



Introduction

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Citation: M.G. Eliggi (2021) Introduction. *Sijis* 11: pp. 21-31. doi: 10.13128/SIJIS-2239-3978-12870

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Ireland and Latin America whether on a mythical or real basis have had a long connection. Was San Brendan the first to arrive on Mexican shores? Was the encounter between Irish travellers and Latin American peoples produced later? As I started reading more about the origin of this connection and how it evolved along time I could confirm that what had happened and how it happened constituted an amazing network. A network that had been “woven” by different kinds of “threads” or actors which gave rise to the interconnected group of people that both in Ireland looks to Latin America and vice versa. And all this went on for several centuries and continues even today. The flow of people and information, their history, their languages and literatures, their local arts, saw periods of greater and lesser exchange but what is undeniable is that those links remained unbroken until the present.

When invited to be the guest editor of the eleventh issue of the *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* monographic collection on Ireland and Latin America, I thought and searched in my mind, looking for an idea, or better *the* idea which could be at the core of this issue, in the very year of the COVID-19 virus world pandemic, twenty years after the beginning of the twenty-first century. I began by re-reading texts that we had read back in 2006, when we started conceiving the possibility of carrying out research in the field of Irish Studies at the National University of La Pampa (UNLPam), Argentina. We had a past as teachers, professors and researchers of literature written in English, not just English literature, but mainly Chicano/a, Caribbean, Native U.S. and Canadian literatures to mention those who had been closer to our research interests from 1996 to 2006. We were completing a cycle with post-colonialism, border matters, identity issues, place and displacement, diasporas, homes, homelessness and also unhomeliness, which included the study of languages, cultures, and history from different perspectives and the application of different theoretical frameworks. By no means were we going to throw away ten years of carefully guided research. So? It was then that in September 2006 our dear friend, colleague and advisor of research projects was invited once again to teach

at our university. Professor Laura P. Zuntini de Izarra of the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil (USP) had by then visited our College of Human Sciences on two previous occasions and was now to lecture on “Narratives of Dislocation”. A careful scrutiny of the syllabus showed us that we were not to give up colonial/postcolonial matters but to turn our gaze toward a different direction, taking advantage of our previous readings and research. Prof. Izarra was going to make us see Ireland and Irish literature and culture from a renewed perspective, different from our previous traditional studies of the well-known, Joyce, Beckett, Yeats, Wilde and Shaw; not as authors to be read only as important writers as we had been taught in the past, as parts of English literature, but with a “revisiting” eye, paying more attention to history, to contextual details, and social developments around them and their writings. It was a wonderful beginning or rather, a new start, in which we could apply our previous knowledge and give our research a twist which would lead us to Irish Studies and not just Irish literature or literature written in English by Irish writers. All the above came into being only through Professor Izarra’s insight about the potentiality of future research in Argentina and also by our accepting her challenge – not without doubts concerning what we had been doing and what we were embarking on.

What happened back then was the result of coordinated actions based not just on academic bonds between scholars and universities in Brazil and Argentina but on true disinterested friendship among academics and their desire to share knowledge, widen the scope of research and join efforts to place Irish Studies within a broader context. Nevertheless, our efforts, if only bilateral, would not have been enough and it was thus, that we all started “spreading the word” and making other scholars consider this expansion of the field in Argentina. The same happened to Juan José Delaney (Universidad del Salvador, USAL, Buenos Aires) and Cristina Elgue (National University of Córdoba, UNC) who were among the first to join this turn towards Irish Studies, especially after the seminal Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses (ABEI) Symposium of Irish Studies in South America held in 2007 in the city of Buenos Aires, which gathered not only scholars and interested researchers but also Irish community members as part of a memorable event. Little by little this neuronal system of academic work, with its dendrites bringing in information and its axons sending it away as part of an interconnected network was on the move as a result of passion more than by anything else. Laura Izarra passed on to us her knowledge together with her enthusiasm and confidence that we would be able to open new paths in Argentina. We soon learned that her work had also been motivated in turn by that of her closest colleague and advisor, Professor Munira Mutran (USP) who back in the 1970s had had a first and impressive encounter and life-long friendship with the Irish writer Sean O’Faolain. Not only did Professor Mutran find as a result her topic and writer for her PhD thesis but also a life-long present, as she narrates it in the following and touching excerpt from the book about O’Faolain’s correspondence with her for more than a decade:

