book, Muldoon treads 'the fine line between' 'allusiveness and elusiveness', 'the slip and slop of language', 'the contaygious' and 'contiguous', the public and the private, the mundane and the magic. In the only chapter marked by the absence of an author's name in the title, chapter X, biographical facts and historical dates intersect with the dissemination of writing. Similarly, the preface appears as an address to the audience of the Clarendon lectures at the end of a chapter towards the end of the book. Such multiple moves and sudden shifts are principal to Muldoon's explorations of Irish literature 'which will be devoted to the subject of veerings from, over, and back along a line, the notions of di-, trans-, and regression'. In Muldoon's textual relativism, the many lines are still traceable.

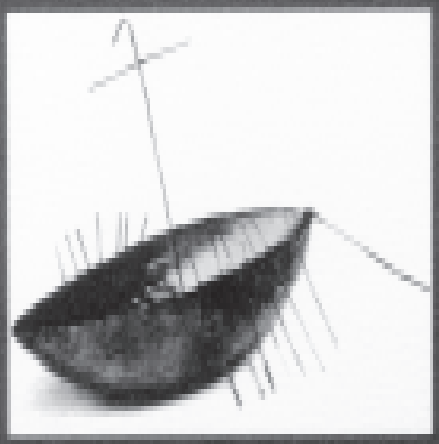
The tetradic arrangement of the book revolves with Viconian cycles and seasonal changes. 'Wonder-birth', 'Such a Local Row', 'Alone Tra La' and 'Contaygious to the Nile' are mainly literary inscriptions inviting the reader to surmise the sources. Despite the preventive abecedarium the reader is also likely to embark on the 'who's in and who's out' exercise, although, Muldoon seems to challenge the rules of this canonical game. In 'Wilde', Oscar appears as a conspicuous absence and the metamorphic Flann O'Brien can often be discerned as a Joycean palimpsest. Muldoon is absently present too: the book radiates his own equestrian élan, semi-manaical Beckettian glossolalia, extraordinary narratives, extreme adlinguisticity, imaginative powers and critical force.

From the professorial position in Oxford the Irish poet in America presents to listeners and readers in a wider world his eternal recurrence to the multiplicity of Irish literature into which he writes himself. The outlandish quality of Muldoon's book is likely to be praised, punished and disciplined, but will certainly bring new and old readers, always and again, to Ireland.

Notes

1 Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 211-3.

Patricia NOLAN



Travelling

« Escales du Nord »
Le Castor Astral

Travelling Towards Utopia

Renato Sandoval

Patricia Nolan. *Travelling.* (France: Le Castor Astral in Paris, France, 2001).

If poetry is life, it is because there is movement in it. The opposite – lack of action, inertia – is a form of unworthy resignation to death. As a reaction against this latter possibility, Patricia Nolan faces the challenges of her own existence by combating this inertia through her most intimate experiences - the various memories, sensations, dreams and aspirations. This is the luggage, on her voyage of self-discovery. A journey undertaken in the full hope of retrieving vanished moments and if death is not the final destination then at least she finds peace and salvation (cf. last poem of book: "Redemption")

And so the poet begins her most important voyage: not an impossible journey which would take her back to places in her life but a voyage that is made through time and poetry. Once inside this Time Machine, Nolan repeatedly travels backwards and forwards like a camera capturing life scenes. Travelling is then not only the action of travelling itself but a vision of movement through space and time that may finish at any possible moment in death. In this way, the poet is witness to humanity's absurd journey on earth where one encounters famine, violence and gratuitous death as demonstrated in the poem "The Hare". Almost in shock, she writes "we stride the coast road, dismayed / how history leaves pock marks on the landscape's face". Later on in the poem her fears are confirmed when she meets death "so perfect" in the body of a hare before continuing her journey through an avenue of trees planted by men dying from hunger in the great Irish famine in 1845 -1848.

Nolan's poems are disconcerting. This is conveyed via a form of a subtle witnessing as expressed through some of the characters found in her book. A case in point is the pathetic white South African woman who while redecorating her bunker style house into a pink coloured paradise is surrounded by blacks who steal and rape. She is incapable of understanding their hate. It is as if apartheid were as fictitious as the pink paradise into which she is trying to transform her home. ("Paradise")

Nolan's sense of fine irony paints pictures which are all the more effective due to her inspired ferocity ever present in all of those poems where conventionality, prejudices (social, sexual, religious) and the establishment are portrayed. In the poem

"Desert Rose" where two unmarried women "on the edge of time" are travelling alone through Namibia. One of them at least has tried unsuccessfully that improbable state called marriage. While the other one reveals herself to the world as a lesbian with all the dignity possible when faced with a supposedly city bred and cultivated man who in response to her declaration asks them about God's plan. "Which one did you have in mind?" one of women responds. They are still laughing at their joke when "the Southern Cross lights up the night sky / the palms bow their heads".

Another example, the poem "Rural Foreplay" is in some ways similar to "Desert Rose" where macho men are likened to the mythical minotaure. In the former poem, Nolan to a certain extent reduces the men (farmers) to a simple animal level when she describes them as thirsty calves sucking on untipped cigarettes. These men need alcohol to give them courage to invite women to dance. They, the women anticipate the start of the dance and the time when the men will invite them outside the dance hall into the night for some intimacy. The description of the couples exiting like eels, "embracing the dark till the moon coughs / to warn the priest is trawling the night." is beautifully illustrated.

Although Nolan demonstrates an angry elegance against a strange world that responds to her stupidly and incomprehensibly, she is also shows great sensitivity and tenderness when she evokes loves ones. This is evident in such poems as the sleeping mother in '"An Artist's Hand", the dead father in "Dermot's Coat" the fragile grandmother in "Jewish Princess" and even the old and rescued teddy bear of her childhood in "Hibernation". She talks about all of them not only with respect and tenderness but also with melancholy due to the sadness she feels when faced with the unavoidable passage of time and the decadence endured before death. Some images remain in the reader's mind, the image of canes and tripods "stick out at angles from chairs / like abandoned armour on a battlefield." which evokes the idea of old age ill health and anxiety in "Jewish Princess". Or the tender moment in "Dermot's Coat" where the daughter tries on the dead father's coat and feels its weight overwhelming her, while at the same time, she submits to it.

In relation to this idealised love (of Electra) for the father figure, Nolan reminds us of Sylvia Plath or Anne Sexton, with their terrifying visions of fathers which leave us breathless but which are also capable of producing surprises. In other moments Nolan approaches hope as in the poem about the woman in "The Couch" where she writes about separation and divorce. The woman, after lying "like a grub without a thought / while life screamed for a second chance / from the bottom of a glass… eventually decides to finish with her pain and mourning by having apathy jump out of the window. And so she begins the next part of her life with subdued optimism. All this is expressed with the unforgettable sense of humour and the sharp ambiguity that characterises all of Nolan's poetry.

On the other hand, even if it is true that most of the poems have a narrative character, others are based on fleeting images, brevity and their proven capacity for

implication. Examples are “Crossing deserts”, “Sub Rosa” and “Bushman’ Creek” where their length is compressed and repressed to communicate love, urgency, sensuality, mystery, and silence. Let us read the first of these three poems without saying one more word: “If I could capture/ your essence in a word/ I would never speak again / but keep you on the tip of my tongue / to savour like the nomad of the desert / sips water from the last oasis before dawn.”

Patricia Nolan travels on and on unrepentant through the world, always with her poetry on her back like a camera which she uses to transmit her own distinct and particular vision of existence. One could speculate ad infinitum on possible meanings only to arrive at no definite conclusion in the end. But what cannot be denied is that through this nomadic travelling, she has learnt to identify with and demonstrate her love for humanity as well as of nature with which she is in symbiosis in the best pantheist style of the Swedish-Finnish poet Edith Södergran or Emily Dickinson. This fusion is evident in the poem “Cycad” where in an intimate dialogue with a primitive fern. The poet pricks herself on its leaves and so unites her own blood with the fern. They set out together in search of Terra Nova wandering through the universe while “plotting to pollinate the moon”.

