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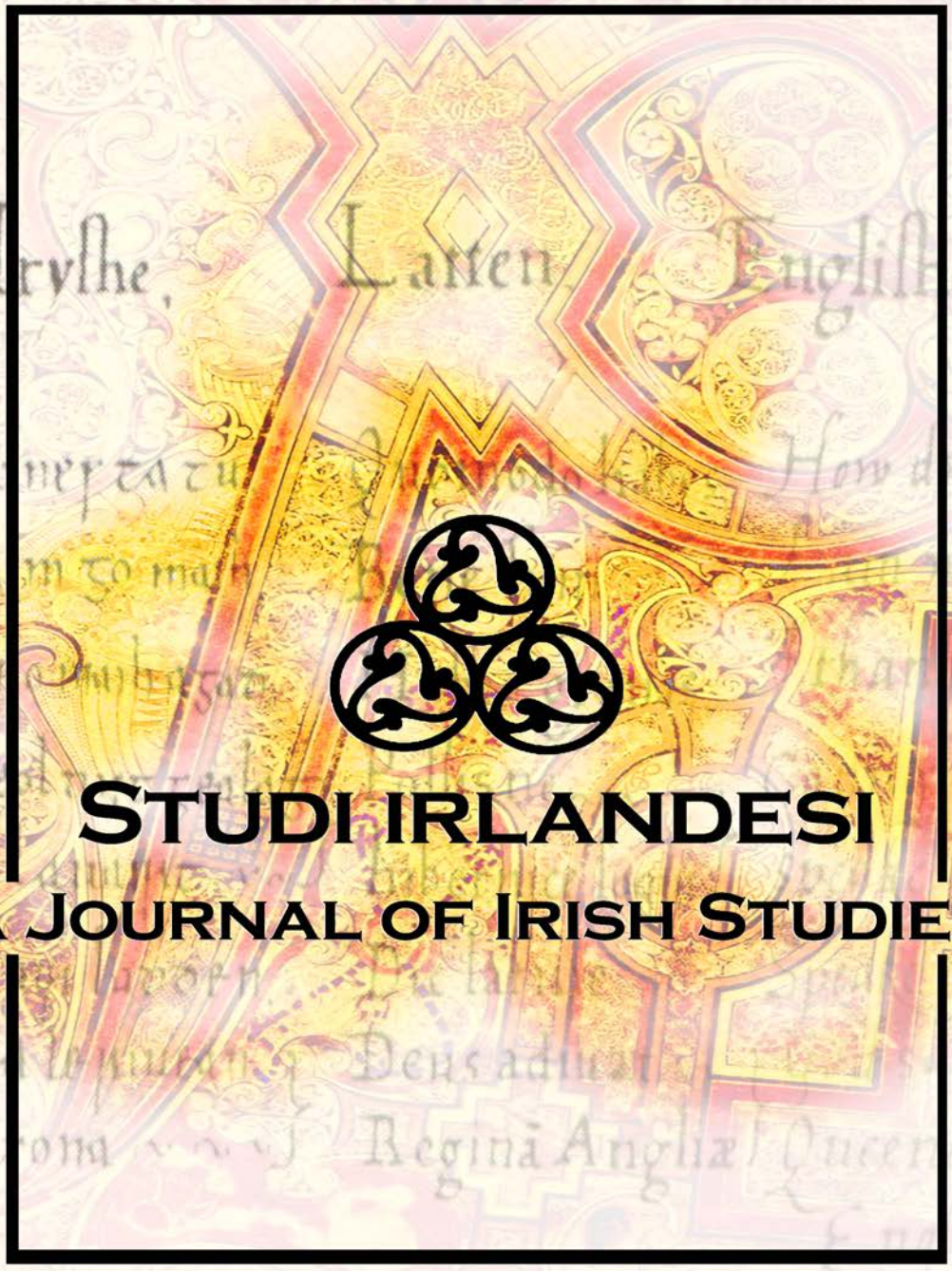

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Indice / Contents

Forms of Identity. Ireland, Language, Translation
edited by Monica Randaccio

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Miscellanea

Voices

Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies, n. 4 (2014), pp. 9
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Forms of Identity.

Ireland, Language, Translation

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Introduction

Monica Randaccio
Università degli Studi di Trieste (<mrandaccio@units.it>)

Language and translation in Ireland appear to be in good form in the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, as they are both experiencing social and cultural changes on a vast scale, they have to exercise hard to keep in shape and maintain a graceful sinuosity. In a recent survey entitled *Language Use and Attitudes in Ireland* (2009), undertaken between 2006 and 2008 by the linguist Raymond Hickey, language, even if it is not a 'battlefield' of identity as it used to be in the previous centuries, however remains a powerful 'site of identity'.

Although the number of native speakers of Irish represents only a small fraction of the whole population of Ireland, Hickey has demonstrated that the Irish language continues to play a crucial role in determining attitudes to English in Ireland. The results of Hickey's survey reach some interesting conclusion from a sociolinguistic point of view. First, the great majority of Irish people still regard the language issue as central to the history and culture of Ireland. Second, there is a widespread concern about the Irish language and about the institutions that support it. This support is shown in the desire for concrete measures, especially that Irish must be studied as a compulsory subject in school. Finally, the Irish people "are aware of their own variety of the English language" as different from other varieties of English, revealing "their own linguistic identity which is unique to this country" (8).

Language and especially translation in their broader social, cultural and philosophical implications were the topics of an interview given by Michael Cronin to Clíona Ní Ríordáin in 2010. Michael Cronin, in *Translating Ireland. Translation, Languages, Culture* (1996), was among the first scholars, together with Maria Tymoczko in *The Irish 'Ulysses'* (1994) and *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (1999) and Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland* (1996), to focus attention on translation and postcolonialism in the specific Irish context. In discussing how the role of translation was crucial in the linguistic and political battle between the Irish and the English, Cronin maintained that Irish translators, at different times in Irish history, have served the interest of both coloniser and colonised. Thus, he revealed the importance of an 'internal colonialism' within Europe itself and demonstrated how the postcolonial power relations within translation do not only operate on the North-South or East-West divide of the world, as Jeremy Munday explains in *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications* (2012 [2001], 138).

However, Cronin makes clear that in the twenty-first century things have profoundly changed since the publication of *Translating Ireland*. After the strong wave of immigration during the Celtic Tiger era, linguistic diversity came to the

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fore when Ireland started to be in contact with the new migrant communities. This new situation is characterised by what Cronin calls "intrinsic alterity", the perception that language difference is at home in Ireland: "in the corner shop, the house next door, the person sitting beside you in the lecture theatre". Intrinsic alterity is opposed to the old "extrinsic alteriy" (Cronin, Ní Ríordáin 2010, 26), the peoples and languages the Irish migrant found in his new destinations.

This emphasis on multilingual reality has two pragmatic consequences but also implies an important philosophical viewpoint. First, the emergence of the need to deal with linguistic difference in terms of translating and interpreting services in the health service, in the education and in the legal systems. Second, the many languages spoken in Ireland today relativise of the position of English and Irish. Thus, English or Irish becomes only one language among many others. Most importantly, multilingualism and migration has also favoured the creation of transnational language communities in the country and the peculiarity of these communities is that they "bi-locate" (27), i.e., that they occupy both the physical space that they inhabit, and the virtual space on the Internet, where they are emailing, texting, skyping and so on.

Cronin sees such consequences as the result of globalisation, which can have two types of response, one centripetally and the other centrifugally. The centripetal response is to be found in a typical Google interface, where you can have a literal translation of a text written in some 'standard Anglophone syntax' in any language. This basic tendency is always centripetal, aiming to standardisation and homogenisation. The centrifugal, which is driven by a search for identity in global settings, contemplates instead the use of technology to "contrast surface diversity of language substitution with content-driven diversity involving language difference" (28). According to the author, this may be facilitated, for example, by the use of Skype, which enables a transnational linguistic community to be constituted and it is of much more help than translating iPhone instructions into whatever languages are spoken by iPhone customers. It is interesting that the same two forces, one toward simplification, the other toward the complexity of diversity, may be detected even in academic translation programmes. Cronin highlights that undergraduate and graduate translation programmes have been established in Ireland since 1982. The first Master's programme at the National Institute for Higher Education Dublin, which was to become DCU, was created in response to the translation needs of European Union membership and economic integration. The Master's programme at NUI Galway and in Queen's University Belfast, concentrated instead on English-Irish translation and responded to the translation needs resulting from the implementation of the Official Languages Act (2007).

Cronin warns us that translators must always remember that sometimes translation can endanger the specificity and otherness of languages. In fact, he claims that "translation like any other human phenomenon is multiple and contains genuinely creative and progressive forces but it also contains within it forces that are limiting and disabling" (31). For him, a tendency to explicitation and simplification, a use of a controlled language and a limited lexicon can lead to "the potential for universal banality" (31) and to an easy notion of translatability, according to the principle that "underneath every successful MacDo is the fact of translatability and translatedness" (32).

In order to resist banality and easy translatability, Cronin returns to the old archetype for translation as voyage. As he maintains in *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000), the voyage involves the 'movement outwards', which broadens the space of the hero's experience through communication with the Other, and the 'movement inwards', which allows the hero to bring the foreign into his own native language and culture. However, when the hero, like Ulysses or Brian Friel's Owen in *Translations* gets back into the community, "he is aware that he has been unsettled by his wandering and that on his return he is an unsettling presence" (32). Nonetheless, when the hero comes back 'home', he brings something back through translation, which allows him to evolve and acquire wisdom, to enrich the life of the community after the trials and tribulations of his journey out. He can thus resist both the prejudices and the common places of where he came from, as well as those of the hosting place.

The nine contributions published in this volume represent a 'form of resistance' against the banality that might arise from any discussion on language and translation in Ireland. Each of them gives us original and challenging insights on various topics, ranging from the historical development of the varieties of English in Ireland, to corpus-based analyses of both divisive terminology in Northern Ireland and the representation of women in the Irish press; from the language of poetry in globalised Ireland and Irish poetry translation into Italian, to the adaptation/re-writing of classics in contemporary Irish drama.

Mariavita Cambria explores the case of Ireland as an *ante-litteram* postcolonial context. Within this context, her main concern is that of the relationship between language and identity. She deals in details with how identity is problematically renegotiated through language in the light of Spivak's and Stuart Hall's ideas of subalternity and of the speaker's position. Moreover, she shows how Irish English, the variety of English spoken in Ireland, enjoys a unique position within the constellation of world-wide English varieties. Irish English may have developed a resistance to the (contrasting) forces of colonialism and has been perceived as a different vehicle for communication when compared to received colonial English. Scholars now generally believe that Irish people, at a certain moment in time, decided to use a language which offered better possibilities for work. Via the analysis of some postcolonial issues, such as the linguistic crisis of the colonial subject, Cambria first illustrates the circumstances that led to the emergence of Irish English, and then outlines the main features of this variety.

In her essay Maureen Murray shows how in Northern Ireland terminology has become a veritable minefield due to its longstanding ethno-political conflict. Murray's corpus-based linguistic analysis conducted on various English-language publications from Nationalist/Republican, Unionist/Loyalist and explicitly non-sectarian political perspectives, aims at studying contentious terminology in Northern Ireland, focusing specifically on certain place names which, according to Mona Baker in *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (2005), can effectively be described as 'rival systems of naming'. The terms in Murray's study is limited to 'Londonderry', 'Northern Ireland', and 'the Republic of Ireland' and their variations. These variations include 'Derry', and 'Derry/Londonderry'; and 'Ulster', 'the Six Counties', 'the North (of Ireland)'; and 'Eire', 'the South (of Ireland)', 'Irish Republic', 'Free State', and 'the 26 Counties', respectively. Murray

views such terminological differences as linguistic aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict and supports the idea that language in Northern Ireland has become a war zone unto itself. Moreover, she wants to show how the use of geographical terminology pertaining to the Northern Ireland conflict has changed over time and across the ethno-political divide. Murray's final goal is in fact to determine if the relative peace throughout the last fifteen years has resulted in lesser use of politically charged place names among the main actors in the Northern Ireland conflict, namely the Republicans and Unionists within Northern Ireland itself. Her work is therefore interesting not only from an exclusively linguistic standpoint, but also for those involved in Peace and Conflict Studies, Sociolinguistics, and Critical Toponymies.

In "The Portrayal of Women's Contribution to Irish Society Through a Sample from the Irish Press", María Martínez Lirola conducts a very accomplished and original corpus-based analysis in an attempt to show how Corpus Linguistics (CL) can be a powerful complementary tool to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Her intention is to cover the representation of womanhood in the Irish press from 2006 to 2012 and her corpus comprises all the texts dealing with women, from January 1 to 31 December of four years within this time range, taken from one of the main Irish broadsheet newspapers: *The Irish Independent*. The research database she has employed to compile the corpus is LexisNexis Academic, and, for the purposes of this research, she has applied Teun van Leeuwen's social actor network model, proposed in *Discourse and Practice. New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (2008). Her conclusion is that equality between women and men both during the Celtic Tiger and in the post-Celtic Tiger period is far from being achieved in terms of power, visibility, salary, assumption of command, and so on. Therefore, according to Martínez Lirola, feminism must keep questioning the patriarchal system, which is responsible for women's condition in Ireland, and must denounce the unfair reality that surrounds women in the Emerald Isle.

Benjamin Keatinge's essay considers how contemporary Irish poets have responded to the changing socio-economic realities of Irish life since 1990. He states that several Irish poets have written persuasively about the dangers of consumerism and, in order to do so, they use the language of marketplace and the vocabulary of contemporaneity, which they usually satirise. According to Keatinge, political and social satire has enjoyed something of a revival in Irish poetry recently and one of the characteristics of good satire is to use the vocabulary of received ideas in order to mock those same ideas. At the same time, globalisation and the modern economy have led to profound transformations in lifestyles and these poets have had to find a language to describe new modes of existence, reflecting the globalised social reality in the twenty-first century. Through an examination of themes such as work, consumerism, the encroachment of cyber-space and changing urban lifestyles, Keatinge demonstrates how Irish poets have risen to the challenge of finding a language to capture what Zygmunt Bauman terms "liquid modernity". Therefore, the late Dennis O'Driscoll, Rita Ann Higgins, Peter Sirr, as well as Billy Ramsell, Kevin Higgins and Iggy McGovern, provide excellent examples of how poets can turn the language of globalisation into a critique of globalisation's economic hegemony.

In her analysis of a volume of Pearse Hutchinson's poetry translated into Italian and published by Trauben in 1999, *L'anima che baciò il corpo*, Debora Biancheri proposes what Lawrence Venuti in *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998) would call a "minoritising project" (11). While, on the one hand, the textual analysis of single poems reveals distinctive traits and peculiarities of each translation, on the other, it highlights translation norms which are typically used in relation to poetry as a genre. Biancheri observes that the translation strategy used in these poems is one that articulates a manifest 'mediation' of the source text. She aptly concludes that in the case of Irish poetry translation, in neat contrast to what happens within the domain of fiction, difference must be paradoxically accepted as a necessary step to create a condition of equality between two cultures, thus allowing difference and sameness to exist simultaneously.

Ciaran McDonough's contribution investigates the conflicted cultural identity of those Irish-speaking antiquarians working on translations of Old Irish texts. Giving voice to the translators, Donough shows how these translators were frustrated in attempts to turn their knowledge into authority by being members of the Catholic Gaelic Irish in a country dominated by the Protestant Ascendancy. In particular, she focuses on the works of John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, the greatest and most prolific scholars of Irish in the nineteenth century. They worked for the topographical department of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland founded in the early 1830s, and were responsible for an exceptionally large number of transcriptions and translations of Old Irish manuscripts. McDonough reveals how the translators felt when they were accused of carrying out the Anglicisation of Ireland's literary heritage. In fact, their translations into English for the Anglophone world were considered as a participation in the erasure of their own language, traditions and their ancient world.

In "Brian Friel as Linguist, Brian Friel as Drama Translator" Monica Randaccio demonstrates how linguistic and translation issues have always been Friel's main concerns. The language question in Ireland is investigated in its multi-faceted implications. In particular, she analyses Tom Paulin's A *New Look at the Language Question* (1985), one of the earliest pamphlets produced within the Field Day activities, as it deals with some language topics which Friel dramatises in *Translations* (1980). Randaccio then shows how Friel becomes a drama translator in his earliest Russian play, *Three Sisters* (1981). According to the drama translation theorist Sirkku Aaltonen in *Time-Sharing on Stage. Drama Translation in Theatre and Society* (2000), any theatre production is tied to the time and place of its audience, metaphorically described as "the time and place of the occupancy" (47). Thus, translation of a foreign dramatic text, as well as its production, represents a reaction to the Other when it is chosen for a performance in another culture. Randaccio analyses Friel's *Three Sisters* and the strategies adopted in his translation as the 'Irish reaction' to Chekhov's Russia.

Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), two adaptations of Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* are discussed in Emanuela Zirzotti's essay "Translating Tragedy: Seamus Heaney's Sophoclean Plays". These two plays are representative of contemporary Irish authors' interest in appropriating the Greek and Roman classical tradition both as a source of inspiration and as a means of redefining the nature of Irishness through a constant confrontation with 'Otherness'.

Zirzotti demonstrates that translation and adaptation are the favoured approaches to the ancient texts, which often become metaphors for the Northern Irish political situation. Thus, in the *Cure at Troy* Philoctes seems to share with Heaney himself that feeling of "in-betweenness", of occupying a halfway position between the allegiance to his community and the loyalty to his role as a poet. In *The Burial at Thebes* Heaney's necessity to give public expression to his involvement in certain dynamics of contemporary politics seems to be superseded by the urge to adhere to a greater textual strictness. Both plays, however, help to legitimise the poet's private voice, i.e., to defend the originality of his art and to affirm his identity as a poet. Heaney's approach to Greek tragedy therefore represents an essential element to understand his "composite" Irishness, an identity that transcends geographical boundaries and political ideology.

Loredana Salis in "'The root of all evil': Frank McGuinness' Translations of Greek Drama" shows how Frank Guinness is also one of those Irish authors who have been attracted by the myths of ancient Greece either for political propagandistic reasons, or to bring back to life tales of heroes and heroines in order to make them distinctively local and contemporary. Field Day's contributions undoubtedly represent a typical instance of the former approach to classics, whereas McGuinness's use of Greek myths help the playwright to reflect upon questions that are not exclusively Irish. Salis convincingly locates McGuinness's translations of Sophocles and Euripides at the crossroads between the local and the global and at the search for what he calls "the root of all evil" with special attention to his *Oedipus* (2008) and *Helen* (2009). In McGuinness's plays, however, there is no condemnation of Oedipus because what happened to him may well happen to anyone and in *Helen* there is the unsettling discovery that gods are fooling with us. The playwright invites us to reflect on responsibility and trust and, though he has Northern Ireland in mind, his language, which articulates intolerance and a deeply-felt sense of racial superiority, does not pertain exclusively to the Greek or Northern Ireland contexts, but expresses discursive practices, which are seen in war contexts around the world.

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"Is it English what we speak?" Irish English and Postcolonial Identity

Mariavita Cambria
Università di Messina (<mcambria@unime.it>)

Abstract:

This paper explores the case of Ireland as an *ante-litteram* postcolonial context. Within this context, a main concern is that of the relationship between language and identity. Irish English (the variety of English spoken in Ireland) enjoys a unique position within the constellation of world-wide English varieties. Various factors led to the emergence of Irish English, it may well have developed as a resistance to the (contrasting) forces of colonialism and has been perceived as a different vehicle for communication when compared to received colonial English. Scholars now generally believe that Irish people, at a certain moment in time, decided to use a language which offered better possibilities for work. Via the analysis of some postcolonial issues, such as the linguistic crisis of the colonial subject, the paper will first illustrate the circumstances that led to the emergence of Irish English and then list the main features of this variety.

Keywords: contact variety, identity, Irish English, postcolonial studies, world Englishes

1. *Introduction*

Language-related issues played a crucial role in the construction and development of the British Empire, colonized peoples were often obliged to use English and many 'forced' unions were created in contexts of this type. These unions were different from the original languages and in many cases gave birth to the multifaceted realities of world Englishes (Kachru 1992; Kachru *et al.* 2009; Jenkins 2009; Melchers and Shaw 2011). But forced passages from one language to another often cause cultural suffering as people try to deal with problems of identity, often a "fractured" identity (Kiberd 1996) which has deep repercussions in daily lives. In the relationship between colonized and colonizer, language (and its use) embodies a series of contradictions to the point that it becomes: "[...] a fundamental site of struggle for postcolonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language"(Ashcroft *et al.* 2006 [1995], 282). A native language is controlled and mastered by im-

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perialistic powers in several ways: by the creation of a new national language or by imposing the language of the Empire (English, in the case of Ireland) in the colony or even by banning the native language. In each case, this type of supremacy is an extremely powerful and pervasive means for cultural control.

The contemporary and fragmented landscape of what are usually referred to as 'world Englishes' was thus strictly interwoven with English colonial policies. Historically, it embodies the results of what are usually referred to as the two migratory phases or diasporas of the English language. The first initially involved the migration of mother-tongue English speakers from England, Scotland and Ireland predominantly to North America, Australia and New Zealand resulting in new mother-tongue varieties of English. The second, involving the colonization of Asia and Africa mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, led to the development of a number of second language varieties, often referred to as 'New Englishes'. It is important to remember that whereas the first diaspora mainly caused the displacement of the aboriginal population, the second provoked the subjection of the population living in the colonies. The two different kinds of colonization brought about different linguistic effects.

Within the constellation of British colonies, Ireland represents a case in point. Ireland was the first British colony and in the historical spread of English during the colonial period, Irish English played a central role alongside forms of Scottish English and British English (Hickey 2004; McCafferty 2011). It is probably the place where the colonial legacy is the strongest as English has been present in the island for over 800 years, but its position and positioning within the Empire is often controversial. Ireland is not included in the phases of the diasporas, as a matter of fact it is considered one of the places from which English people moved to conquer the world. In addition, it is not clear if its mechanisms of colonization were of subjection or displacement, still English is the native language in the Emerald Isle and it is a fact that Irish people tried to get rid of the English conquerors for many centuries. Moreover, even though the process of colonization on the part of England did not bring about a complete displacement of the original population, the Flight of the Earls in 1607 for instance, represented *de facto* the end of the Gaelic world in Ireland.

When analyzing such diasporas at a global level, Ireland is often regarded as the place from which people left to colonize other parts of the world and not as the first place subjected to colonialism and its practices. This attitude also accounts for the conventional exclusion of Ireland in a postcolonial framework. Explanations for this exclusion were often justified by considerations such as the following: "Colonized nations themselves, they [Irish people] were also often ambiguously and intricately implicated in the colonial enterprise, many of their inhabitants going on to take part in the establishment and maintenance of the British Empire" (Bery, Murray 2000, 4). This attitude has motivated a

sort of reluctance in accepting Ireland within the framework of the postcolonial paradigm. As a matter of fact, Ireland found itself in a controversial, still for some reasons 'privileged', position because over the centuries it was both the colonized land and the land from which some English left either to migrate or to expand the Empire. Thanks to this position within the British Empire, the Irish context can be considered a thought-provoking observation point for issues concerning English colonial and language policies.

For the reasons mentioned above, it is therefore necessary to take into account issues concerning colonialism and postcolonialism and those assumptions that the postcolonial studies frame of mind brought into being when investigating the birth and development of Irish English and, more generally, the Irish context. Ireland appears to be a sort of battlefield where British colonial practices were experimented before exporting them overseas. Language, in particular, is the battlefield where the fight for identity is most fought, the development of world Englishes and, in the case of Ireland of Irish English, is only one of the outcomes of this fight.

The starting point of this paper is that Irish English, the variety of English spoken in Ireland (in the past and today) is the result of many linguistic mechanisms and embodies a precursory example of the colonial practices adopted by the British Empire in the colonies. As such, an analysis of the language cannot be separated from an analysis of the mechanism of representation that created Irish people as different from English in a postcolonial context.

This article will first discuss English language policy in Ireland by illustrating some examples of the representation of Irishness by the English in order to make it clear how postcolonial issues fit in the Irish context. It will then very briefly explain some of the reasons behind the so called 'language shift', the mechanism through which Irish people shifted to English and, finally, it will illustrate some features of Irish English which exemplify the reasons why it may be considered as an *ante litteram* variety of Englishes whose identity is the result of a typical contact situation. In line with Hickey (2004, 83), the term used in this article for the English spoken in Ireland is "Irish English", since it parallels established labels such as Welsh English or Scottish English. The label "Hiberno-English" is considered as an unnecessary Latinate coinage, whereas "Anglo-Irish" is considered inappropriate as it has a political and literary connotation which is rejected here and, on a strictly morphological level, it refers to a specific variety of Irish (Gaelic), not English.

2. *Ireland and the Construction of a Postcolonial Identity*

Even though there could be some reasons for excluding Ireland from the postcolonial framework (many Irish people fought in the British army during the conquest of India), such an approach does not take into account the crucial need to examine the hierarchical relationships within the British

Empire, together with the coercive recruitment which took place. The inclusion of Ireland in the postcolonial canon puts into question some of the basic assumptions regarding postcolonial theory, e.g. skin colour. Although sharing the same skin colour with the English, for example, the Irish were, in fact, represented using exactly the same stereotypes employed to describe the "red savages" of America (see Cambria 2012). The representation of the colonized 'others' was often carried out in terms of a lack of whiteness, but skin colour was obviously not the only issue at stake in the representation/control of the other (Bonnett 2004; Ramone 2011). The representation of identity is thus a key issue in this type of environment and one which is often questioned when discussing language issues.

Identity is never straightforward, clear or unproblematic, it is often renegotiated or the result of negotiation. This is particularly the case in postcolonial contexts where the identity of the colonized was often constructed as being the opposite to that of the colonizer. In those contexts, the colonized (or the subaltern) have not right to access the word, they "cannot speak" and so are often described and represented (Spivak 1994). The description of the 'other' is never neutral, but always involves a place of enunciation locked within a specific context: to express one's opinion is by its very nature to speak from a precise position placed in context. As Stuart Hall argues: "though we speak, so to say 'in our name' of ourselves and from our experience, nevertheless who speaks and the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place" (1990, 222).

Colonialism was neither a natural nor a neutral process, but one which involved displacement, coercion and violence, strongly effecting the lives of the colonized. Two related effects of colonialism were the downplay of colonized peoples and their loss of identity, in many cases related to language loss. One major legacy of the two diasporas of English was the assumption of the inferiority of the indigenous language, culture and in some cases character of the colonised, together with the assumption of the superiority of the colonisers and their language. This was partly shown in the representation of the colonized as 'barbaric', 'primitive' or 'wild'. Analyses of various colonial contexts has shown that a colonial discourse was built up to include structures of knowledge, modes of representation and strategies of power, laws and discipline used in the construction/representation of the colonial subject. Like Foucault (1980 [1969]), Said (1993) insists on the central role of ideology, which underpins the formation of all discourses. Colonialism is driven by strategic enforcement and the construction of an ideology that leads the Empire into a position of supremacy over the other that has to be conquered. A series of strategies aimed at educating the colonized and enforcing social control is a necessary step for colonisation to be effective. Within this framework, a major role is played by issues related to the representation of the colonized which are often described from a centralizing awareness which, in the case of England during the colonization of Ireland, was modelled on commonly accepted generalizations created through beliefs and stereotypes which considered Irish people as wild and

barbaric. England had also understood that in order to control the people, it was necessary to control the mind and the language. The following quotation taken from Article III of the *Statutes of Kilkenny* issued in 1366, is a clear example of just how aware the English were of the power of language as a form of opposition and resistance. For this reason, they tried to prevent English people from using the language and the culture of the colonized:

> III. Also, it is ordained and established, that every Englishman do use the English language, and be named by an English name, leaving off entirely the manner of naming used by the Irish; and that every Englishman use the English custom, fashion, mode of riding and apparel, according to his estate; and if any English, or Irish living amongst the English, use the Irish language amongst themselves, contrary to the ordinance, and therof be attainted, his lands and tenements, if he have any, shall be seized into the hands of his immediate lord, until he shall come to one of the places of our lord the king, and find sufficient surety to adopt and use the English language, and then he shall have restitution of his said lands or tenements, his body shall be taken by any of the officers of our lord the king, and commited to the next gaol, there to remain until he, or some other in his name, shall find sufficient surety in the manner aforesaid: And that no Englishman who shall have the value of one hundred pounds of land or of rent by the year, shall ride otherwise than on a saddle in the English fashion; and he that shall do to the contrary, and shall be thereof attainted, his horse shall be forfeited to our lord the king, and his body shall be committed to prison, until he pay a fine according to the king's pleasure for the contempt aforesaid; and also, that beneficed persons of holy Church, living amongst the English, shall have the issues of their benefices until they use the English language in the manner aforesaid; and they shall have respite in order to learn the English language, and to provide saddles, between this and the feast of Saint Michael next coming. (Source <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T300001-001>, 03/2014)

The Statutes were issued to clearly control and prevent the English from falling into temptation with the Irish and so to avoid any sort of contamination of the English culture. With the Statutes things such as using the Irish language, or marrying an Irish woman were made illegal for the English in Ireland. Despite their prescriptive tone, the Statutes were ineffectual to the point that two centuries later Edmund Spenser, in his *View of the Present State of Ireland* written in 1596, ironically described and condemned the fact that the English had become "more Irish than the Irish themselves". A brief quotation from the dialogue between Irenius and Euxodus helps to strengthen this point:

> Eudoxus
> What is that you say, of so many as remayne English of them? Why are, not they that were once English, abydinge Englishe still?
> Irenius
> *No, for the most parte of them are degenerated and growen almost meare Irishe, yea, and more malicious to the Englishe then the very Irishe them selves.*

EUDOXUS
What heare I? And is it possyble that an Englishman, brought up naturally in such sweet civilitie as England affordes, could fynd such lyking in that barberous rudenes, that he should forgett his owne nature, and foregoe his owne nacon? how may this be? or what I pray you may be the cause thereof?
IRENIUS
Surely, nothinge but that first evill ordinance and Institucon of that Common Wealthe. But thereof now is their no fitt place to speake, least, by the occation thereof offering matter of longe Discourse, we might be drawen from this that we have in hand, namely, the handleinge of abuses in the Customes of Ireland. (Spenser 2003 [1894], 4; emphasis added)

In Spenser's time, England was busy creating the ideological basis for the Empire and Ireland did not have the chance to escape the plan. Ireland represented a sort of *alter ego* for England and needed to be in control. This was the same period when the idea of a national language was flourishing in England, a national language that was to help the construction of the nation, an imagined community (Anderson 2006 [1983]) of people called England which would be ready to conquer the world. Even in their deep diversity, the two quotations share the same (unconscious?) idea that using the language of the barbaric contaminates the purity of the English people, thus it had to be avoided. Spenser's text, in particular, is a sarcastic comment on those Anglo-Normans who went to Ireland as colonizers and were colonized, becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves". The attempt to contain the process of becoming barbaric combines with a language policy that wants to stop any sort of contamination. The stereotypes that emerge in the two quotations substantiate an *adagio* which will be repeated over and over the 800 years of English colonization of Ireland.

Linguistically and politically, the description of the postcolonial subject is very often the result of a self-reflection where all the characteristics which cannot be typical of a certain context apply directly to the other. The colonized appear as passive subjects and fail to react against the presence of the colonizer. Identity is thus defined by a series of interrelationships, following an interplay of power relations. Bhabha (1990, 1994) argues that territorial and economic domination produce a divided subjectivity in which identity is the result of a process of mixing with the other, negotiating one's identity, following a pre-established notion pre-determined by the colonizer. The colonized becomes a subaltern, excluded from the logocentric power and thus silenced.

England soon understood that in order to stop the 'contagious virus' of Irishness which had struck the Anglo-Normans, they had to send new people to Ireland, people who could take hold of the situation. The seventeenth century was characterized by several separatist movements in Ireland that caused, on one hand, the final defeat of the Gaelic clans causing the Flight of the Earls, and, on the other, a severe repressive policy on the part of the English who could

not bear the fact that the situation in Ireland was so out of control. A change in the political scenario in Ireland led, almost automatically, to a change in the attitude towards the English language.

3. *A Battlefield of Identities: the Language Shift*

Irish people have always had an ambivalent attitude towards English. The fortune of English in Ireland has gone through several stages: from a mainly Irish speaking country in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the population in Ireland shifted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to English (or better Irish English) for a plethora of reasons. When the English arrived in Ireland and during the first centuries of their colonization, they had to deal with problems which were not only political but also linguistic. As seen, the political colonization of the territory did not parallel with a cultural one and, in 1394 when Richard II received the visit of the Irish kings in Dublin, the second Earl of Ormond had to translate the King's speech into Irish. The Gaelization of the Anglo-Normans partly explains the decline of English in Ireland in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. At the time, English was represented by different varieties due to the diverse regional origins of the early English settlers. It is more than likely that an intermediate variety arose in the fourteenth century, a sort of compromise between the different linguistic varieties of the speakers. This is attested by the major literary document of medieval Irish English, the *Kildare Poems*. The Reformation accelerated the decline of English as it created a sort of alliance between old-English colonizers and the native Irish against the new English Protestants.

This linguistic situation was so widespread that in 1541 during a parliamentary session: "the Earl of Ormond was the only one who had sufficient knowledge of English to understand the Bill proclaiming Henry the VII King of Ireland" (Bliss 1979, 14) and he had to translate it to the nobility attending the ceremony. The seventeenth century marks the emergence in Ireland of a new system of patronage. The English victory at the battle of Kinsale in 1601 had caused the Flight of the Earls and created a political vacuum filled by the English and in particular, by Cromwell's policy. These factors led to the decline of the Gaelic culture. After the military subjugation of the Irish one of the preferred solutions to remunerate the army was the donation of land to the faithful and the banishment of those landowners who had not shown continued allegiance to the Crown. The Plantation created fertile soil for the spread of English. Cultural and political elements both played a crucial role in the language transformation. Cronin (2011) argues that at least four things led to this change of attitude during the period of Cromwell: the enormous land transfers of the seventeenth century which led to the emergence of a new aristocracy, the Ascendancy, who were, as said, almost exclusively English-speaking; the establishment in 1592 of Trinity College, Ireland's first University; the fact that many settlers in the Plantation

spoke English and there was no incentive to change their linguistic habits; and finally, the language of the established Church was English.

As said, the establishment of the first University in Dublin was an important indication of the need to reinforce and empower English in Ireland. Although it provided some teaching in Irish, Trinity College was predominantly English-speaking. A look at the TCD home page (specifically the link to "history": <http://www.tcd.ie/about/history/>, 03/2014) helps to throw some light on the colonial ideology which brought about the creation of Trinity College.

> Trinity College Dublin was created by royal charter in 1592, at which point Dublin Corporation provided a suitable site, the former Priory of All Hallows. Its foundation came at a time when many universities were being established across western Europe in the belief that they would give prestige to the state in which they were located and that their graduates, clergy for the most part, would perform a vital service as civil administrators. By the 1590s England had two long established universities, each with an expanding group of colleges, and Scotland four. *The idea of a university college for Ireland emerged at a time when the English state was strengthening its control over the kingdom and when Dublin was beginning to function as a capital city.* The group of citizens, lay and clerical, who were main promoters of the scheme believed that the establishment of a university *was an essential step in bringing Ireland into the mainstream of European learning and in strengthening the Protestant Reformation within the country.* The organisational design of the new institution was influenced by Oxford, Cambridge and continental precursors […] Many of its early graduates, well grounded in philosophy and theology, proceeded to clerical ordination in the state church, the Anglican Church of Ireland. (Emphasis added)

Trinity was thus funded to reinforce control over Ireland and to spread the Reformation. It is not a coincidence that in this period the Irish language became identified with Catholicism. Politically, after the restoration of the English Crown under Charles II, the distribution of land was carried out according to religious belief and Catholics were not given back their lands. Expropriation and other social elements fuelled the use of English to the point that during the eighteenth century about two-thirds of the population used Irish, while towards the end of the century the numbers decreased to only half the population (Ó Cuív 1951). The linguistic picture was not so clear-cut as there were also some sociolinguistic divisions. It was more than likely, for example, that nobles, country-aristocrats and country gentlemen were anglicized (Hindley 1990; Hickey 2010). It is also very likely that in the eighteenth century English was mainly used in Ireland by the Irish at first only as a second language. The acquisition of English and the development of Irish English was characterized by the fact that it was learnt in a context of adult unguided second language acquisition and this has deeply affected its development. Various factors led to a general language shift in favour of English in the first half of the nineteenth century, among these were the severe

punishments imposed on those who used Irish and the Potato Famine which caused waves of emigration towards the United States. Hickey argues:

> The most remarkable fact in the linguistic history of Ireland since the seventeenth century marks the abandonment of the Irish language by successive generations, to such an extent that the remaining Irish-speaking areas today are only a fraction of the size of the country and containing not much more that 1 per cent of the population. Bilingualism did not establish itself in Ireland, though it characterized the transition from Irish to English. No matter how long this bilingualism lasted, the goal of the shift was obvious and those who shifted to English ultimately abandoned Irish, even though this took many generations. The remaining bilinguals today are mostly native speakers of Irish in the Irish-speaking districts, all of whom speak English. There was never any functional distribution of Irish and English, either in the towns or in the countryside, so that stable diglossia could not have developed. (2007, 121)

The English that the Irish people shifted to, however, was not a standard one but already Irish English, a variety born out of the contact between several input varieties spoken by people who lived in Ireland, and Irish. It was a language that already had the features of the contact between the two identities, those of the colonizers and those of the colonized. Scholars agree that the linguistic context where the shift took place, the prestige and the possibility that English seemed to offer in a period when Ireland was devastated by the Famine may have played a decisive role in accelerating the passage from one language to the other. Also, the shift may have involved considerable bilingualism over the centuries, the native language of the majority of the population was Irish and their recourse to it seems to have been a good option. English (Irish English) was used in contact with administrators, bailiffs and other authorities who spoke only English but a stable diglossia, the co-presence of the two languages used in different fields, was not an option. The difference in the use of English depended on geographical distribution and on sociolinguistic factors. At a certain moment in time, Irish people decided to use a language which offered better possibilities for work. The prestige of the second language may well have been also responsible for the shift. Hoffmann (1992) quotes the decline of the Celtic languages as an instance of this attitude.

As a result, from the beginning of the nineteenth century Irish was no longer used in parliament, law courts or in the administration of local municipalities (McDermott 2011). Irish people had shifted to Irish English and now used the language of the imperial power a language though which owned the traces of a negotiated identity and bore the taste of 'contaminated' identities.

4. *Identities in Contact: Irish English*

As said, the English that Irish people shifted to was not Standard British English, but a language which was the result of the contact between Irish

people and successive colonizations of Ireland by speakers of English and Scots dialects that had begun in the Middle Ages and reached its peak during the Plantation. The context where the language was learned, and the several dialects which contributed to its creation definitely account for the linguistic features of what can be considered a Standard Irish English (Kirk 2011). The intense waves of colonization favoured the birth and the possibility of a contact variety which following Corrigan was characterized by: "(i) innovative forms; (ii) the incorporation of features drawn from Irish, the indigenous language prior to colonization, and (iii) other characteristics caused by the mixing of Irish with the regional Scots and English vernaculars of the new settlers" (2011, 39). Modern varieties of Irish English still retain these mixed features.

In studies on Irish English the initial "substratist" position (Henry 1977; Joyce 1979 [1910]) where a strong Irish substratum and considerable weight was accorded to the transfer from Irish, gave way to the "retentionist" standpoint (Harris 1984, 1985; Lass 1990) where considerable weight was accorded to regional English input to Ireland. In the 1990s, scholars found some answers in the gradual acceptance of contact as a source of some specific features of Irish English. Markku Filppula (1990, 1993, 1999) and Raymond Hickey (1995) took into account the seminal work on contact by Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and convergence became a possible scenario, a scenario where retention and contact occupy places of equal standing. This position was supported by several studies (Clyne 2003; Holm 2004; Winford 2005). There are many possible situations of contact which generate different linguistic outputs. The intensity and duration of contact between speakers of different languages naturally determine the effects that they have on each other. Irish and English are typologically very different, Hickey, for example, defines the contact scenario which applies to the genesis of Irish English one in which "speech habits of outset [were] transferred to target, grammatical interference found in non-prescriptive environments" (2007, 129). Hickey argues that this is a type of contact which involves the speakers of one language shifting to another over time and where the duration of bilingualism constitutes an important factor. Such a situation would perfectly fit Irish English.