I have been asked many times how and why I became interested in O’Faolain’s work. It all started with *a present* [italics my own] I was given one of O’Faolain’s collections by Clyde Enroth, a visiting American scholar, [...] I was looking for a topic, a theme, a contemporary writer to develop my PhD thesis. O’Faolain’s stories and novels in which the relationship between literature and history is strong, appealed to me. I was suddenly transported to a new literary and cultural world (previously, I had been acquainted with English and American fiction only). Having been told that O’Faolain lectured in Trinity College Dublin I impetuously sent him a long, naïve letter discussing my project. It was in 1973 that, to my delight, a small blue envelope bearing an Irish postmark arrived. It was followed by other letters and postcards until the last one in 1986. (Mutran 2005, 167-168)

This extract from *Sean O’Faolain’s Letters to Brazil* is a clear example of how the passion for things can be kindled and also of how it can be passed on to others when that passion is genuine and the subject matter fascinating. Professor Mutran and her colleague Professor Maria Helena Kopschitz at the Fluminense Federal University in Rio de Janeiro were the first to begin a fruitful academic cooperation with University College Dublin and Queen’s University Belfast, respectively, as we learn from Professor Izarra’s account. We also learn that their pioneering work led to many MA dissertations and PhD theses (including her own MA dissertation, Izarra, L.P.Z. *James Stephens: The Demi-Gods at the Crossroads* (Izarra 1989) and PhD thesis, Izarra, L.P.Z. *Espelhos e Labirintos Holográficos: O processo de uma ‘nova’ síntese estética na obra de John Banville* (1995) both under the guidance of Professor Mutran) exploring not only Irish literature and its reception but also history, migrations, film and drama, the lives of Irish women and men in Latin America, among other facts that at the same time produced a multiplying effect through the work of those graduates at different universities around Brazil and/or the world.

The connection, then, between Brazil and Argentina, is now clear and it started to be consolidated from 2006 onwards but more actors, important links in the chain, were involved that would assure the success of positioning Irish Studies in Argentina. The interest and support of the Embassy of Ireland in Buenos Aires, Argentina, shown through the invaluable work of its ambassadors (Philomena Murnaghan, James McIntyre, Justin Harman and Jacqueline O’Halloran – current ambassador) all throughout the period was crucial and we always felt accompanied by them in all our initiatives, receiving sound advice, interesting ideas, and the help which comes from good and knowledgeable friends.

A network is a space where people interact with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts, space which is and *must be* always open to receiving others’ contributions. That is what makes it rich in multiple ways. At the time, full of enthusiasm for the new course our research was taking, reading new materials and re-reading the classics, we developed a first project “Irlandeses in Argentina: recuperación de fuentes, traducción y crítica” (2007-2010) and several others followed until in 2015 we thought that we could develop a wider scheme, a Programme that would include several related research projects and so we did. “Literaturas Contemporáneas en Diálogo” was born and will remain active until 2023, its main goal being to consolidate the professional development of senior researchers while at the same time initiating and guiding the development of junior researchers-graduates and degree-students with a view to transferring the acquired knowledge through our teaching practices and also to spread and share findings with society in general. Meanwhile in other parts of Argentina similar developments or alternative ones related to teaching, research, establishing extra-curricular Chairs of Irish Studies, organising academic events, for instance, were all under way National University of Córdoba (UNC), National University of La Plata (UNLP), Universidad del Salvador (USAL), National University of Río Cuarto (UNRC), National University of Mar del Plata (UNMdeP). The Irish Studies network in Argentina with its strong link with our friends from Brazil was making progress. The organization of Symposia or other similar events always constituted pivotal moments of exchange and learning. Again, in 2009, the Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses (ABEI) asked us to co-organize their IV Symposium in Buenos Aires; Professor Maureen Murphy (Hofstra University, New York – American Conference for Irish Studies – ACIS), Professor Marisol Morales Ladrón (University of Alcalá de Henares, Spain – Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses – AEDEI) and renowned cultural critic Fintan O’Toole were among the keynote speakers. 2011 saw us sharing the biennial Conference of the Society for Irish Latin American Studies (SILAS) in Dublin, hosted by Dublin City University. It was an excellent opportunity to meet other scholars from different disciplines – not just lit-

erature – interested in the relationship between Ireland and Latin America. I felt the warmth and empathy of those present who, in the long run, became dear colleagues and friends, so I want to mention them, honouring their hard and serious work and good humour, Margaret Brehony, SILAS current president, Clóna Murphy, Gera Burton, Gabriela McEvoy, Sinead Wall (*in memoriam*), and our dearest, Laura Izarra again. It was at that memorable Conference that the idea of hosting a shared ABEI Symposium and SILAS Conference in 2013 in La Pampa was voted for and received unanimous approval.