Travelling is a traveller’s book. Through the art of its words, it brings us to other spaces and times in the hope of taking that great and almost impossible qualitative leap - the escape from the tyranny of time through memory, imagination and desire. In this way, we could settle in the Utopia called poetry with Patricia Nolan leading us there by the hand.

contemporary **Irish** filmmakers

Jim Sheridan

Framing the Nation

Ruth Barton

Hollywood and the Nation

Marcos Soares

Ruth Barton. *Jim Sheridan: Framing the Nation*. (Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2002).

Film-maker Jim Sheridan, key figure in the recent "revival"of Irish cinema on both sides of the Atlantic, is the theme of a comprehensive study by Ruth Barton. Her analyses begin with Sheridan's first international success, *My Left Foot* (1989) and cover key – and also comercially successful – films such as *In the Name of the Father* (1993) and *The Boxer* (1997). She finishes the book with a long interview with Jim Sheridan himself in which he offers illuminating comments on his work and its connections with Irish politics. Barton's explicit claim is that Sheridan's films, despited their often cold academic and critical reception, deserve a "political reading" which can reveal their "Irishness" from a larger historical perspective.

It is true that Sheridan's films offer themselves as explicit comments on Irish history by consistently focusing on key political events: the decision of the Irish government to turn its back on its previous policies and embrace "modernisation" in 1958 (the context of *My Left Foot*), the consequences of the independance movement in the 1930s (in *The Field*), and the clash among the British Establishment and various anti-British acts (including those of the IRA as in *In the Name of the Father* and *The Boxer*).

However, one of the first crucial critical issues the reader will encounter is the somewhat uncomfortable clash between Barton's insistance on the fact that the films "demand an allegorical reading" and her attempt to account for the films' "populist" appeal in their effort to entice a large international – and particularly American – audience. Although the apologetic tone never quite vanishes, it gradually leads to a more consistent analysis of key aesthetic and political questions. The first step consists of a minute account of some of the main narrative frames employed by Sheridan: his use of archetypes and stereotypes, his insistance on structuring his scripts round his main characters' oedipal conflicts and trajectories, the deployment of the conventions of genre-based filmmaking (the courtroom and family drama), the reliance on the "star-system" (and particularly on the superb performances given by Daniel Day-Lewis), his aspiration to the mythic and the "timeless" and, more persistently, the reassurance that the individual can triumph

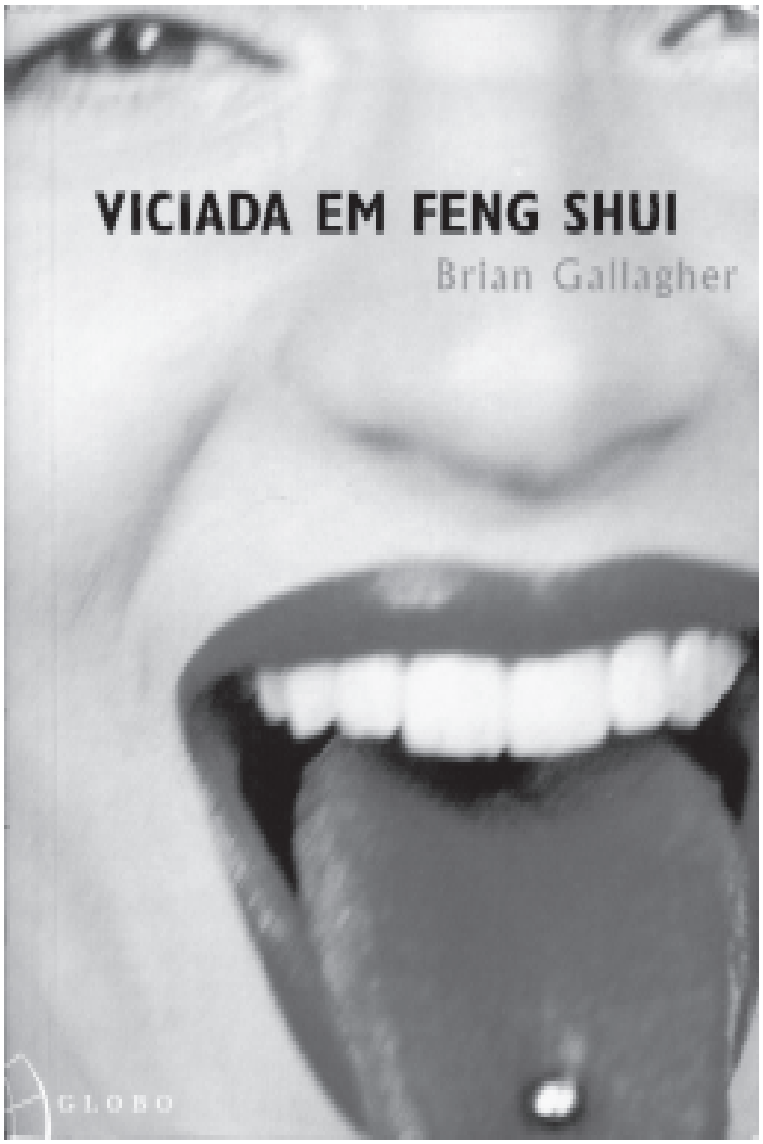
over adversity. It is the use of those conventions (as well as international funding and distribution), Barton argues, that ensured the commercial success of the films worldwide, proving, therefore, that "Irish cultural production can appeal to the local whilst circulating within a global environment of capitalist exchange, namely the Hollywood film industry". Judging from the huge success of Sheridan's first film, Barton concludes that "the significance of *My Left Foot* was that it demonstrated that international audiences would watch Irish films if they were structured around universal themes and conformed to a recognised model of filmmaking; in other words, if they looked like Hollywood cinema".

Although Barton makes an effort to show that large-scale controversial discussions on the Irish situation and the relationship with Britain have been triggered by the popularity of the films (the uproar around the opening of *In the Name of the Father* in Britain is a case in point), she also points out that it is here that the problems begin. For this is a case in which the historical content does not "fit"the narrative paradigms centred upon the conventions of the bourgeois drama. For if the focus remains a purely personal one, if the central issues remain the subjective relationships between sons and their parents (the case in nearly all of Sheridan's films), how is it possible to emphasize the common, collective concerns that must necessarily constitute the core of historical reflections? The result, Barton shows, is invaribly the transformation of History and the past into mere background against which personal dramas can develop or, worse still, into a collection of images and stereotypes that can be consumed by an international audience eager for novelty, the quaint and the exotic. An unhappy compromise, Barton argues, between "a slice of multinational funding" and the attempt to "advertise [the national] attractiveness as a location for non-indigenous productions".

The discussion about the "anxiety about the ability of a small culture to retain its identity within the universalising practices of global capital" is seen by Barton as a deadlock, a dead-end from which no visible alternatives can be made out. Against the ubiquitous critical attacks on Sheridan, who is often accused of having abandoned "that commitment to radical left-wing politics that characterised a certain element in filmmaking in the 1960s and 1070s", Barton seems to offer no alternatives. The sort of Brechtian approach that is commonly associated with the political cinema of the preceding decades, she claims, "delimits its own audience and, arguably, simply preaches to the converted". On the other hand, "it is simply not practicable to imagine that Irish films can be completed without international financing". Further discussions of those statements, both highly debatable and controversial, fall outside the scope of the book.

Barton's approach, however, does not dismiss the films in an act of intellectual snobbery and manages to map out a number of ambiguities and contradictions within the films'structure which in turn illuminate key national paradoxes and conflicts. It is the very flaws and inconsistencies in the films, she argues, that better show can Sheridan "frames the nation" and its political muddles. From this perspective, one the most compelling analyses is the chapter on *The Field* (1990), one of Sheridan's less known but most controversial films. Here, Barton demonstrates, Sheridan indicts Irish radical

nationalism and gives the lie to an “inert society that has failed to transform itself into the nation imagined by visionaries that formulated independence”. Needless to say that from a political perspective this remains a crucial issue for peripherical countries being forced to integrate the new globalized economic and cultural order, where the nature of responsible interventions must at some time ask who are the “beneficiaries of modernisation [...]; in other words, whether the rising tide has indeed ‘lifted all boats’ ”. Because Barton touches upon those central issues in an original and enlightening way, her book is bound to become a major reference in the area.