Creolisation was also considered but subsequently dismissed because there was no break in linguistic continuity in Ireland where the scenario historically, had been unguided adult second language acquisition (Corrigan 1993; Hickey 1997). Several problems arise when considering creolisation as there is no conclusive evidence that Irish English may have been a creole at some early stage. Moreover, language shift is not a scenario which involves creolisation (Winford 2003, 304-358) and there are no records in Irish English of the use of any forms of pidgin, for instance the use of restricted codes when dealing with English officials in Ireland. Hickey concludes that if "these registers did exist, they died out with the completion of the language shift and the rise of later generations of native speakers of English in former Irish-speaking areas" (2007, 285).

What all these studies show is that there are several sources for the features of contemporary Irish English: transfer from Irish, dialect and archaic forms of English, features from context in which English was learned and some features which have no identifiable source and can thus be generated as independent developments (Vaughan, Clancy 2011). There is no space in here to discuss in details the features of Irish English and their possible sources, Table 1 and 2 derive from Hickey (2011, 7-8) and summarize some shared features in Irish English with possible sources.

Phonology
1) Lenition of alveolar stops to fricatives in positions of high sonority, e.g., city [sitiˌ]
2) Use of clear [l] in all positions in a word (now recessive), e.g., field [fi:ld]
3) Retention of syllable-final /r/, e.g., board [bo:rd]
4) Distinction of short vowels before /r/ (now recessive), e.g., tern [tern] versus turn [tʌrn]
5) Retention of the distinction between /ʍ/ and /w/ (now recessive), e.g., which [ʍitʃ] and witch [witʃ]
Morphology
1) Distinction between second singular and plural personal pronouns, e.g., you [ju] versus youse [juz] / ye [ji] / yeez [jiz].
2) Epistemic negative must, e.g., He mustn't be Scottish.
3) Them as demonstrative, e.g., Them shoes in the hall.
Syntax
1) Perfective aspect with two subtypes:
a) Immediate perfective, e.g., She's after spilling the milk.
b) Resultative perfective, e.g., She's the housework done (OV word order).
2) Habitual aspect, expressed by do + be or bees or inflectional -s in the first person singular
a) She does be reading books.
b) They bees up late at night.
c) I gets awful anxious about the kids when they're away.
3) Reduced number of verb forms, e.g., seen and done as preterite, went as past participle.
4) Negative concord, e.g., He's not interested in no cars.
5) Clefting for topicalisation purposes, e.g., It's to Glasgow he's going.
6) Greater range of the present tense, e.g., I know him for more than six years now.
7) Lack of do in questions, e.g., Have you had your breakfast yet?
8) Be as auxiliary, e.g., They're finished the work now.
9) Till in the sense of 'in order that', e.g., Come here till I tell you.
10) Singular time reference for never, e.g., She never rang yesterday evening.
11) For to infinitives of purpose, e.g., He went to Dublin for to buy a car.
12) Subordinating and (frequently concessive), e.g., We went for a walk and it raining.

Table 1: Shared features in vernacular varieties of Irish English (source: Hickey 2011, 7)

Phonological features	*Possible source*
Dental/alveolar stops for fricatives	Transfer of nearest Irish equivalent, dental/alveolar stops
Intervocalic and pre-pausal lenition of /t/	Lenition as a phonological directive from Irish
Alveolar /l/ in all positions	Use of non-velar, non-palatal [l] from Irish
Retention of [ʍ] for <*wh*>	Convergence of input with the realisation of Irish /f/ [φ]
Retention of syllable-final /r/	Convergence of English input and Irish
Distinction of short vowels before /r/	Convergence of English input and Irish
Morphological features	*Possible source*
Distinct pronominal forms 2 p. sg. + pl.	Convergence of English input and Irish
Epistemic negative *must*	Generalisation made by Irish based on positive use
Them as demonstrative	English input only
Syntactic features	*Possible source*
Habitual aspect	Convergence with South-West English input on east coast, possibly with influence from Scots via Ulster Otherwise transfer of category from Irish
Immediate perfective aspect with *after*	Transfer from Irish
Resultative perfective with OV word order Subordinating *and*	Possible convergence, primarily from Irish Transfer from Irish
Variant use of suffixal *-s* in present	South-west input in first period on east coast
Clefting for topicalisation	Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence
Greater range of the present tense	Transfer from Irish, with some possible convergence
Negative concord	Convergence of English input and Irish
For to infinitives indicating purpose	Convergence of English input and Irish
Reduced number of verb forms	English input only
Be as auxiliary	English input only
Single time reference for never	Transfer from Irish, English input

Table 2: Suggestions for sources of key features of Southern Irish English (source: Hickey 2011, 8)

This very brief summary on the possible sources of the main features of Irish English clearly shows that, not only metaphorically, Irish English seems to summarize the clash/union between the two languages. Features such as "negative concord" are the result of "transfer from Irish" and "English input". At the same time, there are some elements such as some aspects of relativization (see Corrigan 2011) which embody some 'universals' created in contact situations which were later to be recreated in other colonial contexts within the Empire.

5. *Conclusion*

Irish English shows how, especially in colonial and postcolonial contexts, we can see language as a battlefield of identity. The struggle may end up creating new identities characterized by fractures but also by encounters or

may result in the complete defeat of one or the other. There are several attitudes adopted by the colonized in answering and opposing the imperialistic language in the decolonization process two of which are the most widespread: refusal and subversion (Quayson 2000). In the first case (refusal), the language of the empire is rejected *tout court* and the colonized restore their mother tongue and use the language they feel is more appropriate to their own identity. In the second case (subversion), the imperialist language (i.e. English), is used because it represents a source of self-interest, but is re-written and re-appropriated through forms deviating from the so-called 'standard' by questioning and challenging its authority. Irish English seems to be a case of subversion. Irish English embodies the prolonged contact between colonizer and colonized. A contact which has created a variety which, as Synge argued, is "English that is perfectly Irish in its essence, yet has sureness and purity of form" (1981 [1907], 45).

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From Shibboleths to Shared Terminology? The Divisive Place Names of Northern Ireland

Maureen A. Murray
Swarthmore College (<mreenamurray@gmail.com>)

Abstract:

In Northern Ireland, terminology has become a war zone due to the region's longstanding ethno-political conflict. Unfortunately, with the exception of Hawes-Bilger's work (2007), there is little current research exploring this phenomenon. This paper aims to fill this current gap in knowledge by conducting a quantitative analysis on the use of contentious place names in Northern Ireland. The terms in this corpus linguistic study will be limited to 'Londonderry', 'Northern Ireland,' and the 'Republic of Ireland' and their variants. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to determine if the relative peace throughout the last fifteen years has led to less use of politically charged toponyms among the main actors in the conflict: the Republicans and Unionists within Northern Ireland itself.

Keywords: conflict, language ideology, Northern Ireland, place names, Shibboleths

1. *Introduction*

In Northern Ireland, terminology has become a "minefield" (Mitchell 1999). The region has experienced longstanding ethno-political conflict and, in day-to-day interactions, the words that one uses can be revealing. Such lexical conflict is unsurprising for, "in cases where socio-cultural tensions are paramount, toponymic struggles may surface in a variety of everyday forms" including "the spontaneous use of alternative names and pronunciations" (Berg, Vuolteenaho 2009, 11). One such 'toponymic struggle' occurs in discussing Northern Ireland's second largest city, Londonderry, known colloquially as 'The Maiden City' and 'Stroke City'. In certain cases, use of the city's official name can create a tense atmosphere as what is conveyed to the audience is often 'I am a Unionist or Loyalist (and most likely a Protestant)

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who supports and will defend Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom'. For this reason, to those of a differing sociopolitical background – Catholic, Nationalist or Republican – the term 'Londonderry' can be construed as offensive and even combative. Similarly, use of the term 'Derry', generally favored by Catholics, Nationalists and Republicans, can result in the same tensions. In Northern Ireland, place names are not simply accepted as neutral "facts" but as "power-charged semiotic dynamos for making meaning about places" (Berg, Vuolteenaho 2009, 7).

In accordance with the work of Cordula Hawes-Bilger (2007), this paper will view such terminological differences as linguistic aspects of the conflict and will support the idea that the language in Northern Ireland has become a war zone unto itself. Furthermore, this paper will build on Hawes-Bilger's work in two significant ways. First, it will connect Hawes-Bilger's work to that of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) regarding the use of metaphor in everyday life and assert that not only is language a war zone in Northern Ireland, as Hawes-Bilger claims, but that words are also conceptualized as weapons. Second, it will provide an empirical study in the use of "rival systems of naming" in Northern Ireland through a corpus linguistic study, focusing on the terms 'Londonderry', 'Northern Ireland' and the 'Republic of Ireland' and their variations (Baker 2005, 123).

In particular, this paper will look at ways in which the use of geographical terminology has changed over time across the ethno-political divide. The study will compare the language that has been, and is being, employed by political communities in Northern Ireland, primarily in news reports, but also in speeches and other publications. Ultimately, the goal is to determine whether the relative peace over the last fifteen years has lessened the use of politically charged place names among the main parties in the Northern Ireland conflict, namely the Republicans and Unionists. For if language can act as a social mirror, with "language structure and language use at any given time, and language change over time, reflect[ing] the social conditions within a society" (Chaika 1989, 2) then the more peaceful conditions created by, or reflected in, the signing of the Belfast Agreement should appear in language use.

1.1 *The Northern Ireland Conflict in Context*

The conflict in Northern Ireland can be viewed through many lenses – colonial, ethnic, religious and political. Evidence of conflict can be traced back as far as the twelfth century, when the English first began to seize land in Ireland. Constant revolts have, since then, challenged British rule in Ireland (Bartlett, Jeffrey 1996, 68).

Historically, the two overarching groups in conflict were the colonized, the indigenous Irish Catholics, and the colonizers, the Protestant English and Scottish settlers. The colonization of Ulster in 1606 resulted in a Protestant/Unionist majority in the area. In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act was

passed, partitioning the island to allow the six counties constituting the area known today as Northern Ireland to remain completely under British rule. The remaining twenty-six counties in the south of Ireland were to make up the Free State (later the Republic of Ireland). Today, the colonized and the colonizers generally fall into a Nationalist and Unionist political ideology, respectively. While Nationalists aim to form a united Ireland, Unionists fight to remain a part of the United Kingdom.

In the decades after partitioning, the Protestant majority upheld discriminatory laws and practices that had been established through anti-Catholic legislation passed in the nineteenth century, leading to widespread discontent. Discriminatory practices included limiting access to housing and employment, culminating in the thirty years known as The Troubles. This saw the establishment of the Catholic Civil Rights Movement in 1967 as well as intense violence perpetrated by paramilitary groups, both loyalist (extreme Unionists) and Republican (extreme Nationalists), as well as the British Army (Mullholland 2002, 48-66). The Troubles officially came to an end on April 10, 1998, after the signing of the Belfast, or Good Friday, Agreement (BFA or GFA).

2. *Methodology*

2.1 *Corpus*

In order to determine if there has been any significant change in the frequency of use of ideologically and politically charged place names in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (1998), I first created a corpus spanning the years 1972-2014. This corpus consists of over 14 million words, obtained from various English-language publications from Nationalist/Republican and Unionist/Loyalist perspectives in Northern Ireland, as well as the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, an explicitly non-sectarian political organization. Details on these publications can be found in Table 1:

Political Affiliation/ Total Word Count	Source	Total Words
Republican Sources 10,371,908	Republican News Archives (1997-2003)	6,936,052
	An Phoblact (2003-2013)	1,902,044
	Sinn Fein (1995-2003)	1,263,423
	Various from CAIN (1993-2013)	270,389
Non-sectarian Sources 2,061,856	Alliance Party (1995-2013)	2,061,856

Unionist Sources 1,737,463	The Revivalist (1972-1986) edited by Dr. Ian Paisley	1,153,223
	Democratic Unionist Party Archives (2012-2013)	211,477
	David Trimble Speech Archives (1998-2006)	36,605
	Various from CAIN (1992-2013)	336,158

Table 1: Sectarian and non-sectarian sources used in this study

While the inclusion of periodicals such as *The Revivalist*, speech transcripts and various reports introduces some diversity across registers, the predominant register represented within this corpus is news publications. Though it is important to "represent the different registers of the language" (Biber, Conrad, Randi 1998, 248), the specific intention of this study was to observe the language used within sectarian, or explicitly non-sectarian, news sources. This corpus is not intended to give an insight into language *in general*, but rather the language of political speeches, publications and news sources. This decision was based on two assumptions: one, that the language in these sources would reflect the language used by the source's general readership and, two, that the language used by these sources would influence its audience (see Fowler 1991, 46-49).

2.2 *Data Collection*

In order to collect the necessary data, I implemented a Python script to find instances of the following toponyms[1]:

Republic of Ireland	**Derry**	**Northern Ireland**
'Republic of Ireland'	'Derry'	'Northern Ireland'
'26 Counties'	'Londonderry'	'6 Counties'
'South (of Ireland)'	'Derry/Londonderry'	'North (of Ireland)'
'Free State'	'Maiden City'	'The Province'
'Eire'	'Stroke City'	'Ulster'
'Irish Republic'		

The number of tokens for each of these terms in the corpus was then calculated for the period before the signing of the Belfast Agreement (1972-

2002) and after (2003-2014), in order to determine if the use of divisive place names had changed with the changing sociopolitical conditions. In order to account for the fact that the signing of the Good Friday Agreement would not, in and of itself, create an immediately peaceful atmosphere however, I have included publications from the years 1998 to 2002 in the 'pre-Good Friday Agreement' category.

2.3 *Analysis*

In collecting the data, there were two aims. The first aim was to determine if the current literature concerning place names in Northern Ireland could be corroborated quantitatively. To do this, data for the following pairings were compared: first, Republican and Unionist sources' use of toponyms pre-Good Friday Agreement (pre-GFA) and second, Republican and Unionist sources' use of toponyms post-Good Friday Agreement (post-GFA). The second aim was to look at how the use of toponyms has changed over time in each political party. To do this, the Republican sources' use of terms pre-GFA and post-GFA as well as Unionist use of terms pre-GFA and post-GFA were compared. For each of these comparisons, the relative frequency of each term in question was calculated with respect to each of the competing terms for 'Republic of Ireland', 'Londonderry', and 'Northern Ireland' using the following equation:

$$\text{Relative frequency} = f / n$$

Here, 'f' is equal to the number of times a specific term is used in the corpus and 'n' is equal to the total number of times any of the observed terms are used in the corpus.

3. *Literature Review*

3.1 *Language as a War Zone? Words as Weapons?*

As Conor O'Clery notes, "a unique feature of Irish politic [is that] words have often come to be charged with as much significance as the events which inspired them" (1987, 7). Moreover, language in Northern Ireland is often associated with concepts of war and violence as Hawes-Bilger observes (2007, 9). Language is described as "loaded" or "barbed" (2007, 9), headlines frequently tell of a "war of words" taking place when reporting public disagreements and phrases discussing "the violence of the spoken word", "the words of war and conflict", and "the language of war" are not uncommon (2007, 9).

Lakoff and Johnson argue that the conceptual system structuring "what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people", is largely metaphorical (1980, 3). In order to better understand our conceptual system,

they suggest looking at language, particularly metaphors, as "communication […] based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting" (1980, 3). Metaphors, specifically those classified by Lakoff and Johnson as "dead" – so fundamental to our language that we no longer perceive them as metaphors – give insight into the concepts we live by, which structure our everyday lives.

One conceptual metaphor elucidated in language in Northern Ireland is WORDS ARE WEAPONS. This connection should not be so foreign to most native English speakers: colloquial phrases equating language and weaponry are found in a description such as 'sharp-tongued' or a phrase such as 'the pen is mightier than the sword'. Though the former deals with spoken language and the latter deals with written language, it is language in general that is equated with a weapon. In Northern Ireland, this conceptual metaphor can be demonstrated by Lakoff and Johnson's framework in the following examples (see Lakoff, Johnson 198, 4).

She spat out the words like *machine-gun bullets.*

[Ian] Paisley has *fired verbal bullets.*

Harmony is unheard amid *verbal crossfire.*

It's fair to say that unionists are more versed in *verbal combat* than nationalists.

Terminology in Northern Ireland is a *minefield.*

[w]e need to have a *decommissioning of words.*

[…] as mediators we find ourselves constantly having to steer paths through potentially *explosive verbal mine-fields.* (Hawes-Bilger 2007, 9-10)

Though these examples are not universally literal as those in Lakoff and Johnson's work (1980, 4), the prevalence of connections between language and notions of war and violence, as noted by Hawes-Bilger, is striking. More specifically, despite the fundamental differences between units of language and instruments of war, words are understood and experienced in terms of weaponry in Northern Ireland. As Lakoff and Johnson remind us, "*the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" (1980, 5). For this reason, we can hypothesize that, in Northern Ireland, WORDS ARE WEAPONS is a metaphorical concept to live by and that one's choice of words becomes critical: using the wrong word could be seen as a form of attack.

4. *The Lexical Arsenal*

The toponyms studied in this paper are therefore highly scrutinized, not only due to the metaphorical concept of WORDS ARE WEAPONS,

but due to their inherent, politically charged nature as place names (Berg, Vuolteenaho 2009, 7).

Contention between the "rival systems of naming" used to discuss a place in Northern Ireland has long been apparent (Baker 2005, 123). From speakers' advanced apologies for the use of potentially offensive terminology (as quoted in Hawes-Bilger 2007, 33), footnotes in publications describing the use of different terms by Catholics/Nationalists/Republicans and Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists and anecdotal evidence provided by those who have lived in the region, it is clear that there is a pervasive understanding that toponyms can "be seen as a means of communicating [ideological] meaning about place" (Berg, Kearns 2007, 26). In this section, we will look more closely at which ideological meaning is communicated by each toponym, first based on literature, then, based on the results of the corpus linguistic study.

4.1 *Republic of Ireland*

4.1.2 *Literature*

Within Northern Ireland, various terms are used to discuss the political entity encompassing the other 26 counties on the island of Ireland. Since 1949, when all formal allegiance to the British crown was terminated, the official name for this region has been the 'Republic of Ireland'. From 1937-1949, the political region had been known as 'Eire', the Irish word for 'Ireland' and, before then, the 'Free State', after the Government of Ireland Act (1920). Hawes-Bilger notes that while the term 'Republic of Ireland' is used by individuals across the ethno-political divide, Nationalists and Republicans in Northern Ireland often reject it, as it is not the all-Ireland Republic so desired. Instead, Republicans in the North generally refer to the south of the island as 'the 26 Counties', where the Republic of Ireland makes up 26 of the 32-county island of Ireland, or 'the South (of Ireland)', implying that the Republic of Ireland is in the southern part of the same country as Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, Unionists and Loyalists have advocated for the use of the term 'Eire', "to make [the Republic of Ireland] sound foreign" and 'Irish Republic', as this implies only the 26-county region and not the whole of Ireland as the term 'Republic of Ireland' does (75).

4.1.3 *This Study*

Based on the analyses within this study, the evidence robustly conveys the divisive nature of place names in Northern Ireland. With reference to the table of relative frequencies below, it is apparent that there are significant contrasts between the preferred terms of each political perspective in both the pre- and post-Good Friday Agreement period. The raw token count can also be found underneath the relative frequency.

	Irish Republic	26 Counties	South (of Ireland)	Republic of Ireland	Free State	Eire
Republican pre-GFA	1.7% 47	49.1% 1378	11.6% 324	1.2% 34	10.1% 283	26.3% 738
Unionist pre-GFA	27.2% 28	0.0% 0	18.4% 19	41.7% 43	1.9% 2	10.7% 11
Republican post-GFA	2.3% 21	57.6% 515	29.2% 261	0.7% 6	2.8% 25	7.4% 66
Unionist post-GFA	13.8% 15	0.0% 0	5.5% 6	77.1% 84	0.9% 1	2.8% 3

Table 2: Comparison of Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Republic of Ireland' Over Time

Throughout the Republican sources, statements featuring the terms '26 Counties' and 'South (of Ireland)' like those found below are commonplace:

> THE British Government has rejected calls to bring the North's corporation tax rate into line with that of the *26 Counties* […], Investment in the social economy in the *south of Ireland* by the Irish Government is around €40 million and in Scotland £30 million and has played a key role in their respective anti-poverty strategies. (McLaughlin 2007; McCann 2009; my emphasis)

In the years before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the two terms most used in Republican sources were '26 Counties' and 'Eire', 49.1% and 26.3% of the time respectively. Post-GFA, usage of the word 'Eire' in these sources decreased to 7.4%, whilst the terms '26 Counties' and 'South (of Ireland)' were instead preferred, 57.6% and 29.2% of the time respectively.

Across both pre- and post-GFA Unionist sources however, the terms 'Republic of Ireland' and 'Irish Republic' are most popular. Statements like those found below, featuring both terms, are typical:

> We have had in the past few weeks the uncovering of the rottenness of the state system of the *Irish Republic* … its core is contained in the idea that the Government of the *Irish Republic*, a foreign State, will work together with the British Government […]. And it is in the interests of the people of Great Britain, and in the interests of the people of the *Republic of Ireland* to encourage the development of healthier politics in Northern Ireland […]. (Paisley 1994; Trimble 2001; my emphasis)

In the post-GFA period however, the use of the term 'Republic of Ireland' skyrocketed by 35.4% while use of the term 'Irish Republic' decreased by 13.4%.

Moreover, comparing the lexical preferences for Unionists and Republicans, the opposing top preferences for each group – namely '26 Counties' and 'Republic

of Ireland' – show divergent patterns. While '26 Counties' is easily the Republicans' most favored term pre- and post-GFA, the Unionists' had a 0.0% use. Instead, their preference is to opt for the term 'Republic of Ireland', the Republicans' least favored term. In fact, while 'Republic of Ireland' was by far the most favored term by Unionists in the pre- and post-GFA eras, use of the term by Republican sources fell from 1.2% to an even lower 0.7% use. A similar pattern can be seen in the second most preferred terms across the pre- and post-GFA years for each group: for Republicans, this would be 'Eire' and 'South (of Ireland)' and for Unionists 'Irish Republic'.

Furthermore, based on the data it is possible to hypothesize the groupings of the lexical items by political affiliation through quantitative analysis. For the Republic of Ireland, the terms can be grouped as follows:

Republican Terms	**Unionist Terms**
26 Counties	Republic of Ireland
South (of Ireland)	Irish Republic
Free State	
Eire	

While the groupings suggested within the corpus study are extremely close to those suggested by Hawes-Bilger, it is interesting to note that the term 'Eire', which she posits is advocated by Unionists and Loyalists in an attempt to 'other' the Republic of Ireland, is found to pattern with other Republican terms in the post-GFA era. That being said, Hawes-Bilger is not incorrect in her observations concerning the term 'Eire'. Despite the fact that 'Eire' is the second most commonly used term employed by Republicans in the pre-GFA years, use of the term decreased greatly after the signing of the Agreement. Whereas 'Eire' had been used 26.3% of the time pre-GFA, its use dropped to 7.3% in the post-GFA period.

4.2 *Derry or Londonderry?*

4.2.1 *Literature*

Derry is the second largest city in Northern Ireland. The name of the region was originally, in Irish, *Daire Calgaigh*, meaning 'oak grove of Calgach'. The name *Daire*, or *Doire*, was later anglicized as 'Derry'. In 1613, King James I gave the Royal Seal to the Charter of Londonderry, after it had been provided considerable investment by London Guilds and merchants. The prefix 'London-' was then added to the name of the city. Whereas today, Unionists and Loyalists refer to the city as 'Londonderry', Nationalists and Republicans will tend to use the term 'Derry'. The dispute over the name became especially contentious during the Troubles, as illustrated when radio presenter Gerry Anderson created the non-sectarian term 'Stroke City' (in reference to the forward-slash in 'Derry/Londonderry') to refer to the city.

4.2.2 *This Study*

There is still strong evidence to suggest that, like the lexical choice for 'Republic of Ireland', political affiliation and preferred toponym are associated with one another for 'Derry'. In fact, it appears that the terms used for the city are the most overtly divisive across the pre- and post-GFA years. As Hawes-Bilger notes, Republicans tend to use 'Derry' while Unionists tend to use 'Londonderry'; and, overall, no group seems to use inclusive terminology such as 'Derry/Londonderry', 'Stroke City' or 'Maiden City' (98). In fact, despite the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the Republican and Unionist sources continue to use the politically charged choices of 'Derry' or 'Londonderry' respectively, as seen in Table 3.

	Derry	Londonderry	Inclusive Terms
Republican pre-GFA	99.1% 1610	0.8% 13	0.1% 1
Unionist pre-GFA	10.5% 4	86.8% 33	2.6% 1
Republican post-GFA	98.9% 450	1.1% 5	0.0% 0
Unionist post-GFA	9.4% 3	81.3% 26	9.4% 3

Table 3: Comparison of Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Londonderry' Over Time

In this sense, the results of this corpus analysis suggest that David Butler is right to assert that to choose between calling the city (or county, in his case) 'Derry' or 'Londonderry' is a "stark choice". As he puts it, in using the term 'Derry', "the semiological cat is out of the bag, for you (if you are clued in to the meaningfulness of the codes) could fairly conclude that I am not a loyalist" (Butler 1995, 105). Considering the overwhelming preference for Republicans to use 'Derry' and Unionists to use 'Londonderry', it is not difficult to crack the "code" to which he alludes (105).

4.3 *Northern Ireland*

4.3.1 *Literature*

Many Nationalists and Republicans reject the term 'Northern Ireland', on the grounds that the creation of the state in 1920 was an illegal act. Thus, to use that name would be be seen as legitimizing the division of the island of Ireland. Instead, they avoid using the term, they generally refer to 'the North

(of Ireland)' and 'the (occupied) Six Counties'. Meanwhile, Loyalists and Unionists generally use the term 'Ulster' for the territory, as the six counties which form it are part of the ancient Irish province of Ulster. Though three of the counties which once belonged to this province are now in the Republic of Ireland, the name 'Ulster' is still used to dissociate Northern Ireland from its neighboring state.

4.3.2 *This Study*

In looking at Table 4, it is apparent that there are strong differences between the preferred terms of each political perspective in both the pre- and post-GFA period.

	North (of Ireland)	Six Counties	Northern Ireland	The Province	Ulster
Republican pre-GFA	22.3% 1036	53.5% 2488	13.1% 611	1.0% 45	10.1% 472
Unionist pre-GFA	1.1% 22	0.2% 4	51.0% 969	8.7% 165	39.0% 741
Republican post-GFA	37.1% 603	50.1% 813	7.7% 125	0.4% 7	4.7% 76
Unionist post-GFA	0.0% 0	0.1% 5	87.4% 3124	5.6% 199	6.9% 248

Table 4: Comparison of Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Northern Ireland' Over Time

The terms most preferred by Republican sources were 'Six Counties' and 'North (of Ireland)', respectively, across the pre- and post-GFA periods. Throughout Republican sources, statements featuring these terms are commonplace:

> For over 30 years the British government has presided directly over the systematic ill treatment and torture of Irish people within the *north of Ireland* […], Dublin foreign affairs minister Brian Cowen set up a committee last June to consider opening a passport office in the *Six Counties* […]. (Friel 1998; Doherty 2000; my emphasis)

On the other hand, Unionists across the pre- and post-GFA periods tend to favor the official name 'Northern Ireland' and the term 'Ulster':

> [Co Wicklow] is also one of the most religiously mixed areas outside *Ulster* […]. This time last year my strategy of renegotiating a fair deal for *Ulster* was laughed at by our enemies […]. So strong is the longing for an end to *Northern Ireland*'s long agony that some are willing to take almost anything on trust […]. (Trimble 1998; Paisley 2004; Trimble 1999; my emphasis)

Despite this, use of the term 'Ulster' plummets from 39.0% to 6.9% post-GFA. At the same time, use of the term 'Northern Ireland' increases from 51.0% to 87.4%.

Unionist sources clearly avoid use of the Republicans' top two lexical preferences for 'Northern Ireland' and *vice versa*. While the Republican sources within this corpus study overwhelmingly chose to use the variants '6 Counties' and 'North (of Ireland)' across the pre-and post-GFA years, accounting for over 75.0% of the relevant data in each time period, Unionists overwhelmingly avoided using these terms across the pre- and post-GFA years, as evidenced by the fact that the terms count for less than 2.0% of the relevant data in each time period. Similarly, Republican sources tended to avoid using 'Northern Ireland' and 'Ulster', using these terms 13.1% and 10.1% in the pre-GFA years and 7.7% and 4.7% in the post-GFA years.

Furthermore, based on the data gathered from the corpus study, it is possible to hypothesize the groupings of the lexical items by political affiliation through quantitative analysis. For Northern Ireland, the terms can be grouped as follows across the pre- and post-GFA years:

Republican Terms	**Unionist Terms**
6 Counties	Northern Ireland
North (of Ireland)	Ulster
	The Province

Based on both the literature and preliminary information gleaned from the corpus linguistic study there is support for the assumption that certain place names are highly contested in Northern Ireland. As Mona Baker acknowledges, the choices between such place names "are not interchangeable, and none of them is 'neutral'" and these preliminary studies support her assertion that each term "clearly signals a specific narrative position" (2005, 125).

Now, to address the overarching aim of this study: whether the more politically and socially peaceful culture catalyzed by the signing of the Good Friday Agreement has resulted in the use of less divisive terms.

5. *Comparison of Post-GFA Use of Terms with 'Non-Sectarian' Party's 'Neutral' Language*

In order to determine if the terminology used by Unionists and Republicans has become more neutral since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the use of terminology by sectarian sources will be compared to that of the Alliance Party. Given the Alliance Party's explicitly non-sectarian aim, its terminology can easily be viewed as the benchmark by which to judge 'neutral' terminology.

In comparing the use of terms for the Republic of Ireland across the potential political affiliations, including the explicitly neutral Alliance Party, two trends become apparent, as seen in Table 5.

	Irish Republic	26 Counties	South (of Ireland)	Republic of Ireland	Free State	Eire
Unionist Post	13.8% 15	0.0% 0	5.5% 6	77.1% 84	0.9% 1	2.8% 3
Alliance Post	0.2% 4	0.0% 0	3.6% 6	86.5% 141	0.6% 1	0.6% 1
Republican post	2.3% 21	57.6% 515	29.2% 261	0.7% 6	2.7% 25	7.3% 66

Table 5: Comparison of Use Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Republic of Ireland'

The first apparent trend is that both the Alliance Party and Unionist sources overwhelmingly prefer the term 'Republic of Ireland' to all other terms in post-GFA years. The second is that the lexical preference of the Alliance Party and the Unionist source is the least preferred term in Republican sources and *vice versa*. There is a strong similarity therefore between the terminology employed by the Alliance Party and that of Unionists and a strong division between the terminology of the Alliance and Unionist sources and that of Republicans.

The apparent similarity in toponymic preference is further strengthened by the data concerning lexical preferences for Northern Ireland, reproduced in Table 6.

	North (of Ireland)	6 Counties	Northern Ireland	The Province	Ulster
Unionist Post	0.0% 0	0.1% 5	87.4% 3124	5.6% 199	6.9% 248
Alliance Post	0.2% 12	0.0% 0	98.5% 5368	2.9% 16	1.0% 55
Republican Post	37.1% 63	50.1% 813	7.7% 125	0.4% 7	4.6% 76

Table 6: Comparison of Use Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Northern Ireland'

Here, the lexical preferences for the Unionist sources and the Alliance Party overlap with an overwhelming preference towards the term 'Northern Ireland', while Republican sources diverge: the term is one of their least preferred. Once again, the lexical preferences of the Republican sources, 'Six Counties' and 'North (of Ireland)', are the least preferred terms of the Union-

ist and Alliance sources. From this data, it would appear that the preferred Unionist terminology is growing closer to that of the Alliance Party.

The only exception to this trend is found in the results of the toponyms for Derry, as seen in Table 7.

	Derry	Londonderry	Inclusive Terms
Unionist Post	9.4% 3	81.3% 26	9.4% 3
Alliance Post	56.3% 93	40.0% 66	3.6% 6
Republican Post	98.9% 450	1.1% 5	0.0% 0

Table 7: Comparison of Use Between Sectarian and Non-Sectarian Sources' Use of Variants for 'Londonderry'

In this case, there remains a disparity in preferred terminology between each of the political affiliations. While the Alliance Party overlaps more with the Republican sources due to its greater use of the term 'Derry', it is also clearly the most inclusive of the political groups within this corpus, despite use of veritably inclusive terminology such as 'Derry/Londonderry' remaining as low as 3.6%. Overall, there is a far less polarized distribution of the terms used, given the Alliance Party's desire to appear, or be, inclusive, this is unsurprising.

6. *Discussion*

6.1 *If Language Reflects the Social Conditions within a Society, what Does This Language Tell Us About the Current Social Conditions in Northern Ireland?*

Two observations may be drawn from the results of this corpus linguistic analysis. First, there *has* been a quantitative change over time in the use of contentious toponyms between the pre- and post-GFA years. Second, this change is, in part, in the opposite direction to what one would expect if society had indeed become more peaceful. Where Unionists have more fully embraced the neutral, official titles of the regions described in this study, Republicans have remained averse to their use over time.

One could conclude that Unionists have become more peaceful, discarding more inflammatory terms and moved towards politically correct terms of 'Northern Ireland' and the 'Republic of Ireland'. This analysis is appealing given that results for the Unionist sources bear semblance to those of the non-sectarian Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, as discussed. An alternative explanation

would question, however, whether Republicans are indeed moving away from the more neutral terminology while Unionists are embracing it in the years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The terminology that is politically correct may not, in fact, be as neutral as the Alliance Party would like to believe.

More importantly, given the results of this study, it is more accurate to suggest that the politically correct, or official, terms that the Unionist and Alliance sources favor cannot be neutral. This is because the contentious terminology for place names in Northern Ireland can be seen as "rival systems of naming", resulting from the presence of "rival communities and traditions" (Baker 2005, 123; MacIntyre 1998, 378). Within this structure of 'rival systems of naming', "to use a name is at once to make a claim about political and social legitimacy and to deny a rival claim" (Baker 2005, 123; MacIntyre 1998, 378). Moreover, according to MacIntyre, "names are used *as* identification *for* those who share the same beliefs, the same justifications of legitimate authority, and so on. The institutions of naming embody and express the shared standpoint of the community and characteristically its shared traditions of belief and enquiry" (MacIntyre 1998, 378). It may be better therefore to assume that the similarity between the overall lexical preferences of the Unionist and Alliance Party sources is not evidence of the Unionist sources moving towards neutrality, but of the Alliance Party accepting and reinforcing terminology that is, at worst, laden with Unionist ideology and embroiled in a type of zero-sum struggle or, at best, disfavored by roughly half of the community in the region, based solely on its historical ties to Unionist traditions.

If the continued avoidance of the terms 'Republic of Ireland' and 'Northern Ireland' by the Republican sources is due primarily to the terms' associations with Unionism, one possible solution would be for political groups, specifically non-sectarian groups, to reinforce terms that are neutral, not in the sense that they are official, but in the sense that they are less stigmatized across the ethno-political divide. The obvious complication is that terms free of sectarian associations are difficult to identify. For example, while relatively unused within this corpus, the term 'Derry/Londonderry' is generally regarded as a neutral term because it is a conflated form of the exclusive variants 'Derry' and 'Londonderry' whereas the official term, 'Londonderry' is very obviously politically charged, as evident by the results of this study. Unfortunately, such conflations are not quite as easy to create for 'Northern Ireland' and the 'Six Counties' or 'Republic of Ireland' and the '26 Counties'.

On the other hand, as Paedar Whelan, editor of *An Phoblacht* and the *Republican News* notes, "language 'is a central part of the political struggle… [o]ur [the republicans'] language reflects our political interpretation of the situation here and also is a way of expressing our analysis of the conflict'" (Whelan in Hawes-Bilger 2007, 11). In this sense, it is possible that the continued resistance by Republicans to the terms 'Northern Ireland' and 'Republic of Ireland' is due to their refusal to give up their longstanding claims concerning 'political

and social legitimacy' through naming as part of the 'rival systems of naming' paradigm. If that is the case, the results of this study suggest that while the violence has largely ended, the conflict continues. In fact, its persistence can be seen in the continued outbreaks of violence on both sides of the ethno-political divide: bomb attempts made by the Real IRA; Sinn Fein's continued calls for a border poll; and, flag protests and riots carried out by Unionists and Loyalists as recently as last year to which, incidentally, 45% of unionists polled felt sympathetic, believing that they should continue (BBC News: Timeline of Dissident Republican Activity; RTE News/Ireland: Sinn Féin Calls for Border Poll on Partition; BBC News: Q&A: Northern Ireland Flag Protests).

6.2 *Conclusions*

Ultimately, this study can only approximate the trends found in the language used in Northern Ireland, across the ethno-political divide. That being said, the results suggest that the contentious nature of place names has persisted throughout the years of relative peace after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Whether this continued manifestation of the Northern Ireland conflict by means of a system of rival place names is predominantly due to the desire to assert a political or social claim (or deny a rival's) because of the continued existence of ethno-political conflict or the result of the terms within this study having a longstanding association with particular political affiliations is unclear. Regardless, a first step to breaking down this persistent division is the reinforcement of inclusive terms where they already exist, as with the term 'Derry/Londonderry', or, the implementation of a collaborative effort to create inclusive terms where none yet exist. Or, in Gerry Adams' words, "dialogue is the means by which the old taboos, antagonisms and fears can be banished and replaced by new ideas, new language and new accommodations agreed" (Hawes-Bilger 2007, 34). While such action would be difficult and would not necessarily ensure success, the changes to the language, "which supplies the models and categories of thought" could help break down the 'us versus them' mentality that continues to plague Northern Ireland by "influenc[ing] non-linguistic behavior such as cognitive activity" (Adams in Hawes-Bilger 2007, 34).

6.3 *Suggestions for Further Research*

While this work has focused in particular on language used by politically affiliated sources within Northern Ireland, a continuation of this study concerning the language used within the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain in the years before and after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement would be illuminating given both nations' involvement in the conflict. Further study on the use of language and the Northern Ireland conflict would do well to focus on eliciting data by conducting interviews with individuals in Northern Ireland.

Notes

[1] Slight variations of these terms were also included in the keywords search as, in many cases, the terms are equivalent but happen to be written out differently. For example, Six Counties may also appear as 6 Counties. Therefore, in order to make sure all instances of the term Six Counties were counted, '6 Counties' was also included as a search term. Other search words included for this reason were 'Twenty Six Counties' and 'Londonderry/Derry'.

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The Portrayal of Women's Contribution to Irish Society through a Sample from the Irish Press[1]

María Martínez Lirola
Universidad de Alicante (<maria.lirola@ua.es>)
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, University of South Africa (UNISA)

Abstract:

The article intends to approach the representation of womanhood in the Irish press from 2006 to 2012. The corpus comprises all the texts dealing with women, from January 1 to 31 December of four years within this time range, taken from one of the main Irish broadsheet newspapers: *The Irish Independent*. The research database LexisNexis Academic was employed to compile the corpus. For the purposes of this research, Teun van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor network model was applied. This paper points out that Corpus Linguistics (CL) can be a powerful complementary tool to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Keywords: Celtic Tiger, corpus-based critical discourse analysis, Ireland, social actors, women

1. *Introduction*

The Irish economy expanded tremendously in the period known as the Celtic Tiger (1997-2008) (Baccaro, Simone 2004; Barrett *et al.* 2009; Gaughan, Garre 2011) due to different reasons: the arrival of foreign working capital, the improvement of social facilities, the creation of technological and pharmaceutical companies, among others. In addition, there are two reasons that are especially significant for this article: a) the increasing arrival of immigrants, and b) the incorporation of women to the labour market. Asylum seekers saw the country as an attractive location, and immigrants from different regions around the world decided to try to find a job and start a new life there. In this way, the Republic of Ireland was transformed into a country of prosperity and immigration, as Schuppers and Loyal make clear:

> Contrary to many other European countries, Ireland has only become a destination country for migrants in the last two decades. It is only in the last fifteen years that the number of immigrants entering Ireland has outstripped the number of emigrants leaving. Another difference between many European countries and Ireland is that the vast majority of Ireland's immigrants are EU citizens and that a large number are well educated. (Schuppers, Loyal 2012, 181)

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This rapid growth in economy was characterized for its being dependent on the labour of non-Irish workers (Dundon *et al.* 2007; Messina 2008), which transformed the country into a competitive marketplace:

> There are two contrasting images of foreign workers in Ireland. On the one hand, there exists an image that such workers are highly skilled and central to Ireland's economic boom of recent years. On the other hand, however, non-Irish national workers are viewed as a source of cheap labour, easily disposable and found in the tertiary labour market. (Dundon *et al.* 2007, 502)

The increased population diversity resulting from the increased immigration to Ireland over the Celtic Tiger period makes it necessary to consider the ways in which Ireland has dealt with immigration in the context of global population movement. In addition, the arrival of immigrants to Ireland contributed to the creation of a national Irish identity (Conway 2006; Phelan 2007; Darmody *et al.* 2011).