And thus, we continued moving further and working together and joining efforts towards a common goal. For us, inhabitants of the pampas and the dunes, hosting the two events was an honour but mostly an opportunity, being a small university in central Argentina, they reinvigorated our community as a whole, motivated our students and added more colleagues to the, by then, “informal” but solid network. Edmundo Murray’s virtual presence via videoconference greeted us and sent his best wishes from abroad. Clóna Murphy’s excellent opening plenary “Writing Irish Women into Latin American History: Problems, Perspectives and Possibilities” impressed the audience. The presence of well-known Irish writer Hugo Hamilton and Irish-Argentine writer Juan José Delaney in an intelligent and at the same time intimate dialogue with Laura Izarra offered the audience a plus. Lance Pettit (Irish films and television) and Thaddeus O’Sullivan (Irish films) were interviewed by Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos (Brazil) on the screening of “The Woman who married Clark Gable”; Emeritus Professor Ailbhe Ó Corráin (Centre of Irish and Celtic Studies, Ulster University) delighted the audience with his brilliant lecture and last but not least the closing lecture by our dear friend Maureen Murphy, once again, generated renewed enthusiasm and a heart-felt applause from the audience. The academic programme was really impressive and we could not have made it possible without the support of all the academic partners involved, Embassy of Ireland in Buenos Aires and Northern Ireland Bureau included. But there was more to that; the cultural part of the Joint Symposium and Conference provided all the attendees with a selection of Irish music, dance, painting and poetry together with local folklore and tango by local singers and dancers organized jointly with our friends from Asociación Argentino Irlandesa de Bahía Blanca (AAIBB), activities celebrated by all those present. Names that come to our mind also attest to the encounter of cultures on Argentine soil: Alejandro Mahon Bertolini and Lucía González Flaherty (Irish dance), Liliana Susana Doyle and Marina Kohon (both reading their own poetry), Ángela Cesetti (popular Irish music) Élida Honoré Kent (painting), Santiago Kincaide Murphy, Nancy Ferracutti Kincaide, María Elena Kincaide, Víctor Ferracutti Kincaide, Luis Cuenca Reyzabal and María Rosa Keegan (AAIBB’s choir), Marcela Eijo (tango singer) Juan Andrés Martín (tango dancer).

A network consists of multiple elements that communicate with one another. This communication if well administered gives its fruits, makes all the links work better. Years passed, we met in 2015 at the premises of the National University of Córdoba, now as hosts of the ABEI symposium, led by Professor Cristina Elgue and her colleagues and receiving the visit of acclaimed Irish writer Colum McCann. The organization was excellent again and we also learned of all the hard work done for that event by the Association “Irlandeses de Córdoba” collaborating with the UNC and coordinated by María Teresa Linares and Jenny Murphy.

The year 2016 was emblematic since countries in South America began to celebrate their independence bicentenaries from previous colonial rule. Beginning with Argentina, which coincidentally was 200 years old as an independent nation in 2016 while Ireland celebrated her centenary, a new series of events was planned and new connections were established, this time with Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, which hosted another great Symposium of Irish Studies in Buenos Aires, with the presence of prestigious historian and Professor