VICIADA EM FENG SHUI
Brian Gallagher
GLOBO

Brian Gallagher's Fiction

Noélia Borges

Brian Gallagher. *The Feng-Shui Junkie*. Translated into Portuguese by Maria Silvia Mourão Neto. (Rio de Janeiro: Globo, 2001. pp. 520).

Brian Gallagher's *The Feng-Shui Junkie* invites us to think that another talented Irish writer is coming to stay. To begin with, Gallagher surprises the public by the dynamic of his narrative structure, acid humor and well-built characters. It is interesting to note here that the novel has the power to arouse the reader's curiosity and interest for reasons which become evident. Initially, as we see our own eyes in the front cover we may realize that the author gets a ride in the fashion of esotericism by the title the writer gives to his fictional work. The sensuous image of a mouth with a protuberant, stretched red tongue stamped on the front cover of the book is the first spicy element which arouses our senses. Still, a 'fashionable' glittering piercing which appears entrenched in the tip of this tongue is another appealing item. Thus, by seeing some selected elements together, either on the cover or in the text, the reader inevitably infers that the author takes advantage of feng shui – an esoteric recipe which has strongly influenced and fascinated those who have turned the millenium with the hope of attracting the energy of happiness, love and long life.

In examining the front cover of *The Feng Shui Junkie*, we see that many purists may consider Gallagher a professional (as any other) inscribed in the capitalist and bourgeois world and, hence, has responded to the demands of the market. That is to say, someone who produces something, expecting a quick financial return. Those people will certainly be aligned with the ones who have analyzed the Harley-Davidson's motorbikes and Giorgio Armani's exhibition in the Guggenheim Museum in New York and expressed their disappointment, taking into account the use of these items in the temple of the art as a profanation of its own *status quo*. As a matter of fact, Gallagher does not express so explicitly his commitment with capitalism as the Brazilian poet, Fagundes Varela, did in the lines: "I write poems to the blond and to the brunette/ I do not care about inspirations/ I want money" (translation is mine). Being a modern writer and leaving aside the romantic aspect of individualism, Gallagher seems unable to resist the powerful force of the alternative doctrines which invade our everyday life, and

more particularly, the book market. Thus, the connection between the two universes does not offer any risk of imbalance. On the contrary, the frontier between the world of art and the world of commodities is quite fluid and it would be disrespectful to reduce his literary work to the simple lessons of feng shui. In fact, *The Feng Shui Junkie* underlines and denounces a world in which the objects of our everyday life (even the commonplace ones) twist around artistic materials, in an ambiguous and awkward way.

The reader must be curious to know how feng shui comes out in the text. In fact, feng shui holds the plot together. It starts when Julie, the heroine, breaks into her husband's lover's house – the pretty blond Nicole –, who is addicted not only to the feng shui doctrines, but also to Julie's husband – Ronan. From that time on, the feng shui lessons spreads out in the text, together with Julie's unexpected and disastrous strategies of vengeance, which certainly appear to be arranged with the purpose of disrupting some of the concepts of the esoteric fashion.

As we are concerning here with an Irish novel, it is worth drawing the reader's attention to the fact that Gallagher's formula is not the same as that of traditional Irish fiction, in which human problems are strongly interconnected with the inexorable commandment of the national question. Undoubtedly, the streets of Dublin (Ireland) come to be the scenery in which the history takes place and the humor – one of the features of the Irish nature – is constant in the text, although in a hyperbolic, sarcastic and erotic way.

It is interesting to observe that, by trying to follow the line of the history, an inattentive reader may not perceive what lies beneath the author's point of view. The fact is that, although the writer transvests himself into a woman's skin, we may curiously see that phalocentric lenses pervade the text surreptitiously. That is to say, the author is not a defender of women as he seems to show. The fact is that, though he gives prestige to the feminine representation in his text, by selecting more women than men (four women and two men) to adorn it, we see that three of them (the wife, the mother-in-law and the lover) represent the image of the serpent – the one who poisons and devours. That is the case of Julie, his mother and Nicole (particularly, for her sexual appetite). Julie's husband, Ronan – the masculine figure – is quite an anonymous agent (as is Nicole's husband), dissolved and engulfed by Julie's subsequent destructive attitudes and also by the demanding position his mother-in-law assumes in his own house. Furthermore, the image of the woman stressed by Gallagher is not that of an angel, but of a serpent, a witch, a psychopathic person. Within this perspective, we see that Gallagher gives special attention to the binary opposition, which is connected with Jungian theory of archetypes. That is to say, women's behavior and attitudes are regulated by their emotion and instincts, whereas that of men by reason and logic.

The story starts when Julie arrives home after her holiday and comes across a lemon-yellow bra hung in the front door-knob of his house in Dublin. The inescapable truth about the existence of another woman sharing her own bed with her husband makes Julie adopt violent attitudes of vengeance – ones which may lead the female

public, especially those who been in the same situation, to identify with Julie's attitude and enjoy the pleasure of her instinctive and brutal action. The scenes are so real and amazing that we inclined to think that they must stem from the author's experience as a lawyer. By dealing with different clients' cases, he could take advantage of the fertile material of his everyday occupation and write the novel. In short, the whole paraphernalia of exhilarating and unexpected actions planned to end up Ronan and Nicole's relationship is so vividly narrated that the reader is able to figure out, as if he/she were seeing a film.

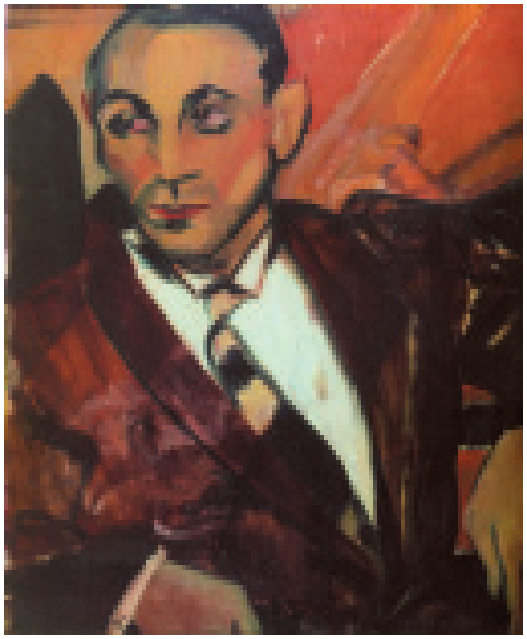
The power of the novel is concentrated in the narrative of the actions in which the plot is structured. The feminine archetypal world, (where the instincts – the negative side of the human being – lie unmasked) overlays the image of docility, kindness, affectivity, which is said to be part of the feminine nature. The chromatism of the language, stuffed with humorous and erotic comparisons, seems to be peculiar to the author's style, giving the story an exhilarating tone, as happens in a comedy. The temporality of the fictional experience does not come only from the chronological space-time measure, but the phenomenological and the chronological experiences are stitched together and pervade the whole text.