This new situation went together with the development of racist attitudes (Fanning 2002; Conroy, Brennan 2003; Garner 2004). As Russell *et al.* claim: "Increasing national and ethnic diversity may have implications for access to equal treatment on the grounds of ethnicity/nationality" (2008, 18). Some of the immigrants who arrived were women and some of the new workers were Irish women who had an opportunity to find a place in the labour market due to the prosperous economy of Ireland.

As already mentioned, apart from immigrants, women also contributed to the development of the Irish economy during the Celtic Tiger period due to the fact that they became an active part in the labour market. Before the Celtic Tiger, women and their work was invisible and not paid, whereas men's work took place in the public sphere, where they were basically the ones earning money (Conlon 2007). Women were relegated to the domestic sphere as mothers and caregivers, that is, their jobs were associated with the private sphere. In a way, they were invisible as workers since they did not take positions in the public places.

There are very few studies that have concentrated on the representation of women and immigrants in Irish society, most of which have a sociological perspective (Mac Éinrí, White 2008; Palmary *et al.* 2010; Cross, Turner 2012). In our case, we are especially interested in the linguistic representation of women in general and immigrant women in particular in a sample from the Irish press because migrant women may face particular situations or vulnerabilities different from those men do (Conroy 2003; Walter 2004; McGinnity *et al.* 2006; Mayock *et al.* 2012).

The printed press is considered the most serious source of information, and the one with the highest capacity to spread all sorts of ideologies and beliefs (Bañón Hernández 2002; Martínez Lirola 2013; van Dijk 2009). Its power is due to its capacity to create knowledge through the production of news articles. This must have some impact on the pieces of news written

about women and immigrant women during the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger period. The tools of the press are verbal language and the photographs illustrating the written message in the examples of multimodal texts. In this sense, since choice, either verbal or non-verbal, is meaningful at all levels, we are interested in analysing the different choices the newspaper under analysis made in order to refer to women.

The main research questions this paper addresses are the following: in which way are women and immigrant women portrayed in the *Irish Independent* during the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger years? Following van Leeuwen's (2008) framework, what are the main categories used to refer to them as social actors? Are there differences in the way women are portrayed in the *Irish Independent* in the period under analysis? And, having observed the most frequent collocate pairs in the corpus, what does the collocational analysis of the word woman/women reveal about the construction of this group in Ireland? And, finally, what do we learn about their social situation?

After this introduction, the paper is divided into the next sections: section two offers the data, aim and methodology; section three pays attention to the importance of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to frame the analysis; the next section offers the results of the analysis and the discussion of the data. The paper finishes offering some conclusions.

2. *Aims, Data and Methodology*

This paper intends to examine how women are portrayed in a sample from the Irish press. It analyses the main ways in which women are represented as social actors during particular years of the Celtic Tiger and the post-Celtic Tiger (2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012) using the *Irish Independent* as a source of data.

The purpose of the analysis is to show media constructions of women in an attempt to reveal what this might suggest about how women were portrayed in the newspaper under analysis. The analysis will offer information about the social situation of women (Irish and non-Irish). The following list of lemmas was used in order to carry out the concordance cluster analysis:

Woman/women
Woman/women worker(s)
Black woman/women
Immigrant woman/women

Table 1: Key words search

Only one newspaper has been included because the other two newspapers that were initially used to look for newspaper articles, i.e., *The Evening Herald* and *The Irish Post*, show very few examples of texts about women and are there-

fore not a representative sample. As such, all the news articles related to women from January 1 to December 31 were collected during the four years under analysis in the *Irish Independent*, i.e., two of them are part of the last period of the Celtic Tiger and the other two years coincide with the post-Celtic Tiger. The tables below show, on the one hand, the number of occurrences and how they have been normalised and, on the other hand, the pertinent corpus data.

Year	No. of texts	% of texts	No. of tokens	No. of occurrences							
				Woman	Women	Woman worker	Women workers	Black woman	Black women	Immigrant woman	Immigrant women
2006	16	8.7	8,341	1	105	0	13	1	2	0	0
2008	65	35.5	44,828	15	264	1	46	14	2	0	1
2010	39	21.2	23,201	7	210	0	26	7	4	0	1
2012	64	34.6	43,787	3	345	0	49	3	10	0	1
Total	**184**	**100**	**120,157**	**26**	**924**	**1**	**134**	**25**	**18**	**0**	**3**

Table 2: Corpus data

The *Irish Independent* is a broadsheet that was established in 1905 as the direct successor to the *Daily Irish Independent*, which was created in the 1890s. For most of its history, the *Irish Independent* (also called the *Independent* or, more colloquially, the *Indo*) has been seen as a nationalist, Catholic newspaper, quite conservative in its opinions (Gaughan, Garre 2011).

The data were collected through LexisNexis, the online interface of newspapers and periodicals which was used to compile newspaper articles containing the lemmas presented in Table 1 (see above). The strength of LexisNexis is that it presents full articles from major English-language daily newspapers worldwide. One of its potential limitations, though, could have been that it does not include texts prior to 2005; all in all, that was not an issue here, given my decision to study news articles from 2006 onwards in the *Irish Independent.*

Once the texts were collected, they were converted to a .txt format and they were coded in the following way: the initials of the newspaper, i.e., II, followed by the day, month and year in which the news article appeared; the last digit altered in the case that there was more than one example per day (e.g. II-120310-5). Then, the concordance programme *Antconc* (Anthony 2012) was used in order to retrieve a list of concordances containing the search word strings already mentioned. *Antconc* allows researchers to view concordances, to calculate lexical and phrasal frequencies, collocations, keywords, etc. Having done this, an Excel

spreadsheet was prepared including the concordance and the code of the .txt file from which the example had been taken. Moreover, I also included columns for the different categories of social actors proposed by van Leeuwen (2008).

Corpus linguistics helps to study language patterns in a large amount of texts and avoid the criticism of possible subjectivity towards the data (Butler 2004, Flowerdew 2008, McEnery, Hardie 2012). I agree with Stubbs that "Corpus data and methods provide new ways of studying relations between language system and language use. If patterns become very frequent in use across very large quantities of text, then it becomes 'entrenched' as part of the system" (2007, 127). This explains why this methodology is used to observe how women in Ireland are referred to in the *Irish Independent*. In this way, I will be able to draw some conclusion on how these journalists construe women's identities and roles in the period under study (Baker 2010a). Moreover, corpus linguistics gives us the opportunity of analysing large numbers of texts systematically, which is not possible with manual methods; as Hidalgo Tenorio makes explicit:

> Investigations grow thanks to what one expects to find in texts and to what texts offer to the reader. Nowadays, we know more about linguistic phenomena that cannot be explained by trusting intuition. Besides, human beings are incapable of analysing manually large collections of data in a limited time. Then, to my eyes, it was essential to rely on corpus based studies. (2009, 118)

Approaching texts in this way allows researchers to be less subject to bias (Baker 2004, 2006, 2010b; McEnery, Hardie 2012); as Gabrielatos and Baker make clear:

> Corpus linguistics methodology allows for a higher degree of objectivity—that is, it enables the researcher to approach the texts (relatively) free from any preconceived notions regarding their linguistic or semantic/pragmatic content. When the starting point is keyword analysis, the analyst is presented with a list of words/clusters which will then be examined in (expanded) concordances for their patterning and contextual use. (Gabrielatos, Baker 2008, 7)

3. *Theoretical Framework*

This paper focuses on the representation of women as social actors in a sample from the Irish press. The perspective offered by CDA will be essential for the analysis since the intention of this research is to explore the relationship between the different linguistic choices used to name women and the social context framing Ireland in that historical period.

The theoretical framework on which this research is based is CDA and, in particular, van Leeuwen's (2008) approach to CDA, which pays attention to the representation of social actors; thus I will be able to study some of main

discourse strategies found in the selected Irish newspaper to refer to women in news articles. In other words, we are interested in analysing the different linguistic choices and their relationship with justice, power, prejudice, bias and injustice, i.e., to establish a connection between language and society (Wodak, Meyer 2009; Hidalgo Tenorio 2011; Crespo, Martínez Lirola 2012). As van Leeuwen makes clear: "Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is based on the idea that text and talk play a key role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice and oppression in society. It uses discourse analytical methods to show how this is done, but without restricting itself to one particular discourse analytical approach" (2009, 277).

The language employed in the texts creates a particular world-view and a particular view of a social reality, in this case of women in the Irish press. I understand, in consequence, that there must be a relationship between how a text constructs its meaning and the social reality that frames it. This relationship makes it possible to deduce the socio-political framework of the text from the text itself, which frames the production and consumption of the text in its context of situation.

Using CDA as an analytical approach implies understanding the news articles under analysis as social practice and as discoursal practice, i.e., the texts under analysis are produced, distributed and consumed, and there is a social purpose in the whole process (Fairclough 1992 and 1995; van Leeuwen 2009). In addition, CDA is concerned with the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used, as it will be highlighted in the next sections. CDA will allow us to analyse discourse from a critical perspective, paying attention to the implications of each linguistic choice, as Baker *et al.* point out:

> We understand CDA to be an academic movement, a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, which often focuses on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology and domination. We do not view CDA as being a method nor are specific methods solely associated with it. Instead, it adopts any method that is adequate to realize the aims of specific CDA-inspired research. (2008, 273)

In order to deepen into social practice, I will use van Leeuwen's (2008) theoretical framework, so that I can observe how women appear as social actors in discourse. Van Leeuwen proposes some general categories and some subtypes, which sometimes are complementary, to refer to social actors in discourse: exclusion or inclusion. Inside inclusion, the following types are distinguished: 1) role allocation (agent or patient), 2) generalisation and 3) specification (generic or specific reference, i.e., representation as classes or as individuals); 4) assimilation (representation of people in groups), 5) association (groups of social actors) and 6) dissociation (unformed associations); 7) indetermination (unspecified representation of social actors) and 8) differentiation (specification of the different social actors); 9) nomination (reference to the unique identity of social actors) and 10) categorisation (identities and functions shared with others); 11) functionalization

and 12) identification (reference to social actors in terms of something they do or what they are); 13) personalization and 14) impersonalisation (representation of social actors as human beings or not); and, finally, 15) overdetermination (representation of social actors as participating in more than one social practice).

Therefore, from the previous paragraphs, it is clear that this paper establishes a connection between discourse analysis and corpus linguistics (Ädel, Repel 2008; Flowerdew 2012). In Charles *et al.*'s words: "Discourse analysis prioritizes whole texts and their cultural context, identifying patterns that extend across sentences and paragraphs. Corpus linguistics tends to use techniques that decontextualize individual texts and focuses on recurrent patternings of small-scale items such as words and phrases" (2009, 1).

4. *Results and Discussion*

As mentioned above, this article pays attention to the representation of women as social actors in particular in a sample from the Irish press. After identifying van Leeuwen's categorization of social actors in discourse, I analysed the ways in which women were referred to as social actors in discourse (active, passive, individuals, groups, etc.). Due to the space constraints of this paper I will select only some examples to illustrate the main categories found.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the corpus of examples is the role allocation given to women by presenting them as agents or patients; the examples show the presence of women in active sentences and their references as group instead of individuals. As van Leeuwen makes clear, "Activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as 'undergoing' the activity, or as being 'at the receiving end of it'" (2008, 33).

The majority of the examples show women as active, which goes together with the prominence they have had during the historical period under analysis. For instance, the next examples make reference to the women working in the health service, or getting degrees:

1) ions", the report said. "In the health service, women represented almost 80pc of all staff but less tha (II-BR-141206-1)
2) Women are getting more honours degrees than men but are paid less when they go into the workplace, new figures out today reveal (II- BR-12112008-1)

Out of the different categories of social actors the one that appears the most is that of worker, which will be included inside the category of functionalization, since women as "[…] social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance, an occupation or role" (van Leeuwen 2008, 42). This shows women's gradual incorporation into the labour market due to the new economic situation in Ireland.

There are many examples in which women are referred to as workers since there were many jobs offered in the period chosen for the analysis due to the positive growth of the Irish economy. For example, in 2006, there are some examples that make clear that more than 50% of women have now a paid job for the first time in the Irish history and they have started what traditionally was considered a male-dominated career:

3) 2006 Friday Six out of 10 women now work SECTION: NATIONAL NEWS LENGTH: 190 wor (II-BR-011206-1)
4) he first time in Irish history, more than 60pc of women are now working outside the home. And an increa (II-BR-011206-1)

There are examples worth mentioning because they evidence that women were in certain top positions for the first time. The following one is representative because it is one of the few in which the woman's name is shared with the reader:

5) anyone imagined. Stella Rimington was the first woman to become (II-BR-081108-1)

Sometimes, the importance of women in society is highlighted by comparing certain things they do with the ones done by men. The following examples focus not only on the activity itself they are involved in but also on their civil status:

6) ng it for themselves. For the first time, single women are buying more (II-BR-160908-1)

Ireland could see that women are gradually taking over the workplace, which involves that jobs and top positions were shared between both sexes progressively:

7) Ireland has seen a transformation in the role of women at work. Their (II-BR-100310-1)
8) orty-two per cent of people employed in 2010 were women, the highest (II-BR-050112-1)

However, it is also pointed out that the traditional role of caring was seen as women's responsibility:

9) cumstances. Caring duties still primarily fall on women and they are less inclined to attend late or over (II-BR-111206-1)
10) to change is the assumption that children are the woman's responsibility. Even when both parents are (II-BR-160508-1)
11) ent fund. The fact that the primary role of many women is caring also accounts for poor pension (II-BR-240212-1)

From the previous examples, we can see that there still exist certain pervasive stereotypes in Ireland, since women are thought to be more gifted for caring. Other stereotypes involving gender may peg the Irish woman as shopaholic:

12) emotionally, instead of making wise investments. "Women like shopping a lot. It's a sexist thing" (II-BR-050908-2)

The following examples make explicit that, although in recent years there have been many advances, women are treated differently than men, for example, in their salaries or in the time they devote to work at home, just as shown below:

13) FEMALE workers earn 150 a week less than men, new figures show (II- BR-29122006-1)
14) WOMEN working in the financial sector get paid up to 20,000 less than their male colleagues, according to a new survey (II-BR- 7112006-1)
15) gender inequalities still exist in the home, with women working on average an extra 39 minutes every day (II-BR-190608-1)
16) dig in the ribs, over a new report that suggests women do nearly 40 minutes more work a day than their (II-BR-110708-1)
17) THE vast majority of Irish women feel they are still treated as second-class citizens in the workplace, according to new research (II-BR-26082010-1)
18) The European Commission said the gap reflects women's problems balancing work and their private lif (II-BR-030312-1)

These examples make it clear that there are patent differences between both sexes at work. Most women have part-time jobs and, therefore, they earn less money because it is understood that the primary role of many women is caring. The fact that women have lower salaries than men implies that they take the risk of making their financial futures depend on men. Consequently, women could be left with nothing if they separated or divorced.

In addition, there are also clear differences in the number of women who have top positions in society, for example in politics, which contrasts with the few examples already presented some paragraphs above in this section that make reference to the jobs or degrees women have (see 1 and 2, above):

19) WOMEN continue to lag far behind their male counterparts when it comes to representation in decision-making structures at both national and regional level (II-BR-14122006-1)
20) only 15pc of seats in Leinster House are held by women. Most leadership positions are dominated (II-BR-080512-1)
21) rmination. When it comes to politics in Ireland, women are woefully under-represented. Just 25 women (II-BR-100312-2)

The references to women's age, race, religion or sexual orientation are concerned with the social category of identification, and specifically to classification; in van Leeuwen's words:

> Identification occurs when social actors are defined, not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they, more or less permanently, or unavoidably, are. […] In the case of classification, social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people. (2008, 42)

There are only four instances in which there are references to women's religious creed or sexual orientation; all of them were present in news articles published in 2012. This may involve that in the other examples women are understood to be heterosexual and Catholic, which have usually taken as the main, natural or normal tendencies in Irish society:

22) There's just one slight problem -- so are the women. All three are lesbians and are going to use tha (II-BR-280212-1)
23) d up in each other's arms. Nowadays heterosexual women work alongside red-blooded men. We sit beside (II-BR-250912-1)
24) ened up an opportunity otherwise denied to Muslim women and Abdallah says business is thriving (II-BR-200312-1)
25) r the anger and frustration of seeing five Muslim women in full niqabs walking straight through security (II-BR-200312-1)

Some other examples highlight the presence of black women in Irish society and their doing some important jobs:

26) arbara Jordan, who in 1972 became the first black woman elected to the House of Representatives (II-BR-030308-1)
27) educate herself and become Britain's first black woman judge. Beaten repeatedly with a stick for (II-BR-061208-1)
28) to Africa for a theme -- the empowerment of black women. Invitations to his 8.45pm show at the Royal (II-BR-170912-1)

Additionally, there are also examples that point out that black women faced a difficult situation, for example, the fact of suffering domestic violence or sexual harassment:

29) nd domestic violence habitually suffered by black women in the early years of the 20th Century (II-BR-031112-1)
30) Not every black woman who suffers sexual harassment in the workplace does so because of her race (II-BR-27092008-1)

I have analysed the references to women as migrant inside the category of race. The examples found in the corpus point out that immigrant women have more difficulties and that they are forced to undergo racist and sexist attitudes both inside and outside work (in the streets, at the shops, etc.); moreover, there are cases in which they are overexploited at work because they do not know their basic rights related to wages, holidays or maternity benefits:

31) CTION: NATIONAL NEWS LENGTH: 295 words MIGRANT women workers in Ireland suffer high levels of racism a (II-BR-061106-1)
32) eelings of social isolation and even fear. Some women had experienced highly sexualised racism and (II-BR-061106-1)

Therefore, following Hogan and Marandola (2005), the examples about immigrant women offer the possibility of talking about multiple vulnerabilities due to the fact that they suffer discrimination for their sex, race and the work they do. In this sense, Conlon makes the following statement, which is illustrated with some of the previous examples such as 29-32:

> As in most European nations, women in Ireland have entered the paid labor force in significant numbers (see O'Connor 2001; and O'Connell 2001) while immigrants, predominantly women, take up the tasks associated with the social reproduction of the domestic sphere (see Conroy 2003). Ironically then, as many Irish women have been thrown into the public domain of Celtic Tiger Ireland as independent professionals, immigrant women take up the historically nationalist ideological position of Irish women as caregiver and social/cultural reproducers of the nation-state. (Conlon 2007, 48-49)

Although it is not one of the outstanding categories in any of the years under analysis, there are some examples that point out that one of the changes that indicates that women are assuming a new role in society is the fact that they marry latter, they have fewer children or they even decide not to have children at all:

33) n ESRI study of census data shows that most Irish women now delay having children beyond 30 years of age (II-BR-100310-1)
34) been married by 18 and had children young but now women are more likely to marry late and have high (II-BR-200510-1)

Figure 1 below makes clear that women normally appear in active sentences and they are referred to as a group, not as individuals; in fact, there are very few examples dealing with specific women, called by their name and whose position in society is made explicit. As already mentioned in the previous section, the different collocations used intend to collectivize women and to refer to them by their function in society (what they do) and to their identity in terms of their race, age, status, etc.

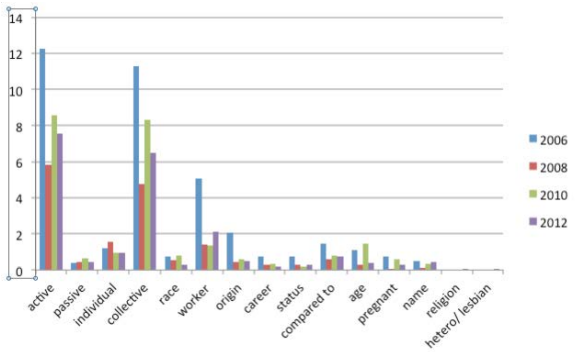

Figure 1: Comparison of the main categories used to refer to women in four years in *The Irish Independent*

As already mentioned, van Leeuwen (2008) makes clear that the different participants in the news articles can be referred to as individuals (individualization) or as members in a group (assimilation); and, in the words of Machin and van Leeuwen: "Which of these two options is chosen can make a significant difference to the way events are represented" (2005, 132). The fact that women are referred to as a group implies that there were many women who started to be visible in society and take positions in public places, which contrasts with their situation before the Celtic Tiger, when they largely stayed at home doing not-paid work and taking the traditional roles of nurturer and carer of their children.

Women are mainly referred to as workers out of the different categories taken into consideration (see Figure 1 above). This is very significant because this strategy clearly points out that at the end of the Celtic Tiger period and in the post-Celtic Tiger period women started to work outside home, which involved changes in their lives such as having more independence, having to work inside and outside home, and sharing housework with their partners. In this sense, it is interesting to mention the examples that offer a comparison between the situation of women and men in Irish society because they point out the ways in which women have improved their situation or the ways in which they continue being dependent upon men, have lower salaries or work more at home (see examples 13-21 above).

There are no great differences in the representation of women as social actors in the four years under analysis. If we compare the different categories in this period of time, it is interesting to observe that in 2010 more examples refer to the age of women than to their condition as workers; this is probably due to the fact that women have incorporated progressively to the labour market and now the newspaper is interested in pointing out the age of the women. However, in 2012 it is still the reference to women as workers the one that predominates followed by the examples in which women are compared to men to show their improvements or the situations that still need to change (see Figure 1).

5. *Conclusions*

In the present paper, I have observed how women are discursively constructed in a sample from the Irish press. In order to do so, CDA and CL are used to analyse the examples found. The press shows social realities and describes social actors, and language is the one of the most effective tools used to do so. For this reason, every lexical choice matters for the description/depiction/portrayal of women's condition.

It is outstanding that they are construed as such social actors in terms of the following categories: active-passive, individual-groups, work, status, origin, career, race, name, pregnant, name, religion, heterosexual or lesbian. The news-

paper articles analysed point out the presence of women in the labour market, which is a very important change in Irish society. Therefore, women start being less dependent upon men and their role is more active in society.

Even though there is no doubt of the presence of women in the main areas of Irish society during this six-year period, the examples analysed point out that there are still traditional stereotypes in society. This implies that women devote more time to work at home or they earn less money in certain jobs. In addition, some examples make clear that women feel as second class citizens and that some women rely on their partners because of having part-time jobs or inferior pensions when they retire. In consequence, it is observed that women are, on the one hand, more visible than they were before when their role was mainly at home; but, on the other hand, they are also more vulnerable than men.

Although there have been advances in the equal rights fight in the twenty-first century, it is still necessary to promote equality between women and men. In this sense, the prosperous economy of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland offered some women the opportunity of getting a job and being active in the labour market. However, this study has made clear that there are still differences between women and men in the salaries, positions and types of jobs.

Equality between women and men is not a fact in terms of power, visibility, salary, assumption of command, etc. in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger and the post-Celtic Tiger period. Therefore, feminism must question the social order established by the patriarchal system in which both sexes are far from being treated as equal, so that one sex has control over the other. This is one of the main ideas of the patriarchal system to keep women apart from power. For this reason, it is necessary to show the unfair reality that surrounds women in Ireland, to name it and to report it.

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The Language of Globalization in Contemporary Irish Poetry

Benjamin Keatinge
South East European University, Macedonia (<benkeatinge@gmail.com>)

Abstract:

This essay considers how contemporary Irish poets have responded to the changing socio-economic realities of Irish life since 1990. Through an examination of themes of work, consumerism, the encroachment of cyber-space and changing urban lifestyles, the essay demonstrates how Irish poets have risen to the challenge of finding a language to capture what Zygmunt Bauman characterizes as "liquid modernity". A range of poets are considered, including the late Dennis O'Driscoll, Rita Ann Higgins, Peter Sirr as well as Billy Ramsell, Kevin Higgins and Iggy McGovern. These poets' musings provide excellent examples of how the poet can turn the language of globalization into a critique of globalization's economic hegemony.

Keywords: consumerism, globalization, Ireland, language, poetry

1. *Introduction*

In her 2012 novel *The Devil I Know*, Claire Kilroy captures the spirit of economic frenzy in Ireland during the dying days of the Celtic Tiger:

> Calls had been made across the world. Contracts were being drawn up in various international financial institutions. Things had started to happen. We had flipped one of the hotels in London and shifted a shopping mall in Dubai, extracting value of over €100 million from those two alone, every cent of which we moved like a stack of poker chips onto the Pudong site, stationing our army at the mouth of this most strategic of ports [...] We kept an eye on the row of clocks, trying not to. Dublin, Dubai, Shanghai; not London, New York, Tokyo as of old. The axis of world power had shifted. [...] I was pleading for us to win. Every fibre of my being was focused on that outcome. *Bona fortuna*. That's when I experienced the startling revelation [...] Maybe wealth could be created out of debt and fortunes amassed overnight. (2012, 239)

All the essential ingredients of the economic mirage in Ireland are here, mediated through the preposterous narrator Tristram St Lawrence: the gamble on international and domestic property, the instantaneous money transfers across financial centres, the loans carried over by developers from previous

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investments, the new financial networks of power and the sheer belief that the money would never dry up and that the property business was a one-way bet on success and wealth. Of course, Kilroy's novel is a wry morality tale in which Tristram and his business partner, the developer Desmond Hickey, lose everything on this final roll of the dice. Meanwhile, the mysterious M. Deauville, Tristram's mentor, evaporates at the end of the novel in a Faustian denouement where all of the protagonists enter the damnation of post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland.

The period since the bank guarantee of 30 September 2008 and the EU-IMF bail-out announced on 21 November 2010 has been a period of consolidation and reflection, as well as deep social frustration and anger, as the consequences of Ireland's economic boom have become clear. The collapse of the Irish economy stemmed from a unique confluence of local and international factors, among which financial deregulation and globalization are of major importance. Economic experts have suggested that up until around 2001, the economic growth enjoyed in Ireland was still relatively healthy and perhaps sustainable, if prudently managed[1]. Growth had been export-driven, based on the investment of largely American capital in an Irish economy which boasted low corporate tax rates, a skilled workforce and access to European markets. However, in the period 2001-2007, the economy veered towards a construction and property boom which led to wild speculation by property developers, frenzied levels of building, irresponsible bank lending and an inflationary spiral. All of this was made possible by the globalization of the banking and financial sectors which enabled Irish banks to borrow money internationally in order to lend to Irish developers. When the credit crunch came, Irish banks were effectively insolvent, and only the infamous bank guarantee prevented bankruptcy of all Irish financial institutions. Nevertheless, the consequence of the guarantee has been the bankruptcy of the Irish state and has necessitated the draconian cut-backs implemented by the Irish government under the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 which in turn has been a consequence of the Irish state's recourse to the International Monetary Fund.

While the international banking crisis may have been the immediate cause of the Irish crash, it is also clear that Ireland's predicament is the outcome of deeper external and internal social and economic processes and uniquely Irish cultural mores. This predicament could be summarized in one word – property. Although Irish home-ownership levels are not outstandingly high by European standards (in the 2006 census, 75% of Irish residential property was owner-occupied), home ownership is still highly-prized in Ireland, especially house ownership, as opposed to more Continental-style apartment living. When wealth began to circulate in 1990s Ireland, many beneficiaries' first instinct was to invest in property; property speculation became, during the 1990s and 2000s, a national pastime. Another local factor has surely been Ireland's historic poverty. When the Irish economy began to grow, Irish

people understandably rejoiced in their new found wealth, but did not always use it responsibly. The lack of economic management, both on a micro- and macro-economic levels has led to the charge that the social and infrastructural benefits of the boom have been minimal and the fruits of prosperity have been squandered on the conspicuous consumption which was a feature of Irish life during the Tiger years.

No amount of poetic condemnation or criticism could have altered the political and economic direction Ireland followed during the Tiger years. Nevertheless, poets have enjoyed their traditional role of guarantors of the integrity of language in an environment where the devaluation and bowdlerization of language has been widespread and where the dictates of the market have created a newly vacuous vocabulary and set of ideas. Many examples of such vocabulary will be cited in this essay. I will argue that several Irish poets have written persuasively about the dangers of consumerism and of allowing the language of the marketplace too much sway. Political and social satire has enjoyed something of a revival in Irish poetry and one of the characteristics of good satire is to use the vocabulary of received ideas in order to mock those same ideas. At the same time, globalization and the modern economy have led to profound transformations in lifestyles and communications which go to the core of our relationships and private selves. Therefore, poets have had to find a language to describe new modes of existence in the twenty-first century, modes which reflect a globalized social reality.

The benefits and disadvantages of globalization are disputed by academics and laypersons alike and there is no poetic consensus about how Ireland's economic (mis)fortunes should be presented. The fact that, since 1995, Ireland has been ranked (in accountancy firm Ernst and Young's annual globalization index) as among the top three most globalized economies in the world, is represented poetically in many reflections on how Ireland's social fabric has been transformed. Most visibly, immigration to Ireland – of migrants from Eastern Europe, from Nigeria, from China and elsewhere – has given the major cities, especially Dublin, a newly cosmopolitan feel. Equally, the decline of the Catholic Church, in the wake of clerical abuse scandals through the 1990s and 2000s, has changed entirely the relationship of Irish people to traditional sources of moral authority. It has also opened up Irish people to the presence of other faiths, especially Islam, in their midst while also breaking the ties of Church and State in the realms of education, healthcare and social provision. The fact that international corporations have been attracted to Ireland by a low tax regime, but are now leaving, often with unseemly haste, has reminded all of us that international corporations and local communities are divergent entities; the profit motive does not consider local community interests. Clearly, poets are not economists, but they can observe and reflect on the changes which manifest themselves in Irish society as a direct or indirect result of the globalized economy.

This essay will consider globalization as a theme and phenomenon *in* contemporary Irish poetry. It will be less concerned with what might be termed the globalization *of* Irish poetry, or, indeed, of poetry in general. In an age of travel where writers and academics can appear at festivals and conferences in almost any part of the world, poetry and its practitioners are more than ever themselves part of a globalized environment. This situation is reflected in the number of noted Irish poets who live outside of Ireland – Paul Muldoon, Eavan Boland, Tom Paulin, Justin Quinn and (until relatively recently) Harry Clifton, to name just five émigré Irish poets. It is even reflected in the ambiguity of what, in the twenty-first century, constitutes an *Irish* poet. Historically, writers such as Louis MacNeice and Oscar Wilde, even Yeats himself, have been less than fully indigenous either in their country of residence or in their commitment to aspects of Irish nationalism. In more recent times, several Irish poets are equivocally Irish or Irish by conviction, if not birth. Richard Murphy, Ian Duhig, Peter McDonald and Eamon Grennan might all be seen as Irish in ways which serve to underline the difficulties of defining such identarian boundaries. All of this points towards what poet and critic Justin Quinn has termed "the disappearance of Ireland" (Quinn 2008, 194) as a focus of contemporary writing. According to Quinn, in an increasingly post-national environment, poets are less troubled by the matter of Ireland and he cites several important contemporary poets in support of this view, among them: Harry Clifton, Paul Durcan, Peter Sirr, David Wheatley, Vona Groarke and Conor O'Callaghan. Of course, Ireland never literally disappears from the work of these writers, far from it. But the globalization *of* poetry has led them, arguably, to view Ireland through the prism of their international experiences and frames of reference in a less introverted and less nationalistic way than their predecessors.

In his 2009 essay "Solitary Caverns: On Globalization and Poetry", American poet C.K. Williams reminds us that, ever since the Renaissance, change and evolution in poetry (and the other arts) has come about through the cross-fertilization of various national traditions. Indeed, it seems that all major cultural formations – the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism – are pan-European and international in character. Nevertheless, what Williams calls "a globalization of art" (2009, 553) may carry the same cultural dangers often associated with globalization, those of homogenization and conformity across national boundaries. One of the controversies and questions concerning globalization is whether such a process leads to greater cultural homogenization or whether, on the contrary, globalization may undermine national traditions but simultaneously strengthen local and regional identities in a process of so-called 'glocalization'. Certainly, the benefits and consequences of global economic processes for poetry and art are not yet fully understood and may yield some counter-intuitive surprises.

Just as artists and writers have always ignored national boundaries in their search for new styles and ideas, so the business and mercantile *élites* of

the world have always sought opportunities abroad. The early-modern period, in some ways, marks the beginnings of the colonial and pioneer trading networks which find their modern manifestation in the international money markets where vast sums can be transferred around the world at the touch of a button. Therefore, globalization as a process has been with us at least since the Renaissance; however, as a constellation of ideas and set of discourses, it emerges in the 1990s as a powerful explanatory tool for describing the new and complex networks of international trade and finance which the Irish economy tapped into during the Celtic Tiger. Perhaps the greatest difference between the modern global economy and those of preceding periods is that the level of interdependence of finance and trade is now so great that, in terms of economic policy, no country can be self-sufficient or avoid the international factors which drive or impede economic growth.

Irish poets have been quick to co-opt the idea of globalization and its vocabularies as a way of exploring perennial themes of identity, personal relationships, lifestyles and the workplace in the twenty-first century. The fact that Ireland has benefitted from globalization, but also suffered major economic reversals, because of this small island's exposure to the swings and roundabouts of the world economy, lends globalization a certain topicality within Irish culture. Equally, the evolution of Irish society away from essentialist definitions of Irishness towards a more pluralistic viewpoint – one which includes the Irish diaspora, immigrants to Ireland, non-Catholic Irish, various ethnic minorities, Northern Protestants – should serve as an indicator of the potential benefits of a discourse which helps account for a less insular Ireland. This essay, then, will look, first of all, at some of the satirical responses to the fall-out from the economic collapse since 2008; it will also explore how poets such as Dennis O'Driscoll have made the work and social patterns of the Celtic Tiger years one of the major aspects of their poetry. The essay will then explore some of the more insidious aspects of globalization – for example: call centres, internet spam, junk TV – under the heading of 'Depersonalized Spaces' and see how Irish poets have responded to the more impersonal features of the global technological revolution.

2. *Fool's Gold: Satire and Critique of the Celtic Tiger*

Within discourses of globalization, the term *précarité* – or in English, precarity – is often used to describe the social and economic experience of globalized, free-market capitalism in which the deregulated market threatens to undermine some of the hard-won social protections which are embodied in social-democratic models of society (Bremen 2013). Clearly, Irish experience since 2008 has been nothing if not precarious, with the near meltdown of the financial system and subsequent property collapse and recession. However, it could be argued that even during the years of economic growth,

precariousness is what exactly describes Irish social and economic experience. Although globalization is primarily an economic experience affecting the domains of work and consumption, it also arguably invades the inner corners of our private selves with a very modern sense of precariousness and transience which sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has referred to as the "liquid" (rather than "solid") experience of modernity under late capitalism. Even if new opportunities and new lifestyles have opened up in Ireland since 1990, the type of mobility, speed and dynamism which was a feature of the Tiger years, contains its own unique sense of vertigo so that the sudden reversal of the wheel of fortune may be seen as an extension, rather than inversion, of the vertiginous economic spiral of the Irish and global economy.

For Bauman, in his persuasive critique of globalization and modern consumerism, the nature of modern societies is entirely dictated by the needs of the market:

> The seminal departure that sets the *consumerist* syndrome most sharply apart from its *productivist* predecessor [...] seems to be the *reversal of values attached respectively to duration and transience*. The consumerist syndrome consists above all in an emphatic denial of the virtue of procrastination and of the propriety and desirability of the delay of satisfaction [...] the consumerist syndrome has degraded duration and elevated transience. It has put the value of novelty above that of lastingness. It has sharply shortened the timespan separating not just the wanting from the getting (as many observers, inspired or misled by credit agencies, have suggested), but also the birth of the wanting from its demise, [...] it has put appropriation, quickly followed by waste disposal, in the place of possessions and enjoyment that last [...] *The 'consumerist syndrome' is all about speed, excess and waste*. (2005, 83-84, italics in original)

The Celtic Tiger was a period of Irish history entirely in the grip of this consumerist syndrome. The beneficiaries of the boom took advantage of their new found purchasing power in order to acquire all the accoutrements of the modern consumer: fashionable clothes, holidays abroad, second homes, expensive cars, fine dining and, of course, more and more property. Indeed, one of the features of the boom was the decision by many young first-time buyers to get on the property ladder in case they would miss out entirely on the apparent property bonanza. Such "denial of the virtue of procrastination" and inability to delay the satisfaction of a major purchase has resulted in financial disaster for many Irish couples and individuals. In a society of "speed, excess and waste", individuals are interpellated, as Bauman (following Louis Althusser) suggests, as consumers so that earning and spending became the sole preoccupations of vast swathes of the populace. Irish society became a classic case of the consumerist syndrome which was expressed in the need to own and to consume and the generation of false needs in order to perpetuate and prop up economic order of things.

Perhaps the most perspicacious poet-critic of this state of affairs, in the 1990s and early 2000s, was the late Dennis O'Driscoll who used his poetic

gifts to critique the work-a-day world around him. His ironic and mordant criticism of Irish lifestyles in the Celtic and post-Celtic Tiger period makes him the most perceptive and effective poetic opponent of Ireland's hyper-consumerism and subsequent crash-landing in the past decade. In his poem "The Celtic Tiger", from his 1999 collection *Weather Permitting*, O'Driscoll neatly captures the heightened tempo and shallowness of the boom years:

Ireland's boom is in full swing.
Rows of numbers, set in a cloudless blue
computer background, prove the point.

[...]

Outside new antique pubs, young consultants
well-toned women, gel-slick men –
drain long-necked bottles of imported beer.

[...]

The old live on, wait out their stay
of execution in small granny flats,
thrifty thin-lipped men, grim pious wives . . . (2004, 145)

In a globalized and highly dynamic economy of rapid technological change, the old (defined as over-fifties) and the poorly educated are necessarily excluded. O'Driscoll's evocation of retiree couples in the globalized city foregrounds the fact that there are stark contrasts in lifestyle between the winners and losers in a consumer society. One of the more deplorable features of "liquid modernity" is the devil-take-the-hindmost attitude to social cohesion. In a newly acquisitive Ireland, to quote Bauman again:

> The need here is to run with all one's strength just to stay in the same place and away from the rubbish bin where the hindmost are doomed to land [...] Life in the liquid modern world is a sinister version of the musical chairs game, played for real. The true stake in the race is (temporary) rescue from being excluded into the ranks of the destroyed and avoiding being consigned to waste. (2005, 3)

Traditional Catholic Ireland may have been economically stagnant, but at least the exclusionary game of musical chairs was not a feature of national economic life to the same extent as the boom years.

In subsequent collections, O'Driscoll has extended his critique of the consumer economy via his focus on two themes – death and work – which he uses to offset the hedonism and acquisitiveness of Celtic Tiger Ireland. In a review of the 2002 volume *Exemplary Damages*, Adam Kirsch writes:

If death is the major theme of O'Driscoll's poetry, his favourite subject is work. He makes work – the routines and impedimenta of office life – a synecdoche for the standardised, globalised, pampered and otiose life led by the middle classes in the West, Ireland as much as Britain or America [...] his semi-sonnet sequence 'The Bottom Line' makes Dublin seem like a version of Detroit. (2003, 35)

The global equivalent of individual mortality is the unsustainability of economic life as currently lived in the West which, simply put, will exhaust the globe's resources at current rates of consumption. O'Driscoll spells this out for us in the poem "Exemplary Damages":

How will there ever be goods enough, white goods,
dry goods, grave goods, munitions, comestibles,
to do justice to all the peoples of the world?

Enough parma ham, however thinly curled,
to serve with cottage cheese and chives
in the cavernous canteens of high-rise buildings?

Enough rubs and creams, suppositories and smears,
mesh tops and halter necks, opaques and sheers?
How will there be enough flax steeped for smart

linen suits, enough sheep shorn for lambswool coats,
enough goats for cashmere stoles to wear on opening nights,
enough cotton yarn to spin into couture tops, flak jackets?

And can we go on satisfying orders for baseball caps, chicken nuggets,
body toning pads, camomile salve for chapped lips? And what quantity
of dolphin-friendly skipjack tuna meets a sushi bar's demands? (2004, 193-194)

Here O'Driscoll employs the language of the modern consumer, with suggestions of the liquid lifestyle of the upwardly mobile professional of the Celtic Tiger years whose dietary and sartorial tastes are deftly suggested. Implicit in this poem is O'Driscoll's sense of the superficial and blindly acquisitive nature of these apparent needs, especially since the goods mentioned are luxuries, not necessities. An older, more traditional Irish poem would regard such lifestyle choices as exotically foreign, not native. However, in a globalized city such as Dublin in the 1990s, these are the new, consumer-driven norms.