Emeritus Dermot Keogh, University College Cork (UCC), representative members of the Keogh-Naughton Institute, Notre Dame, U.S.A. (Christopher Fox and Diarmuid Ó Giolláin), Laura Izarra (USP), Paula Ortiz (USAL), María G. Eliggi (UNLPam), María Eugenia Cruset (UNLP). Bríona Nic Dhiarmada, documentary creator and writer, Thomas J. and Kathleen M. O'Donnell Professor of Irish Studies and Concurrent Professor of Film, Television, and Theatre at the University of Notre Dame was also present for the screening of “1916 The Irish Rebellion”, award winning documentary which led to a remarkable post-screening discussion. It was then that after about ten years of working in the field, always in collaboration with other scholars and other institutions and associations, that we thought, we deserved a local Association. Joint efforts were made and by October 2017, Asociación de Estudios Irlandeses de Sur (AEIS) was created in an *ad hoc* meeting at the National University of La Pampa, with the presence of all those who sooner or later had become part of the Irish Studies group in Argentina. The presence of former ambassador to Argentina, Justin Harman, and of Professor Laura Izarra, who travelled especially for that purpose made us all reflect on the relevance of the moment. AEIS was created in the hope that in the near future all the other Spanish-speaking countries in South America could become part of it through their academic and/or community representatives interested in the field of Irish Studies. In August 2018 both AEIS and ABEI jointly organised a new Symposium in Santiago de Chile and in December of that same year a Conference on the topic “Ireland and Latin America – Globalising Irish Studies” closed the year celebrating Chilean’s independence bicentenary. 2019 made several of the AEIS, ABEI and SILAS members participate both in the SILAS Conference held at Trinity College Dublin in April and celebrating ABEI’s 30th anniversary during the August Symposium in São Paulo. And then, 2020: Covid-19, pandemic, lockdown, paralysis. It was a huge shock, it was not easy but one way or another and gradually, the network continued to move, work, interact, participate in events via zoom or other platforms that helped shorten distances.

When I thought about calling this monographic issue of the *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* “Ireland and Latin America: an amazing network” I was thinking precisely about all the memories I had just recalled and written. Of all the people who enthusiastically joined Professors Munira Mutran and Laura Izarra and everything that happened later until we reach the present. We are surely of a heterogenous nature, we may not all think alike (that’s good!) but our passion for the field makes us a “fabric with a special weave”, where each thread has a colour, a texture, and combined they make a wonderful pattern, they have a special feel. That is how I see this network, this amazing network which brings together Ireland and Latin America.

This monographic collection “Ireland and Latin America: an Amazing Network” comprises ten articles on various topics that can be grouped, though, since all follow a certain logic. Four of the articles are mainly concerned with representation, a concept which Stuart Hall defines as “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It *does* involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things” (Hall 1997, 15). The concept of “representation”, according to Hall, occupies an important place in the study of culture, because “representation connects meaning and language to culture” (*ibidem*). He further explains that “representation” means using the language, the signs, the images, to represent the world meaningfully to other “people”. However, the approaches selected by the writers and the corpora will obviously differ.

In the first article “Becoming Irish-Argentine in the Argentine Pampas: Identity Representa-

tions in Private Voices in Edmundo Murray's *Becoming Irlandés*" by María Isabel Arriaga, we are acquainted with nineteenth century emigration/immigration processes from Ireland to Latin America, especially to Argentina, a country which was by that time receiving large numbers of immigrants coming from Europe, and Ireland was, surprisingly, one of the countries from which an important wave of emigrants had departed to try their luck in these southern territories. Those who settled in rural or urban Argentine environments recorded their experiences either in personal diaries, memoirs or letters exchanged with family and friends back in Ireland. Those private documents constitute invaluable testimonies of their lives and contain representations of the Irish in Argentina, their settlement experiences and cultural adjustments and also of Argentina – its inhabitants, customs, and socio-cultural aspects in general, seen through the eyes of Irish immigrants. In his Introduction to *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Hall states that "identities" are "never unified [...] increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation" (1996, 4). Following Hall's notions of identity formation, the purpose of Arriaga's article is then to analyse through a postcolonial perspective and a narratological approach, strategies of identification in the discourse of those Irish born or Argentine of Irish descent.