Voices from Brazil

Oswald de Andrade

Modern Art Week

Mário de Andrade



Anita Malfatti's *The Yellow Man*

Preludes to Modernism in Brazil[1]

Telê Ancona Lopez

Abstract: *This study focuses on certain significant events in the years immediately preceding the Modern Art Week, the landmark in Brazilian Modernism, in 1922. These events open up what may be described as the first Modernist period, from 1917 to 1929, which could even be extended up to the Exhibition of 1931.*

First act: **the *avant-garde* is born**
Period: **just before 1922**
Scene: ***Paulicéia* is declared to be modernist**

After the First World War, as a result of the impulse given to industrialisation by the transfer of the production of consumer goods to the Americas, São Paulo became a metropolis which bragged of its own cosmopolitanism as an indicator of modernity and the spirit of renewal. In the euphoria of urban growth, it was all too easy to ignore how provincial both cultural and social life continued to be. Immigration – above all that from Italy – brought the expansion of libertarian ideals of anarchy and trade unionism. But the arts, including literature, were not aerated by the fresh breezes of the *avant-garde*. In São Paulo, in 1913 and 1914, the exhibitions of Lasar Segall and Anita Malfatti, instead of enabling us now to anticipate our first date parameter, caused no impact at all, despite the commitment to Expressionism that they demonstrated. Like Segall, Malfatti, as Marta Rossetti Batista stresses, was, in the opinion of the academic community, merely "a student who revealed her aptitude for the profession" and "one of the foreign artists who dropped anchor here."[2] The painter, seen as "Impressionist" in 1914, was amused to register, in her exhibition diary, the arrogance and ignorance of contemporary European artistic trends in the declarations aroused by her work in critics and illustrious visitors, such as the architect Dubugras and the painters Parreiras and Pedro Alexandrino.[3]

In São Paulo, the coffee barons were prospering, planting and exporting the celebrated Brazilian coffee. They welcomed industrialisation, despite the uncomfortable association with the *nouveaux riches*. They travelled to Europe, with long stays in Paris. They were educated and kept up to date with what was happening. From their ranks would come the great patrons of Modernism, Freitas Vale, Paulo Prado and D. Olívia Guedes Penteado. As they evolved they learned to welcome the manifestations of the new in literature, the visual arts and music. Around 1917, it was possible to observe that

young writers were already risking change, in their desire to contest the Parnassian canons which were dominant in Brazil. In addition to Baudelaire, root of the modern eye, and of Whitman, master of the *avant-garde*, these young people were diligently reading writers who, in the Old Europe, were already seen as played out from the point of view of the *avant-garde*. For them, there was nothing newer or more worthwhile than contact with Unanimist poetry and that of the Abbey of Creteuil, with Verhaenen, Gustave Kahn, Stuart Merrill, Francis James or Claudel, presented in the Universal Literature courses at the Philosophy Faculty by the monks of São Bento,[4] or discussed in conversations at Freitas Vale's Vila Kyrial. They were unaware of Sousândrade, but adored Antônio Nobre, Alphonsus de Guimarães and the poetry of the day-to-day of Mário Pederneiras. As poets, their work revealed traces of Parnassianism; nevertheless, in exploring Penumbral lyricism, they were expressing their anxiety to represent the century which was imposing a new world of the modern city and of the dawning solidarity between mankind.

But if, in literature, the Brazilian Academy of Letters prescribed Parnassianism for one and all, the innovations introduced by Symbolism, which it so despised, were finding expression, albeit in an isolated fashion, in the Novist poetry which sought to unite the cult of subjectivity with an awareness of the word. At the same time, amongst the Penumbrists, free verse was establishing itself.

It is noteworthy that, on 28 May 1909, the *Estado da Parahyba* newspaper had printed, on its front page, the translation of the eleven points of the Futurist Manifesto which had been published by the *Fígaro* of Paris, in February that same year.[5] However, the repercussion, just as with the news of Marinetti's proclamation, circulated by the press of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, was insignificant, merely journalistic in its impact. Even the fact that the magazine *Orfeu* in Rio de Janeiro enjoyed the participation of Ronald de Carvalho did not enable the ideas of the Futurists to go beyond the three numbers that Portuguese Modernism accepted, being restricted in Brazil, in 1915, to very few readers.[6]

Thus, in 1917, the publication of Mário de Andrade's first book, *Há uma gota de sangue em cada poema* ("There's a drop of blood in every poem"), under the pseudonym of Mário Sobral, went almost unnoticed. The critics praised his versifying ability and his moral elevation, Christian and pacifist, but were shocked by his formal innovation. Parnassian taste could not accept the originality of his synaesthesia, the importance of the voice of the day-to-day or of the rhyme constructed by onomatopoeia: "[...] Somente/ o vento continua com seu oou." ("Only the wind continues with its 'woo'.") The critics failed to detect the greatest conquests of a writer who, motivated by pacifism, repudiated confessional poetry and Parnassian description in order to assume the pain felt by all those devasted by the war, whether Allies or Germans. In this Unanimist identification it is possible to detect the roots of the literature of circumstance, of the action poetry, of the complete solidarity with the oppressed and even of the fragmentation of the self which so strongly characterised the later poetry of Mário de Andrade. This

identification would be fed by Expressionism the following year. 1917 constitutes an opening up to modernity, despite the ignorance of the *avant-garde* which, at this time, was spawning manifestos and work in Europe. This opening was born, as far as one can tell, not from reading the Romains manifesto, but from contact with the *La vie unanîme* poems, as well as reading Antônio Nobre's *Só*. In addition to this, in the suspended punctuation of the ellipses, open and intersected, may be found the germs of what Andrade would later systematise as polyphonic poetry and harmonic verse in the "Prefácio interessantíssimo" of *Paulicéia desvairada*[*], the first modern book of Brazilian Modernism, in 1922, solutions which enable us to posit the hypothesis of a dialogue initiated with the work of Gustave Kahn.

Mário da Silva Brito, in his history of Brazilian Modernism, stresses the use of typographical resources, with Futurist roots, in Murilo Araújo's *Carrilhões*, also of 1917, a book received ironically by the critics. Araújo, whose name may not be properly included in the Modernist roll of honour, made an important contribution at this time. His declaration of principles printed on the title page not only covers the freedom of the verse but also attests to the absorption of certain matrices recognised by the principal lines of the European *avant-garde*, as well as mentioning Futurism. Here are the masters repeating or initiating a role:

> My poetry is not very clear in any particular part: for excessive concision is a general tendency which nowadays weighs upon almost all temperaments: in poetry, nostalgic Futurists, a Verhaenenist like Whitman or a mystic like Nerval and even our best Neoromantics demonstrate – like Debussy in music, Bergson in Philosophy or Rodin in sculpture – the victory of the sketched idea over the fully drawn one...[7]

Carrilhões, thus, did not become an object of admiration for the first Modernists to arise in São Paulo.

On the São Paulo scene in 1917, others who, soon afterwards, would join the Modernist campaign – Guilherme de Almeida, Menotti del Picchia and Cassiano Ricardo – established themselves as names praised by the critics and public alike. *Nós*, Almeida's Neoclassical poetry, *O Evangelho de Pã*, Ricardo's Parnassian verse of a nationalist future, and *Juca Mulato*, del Picchia's highly applauded regionalist poem, could never be stigmatised as "Futurist." In Brazil, Futurism existed merely as a coverall term, including any manifestation out of the ordinary.

It is not in Rio de Janeiro, at that time still the court and headquarters of academic values, but in São Paulo, the metropolis, in November 1917, that the first mark of Brazilian Modernism is generally situated. The Expressionist and Cubist art of Anita Malfatti's exhibition revealed the existence of new visual possibilities to the painter Di

* *Paulicéia* refers to the delirious metropolis of São Paulo.

Cavalcanti and the young poets who visited it – Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade, thirsty for renewal, Ribeiro Couto and Guilherme de Almeida, much encouraged. When a reactionary article by Monteiro Lobato described Malfatti's work as "paranoia or mystification," Oswald de Andrade took up the defence.[8] Travelling through Europe in 1912, he had been affected by the echoes of Futurism; he even wrote, in free verse, "Last trip of a tuberculosis sufferer around the city, by tram," a poem which he never kept. In *O Pirralho* ("The Brat"), a satirical newspaper, and other São Paulo periodicals, he sought an escape route for the prose and poetry of his time. In focusing upon art, he called for the inclusion of the Brazilian landscape, which would later become one of the elements of the Brazil Wood aesthetic movement. In defending Malfatti's painting, he emphasised the difference between reality in art and reality in nature, rejecting the copy postulated by the academies.