O'Driscoll pursues these concerns – of mortality, in the context of a finite and fragile world ecosystem – in his final published collection *Dear Life* (2012). Here again, he lambasts the money-changers and the speculators, but he also adopts, in places, a tone of solemn appreciation of life's blessings together with a sense of responsibility and concern for the future. So, the poem "Not the Dead" looks forward in a deprecatory and darkly funny way,

all the while evoking Bauman's sense of the disposability of both goods and people in liquid modernity:

It is not the dead who haunt us.
[...]
It is the not-yet-born
we are up against.
They will be the first to forget us.
[...]
Consign us to the past.
[...]
Outlast us. (2012, 57)

Another Dublin-based poet who shares some of O'Driscoll's ironic insights into the essential emptiness of Ireland's economic transformation is Iggy McGovern. As the title of McGovern's first collection – *The King of Suburbia* (2005) – implies, he is happy to foreground the ordinariness of his suburban environment by casting himself ironically as the monarch of Dundrum, king of the wheelie-bin and the bottle-bank and the suburban garden. In his more recent volume *Safe House* (2010), we find the following series of juxtapositions in "The Irish Poem Is" which tellingly unravels the conflict between traditional (indigenous) and modern (globalized) Irish identities:

a Táin Bó, a Spring Show, a video
a trodden dream, a parish team, a tax -break scheme
a prison cell, an Angelus bell, a clientele
a brinded cow, a marriage vow, a domestic row
a tattered coat, a puck goat, a telly remote
a game of tig, a slip jig, a U2 gig
a restored tower, a Holy Hour, a pressure shower
a ticking clock, a summer frock, a shock-jock
a hazel wand, a dipping pond, a page 3 blonde
a canal bank, a returned Yank, a septic tank
a green flag, a Child Of Prague, a Prada bag
a whispering sea, a Rose of Tralee, a transfer fee
a disused shed, a settle bed, a Club Med
[...]. (2010, 61)

This bewildering series of images and associations speaks for itself. While the majority of traditional images of Ireland are rural, it is the urban and materialistic counter-images which we recognise as best describing current social realities. By opposing clichés of traditional Ireland with modern equivalents, McGovern shows how the Celtic Tiger has bequeathed us its own set of associations which invade the fabric of our consciousness and become starkly recognisable when fed back to us in juxtaposition to more traditional cultural imagery.

The perspective of Galway-based poet Rita Ann Higgins on the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger conveys some of the anger and denunciation expressed by the public at large especially in their unceremonious rejection of Fianna Fáil in the 2011 general election. She has long been known as a poet from the margins who has championed minority causes and voices in her work. In her most recent collection titled *Ireland is Changing Mother* (2011) there are several arresting poems pointing out the political stupidity and corruption which has led to Ireland's economic collapse. Her poem titled "The Darkness" is a riposte to anyone who believed that Ireland's economic miracle was sustainable or that Bertie Ahern's version of socialism was credible:

it was dishcloth dreams
it was back on the dole queues
it was Fás schemes
it was refuse charges
it was Fás expenses
it was soap operas
it was pope operas
it was Spiddal in the middle
it was rain rain rain
[...]
it was tribunals
it was lost receipts
it was a limo, here a limo there
it was SSIAs (Rita Ann Higgins 2011, 19)

As with Iggy McGovern's poem "The Irish Poem Is", there is a rhetorical clarity here which hits its targets in a direct and vigorous way. All of the wrongdoing and corruption of the Celtic Tiger years is laid out in this three page poem: from "Biffo's budget" (reference to former Fianna Fáil Finance Minister and Taoiseach Brian Cowan whose mismanagement of the nation's finances arguably worsened the subsequent economic recession) to Michael Fingleton (former chairman of Anglo-Irish Bank, subsequently nationalized after massive losses), to the Health Service Executive (HSE), "foreign-owned banks" (Higgins 2011, 20), to NAMA (National Asset Management Agency) and An Bord Snip Nua (a government-commissioned report on possible budget savings published in 2009). Despite the global backdrop, these reference points are decidedly Irish; Ireland found its own distinctive way to go bankrupt and Higgins revels in some of the local points of reference well-known to Irish readers.

Nonetheless, Higgins (born in Galway in 1955) has had a productive poetic career which spans a period beginning well before the years of economic plenitude in the 1990s and early 2000s. From her first volume *Goddess on the Mervue Bus* (1986), she has drawn particular attention to the situation of

working mothers and to poverty and social exclusion in her native Galway. As a bilingual writer currently living in Spiddal in the Galway Gaeltacht, Higgins has also written about her relationship to the Irish language and its ever-dwindling community of native speakers. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, to find a poem (in the 2005 volume of new and selected poems, *Throw in the Vowels*) which deals with an older and more traditional form of globalized Irishness: the church missions to Africa, South America and Asia, part of the Irish Catholic Church's historical contribution to worldwide Christianity. Even up to 1980, the Catholic priesthood would have been a not unusual career choice in the highly circumscribed choices presented to Irish school-leavers. Even though this is now a vanished Ireland, Higgins reminds us of its grim legacy as has been revealed in several investigations during the 1990s and 2000s into sexual misconduct among the Catholic clergy:

They say Ambrose had a smashing global outlook,
[...]
When he could hardly walk
he was collecting for the black babies.

So it came as no great shock to us
when one pancake Tuesday word rose up the queue
that Ambrose got a black baby of his own
and he married her.
She was twelve and three quarters. (2005, 190)

Higgins' work reflects the tensions within a wider Irish society between conservative, traditional forces and modernizing tendencies. A poem published in 2005 about a church missionary appears to hark back to a bygone era, but the link the clerical child abuse makes it entirely contemporary. Likewise, a poem published in the 2010 volume *Hurting God* titled "When the Big Boys Pulled Out" reminds us that the economic challenges of globalization are not necessarily new in Ireland. The modernization of the Irish economy really began in earnest with the publication in 1958 of the *First Programme for Economic Expansion* authored by economist and civil servant T.K. Whitaker at the behest of then Taoiseach Seán Lemass who was determined to reverse de Valera's economic isolationism. This strategy to attract foreign investment was partially successful with a modest economic recovery during the 1960s. However, Higgins evokes a Galway of the 1980s when some of the newly established industries "pulled out" thus exposing the vulnerability of the Irish economy to outflows of capital investment: "Our fag breaks / became our summer holidays / when the Big Boys pulled out" (2010, 48).

Another Galway-based poet with a distrust of the "Big Boys" is Kevin Higgins, author of four volumes which mingle reflections on his own brand

of left-wing politics with several state of the nation poems alongside satires of political mismanagement and corruption. Born in England, Higgins' family returned to Ireland in 1974 when he was seven to live in Galway and Higgins experienced the worst of 1980s recessionary Ireland as well as the upheavals of Thatcher's England. His take on the Celtic Tiger and its aftermath is predictably acerbic. The sanitized, politically-correct Ireland of recent times is described in the 2010 volume *Frightening New Furniture* as "this minimalist spaceship / where people just sip their decaffeinated water / and listen to David Gray" (2010, 21). The poem "That Was My Country" from the same volume, displays an ironic nostalgia for a less (or possibly more) wholesome Ireland: "When there was planning permission / for anything and morning / was breakfast baps and gravel / going back that road by the truckload" (2010, 24). Higgins' poetry present the poet's persona as a self-deprecating, aging radical whose memories of political counter-culture from the early 1980s cannot help but cast in a negative light the new, insipid but superficially improved Ireland of more recent years.

3. *Depersonalized Spaces*

In the realms of clinical psychology and psychiatry, the term "depersonalization"[2] is sometimes used to refer to a psychic state which entails a self-division and inner alienation. The subject or patient feels disconnected from his/her inner self while at the same time feeling estranged from outer reality; it is therefore a kind of double alienation which threatens the stability and integrity of the self. The term "postmodern schizophrenia"[3] is sometimes advanced, in the context of Frederic Jameson's theories of post-modernity, as a way of describing the modern subject's disconnectedness from social and historical realities and Jean Baudrillard's theorization of "the simulacrum" has attempted to describe a postmodern mediatized non-reality which has lost its grounding in a localizable, actual social or geographical space (Baudrillard 1988).

Clearly, in the age of the internet and modern communications technologies, all of us are challenged by a lack of groundedness which can lead to distortions in our own sense of self-identity. Even a relatively simple transaction of watching the daily news on TV can be disorientating in its bewildering conflation of various events across the globe which may have little or no direct relevance to our daily lives. We are all spectators, but we don't control always what we see and how it is presented to us. More controversially, we are also victims of surveillance by agencies around the world; every e-mail we send can be read by intelligence agencies. Our financial, professional and personal histories leave traces across the world wide web so that our sense of personal autonomy and integrity is increasingly besieged. Interestingly, schizophrenia is an illness which may entail paranoia and delusions of volition; a patient may not feel his/her actions and movements belong to him/her and may feel controlled involuntarily by external agencies. Such is our daily experience as

Jameson and others have suggested and it is a psycho-social dilemma which some contemporary Irish poets have engaged with.

In the blurb on the back cover of Cork-based poet Billy Ramsell's 2007 volume *Complicated Pleasures*, we find the following comments: "[Ramsell's poems] attempt to stake out a 'personal space' in a violent world of systems, machines and twenty-four hour surveillance where privacy, language and even memory itself are under permanent threat". Ramsell's collection amply shows that the personal is the political even while he tries to resist the encroachments of globalized cyber-systems into his personal space. However, the poems register as a kind of silent alarm or nameless dread that "those digital minds [...] with their fibre optics" ("You and the Sea", 2007, 55) can penetrate the poet's most private thoughts and wishes. There is a dose of postmodern paranoia in the poem titled "Silent Alarm":

Feel that? One of those inexplicable shivers,
the flesh stretching at the base of your neck,
rippling in a wave-pattern?
You're being credit-checked
by a mainframe in Brussels.
Your girlfriend's sister's Googling you
in a Liverpool cybercafé. (2007, 58)

The sense of being manipulated by unseen and unnamed forces is part of Ramsell's sense of postmodern depersonalization even within private spaces and even in the most intimate moments of his personal life. In the poem "Still Life with Frozen Pizza", Ramsell presents the speaker as passive and semi-catatonic victim of the global networks which encroach upon him:

I unwrapped the plastic and slid the icy disc
onto the oven shelf. 15 minutes later, as the TV rippled
into wakefulness, the tray made a presentable still life:
[...]
I navigated Countdown, sitcoms, pantomime wrestling,
rolling news. Somewhere bombs were falling:
the crosshairs at the centre of the grainy video.
A building dissolved in dust, its crater spoiling
the streetscape's geometric perfection. (2007, 52)

Ramsell here seems to be manifesting a globalized world-weariness which leaves him indifferent even to the bombs falling, close at home or far away. An ironized allusion to Seamus Heaney's poem "Digging" ("the remote / that liked to sit in my hand, snug as a gun", 2007, 52) makes us painfully aware of just how far we are from any traditional sense of rootedness or belonging. More than merely weekday fatigue, the poem presents an invasive globalized non-reality which induces panic and passivity in equal measure from the poet.

The kind of depersonalized loneliness evoked by Ramsell is keenly felt in another cyberspace poem by Peter Sirr from his collection *Bring Everything* (2000). Sirr worked for a number of years as Director of the Irish Writers' Centre. At one stage, in this role, his was in daily receipt of e-mail messages destined for the Irish Wildbird Conservancy which resulted in his poem "The Beautiful Engines":

for the king eider seen off Brow Head, the scarlet rosefinch on Rockabill,
Baird's sandpiper seen last evening in Ballycotton

flocking in daily error to my computer,
fluttering their names as I log on,
[...]
it would have been terrible to miss:
an engine released at last from its name
to flicker like lightning in the brain,
the valves of the planet looming through glass . . . (2004, 77)

In an interview with David Wheatley, Sirr comments that: "I'm interested in computer technology so I read a lot of technical stuff about operating systems and so forth" (2005, 70). His poems have an impersonal feel which undermines any sense of a lyrical-I behind the verses. In the above poem, cyber space, bird migration and the travels of diverse bird-enthusiasts, whose lives Sirr accidentally learns about, are presented as a relatively benign version of our cyber-histories circumnavigating the planet, though the final stanza is full of mechanical menace.

Aingeal Clare remarks in her introductory article on Peter Sirr, published in *Metre* magazine in 2005, that Sirr's poetry: "hints at a desire to unpick conventional notions of poetic persona" and that Sirr is working from a position of "non-identity" resonant with "the Portuguese modernist Fernando Pessoa" whom Sirr has cited as one of his major influences (Clare 2005, 77). The poem "Gospels" is full of machines which seem to supplant the lyric subject. The poet is "sucked out of sight [...] / erasure's emperor" (Sirr 2004, 73). Sirr's poetry only occasionally, and then obliquely, addresses the socio-economic crisis of contemporary Ireland in such poems as "James Joyce Homeloans" and "Office Hours" both from the 2004 collection *Nonetheless*. However, in a wider sense, his poems articulate a nomadic subjectivity which appears to reflect the globalized networks of communication which dominate our world.

4. *Conclusion*

Writing in his editorial in the summer of 1986 to Issue 16 of *Poetry Ireland Review*, Terence Brown complained that:

I get very few poems that address political or social issues directly [...] Reading the bulk of the submissions it is sometimes possible to forget that we are living through a period of profound social and political crisis, so intent are the poets on the exploration of the private world which is assumed to possess unquestionable validity. (1986)

It is clear, however, that Ireland's current economic plight has stimulated a fair amount of social engagement on the part of this sample of established and emerging poets. To speak coherently about contemporary Ireland, global discourses and networks must be considered. In an interview published in *The Paris Review* in 1987, Samuel Beckett referred to "consternation behind the form" of his own work. Even though the context and occasion is different, one might reasonably suggest that the precarity of globalized modernity, as manifested in Ireland's economic boom and bust, has prompted some well-sculpted consternation on the part of contemporary poets. The consternation is a formal artistic response to a "new world disorder" (Bauman 1998, 59) which has engulfed Ireland and threatened her sovereignty and survival.

Notes

[1] For example, Fintan O'Toole comments: "In essence, the real boom lasted from 1995 until 2001. What made it real were two forces [...]: sharp rises in output per worker (productivity) and manufacturing exports. Productivity growth slowed between 2000 and 2006 to its lowest level since 1980. [...] By 2008, Irish productivity levels were below the OECD average" (O'Toole 2009, 20).

[2] This term originated in the field of existential psychiatry and was popularized in Scottish anti-psychiatrist R.D. Laing's study *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1960).

[3] For extensive discussion of the cultural history of this term see Chapter 6 'Postmodern schizophrenia' of Angela Woods' study of the uses of the term 'schizophrenia' in cultural and critical discourses titled *The Sublime Object of Psychiatry: Schizophrenia in Clinical and Cultural Theory* (2011).

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Reaching out Towards the Interstitial: Linguistic Preferences and Cultural Implications in Italian Translations of Contemporary Irish Poetry

Debora Biancheri
National University of Ireland (<debora.biancheri@nuigalway.ie>)

Abstract:

This article engages primarily with a volume of translations from Pearse Hutchinson published by Trauben in 1999, *L'anima che baciò il corpo*. While on the one hand the textual analysis of single poems reveals distinctive traits and peculiarities of each translation, on the other it highlights translation norms which are typically used in relation to poetry as a genre. Precisely, the translation strategy assessed in this article is one that articulates a manifest "mediation" of the source text. In this sense poetry translation, in neat contrast to what happens within the domain of fiction, endorses the paradoxical premise that accepting difference is a necessary step to create a condition of equality between two cultures, thus allowing difference and sameness to exist simultaneously.

Keywords: domestication, Hutchinson, Irish poetry, mediation, translation

The complexity of translation consists in many overlapping factors, which have been widely discussed in recent years in the context of Translation Studies. In this article I would like to pay particular attention to one aspect of translation which is effectively captured by George Gadamer in his statement that, in the target text, "the meaning must be preserved, but since it must be understood within a new language world, it must establish its validity within it in a new way" (Gadamer, Misgeld, Nicholson 1992, 384). More specifically, I would like to explore the practical ramifications of the "new ways" in which the target text interacts with its receiving context by appraising some Italian translations of Irish poet Pearse Hutchinson. Thereby the focus will be on source texts belonging to a relatively 'minority culture' – Ireland – translated into a relatively 'minority language' – Italian. Configurations where the translating flow under examination is moving within the Western cultural paradigm have been progressively overlooked in recent years, as the influence

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of postcolonial theories have shifted critical attention towards more exotic or politically charged encounters[1]. However, there is a case to be made for the study of deceivingly 'neutral' contexts of exchange, as the absence of tangible ideological pressures provides a model where the representation of difference can be foregrounded in terms of their literary re-articulation and cultural relevance within the receiving context. The same objective is reflected by the decision to engage with poetry. As Lawrence Venuti eloquently maintained:

> The marginality is in fact the first reason to move poetry closer to the center of translation studies. Poetry translation attracts a narrow audience and therefore occupies a tenuous position in the process of commodification that allows other literary genres, notably the novel, to become lucrative investments on the foreign rights market. (2011, 127)

With this in mind, I will try to assess the articulation of difference in the translations of Hutchinson's poems as the result of a subtle balance between distancing and mediation. Textual analyses of the target texts and the paratextual elements supporting them will reveal that they aspire to the creation of new knowledge through an attentive interaction with 'constructed readers' who possess competencies which are plausible for somebody who belongs to an Italian cultural paradigm. In this article the notion of constructed reader is meant to refer to the conscious embodiment of the publishers' and translators' expectations of their potential readers. However it does not necessarily correspond to an actual reader, or 'imagined reader', who could be tentatively outlined through a social analysis of Italian reading habits but whose profile is bound to remain nonetheless speculative and ultimately elusive. The notion of constructed reader, as a function embedded within the translations, can instead be univocally determined through an objective evaluation of characteristics of the target text. Viewed like this, it gives a relevant indication of the projection of the reader implicitly addressed by the translation strategy implemented for a specific text. Acknowledging this close relationship between translation strategies and reception is important to understand one crucial reason behind the existing differences in the norms of translation regulating different literary genres. In particular, it provides the critical underpinning to assess poetry translation as performed by the Turin-based publisher Trauben, as an activity that allows "newness entering the world", as Homi Bhabha would say (2000).

1. *Mediating the Foreign: the Challenge of Releasing the Transformational Charge of Translation*

Pearse Hutchinson's work emerges from within a bilingual Irish tradition, which he connects with a multilingual European tradition. He marries successfully two rather distinctive veins within the domain of Irish poetry, i.e.

the Gaelic roots and the European dimension. Not only does the combination of these two traditions give voice to anxieties deriving from historical circumstances, but it can also be seen as the expression of the poet's personal feelings: his nostalgia and, ultimately, his view on men and reality. If, on the one hand, the universality of Hutchinson themes helps his poetry transcend the limits of the individual and personal sphere, on the other, the specific references to idioms and codes of different traditions – which are very rarely described – constitute a considerable challenge to the readers' comprehension of his poetic voice. This difficulty is further increased once the work is exported abroad. The driving inspiration behind a considerable number of Hutchinson's poems is the relationship between modern Ireland and the symbols of the former imperial power. The subtleties of this theme, however, can be lost when the poetry is uprooted from its original environment.

The publisher Trauben was probably the best equipped for the challenging task of mediating Hutchinson to the Italian audience, as it can rely on an active network of collaborators from Turin University, which hosts a *Centro Studi Celtici.* The activity of this centre has fostered the study of Irish literature and helped to establish dynamic cultural relations between Italy and Ireland. The translators who work for Trauben, can therefore count on specific expertise, and also on the 'friendly collaboration' of the author, as acknowledged at the end of the volume. This article aims to assess the strategies employed in the Italian translation of Hutchinson's poetry, in order to show how this author is presented to Italian readers and potentially perceived by them. It also suggests that these translation strategies should facilitate a dialogue between Italian and Irish culture through the creation of a contact zone inherently hybrid.

The volume titled in Italian *L'anima che baciò il corpo*, opens with a brief introduction written by the translator Melita Cataldi, Irish scholar and director of *Centro Studi Celtici*. She emphasises Hutchinson's love for languages and for words; not only for his ancestral language, Irish, or his native language, English, but also for languages belonging to other epochs and cultures, like Old Irish, Catalan, Portuguese and even Italian dialects. Thus, the translator offers an important interpretative lens to the readers, who are invited to see the poems as "riflessioni sulle parole". More specifically, these become reflections on the injustices against human nature, which are perpetrated in the form of violence and impositions upon their language (Hutchinson 1999, 8).

Hutchinson's sensitivity to language is further explored in the interview with the author included at the end of the volume. This conversation touches on issues concerning his personal and cultural background, which can retrospectively endow his poetry with further meanings and nuances. The question of the Irish language is rather prominent. The emotional layer of this delicate issue is tentatively recovered in the recounting of an anecdote about young Pearse, who was invited by his Irish-speaking mother not to address an old woman asking for money as a "beggar", but as a "poor old woman". Besides

emphasising the peculiar attitude to words and their relation with the world displayed by the Irish, the anecdote also reveals the folkloric substratum behind the language, since the "poor old woman" is traditionally associated with the representation of Ireland itself as the *Seanbhean Bhocht* (134). In the interview, Hutchinson also offers a brief history of the language, which is narrated from his personal point of view, and resonates with the commotion of somebody deeply involved in it. The Irish is described as "so old and so new", because it was never used in a modern way until the 1950s, with the only exception of Padraig Pearse, Pádraic Ó Conaire and a few others, and as it remained "untouched by the stiffness of the Victorian age" (135). This background, especially the emotional resonance that the issue of language may have for an Irish person, is essential to embrace the discoursal construction of the Self as articulated in Hutchinson's poetry. The expansion of the textual perspective in order to incorporate the cultural Other into the familiar and the recognisable is one of the goals of the translation strategy that I propose to call mediation. This is often achieved by complementing the inclusion of relevant information in the paratextual apparatus with a number of specific interventions on the target texts.

One of the most frequent effects produced by the Italian translations in *L'anima che baciò il corpo* is that of creating a certain detachment from the content of the poetic material, so as to invite the target readers to preliminary engage with it with a critical outlook, rather than being left striving for an emotional involvement that is very unlikely to occur. This perspectival 'distancing' from the subject matter, which is to some extent inevitable, can be assessed in relation to "Achnasheen", one of the poems that deals more directly with the issue of the Irish language. The translator, Rosangela Barone, chose to keep the original title. While this option is often perceived as a foreignising device, useful to bring readers close to the source culture, it also brings those unacquainted with Gaelic to unfamiliar territory – unintelligible and unpronounceable at the same time. Equally difficult to decode for most Italian readers is the Scottish placename of Beinn Àilleagan, which appears in the second part of the poem, and should instead be representative of the few Gaelic names that have not been distorted by English renaming and therefore still carry their original meaning. Precisely for these reasons, the translator seems to pursue a strategy that consciously emphasises the otherness of the poem.

The translation of the first line should aptly illustrate how the effect of distancing is achieved also through subtle linguistic manipulations. The quite colloquial and direct verse "You'd miss the Gaelic from the placenames" becomes the more formally articulated sentence "da questi toponimi non ricavi il gaelico", in which not only the familiar word "placename" becomes the more technical "toponym", but the sentence is rearranged so that the idea of "missing" the Gaelic behind them is much less forcefully expressed. The core meaning of the Italian sentence does correspond quite literally to the source text, but the way

in which is formulated fails to evoke the tangible sense of loss that a verb like "to miss" implies. Later on, in one crucial stanza of the poem, other stylistic choices seem to weaken the evocative power of the source text (66-67):

You'd almost think the conquerors thought/ Gaelic was God:/ its real name unnameable.	Ti viene quasi da pensare che nella mente dei conquistatori/ gaelico equivalesse a Dio:/ da non nominare il suo vero nome.

The English presents an unusual syntax and its real strength lies in the paronomasia, which consists in the repetition of different words with a common etymological root: think/thought, name/unnameable, which in turn creates the illusion of a link between the juxtaposed words of "Gaelic" and "God", thus simultaneously suggesting the personification of the Gaelic language. This structure disappears in the Italian translation. Even in the last stanza, where the paronomasia is partly kept with the substantive "nome" and the verb "nominare", the ambivalence of the noun-adjective "name unnameable" is lost. In fact, whereas the English encompasses the meaning of both something that you "don't have to" name, because it is forbidden, and something you "cannot" name, because it is impossible, the Italian solution opts for the single meaning of "forbidden," thereby failing to address the unpronounceable nature of the Irish language from the perspective of the English conquerors. The "distance" between the text and the constructed reader of the translation is increased also by the way the first line of the stanza is re-arranged. The source text creates the impression of an "overlapping" between the reader's sensibility and the "conquerors thought," reinforcing the meaning that the line "You'd almost think the conquerors thought" taken in isolation may have. This may allude to the effect of a daily confrontation with a land and a language shaped by "conquerors", as shown by the poem which is in fact written in English. The Italian translation "nella mente dei conquistatori" automatically places the readers outside the conquerors' frame of mind. They are just observing traits of this mentality, but they are not "haunted" by them. Amongst the other techniques used to consolidate a "distancing" effect, there is the employment of italics. This device is used in the bilingual poem "She Fell Asleep in the Sun" / "Si è addormentata al sole":

A woman from Kerry told me
what she'd always heard growing up was
leanbh ón ngréin:
a child from the sun.

Mi disse una donna del Kerry
di aver sentito dire negli anni
leanbh ón ngréin:
un figlio del sole.

The few lines or words in the Irish language are kept unaltered but they are italicised in the Italian translation, which defies the natural merging of the two languages as in the original. This is quite legitimate since no natural merging exists between Italian and Irish. Arguably, the Italian version keeps intact the "mixed" sentence "garsúinín beag mishtake" for the same reason:

And when a friend of mine from Tiernahilla
admired in North Tipperary
a little lad running round a farmyard
the boy's granda smiled:
'garsúinín beag mishtake'

E quando un mio amico del Tiernahilla
guardava ammirando nel Nord Tipperary
un piccolo che correva nell'aia
il nonno del bambino sorrise:
'garsúinín beag mishtake'

The stanza is supplied with an endnote that provides a translation of the last line and explains the bastardised English form "mishtake". The endnote goes even further by giving an interpretation of the final part of the poem:

Not to mention the long,
leadránach,
latinate, legal, ugly
twelve-letter name not
worthy to be called a name,
that murderous obscenity – to call
any child ever born
that excuse for a name
could quench the sun for ever.

Per non dire di quell nome lungo,
leadránach,
latineggiante, legale, brutto,
nelle sue dodici lettere, non
degno s'essere un nome,
quella crimilae oscenità – dare
a qualsiasi bambino mai nato
quell pretesto di un nome
potrebbe spegnere il sole per sempre.

In these stanzas the word "illegitimate" is evoked without being uttered. The explanation in the endnote is necessary because the clues provided by Hutchinson to figure out the unuttered word might not be very enlighten-

ing for an Italian reader, who should be looking for the word "illegittimo." Although "legal" and "ugly" may still apply, "latinate" would lose its distinctiveness since it refers to the majority of the Italian vocabulary and "twelve-letter name" is simply not true for the Italian eleven-letter word. In this and many other instances, the endnotes play a pivotal role in conveying the full import of the poetic work and they have to be seen as an integral part of the translation. The textual analysis of the translation proper, therefore, cannot be assessed as a single specimen of text without a context, as it comes to acquire its full significance only in conjunction with other parts of the volume, which is intended to be read as an organic whole.

These examples can give a preliminary idea of the policy followed by Trauben, partly based on leaving as unaltered as possible the visible hallmarks of foreignness carried by the poems. At the same time, readers are alerted on the fact that these texts are written from the writer's more or less conscious standpoint. He therefore articulates his own culture and has a very different perspective than that of his Italian readers. This does not mean that a full responsive understanding would be possible only if the audience shared the same socio-cultural conditions in which the source text is produced, as this would defy the idea of translation itself, an act that entails the compliance with requirements of communication existing within the receiving culture. However, the choice of placing the Italian readers "outside" the texts while at the same time supplying them with an ample array of critical tools seems a rather effective way to grant them immediate recognition of their inevitable disconnectedness from the otherness of the texts. Moreover, this choice allows to guide the reception of Hutchinson's poems in Italian towards a more challenging and enriching experience.

2. *The Deliberate Acknowledgement of the Arbitrariness of Translation as a Way to Overcome it without Eradicating Difference*

As previously mentioned, thanks to Cataldi's critical intervention and an interview with the author, the volume *L'anima che baciò il corpo* provides important insights on Hutchinson's poetry. The brief introduction in particular can be read as a form of "compensation", since here the translator tries to make up in advance, through commentaries, some inevitable alterations that will occur in the body of the texts. For instance, she directly comments on Hutchinson's experimentation with words by stating that this is clearly reflected in his poetic style, especially in the mix of heterogeneous forms and registers. It is as if the translator wanted to justify why, on so many occasions, the Irish poet's creativity with language appears thwarted in its Italian variant, where the formal and grammatical constraints to be met are different. One pertinent example is found in the poem "The Frost is All Over" (70-71), where the translator is faced with the line "and winged them blood-flowers", whose strength derives from a formal condensation, due to the transformation

of "wing" into a verb and the creation of the compound "blood-flowers". As both these processes are almost inconceivable in Italian, the directedness and intensity of this poetic expression is almost impossible to reproduce. Hence, the translated sentence results in an expanded version of the English verse: "e imposero loro ali di fiori di sangue". The need for clarity compromises not only the source text's audacity with language, but its conciseness as well.

Even texts with fewer evident poetic qualities present challenges for the translator, due to natural asymmetries in languages. For instance, in the third text selected for the collection – going by the telling name of "Prose" / "Prosa" (19-20) – there are problems in keeping an adequate pace in translation. Concise lines like "They grudgingly agreed – he was truly an O.K. name" need to be developed in Italian into longer sentences: "Benché riluttanti acconsentirono alla richiesta: si trattava veramente di un nome sicuro". With the addition of the concessive conjunction "benché" (although), the explicitation of the object "richiesta" (request), and the informal "O.K. name" becoming the more determined "nome sicuro" (safe name), the target text is once more sacrificing the colloquial briskness of the source. An even clearer case is the development of the expression "scholar-preambled" into the full-length sentence "dopo essere stato presentato secondo le formalità accademiche", literally "After having been introduced according to academic formalities". Although taken as they are those translation choices could easily fall within the realm of linguistic domestication – as fluency in the target language prevails over the stylistic effect of the source text – it has to be remembered that the source texts are readily available beside each translation. This means that the constructed readers are still able to interact with them and appreciate the stylistic effects of the English or Irish language, while being instructed about the meaning by the target texts.

In other instances, the peculiarity of the Irish voice is tentatively maintained in the target text, such as the literal translation of "A lovely crisp cracking thing" with "una bella cosa nuova e frusciante". However, even though the recurrence of "cosa" in Italian is much less frequent than "thing" in Irish, and its introduction in an unusual position might indeed trigger a sense of estrangement, this by no means can be linked to a speech peculiarity of Irish-English. This is why the introduction plays such a significant role in shaping the real achievements of the translation. Here Cataldi anticipates most of the stylistic qualities that will be encountered in the collection, like the alternation of lyric and prose, emotional and meditative tones, civic engagement and mere divertissement. More importantly, she addresses the poet's sharp sensibility to sounds and silence and to accents and pauses in the rhythm, a feature that, as briefly shown, very rarely can be maintained in the translated version without disrupting other characteristics simultaneously present in a poem. By openly drawing attention to the main reasons which make Hutchinson's sense of rhythm so difficult to reproduce in translation, rather than acknowledging its failure, the translator is effectively "making it work".

A good example of the challenges posed by a poem relying on descriptions of places and people which are rendered vivid precisely by the sounds through which they are evoked is "Malaga" (12-13), which opens the Italian collection. The irregular but very important rhymes and repetitions in this poem are quite distinctive. This clearly emerges from a simple overview of the words at the end of each verse, which appear in the following order:

beach//t**own**/d**own**/fl**ower**/p**ower**/p**eace**/rel**ease**/sc**ent**/w**ent**
b**each**/r**each**/p**eace**/rel**ease**/cont**ent**/sc**ent**
ch**ild**/w**ild**/t**rimmed**/b**rimmed**/p**eace**/rel**ease//t**each**/b**each**

Thanks to the rhyming scheme the pictures evoked by the words are somehow enhanced by the cohesiveness of the sound. More importantly, the repetition of "beach", "peace", "release" and "scent", obsessively returning in prominent positions at the end of the verse, gives quite precise connotations to the mental image the poem is trying to convey. In the Italian version, the rhyming scheme has to be reconfigured and, compared to the source, the appearance of words in final positions seems to lack a precise pattern:

notturna//costiera/**gelsomino**/intenso/potenza/completa/**abbandono/gelsomino**/noi
meridiana/coglieva/sconfinata/**gelsomino**-/brama/giugno
urbana/**stel**lati/**stel**i/mese/pace/**abbandono//**insegnare/estate

The heavy rhyming patterns are not reproduced, yet the translator attempts to retain some melodic cohesion by introducing the alliterations *stellati* and *steli,* and by keeping some repetition of the same words which recur in the source text, at least in the body of the translation if not at the end of the verse. An attempt to maintain some sort of repetition can be found in the consistent choice of the word "abbandono" in order to render the English "release", a concept which does not have a perfect Italian equivalent. Although the noun "abbandono" might very well come to mean "let oneself go", its direct derivation from the verb "abbandonare" may suggest some negative connotations that "release" does not have. In point of fact, another perfect translation for "release" would be the Italian word "liberazione", which expresses a concept very close to "free oneself". Also, it is strictly associated with the word "libertà", freedom, a nuance that the choice of "abbandono" fails to capture. In any event, this Italian rendition seems to be determined by the first occurrence of the word "release" in the verse "and even love at last had perfect calm release", where the Italian "e persino l'amore alla fine aveva un perfetto calmo abbandono" is perfectly appropriate. The use of a derivative of the same word in the second recurrence, where the English "the night brought jasmine's great release" turns into "la sera portava il grande abbandonarsi al gelsomino", is slightly more problematic. In this case, the

unusual nominalisation of the verb "abbandonare" renders the whole sentence rather cryptic. This is especially true because of the switch in focus from the jasmine to some impersonal, unidentified subject that "let itself go" to its scent. In the context of the verse, "release" is rather referring to the "dispersion" of the flower's scent, an idea that would be aptly captured by the Italian "lo sprigionarsi del profumo del gelsomino", but in this case, obviously, the cohesive effect created by repetition would have been lost.

The translation shows a remarkable awareness of the meaning and effect of the source poem, as "gelsomino" is the only word which maintains its position at the end of the line. It is as if the translator had identified the most iconic image in the poem and recreated the effect of the pervading sensation of its scent by enhancing the visibility of the word, using the same device used in the source text. The other components of the target text, of course, needed to be accommodated around this choice. However, this attests to the critical sensibility with which the translation is performed, as the effect ideally produced on target readers is comparable to the feeling the source text may inspire in its readers. Overall, it seems safe to assume that the target text's intermediate position between a straightforward favouring of the sounds or of the content is a deliberate strategy. In this light, the price paid by sacrificing to some extent the content and the sounds of the source has to be seen as an intentional compromise to be able to keep them both.

A closer look at one verse of this poem will give a better idea of the quantitative and qualitative nature of the compromises that had to be made in the Italian version as far as internal and end rhymes are concerned:

In daytime's humdrum town from small child after child
we bought cluster on cluster of the star flower's wild
white widowed heads, re-wired on strong weed stalks they'd trimmed
to long green elegance; but still the whole month brimmed
at night along the beach with a strong voice like peace; [...].

Bambini e bambini nella diurna banalità urbana
ci offrivano mazzi e mazzi di quei selvatici fiori stellati
dal bianco capo vedovile, attorcigliati su solidi steli
disposti in lunga verde eleganza; ma l'intero mese
culminava alla sera, lungo la spiaggia, con la voce forte della pace; [...].

The Italian translation does keep some of the internal repetitions ("bambini e bambini"; "mazzi e mazzi") and alliterations ("solidi steli"), yet others have been only partially reproduced or entirely omitted, such as "White widowed heads" or "long green elegance". More crucially, the end rhymes and internal assonances, which endow the passage with its most evident poetic qualities, are lost ([…] child / […] wild; […] trimmed / […] brimmed; at night along the "beach" with a strong voice like "peace"). The rhythm is also

partly broken up by syntactic rearrangements, such as the formulation of the smooth, fast-paced line "at night along the beach with a strong voice like peace" with a more fragmented and moderate tempo, and the introduction of an incidental sentence: "culminava alla sera, lungo la spiaggia, con la voce forte della pace". This re-structures the sentence so as to make the use of Italian more standard and the target text generally more readable.

Generally, the linguistic fluency of the target texts is a criterion highly prioritised by Cataldi and the other two translators who worked on this collection. The content of their translations may reflect this agenda, to the extent that they often mildly differ from the source texts. Among the techniques in use are "clarification", which Antoine Berman defines as the attempt to make clear what is not meant to be clear in the original, and "expansion" (Munday 2001, 280), the addition of explanations which – when inserted in the body of a poem – can break the rhythm and effectively diminish the strength of the narrating voice. The forms of "explicitation" that "clarification" may entail are the recovery of ellipsis, the direct expression of implicit attitudes, the strengthening of cohesive or collocation networks, that is to say, the use of word sequences which are considered more natural in the target language. Although the immediate effect of these devices may seem to point towards a domestication of language which may recall the illusion of transparency famously exposed and condemned in the pivotal critical intervention by Venuti (1995), an important difference prevents Trauben's translation of Irish poetry from sliding into this controversial territory. Thus, domesticating tendencies are often alternated with digressions from the norms of the target language, and compensated for by the preservation of source-cultural allusions. The widespread use of footnotes, which enable retention of the foreign while restoring its deepest meaning, shows that concrete efforts are made not only towards the clarity of language, but also towards the clarity of meaning. The foreign is never suppressed and careful attention is paid to making it attainable to the target readers.

The strategy of 'mediation' therefore favours the preservation of unfamiliar histories in a domestic environment. While achieving acceptability thanks to a certain degree of linguistic domestication, the series *Poesia irlandese* by Trauben also openly embraces the translational dimension of the texts, thus carefully avoiding any assimilation or eradication of difference. One final illustration of the fine balance between intelligibility and remoteness achieved by the Italian translators, although in a different way, can be found in the translation of the Irish poem "An tAnam Phóg an Corp". A brief comparison with a French translation of the same poem will highlight more clearly how the Italian translator avoids the temptation of domestication and how delicately balanced is the use of strategies such as formal equivalence. From the title itself it is possible to note that, while the Italian translator keeps the unusual image of the soul kissing the body intact – also chosen as the title for the collection

— the French translation (Ó Gormaile 2007, 71) prefers to slightly normalise the poetic image by having the soul "embracing" the body ("L'âme qui embrassa le corps"). The difference is all the more significant when it is considered that the Italian translation introduces an endonote which reveals that the inspiration behind the poem is a tale from Irish folklore, whose ending describes the soul leaving the body on its deathbed; once at the door it turns back for one last gaze and cannot resist the temptation to go back and to kiss that body that has been "so faithful for all its life" (124). In the French text small variations also occur throughout the body of the text: the "people at the wake" ("ar lucht an tórraimh") for instance, is turned into "les proches du défunt", the departed's relatives, which somehow obliterates the aspect of social occasion of the typical Irish ritual of the wake and turns it into a regular French funeral.