The second article in this collection "Cultural Representations in Irish Immigrants and Their Descendants in *Tréboles del Sur*, by Juan José Delaney" by Norma L. Alfonso and Graciela Obert allows us to learn the reasons that attracted Irish emigrants to Argentina between 1830 and 1930. In an attempt to secure better living conditions the Irish contributed, together with many other Europeans lured by the prospects Argentina offered at the time, to the formation of the identity and the progress of the country. The need to preserve their own identity and language as Irish, together with the fact that they had travelled long distances to reach South America, made them keep permanent ties with their land and relatives back in Ireland so as to help them overcome the first phases of settlement. This article aims, then, at analysing the representation of cultural aspects in those Irish immigrants, resorting to Hall's concepts of representation, cultural identity and diasporic subjects, Raymond Williams' concept of culture and the notion of cultural hybridity introduced by García Canclini as basic theoretical texts. The analysis proposed by Alfonso and Obert is restricted to some of the fictional characters appearing in Juan José Delaney's collection of short stories *Tréboles del Sur* (Delaney 2014 [1994]). Delaney, a contemporary Irish-Argentine writer, has fictionalised the process of emigration and immigration of the Irish in Argentina, their connections with their home country, and the stages of their integration, adaptation and assimilation along time. His short stories seem to provide evidence regarding the ways in which Irish immigrants preserved the links with their country of origin while at the same time trying to forge new bonds in the new Argentine lands.

The next article in the collection, "Hero or Traitor? A Linguistic Analysis of the Literary Representation of Roger Casement in Sabina Murray's *Valiant Gentlemen*" by Miriam P. Germani will move us a little further; still we will be reading about how representations are constructed through the linguistic analysis the writer of the article undertakes of the literary representation of controversial Irish nationalist, Roger Casement (1864-1916), who had also been a British Consul in Africa and Brazil. An interesting connection between literature and history is pointed out as a feature which attracts the attention not only of historians, in view of Casement's relevant participation in the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland, but also of novelists. This, in turn, makes this analysis by a linguist a motivating endeavour to discover not *what* Murray's text means but rather how she makes those meanings explicit by her language choices, that is, *how* the

text means. Casement – the character in the novel – will be analysed in its evolution through a combination of a linguistic critical perspective (Fowler 1986) and the Appraisal system within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, White 2005). The way in which Casement's identity is constructed by means of language is the ultimate goal of this article.

Following these first three articles comes Stephen Allen's "Irish Journalists and the 1968 Mexico City Olympics". Even though this article is also about representation, Allen's focus is placed on the representation of Mexico City in the Irish press, describing it as a suitable host for the 1968 Olympic Games. It also points to other representations appearing in Irish newspapers of the time regarding the poor performance of Irish athletes or Ireland's population's lack of physical activity and a good diet, though that is not the main import of the article. The writer cleverly shows the reasons behind Mexico City's candidacy as host of the Olympics, mostly economic in nature, and also analyses how Mexico was seen from the perspective of Ireland, another nation occupying a peripheral position in the Olympic movement. Using archival sources from the Republic of Ireland and the Avery Brundage Microfilm Collection the article aims at providing new and illuminating views on the ways Mexico was described by the press depending on the reporters and editorial positions; the particular cases of J.J. Walsh, editor of *The Munster Express* and Lord Killanin's analysis as a journalist and Olympic Bureaucrat are considered in detail. The article also deals with the intersection between Olympic ideals and the ideas of national progress and modernity and their results, often contradictory. A general view of the multiple ways in which journalists perceived and represented Mexico on the occasion of hosting the Olympics is also part of the writer's examination of the topic.

The next two articles also have connections between them and with the previous ones in interesting ways. On the one hand, María Eugenia Cruset's article "A Nationalist Network in South America: Diaspora and Diplomatic Action" has as its primary aim to revisit the events surrounding the apparent failure of the 1916 Easter Rising in order to understand the reasons behind the organization of a transnational political action network through its diaspora, bringing to the fore again the importance of those Irish emigrants who had settled in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and the south of Brazil and who continued to be actively engaged in the nationalist cause back in Ireland. Whereas studies of such connections between Irish nationalists at home and their diaspora partners in English-speaking countries, namely the United States of America, Australia and Canada had been reported in detail in several other studies, the South American case still needs to be investigated. Thus, the interconnected network which originated in Argentina and grew to include both Chile and Uruguay is a matter of concern for the writer of this article which shows the important role played by paradiplomatic actors who, from the distant South American countries, did not hesitate to cooperate towards the establishment of an Irish Free State.