The battle of the *avant-garde* in Brazil owes much to Anita Malfatti, whose art is designed to shock, a process that may be understood in the two faces that Anatol Rosenfeld attributes to the impact arising from the processes of renewal. Shock signals, on the one hand, the scandal produced by the breaking up of certainties, that is the canons and dogmas which govern not only the visual arts but also, the very way of seeing of a society. On the other hand, shock, at its most fertile, means divulging discoveries, "showing aspects of external or internal reality under a renewed, strange and surprising light, obliging us to see and learn what generally escapes us due to the exhaustion of our sensibility, worn out by routine and habit."[9]

In 1942, when Mário de Andrade, in *Movimento modernista*, subjected the illusions and successes of the task that had been undertaken to rigorous analysis, he stressed this dimension of the discovery in 1917:

> The pre-awareness, first, followed by the conviction of a new art, a new spirit [...] had been spreading through the [...] feeling of a small group of intellectuals in São Paulo. At first it was a purely emotional phenomenon, a divinatory intuitive [...] state of poetry. In effect: educated in the 'historical' visual arts, knowing at best of the existence of the main Impressionists, unaware of Cézanne, what was it that led us to adhere so unconditionally to Anita Malfatti's exhibition which, at the height of the war, brought Expressionist and Cubist pictures to our attention? It seems ridiculous, but those pictures were the revelation. And, marooned by the flood of scandal which engulfed the city, we found ourselves in ecstasies of delight before pictures called *The Yellow Man*, *The Russian Student* and *The Woman with Green Hair*.[10]

The pioneering Malfatti, after painting with Lowis Corinth in Germany, had gone on to the United States, where she had enjoyed, in 1915-16, a profound liberation of line and colour in the Independent School of Art. She had encountered her own way of transposing Expressionism and Cubism. Far from her homeland she had synthesised, for example, in her 1915 drawing, *Study of Man*, elements of a tropical space, in the

green and the exuberance of the plants which form the background to the black nude facing away from us. In the features sketched on the profiled face, it is surprising to see the meeting of Expressionism with cultures beyond the sphere of the European elite and white civilisation. The so-called primitivism which so clearly characterised Kirchner's little savage girl and which corresponds, in Die Brücke's aesthetics, to communion and solidarity, broke the arrogance of ethnocentricity and established in the artist a reencounter with Brazil. This would become the patch of banana trees and cacti explored by Tarsila do Amaral in Brazil Wood painting and in certain Anthropophagous pictures like *A negra* or *Abaporu*. In this 1915 nude, it is possible that Mário de Andrade may have detected this dimension, when he purchased it for his collection, along with *The Yellow Man*, *The Russian Student* and other works by Malfatti.

The Modernists join forces

1918 and the two years that followed were devoted to reading and the beginning of discussion. Mário de Andrade learnt German in order to understand Expressionism better. He became a friend of Anita Malfatti. To her, to Else Schoeller Eggebert, the teacher who taught him Goethe's language, and to the sculptor Haarberg, he was indebted for the suggestion of books and magazines, and the revelation of poetry, fiction and like-minded visual artists and musicians.

In 1919 Rubens Borba de Morais returned to Brazil. He had been studying in Switzerland, where Sérgio Milliet was also living. Together they brought news, fresh from Paris, about the radiation of the *avant-garde*. In 1920, in São Paulo, little-by-little, the Modernist group was formed. Writers and visual artists joined together in the magazine *Papel e Tinta* ("Paper and Ink"), where Di Cavalcanti drew his midnight phantoms. The group, of whom the most involved were perhaps Oswald de Andrade, Ribeiro Couto, Mário de Andrade, Guilherme de Almeida, Anita Malfatti and Rubens Borba, received the same year the fundamental support of the renowned creator of *Juca Mulato*. An admirer of the Futurists, Menotti del Picchia, or Helios as he was known, took on the role of the "Gideon of Modernism"; he used military terminology to describe the activity of the vanguard that was forming. In the *Correio Paulistano* and in the *Gazeta* newspapers he made his energetic contribution as a Modernist in the propagation of the concept, translating Marinetti or Govoni, presenting participants, alert to the enlistment of enthusiasts. Oswald de Andrade, in the *Jornal do Comércio*, told of the group's first great discovery, the sculptor Brecheret. Mário de Andrade related their next discovery in the first of his "letters," in the series "De São Paulo," written for *Ilustração Brazileira*, a chic magazine published in Rio de Janeiro. As a correspondent, his objective was "to reveal the artistic and literary movement of the people of São Paulo." He did this gallantly, certain of the project's innovatory nature:

> Now it is Dr. Taunay who appears in the bookshops with his studies of the city's infancy, written in legitimate Portuguese (the little decorations hiccup); now it is Brecheret who sets out the project of the Monument to the Pioneers, the national anthem of the race (the Canovas tap dance); now it is Di Cavalcanti who shows his puppets, like a new Rops or Lautrec, ironic and brutal, observing the day of those who live... at night (the samba dancers roar).[11]

In presenting the city, the nationalistic project implicit in this text offers in prose themes and motifs which would be consolidated in 1922, in *Paulicéia desvairada*, in the poems "O trovador" and "Paisagem nº 1": the lute of the modern poet, the climate blending summer and winter, the wind cutting like a knife. It is a new poetics. Since "De São Paulo" has not yet been published in book form it is appropriate to quote a passage at length:

> One can already feel that the city is once again generating ideas and schools, reactivating an almost withered tradition, almost entirely overshadowed by the bright lights of Rio..
>
> It was no accident that Bilac chose our land from which to tell Brazil of his hopes of national renewal... He feels the biblical breathlessness of creation. The marble palaces of the Parnassians, like the meat-filled gutters of the realists, crumble over the vertiginous lute of joyous, triumphant youth... Apprehensions... Ruddy banners... There are those who preach battles and the sacrifice of the gifted...
>
> But, in the midst of so much effervescence, Paulicéia[12] shivered with cold. After the florid summer in which the city opened wide its doors and windows in the last fortnight of October, once again it froze with the opening of the month of the Republic. Deepest winter. Everything was muffled up in the grey ermine of the mists, as our beloved Gui would say. A frightened breeze razored the epidermis of the streets and great drops of dew trembled in space, where a broken, multicoloured light was like a faint memory of the Sun.

These impressions of the columnist, penned in 1920, foreshadow the line "Sou um tupi tangendo um alaúde!" in the poem "O trovador" ("The Troubador"), the Modernist's profession of faith, in *Paulicéia desvairada*. In the chain of literary nationalism, in 1922, Mário de Andrade would appropriate the position of the Romantic Gonçalves Dias, which was in its turn steeped in the national impulse of Musset, transferred from medieval French tradition, most explicit in the line of "La nuit de mai," "Poéte, prends ton luth."[13] In Gonçalves Dias's "Canção," when the poetic presence divides along three trails linked to three musical instruments, the São Paulo poet finds the harp dedicated to religious poetry; the lyre to amorous lyricism, and the "serious lute" devoted to "my own!"[14] In the column "De São Paulo," one may be surprised at the lute making an appearance in the twentieth century: "vertiginous," it

serves the new aesthetics, echoing, in the magazine *Klaxon*, the "light laugh of the moderns."

In addition to pre-echoing the "poetic polyphony" proposed in the "Prefácio interessantíssimo" and put into practice in the poems of *Paulicéia desvairada*, the words, with no immediate connection between them, "Apprehensions... Ruddy banners..." resonating in their ellipses, with the telegraphic phrase, "Deepest winter.", mark the encounter of Mário de Andrade with Futurism, which may be confirmed by the presence of works by Palazzeschi, Sem Benelli, Folgore and others, in editions from 1918 to 1920, in his library.

It is worth remembering that, in paraphrasing the Penumbrist lines of "our beloved Gui" (Guilherme de Almeida), the Modernist vision of the city was arising, a mixture of Futurism and Impressionism (both literary and artistic) presaging lines in "Paisagem nº 1" ("Landscape no. 1") from the 1922 book. In "De São Paulo" one reads:

> A frightened breeze razored the epidermis of the streets and great drops of dew trembled in space, where a broken, multicoloured light was like a faint memory of the Sun.