Even more striking are the changes in the French version of "Pietà", where from the first verse, the name "Muire" is extended to "La Vierge Marie", the Virgin Mary, perhaps to distinguish her from other generic characters also referred to as Mary who appear later on in the poem; or possibly because the role of Catholicism in France is less dominant than in Italy and Ireland and the association of the name Mary to the Virgin would not be as immediate. Curiously, the French translation tends to play down the Catholic overtones in other parts of the poem. The expression "Íosagán na ndúl", for instance, is translated as "Íosagán des eléments". Not only does the mention of "the elements" have rather pagan overtones, but the Catholic image of Jesus remains hidden behind his Irish, literary counterpart of Íosagán which, as explained in a footnote, evokes the character in a famous story by Patrick Pearse rather than the saviour in more openly religious terms. This is not the case in the Italian translation, which turns Íosagán into the immediately recognisable figure of "Gesù bambinello" and rather enhances the biblical tones by choosing the expression "dell'intero creato", of all creation, for the translation of "na ndúl" (82-83). However, the majority of the substantial changes applied in the French version seem to be an attempt to bring the poetry as close to French tastes as possible from a stylistic point of view, in ways that go beyond the changes dictated by the need to achieve an acceptable degree of fluency. For instance, "i bhfothain / ag Críost is" rather literally translated in Italian as "rifugiata nel Cristo", whereas the French adopts the less metaphorical expression "sous la protection du Christ", under the protection of Christ. Elsewhere, the Latin word in the expression "i rictus na fola" is kept in the Italian "nel rictus del sangue", but normalised in French "dans un sourire en sang" (77). Furthermore the syntactic structures of Irish are much more faithfully followed in the Italian version. The following stanza might be taken as an example:

Í	Lei	Tel un souffle de repos
Mar ghaoth scíth'	Come vento domato	Elle se trouve
I gcill na cruinne	Nel sacro tempio del mondo	Dans la cimitiére de l'universe.

Even without a back translation it is quite evident that the Italian structure follows the Irish more closely, with the feminine third person singular appearing alone in the first line and the comparative clause in the second line. Taking everything into consideration, the Italian translations seem to resist the allure of poetic embellishment. However, this does not take away from the aesthetic pleasure of the poems, since it is the very adherence to the source texts that captures the strangeness of the language which, in turn, is exactly what makes the narrating voice aesthetically interesting. Moreover, similarly to what has been noted above in relation to English language poems, even when the translation resembles a gloss, this apparently reductive dimension is overcome by the whole apparatus of a volume that provides the source texts and critical tools alongside the target texts.

3. *Conclusions: A Comparative Digression*

One of the fundamental points argued throughout this analysis is that, in the series *Poesia irlandese*, the position occupied by the target text is not marginal, but subsidiary to the source texts, and in turn the other elements of the critical apparatus in the edition are subsidiary to the target texts. From the outset, this causes a disruption in the "suspension of disbelief". By virtue of this, paradoxical images such as a group of elderly Irish men shouting Italian jargon in an Irish pub can be created by translation. Accordingly, the narrating Self of a poem giving voice in Italian to feelings like the grief for the loss of the Irish language can become acceptable only by detaching the process of comprehension from the process of empathy. However, the empathy becomes possible only if critical intervention facilitates the comprehension of Italian readers. This process was briefly illustrated by the few examples outlined in this article, but it can be representative of a large number of poetry translations into Italian. In the case of Irish poetry, for instance, translation is often in the hands of the few Italian scholars working with Irish literature and culture, who engage in a careful and competent study of the poetic work to be translated, and present it to readers with the critical support necessary for a deeper understanding.

From a theoretical perspective, the acknowledgement of the employment of the strategy of 'mediation' acquires its full significance when contrasted with the predominant trend which characterises the translation of contemporary Irish fiction, for instance. Indeed Italian publishers seem to adamantly discourage any admission of "imperfectibility" of the translation in relation to most types of fiction, especially if contemporary. Although a robust endorsement of this argument would call for a much more detailed investigation[2], on this occasion it shall suffice to mention some standard practices broadly familiar to Italian readers, such as the lack of introduction or other critical tools, the scarce visibility given to the translator's name and source text's title, as well as the insertion

of translated works among series of Italian originals and similar stratagems to downplay the fact that a work has been translated in the eyes of potential readers.

The general impression conveyed by the Italian market of translations of works of fiction, hugely popular in terms of numbers, and thus profit – especially when compared to the extremely limited circulation of Trauben's translations – is one of blissful unawareness of the theoretical mayhem that the dismissal of translation as merely a matter of linguistic substitution has caused. Most publishers, particularly the big corporations with a widespread national distribution, still seem to stubbornly cling to the popular belief in the 'transparency of languages', in the inherent translatability of every language system. By presenting translated texts as seemingly authentic and stable as the source texts, they behave as if translation were a passive reproduction of transcendent meanings. This is not necessarily unawareness, but rather the conscious pursuit of an agenda which builds a fake halo of absolute authority around translations in the attempt to ensure the maximum economic return. The tacit assumption seems to be that readers of contemporary fiction are conceived of as fairly uncritical consumers, who turn to literature mainly for entertainment purposes. From this perspective, stressing the arbitrariness of the transformation undergone by translated texts would 'construct' a typology of critical reader which is not consistent with the one 'imagined' by the publishers, and would therefore constitute a bad marketing strategy.

This is in stark contrast with the policy followed by Trauben, whose list of priorities is by no means dictated by concerns about profit. As a result, its translation activity seeks to enable the target readers to appreciate Irish poetry starting from an understanding of the source language culture, in terms of its diversity from the target language culture, embracing difference rather than struggling to conceal it. This, however, is possible because these editions of Irish poetry, contrary to what happens with more commercial operations, do not attempt to 'create' or 'conquer' a new audience, but they are content to address the needs of an existing one, no matter how small or specialised it might be. Further evidence of this policy can be found in the unusual choice of 'promotional blurbs'. The three short reviews included to highlight the poetic achievements and principal themes of Hutchinson's poetry, for instance, rather than relying on the visibility of widely recognisable figures – as common practice would demand – are signed by Alan Titley, John Ennis and Gabriel Rosenstock. The choice of relying on authoritative voices that are prominent in the Irish literary scene but practically unknown in Italy reinforces the idea that the constructed readers targeted by this volume belong to a small audience already interested in Irish literature, and thus possibly familiar with those names.

Ultimately, the promotion of mediation as a policy of translation reveals that Italian readers of poetry, unlike readers of fiction, are mostly 'imagined' as cultivated or eager to develop their knowledge of the background of the

authors and their work. The result is an active encouragement of strategies that embrace the interactional nature of translation and its ability to mould the socio-cultural formation of the source and target languages into newly shaped hybrid entities. Although the perfectly balanced exchange suggested by the term "hybridity" is hardly attainable, it has been demonstrated that translation can become an expression of the articulation of cultural alterity by fostering an interstitial literary dimension where differences can be reconciled.

Notes

[1] The challenge to European centrality started by postcolonial theories is emblematized in Chakrabarty (2000) and it is a topical subject within the field of Translation Studies (see Chesterman 2014).

[2] For a more detailed exploration of the norms followed by many Italian publishers translating contemporary Irish fiction see Biancheri (2013).

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'Death and Renewal': Translating Old Irish Texts in Nineteenth-Century Ireland

Ciaran McDonough
National University of Ireland, Galway (<c.mcdonough1@nuigalway.ie>)

Abstract:

This article investigates the conflicted cultural identity of those nineteenth-century Irish-speaking antiquarians working on translations of Old Irish texts. Giving voice to the translators, this article will show how they were frustrated in attempts to turn their own knowledge into authority by being members of the Catholic Gaelic Irish in a country dominated by the Protestant Ascendancy. It will examine contemporaneous writings and correspondence to reveal how the translators felt about being accused of complicity in the Anglicisation of Ireland's literary heritage, in the erasure of their own language, and traditions, by means of their translations into English for the Anglophone world.

Keywords: antiquarianism, Ascendancy, O'Curry, O'Donovan, translation

Whilst Gaelic Irish society has always valued the transmission of older Irish texts, interest by English-speakers was only really shown in the late eighteenth century. Some interest had been shown earlier by English-speaking antiquarians, such as James Ussher, Sir James Ware, Charles Vallancey and Edward Ledwich, some of whom had used *amanuenses* to translate the materials for their own research, but interest by the general public was only shown after the so-called "Ossian controversy" of the 1760s. The "Ossian controversy" was the unmasking of James MacPherson's compositions centred on the character of Ossian, which he had attempted to pass off as translations (Leerssen 1996b, 40). What the compositions and, indeed, the controversy itself succeeded in doing was to garner public interest in all things 'Celtic' and to create a dichotomy which would last throughout the nineteenth century in Ireland, that is to say, Celtic or Gaelic versus Anglo-Saxon or Ascendancy. Naturally, the interest in all things Celtic, inspired by the Ossian poems meant that there was interest in Ireland's Celtic past as well. Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, published 1789, helped to introduce the general public to some of the Irish material which dealt with Oisín and to a literary tradition unfamiliar

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to most. She writes that "the British muse is not yet informed that she has an elder sister in this isle […]" (Brooke 2009, vii). This interest helped to discard some of the associations of barbarity that were associated with the Celts and also helped Anglo-Irish Ascendancy forge a link between their position as being neither completely Irish, nor completely English, and the country they called home; Ireland. Brooke writes about this in her introduction to *Reliques*, stating that:

> [...] let them [the British and Irish muses] tell her [Britain], that the portion of her blood which flows in our veins is rather ennobled than disgraced by the mingling tides that descended from our ancestors. (Brooke 2009, viii)

This notion of unity with Ireland had become important to the Anglo-Irish in the late eighteenth century and continued and developed further throughout the nineteenth. Joep Leerssen writes:

> In all these new manifestations of Ireland's national conflict, one trend had however been firmly fixed in the course of the eighteenth century, and was to remain an operative force in later ideological developments: the implicit notion that Ireland was fundamentally a Gaelic country, that the true Ireland looked back to a Gaelic past, and that the presence of English-derived culture within the Irish shores was a matter of cultural adulteration. Irish nationalists, though usually belonging to an urban, English-speaking middle class or upper middle class, were to refer to native, Gaelic culture and to native Gaelic antiquity in the first person, as something to identify with, while seeing England as an alien, foreign country. […] The adoption and central canonization of a Gaelic cultural affiliation and a Gaelic-oriented historical self-awareness had been a slow and complex process, finally accomplished in the later eighteenth century; it was to remain central to the Anglo-Irish sense of national identity henceforth. In the various ethnic and cultural images and identity-constructs of Irishness which had been formulated over the centuries, the one which had finally gained pride of place was that of a fundamental, essential and intransigent non-Englishness. (Leerssen 1996a, 376)

With this amount of interest being shown in Gaelic Ireland and with the underlying notion that literature in Irish from this 'Gaelic past' was somehow truer, it is somewhat understandable that so much attention would be paid to Old Irish literature in the nineteenth century and that many would want to take part in bringing it to a wider audience of 'fellow Irishmen' amongst the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and to an interested audience in Britain and other countries as well.

As in previous centuries, the translations were made almost exclusively by Gaelic scholars, though there were some from the Ascendancy who worked on translations as well. These Ascendancy scholars, however, were few in number and arguably limited to the Reverend James Henthorn Todd, who had learnt Irish and was able to translate himself from Old Irish into English, and to

Sir William Reeves, Bishop of Down and Conor, who had a great interest in the archaeology of ancient Ireland and in 1847 had translated *The Life of St Columba, Founder of Hy; Written by Adamnan, Ninth Abbot of that Monastery*, which was written in Latin. For translations from Old or Middle Irish to English, though, Reeves was dependent on John O'Donovan, as shown by their correspondence[1]. John O'Donovan and his sometime colleague and later brother-in-law, Eugene O'Curry, were arguably the greatest and most prolific scholars of Irish in the nineteenth century and they are responsible for an exceptionally large number of transcriptions and translations of Old Irish manuscripts. Because of this, a large portion of this article will be focused on them, as well as for the fact that they were both native Irish speakers, whose work almost solely involved them in translating for largely Anglophone audiences through large-scale antiquarian translation projects led by Anglo-Irish steering committees. It is through possibly the greatest Anglo-Irish led translation project that both O'Donovan and O'Curry came to prominence as Irish scholars. They both had worked for the topographical department of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (also referred to as the historical department), which was founded in the early 1830s (Doherty 2006, 19-20) to assist the military to better follow Thomas Larcom's instruction number thirty three "that the persons employed on the survey are to endeavour to obtain the correct orthography of the names of places by diligently consulting the best authorities within their reach" (cited in Andrews 2006, 311). After the military proved not to be suited to this task, O'Donovan was brought in to replace another scholar, Edward O'Reilly, who had died (Ó Muraíle 1997, 15) and O'Curry later joined. The way it worked was thus: O'Donovan had spent years researching placenames in printed and manuscript sources in Dublin and then, after realising that field staff were of little use to him in collecting contemporary orthography due to their ignorance of the Irish language, he went into the country himself to collect placenames (Doherty 2006, 20). After O'Curry joined the topographical department, he acted as O'Donovan's cross-referencer in Dublin, although he himself was active in the field between 1837 and 1839 (Ó Madagáin 2008, 430; Doherty 2006, 20). O'Donovan, whilst out on the road, would send back letters a few times a week to Dublin, which contained all the information he had gathered about placenames from both locals and manuscripts in private collections, as well as information about historical and antiquarian sites he had come across on his way. George Petrie, O'Curry and the others involved in the topographical department used these letters for their own antiquarian researches; O'Curry cross-referenced the information in the missives with manuscripts in Dublin libraries and other Dublin based institutions. Although Anglo-Irish scholars had been aware of the value of native scholars for a while, it was the big projects, such as the Ordnance Survey, which really highlighted how much they needed their help with regard to translations. Though some placenames were transliterated by the

topographical department of the Ordnance Survey, many were translated and with Colby's instruction to consult "the best authorities within their reach," it is evident that scholars of the capability of O'Donovan and O'Curry had to be involved. Joep Leerssen writes about their involvement, stating that:

> The troika of Petrie, O'Donovan and O'Curry has often been celebrated as the rescue team of Irish antiquarianism, the men who set the investigation of Gaelic antiquity on a new, scientific and critical footing, and whose enormous labours laid the groundwork for all subsequent work in the field. At the same time it is important to realize that this work was undertaken for, and for more than ten years largely funded by, the Ordnance Survey project as it was expanding under Larcom's inspired direction. It is all the more important to stress this, since the Ordnance Survey has been heavily distorted in Brian Friel's widely successful play *Translations*. Friel presents the Ordnance Survey as a blunt colonial instrument in the hands of the imperial forces, inflicting cultural self-estrangement on native Ireland by means of billeting English soldiers in rural villages, and imposing uncomprehending and ugly anglicizations of native placenames under threat of eviction. In fact, the very opposite was the case. Although triangulation and measurements may have been undertaken by soldiers, the fieldworkers sent out to inventorize placenames, architectural remains and other cultural artefacts were men like O'Donovan and O'Curry, with a good knowledge of, and a sympathetic interest in, local antiques and native lore, foreshadowing later folklore commissioners, salvaging the original placenames from neglect or corruption by painstaking inventorization of manuscripts, giving them English transliterations rather than translations, and capturing a great deal of local lore and learning from communities which would fifteen years later be swept away by the Famine. If, today, the Gaelic substratum of Irish culture is most prominently visible in the placenames and the landscape, then that presence is owing to a large degree to the work of the Ordnance Survey of 1824-1841. We may go even further and say that the Ordnance Survey was a major contribution to the cultural nationalism of later decades, in that it equated the very land itself with a Gaelic past and a Gaelic-speaking peasantry, thus canonizing the Gaelic tradition as the very bedrock, the cultural ground under the feet of modern Ireland, making Gaelic culture literally aboriginal and autochthonous to Ireland, a native fruit of its very soil. The Ordnance Survey turned the entire countryside of Ireland into one vast *lieu de mémoire*: topography became replete with historical and mythological overtones, while history and myth became specific and graspable in their topographical locale. (Leerssen 2006b, 102-103)

This was the first Anglo-Irish led project that O'Donovan and O'Curry had worked on, aside from some cataloguing work of manuscripts for Todd. It could be argued that it was more of an Anglo led project than an Anglo-Irish one, but their Anglo-Irish supervisors had more of an impact on their work, in particular Sir Thomas Larcom, the departmental leader, an Anglo-Irish and exemplary of the type of Ascendancy figure, who had a great interest in Irish history and language and their immediate supervisors, and the scholar George Petrie, who was neither Anglo-Irish nor Gaelic Irish. O'Donovan's and O'Curry's involvement with the Ordnance Survey would set the para-

digm for the rest of their lives as they moved from one project to another, even publishing their own research, mainly in the form of translations, in Anglo-Irish run journals.

John O'Donovan spent the years 1848-1851 working on, amongst other things, an edition and translation of *The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* or the *Annals of the Four Masters* (hereafter quoted as *AFM*), as they are commonly referred to. It might be assumed that, as he was working independently on this and not as a translator of someone else's edition, he made the decisions regarding the publication. This, however, was not the case. As with his work on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, O'Donovan carried out vast amounts of work, but the final say was made by somebody else. In the "Introductory Remarks" to the first volume, O'Donovan describes how J.H. Todd made several changes to his original plan for the work, maintaining that "the Editor first stated his own opinion as to the mode of printing the original and translation, but finally submitted to the following rules, which were committed to writing by the Rev. Dr. Todd" (O'Donovan 1856, xxxix). He goes on to lay down the rules, which are mainly to do with punctuation, but also, as O'Donovan was working from two autographed copies of *AFM*, to do with discrepancies between the manuscripts themselves. O'Donovan states, on page xxxviii, that he had asked the publishers to check with the scholars, whose opinions he valued, which seems to be indicative of the lack of power that he felt he had. When one is doing an edition of a text, normally the decision about punctuation and the like resides with the editor; however in this case, it did not.

Perhaps the best example of how the Gaelic Irish scholars were seen as merely translators and the extent to which they were in the hands of steering committees is the Brehon Law Commission. The first meeting of the Commission for the publication of the ancient laws and institutes of Ireland was held on 7th December 1852 and the members were:

> Dr. James Henthorn Todd, Dr. Charles Graves, Dr. George Petrie, Sir Thomas Larcom, Chief Baron David Pigot, Lord Chancellor Francis Blackburne, Lord Monteagle, Sir Joseph Napier, the Earl of Dunraven, the Earl of Ross, Lord Talbot de Malahide, and Rev. Dr. Thomas Romney Robinson. (Boyne 1987, 99)

In the words of one commentator, "Of the twelve, two were Catholics, a few were Irish scholars but not Irish speakers; none had the tradition of Gaelic culture inherent in both O'Curry and O'Donovan" (Boyne 1987, 99). This, naturally, led to problems. At the first meeting, O'Donovan was appointed editor, over his colleague O'Curry, who, as might be expected, was not happy with this arrangement (*Minutes of First Meeting of Commissioners* dated 7th December 1852). The steering committee's rationale for this act was that O'Donovan was considered a classical scholar and legal expert, whereas O'Curry was not (Boyne 1987, 99). And it is this importance of education which is the crux of the matter of why Gaelic scholars were only ever merely

translators or editors under large Ascendancy-dominated steering committees. The work on the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland* (hereafter referred to as *ALI*) was immense. After the preliminary translations of their transcriptions, which took five years to do, O'Donovan ended up with twelve volumes; O'Curry with thirteen (Boyne 1987, 100). This, however, was of little consequence to the Treasury, who had funded the project, and they began putting pressure on the editors to speed things up, due to the great costs involved. They had also decided that the delay was due to "an indifferent command of the English language on the part of the editors" (Boyne 1987, 100) and, as such, in 1860, a parliamentary order was issued to have the Commission appoint an editor skilled in ancient law and legal terminology. This order removed O'Donovan – an expert linguist and trained lawyer –, and O'Curry, the most skilled scholar of his day in the interpretation of old Irish manuscripts. They were replaced with a Professor of Jurisprudence at Queen's College, Belfast, William Neilson Hancock, and his assistant, Thomas Busteed, who could not speak, read, or write Irish (Boyne 1987, 100). O'Donovan died towards the end of the following year, O'Curry the year after, leaving the *ALI* nowhere near completion.

It is only the education of Hancock and Busteed which made them suitable in the eyes of the steering committee to carry out this task. As already shown, they had none of the linguistic capability of either O'Donovan or O'Curry, nor the familiarity with the manuscript tradition. What they did possess was English as a mother tongue and a university education. As Catholics, O'Donovan and O'Curry were denied a university education. The Catholic University was founded in 1851 and it is unlikely that they ever would have been educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Despite this, they did both work as university lecturers: O'Donovan at Queen's University, Belfast and O'Curry at the Catholic University. To their Anglo-Irish Ascendancy project overseers, this did not seem to matter.

The projects outlined above were the largest that the pair of them were involved in, though they had also published articles and books. These journals were in affiliation with archaeological or Celtic societies, which had, for the most part, been founded by members of the Ascendancy and were still run by them. The books published were mainly about manuscript sources for early Irish history, for example O'Curry's *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, based on a series of lectures and published posthumously in 1873, which also contained some translations of manuscripts.

It might not be such a surprise that the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was in such control of the antiquarian translation projects, given that its members were the intended market for the resulting translations. What has to be remembered is that the original texts from which the translations were made were not just written in a language that was not spoken by those in power in nineteenth-century Ireland, but that they were written in a language that had

not been spoken since the ninth century, in the case of Old Irish, and since the twelfth century, in the case of Middle Irish. Though the Gaelic Revival inspired people to learn Modern Irish at the end of the nineteenth century, the late eighteenth-century Celtic Revival did no such thing. In any case, given the difficulties with the older forms of the language that the so-called experts encountered, it is extraordinarily unlikely that the general populace could ever have managed to learn Old or Middle Irish. One of the criticisms levelled at O'Donovan and O'Curry regarding their work on the Brehon laws was that their knowledge of Old and Middle Irish was based on a sound knowledge of Modern Irish (Boyne 1987, 100) coupled with a familiarity of old manuscripts. It is also worth pointing out that these were the early days of Celtic philology – the first printed grammar to treat of Old Irish, Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica*, did not appear until 1853 – and a more scientific study of the language would not appear until a little later in the century. There was a dichotomy present in the study of Celtic philology around the middle of the nineteenth century, which could help explain why the Gaelic Irish scholars were regarded as being fit solely for translation and not as capable of supervising their own projects. The Celtic scholarly community, as Seán Ó Lúing writes, was divided into two methods of study – continental philological scholarship, with a purported emphasis on accuracy and scientific method, versus native learning, which sought to apply native knowledge to the study and interpretation of the older language (Ó Lúing 2000, 44). "Native learning" here encompasses *senchas*, what F. J. Byrne and others term the "Gaelic historical tradition" (Byrne 1974). Many scholars who favoured philological scholarship looked down on the native scholars, who did not possess, according to them, the scientific skills necessary to properly study the language. One such scholar was the late nineteenth-century antiquarian Whitley Stokes, who was a champion of continental philological scholarship. In an argument with Standish Hayes O'Grady he claimed that "two German professors [Windisch and Zimmer] had, in the previous thirty five years, done more for the knowledge of Irish 'than all the native scholars of Irish that have ever lived'" (*The Academy*, 6 April 1889 cited in Ó Lúing 2000, 45). With so much controversy surrounding the study of Old Irish texts, it is clear that the only way to convey them to the populace was to translate them into English. Very few Ascendancy members went to the trouble of learning Irish, and those that did are normally numbered amongst those with an academic interest, which only left English.

Working surrounded by Anglophones, supervised (for the most part) by Anglophones, and, most definitely, for Anglophones, meant that O'Donovan and O'Curry were only left to use their mother tongue in their own homes and possibly to each other in private. In addition to this, they faced criticism from those fellow antiquarians who considered them to be lesser scholars, as they had not learnt Old Irish, but were basing their knowledge on their

knowledge of their native tongue. For O'Donovan, certainly, and possibly for O'Curry as well, though no written evidence of this has emerged as of yet, this most definitely had an effect on the way he viewed the modern form of the language. Despite working nearly solely on the older forms of the language, he nevertheless had enough of an interest in the modern form to publish *A Grammar of the Irish Language* in 1845. From the size of it and the types of examples given, it was not likely in his eyes to be seen to be a useful tool for learners. It seems to be more of a relic of the language captured at a moment in time and this feeling is increased when looking at the examples of Irish writings given in an appendix, which do not date any later than the seventeenth century (O'Donovan 1845, Appendix II). O'Donovan certainly never saw his grammar as anything other than a record of the language as spoken with no future ahead of it. In a letter to Reeves in 1845, he writes that, "my grammar is published but I have not yet seen it. I fear that very few will buy it. It is too heavy a work for any but antiquaries; it will remain as a monument of the language and I trust the preface or introduction to it will teach future Irish scholars to be less wild and extravagant in their notions" (26 July 1845 IE/UCD/SC/JO'D/5). He continues to reveal his worries about the language and society in his letters to Reeves, saying:

> I fear the Gaelic world is likely to die of sheer *inanimation*. Societies gone to pot! No chance of any more works for us as I understand. The failure of the potatoes and the fear of Mitchel have among the *Gaedhil* frightened literature of existence. Mr Mac Donnell's sporting his way among genteel circles and seems to forget his Gaelic ancestors. He makes me a visit now about once a month to talk about the progress now making by democracy, and to what I am doing!! I am getting on steadily with the first part of the Four Masters, and hope to be out in November, but I fear the feeling for such studies is dying out by re-action. I always believed this would be the case, but I worked away reckless of consequences. I shall then have to decide on what to do with myself. It would have been better for me that the Archaeological Society never existed, and as for the Celtic I never had any hope in that or its originators, so that my connection with it was merely accidental. I am puzzled to determine on what I had better do. Ferguson's last Review of the Annals deals with me in such a way that I may be set down as a politician, which is not very fair as I have avoided politics all my life. Ferguson's praise and dispraise appear to me rather strong in a philosopher. He evidently despises the subject, but wishes to turn it to account in the present line of politics which he has adopted and this will not do me much service. (13 May 1848 IE/UCD/SC/JO'D/32)[2]

One wonders if O'Donovan felt anything like guilt for what could potentially be seen as his help in eradicating the Gaelic world, which had raised him and brought him to prominence with his knowledge of it. His and O'Curry's contributions to finding, collating, and transcribing manuscripts is widely recognised by Celtic scholars today, who freely acknowledge the debt they owe to their forerunners in the field[3], yet his work lay in solely in the realm of

English. He did not add anything new to the literature of the Gaelic world, though his contributions for others to study it and to increase on the knowledge of it at a later date were vast and their importance cannot be understated. Perhaps he thought that his contributions would inspire greater numbers of people to learn the older form of the language or to show an interest in the modern form, but in this, he was disappointed. As stated already, the Celtic Revival did not inspire people linguistically the way that the Gaelic Revival did. It could be assumed, however, that O'Donovan was grateful for the few who did show an interest in early Irish history and its literature, even if they did have to read it in translation. In a letter to Reeves, he writes:

> England will never foster anything relating to Irish literatures. Her object has been, and will be to obliterate all monuments of the Scots [he writes in brackets above this *omnia monumentia scotorum*], but individuals of the Teutonic race have now done too much to keep it in the power of any people to obliterate these monuments. Ussher, Ware, Lombard, Petrie, Reeves have, by individual exertion, contributed to keep alive the memory of a race which the English government would wish to obliterate. By further working in the same field you may earn fame and honour amid posterity; but this is an age of turbulence, which will not appreciate the labours of any truth-loving historian or antiquary. Ledwich had his day; he connected his speculations with the politics and prejudices of his class, write much truth, but distorted many facts, and exhibited such a malignant spirit towards the race whose history he attempted to illustrate, that his real character was discovered by the next generation, and all his distortions have been carefully examined, exposed by the learned and honest Lanigan and by the truth-loving Petrie, and condemned. This fate he deserved!!! Ussher, Ware, Colgan, O'Flaherty, Petrie & Reeves, will be the same to every generation, because they investigated the naked truth apart from national prejudices or *race*. Prejudices. (14 July 1848 IE/UCD/SC/JO'D/33)[4]

O'Donovan, and perhaps O'Curry as well, may have felt trapped in a juxtaposition of translating the literature of their country, written in their mother tongue, albeit an older and obsolete form, into English for people whom had no desire to learn for themselves, and the majority of who were merely following a fad in the fashion of Celticity, whilst watching the modern form of their language slowly die out around them, but it need not have been a completely uncomfortable situation for them. Just as O'Donovan had seen a decline, in standard if not in fashion, in antiquarian research at the end of the eighteenth and in the first decade of the nineteenth century, only for it to be a renaissance in both standard and desire in the early to mid-nineteenth, perhaps he felt that way about the language itself. He had witnessed the first philological work to deal with the Celtic languages, Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica*, be published in 1853; he had seen the first continental scholars start to work on Old Irish, which he must have seen as a good thing, even if it did lead to criticism of his own standard being levelled at him; and he had started to see the flourishes of what could possibly lead to a renewed interest

in the Irish language start under the auspices of the beginnings of the Cultural Nationalism movement, after the *Nation* newspaper began publishing articles praising the worth of the modern Irish language and beginning its intrinsic link to Irishness. Yes, O'Donovan did write about how he saw Gaelic society having no future, yet the same was said after the Flight of the Earls in the seventeenth century. That society was on a wane, but did not die out completely. It is not completely unlikely that O'Donovan, and possibly O'Curry, and even the other antiquarians who were able to translate from Old Irish, lived in hope of this happening again and knowing that they had played a part in preserving the manuscripts, especially in the bi-lingual editions, for future generations. Even if all the general public wanted was translations, a demand had been created for knowledge, which in turn created a demand for translators with the knowledge of these manuscripts and the linguistic capability to translate them.

Notes

[1] Held in University College, Dublin, IE/UCD/SC/JO'D.

[2] Underlined emphasis is O'Donovan's own. Ferguson here refers to the antiquarian and poet Samuel Ferguson, who, along with some articles antiquarian in nature, wrote poems based on early Irish history. He was, what could be termed, a 'Nationalist-Unionist', in that he was a staunch Unionist who believed that it was in Ireland's best interest as a nation to remain unified with Britain. This, however, as with many other Nationalist-Unionists, such as the antiquarian William Wilde, did not diminish his sense of patriotism. He, and many others like him, would have been typical readers of the translations made by O'Donovan and O'Curry and others.

[3] For example, D.A. Binchy's assessment of their work done on early Irish law in his own *magnum opus*, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (1978). He writes: "It only remains for me to pay tribute to the great scholars of the past who have paved the way for me and laid me under such heavy obligations. First and foremost those gallant pioneers O'Curry and O'Donovan. Without seventeen volumes of their […] transcripts, […] I should never have undertaken a task of this magnitude, and without their aid I should have been quite unable to read several lines of the manuscripts which have become almost illegible in the interval […] Their exceptionally wide acquaintance with all other branches of literature enabled them to make their way through the labyrinth of legal manuscripts with a degree of success which is all the more remarkable when we remember that the scientific study of the older language had hardly begun in their lifetime […] The translations by them, which afterwards appeared […] in the ill-starred 'official' edition, are reasonably accurate so far as the later material is concerned, but the crabbed and cryptic language of the text often baffled them. In the circumstances they did the best they could: they translated it as the glossators had 'explained' it, in the belief (or perhaps just the hope) that these later custodians of the 'sacred' text knew its meaning. For this oversight it would be most unfair to blame them: they were confronted with a language which was an uncharted sea and which even today, after more than a century of strenuous research, is still far from fully explored. Besides, death claimed both of them before they could undertake a comparative study of the numerous manuscripts they had transcribed and translated in isolation. Had they been granted a longer span, many of the worst blunders in the English version of the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* would undoubtedly have been avoided" (vol I, xvii).

[4] Underlined emphasis is O'Donovan's. Ledwich was an Anglo-Irish antiquarian, mainly writing in the late eighteenth century. He wrote a general history of Ireland, which equated some Irish practices, such as Brehon law, with barbarism.

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Brian Friel as Linguist, Brian Friel as Drama Translator

Monica Randaccio
Università degli Studi di Trieste (<mrandaccio@units.it>)

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how linguistic and translation issues have always been Brian Friel's main concerns. The language question in Ireland is investigated in its multi-faceted implications in the light of Tom Paulin's pamphlet, *A New Look at the Language Question* (1985). Friel first dramatises this question in *Translations* (1980) and then uses translation as a powerful means of intercultural exchange in his Russian play, *Three Sisters* (1981). According to drama translation theorist Aaltonen, the translation of a foreign dramatic text, as well as its entire production, unavoidably represents a "reaction to the Other" when it is chosen for a performance in another culture. Therefore, Friel's *Three Sisters* is seen as an 'Irish reaction' to Chekhov's Russia.

Keywords: drama translation, Friel, Ireland, language, Russia

1. *Friel as Linguist*

It is quite interesting to note that there are two competing misrepresentations of the Field Day board, which was composed of Brian Friel, Stephen Rea, Seamus Heaney, David Hammond, Seamus Deane and Tom Paulin, who were formally announced as the 'Boards of Directors' of the Field Day Theatre Company in September 1981. The first is the naïve view that the members of the board were chosen as representative of the larger political and cultural configurations in Northern Ireland in order to balance evenly Protestant and Catholic concerns. The second is that Field Day has a covert political programme for Northern Ireland and that every activity of the company must necessarily have a definite political aim. In rejecting both misrepresentations, Marylynn J. Richtarik underlines not only that none of the board members is particularly representative of the community from which he comes, but also that "Field Day is a process, a practice, defined by what it does and, to a lesser extent, by what it says it is doing" (Richtarik 1994, 75). It seems, therefore, that the activity of the Field Day was mainly pragmatic and characterised by a great deal of disagreement because, as Heaney asserts, each of the directors "has a different version or vision of the thing" (75).

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However, even if the purposes of the Field Day appear at first sight as those of "a loose coalition more than a disciplined party cell" (75), the activities of its members have undoubtedly 'a common core', as shown in many pamphlets produced at that time. In fact, the first three titles, written by three of the directors themselves, touch, more or less directly, upon the crucial issue of language in Ireland.

Seamus Heaney in *An Open Letter* (1983), thirty-three stanzas in the form of a humorous verse letter, expresses his objection to the adjective 'British', used by *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*, to describe his poetry. He attempts to explain the importance for a Northern Irish person whether he/she is called 'British' or 'Irish' and the significance of proper naming:

You'll understand I draw the line
At being robbed of what is mine,
My patria, my deep design
To be at home
In my own place and dwell within
Its proper name. (Heaney 1985 [1983], 25-26)

Seamus Deane in *Civilians and Barbarians* (1983) uses a less conciliatory tone than that employed by Heaney. He starts from the common identification of the English with those who live under the law – the civilians –, and the Irish with those who live beyond it – the barbarians – and shows how this view has remained a constant feature of the English mindset. According to him, this belief has become common currency in the language of politics: "The language of politics in Ireland and England, especially when the subject is Northern Ireland, is still dominated by the putative division between barbarism and civilization" (Deane 1985 [1983], 39).

A more definite linguistic approach to the 'language question' is certainly that taken by Paulin in *A New Look at the Language Question* (1983). Paulin starts with the observation that there is strong link between language and nationality: "The history of language is often a story of possession and dispossession, territorial struggle and the establishment or imposition of a culture. Arguments about the 'evolution' or the 'purity' of a language can be based on a simplistic notion of progress and doctrine of racial stereotypes" (Paulin 1985 [1983], 3). Through the story of Noah Webster, he explores the identity crisis of a nation without its own language and shows how Webster's *Dictionary of American English* helped to create the concept of American English, which then appeared as native. In Ireland, as in America, even though English has become naturalised, the situation is more complicated because that language was regarded as an imposed colonial tongue. However, Paulin observes that Irish, which was not completely suppressed or rejected under the colonial rule, became central to the new national consciousness after the independence and it was restored as

the national language of the country. It has also played an important part in the school syllabus in the Republic and in Catholic schools in the North. According to Paulin, the attitude toward Irish language reflects social divisions in Ireland:

> State education in Northern Ireland is based upon a pragmatic view of the English language and a short-sighted assumption of colonial status, while education in the Irish Republic is based on an idealistic view of Irish which aims to conserve the language and assert the cultural difference of the country. (Paulin 1985 [1983], 10-11)

Paulin does not indulge in the old opposition between the Irish and the English languages, but prefers to analyse English as it is actually spoken in Ireland today, variously referred as Hiberno English, Ulster English and Irish English, in order to make a relevant point. In fact, he considers that

> [s]poken Irish English exists in a number of provincial and local forms, but because no scholar has as yet compiled a *Dictionary of Irish English* many words are literally homeless […] The language therefore lives freely and spontaneously as speech, but it lacks any institutional existence and so is impoverished as a literary medium. (11)

In rejecting both Swift's "ideal, international English" and the "stateless" (12) language of Samuel Beckett, Paulin then shows his fascination with Ian Adamson's ideas expressed in *The Identity of Ulster*. Adamson argues that the people of Northern Ireland must recognise their common identity as Ulster men and women in order to transcend the political and religious divide – Great Britain/Ireland and Protestant/Catholic – and build a new, independent Northern Ireland together. In particular, he is impressed with the chapter on "The Language of Ulster", in which Adamson describes how the original language of the area, Old British, was displaced by the Irish language. The Irish was then wiped out by the English later in history. Thus, in Paulin's opinion, "[Adamson] denies an absolute territorial claim to either community in Northern Ireland and this allows him to argue for a concept of 'our homeland' which includes both communities" (1985 [1983], 13). From a linguistic point of view, Paulin wishes that "a confident concept of Irish English would substantially increase the vocabulary and this would invigorate the written language". Finally, he concludes that "a language that lives lithely on the tongue ought to be capable of becoming the flexible written instrument of a complete cultural idea" (Paulin 1985 [1983], 15).

Although Paulin is aware that his wish appears conciliatory and, in some respect, consolatory, the language he hopes for is, in fact, almost unattainable. By his own admission, he would welcome a literary English, which includes words that are typical of Irish speech in order to start from "a concept of civil duty and a definite cultural affiliation" (Paulin 1985 [1983], 16). At the same time, however, he knows that his linguistic and political purpose is "impossible in the present climate of confused opinions and violent politics". His

purpose, in fact, is hindered by the cultural impoverishment of the country, which reduces the language to "a fragmented speech", to "an untold numbers of homeless words" (Paulin 1985 [1983], 16-17).

Among the various issues raised by Paulin in *A New Look at the Language Question*, there is also the controversial status which language acquires for the Irish writer as a trope of both alienation and belonging. The decline of the Irish, the loss and suppression of Gaelic culture and the uneasy relationship between the English and the Irish languages make the theme of writing in a language not one's own a peculiarity of Irish literature. To quote some examples that have become almost proverbial, in *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man*, after the encounter with the dean of studies of his college, Joyce makes Stephan Dedalus think, "The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine [...] His language so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech" (Joyce 1976 [1916], 189). Similarly, the poet John Montague uses the metaphor of the "grafted tongue" to show the Irish writers' dilemma to express themselves in English: "To grow / a second tongue, as / harsh humiliation / as twice to be born" (Montague 1982, 110-111).

The trope of language as alienation and belonging, metaphorically seen in Paulin's essay, in Joyce's narrative and in Montague's poem, is also one of Friel's central concerns. As Friel states, a solution to the English colonisation in Ireland will be found only when the language question is brought to the fore: "the question of language […] is one of the big inheritances which we have received from the British […] We must make English identifiably our own language"(Agnew 1980, 60-61).

Some years later, Friel goes back to discuss this alienation that, from a purely linguistic viewpoint, acquires the overtones of a spiritual exile. The spiritual exile was that of the participants to the 'Field Day enterprise', who felt distant from both the Republic and the United Kingdom. In an interview with O'Toole, he stated his purpose:

> We are trying to make a home […] one of the problems for us is that we are constantly being offered the English home, we have been educated by the English home and we have been pigmented by an English home […] And the rejection of all that, and the rejection into what, is the big problem. (Friel 1982, 22)

Friel's idea of making a home represents his personal response to the trope of language as alienation and belonging and the creation of a 'metaphorical home of language' becomes the theme of the playwright's *Translations*. Moreover, *Translations*, which was the Field Day Theatre Company's first production and was premiered on 23 September 1980 in Derry's Guildhall, seems to dramatise some of the issues raised by Paulin on the language question. Thus, the central events in *Translations* do not put in opposition the Irish and the English languages, but give, through the play's characters, a detailed analysis of the various attitudes toward English. They also highlight the importance of

dialects and their profound implications in order to articulate the "complete cultural idea" wished for by Paulin.

The plot of *Translations* revolves around two main events. First, the arrival of a platoon of Royal Engineers in Baile Beag, a rural, Irish speaking community in county Donegal, to map the country and translate Irish place-names into English. Second, the imminent abolition of the local hedge school, run by the schoolmaster Hugh, and its substitution with the new state-run national school and, consequently, the substitution of Irish with English as the teaching language of the Irish speaking community. Although *Translations* has proved a controversial play and much ink has been spilled over its sometime contradictory interpretations[1], my brief analysis of the play will mainly focus on language and linguistic concerns.