Regarding the other, Viviana P. Keegan's "Teaching Irish History to Irish-Argentine children at the turn of the Twentieth Century" examines how Irish history was taught to Irish and Irish-Argentine children in Argentina in the period 1880-1922. Through the analysis of the two Irish history textbooks for that purpose, both published in Dublin and used by the religious schools at Capitán Sarmiento, province of Buenos Aires and Rosario, province of Santa Fe, the aim of the article is to inquire into the educational, pedagogical, cultural and political links between Ireland and Argentina and their strong nationalist connections. To that end, *The Southern Cross* special section of the Argentine Gaelic League provided useful and revealing information also highlighting the important role played by William Bulfin (1863-1910), remarkable figure and active Irish nationalist concerned with education. Another outstanding figure analysed in the article is that of Mary-Louise Gwynne, nationalist and women's rights defender, author of

Stories on Irish History Told for Children, one of the books under scrutiny. Teaching Irish history involves aspects of identity, memory and education, claims Keegan, especially at a time when both Ireland and Argentina were consolidating their identities as countries, both reflecting on their history and on their language.

As the abovementioned articles clearly show, both are connected through the activities of the Irish diaspora in South America, through history, diplomacy and paradiplomacy, and through the concern for the education of the Irish-Argentine generations resulting from the emigration waves in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Again, issues of language and identity also emerge as central to the Irish who settled in Argentina, as the articles attest.

Moving forward and westwards at the same time the next two essays – which deal with poetry – are based on the relationship between Ireland, Chile and Argentina. The first one, “‘O My Pablo of Earthlife!’ Heaney’s Neruda and the Reality of the World” turns around the following puzzling question: Does Seamus Heaney reject Pablo Neruda? In his essay, Shea Atchison challenges John Dennison’s idea that Seamus Heaney would seem to be rejecting Pablo Neruda’s “impure” poetry, making a direct allusion to Neruda’s “Toward An Impure Poetry” (1961) and claims that Dennison is presenting his argument on the basis of an oversimplification. His task, then, will be to prove that Heaney, not only in his poem “To Pablo Neruda in Tamlaghtduff” from the *District and Circle* volume but along his works had valued Neruda’s poetry and even shared certain ideas, perhaps without his conscious acknowledgement. By performing a close reading of a set of selected poems, Atchinson sets out to prove that Heaney and Neruda have more points in common than it may be suspected. Identifying the context of Heaney’s development, the author will show how Heaney embraced Neruda’s ideas and in doing so he will also provide some parallels between both poets’ ways of understanding death.

Benjamin Keatinge’s “‘Across the divide / Of the Andes’: Harry Clifton and Latin America” will make readers be part of an astonishing journey with Harry Clifton and through his poems to areas of Ireland, Chile and Buenos Aires trying to find meaning and a “deeper clarification”, as Keatinge states, of his family roots, both maternal (Latin America) and paternal (Ireland). According to the author, Clifton’s aesthetics need to be interpreted in the interplay between a sense of belonging and a sense of estrangement, being the voyage of departure and that of return, the axis on which his poetry finds balance. Resorting to notions of place and placelessness, exile and return, and the specificities of language and identity proper of colonial/postcolonial discourse, Keatinge will analyse Clifton’s poetry drawing parallels between the arid Atacama Desert of Northern Chile, Bohemian Buenos Aires and the newly cosmopolitan Ireland. The poems seem to signal, according to the author, Clifton’s homecoming in which his Irish and Latin American roots come together. However, claims Keatinge, it is in the in-between zones or interstitial areas that Clifton’s poetic imagination can best be situated.

Brian Ó Doibhlin introduces us in his essay “Gaelic Surnominal Place-Names in Ireland and Their Reflection in Argentina” to the amazing universe of place-names, assuring us that everywhere in the world, place-names bring us closer to the history of a given place, also revealing through their etymologies the different political, social, religious and geographical influences which gave rise to the nomenclature of an area. Place-names can be mere descriptions of the local topography or refer to the built environment. Yet another category has to do with the surnames of important families in Ireland, showing their presence by naming a place with their surname in their honour. Emigration to other parts of the world also brought about the “voyage” of surnames across the sea. In the case of this study, Ó Doibhlin first refers to the process of Anglicisation resulting from the English colonisation of Ireland which has concealed original Irish-language etymologies, and later explores a selection of district names present in certain provinces of Argentina which establish a link with their Irish Gaelic counterparts in Ireland.