In "Paisagem nº 1" the poet, impregnated with Baudelaire's "Tableaux parisiens," perceives his city thus:

> My London of the fine mists!
> High summer. The ten thousand million roses of São Paulo.
> There is a snow of perfume in the air.
> It's cold, very cold...
> And the irony of the legs of the little seamstresses
> Like ballerinas...
> The wind is like a razor
> In the hands of a Spaniard. Harlequinesque!...
> Two hours ago the Sun was burning down.
> In two hours' time the Sun will be burning down.[15]

Oswald de Andrade: the Trianon Manifesto

In 1921 came the first victory: the public recognition of Brecheret. Praised by all, the sculptor of the *Monument to the Pioneers* received a state pension to study for two years in Paris. But, in a country characterised by an exaggerated importance attached to academic degrees and by after-dinner oratory, there is insufficient seriousness to consolidate worthwhile projects. Such consolidation occurs in an ironic and ambivalent fashion. Thus, on 9 January 1921, the so-called São Paulo high society – the forces of

conservatism – paid homage to Menotti del Picchia in the coffee-table edition of the poem *As máscaras* – a pre-Modernist work with *art-nouveau* illustrations by Paim. Oswald de Andrade surprised most of those who appeared at the Trianon restaurant, meeting place of the São Paulo elite. Speaking in the name of the "half-dozen young artists of São Paulo," he placed his faith in the difference, the marginality, which distinguished them. The banquet was seen as a landmark. The young people were there to pay homage to one of their own and to sacrament the formerly discriminated renewal. If Menotti was a name consecrated by two factions it was best not to confuse him with the old guard and remind him that the path of renewal was one of the fiercest and most difficult battles. Occupying, so to speak, the territory of the adversary, Oswald de Andrade decreed that night the end of an epoch, calling upon everyone to join the fight then being waged in São Paulo, the city of the twentieth century, a city which synthesised the ideal of a new world, the owner of a new thematic, of new resources to be explored by literature:

> We are here in the Trianon, laying open to the public the panoramic city in the fearless cross-section of its streets of factories and its clusters of American palaces. It is the city that, in the confusion of its voices, in the endless unfolding of its newborn suburbs, in the improvised ambition of its street markets and in the victory of its financial markets, ululates an unknown harmony of human violence, of ascensions and disasters, of fights, hatreds and loves, to propose the receptivity of choice, the richest material of its suggestions and the imperative persuasion of its colours and lines.[16]

This tentacular city, the "Paulicéia desvairada" ("delirious São Paulo") of Mário de Andrade, demanded the attempt at simultaneity in enumeration, in the discourse striving to reflect "American life." The adjective "American," later forgotten, reiterated, in these first Modernist years, the desire to incorporate into the text the dynamism and audacity of modernisation, following the example of the land of Uncle Sam, where the process had radically changed the urban landscape and human behaviour. Oswald de Andrade, in a "fiery and unrestrained style," proposed renewal, without, however, making a programme explicit. His speech, despite the audacity of certain expressions, was limited to the worn-out oratory of high-sounding phrases, of persuasive hyperboles, of excessive adjectives. Its greatest importance was to impudently mark out the terrain, which is undoubtedly an attitude characteristic of the *avant-garde*. It made headlines. It made the *Correio Paulistano*, a conservative newspaper, feel obliged to publish the complete text of the speech that aroused so much comment.

Mário de Andrade, one of the guests, sent the *Illustração Brazileira* his own lucid analysis of the homage, of which it is useful to transcribe the final part:

> Thus the disparity between the guests who were celebrating Menotti del Picchia was more perfect than anything I've seen in my life. Skinflints of all beliefs, standards of behaviour of all kinds, mugs of every suburb were shuffled

together in a Hugo-esque love of antithesis. And at a certain moment there even appeared an automatic Punchinello, doublehunchbacked bearer of grateful happiness... He was demanding the place that had not been granted to the celebrity of the party in the intermezzo between his masques... This rain of fire that is Bueno Monteiro asked if I was the police. But I didn't know...

Afterwards the *speechifying* began. There was much that was worth hearing and noting down. Mr. Putteri, in the name of the Italian community, put a high polish on some very good and sensible ideas. Too sensible even to be lovely. Oswaldo de Andrade spoke as well, representative and mandarin of a new generation, revealing much brilliance and some hope. He was the bugler of the Futurists, those "of the pathologists' domain" as certain old-fashioned critics say and write, in their gruelling rancor towards new beginnings. João Miramar said some lovely things... Which is not to say that they were well thought-out... And perhaps that's true... The men of your clan, as you call it, Oswaldo, my Tiern, don't think – they brood, they don't reflect – they feel. It's a greenhouse of mad poets, an exotic, fantastic generation blubbering over their marriage to the drizzle, ritual conventionality of the middle-ground. In this lunatic asylum they say that little thinking is done... But what sensations, what commotion, what enthusiasms, what moonshine and fireworks, where every step is multiplied and Beauty is transformed – this much beloved Errabunda in the briar patches of Perfection!... The proof of this: Oswaldo de Andrade said with his own lips that it is a sacrilege, since it imitates mystic Benedictine psalmody, and the whole room applauded. Everybody was well satisfied because they judged themselves to be included in the "half-dozen" of which the audacious young man spoke. If, in that moment of blindness, they had remembered the "half-dozen's" enthusiasm for the "pathologists' domain" perhaps they would have deserted the goad of scurrility... As if madness were not the defect or principal characteristic of the whole of humanity! But the victory of the clan is that everyone wants to be a member of it, failing to see the pride and solicitude in which it fortifies and purifies itself.

Menotti del Picchia replied to each of the innumerable orators, as one might expect of the welcoming goodness of his spirit. And he said lovely things too, in a musical discourse of the most dazzling brilliance. I believe that this artist of Moses handles prose with greater perfection than he does verse. He is a less resounding and erudite Euclid. Sentences flow from him in flexuous melody. Each one is crowned with endings which are washed ashore, wide, slow and languid, like wavelets in the dead tides of January... It is a stunning rhythm, always varied, always original... It is in his prose that Menotti sang his best lines – those that his poetics have not yet allowed, cloistered in the prison of Alexandrian rules.

And the liqueurs. The cigar smoke. The disorderly dispersal.

> Staying behind, in the already deserted sanctuary, I saw that, on the sensual lips of the bronze mask of Helios, a green tear was poised, shed from the half-open eyes... And I felt that, for some time yet, artifice will continue to sprinkle the light sadness of the Pierrot on the upward audacity of the Harlequins.[17]
>
> **MÁRIO DE ANDRADE**
>
> *Illustração Brazileira* – 21 March 1921

Even while externalising the aggressive meaning of contemporary life, Oswald de Andrade did not exploit the label of Futurism; he crossed the frontiers of the conservatives with a certain care. He kept this label in order to launch Mário de Andrade in May of that intense 1921. In "My Futurist Poet," printed by the *Jornal do Comércio* on 27 May, in addition to flaunting the existence of the book *Paulicéia desvairada*, at that time originals known only by the poet's friends, the columnist discusses the life and personality of the author and transcribes the poem "Tu." In fact, the lines, in exposing the intense emotional bond between the poet and his city, assimilated the Futurism of the Technical Manifesto of 1912 far more than the stereotype of the Futurist city of Marinetti and the other São Paulo Modernists. In his zealous attempt to conceptualise the contradictory metropolis, Mário de Andrade, whose lyricism combines Impressionist tenderness, the world of dreams and of Expressionist hallucinations, with some truly Futurist epithets, coins the neologism "Bandeirantemente!" ("Pioneeringly") to convey enthusiasm. Oswa1d de Andrade repeats this in order to transmit, in the press, the label that caused most hullabaloo:

> Blessed be this São Paulo Futurism which has arisen as a travelling companion for those who wear out their heart and soul in the brutal fight, the American fight, pioneeringly![18]