Richard Kearney has been among those critics who highlighted the importance of language in *Translations* (Kearney 1987, 123-171). He notes how Friel's plays in the 1980s "have become increasingly concerned with the problem of language" (123) and that his theatre is not "just a theatre *of* language but a theatre *about* language" (123). Although it would be too naïve to think that *Translations* deals only with theoretical linguistic questions because any Irish playwright who talks about language almost certainly has a political overtone, none the less Friel himself claims that "the play has to do with language and only language" (1983 [1979], 60). According to Kearney, Friel's plays operate within two basic linguistic models – one ontological and the other positivistic. The former is, philosophically speaking, a kin to Heidegger's approach to language as "the house of Being" (Kearney 1987, 155), a language which "tells us the truth by virtue of its capacity to unlock the secret privacies of our historical Being" (155-156). The latter, which is associated with the philosophy of British Empiricism, uses words as instrumental to pragmatic progress and reduces language to a utilitarian weapon for the colonization of Being (156). In particular, Kearney claims that in *Translations*:

> Friel identifies the ontological vocation of the Word with the Gaelic and Classical languages. It manifests itself in the local community's use of naming to release the secret of their psychic and historical landscape or in Hugh's excavations of Latin and Greek etymologies. Friel's play illustrates Heidegger's claim that language is the house of Being not only in so far as it permits to dwell poetically in our world but also that it grants us the power to recollect our past, our forgotten origins. (156)

The ontological and positivistic function of language is illustrated in two important moments of the play. When Owen, Hugh's son and Yolland's translator, recounts the story of a place called Tobair Vree, which is going to be renamed Brian's Well, he acknowledges, in the fate of this place-name, that language not only embodies the value of old names, but also a culture threatened by an imminent loss. Language used as 'utilitarian weapon' of colonisation is instead shown later in the play in the naïve and simplistic attitude held by Owen and Yolland, who believe in a one-to-one correspondence between places and their new names translated in English for the maps of the Ordnance Survey:

YOLLAND: A thousand baptisms!
OWEN: Eden's right! We name a thing and – bang – it leaps into existence!
YOLLAND: Each name a perfect equation with its roots.
OWEN: A perfect congruence with its reality. (Friel 1996, 422)

Language is also an essential feature of the play from a structural point of view. First, the audience is asked to believe that the characters on stage are speaking both Irish and English when in fact everyone is speaking English. Second, in the love scene between Maire, a Gaelic-speaking peasant girl, and Lieutenant Yolland, one of the English officers, the two young lovers manage to communicate their affection without a common language. In fact, Yolland recites the place names he has been learning during his stay in Maire's village, Baile Beag, which is the only Gaelic he knows. Thus, the play appears to be built between two extremes, the presence of language and its absence. In fact, there is a language that should be there, and is not – the Irish –, whereas a language that does not exist, is more than real – the personal language Maire and Yolland speak to each other to express their intimacy.

Furthermore, language has a crucial role in relation to the main question posited by the play, namely, what attitude Irish people should have towards English. The possible answers are epitomised by the characters of Manus, Owen and Hugh. Manus, Hugh's son, who is in love with Maire and is a schoolmaster himself, decides to leave Baile Baeg at the end of the play and take up a job in another hedge school on Inis Meadhon, one of the Aran islands, where the Gaelic culture still survives. He represents the uncompromising nationalist position of those who believe that English language must be refused at all costs. However, his allegiance to Irish language and its cultural traditions, proves unviable and futile. Owen, Hugh's son and the British soldiers' pragmatic helper who wishes to bring Baile Baeg into the modern world, moves from the self-assured joker of the first act to the rejection of his role in the mapping project. For him, as for his brother Manus, a mediation between Irish and English languages proves "impossible in the present climate of confused opinions and violent politics", of *Translations*, to use Paulin's quotation (1985 [1983], 16-17). Hugh, however, is the only one who demonstrates an unsuspected ability to adapt and he finally agrees to teach Maire English, as she is anxious to learn it in preparation for her impending emigration to America. When Owen apologises to his father for understanding too late that the translation of place-names was actually hiding "a bloody military operation", he announces:

HUGH: We must learn these new names…We must learn make them our own. We must make them our new home… It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language… we must never cease renewing these images; because once we do, we fossilise… to remember everything is a form of madness. (Friel 1996, 444-445)

Hugh appears to be the most accomplished interpreter of Paulin's and Friel's ideal vision of language policy in Ireland. In fact, for Hugh, as for Paulin, the language must be the "flexible instrument of a complete cultural idea" (Paulin 1985 [1983], 15) capable of renewing the legacy of the past in the light of unavoidable historical changes. Similarly, Friel (1982), in an interview, echoed almost word for word in Hugh's final lines, shows that *Translations* stands for the metaphorical journey of the language from 'the Irish home' to 'the English home'. In the attempt to find a compromise between the two languages, which is a reflection of cultural hybridity, the character of Hugh thus provides a more general response to the trope of language as alienation and belonging.

The importance of cultural hybridity[2] in relation to language and, in particular, to the use of dialects is also the topic of Maria Elena Doyle's article, "A Gesture to Indicate a Presence: Translation, Dialect and Field Day Theatre Company's Quest for an Irish Identity" (2000). She starts from the assumption that a dialect, which is by definition a linguistic hybrid, is a powerful tool for postcolonial writing because, as in Friel's *Translations*, it disrupts the enduring myths of a unitary Irish culture. As William B. Worthen states, the Field Day company sees Irish identity inextricably bound to the languages of Ireland rather than to the ancient native tongue alone (1995, 24). Thus, for "a company wishing to broaden the Irish theatre audience by bringing plays to smaller communities around Northern Ireland and the Republic, which rarely saw professional theatre, dialect has functioned as a significant means of connectivity" (Doyle 2000, 168). One of Doyle's observation has a particularly deep resonance. For her, the manipulation of dialect, by allowing Friel's multilingual characters to switch back and forth between Standard English and Hiberno-English, permits them to demonstrate the fluctuation in their cultural consciousness, rather than simply indicating which languages they are speaking. The representation of speech in the play, therefore, "alerts an audience not only to the slipperiness of language but also to individual characters' need to reconcile their disparate poles of identity" (170). This linguistic device suggests that to a change in language corresponds a change in self-understanding:

> The community that speaks Hiberno-English is by its very nature unlike the community that speaks Gaelic, and thus the two languages must be employed differently. Particularly, through his multilingual characters, Friel reveals that both their speech and their identities are irrevocably hybrid. (170)

In conclusion, I would argue that Friel in *Translations* mainly focuses on language issues. Although he makes continuous references to George Steiner's theory of translation presented in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, as many critics have widely emphasised (Smith 1991, 392-409; Richtarik 1994, 33-35; Pine 1999, 209, 359-363), Friel seems more interested in Steiner's model

of communication than in his theory of translation. From Steiner, he derives that translation is only a special case of communication in general, and that Steiner's radical suggestion is that "communication outward is only a secondary, socially stimulated phase in the acquisition of a language. Speaking to oneself would be primary function" (Richtarik 1994, 33). Friel seems to suggest that, only once we have learnt to talk to ourselves, can translation take place. Steiner, who defined translation as a fourfold motion of a hermeneutic activity consisting of various phases – trust, aggression, embodiment and restitution – had already prioritized interlingual communication. In the chapter titled "Understanding as Translation", Steiner sums up the difficulties of communicating within the same language: "No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same thing, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings" (1998 [1975], 47). He then moves from communication in general to more specific translation questions and shows that it is only in the final phase of his hermeneutic motion, restitution, that the translator gives the energy back to the original and restores the balance between original and translation. The restoration of this balance is the aim of Friel's *Three Sisters*, which will be analysed in the light of drama translation's theoretical framework.

2. *Friel as Drama Translator*

To put it simply, my contention is that Friel becomes critically aware of the importance of translation and, in particular, of drama translation, when he finds himself in the position of a translator. As indicated before, I am certainly not denying the philosophical and cultural import of Friel's considerations on the 'act of translating' as shown in *Translations*. However, a thorough and systematic reflection on translation from an intercultural perspective and with specific reference to translation for the stage is shown in some of Friel's Russian plays and, in particular, in *Three Sisters*. As Sirkku Aaltonen, the translation scholar who has given a rather comprehensive analysis of drama translation states: "the choice of a translation strategy [...] is linked with the spatially and temporally confined code switch through these strategies become represented in the discourse of the completed translations" (Aaltonen 2000, 45). She then clarifies, using the metaphor of translation as "a territory inhabited by many tenants", that the relationship between the source text and its translation does not result from an independent choice because this choice is always tied up to "the time and place of the occupancy" (47). As any theatre production is tied to the time and place of its audience, Aaltonen's conviction is that the translation of a foreign dramatic text, as well as its entire production, unavoidably represents a "reaction to the Other" when it is chosen for a performance in another culture (58)[3]. Furthermore, she exploits Erika Fischer-Lichte's notion of "productive reception" (Fischer-Lichte 1990, 287) to investigate how the foreign elements of

the source culture undergo cultural transformation through the process of theatre production in order to make the target culture productive again (Aaltonen 2000, 49). She then identifies clear-cut categorisations - compatibility, alterity and integration - to account for the relationship that exists between source and target theatre texts. Theatre, in fact, is an art form based on society and communal experience and grows directly from a society, its collective imagination, its symbolic representations and its system of ideas and values (Brisset 1996, 5). As Aaltonen clarifies, a foreign theatre text is made "compatible" when this text is chosen and the adjustments carried out are made "in the interests of the integration of the foreign text into the aesthetics of the receiving culture as well as the social discourse of the target society" (Aaltonen 2000, 53). Compatibility, therefore, occurs when foreign works are selected "on the basis of some discursive [sic?] structures […] in line with those in the target society" (53).

Thus, Friel attempts to make some Russian works, especially those of Chekhov and Turgenev, 'compatible' with Ireland and the Irish audience, with its social, cultural and political situation, as many critics have observed (York 1993, 164-177; Andrews 1995, 181-191; Pine 1999, 334-343; Randaccio 2001, 215-220)[4]. This is particularly true of his translation of *Three Sisters* (1981) and, to a lesser degree, of *Fathers and Sons* (1987) and of *A Month in the Country* (1992), which are adaptations from Turgenev's homonymous novels[5].

Three Sister, first performed in the Guildhall, Derry, in 1981, was considered a "translation in the deepest sense of the word" capable of illuminating "the complexities and confusions of life in Ireland today" (Richtarik 1994, 112). Beside the pragmatic reasons that Friel's treatment of Chekhov's text was already available since the previous year, and that doing a classic might reduce the pressure of expectations on the Field Day Company after the unprecedented success of *Translations*, there are more profound motivations which pushed Friel towards the Russian playwright. For Friel, these motivations lie both in the Chekhov's artistic figure and in the similarities between Russia and Ireland. Chekhov, as a writer, was capable of giving an accurate representation of life in his art and, at the same time, was capable of bringing medical assistance to the villages he used to work for as a doctor. Similarly, "with Field Day, [Friel] was trying, like Chekhov, to accomplish something in the world outside the theatre, and the example of the Russian was proof that a writer could be socially committed without losing his artistic integrity" (Richtarik 1994, 114). However, parallels between Russia and Ireland definitely are what triggered Friel's imagination. In fact, both countries had largely peasant economies and a restricted gentry class whose power was imposed on the vast majority of society. Both were on the edge of Western Europe, industrially underdeveloped and conscious of their backwardness. The closeness between provincial Russia of the nineteenth century and provincial Ireland in Friel, however, dates back to those non-Russian plays such as *Living Quarters* (1977) and *Aristocrats* (1979). As in Chekhov, there is the "same emotional primacy of the family" and its sense of apartness,

the distinctive sensibility of its components, their capacity to dissipate their emotional energy in the activities of every day (York 1993, 164). According to Richard York, "there is in both Chekhov and Friel, a dramaturgy of loss, of the wasted opportunity, of a confronting of inertia" (164). Richard Pine states that the striking similarities between Russia and Ireland is instead that Chekhov's and Friel's characters "appear in a state of limbo, people to whom things happen and who initiate nothing, who surrender to fate and live for tomorrow because to do so is less demanding than to try and live in the present" (Pine 1999, 334). Thus, the melancholy pervading most nineteenth century Russian literature, from Turgenev to Goncharov, from Pushkin to Dostoyevsky, disguises a sense of an "intolerable waiting", which acquires Beckettian overtones (335). In similar vein, Elmer Andrews notes that Friel's Russian characters, like Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* or Cass McGuire in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, have "a nostalgic yearning for a lost past or the dream of a Utopian future […] an inability to live in the present" because they "keep looking back or looking forward" (Andrews 1995, 185).

Seamus Deane draws a more specific parallel between Chekhov's Russia and Northern Ireland political situation, and equates the three sisters' frustrated ambitions and thwarted lives with those of the Northern Ireland minority. For this minority, "neither acceptance [of the State] nor reunification are remote possibilities […] so the present is determined by the promise of an unrealisable future" (Deane 1984, 83-84).

From a drama translation perspective, it is important to note that the various critical opinions expressed by York, Pine, Andrews and Deane on the *Three Sisters*' translation, more or less overtly, account for Friel's 'reaction to the Other' and they seem to describe the playwright's attempt to make the original text productive again.

Friel himself described the operation he set out to accomplish and gave a detailed explanation of the translation strategy adopted toward his source text. He pointed out that his own translation was undertaken primarily as an act of love, that he had not adapted the play, changed it into an Irish setting or tried to give specifically Irish meanings. Moreover, his work was not even a translation in the usual sense, because he did not know a word of Russian. As he admitted, "what I did was simply to put six texts in front of me and tackle each line at a time, to see first of all what was the meaning of it, then what was the tone and then eventually what was the sound. It took me nine months in all" (O'Donnell 1981). Friel was aware that his version of the *Three Sisters* represented a profound cultural and political statement for the target audience, especially in the Field Day 'enterprise'. In fact, Friel's reason for a new rewrite of Chekhov's play was that

> [...] the versions of *Three Sisters* that we see and read in this country always seem redolent of either Edwardian England or the Bloomsbury set. Somehow the rhythms of these versions do not match with the rhythms of our own speech patterns, and I think that they ought to, in some way. (Friel 1980, 59)

What Friel emphasises in this comment is a tendency peculiar to the British stage to domesticate foreign drama texts as, more than often, the original texts are given to an anonymous translator to be translated literally and then reworked by a well-known playwright[6]. In the case of Chekhov's translations, this tendency has gone so far as to alter "the ideological basis of Chekhov's thinking" and create "not a Russian, but an English Chekhov invented through the translation process" (Bassnett 1998, 94). As Gunilla Anderman has caustically observed, "Today's Chekhov on the English stage has become so Anglicised that 'English Chekhov' has even been turned into an export product" (Anderman 2005, 129).

Some interesting questions arise when Friel's 'Irish Chekhov' is thoroughly analysed as drama translation, especially when compared with Chekhov's other English translations. What exactly is Friel's attitude towards the chekhovian original – Friel's "reaction to the Other", according to Aaltonen's definition (58)? And, more importantly, what is the most profound meaning, from a theatrical perspective, of making the Russian play compatible with its Irish translation?

There are four main aspects which can be singled out to answer these questions. First of all, there is what Friel's himself defines "a decolonising process" in tune with the broader postcolonial agenda of the Field Day Theatre Company. As Rea, another co-founder of the company, said about the climate of the 1980s in Ireland, they were beginning "to try and throw off the old colonial thing" so that they could "get on with it themselves" (Richtarik 1994, 86). The process Friel specifically refers to in *Three Sisters* is the decolonisation of the Irish stage from all those chekhovian plays in which the Irish actors had to pretend "first of all, that they are English, and then that they're Russians" (O'Connor 1981 in Delaney 2000, 160). In fact, similarly to Rea's thought, Friel was convinced that a specific translation of Chekhov for an Irish audience would start "the decolonisation process of the imagination [which] is very important if a new Irish personality is to emerge" (160).

Second, there is the practical need of using a language easier to speak for the actors: "I wrote this play in an Irish idiom because with English translations Irish actors become more and more remote" (160). Richtarik reports that Friel's adjustments are particularly evident for some roles such as Natasha's, whose lower social status is portrayed in her language richer in colloquialism and local expressions. For example, she exclaims: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph! You put the heart across me!" (Friel 1992a, 120) and "Sweet mother of God" (36), and she refers to herself as "an eejit" (40). Her speech is also full of specific Irish constructions, as in "sure aren't we all" (76). However, other characters also use occasional Irish expressions or constructions. Kulygin announces that Chebutykin "has to pick a night like this to go on the hammer. Footless!"(78) and Doctor Chebutykin repeats at the end of the play "Matters sweet damn all… sweet damn all it matters" (123). The Irish aspects of Friel's translation does not only consist of a

large deployment of localisms, but also concern the creation of distinctively Irish references. When Natasha threatens to throw the elderly servant, Anfisa, out of the house, the reference to "bogs" cannot pass unnoticed. In fact, she shouts:

NATASHA: She is no use any more! She's a peasant and that's where she belongs – out in the bogs! You have her spoiled! If this house is ever to be run properly, we cannot carry old baggage like that. (Friel 1992a, 79)

Similarly, when Andrej complains about the lack of great personalities in their town, his reference to the 'Island of Saints and Scholars' is evident:

ANDREJ: Look at this town. One hundred thousand people – all indistinguishable. In the two hundred years this town has been in existence, it hasn't produced one person of any distinction – not one saint, not one scholar, not one artist. (Friel 1992a, 111)

The third reason which makes Friel's translation important in relation to the Russian Other is that *Three Sisters* on the Irish stage becomes the expression of the exchange of dramatic texts in intercultural theatre. In discussing the relationship between Chekhov and Turgenev in another Russian rewrite, *A Month in the Country*, Friel adopts the term "metabiosis" to describe how Chekhov metaphorically feeds on his Russian predecessor:

The term metabiosis in chemistry denotes a mode of living in which one organism is dependent on another for the preparation of an environment in which it can live. The relationship between Chekhov and Turgenev was richly metabiotic. (Friel 1992b, 10)

The term "metabiosis" which refers to the intracultural movement of texts, can be taken a step further when the exchanges of texts in translation move beyond the national borders[7]. Significantly, from "metabiosis" we move to Patrice Pavis's metaphor of the "hourglass", one of the most powerful tropes employed to describe drama translation in the 1990s from an intercultural point of view:

[An hourglass] is a strange object reminiscent of a funnel and a mill. In the upper bowl is the foreign culture, which is more or less codified and solidified in diverse anthropological, sociocultural modelizations. In order to reach us, this culture must pass through a narrow neck. If the grains of culture or their conglomerate are sufficiently fine, they will flow through without any trouble, however slowly, into the lower bowl, that of the target culture, from which point we observe this slow flow. The grains will rearrange themselves in a way which appears random, but which is partly regulated by their passage through some dozen filters put in place by the target culture and the observer (Pavis 1992, 4). As 'metabiosis' keeps alive the dialogue the tension between past and present, the metaphor of the "hourglass" illustrates the intercultural amalgamation of cultures in translated drama text. This metaphor thus not only embodies the "fusion of a mid-nineteenth-century Russian story and late twentieth-century feelings and responses in a vibrant and disturbing way", but also "carries a special force for the contemporary Irish and also non-Irish audience". (Kurdi 1995, 296)

The final aspect which renders the chekhovian original compatible with Friel, and best exemplifies the Irish playwright's 'reaction to the Russian Other', is Friel's display of his stylistic dramaturgical hallmark. In fact, that the more Friel distances from the Russian *Three Sisters* in his translation, the more he comes to the fore as dramatist. As many critics have highlighted, the ending of his *Three Sisters* bears witness to perhaps the greatest modifications of the whole play and, whereas Chekhov ends as it begins, Friel includes the possibility of change. He incorporates two new interludes of his own devising, two moments of potential escape from the characters' frustrating and stagnant lives, in which music and dance can become a means of transformation. One is the scene in which Fedotik, Roddy and Irina sing together and there is "the expectancy that suddenly everybody might join the chorus - and dance - and that the room might be quickened with music and laughter" (Friel 1992a, 55). The other is when Olga delivers her final lines and restates the importance of music:

> Olga: Just listen to the music. It's so assured, so courageous. It makes you want to go on, doesn't it?...But our life isn't over yet. By no means! We are going to go on living! And that music is so confident, so courageous, it almost seems that as if it is about to be revealed very soon why we are alive and what our suffering is for. If only we knew that. If only we knew that. (Friel 1992a, 23)

Leaving aside the controversial reading of these two moments, which have been seen either as optimistically bringing a future-oriented view of life or as a failed attempt of breaking out of the futility and boredom of provincialism, music and dance later acquire a healing and subversive power in *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), a distinctive trait of Friel's drama.

3. *Conclusions*

This paper has tried to articulate Friel's position toward new language insights in Ireland, which emerged from the critical reflection proposed in the 1980s by Field Day and was shown in its practical realisation in *Translations*. The debate on drama translation instead, which started to develop in the late 1970s in the English-speaking countries and gained momentum at the turn of twenty-first century, has provided the theoretical framework according to which Friel can be considered as a drama translator from an intercultural perspective in his version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. Far from being an exhaustive treatment of very complex topics, which would require much more investigation, this paper starts with the assumption that language and translation have always been crucial in Ireland. They have assumed various guises throughout the centuries, becoming in turn weapons of political propaganda, agents of linguistic reform or catalysts for cultural renaissance. Friel as linguist and translator has contrib-

uted to shake off the stereotypical vision of the Irish as those who have 'a rich language' and 'a rich literature', showing how often "words are signals, counters, which imprison a civilisation in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of facts" (Friel 1996, 419), as Hugh admonishes in *Translations*. At the same time, he has also taught us to make those very same words both productive and valuable again.

Notes

[1] Grene sees *Translations* as one of the three plays, together with Dion Baucicault's *The Shaughraun* (1874), George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) as the most representative examples of the process of stage interpretation of Ireland (1999, 6). Most interpretations of *Translations* have been in postcolonial terms from the 1990s on: McGrath (1999); Morales Ladròn in Gonzales (2003, 193-202); Bertha in Roche (2006, 154-165); Boltwood (2009 [2007]); De Pilar Roya Grasa (2011, 205-215).

[2] The importance of the notion of hybridity has been recently underlined in Chu He (2010, 117-129).

[3] The translation theorists who have given poignant examples of representations of the 'Other' in translation are Lefevere (1992) and Venuti (1998).

[4] Chekhov and Turgenev have had a constant influence on Friel's dramatic production as *Three Sisters* (1981), *Fathers and Sons* (1987), *A Month in the Country* (1992), *Uncle Vanya* (1998), *The Yalta Game* (2001) and *Afterplay* (2002) demonstrate.

[5] For reference to adaptation and the investigation of its relationship to translation see Marta Minier (2014).

[6] This topic has been dealt with in the 1990s especially by Bassnett (1991, 101) and, more recently, by Marinetti (2013, 29-32).

[7] According to Pavis, *intracultural* which is "the correlative of the intercultural" refers to the search for national traditions in order to define one's theatre in relation to external influences and understand more deeply the origins and transformation of one's own culture (Pavis 1996, 5-6).

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Translating Tragedy: Seamus Heaney's Sophoclean Plays

Emanuela Zirzotti
"Sapienza" Università di Roma (<emanuela.zirzotti@yahoo.it>)

Abstract:

The interest of contemporary Irish authors in the Greek and Roman antiquity testifies to their renewed effort in appropriating the classical tradition both as a source of inspiration and as a means of redefining the nature of Irishness through a constant confrontation with 'Otherness'. Translation and adaptation are among the favoured approaches to the ancient texts, which often become metaphors for the Irish political situation. This paper analyses Seamus Heaney's challenge to the established canon by his creative use of the classical tradition in *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), adapted from Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and *Antigone*. It aims to illustrate the relationship between Heaney's translation practices and his role as a poet.

Keywords: Antigone, Heaney, Philoctetes, poetry as cure, Sophocles

The interest of contemporary Irish authors in Greek and Roman antiquity testifies to their renewed effort in appropriating the classical tradition both as a source of inspiration and as a means of redefining the nature of Irishness through a constant confrontation with 'Otherness'. Translation and adaptation are among the favoured approaches to the ancient texts, which often become metaphors, or, as Terence Brown terms it, a "cultural metaphor" for the Irish political situation. As such, Brown insists, translation is "a sign of the degree to which in contemporary Ireland inherited definitions of national life, of social origins and expectations, fail to account for much individual and collective experience" (1996, 138); hence, the necessity to write "as if Ireland could be translated into somewhere else" (139). Interestingly, contemporary Irish writers (and poets in particular) very often 'translate' Ireland into ancient Greece and turn to ancient Greek plays in order to appropriate and, at the same time, challenge the language of culture by inevitably contaminating it with Irish terms and – notably in the '80s – by introducing precise political messages, which are meant to comment on and spread awareness of the Irish

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situation[1]. Thus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus "become poetic weapons and tools for discourse: microphones for the new dialogues" (McDonald 1996)[2]. My paper analyses Seamus Heaney's challenge to the established canon by his creative use of the classical tradition in *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), adapted from Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and *Antigone*, which interestingly represent different forms of challenge to power.

Heaney's first creative approach to the canonical territory of Greek tragedy still reflects his inner tension between his involvement in the Irish cause, and his loyalty to the Irish community, and a more purified aesthetic discourse. *The Cure at Troy* (composed for Field Day and staged in Derry in October 1990) is thus imbued with the spirit of denunciation which animates Heaney's fellow poets in the '90s[3]. *Philoctetes* is a story of exile and dispossession: bitten on his foot by a snake while he was making offerings to the gods before getting to Troy, the hero is abandoned on the desert island of Lemnos by his companions, who cannot stand the stink coming from his infected wound any more. During his ten-year stay there, his resentment against the Achaeans becomes bitter: the main target of his hatred is Odysseus, who had convinced his fellows to act against the hero. However, Philoctetes and his prodigious bow (which he had received from Hercules) are necessary to conquer Troy. Sophocles's play opens with the Greek ship landing at Lemnos and with Odysseus instructing Neoptolemus (Achilles's son) to deceive Philoctetes in order to get his bow and persuade him to go back to Troy. Sophocles indulges on the description of the young man's inner conflict: Neoptolemus is torn between his pity for and loyalty to Philoctetes, and his obedience to the Greek cause, to which he is linked by an indissoluble bond[4]. Heaney inevitably compares Neoptolemus's delicate situation to the general condition of contemporary Northern Irish people:

> The whole deception strategy goes against Neoptolemus' nature, but, for the sake of the Greek cause, he cooperates. He lies to Philoctetes, but in the end he cannot sustain the lie… Anyhow, the moral crunch of the play connects up with E. M. Forster's famous declaration that if it came to a choice between betraying his country and betraying his friend, he hoped he would not betray his friend. But that is not a Greek position. Nor an Ulster one, indeed. In the Northern Ireland situation, you feel stress constantly, a tension between your habitual solidarity with your group and a command to be true to your individual, confused and solitary self. But in crisis situations, as Odysseus knows, there is little room for the tender conscience. If your side wants to win politically, you all have to bond together. And that bonding can strangle truth-to-self. (Heaney 2000, 22)

Heaney thus freely translates "the overall situation of the play" (2000, 22), choosing for his version a title which is resonant with Catholic echoes and suggestive of the optimistic ending of the play, and adopting a kind of language and verse which "would sound natural if spoken in a Northern Irish accent" (2002, 171-174)[5]. If Philoctetes's story (that of a hero who is exiled

in a "home that is not a home inside" because of his festering sore; Sophocles 1998 [1994], 307) becomes emblematic "of the trauma of Ulster's maimed and distrustful communities" (Crotty 2001, 204), Heaney concentrates on the 'cure', that is a remedy which could heal Ulster's inner clash and, at the same time, vindicate poetry's right to be more than a mere instrument of protest. The poet expresses his idea through the introduction of an opening chorus (one of his major changes to the source text) as a prologue commenting on the overall situation of the play. Indeed, Heaney's voice resonates loudly in the choruses spoken by three women "wrapped in shawls" (instead of the fifteen sailors of the original), insofar as they allow him both to communicate his own personal involvement in political issues with "a public voice" and to legitimize his reflections on the authority of poetry[6]. Thus, *The Cure at Troy* opens with the chorus introducing three heroic figures, "Philoctetes. Hercules. Odysseus":

Heroes. Victims. Gods and human beings.
All throwing shapes, every one of them
Convinced he's in the right, all of them glad
To repeat themselves and their every last mistake,
No matter what.

People so deep into
Their own self-pity self-pity buoys them up.
People so staunch and true, they're fixated,
Shining with self-regard like polished stones.
And their whole life spent admiring themselves
For their own long-suffering.

Licking their wounds
And flashing them around like decorations.
I hate it, I always hated it, and I am
A part of it myself.

And a part of you,
For my part is the chorus, and the chorus
Is more or less a borderline between
The you and the me and the it of it.

Between
The gods' and the human beings' sense of things. (1-2)

The prologue is suffused with the prevailing emotion of the tragedy: the above mentioned heroes are associated because of their haughtiness and the firmness with which they stick to their views, whatever they are; their distinguishing characteristic is 'endurance', which is set as a justification to their utmost pride in suffering. Hence, in *The Cure at Troy* Heaney makes

Philoctetes's isolation and loneliness more acute in order to highlight the hero's determination to resist and survive, nurturing his resentment towards those who have condemned him to a fate worse than death and showing a deep self-pity at the same time. Thus, while the chorus of Sophocles's play sympathises with Philoctetes, who is "miserable, always alone" and "lies without a share of anything in life, far from all others, with beasts dappled or hairy, and pitiable in his pain and hunger he endures afflictions incurable and uncared for" (Sophocles 1998 [1994], 275), in *The Cure at Troy* the prologue emphasises the exceptionality of the hero's condition ("Human being suffer / But not to this extent") and Philoctetes himself is reduced to a wild beast because of his uncommon physical and emotional pain:

Out in the open always,
Behaving like a savage.
Nothing but squeals and laments.
Nothing left but his instincts.
Howling wild like a wolf. (Heaney 1990, 13)

Like a wild beast indeed, he rages against Neoptolemus and the chorus, when he appears on the stage for the first time ("What's this? Who is this here? How did you land? / What brought you to a deserted island? / Tell us who you are and where you come from"), explaining that his rudeness is the effect of the wickedness of his former friends ("What I am / Is what I was made into by the traitors", Heaney 1990, 15). Philoctetes's fury against the men who left him rot "like a leper" (17) on an island which is "a nowhere" (18) exemplifies the process of metamorphosis that Sophocles's protagonist undergoes in Heaney's version: Heaney's Philoctetes is proud of being an exile, he revels in his suffering, and his wound acquires a symbolic meaning, becoming his distinguishing feature. That is why he firmly refuses to follow the Achaeans to Troy and rejects the possibility to be cured, thus putting an end to his pain: "Never. No. No matter how I'm besieged. / I'll be my own Troy. The Greeks will never take me" (63)[7].

The opening chorus thus attacks Philoctetes's strictness ("I hate it, I always hated it"), and yet it feels involved in what is going on. It is easy to grasp in the chorus's words an allusion to Heaney's own "in-betweenness", that is his feeling of occupying a halfway position between the allegiance to his community and the loyalty to his role as a poet. This assumption is confirmed in the second half of the prologue, in which the poet reveals how he would like to carry out his task of intermediary:

And that's the borderline that poetry
Operates on too, always in between
What you would like to happen and what will —
Whether you like it on not.

Poetry
Allowed the god to speak. It was the voice
Of reality and justice. The voice of Hercules
That Philoctetes is going to have to hear
When the stone cracks open and the lava flows.
But we'll come to that.
For now, remember this:
Every time the crater on Lemnos Island
Starts to erupt, what Philoctetes sees
Is a blaze he started years and years ago
Under Hercules's funeral pyre.

The god's mind lights up his mind every time. (Heaney 1990, 2)

Like the chorus in the Greek tragedy, poetry brings together past and present, gives voice to the characters' hopes and bears genuine witness to the development of the events. Much more than this, poetry acts as a vehicle for the god's voice, thus anticipating the end of the play, when Hercules speaks during the volcano eruption to blame Philoctetes and convince him to follow the Achaeans to Troy, where he will be cured at last. Heaney seems to imply that if poetry represents the god's voice, at the same time it may offer a cure to both the hero's physical wound and his inner conflict.

In the last section of *The Cure at Troy*, Heaney progressively detaches from the source text. Despite the poet's assumption that "Philoctetes is not meant to be understood as a trimly allegorical representation of hardline Unionism", since he is "first and foremost a character in the Greek play, himself alone with his predicament, just as he is also an aspect of *every* intransigence, republican as well as Unionist", and that the parallels between the psychology and the situation of the characters in the Greek play and "certain parties and conditions in Northern Ireland", however suggestive, "are richly incidental rather than essential to the version" (Heaney 2002, 175), those allusions and parallels become indeed necessary to understand some of the poet's thematic and linguistic choices. Not only is Philoctetes *his own Troy*, he is indeed *Troy himself*, pretending to be unassailable but destined to fall. Significantly enough, his resistance is worn down by Neoptolemus's moral integrity and human compassion: the young man refuses to act as Odysseus instructed him and gives Philoctetes back his bow, deciding to "redress the balance" (Heaney 1990, 65) and to behave like a reliable friend, just as his father taught him to do. At the same time, however, Neoptolemus starts to dismantle Philoctetes's strictness ("Are you going to stay here saying no for ever / Or do you come in with us?"; 69)[8] and useless obstinacy:

You know
Human beings have to bear up and face

Whatever's meant to be. There's a courage
And dignity in ordinary people
That can be breathtaking. But you're the opposite.
Your courage has gone wild, you're like a brute
That can only foam at the mouth. You aren't
Bearing up, you are bearing down.
[…]
You're a wounded man in terrible need of healing
But when your friends try, all you do is snarl
Like some animal protecting cubs. (Heaney 1990, 72)

There is no dignity in Philoctetes's stand, no courage in his bearing the memory of a distressing past while avoiding to face the future ("The past is bearable, / The past's only a scar, but the future – / Never", 73). Thus, Hercules (whose presence is always perceived on the stage) inflicts the decisive blow to Philoctetes's stubborn opposition. In compliance with his will to freely translate the play, Heaney once again changes the source text: he rejects Sophocles's introduction of Hercules as a *deus ex machina*, just before the curtain falls, and chooses "to prepare for the sudden overturn of attitude in the hero in other ways – while still associating it with the influence of Hercules" (Heaney 2002, 172). Peter McDonald points out the way Heaney internalises Philoctetes's dilemma by translating the divine language of the original into the human language of the chorus (1995, 194), in a speech which seems to move the protagonists of the play through time and space in order to re-contextualise them in contemporary Ireland. Thus, the stage resonates with the roar of the erupting volcano, the lights fade, a spotlight directed at the three women who voice the well-known last chorus of the play:

Human beings suffer,
They torture one another,
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured.

The innocent in gaols
Beat on their bars together.
A hunger-striker's father
Stands in the graveyard dumb.
The police widow in veils
Faints at the funeral home.

History says, *Don't hope*
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime

The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.

So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.

Call miracle self-healing:
The utter, self-revealing
Double take of feeling.
If there's fire on the mountain
Or lightning and storm
And a god speaks from the sky

That means someone is hearing
The outcry and the birth-cry
Of new life at its term. (Heaney 1990, 77-78)

Starting from a universally valid assumption (that is, suffering is common to all human beings), the poet introduces a more private form of suffering, one which indifferently affects people in jail, prisoners on hunger strike in Northern Ireland, helpless relatives withdrawn in their unspeakable sorrow, and the widows of the policemen killed in the conflict. There seems to be no possibility for poetry (and for art in general) to offer a 'redress' to sectarian conflicts. Yet, Heaney strives to show that poetry may still express that hope which is denied by History. Thus, even if only once, justice may be generated by the great wave symbolising change, and surprisingly "hope and history rhyme"[9]. The chorus seems to imply that, in order to make the cure effective, it is necessary to believe in it, as it is necessary to go on believing in miracles and healing wells. Poetry is both the means with which the "further shore" where hope resides can be reached, and the essential tool to get "self-healing" and to conciliate conflicting parties.

The cure is unavoidable: speaking through the chorus, Hercules exhorts Philoctetes to follow the Achaeans to Troy, and to "conclude the sore / And cruel stalemate of our war. / Win by fair combat. But know to shun / Reprisal killings when that's done" (Heaney 1990, 79). The hero cannot but admit the inevitability of his destiny:

I'll never get over Lemnos; this island's going to be the keel under me and the ballast inside me. I'm like a fossil that's being carried away, I'm nothing but cave stones and damp walls and an old mush of dead leaves. The sound of waves in draughty

passages. A cliff that's wet with spray on a winter's morning. I feel like the sixth sense of the world. I feel I'm part of what was always meant to happen, and is happening now at last. (72)

Nothing similar can be traced in Sophocles: Heaney's Philoctetes cannot bid farewell to Lemnos, because he *is* Lemnos, he is part of it, metamorphosed in an essential element of its landscape. Philoctetes's last lines close the play full-circle: the healing process begins to have effect when the hero becomes aware of his responsibility towards his community.

Philoctetes becomes a catalyst for Heaney's disappointment towards contemporary Northern-Irish politics. By resuming the translation of Sophocles in 2004, however, the poet avoids the temptation to use Greek tragedy as an instrument of social and political criticism and focuses on its status of work of art. This change is the result of the poet's redefinition of his idea of translation. In an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney admits to have started translating as a job after he gave up teaching, and to have later developed a penchant for it because "it's a form of writing by proxy. You get the high of finishing something but you don't have to start it" (Heaney 2003). The poet is also conscious to have incurred in the temptation of contaminating the source text with his personal voice when he was younger: "I suppose it is inevitable that people speak in their own voice in translation. But the older I get the more obedient I tend to become" (Heaney 2000, 14). Greater faithfulness to the source text and deeper respect for its themes and general atmosphere are Heaney's keywords in 2004, when he starts translating Sophocles's *Antigone*. At the same time, his version is much more than "a conditioned response to a venerable work of antiquity, more than a reverential bow to the cultural authority of the Western canon" (Heaney 2004b, 419).

As for *The Cure at Troy*, Heaney chooses an emblematic title for his *Antigone*, *The Burial at Thebes*, which immediately evokes the play's main theme. By focusing on the inhumation rite, the poet highlights the triggering event of the play, that is Antigone's disobedience to Creon's prohibition to bury her brother Polyneices, who had fought with the Greeks against his own people. When he starts translating, however, Heaney has also in mind a recent Irish event, namely the general stir created by a funeral procession in Toomebridge in May 1981; the participants, Heaney recalls, "had come to Toome to observe a custom and to attend that part of the funeral rite known as 'the removal of the remains'". It was no ordinary event:

> [...] before the remains of the deceased could be removed that evening from Toome, they had first to be removed from a prison some thirty or forty miles away. And for that first leg of the journey the security forces deemed it necessary to take charge and to treat the body effectively as state property. The living man had, after all, been in state custody as a terrorist and a murderer, a criminal lodged in Her Majesty's Prison at the Maze, better known in Northern-Ireland as the H Blocks. He was a notorious

figure in the eyes of Margaret Thatcher's government, but during the months of April and May 1981 he was the focus of the eyes of the world's media. (Heaney 2004b, 411)

The corpse claimed by both the English authorities and the Irish people was Francis Hughes's, an IRA militant victim of the hunger strike, and a friend of Heaney's[10]. In the poet's mind, myth fuses with history and he interprets the dispute over the corpse as a metaphor for what he terms, after Hegel, the conflict between "the daylight gods of free and self-conscious, social, and political life" and "the Instinctive Powers of Feeling, Love and Kinship" (Heaney 2004b, 413-414), embodied in Sophocles's tragedy by Creon and Antigone, respectively.

Both the civilians' opposition to the English soldiers and Antigone's position are interpreted as forms of loyalty to the *dúchas*, that is set of values of one's own community and kin:

> Antigone […] is surely in thrall to patrimony, connection, affinity and attachment due to descent, to longstanding, to inherited instinct and natural tendency, and for her all these things have been elevated to a kind of ideal of the spirit, an enduring value. If we wanted, what's more, to find a confrontation that paralleled the confrontation between her and king Creon we could hardly do better than the incident on the street in Toomebridge. (Heaney 2004b, 413)

Heaney decides not to push the parallel further[11], and no other reference to Irish issues can be traced in his play[12]. Standing out from his contemporaries, who turn Sophocles' *Antigone* into a symbol of the Irish fight against English authority[13], in *The Burial at Thebes* Heaney focuses on the heroine's moral integrity even when opposing the law and on her respect for her family and her people's traditions. Antigone appeals to her loyalty to the *dúchas* when she tries to convince her sister Ismene to help her arrange the funeral rites for Polyneices:

Antigone […]
I say
It's a test you're facing,
Whether you are who you are,
And true to all you belong to,
Or whether —
[…]
His body… Help me to lift
And lay your brother's body.