Tina Lawlor Mottram's "An Irish Artist's Travels from Buenos Aires to Araxá" completes this monographic collection, and is an extensive and fascinating narrative of an artist during lockdown in the UK, time during which she re-evaluated the meaning of being Irish in a foreign country. Her travels are not mere geographical ones along and across cities of two South American countries – Argentina and Brazil – but also symbolic ways of positioning herself as artist-in-residence to go through the works of three contemporary South American artists. Her travels to know about the works of these artists take her to different places and also back to different times. Their works, seen from the perspective of this Irish artist, have traces of local histories, of colonization and emigration processes, granting them a given identity. Along her journey in Brazil, this artist could also have a feel of everyday routines, cultural differences, local food, exotic natural environments – fauna and flora – many of which not only surprised but also delighted her. Looking back at her photographs and recorded memories of the lived experiences she concludes that the South American experience has definitely influenced her own way of creating art.

This eleventh issue of the *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* on Ireland and Latin America also includes two interviews with writers. The first one "Tea for Two, Scones and Literature!" an interview with Juan José Delaney was a project that had been postponed several times for different reasons. Juan José Delaney is an Argentine Literature professor and head of a school in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. He also coordinates the activities of the Irish Studies Program at USAL, having worked very hard towards its creation and dynamic development. Juan José is an already published and active writer, the product of the Irish diaspora to Argentina in the nineteenth century, fourth generation and Argentinian by birth but with his Irish ancestry that makes him a true Irish-Porteño in the full expression of this term coined by the Irish community in Buenos Aires. Juan José Delaney's first collection of short stories received the praise of notable Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, famous among other achievements, for his excellence in short story writing. In this interview, on which we both worked "over a virtual cup of tea" due to reigning pandemic restrictions around the world, and also to the fact that he lives in Buenos Aires and I in the middle of the Argentine "pampas" we travelled along his life as an Irish-Porteño, his childhood memories, his relationship with literature and other writers, and also his preferences regarding genres at the moment of putting pen to paper. His works include a novel, several collections of short stories, a novella and the biography of Marco Denevi, another well-known Argentine short-story writer. Juan José is a regular contributor to *The Southern Cross*, the Irish community newspaper in Buenos Aires. He has written a book on Borges and Irish Writing. His doctoral thesis *What, Che? Integration, Adaptation and Assimilation of the Irish-Argentine Community Through its Language and Literature* was published in 2017 by Ediciones Universidad del Salvador.

In "Embracing the Challenge. An Interview with Patrick Holloway", I engage in a dialogue with this young Irish writer who had lived with his family for almost ten years in Porto Alegre, Brazil, teaching English as a foreign language while at the same time writing poetry, short stories and a novel which is still in the hands of his agent waiting for a suitable publisher. Patrick married a Brazilian girl giving rise this way to an Irish-Brazilian or Brazilian-Irish family, now living back in Ireland. He is part of a different kind of diaspora. Unlike that wave of emigration of the nineteenth century, he moved to Brazil to celebrate love and life, and as part of a different flow of people around the world with multiple reasons for moving and settling without, in his particular case, the extreme conditions of his predecessors to Latin America. He is back in Ireland, which is now a country receiving not only the Irish spread around the world and coming back "home" (reverse diaspora) but also people emigrating from their countries of origin and considering Ireland a land of opportunities in which to start a new life as immigrants, in the hope of becoming, in the future, new Irish citizens. Patrick is someone with the passion,

strength and clarity of mind who, as Colum McCann encourages young writers to do in his *Letters to a Young Writer*, is capable of embracing the challenge of writing:

So embrace the challenge. Never forget that writing is the freedom to articulate yourself against power. It is a form of non-violent engagement and civil disobedience. You have to stand outside society beyond coercion, intimidation, cruelty, duress. Where power wants to simplify, you should complicate. Where power wants to moralize, you should criticize. Where power wants to intimidate, embrace. The amazing thing about good writing is that it can find the pulse of the wound without having to inflict the actual violence. (McCann 2017, 160)

The Writings section of the Journal comprises, as well, unpublished works contributed by several Irish writers and poets and also by a young Peruvian writer. The first one is a short story called “Speculations on A Dead Man’s Body. A Living Woman’s Pills” by acclaimed and award-winning Irish poet and fiction writer, drama critic and professor of Creative Writing, Mary O’Donnell. This short story is, in the words of its author, “about the way one woman deflects anxiety. As a reflective person pushed to her limits, her decisions show her desperation as well as her unwillingness to be influenced by conventional attitudes towards the elderly”. Elaine Gaston, poet from the north coast of Ireland and author of the Collection *The Lie of the Land* (2015) who had spent a time living in Argentina in the past has also contributed three poems for this issue which bring about the significance of place(s) and identity. Finally, Professor John Ennis, celebrated poet and recipient of multiple awards along his amazing career as a result of his impressive poetic *oeuvre* enters in a lyrical dialogue with young Peruvian and promising poet, Giovanni Mangiante, both sharing their poetry and also their views on each other’s work.