Mário de Andrade's reply, "Futurista?!", on 6 July, in the same newspaper, establishes his respect for the past, emphasising links evident in really modern art. In relation to the aesthetics of Marinetti, he accepts and applauds the formal conquests. He rejects the ideological proposals, casting doubt: how far may Futurism be seen as significant, "que futuro endireita?"[19] (What future is it rectifying?") He rebels against received classification, refusing each and every type of framing, preferring to be written off as extravagant and crazy, far from any school. In fact this reveals an aesthetic which is anti-school and in favour of the absolute liberty of the artist – Dadá. Oswald de Andrade, however, insists and proves the Futurism of his friend, linking his poetry to that of Guilherme de Almeida, the "Epígrafe" of *Canções gregas*, Modernist only insofar as it was written in free verse, and the Futurist recipe of Agenor Barbosa, "Os pássaros de aço."[20] It may be understood, making allowance for the obstinacy of Oswald de Andrade, reassuringly, that Modernism was gradually gaining more space and that the language was being disposed of. Mário de Andrade concluded his attack on Parnassianism, taking aim at professions of faith and poetic principals. Contrasting simple,

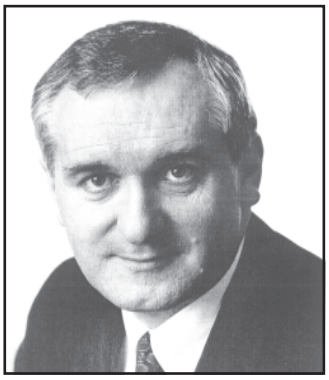
day-to day words with the parody of Parnassian discourse, he constructed a series of seven texts entitled "Mestres do passado."[21] He was not embarrassed about being partisan since he wished to denounce the corrosion of the past, at heart a Futurist endeavour. In his sights was the hypertrophy of formal elaboration isolated from free creation. Later he was to recognise that the factiousness of 1921 was pure strategy. Nonetheless, the series is evidence, from the critic's pen, of a certain theoretical maturity in Brazilian Modernism.

Notes

1 Translated from the Portuguese original by Dr Peter James Harris, State University of São Paulo (UNESP).
2 Marta Rosseti BATISTA, *Anita Malfatti no espaço e no tempo* (São Paulo: IBM, 1985) 29.
3 BATISTA 28-30.
4 Telê Ancona LOPEZ, "A estréia poética de Mário de Andrade," in____. *Mariodeandradiando*. (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1996).
5 Mentioned by Gilberto de Mendonça Telles.
6 Mário da Silva BRITO, *História do modernismo brasileiro – I: Antecedentes da Semana de Arte Moderna* (São Paulo: Saraiva, 1958).
7 Murilo ARAÚJO, in BRITO 76-7.
8 The defence by Oswald de Andrade in the São Paulo edition of the *Jornal do Comércio*, on 11 January 1918, "A exposição Anita Malfatti," is quoted in BRITO 53.
9 ROSENFELD, Anatol et al. *Vanguarda em questão.* In: Holanda, Heloísa Buarque de, e Luiz Costa Lima Lima. *Vanguarda e Modernidade: Questionário. Tempo Brasileiro,* n. 26-27. Rio de Janeiro, jan.mar. 1971, pp. 40-47.
10 Mário de ANDRADE, "O movimento modernista," in ____. *Aspectos da literatura brasileira*, 4th ed., (São Paulo/Brasília: Martins/INL, 1972) 239-40.
11 Mário de ANDRADE, "De São Paulo," in *Ilustração Brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, December 1920. Annotated edition by Telê Ancona LOPEZ being prepared for publication.
12 The city of São Paulo (translator's note).
13 See Telê Porto Ancona LOPEZ, "A biblioteca de Mário de Andrade: seara e celeiro da criação," in *Fronteiras da criação: Anais do VI Congresso Internacional dos Pesquisadores do Manuscrito literário* (São Paulo: FAPESP/Anna Blume, 2000).
14 DIAS, Antônio Gonçalves. *Poesias* (nov. ed. de Joaquim Norberto Souza e Silva), Paris, Garnier, 1919; See Lopez, Telê Ancona. "A Biblioteca de Mário de Andrade: seara e celeiro da criação II". *D.O. Leitura*, Ano 19, Nº 2002, São Paulo, Jan. 2001.
15 Mário de ANDRADE, "Paisagem nº 1," in "*Paulicéia desvairada*," in *Poesias completas* (São Paulo: Martins, 1955) 43.
16 The complete text of Oswald de Andrade's speech is published in BRITO 157-9. Mário used to write Oswald de Andrade's name as "Oswaldo", as he used to call him personally.
17 Mário de ANDRADE, "De São Paulo," *Illustração Brazileira*, Rio de Janeiro, 21 March 1921.
18 Osvaldo de ANDRADE in BRITO 199-200.
19 Mário de ANDRADE, "Futurista?!" *Jornal do Comércio*, 6 July 1921.
20 Osvaldo de ANDRADE.
21 Mário de ANDRADE, "Mestres do passado,".

News from Brazil

The Taoiseach's Visit to the University of São Paulo, July 2001



An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, T. D.

Munira H. Mutran welcomes the Taoiseach.

Jacques Marcovitch, President of the University of São Paulo, offers the Human Rights Medal of Honour to Mr. Berti Ahern.

The governor of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, welcomes the Taoiseach at Palácio dos Bandeirantes.

Irish Ambassador John Campbell.

Message from Ambassador Martin Greene

When I presented my credentials to President Cardoso last December, both he and the foreign minister, Mr Celso Lafer, who was also present, mentioned their strong connections with the University of São Paulo. They also mentioned, and went on to demonstrate, that they had developed an interest in Irish literature and culture through their association with Professor Munira Mutran and the Irish Studies programme at the university. President Cardoso said that: "Ireland is known in Brazil above all for its literature; that can be the key to strengthening the relationship between the two countries in all sectors." These were very encouraging words for a newly-appointed Ambassador to hear.

The decision to open a resident Irish embassy in Brasilia, following the very successful visit to Brazil by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in July 2001, is one that will be welcomed by many people. There will be much for the new embassy to do. Given Brazil's political importance and economic weight and Ireland's position as an EU member state and current member of he UN Security Council, there is plenty of scope for bilateral engagement on foreign policy issues of interest to the two countries. EU/Mercosur relations are extremely important. Bilateral commercial relations are also important and have the potential to become even more so – the Kerry Group's involvement in Brazil shows what can be achieved in the Brazilian market by innovative Irish companies. There is also a very strong tradition of people-to-people links between the two countries, of which the work of Irish missionaries in Brazil is the best example.

The hosting of the conference of the International Association for the Study of Irish literatures by the University of São Paulo from 28-31 July, 2002, is a landmark event. It confirms that the study of Irish culture and literature in Brazil has come of age. Heartiest congratulations are due to Professor Mutran and her colleague, Dr Laura Izarra, for developing the programme in São Paulo and for bringing the conference of the international association to Brazil. Credit is also due to the University administration for the tremendous support provided to both the programme and the conference. From the point of view of the Irish Embassy in Brasilia, the importance of the conference is that it can be the point of departure for greatly intensified cultural cooperation between Brazil and Ireland in the future.

Martin Greene
Ambassador of Ireland to Brazil

Ambassador Martin Greene at the University of São Paulo. April 2002.

Martin Greene – *Curriculum Vitae*

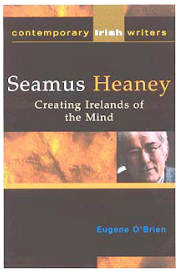
Place and date of birth: Co Offaly, Ireland, 1952
Marital status: Married to Jill Butler
Educational qualifications: PhD (Bradford), MSc (Bradford)
Career:
Department of Foreign Affairs, 1970 to date:
Overseas assignments: Brazil (2001 to date), Ethiopia (1994-5), Portugal (1988-92), Sudan (1986-88), Lesotho (1978-82) and New York (United Nations) (1972-74).
Headquarters assignments: Development Cooperation (1995-2001, 1983-86, 1975-78), Economic (1992-95) and Political (1986) Divisions and in the Minister's Private Office (1970-72)
Current Position: Ambassador of Ireland to Brazil.

Mr. Martin Greene with the editors of *ABEI Journal*.

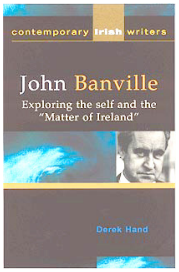
Exhibition of books offered by the Taoiseach Mr. Bertie Aherns to the Library of Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo.