Ismene
And bury him no matter…?

Antigone
Are we sister, sister, brother?
Or traitor, coward, coward?

Ismene
But what about Creon's order?

Antigone
What are Creon's rights
When it comes to me and mine? (Heaney 2004a, 3-4)

Heaney's Antigone insists on the primacy of blood and emotional ties ("are we sister, sister, brother?", which harshly emphasises the original "I will bury *my brother, and yours*, if you will not"; Sophocles 1998 [1994], 9, my emphasis) and appeals to them even when Ismene categorically refuses to help her, afraid of the consequences of breaking "the laws of the land" (Heaney 2004a, 5)[14]. By opposing both the law and the man who embodies it, Antigone performs an "anthropological" gesture (Heaney 2004b, 422), more than a political one, insofar as she affirms the force of "statutes utter and immutable – / Unwritten, original, god-given laws" (Heaney 2004a, 21), which are eternal and should be binding for the community as a whole. Creon's law, however strict, relies on a 'mortal force' which sets the preservation of the polis and the common good above the demands of individuals, family and friends. In the name of this 'mortal law', Polyneices is reduced to a 'non-person' deprived of soul and thus of the right to be buried. Antigone's subversive act aims at restoring Polyneices's dignity as an individual and a human being more than as part of a community; and when that community condemns her to an extreme punishment (she will be buried alive for having given a suitable burial to her brother), she still asserts the legitimacy of her private gesture appealing to the immutability of the feeling which links her to her family and to the ancestral law that her people silently recognise as 'right':

Stone of my wedding chamber, stone of my tomb,
Stone of my prison roof and prison floor,
Behind you and beyond you stand the dead.
They are my people and they're waiting for me
And when they see me coming down the road
They'll hurry out to meet me, all of them.
My father and my mother first, and then
Eteocles, my brother – every one
As dear to me as when I washed and dressed
And laid them out.
But Polyneices,
When I did the same for you, when I did
What people know in their hearts of hearts
Was right, I was doomed for it. (Heaney 2004a, 40)

Antigone's last monologue stands as both her ultimate challenge to the community and her most touching declaration of innocence. Heaney's tone

is sharper than the original, he closes the monologue with the image of the Justice Antigone had invoked since the beginning of the play:

> Ancestral city of the land of Thebes and gods of my forebears, I am led away and there is delay no longer! Look, rulers of Thebes, upon the last of the royal house, what things I am suffering from what men, for having shown reverence for reverence! (Sophocles 1998 [1994], 91)

Now gods of Thebes, look down.
Through my native streets and fields
I'm being marched away.
And never, you men of Thebes,
Forget what you saw today:
Oedipus's daughter,
The last of his royal house
Condemned. And condemned for what?
For practising devotion,
For a reverence that was right. (Heaney 2004a, 41)

As the stage directions read, "*Antigone is led out*" (41). Coherent till the end, Heaney's Antigone leaves the scene as a real Greek heroine should do. If, as Fintan O'Toole assumes, "there is not and never has been a pure, universal text of Antigone divorced from contemporary politics" (quot. in Younger 2006, 158), *The Burial at Thebes* stands as a wonderful exception: while focusing on the theme of inhumation, Heaney exalts the universal value of Antigone's loyalty to her *dúchas* and reminds the audience of "our final destiny as members of the species"; hence, the word "burial" subliminally brings together the "solemnity of death" and "the sacredness of life": "wherever you come from, whatever flag is draped on the coffins of your dead, the word 'burial' carries with it something of your *dúchas*" (Heaney 2004b, 426).

In *The Burial at Thebes* the necessity to give public expression to his involvement in certain dynamics of contemporary politics (which is manifest in *The Cure at Troy*) seems to be superseded by the urge to adhere to a greater textual strictness. However, both plays are imbued with the need to legitimize the poet's private voice, that is to defend the originality of his art and to affirm his identity as a poet. Heaney's approach to Greek tragedy provides an essential element to understand his 'composite' Irishness, an identity which transcends geographical boundaries and political ideology.

Notes

[1] Des O'Rawe remarks that the effort in translating ancient Greek tragedies constitutes one of the most challenging aspects of contemporary poetry, and that such is the variety of texts and translators that "one might be forgiven for thinking that no (male) Irish poet's *oeuvre* can any longer be considered complete without at least one published version of a Greek play"

(1999). Among the translations and adaptations of the Greek classics which are performed on the Irish stage from the second half of the '80s, it is worth recalling: Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act* (1984) and *Seize the Fire* (1989, respectively versions of Sophocles's *Antigone* and Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*), Aidan Carl Matthews's *Antigone* (1984) and *Trojans* (1994), Brendan Kennelly's *Antigone* (1985), *Medea* (1991), and *The Trojan Women* (1993), Desmond Egan's *Medea* (1991), and Derek Mahon's *The Bacchae* (1991) and *Oedipus* (2005), a two-act play combining Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

[2] See, for example, Paul Turner's interpretation on the subject: "Greek tragedies are approached, not as historical masterpieces in their own right, but as means to the end of the Irish protest" (2007, 132). However, the critic seems to ignore the existence of a parallel trend, which aims at stressing the artistic value of ancient tragedies, without necessarily making them symbols of the Irish political situation. Part of this trend are Derek Mahon's Oedipus tragedies and Heaney's own version of Sophocles's *Antigone*.

[3] "In […] *The Cure at Troy*, classical imagery of a destructive war, and an ensuing demand for tribal vengeance, is used to achieve a crossing from the tribal to the ethical" (O'Brien 2005, 110). In fact, Heaney had previously declined to translate Greek classical plays for Oxford University Press, because of his insufficient knowledge of the Greek language (2000, 22). However, when he starts translating for Field Day, he feels perfectly at ease: the play, as he conceives it, responds to one of the main principles of the company, that is the opposition to any form of sectarian division in Ulster. Field Day's main aim is "[to] contribute to the solution of the recent crisis by producing analyses of the established opinions, myths and stereotypes which [have] become both a symptom and a cause of the current situation" (quot. in Richards 2003, 67).

[4] Thus, for example, Neoptolemus addresses Odysseus, questioning the licitness of his actions: "Son of Laertius, things which it distresses me to hear spoken of are things which I hate to do! It is my nature, and it was also my father's nature. But I am ready to take the man by force and not by cunning; with only one foot he will not get the better of us who are so many. I was sent to help you, but I am unwilling to be called a traitor; I had rather come to grief, my lord, while acting honestly than triumph by treachery". In addition, when Philoctetes finds out that he has been cheated and asks to have back his bow, Neoptolemus reiterates his loyalty to his kin, because "[j]ustice and policy cause [him] to obey those in command" (Sophocles 1998 [1994], 265, 349).

[5] The opening lines of the play, a description of the setting in Odysseus's words, are translated into a colloquial language, whose broken rhythm conveys the protagonists' tension when landing to Lemnos: "Yes. / This is the place. / This strand. / This is Lemnos all right. / Not a creature! / And here we are then, Neoptolemus, / You and me. / Greeks with a job to do" (Heaney 1990, 3). The choice of such a language is itself dictated by Field Day's policy: "I wanted" — Heaney explains — "to have verse that would sound natural if spoken in a Northern Irish accent. But this is not suggesting that actors should try to *do* Northern Ireland accents: that would be a deplorable distortion. It's just that I knew beforehand that we would be using a number of actors from Ulster, would be opening in Derry, touring the North (as well as the South) and operating under the banner of Field Day; Field Day is a company whose purposes include the revoicing and revisioning of experience by 'talking Irish', as it were (as in 'talking dirty', not as in 'talking French' — the 'Irish' here is adverb rather than noun)" (2002, 174).

[6] "The Greek chorus allows you to lay down the law, to speak with a public voice. Things you might not get away with in your own voice, *in propria persona*, become definite and allowable pronouncements on the lips of the chorus" (Heaney 2000, 23).

[7] The parallel between Philoctetes and Troy is Heaney's invention; as a matter of fact, in the original Philoctetes mentions Troy only to curse both the town and those who are besieging it: "May Ilium perish, and all those beneath it who had the heart to reject my tortured foot!" (Sophocles 1998 [1994], 375).

[8] It is interesting to notice that, despite he claims that references to Irish political issues are absolutely accidental, in Neoptolemus's question Heaney himself detects an allusion to a

particular political event: "This echoes the Ulster Unionist refusal of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1987, when they would not grant that the Irish government had any right to be involved in the envisaging or the conduct of the new political arrangements in Northern Ireland. (Incidentally, Thatcher's Tories stuck to their guns — oops, that's what she said about the IRA — and the ultimate result, I would argue, is the relatively hopeful conditions which prevail at present. If the Unionists are still saying no to an Irish dimension, they are doing so with less overbearing and less credibility)" (Heaney 2002, 175).

[9] Hugh Denard points out that some of the lines of Heaney's chorus have been quoted by leading politicians in relevant moments in Irish history, that is when there seemed to be a correspondence between history and hope. Thus, in November 1990, only a month after the *première* of *The Cure at Troy*, the new president of the Irish Republic, Mary Robinson, quotes the "hope and history rhyme" stanza of the chorus in her inaugural address. On December 1, 1995, one year after the IRA had proclaimed the ceasefire, president Bill Clinton appropriates the same stanza during his speech from the Bank of Ireland, "bringing the weight of American influence and dollars to bear on the Northern Irish peace process." Finally, still in 1995, Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, addresses his audience using Heaney's words, wishing that "history and hope can be made to rhyme" in Ireland (2000, 1-2).

[10] Heaney's opinion regarding his fellow countrymen's attitude towards the prisoners' protest (an attitude he, in a way, adopts) is worth noticing: sympathizing with the convicts would have meant to connive at the IRA's violent methods, "so many people hesitated. But in their hesitation they were painfully aware that they were giving silent assent to the intransigence and overbearing of Margaret Thatcher" (Heaney 2004b, 412).

[11] Heaney asserts that the play could provide a response to the post-September 11 political situation, in particular when "President Bush and his secretary of defence were forcing not only their own electorate but the nations of the world into an either/or situation with regard to the tyrant of Baghdad". It could be easy, then, to offer a version of Sophocles's play in which Creon "would have been a cipher for President Bush", but this would have disparaged both Sophocles's work and the White House's effort in preserving national security (Heaney 2004b, 421-422). Writing for *The Guardian.* In 2005, Heaney goes back over the comparison Creon-Bush: "Early in 2003 we were watching a leader, a Creon figure if ever there was one: a law and order bossman trying to boss the nations of the world into uncritical agreement with his edicts in much the same way as Creon tries to boss the Chorus of compliant Thebans into conformity with his. With the White House and the Pentagon in cahoots, determined to bring the rest of us into line over Iraq, the passion and protest of an Antigone were all of a sudden as vital as oxygen masks" (Heaney 2005). Heaney thus avoids the temptation to make Antigone's opposition to Creon a symbol of the world's protest against Bush the 'tyrant'. The poet refers in particular to Creon's first cue, in which he proudly affirms that his laws aim at preserving both the city and its institutions: "That is my way of thinking, and never by my will shall bad men exceed good men in honour. No, whoever is loyal to the city in death and life alike shall from me have honour" (Sophocles 1998 [1994], 23).

[12] In *The Burial at Thebes* Eugene O'Brien notices a clear Irish subtext; relying on Heaney's general observations on the choice of the title of his version, O'Brien detects in Polyneices's disputed body "a potent trope in nationalist rhetoric in an Irish as well as classical context. The images of dead martyrs or traitors are the motive forces behind so many of the commemorative parades, processions and demonstrations that have caused such tension, bloodshed and death throughout the history of Northern Ireland. The honouring of one's own glorious dead and the dishonouring of those who broke the code of the tribe is a vital signifier in nationalist and unionist rhetorical structures […]. In this text, as in *The Cure at Troy*, there is an almost allegorical level of connection between classical Greece and contemporary Northern Ireland". Hence, the critic assumes that the image of the women demanding justice for their brother's corpse has a strong resonance in contemporary Ireland; in particular, he has in mind the stir

caused by Robert McCartney's sisters in Belfast on January 30, 2005: trying to shed light on their brother's death (McCartney was murdered outside a pub by members of the Sinn Féin and of the irregular IRA), the women had started a protest against the government's investigation methods. To O'Brien, the event bears a strong resemblance to what *The Burial at Thebes* describes, since "The public sphere which is deemed to be not a woman's place is both ancient Thebes and contemporary Belfast" (2005 [2002], 128, 132-133). O'Brien is certainly right in pointing out the similarity between Antigone's and McCartney's sisters' positions, however I do not agree with his general reading of Heaney's play; if, as he explains, "to see these translations as locked in the symbolic order of the ancient classical world is to miss the subtext that is at work here", to over-interpret *The Burial at Thebes*, as he does, by forcing an Irish subtext into the play, implies to diminish the value of Heaney's translation as a work of art *per se*.

[13] See, for example, Kelly Younger's interesting study, focusing on the frequency with which translations of Sophocles's *Antigone* have been staged in Ireland since the '80s. Younger interprets these versions as Ireland's disastrous attempt to "de-colonise" itself, to get free from its English "father" (Younger 2006, 151-153).

[14] "In the land of the living, sister, / The laws of the land obtain — / And the dead know that as well. / The dead will have to forgive me. / I'll be ruled by Creon's word. / Anything else is madness" (Heaney 2004a, 5).

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"The root of all evil": Frank McGuinness' Translations of Greek Drama

Loredana Salis
Università di Sassari (<lsalis@uniss.it>)

Abstract:

Whether in political propaganda or in creative works the myths of ancient Greece have long attracted scholars, writers and audiences from Ireland. Over the past forty years, a wealth of adaptations of plays by Sophocles and Euripides has been produced, which brings back to life ancient tales of heroes and heroines, in settings at times distinctively local and contemporary, at times deliberately universal. Field Day's contributions represent a typical instance of the former approach to the classics, while other Irish playwrights have used Greek myths to reflect upon questions that are not exclusively Irish. Their plays may have an Irish echo, and some are even set in Ireland, but their main preoccupation lies beyond geographical borders. Frank McGuinness belongs to this second group of playwrights. To date, he has reworked and staged five Greek plays with great audience and critical acclaim. This paper locates his translations of Sophocles and Euripides within the tradition of classical tragedy use in Ireland at the crossroads between the local and the global and at the search of what he calls "the root of all evil" with special attention to his *Oedipus* (2008) and *Helen* (2009).

Keywords: culture, Frank McGuinness, Greek drama, language, permanence of myth, translation

The classical tradition has largely inspired Irish literature and drama: whether in political propaganda or in creative works, scholars, writers and audiences from Ireland have often returned to the tropes, the grammar and the philosophy of the Greeks (Stanford [1976] 1984). Over the past forty years, a wealth of new versions of plays by Sophocles and Euripides has been produced, which brings back to life ancient tales of heroes and heroines, in settings at times distinctively local and contemporary, at times deliberately universal. Field Day's contributions are exemplary of the former approach to the classics – e.g. Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act* (1984) and *Seize the Fire* (1989), and Seamus Heaney's first work of that kind, *The Cure at Troy* (1991) –, as

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are Michael Longley's translations of Homer in which the poet speaks of his native North at times of uncontrollable blood thirst[1]. Other Irish writers have used ancient myths to reflect upon questions that are not exclusively Irish: their works may have a 'local' echo, and some are even set in Ireland, but their main preoccupation lies with solitude (Edna O'Brien, *Iphigenia*, 2003), fragmentation of the self and of the family (Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 1998; *Ariel*, 2002) (Salis 2009), memory, change and the environment (Paula Meehan, *Painting Rain*, 2009); human and aesthetic experience (Theo Dorgan, *Greek*, 2010).

One playwright who has significantly revisited Greek tragedy is Frank McGuinness: to date, he has adapted four plays[2] – five, if one considers Racine's *Phaedra* (2006) – and staged them in theatres around the world with great audience and critical acclaim. In an introduction to Carr's version of *Medea* he maintains that "playwrights have to be in the business of discovering fire, for without it there is no passion, no comfort, no terror, no light" (2003, 87-88). His words reveal as much of his politics of translation as they do of Marina Carr's. Accordingly, this paper locates McGuinness within the tradition of classical tragedy use in Ireland at the crossroads between the local and the global and in search of what he calls "the root of all evil" in his most recent Greek plays, *Oedipus* (2008) and *Helen* (2009).

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (429 BC) tells the story of the eponymous king of Thebes. When a terrible plague strikes the city, the elders walk to the royal palace and ask the help of their sovereign. Oedipus, who has defeated the Sphinx by solving her riddle, and has thus become their king, is determined to save his people. But the gods have spoken through the oracle: Laius, the former king, has been killed and Apollo now demands that his killers are punished. The search begins and it soon leads to the tragic realisation that Oedipus, the son of Laius and Jocasta, is the man who has killed his father and married his mother. Overwhelmed by the horror of these findings, Jocasta takes her life and Oedipus blinds himself. Creon becomes the new king of Thebes while Oedipus is taken away from the city and from his children. A chorus chants of his dreadful fate: death alone will grant him his final rest[3].

Since Sophocles first staged his play, and owing to Aristotle's notion that it is 'the perfect' tragedy, *Oedipus Rex* has been reworked countless times. Freud's psychoanalytic interpretation at the start of the past century, perhaps more than any other reading of the myth, has contributed to shape our contemporary perception of it. Indeed, Freud's Oedipus complex revives in modern versions of a tragedy that speaks of parricide, incest, *hubris*, contingency, the limitations of human knowledge and the necessity of fate[4]. In Ireland, Sophocles' play was chosen by W.B. Yeats to promote his Irish cultural revival. In 1927, he produced a 'modern' version of *King Oedipus*, a play that follows the source in its plot but, whose protagonist evidently feels 'at home' in Ireland. Yeats strongly believed in the affinity between old Irish and Greek literatures, and a

year later he also translated *Oedipus at Colonus*[5]. Yeats' notion of tragedy and its place in the poet's ideal of a cultural transformation for Ireland through a National Theatre haunt the history of Irish theatre in the twentieth century: when Seamus Heaney was invited to write a version of *Antigone* to mark the Abbey Theatre's hundredth anniversary, his thought went back to Yeats and to other Irish playwrights who had reworked that play before him[6]. "How many Antigones could Irish theatre put up with?" wondered the Nobel Prize winner, who went on to write a beautifully poetic and evocative adaptation of *Antigone* entitled *The Burial at Thebes* (2004). Similarly, when a production of *Oedipus* by Frank McGuinness was announced, some may well have thought that Irish theatre had already had enough Oedipuses[7]. The playwright had actually seen a production of Yeats' *King Oedipus* in Dublin when he was a teenager (Higgins 2008) – but his adaptation tells a different story altogether.

Oedipus does not change the original plot but notably alters Sophocles' diction and turns it into something strikingly primitive and powerful. McGuinness shortens the play almost by half, strips the language bare, and he simplifies it to attain immediacy. There are no twists and turns, no long choral odes, descriptions or mythic accounts, mostly brief sentences uttered in a plain idiom that conveys a few simple but disquieting messages. The emotional impact is enormous. Oedipus loses his royal title in this version: though he remains the king of Thebes, he is firstly a man with his flaws and a sinner, at time presumptuous but also generous and sensitive to his people's suffering. The opening reveals a "man most hateful to the gods" (60) and a victim to their tricks: Oedipus is a character to sympathise with because, as he reminds us, he "had no wish to murder [his] father" (44).

The play begins with the protagonist's words:

My people, my friends, you come before me – *why*?
You are begging, you are praying – *why*?
The city, *why* is it sore with weeping?
Why is this whole city suffering?
[...]
Old man, I turn to you – *speak out*.
I want to give you all the help I can.
My heart's sore, for you are a black pity. (3, Emphasis added)

In Sophocles, the Theban king enters to address a group of suppliants gathered at the palace door:

My children, latest born of Cadmnus old,
Why sit ye here as suppliants, in your hands
Branches of olive filleted with wool?
What means this reek of incense everywhere
And everywhere laments and litanies?

Children, it were not meet that I should learn
From others, and am hither come, myself,
I Oedipus [...] explain your mood and purport. Is it dread
of ill that moves you or a boon ye crave?
My zeal in your behalf ye cannot doubt;
Ruthless indeed were I and obdurate
If such petitioners as you I spurned. (ll. 1-13)

The *parodos* exemplifies McGuinness' use of the translated word: language is deliberately minimal and yet emphatic; by way of repetitions – my... my... you are... you are... the city... this whole city – it becomes direct and unequivocal. Oedipus' heart is "sore" (3) because "the city is sore with weeping" (3); the king suffers because his people suffer: "You feel your own pain [...] but mine is your own" (4). Sorrow, pain, and suffering afflict Thebes because "God is on fire – his fever is plague" (4, corresponding to Sophocles ll. 27-29: "armed with his blazing torch the God of Plague / hath swooped upon our city emptying the house of Cadmus"). McGuinness introduces the notion that "there is poison in this land / we feed on it, so we fester" (5), a significant diversion from Sophocles' lines: "King Phoebus bids us straitly extirpate / a fell pollution that infests the land" (ll. 96-98), rather echoing the Chorus in Heaney's *The Cure at Troy*[8] and exposing the decay, the rot, even, affecting people from within. It is worth noting, in this respect, that the terms (and derivatives) "cure" (4, 12, 65), "curse" (12, 18, 34, 56, 58, 59), "dirty" (13, 32), "fester" (14), "filth" (20, 27, 61), "foul" (9, 27), "infect" (62), "plague" (3, 8, 9, 12, 14, 28, 63), "poison" (5, 10, 28), "pollute" (45), "sickness" (59, 63), "sin" (16, 18, 19, 37, 56, 57, 63, 64), "soiled" (10, 21, 59), "stain" (10, 56, 59), "stench" (14), (64), and "taint" (62) are reiterated throughout; these are strong words that depict a devastated people in need of healing (8). Evil is infectious, it spreads fast and it brings death: "Blood will have blood / Blood will drench this city" (6). Here is where the urgency lies for Oedipus to find "the stem [...] of all evil", which lies in his own self, as he eventually learns from Tiresias: "You are your own children" (19). His words to Oedipus are an addition in McGuinness: Sophocles' forecast that "a flood of ills [...] shall set thyself and children in one line" (ll.425-426), turns into a curse: "Your happy marriage [...] will drench you in sin / drown you in sin after sin" (18).

Oedipus' search for "the secret of my birth" (48) begins with the play and it culminates with the unveiling of parricide[9]. Sophocles refers simply to "the plague" (l. 833), but McGuinness takes a substantial liberty and names "the sin of all sins" (37), that blasphemous yet liberating deed – the killing of the father – that is deeply rooted in the Irish psyche and recurs throughout Irish drama and literature[10]. Parricide is a metaphor for an original sin that expects to be washed. In the text it sets the scene for a confrontation with one's own

past. Asked about the reasons for adapting *Oedipus*, McGuinness links it to the death of his own father[11], but to think of the play as a self-reflexive self-analytical enterprise would be reductive because *Oedipus* is where the personal, the local and the universal spheres converge. Oedipus, to put it differently, is not an alter ego of the artist, but rather a representation of the ordinary man, and woman, with their fragility, and their sinful and troubled soul.

The opening passage above reveals a side of the hero that is peculiar to McGuinness' reading. His protagonist is a man in search of answers: he asks "why" four times (and he also asks the old man to "speak out", 3). Oedipus questions and poses questions incessantly because he needs to know – "What are the words to answer my question?" (62); to make things clear is an urge for him; to know more and better is an overpowering necessity:

Shepherd: Master, question me no further.
Oedipus: If I have to ask these things again /I will kill you myself.
[...]
Shepherd: That is what scares me most.
What I have to say –
Oedipus: What *I have to* hear.
And *I must* listen carefully. (54-55, Emphasis added)

Oedipus' anxiety for the truth gives the play its rhythm and tension: "It's time to reveal this thing", he tells the Chorus (48). His words are directed to the elders of Thebes and also to a character called Stranger – clearly, they send out a message for anyone in the audience that is ready to receive it. Oedipus' investigation, an unrelenting search for answers, soon leads to the discovery that he is the man he is looking for. This is another interesting addition to Sophocles: Tiresias' words to the King that "Thou art the murderer of the man / whose murderer you pursuest" (l. 362) become:

The man who was murdered, you murdered him.
You are who you are seeking to find. (15, Emphasis added)

The grammar in that second line is wrong (it should be "you are *he* / *the one* you are seeking to find"); it is as wrong as that which it reveals – the distorted articulation of a truth that can no longer "be chained" (15). "Riddles" (19) and "ignorance" (23) are repudiated and the first signs of clarity are about to be revealed: Creon laments that he doesn't "see who stands before [him]" (30), Oedipus is in a "blind panic" (34) while Jocasta regrets "paying heed to veiled visions" (38). Like Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Oedipus sees the "horror" he has brought in his head (58), and blinds himself so that "his eyes now would be at home in the darkness / they would not know those he still wished to know" (58). In Sophocles, blindness is a condition

of true knowledge and wisdom (Tiresias' second sight), but in McGuinness lack of sight is the result of a self-inflicted punishment as well as an evil state of being: it is a "cloud of darkness", an eternal torment for the heart "pierced by swords of sorrow"; it reawakens memories of the past (59).

The *exodos* confirms McGuinness' different view of the tragedy of Oedipus. The end of the protagonist's quest and the revelation that he is "the root of all evil" (61) bring a cure to the plague and placate the gods. The Chorus in Sophocles looks back at the greatness of a man who "was the mightiest in our state" and warns the audience that they may:

Look [...] in what sea of troubles sunk and overwhelmed he lies!
Therefore wait and see life's ending ere thou count one mortal blest;
Wait till free from pain and sorrow he has gained his final rest. (ll. 1528-1530)

For McGuinness, however, the ending bears a different, unsettling message:

Look on Oedipus and respect his deeds.
[...]
The grave is waiting for us all.
Our comfort lies in the cold clay.
Turn to dust and be contented. (66)

There is no pity nor condemnation of Oedipus: what happens to him may well happen to anyone because "our life is all random" (43) and man is "a ball to kick beneath [the gods'] feet" (60). There is no redemption either: for McGuinness tragedy is about coming to terms with man's fragility; it is the spelling out of human suffering. The closing variation shows another interesting aspect of this playwright's use of the Greeks in that he is actually closer to Euripides' rationalism than he is to Sophocles' profoundly religious view of life. McGuinness wrote *Oedipus* after *Hecuba* and one year before *Helen*, so it is no surprise that his reworking was influenced by Euripides' unique "touch of all human things" (Storr in Sophocles 1912, vii). Indeed, the vulnerability of men, the point at which *Oedipus* ends, is exactly where *Helen* begins.

Helen by Euripides (412 BC; Euripides 2002[12]) revolves around the eponymous character, the beautiful wife of Menelaus, whose love story with Paris, the Trojan prince, famously caused a ten-year war of the Greeks against the city of Troy. In the play, Helen recounts another story, unveiling the events that really led to the war and managing, in the end, to save her life and reputation, and the life and reputation of her husband. At the start of the Trojan war, Helen is taken to Egypt and lives there for seventeen years, but when the King dies, his son Theoclymenus, now the new sovereign, seeks to seduce and force her to marry him. To guard her innocence, Helen sleeps by the old king's tomb, her thoughts always fixed to Menelaus. A messenger tells her that he is alive and

has been travelling in search of her. The two are finally joined; Helen proves Menelaus her fidelity and tells him of how Hera, the goddess, annoyed because she did not win the beauty contest against Athena and Aphrodite, created a "breathing image" of her, a ghost which she gave in marriage to Priam of Troy and which brought war "upon the Greeks and the poor Trojans" (ll. 38-39). The couple plan their escape, outwitting the King and leaving the land of Egypt with the favour of the gods, who "gallop the sea [... and] escort them" to their own country (l. 1665).

Helen has been defined an "escape tragedy", a play which, despite its happy end is "far from being [...] untragic, light or whimsical. [It] emerges as being serious, dark, pessimistic [and] raises some very disturbing questions about the audience's knowledge of their myths, their gods and their very existence" (Wright 2005, 5). Matthew Wright's words of defence are a response to misreadings of *Helen*, among other Euripidean plays, that deny it the value of tragedy proper on the basis of elements in it which bring it closer to other genres such as romantic tragedy, melodrama and comedy (Wright 2005, 7-10; 16-23). Interestingly, in reviews of McGuinness' *Helen*, critics often refer to it as "a comedy" whose success largely rests on the entertaining quality of speech (e.g. Billington 2009; Fisher 2009, Sulcliffe 2009). The presence of humorous light-hearted dialogues between characters in both plays cannot be overlooked, but that alone does not suffice to turn *Helen* into a comedy. It may be objected that it is a question of what one means by tragedy and comedy, yet it is also quite evident how, in this particular case, laughter is a momentary release from tension (Taplin 2006 [1996], 188), and comical elements "exist in a fruitful tension with the context, which enhances the tragic effect of the whole work" (Seidensticker 1982, in Wright 2005, 29). Similarly, the presence of a happy end and the absence of heroes and important deaths[13] cannot be taken as the defining features of a comedy; where *Helen* by Euripides and McGuinness is concerned, at least, these alone do not alter its tragic quality. Indeed, in both plays tragedy is given by the writer's ability to bring the audience on the verge of a precipice, and to elicit laughter and astonishment at one and the same time. This is a significant correspondence; indeed McGuinness' dialogue with Euripides allows him to take liberties that hardly betray his master's work.

Tradition has it that were it not for Helen's beauty and lust no Trojan war would have ever occurred; factually, then, the ten-year bloodshed, which gave start to Greek history and life[14] would (and could) have been avoided. This notion recurs throughout classical literature and it has been influenced, almost unanimously, by the hostile standard Homeric version of the myth (Wright 2005, 82-127). Euripides does not share this view and creates an alternative, rather unfamiliar portrait of Helen as a chaste and faithful woman through which he maintains that the cause of all evil lies elsewhere. This variant of the story is peculiar to Euripides, and I believe it explains, at least partially, McGuinness' fascination with it.

When the play opens, Helen tells the audience that she was "put forward for the Greeks as a prize of war" and taken to foreign grounds, so that she could "keep [her] bed unsullied for Menelaus" (ll. 42-43). Protected by Hermes, the woman knows that "one day [she] will live in Sparta's plain with [her] husband, who will learn that I did not go to Ilium – provided I do not share my bed with anyone" (ll. 57-59). Helen is determined to preserve her chastity and wait until justice is made: "Even if my name is reviled in Greece, my body shall not here be put to shame" (ll. 66-67). Her prologue-speech is a suggestive section of the play which condenses all the thematic wealth of its narrative. Euripides' *parodos* – "Here flows the Nile with its fair nymphs!" (Euripides 2002, l. 1) – locates the scene in Egypt, and centres upon images of the family and the gods. Helen tells of Proteus and his children, and of her father Tyndareus; but then adds that she has another father too: begotten by Leda and Zeus, who "flew to my mother [...] in the shape of a swan" (l. 18), she is a goddess herself. Similarly, the Dioscuri, her brothers, were made gods by the will of Zeus (l. 1659).

Euripides' 67-line prologue-speech becomes a 75-line monologue in McGuinness' version (2009)[15]:

My name is Helen – Helen of Egypt.
The river Nile is my neighbour here.
The King of this country – he's called Theoclymenes.
It's said he's devout – he adores the gods.
His sister, everyone's dote since she was a baby,
She's called Theonoe because she thinks like a god,
Knowing what is past or passing or to come. (3)

This opening focuses on the protagonist, now Helen of Egypt, a woman well settled in a foreign land – "The Nile is my neighbour" (3). It has less to do with Euripides' *parodos* than with the opening of McGuinness' previous adaptation of a Greek play, *Hecuba*:

I am Polydorus, son of Hecuba.
Priam is my father.
I am dead.
I come from that darkness –
The abyss, the gates of godless hell.
Son of Hecuba,
Priam is my father. (3)

The analogy is telling; indeed the two plays are similar in their language, tone, and historical setting; both explore the causes and the consequences of conflict, and they revolve around a victimised female central character. *Hecuba* and *Helen* touch upon gender issues while stereotypes of female inferiority and

weakness are reiterated in speeches by Odysseus, Polymestor and Agamemnon (*Hecuba*) as well as in the words of Menelaus and especially Theoclymenes, the Egyptian King[16]. *Hecuba*, perhaps more bitterly than *Helen*, also comes to the conclusion that the gods cannot be held responsible for all evil, while humans are deliberately, and at times willingly, the makers of their own fate[17]. McGuinness develops a discourse based on the demystification of gendered roles and the demythologisation of myth in a context, our contemporary society, in which violence can only be ascribed to humans ("I've been the victim of woman's vanity", says Helen, 3). This view is common to other playwrights who have worked on Greek tragedy in recent years, and particularly those who have used myth to depict the futility of war. If some explore why violence erupts (Edna O'Brien) or demand when violence is going to end (Colin Teevan), McGuinness goes back in time to pose the question of where it all began; significantly, the Chorus in *Helen* chants: "Lady, I hear your litany of misery / *I link it to the wonder of your birth*" (11, emphasis added), while Menelaus links his bad luck to the day he was born (17). Their words bring to mind those spoken by Oedipus (above), and signal the importance of revisiting the past in *Helen* too[18]. Here, characters discover the uncomfortable truth that things are not as they seem or have always seemed: Helen's beauty "is a mask, a mask that mocks" (13).

Travesty, mockery, trust and honesty are crucial aspects of this play[19]. Euripides shows that the eponymous character is not the one to blame, and, most tragically, that the Trojan War, *the* root of all evil, is a whim. More disturbingly, McGuinness reveals the extent to which uncertainty and precariousness define the contours of human life. Before the play opens, in an added line of stage directions, it is clear that for him nothing and nobody can be trusted:

> *Setting*
> A graveyard in Egypt before the gates of King Theoclymenes' royal palace
> *Time*
> Seventeen years after the Trojan War started, when Helen was stolen from Paris, Prince of Troy, and taken from her husband, Menelaus – *apparently*. (59, Emphasis added)

None of this is present in Euripides: "Before the *skene*, representing the palace of the Egyptian king Teoclymenus, is the tomb of his father Proteus. When the action begins, Helen is sitting at the tomb as a suppliant. McGuinness' addition, the adverb "apparently" at the end of the stage direction, is a key-point in a play about deception and the illusory nature of words. Ironically, perhaps, it also exposes how gullible humans can be.

This brings us back to the opening monologue in which Helen speaks of her two fathers (ll. 17-21; McGuinness 2009, 3), but also to other sections in the play which similarly assert duplicity. When Helen asks Teucer, a wandering Greek soldier, whether her brothers, "the sons of Tyndareus [are]

alive or not" (l. 138), Teucer replies that they are "dead, not dead: there are two accounts". Helen's response to this sounds puzzling, at first: "Which is the better one?", but it clearly reflects her awareness that for each story there is a reverse, which may not be true, but it is equally valid. In the same conversation the woman also learns that Leda, her mother, "is dead and gone"; *apparently* she took her life:

Helen: What? Killed by Helen's shame?'
Teucer: *So they say*: she put a noose about her fair neck.
Helen: Are the sons of Tyndareus alive or not?
Teucer: *Dead, not dead: there are two accounts.*
Helen: *Which is the better one?*
[...]
Helen: [...] *But what is the other story?* (ll. 135-141, Emphasis added)

McGuinness follows his source very faithfully here:

Helen: And Helen's mother – any news?
Teucer: Leda – is that what you mean? She's as dead as dust
Helen: Did the dirty about Helen –
Teucer: Destroy her mother? *So they say*.
She found a noose for her long, lovely neck.
Helen: Her sons – are they alive – Castor –
Teucer: And Pollux? *Dead but not dead*.
Two sides of that story.
Helen: *What do people believe*?
[...]
Teucer: *That's just one story.*
Helen: *Tell me the other*. (9-10, Emphasis added)

Helen wants to know both versions and yet she is sceptical; she knows that there can be no certainty since *both sides of the story* may be (un)reliable:

Helen: That's not just hearsay? [...] You're certain?
[...]
Helen: Maybe it was the gods fooling (8)

The discovery that the gods are fooling is unsettling: it must have been for Euripides' public, and it undoubtedly was in 2009, at a time when the force of persuasive rhetoric resounded in the media with notions of a 'war of words'. McGuinness claims to "despise people who try to hammer home the relevance of the Greeks" but the conflict in Iraq, and its public reception are between the lines of the play: he had touched upon those issues in *Hecuba* ("Europe / steals me from Asia / leaving me no hope", Chorus, 24) and was now returning to them in a darker reflection on responsibility and trust[20]. In

the meantime the history of Northern Ireland had reached a defining moment: a country long divided by the Civil War, finally achieved a "seemingly impossible" solution in 2007 as the leader of the DUP, Rev. Ian Paisley, became Northern Ireland's new First Prime Minister in a power sharing executive with Sinn Féinn's Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister (BBC History online). How long would peace last? Was this going to be another illusion?

In the light of those events, *Helen* also tackled the question of the power of language. Indeed, the entire process of adaptation is primarily linguistic and it is given by simplified dialogues, shorter utterances, idiomatic expressions, a low register and a basic vocabulary. Colloquialisms are common, though this is also a peculiarity of Euripides' diction, but in the adapted text accent and dialect are also added. The effect is double: on the one hand, speech becomes recognisably local (causing a laughter that eases the dramatic tension), on the other, linguistic relocation helps construe a type of diversity that is at once ethnic and properly cultural. Helen is *unlike* the other characters; she stands out among humans and gods – her beauty, her descent, her reputation, her innocence, and her dignity make her exceptionally diverse. In McGuinness' play she does more than simply replicate Euripides' Helen and becomes a vehicle through which theatre can expose what the Chorus calls "the false prophets" and seek to "save" (32) man from the illusion and delusion of shared assumptions.

McGuinness exploits the original structure of the play to bring this aspect to the fore. Notably, *Helen* has no actual division into acts, though the action takes place in two clearly distinct moments: the first (ll. 1-385) introduces the background to the story through the voice of Helen, who narrates her past misfortunes until she discovers that Menelaus is alive; the second (ll. 385-1692) concentrates upon Menelaus and then Theonoe, the prophetess and a sister to the King, who helps the Greek couple leave the land of Egypt. The first part is considerably shorter than the second, and it acts as a sort of preamble to it: anything that is said or hinted at in those opening lines turns out to be a cautionary tale by the end of the play. Words become facts or else they are proved right as the action unfolds. McGuinness shortens Euripides by 240 lines (mostly in the second half of the play), condensing choral odes, monologues and dialogues. The tempo speeds up and exchanges gain dynamicity, often heightening the tension. As well as cutting down on Euripides' lines, the Irish playwright also simplifies and revises the original language[21] so that tone and register create an atmosphere that is dense with hatred, diffidence, uncertainty. Words are deceitful, we learn from the start, and similarly what our eyes see cannot be trusted. The play dismantles all that it constructs and "nothing is ever as we imagine". As the Chorus chants in McGuinness' *exodos*, "so this story ends, as do all stories" (63).

The second part of the play further explores the consequences of this realisation. Menelaus opens this section with a pseudo prologue-speech, an-

other authoritative account of why things are as they are and why. Like Helen, he also goes back to a time long before he was born. In Euripides, Menelaus enters the empty stage "dressed in pieces of torn sails" and pronounces a seven-line speech in which he evokes Pelops[22], who begot Atreus, who begot Agamemnon and Menelaus. This, the Greek warrior says, he wishes had never occurred. McGuinness omits the mythological details, of little relevance to a contemporary audience, and focuses on Menelaus' reasoning. In a couple of short, sharp sentences he makes his point clear:

I date my bad luck from the day I was born.
No, I'll go further back.
Better my father had cursed his father,
He brought him into this world. (17)

This speech opens a section of the play in which two major events take place: Menelaus finds his wife (and Hera's trick is unveiled) and the couple return home safe thanks to the help of Theonoe. Menelaus arrives in Egypt not knowing where he is: he has lost his companions and has been cast upon a foreign land (ll. 408-410); he is hungry and in search of help (ll. 430-434). He arrives at a rich man's house, a walled palace with "impressive gates", and there he encounters an Old Woman, a rather hostile inhospitable gatekeeper. The scene is among the most suggestive and entertaining in the play: here, laughter serves to contain the underlying tension for the forthcoming events. The exchange between the two characters is also emblematic of McGuinness' use of Greek tragedy:

Euripides (ll. 437-444)
Gatekeeper
Who is at the gate? Leave this house!
Do not stand at our courtyard gate and
bother my master! Otherwise you'll be
put to death! You are a Greek, and Greeks
are not allowed here!