Three Book Reviews have been included in relation to the topic of Ireland and Latin America, as well. The first one has been written by Professor Enrique Alejandro Basabe (UNLPam) on Eduardo Cormick’s *El lado irlandés de los argentinos: El aporte de los descendientes de irlandeses en el entramado cultural de la Argentina del siglo XX*. (2020). The second one has been produced by Professor Cristina Elgue (UNC) on Gabriela McEvoy’s *La experiencia invisible. Inmigrantes irlandeses en el Perú*. (2018). The third one is the result of the work of Manuela Shocron Vietri from Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina (UNS) on Rosalie Rahal Haddad’s translation into Spanish of her book *Shaw O Crítico* (2009) as *Shaw, Crítico* (2019).

Closing the works sent as part of this amazing network between Ireland and Latin America we have the honour and pleasure to share a series of photographs kindly contributed by professional photographer and artist Carmen Casey, distinguished member of the Irish-Argentine community in Argentina. *Postcards. From the Argentine pampas to the Irish shores. Eight photographs by Carmen Casey* presents a selection made by the artist of both Argentine and Irish landscapes in which nature plays a central role. The deep calm which the photographs transmit together with the strength of the natural elements are deemed two essential features humanity needs to restore in this uncertain and troubled times; this new era after the Covid-19 pandemic threatened and changed our once “normal” lives.

I want to conclude by thanking the General Editor Professor Fiorenzo Fantaccini for his trust and support and for his timely and intelligent comments all along the editing process. Thanks are due to our common friend and colleague Professor Giovanna Tallone, who first thought I could be the guest-editor for this issue and to the Journal Manager, Arianna Antonielli, and her team for all their work. Special thanks to all the authors who submitted their articles and who afterwards worked very hard until we all considered their work was finally ready to be published. This work would not have been possible without the invaluable response of all the reviewers who read each submission with interest and provided their feedback, suggestions and ideas to help writers improve their work.

I would not like to close this Introduction without a deep and grateful appreciation of the always enthusiastic and invigorating work of my dear colleague and friend, Professor María Graciela Adamoli (UNLPam, Argentina) who in 1997 introduced us to the incredible work of Professor Laura Izarra (USP, Brazil) who, in turn, provided us with research tools, ideas and always insightful advice; to Professors Munira Mutran and Rosalie Rahal Haddad (USP, Brazil) for their trust, support and generosity; to the disinterested help and knowledge of Dr. Fionnuala Carson Williams who not only introduced us to the poet from Ireland's north coast, Elaine Gaston, and scholars Frank Sewell (Ulster University, Coleraine Campus, Northern Ireland) and the late Professor Ciaran Carson (then Director of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland) during our 2008 visit, but also toured us along the northern lands and coast including Bellaghy Bawn which then housed Seamus Heaney's works but which are now in a purpose-built centre – HomePlace, Bellaghy – giving us all those details about the different places, as only someone who really knows about them could; to Edmundo Murray, who was from the very beginning interested in the potential of our work and helped us establish several relevant connections; to Andrés Romera, who kindly introduced us to Dr John Ennis (Waterford, Ireland) author of an enormous poetic work, and to Sinéad Mac Aodha (Director, Literature Ireland the national organisation for the promotion of Irish literature abroad) who arranged back in 2008 a series of interviews with writers in Dublin whose literary works still today are part of our readings and research. And, of course, I would like to say deep thanks to my National University of La Pampa, research and translation group and friends for their support along the way, in this wonderful Irish Studies journey.

To the younger generations of future scholars my gratitude for accepting the challenge of being part of this Ireland and Latin America amazing network which they will have to improve with their work and renewed perspectives and – just a piece of advice – embrace your tasks with passion, not as a duty, and work hard to make them shine.

Gracias, Thanks, Grazie

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