Books Received

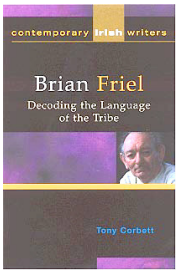
Seamus Heaney: Creating Irelands of the Mind
By Eugene O'Brien. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2002



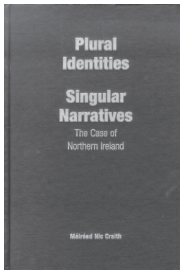
John Banville: Exploring Fictions
By Derek Hand. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2002



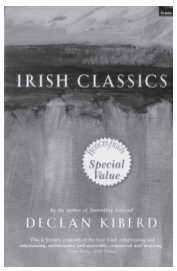
Brian Friel: Decoding the Language of the Tribe
By Tony Corbett.
Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2002



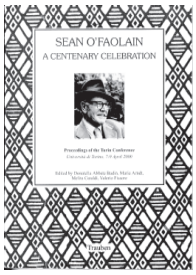
Plural Identities. Singular Narratives
The Case of Northern Ireland
By Máiréad Nic Craith.
New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002.



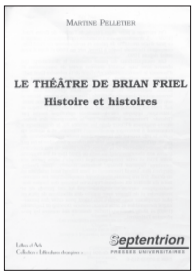
Irish Classics
By Declan Kiberd.
London: Granta Books, 2000



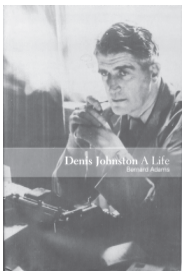
Sean O'Faolain. A centenary Celebration
Edited by Donatella Abbate Badin, Marie Arndt, Melita Cataldi, Valerio Fissore.
Torino: Trauben, 2001



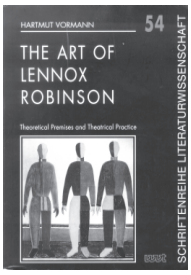
The Théatre de Brian Friel
Histoire et histoires
By Martine Pelletier.
France: Septentrion Presses Universitaires, 2001



Denis Johnston A Life
By Bernard Adams
Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2002

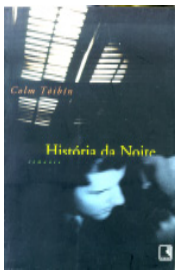


The Art of Lennox Robinson
Theoretical Premises and Theatrical Practice
By Harmut Vormann
Wuppertal: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001

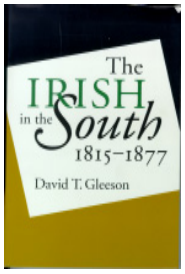


Samuel Beckett. O Silêncio Possível
By Fábio de Souza Andrade
São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial, 2001.

The History of the Night
By Colm Tóibín
Trans. Rubens Figueiredo. São Paulo: Editora Record, 1998



The Irish in the South 1815-1877
By David T. Gleeson
Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina, 2001.



In Memoriam

Dedicated to the memory of Thomas F. O'Keeffe

The year was 1950 and most of Europe was still ravaged by the effects of the Second World War. Although Ireland had shrewdly maintained itself neutral throughout the conflict, the economic depression that ensued had, in a way, even more severe consequences in Ireland, which was obviously not included in the international effort to rebuild Europe.

Thomas Francis O'Keeffe (Tom), born in Waterford, Ireland, already qualified as a chartered accountant, accepted a contract to work in Brazil for the firm Wilson Sons. To prepare for this he went to their London office for a few months. There he was introduced to a Brazilian lady, Iolanda d'Abreu (whose Brazilian husband was working for the BBC), who gave him Portuguese lessons. She started off the first lesson by saying "Vamos falar a língua do povo"!

Prior to this, during his years of study and accountancy work Tom joined the L.D.F. (Local Defense Force) and became an officer. The song he composed and donated (The March of Cosantoiri) was chosen to be the marching song for his Division and later was often played on Radio Eireann.

Tom married Gabrielle Elizabeth O'Keeffe in February 1950 in University Church, Dublin. Their daughter Geraldine was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 and their son Raymond was born in São Paulo in 1958. Tom and Gabrielle's was a very happy marriage of fifty one years.

In 1965 Tom joined SPAL, Coca-Cola. A few years later he became President, a post which he held until his retirement.

Tom was offered the position of Honorary Consul in 1971. Later he was appointed Honorary Consul General. Tom donated the use of an office suite on the Avenida Paulista and set up the Consulate there. He and his wife chose this location due to it's central position providing easy access for all. This was of particular benefit to the missionaries living on the outskirts of the city. Tom ran the Consulate in São Paulo until his death in March 2001 and with 30 years of service was the longest ever serving Honorary General Consul of Ireland. His son-in-law, Joseph (Joe) E. Semple is at present running the Consulate.

Tom worked closely with Professor Munira Mutran whose work he greatly admired. Together they achieved much in promoting Irish Literature and Culture. Tom was an Honorary Member of ABEI and was also involved in many other cultural undertakings from organizing the Irish participation in the São Paulo Bienal over the years, to helping Brazilian children of all ages, and those at College level, with their projects about Ireland.

Later in years out he did a great deal of work for Irish companies interested in trading or doing business in Brazil as well as helping the Irish state-owned companies.

Social work was always on his agenda. Amongst many undertakings he was a Counsellor in the "Ação Comunitária do Brasil". As well as other honours he received the "Ordem do Albatroz".

During all these years of hard work Tom never lost sight of his greatest love, his family, which had grown to include his five grandchildren, Edward, Sean, Vanessa, Anaïs and Patrick.

Raymond O'Keeffe

Contributors

Marie Arndt was educated at the universities of Uppsala (Sweden), Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast, from where she got her PhD on a thesis on Sean O'Faolain. She has published articles on Sean O'Faolain, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad and Sean O'Casey. She is currently involved in a research project about exile in literature in English. She is the initiator and chairperson of NISN, the Nordic Irish Studies Network and has also been closely associated with other international associations for Irish studies for many years, most notably IASIL. She has taught at universities in Sweden but is currently spending time teaching and doing research in England.

Aurora Bernardini, Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at the University of São Paulo since the early seventies to present date. Her Theses were: "Materials for Futurism and Cubo-Futurism"; "The Poetics of Marinetti and Khlebnikov"; and "Secondary Effects in Marina Tzvetaeva". She has specialised in Literary Translation: Khlebnikov, Babel, Eco, Gadda, Buzzati, amongst other authors. She has recently published poetry and have given university courses on poetic translation.

Noélia Borges is Assistant Professor at the University of Bahia - Salvador. Co-author of *Grasping the Meaning/Compreensão Inteligente de Textos*, published by Ao Livro Técnico S.A. , vol. 1 and 2, 1988-1889, she wrote many essays on English literatures such as "Victorian Universe", published in Jornal A Tarde, 25.02.1997 (Salvador-Bahia). She has an M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Santa Catarina. She is writing her PhD. thesis on Kate O'Brien, an Irish modern writer.

Tony Corbett holds a PhD from the National University of Ireland, and has had an involvement with the theatre since his early teens. He lives and works in his native Cork, where he has taught in several institutions. He has published articles on many aspects of drama and the theatre, from the Middle Ages to the present day. He is the author of *Brian Friel*: *Decoding the Language of the Tribe*, to be published in 2002, and is presently working on a study of the York cycle of medieval mystery plays.

Cielo Griselda Festino has an MA in English language and English and American literature from Universidade de São Paulo. She lectures English literature and language at UNIP, a private university. At the moment she is a PhD student at Universidade de São Paulo. Her main field of research is post-colonial literature. Her publications are "Os Relatos de Viagem. Em foco: *Goa and the Blue Mountains* de Sir Richard Francis Burton".(*Revista da História.* History Department at Universidade de São Paulo (forthcoming)). "The Discourse of Diaspora and the Goan Experience" (*Revista Cláritas*. PUC. São Paulo (forthcoming))

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