Menelaus
Ancient lady, you may say these same
Words in a different tone: I will obey.
Stop being angry!

Gatekeeper
Go away! It is my job, stranger, to see
that no Greek approaches this house.

McGuinness (18-19)
Gatekeeper
What's the racket? Away from here. Hop it.
Who are you to bother your betters?
You are Greek – I can tell by the cut of you.
We're not so keen on your kind.
We'll skin you.

Menelaus
Madam, keep a civil tongue, please
There's no need to be abusive..

Gatekeeper
You look like a Greek, you smell like a Greek,
You quack like a Greek, I'd say
    you're a Greek.
I've a punishing entry policy.
No dogs, no Greeks – fuck off foreign bastard.

Euripides' Gatekeeper is nothing like McGuiness'; her function is evidently different. The first woman provocatively gives voice to anti-Greek feelings that may have been common among slaves and Trojans, but were certainly not so among people sitting in the audience at Dionisia. This is a crucial point to be made when thinking of Euripides' alternative use of myth, because he wrote for an Athenian public but targeted their idiosyncrasies. Euripides knew how his audience felt about strangers; he sought to expose those notions and to invite his audience to rethink them. The irony, in the speech above, is caused by the fact that Menelaus, a Greek, is called a stranger and is treated like a barbarian; he is treated exactly the way barbarians were treated by the Greeks. It is indicative, in fact, that Menelaus is in rags, a beggar deprived of his actual royal status, even diminished in his intellect (l. 454). There is also a striking contradiction between the idyllic image of Egypt offered by Helen in the opening (this is the place where her life and honour are saved), and the not-so-welcoming land where Menelaus is a shipwreck. The contrast is ironic but only apparently so because that moment of irony soon turns into a non-ironic reminder that words are not reliable; however authoritative, words are deceptive, and impressions can be misleading. McGuinness expands on this aspect and recreates a character whose colourful language may be funny at first, but it gives way almost immediately to a grotesque sense of *déjà vu*. The speech above resonates with a sectarian hatred that recalls the no-entry policy ("No dogs-no Greeks") for Jews in Nazi-Germany, for blacks in Apartheid South Africa, for Italian and Irish immigrants in North America in the 1950s and the 1960s, or for Irish Catholics in Protestant Northern Ireland.

As with *Hecuba* five years earlier, McGuinness turned to a vocabulary of race in which *the other* is a "savage" (27), a "parasite" (32) "stinking of slavery" (31), a "barbarian" (13), and an uncivilised, undignified other. But unlike that first adaptation of Euripides, in which racist practices pertained to the Greeks exclusively, in *Helen* both sides, Greeks and non-Greeks, rely on the same language to articulate intolerance and a deeply-felt sense of racial superiority. Discourses such as these are seen in war contexts around the world, and it is to them that the play refers, though it cannot be denied that McGuinness had his Northern Ireland in mind when he reworked the Greeks and the Egyptians in *Helen*. His characters speak a language that is rich with colloquial and idiomatic expressions, 'Irishisms' proper, that shift the geography of the play to McGuinness' native land ("ownio", "arse", "shenenigans") and resound with the local talk ("the big man", "she did, so she did"). Dialect – which brings verbal communication closer to the truth and helps convey a sense of authenticity – was used in performance, and it was the regional variant of the North that went on stage ("voice and dialect work" by Jan Haydn Rowles in McGuinness 2009). The effect was comic, but laughter could be only temporary. The search for clarity and certainties retraces a past that needs uprooting, it leads to the conclusion that reality is beyond human control and that evil is always futile. That, in McGuinness' plays, is a non-negotiable truth.

Notes

[1] Longley depicts the conflict in "The Butchers" (1991), a poem based on Book XXII of the *Odyssey*, and overcomes it, at the imaginative level, in "Ceasefire" (1994), a prophetic sonnet based on the *Iliad*.

[2] *Sophocles' Electra* (1998); *Euripides' Hecuba* (2004); *Sophocles' Oedipus* (2008), and *Euripides' Helen* (2009).

[3] Sophocles 1912; references are taken from this edition and they are indicated parenthetically within the text.

[4] "His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours ... It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and murderous wish against our father", wrote Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The quote is reported in The National Theatre's workpack for McGuinness's *Oedipus* (Kent 2008, 18). Director Jonathan Kent believes that Freud "audaciously expropriated" Sophocles, yet acknowledges his influence on contemporary readings of the play. The same applies to versions by Storytellers Theatre Company (*Oedipus* 2000) and more evidently Pan Pan's production of *Oedipus Loves You* (2008).

[5] "Greek literature, like old Irish literature is based upon belief [...] At the Abbey Theatre we play both *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus* and they seem at home here" (Stanford 1984 [1976], 99).

[6] As early as 1903, Yeats translated part of the play which survives as "Ode to *Antigon*", the last stanza in "A Woman Young and Old", published in *The Tower*, 1928. In 1984, *Antigone* was revisited by Aidan Carl Matthews, Tom Paulin, Brendan Kennelly, and Pat Murphy. In 1999 and 2003, there were four more versions of the play in Ireland (respectively, Declan Donellan and Marianne McDonald, and Conall Morrison and Crooked House Theatre Company). In 2004, Seamus Heaney and Conall Morrison added to the list, followed, in 2009, by Owen McCafferty.

[7] E.g. Rev. Sheridan (1723); Synge (1907), Yeats (1926); de Brún (1927); Burke-Kennedy (2000); Doyle/Quinn (2006).

[8] "Your wound is what you feed on, Philoctetes [...] stop eating yourself up with hate" (Heaney 1991, 61).

[9] In Sophocles, Oedipus refers to "the secret of my birth" towards the end of the play (l. 1393), when he tells the Chorus that he does not regret causing his blindness: "For, had I sight, I know not with what eyes / I could have met my father in the shades". McGuinness uses Sophocles' words earlier in the play, when Oedipus has his last conversation with Jocasta (48).

[10] Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) is the most exemplary dramatic work of this kind. For a reading of parricide as a metaphor of a national issue with the father figure cf. Kiberd (1995, especially chapter 21).

[11] The loss of both parents also influenced the writing of *Hecuba* four years earlier. In 2008, while working on *Oedipus* the playwright "had an astonishing experience […] My father died 11 years ago and my mother about 10 months before. I have spent the past decade dealing with her death; the death I hadn't really dealt with was my father's. […] This dreadful shock came over me […] I had some tremendous buried grief and sorrow and fear, and it came to the fore" (Higgins 2008).

[12] References to the play are taken from this edition and are indicated parenthetically within the text.

[13] No main character dies, but at the end of the play lots of minor characters actually fall in a bloody battle (Euripides, l. 1065).

[14] According to Herodotus, Greek history and life were perceived to have begun with this conflict (Wright 2005, 117).

[15] References to this play are indicated parenthetically within the text.

[16] The Gatekeeper, a marginal character in Euripides, acquires an important role in McGuinness. In the Greek play, the woman appears once, in a conversation with Menelaus, but in the

modern adaptation she leads the scene twice, namely in a curious exchange with the Spartan warrior (18-20) and, when she defies Theoclymenes (61, echoing Shakespeare's Emilia in *Othello*).

[17] Hecuba's utter desperation is spelt eloquently in one of McGuinness' best tragic monologues: "Who is to protect me? What son, what city? [...] Is there a god to hear me?" (9).

[18] This is also a central theme in *Electra*, a play in which revenge is a manifestation of the overpowering force of the past. The past revisited returns in *Hecuba* with the image of a revenant, the ghost of Polydorus. Killed by Polymestor and thrown into the ocean, Hecuba's son returns to his motherland to demand a rightful burial (2004, 5).

[19] See "mock" (48, 57); "honest" (38, 40); "fair" (43); "loyal" (62); "loyalty" and "fairness" (36, 37, 43, 62); "false" (32), "illusion" (25, 32); "trust" (59). Travesty is recurrent: Menelaus wears rags on his first appearance; he is travestied as a Greek slave when he testifies of Menelaus' death; and he wears new clothes and armour to bring offerings to the dead hero in the escape scene, while a servant acts as dead Menelaus in the funeral scene. Helen is notably an "illusion" (25, 32); she pretends to be a desperate widower who wears black and cuts her hair in mourning.

[20] This aspect is particularly evident in productions of *Hecuba* at the Donmar Warehouse, London (2004), at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre in 2006, and at the Dundee Rep Theatre, Dundee, 2013. Jonathan Kent, who directed the play in London, observes that although it would be a mistake "to set the action explicitly outside Basra or Baghdad [...] it would also be a sign of failure if the play didn't bring Iraq to mind" (Kent 2004). In Dundee, the audience are "invited onto the stage-set seating as radio recordings of the 2003 Iraq war and the oft-imitated tone of George W. Bush crackle overhead" (Donaldson 2013).

[21] McGuinness commissions literal translations of the original plays in English which he then adapts and modernises. Fionnuala Murphy translated *Hecuba* and *Helen*; and Ciaran McGrogary translated *Oedipus*. For *Electra*, McGuinness used the LOEB edn (1912).

[22] A suitor to Hippodamia, daughter to the King of Pisa, Pelops "won the race and his bride by bribing [the king's] charioteer" (Euripides 2002, 53, n. 14).

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Miscellanea

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Le migrazioni irlandesi in Francia fra il XVI secolo e i primi decenni del XIX secolo. Lo *status quaestionis*

Matteo Binasco
Università degli Studi di Genova (<Matteobinasco973@hotmail.com>)

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to provide a historiographical overview of the Irish migrations to France from the second half of the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Over the last fifteen years, research on Irish migrations to France and the rest of Europe during this period has generated an impressive amount of scholarship, thus demonstrating how this can be considered a phenomenon which anticipated the great Irish diaspora of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Brittany, France, Ireland, Irish Colleges in France, migrations, wild geese

1. *Introduzione: il quadro cronologico*

Nel suo recente saggio sulle migrazioni irlandesi in Francia durante l'età moderna, lo storico Éamon Ó Ciosáin ha sottolineato, con una certa polemicità, come fino alla fine degli anni Novanta la storiografia abbia continuato a dare maggior importanza ai flussi legati all'esilio dei soldati fedeli a Giacomo II (1633-1701) che abbandonarono l'Irlanda a seguito della sconfitta subita nel 1690 contro l'esercito comandato da Guglielmo III d'Orange (1650-1702) nella battaglia sul fiume Boyne. Secondo Ó Ciosáin, è solo nell'ultimo decennio che si è cominciato a rivedere la scansione cronologica dei flussi dall'Irlanda alla Francia e a dare maggior importanza ai movimenti avvenuti prima del 1690 (2010, 125-126). Data la mancanza di dati precisi, è difficile avere un quadro cronologico uniforme sui flussi irlandesi verso la Francia dalla fine del 1500 al primo decennio del 1800. Ó Ciosáin ha proposto di suddividere la migrazione in quattro differenti periodi. Il primo copre gli anni che vanno dal 1589 al primo decennio del 1600 quando alcuni reggimenti militari irlandesi, attivi nelle Fiandre spagnole, si trasferirono in

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Francia. A questo movimento seguì l'arrivo, fra il 1603 ed il 1607, di consistenti gruppi di poveri irlandesi sulle coste della Bretagna, una migrazione che sembra essere legata alla carestia che colpì l'Irlanda nel 1606[1].

Fino alla prima metà degli anni Novanta, questo flusso è stato quasi completamente ignorato sia dalla storiografia francese che da quella irlandese. La dimostrazione di ciò è data dal fatto che, fino ad allora, le uniche ricerche di rilievo erano quelle fatte da Charles de Beaurepaire (1900-1904), François Gourvil (1949), Jules Mathorez (1913), Paul Parfouru (1894), Jean Thomas (1949), e Anthony Walsh (1897). Oltre ad essere ormai datate, queste analisi dedicano poche righe ai flussi del primo Seicento, e privilegiano invece le migrazioni avvenute fra la fine del XVII ed il primo ventennio del XVIII secolo (Lyons 2003, 2).

Nel 1994 i flussi del primo Seicento sono stati ripresi ed espansi da Ó Ciosáin che, grazie alla scoperta di nuove fonti nei registri parrocchiali bretoni, ha fornito una differente prospettiva sulle migrazioni dei vagabondi irlandesi (Ó Ciosain 1994). Il suo lavoro ha aperto un fertile filone di ricerca che è stato progressivamente esteso da Alain Le Noac'h (1998), Patricia Dagier (1999), e soprattutto da Mary Ann Lyons. Quest'ultima ha ampliato il lavoro pioneristico iniziato da David Buisseret (1964) negli anni Sessanta, riuscendo a mappare le comunità dei vagabondi irlandesi che si stabilirono a Morlaix, a Rouen e a Parigi nei primi anni del 1600. Lyons ha anche investigato la differente reazione delle autorità municipali di quelle città all'arrivo di questo flusso di vagabondi, dimostrando come, il più delle volte, venissero considerati come un pericolo da rimuovere tramite la promulgazione di bandi di espulsione, come di fatto avvenne a Morlaix e a Parigi nel 1605 (2000). Lyons ha anche proposto di rileggere la cronologia delle migrazioni irlandesi verso la Francia, dimostrando che già dal 1540 c'erano dei flussi, seppur di modesta entità, che dalle principali città portuali irlandesi si dirigevano verso Saint-Malo (Lyons 2003, 1), flussi favoriti dai contratti commerciali che legavano l'Irlanda ai porti della Normandia e più in generale a quelli della costa atlantica francese sin dal tardo Quattrocento[2]. In particolare Lyons ha rilevato che i primi nuclei d'irlandesi che si stabilirono a Saint-Malo durante il 1500 erano prevalentemente membri dei Lynch e dei Martins, due delle famiglie mercantili più influenti di Galway (Lyons 2001, 108-111).

La seconda ondata migratoria dall'Irlanda verso la Francia si sviluppò nel periodo compreso fra il 1620 ed il 1640 per terminare nel 1660. Anche in questo caso una consistente parte di questi flussi era composta da poveri vagabondi che migravano verso le coste francesi e in misura minore verso l'Inghilterra[3] a seguito di una serie di carestie che impoverirono l'agricoltura irlandese. Tuttavia le carestie non sembrano essere l'unica causa alla base di queste migrazioni. Infatti la maggioranza di questi vagabondi era proveniente dalla parte sud occidentale della provincia del Munster. Come è stato ipotizzato da Ó Ciosáin (2010, 128-130), è probabile che le migrazioni da questa zona fossero causate dalla sempre più invasiva colonizzazione inglese che progressivamente tolse consistenti appezzamenti di terra ai piccoli proprietari appartenenti al ceppo gaelico della popolazione[4].

Questa seconda ondata migratoria non era composta solo da vagabondi o da proprietari terrieri privati delle proprie terre ma anche da soldati. Lo studio fatto da Pierre Gouhier negli anni Sessanta ha messo in luce come, fra il 1634 ed il 1660, la corona francese avesse reclutato quasi 30.000 fanti irlandesi nel proprio esercito (1968). Di questi quasi 18.000 arrivarono in Francia dopo l'invasione, nel 1649, e la successiva conquista dell'Irlanda da parte di Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) nel 1653[5] (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 101).

Oltre ai militari, la conquista puritana spinse anche altre categorie sociali, e in particolare prominenti famiglie mercantili e membri del clero cattolico, a lasciare l'isola alla volta della Francia. Questo è dimostrato dal fatto che, dopo il 1650, almeno dieci vescovi irlandesi si rifugiarono in Francia dove riuscirono a sopravvivere grazie ai proventi e al sostegno fornito dalla gerarchia ecclesiastica francese[6]. È stato ipotizzato che la seconda ondata migratoria irlandese verso la Francia fosse composta da 40.000 uomini e donne, una stima che tiene conto di tutte le categorie sociali (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 105).

La terza ondata migratoria dall'Irlanda alla Francia avvenne nel periodo compreso fra il 1660 ed il 1680. Questa periodizzazione è stata introdotta solo di recente da Ó Ciosáin che, così facendo, ha voluto ribaltare il pregiudizio storiografico che vedeva questo periodo come privo di significativi flussi migratori dall'Irlanda. Secondo Ó Ciosáin, fu invece durante questo ventennio che la comunità irlandese in Francia rafforzò la sua presenza, in particolare nella parte centrale ed in alcuni centri costieri della Bretagna. Questo periodo vide anche il consolidamento della presenza ecclesiastica, con l'acquisto nel 1672 di un struttura più grande per il Collegio irlandese di Parigi, e il progressivo incremento del processo di naturalizzazione degli irlandesi in Bretagna. Ulteriori fattori che consolidarono la presenza irlandese in Francia fra il 1660 ed il 1680 furono l'arrivo delle famiglie Knowles, MacNamara, Joyce e Brown a Nantes che, in breve tempo, sarebbero diventate le principali *élites* commerciali della città, nonché i matrimoni fra le donne irlandesi di seconda generazione con prominenti notai francesi (Ó Ciosáin 2006).

Come è stato accennato in precedenza, la quarta ondata migratoria dall'Irlanda prese avvio dopo la battaglia sul fiume Boyne del 1690 che provocò l'esilio dei soldati giacobiti. È stato stimato che 14.000 soldati irlandesi abbandonarono l'isola per essere reclutati nell'esercito regio francese. Sin dal seconda metà dell'Ottocento questo flusso ha attirato l'attenzione degli storici irlandesi e, nell'ultimo trentennio, anche di quelli francesi[7]. Ad oggi però manca ancora una cesura cronologica precisa che possa indicare con una certa sicurezza in quale momento la migrazione militare irlandese, e quella degli altri gruppi sociali, verso la Francia, e *tout court* verso l'Europa continentale, cominciò a diminuire. Lo storico dell'economia Louis Michael Cullen sosteneva che il declino dei flussi migratori irlandesi era cominciato dal 1780, quando l'esportazione di brandy e di vino dalla Francia all'Irlanda registrò una progressiva contrazione con un conseguente indebolimento della comunità irlandese di Bordeaux, la

più importante in questa rete commerciale[8]. Sempre secondo Cullen il periodo rivoluzionario vide in Francia l'istituzione della leva di massa che portò alla fine dell'arruolamento dei reggimenti dall'Irlanda, decretando così l'interruzione dei privilegi di cui fino ad allora avevano goduto gli ufficiali irlandesi e le loro famiglie (Cullen 2006). L'unica eccezione fu rappresentata dal 3ème Régiment Étranger d'Irlandais che venne reclutato da Napoleone Bonaparte (1769-1821) nel 1803 per poi essere sciolto nel 1815 (Bartlett 2006). La periodizzazione proposta da Cullen venne utilizzata anche da Liam Swords nel suo studio sulla comunità clericale irlandese di Parigi alla fine del settecento. Egli metteva in evidenza come fino allo scoppio della Rivoluzione Francese (1789-1799) questa comunità avesse sviluppato una serie di reti culturali, finanziarie, e sociali grazie a cui i preti irlandesi si erano potuti integrare nella società parigina di fine settecento. Tuttavia lo scoppio della Rivoluzione e l'arresto di molti ecclesiastici irlandesi residenti a Parigi ed in Francia spazzò via questi *networks*, interrompendo così i flussi di immigrazione dall'Irlanda (Swords 2001).

La periodizzazione che è stata precedentemente illustrata serve ad inquadrare il fenomeno delle migrazioni irlandesi verso la Francia in età moderna. Data la mole della bibliografia, è opportuno analizzare questi flussi suddividendoli in base alle tre categorie sociali che caratterizzarono le migrazioni verso la Francia, ovvero il clero, i soldati ed i commercianti.

2. *La migrazione ecclesiastica*

Come venne sottolineato da Patrick Ferté, la Francia, assieme alla penisola iberica, fu la principale meta dell'emigrazione ecclesiastica irlandese verso l'Europa continentale dalla fine del 1500 al 1689. L'affermazione di Ferté si basa sul fatto che l'*Hexagone*, pur non garantendo lo stesso livello di supporto finanziario fornito dalla corona spagnola, favorì la creazione e lo sviluppo di una rete di collegi irlandesi (Ferté 2006, 33). I primi tre seminari secolari ad essere fondati furono quello di Douai, nel 1601, di Bordeaux e di Tolosa, entrambi nel 1603, che beneficiarono del supporto del clero locale (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 103). A questi tre collegi si aggiunsero quelli di Parigi, di Rouen, e Nantes, fondati rispettivamente nel 1605, nel 1610 e nel 1680. Alle fondazioni per il clero secolare si affiancarono quelle per i regolari, quali il collegio dei Cistercensi di Bordeaux, fondato nel 1615, il collegio francescano di Parigi e quello gesuita di Poitiers, fondati rispettivamente nel 1617 e nel 1674. Gli ultimi due collegi regolari ad essere fondati furono quelli per i cappuccini di Bar-sur-Aube e Wassy che vennero istituiti nel 1685[9].

Sin dai primi decenni del Novecento, la fondazione e lo sviluppo di questo *network* di collegi ha attirato l'attenzione tanto degli storici francesi che di quelli irlandesi, anche se è solo verso la fine degli anni Settanta che si cominciò ad inserire la storia di questi seminari nel quadro più ampio dell'immigrazione irlandese verso la Francia.

Il precursore degli studi sui collegi irlandesi in Francia fu Patrick Boyle, che nel 1901 pubblicò una lunga sintesi sulla storia del seminario di Parigi, da cui venne estratto anche un breve articolo apparso nel 1902. Pur essendo basata su documenti inediti, l'analisi è aneddotica ed è inoltre influenzata da un tono agiografico (Boyle 1901). Fra il 1907 ed il 1916 Boyle estese le sue ricerche al Collegio Irlandese di Bordeaux (Boyle 1907), a quello di Tolosa (1912), agli studenti irlandesi ammessi nel seminario di Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet di Parigi (1910), e a Micheal Moore (c.1639-1726), rettore dell'Università di Parigi dal 1701 al 1702, a cui dedicò una breve sintesi nel 1916. Quasi contemporaneamente a Boyle, gli storici francesi George Daumet e Jules Mathorez cominciarono a tracciare la presenza ecclesiastica irlandese a Parigi ed in Bretagna. Più precisamente Daumet approfondì le ricerche sulla rete dei collegi inglesi, irlandesi e scozzesi esistenti a Parigi prima della Rivoluzione (Daumet 1912), mentre Mathorez studiò la presenza del clero irlandese rifugiatosi a Nantes nel XVII e nel XVIII secolo (Mathorez 1912).

Sia i lavori di Boyle che quelli di Daumet e Mathorez non vennero continuati fra gli anni Venti e Quaranta, tanto che le uniche opere inerenti ai collegi irlandesi pubblicate in quel periodo furono la sintesi generale fatta da James O'Boyle (1935), e la raccolta di documenti sul collegio di Douai fatta dal Francescano Brendan Jennings nel 1943. Ancora più esiguo fu lo spazio dedicato ai collegi negli studi fatti, fra il 1938 ed il 1949, da Richard Hayes sulle comunità irlandesi di Rouen (1937), Bordeaux (1938), Nantes (1939), e più in generale sui rapporti fra Irlanda e Francia (1940 e 1949). Tale scarsità di opere venne controbilanciata dal fatto che durante quel periodo l'attenzione della storiografia si era spostata sull'*affaire des hibernois* del 1651, l'anno in cui gli studenti irlandesi della Sorbona cercarono di far espellere i giansenisti dalla facoltà di teologia. Questa controversia venne marginalmente affrontata da Boyle, per poi invece essere approfondita da Patrick J. Corish (1923; 1954), Ruth Clarke (1932, 187-201), e Thomas Wall (1944).

La penuria di opere dedicate ai collegi irlandesi e più in generale al clero emigrato in Francia rimase una costante della storiografia francese ed irlandese fra gli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta. La prova di ciò è data dal fatto che in quell'arco di tempo vennero pubblicati solamente due articoli, entrambi di Timothy Walsh, sul collegio secolare di Bordeaux (1950) ed una sintesi su quello di Tolosa (1954). Questa scarsità di analisi è meno evidente per i collegi del clero regolare. Infatti l'analisi di Benignus Millett (1964, 24, 97, 105, 108, 184-195, 193, 365, 383, 499-500, 510, 525-526) sulla provincia francescana irlandese fra il 1651 ed il 1665 ma soprattutto lo studio di Canice Mooney (1964) sui rapporti fra i francescani irlandesi e la Francia cominciarono a tracciare un primo quadro generale. Scarse invece furono le analisi dedicate al collegio gesuita di Poitiers, tanto che l'unico studio fatto fra gli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta fu la breve sintesi sul seminario del gesuita Francis Finnegan del 1965 (Finegan, SJ, 1965).

È solo a partire dalla prima metà degli anni Settanta che la storiografia irlandese dimostrò un rinnovato interesse per i collegi e per le comunità ecclesiastiche ad essi legati. In particolare lo studio di Timothy Walsh (1973) sui collegi di Bordeaux, Lille e Tolosa contribuì ad inserire l'analisi di questi seminari nell'ottica di una rete interconnessa in cui c'era un costante movimento di studenti e docenti da un seminario ad un altro. L'opera di Walsh risente però di un tono eccessivamente agiografico ed inoltre difetta della mancanza di studi prosopografici sugli studenti che venivano ammessi nei sopradetti collegi. Questa lacuna di studi prosopografici cominciò ad essere in parte colmata nella collezione di saggi edita da Liam Swords sui legami culturali, politici e religiosi fra l'Irlanda e la Francia che venne pubblicata nel 1978. Infatti il testo, oltre a fare un breve riassunto della storia dei collegi irlandesi in Francia e nel resto d'Europa, contiene una lista, molto approssimativa e limitata però, dei preti irlandesi che furono attivi nelle diocesi francesi fra la fine del Seicento e gli ultimi decenni del Settecento (Swords 1978). Due anni dopo l'uscita di questa raccolta di saggi, Swords pubblicò anche la prima raccolta di documenti sul Collegio Irlandese di Parigi, gettando così le basi per espandere le ricerche su quest'istituzione e più in generale sulla comunità ecclesiastica irlandese che si era stabilita in città fra il 1578 ed il 1800 (1980).

Fra gli anni Ottanta ed i primi anni Novanta la produzione storiografica sui collegi irlandesi non venne sviluppata dal punto di vista quantitativo. Basti pensare che durante questo lasso di tempo vennero pubblicate solo due brevi sintesi, una sul Collegio di Parigi scritta da Swords (1985) e un'altra ancora più generale di Tomás Ó Fiaich (1990) sui seminari irlandesi fondati in Francia. A queste due sintesi bisogna aggiungere la monografia di Swords sulla comunità irlandese di Parigi durante la Rivoluzione, di cui una parte consistente è incentrata sulle due istituzioni fondamentali per la formazione del clero irlandese a Parigi, ovvero il Collège des Lombards e il Collèges des Irlandais. Questa analisi fu la prima nel suo genere, dato che tracciò un quadro molto dettagliato del ruolo svolto da questi due collegi nel contesto della società parigina durante la Rivoluzione (Swords 1989).

Se l'analisi di Swords diede un contributo cruciale, altrettanto fondamentali furono gli articoli scritti da Lawrence Brockliss e Patrick Ferté, che vennero pubblicati nel 1987 e nel 2004, sul clero irlandese emigrato in Francia nel Seicento e nel Settecento. Le loro analisi furono le prime a fornire un dettagliato quadro statistico sugli ecclesiastici irlandesi che furono ammessi a frequentare l'Università di Parigi e quella di Tolosa. Oltre ai dettagli prosopografici, gli studi di Brockliss e Ferté hanno identificato da quale provincia irlandese provenivano gli ecclesiastici, contribuendo così a tracciare una prima mappa dell'emigrazione clericale irlandese in Francia.

A partire dalla seconda metà degli anni Novanta gli studi sui collegi e sul clero cominciarono a porre l'accento su singole figure e su gruppi determinati, così come su specifici aspetti culturali ed intellettuali legati all'emigrazione

ecclesiastica irlandese in Francia. La prova di ciò sono le analisi fatte da Liam Chambers su Michael Moore, sugli intellettuali irlandesi emigrati in Francia, e sugli studenti residenti nei collegi di Parigi fra la fine del Seicento ed il primo decennio dell'Ottocento[10], nonché i saggi di Priscilla O'Connor sui preti irlandesi durante il primo trentennio del settecento (2001; 2003).

Nonostante questo profluvio di studi, la storiografia sul clero irlandese in Francia risente ancora della mancanza di un analisi approfondita sul collegio di Parigi così come sugli altri seminari. Il più recente studio è quello di Proinsias Mac Cana (2001) che si è focalizzato sul ruolo avuto dal Collège Des Irlandais di Parigi nello sviluppare e promuovere la cultura gaelica in Francia. La sua analisi però è molto schematica e non tiene conto degli sviluppi avvenuti nella letteratura sulle migrazioni irlandesi. Il quadro fin qui illustrato ha cercato di delineare la genesi e lo sviluppo della storiografia sul clero irlandese emigrato in Francia, cercando di evidenziare i cambiamenti avvenuti negli ultimi quindici anni. Nella prossima sezione si cercherà invece di indicare come si è sviluppata la letteratura relativa alla migrazione militare dall'Irlanda.

3. *La migrazione militare*

Nella sua sintesi sui flussi migratori irlandesi verso la Francia dal 1590 al 1688, Ó Ciosáin ha sottolineato che durante questo periodo la migrazione dei reggimenti irlandesi fu modesta rispetto a quella che interessò la penisola iberica. Questo storico ha suddiviso in tre fasi la migrazione militare dall'Irlanda. La prima fu caratterizzata dai reggimenti che si unirono alla Lega Cattolica francese nell'ultimo decennio del 1500. Durante la seconda fase, che durò all'incirca dal 1600 al 1620, giunsero gruppi isolati di soldati e una compagnia di circa duecento uomini che nel 1614 venne reclutata dall'esercito di Concino Concini, marchese d'Ancre (?-1617). Il picco di questa migrazione militare avvenne fra il 1634 ed il 1660 quando 30.000 soldati irlandesi lasciarono la loro patria per essere arruolati nell'esercito francese[11].

Le migrazioni dei soldati irlandesi in Francia hanno cominciato ad essere studiate nella seconda metà del Settecento, quando un diretto protagonista di questo fenomeno fornì una prima stima del numero dei compatrioti che erano morti nell'esercito regio. Infatti il primo che provò a quantificare questa migrazione fu l'abate James MacGeoghegan (1702-1763), cappellano delle truppe irlandesi di stanza in Francia. Fra il 1758 ed il 1763 egli pubblicò tre volumi dedicati alla storia d'Irlanda e ai reggimenti irlandesi arruolati negli eserciti continentali dalla fine del Seicento. MacGeoghegan (1758-1762; vol. 3, Amsterdam 1763) arrivò a stimare che quasi 450.000 soldati irlandesi erano morti nel corso delle guerre combattute dall'esercito regio. La stima, alquanto esagerata ed inverosimile, non venne però dibattuta né presa in considerazione da John O'Callaghan che, nel 1854, pubblicò una corposa storia dei reggimenti irlandesi arruolati nell'esercito francese dal 1688 al 1791. Nonostante

sia un'opera ormai datata e condizionata da un approccio eccessivamente narrativo, il testo di O'Callaghan fornisce ancora utili riferimenti in quando dà un quadro schematico delle migrazioni dei militari irlandesi dallo scoppio della Gloriosa Rivoluzione fino alla Rivoluzione Francese.

Agli inizi degli anni Cinquanta la stima avanzata da MacGeoghegan cominciò a essere discussa e soggetta ad una revisione. Secondo Hayes, autore delle opere biografiche già citate in precedenza, i 450.000 soldati irlandesi stimati da MacGeoghegan non erano morti in battaglia, ma erano quelli che avevano prestato servizio nell'esercito francese (Hayes 1949-1953). L'ipotesi avanzata da Hayes non suscitò però alcun dibattito nella storiografia irlandese degli anni Quaranta e Cinquanta, né aprì la strada a nuove ricerche. Durante questo periodo le uniche eccezioni furono gli articoli di Christopher Atkinson, di Hayes (1952-1953) e quello di Dean Gunther White, pubblicati rispettivamente nel 1946, e nel 1958. Il primo tratta del reggimento guidato dalla famiglia Hamilton che prestò servizio in Francia dal 1672 al 1678 (Atkinson 1946). Il secondo è incentrato sui fanti gaelici arruolati da Enrico VIII (1491-1547) durante l'assedio di Boulogne (1544-1546), anche se è necessario precisare che questa analisi è più focalizzata sul significato politico dell'arruolamento di questi soldati che non sulla loro esperienza migratoria in Francia (Gunther White 1957-1958).

È solo a partire dalla seconda metà degli anni Sessanta che gli studi sulle comunità militari irlandesi in Francia cominciarono ad essere più sistematici. Nello specifico i due articoli di Pierre Gouhier, pubblicati rispettivamente nel 1965 e nel 1968, gettarono le basi per approfondire lo spettro d'indagine sull'arrivo e il reclutamento dei soldati irlandesi nell'esercito regio fra il 1635 ed il 1664, periodo che, fino ad allora, era stato largamente ignorato. Gli studi di Gouhier non ebbero però un seguito nei decenni successivi, in quanto le analisi fatte dagli anni Settanta in avanti si concentrarono sui flussi dei militari emigrati dopo il 1690, seguendo così la pista tracciata da Hayes. La prova eloquente di questo interesse è riscontrabile nell'analisi di Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret ed in quella di Maurice Hennessy, entrambe pubblicate nel 1973, che sono incentrate sulle migrazioni dei *Wild Geese*. Come ha notato David Trim, queste analisi sono state però condizionate da un eccessivo approccio apologetico ed inoltre si sono basate quasi esclusivamente su cronache e fonti letterarie, con un uso molto limitato delle fonti archivistiche (Trim 2010, 237).

Dall'inizio degli anni Ottanta le analisi sulle migrazioni dei *Wild Geese* si moltiplicarono grazie ai nuovi studi fatti da Mark MacLauglin (1980), Pierre Carles (1983), Frank MacLynn (1985), John G. Simms (1986), Micheline Kerney Walsh (1987-1988), John McGurk (1992), Patrick Clarke de Dromantin (1995), Hector McDonnell (1996), Harman Murtagh (1996), Frank D'Arcy (2001), Diego Téllez Alarcia (2002), Éamonn Ó Ciardha (2002), David Bracken (2001), Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac (2007; 2008-2009) e Colm O'Conaill (2004; 2005a; 2005b). Tuttavia, come hanno criticamente sotto-

lineato Ó Ciosáin e Trim, questa mole di studi continuò a dedicare poche pagine ai flussi migratori avvenuti prima del 1690, rimanendo così ancorata alla tradizione storiografica iniziata da Ó Callaghan e Hayes (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 102; Trim 2010, 237). In particolare, secondo Ó Ciosáin, molti storici militari hanno ignorato il fatto che, almeno fin dal 1635, vi era una esigua ma costante presenza di militari irlandesi nell'Hôtel des Invalides (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 102), un campo di ricerca che è stato invece ampiamente investigato per il periodo *post* 1690 da Eoghan Ó hannaracháin (1998-1999; 1999; 2001; 2004-2005; 2008-2009; 2011).

Questo sbilanciamento cronologico a favore dei flussi migratori *post* 1690 si è concentrato principalmente sul XVIII secolo, mentre poche sono, ad oggi, le analisi sulle comunità militari irlandesi in Francia nei primi decenni del 1800. Questa penuria storiografica vede come unica eccezione il filone di ricerca sul 3ème Régiment Étranger d'Irlandais, su cui si incentrarono gli studi di Brian Clark in collaborazione con Marianne Elliot (1982), John Gallaher (1986; 1989; 1992), e più recentemente il già citato saggio di Bartlett (2006).

4. *La migrazione commerciale*

Il terzo gruppo di migranti irlandesi a stabilirsi in Francia in età moderna fu quello dei mercanti. Rispetto alle migrazioni degli ecclesiastici e dei militari, la storiografia su questo gruppo è molto meno sviluppata ed è solo dalla fine degli anni Sessanta che cominciò ad essere studiata grazie alle analisi di Cullen. Quest'ultimo sottolineò come la loro migrazione fosse stata legata a due fattori principali: il primo è che nel corso del XVII secolo la loro attività, che sino ad allora era svolta da commercianti residenti in Irlanda, venne progressivamente presa in mano da irlandesi che si erano stabiliti permanentemente in Francia. Il secondo fattore alla base di questa migrazione è legato al progressivo incremento dei traffici commerciali nell'area atlantica (Cullen 1984). A partire dalla seconda metà del XVII secolo si assiste ad una naturalizzazione di famiglie di mercanti irlandesi nelle principali città portuali della Bretagna, un fenomeno che viene favorito dall'esilio di molti cattolici in seguito alla conquista dell'Irlanda da parte di Cromwell. In particolare questo è evidente a La Rochelle, Nantes, e Saint-Malo dove, dal 1650, si stabilirono gruppi di mercanti cattolici di Waterford a causa della loro esclusione dai traffici commerciali in patria (Ó Ciosáin 2001, 98). Il primo ad aver analizzato questa migrazione e a fornirne un primo quadro fu Cullen che, a partire dalla fine degli anni Sessanta, analizzò il commercio irlandese e la rete di collegamenti mercantili che legavano l'Irlanda all'Inghilterra ed alla Francia, dalla seconda metà del 1600 ai primi decenni del 1800[12].

Quasi contemporaneamente a Cullen, Jean-Pierre Poussou e Pierre Daudry cominciarono a tracciare la presenza dei commercianti irlandesi a Bordeaux e Dunkerque fra il XVII ed il XVIII secolo (Poussou 1974; Daudry

1979). Tuttavia le loro ricerche non vennero sviluppate ulteriormente, e di conseguenza fino alla fine degli anni Novanta la storiografia sui commercianti irlandesi emigrati in Francia continuò a basarsi sulle sopracitate opere di Cullen, ed in minima misura sulla sintesi di Silke. Dalla seconda metà degli anni Novanta il quadro è stato esteso ed arricchito da Mary Ann Lyons, Christian Pfister and Guy Sapin che hanno investigato la presenza delle famiglie cattoliche irlandesi nel tessuto commerciale di Dunkerque e Nantes nonché il loro ruolo nei traffici mercantili fra la Francia, il Nord America e l'area caraibica[13].

5. *Conclusioni*

La presente rassegna storiografica ha cercato di mettere in evidenza e di tracciare i principali flussi migratori irlandesi verso la Francia fra il XVI ed i primi decenni del XIX secolo. Dall'analisi emerge un quadro estremamente complesso e multiforme a cui non è possibile dare una precisa cesura cronologica. I recenti studi hanno infatti contributo a rivedere e soprattutto a retrodatare l'inizio delle migrazioni irlandesi verso la Francia già dalla prima metà del 1500. Tuttavia le migrazioni pre-1688 rimangono un'area ancora da investigare in quanto le ricerche si sono concentrate principalmente sulla Bretagna e sulle città di Bordeaux, Parigi, e Rouen. In particolare è necessario estendere le indagini alle zone di frontiera del nord della Francia e, al tempo stesso, cercare di quantificare con maggior precisione le migrazioni pre-1688, inserendole nel contesto più ampio dei movimenti di persone che dalle *British Isles* si diressero verso l'Europa continentale fra il XVI ed il XVIII secolo.

Note

[1] Ó Ciosáin 2001, 93-95; Ó Ciosáin 2010, 125-126.

[2] La letteratura sui legami commerciali fra l'Irlanda e la Francia nel tardo Medioevo è estesa. Per un quadro generale vedi Longfield 1929; Bernard 1980; Childs, O'Neill 1987; O'Brien 1995, 31-80; Lyons 2000b.

[3] Fitzgerald 1992. Sul vagabondaggio in Inghilterra fra il XVI ed il XVII secolo si vedano Slack 1974; Beier 1985.

[4] Sulla colonizzazione inglese nella provincia del Munster cfr. Beers Quinn 1966; MacCarthy-Morrogh 1986; Canny, Pagden 1987; Canny 1988; Canny 2001.

[5] Sulla conquista dell'Irlanda da parte di Oliver Cromwell si vedano Barnard 1975; Scott Wheeler 1999; Ó Siochrú 2008.

[6] Ó Ciosáin 2010, 130-131; sull'esilio dei vescovi e del clero irlandese in Francia cfr. d'Ambrières 2001; d'Ambrières, Ó Ciosáin 2008.

[7] Sui reggimenti irlandesi reclutati in Francia si veda più avanti.

[8] Sul commercio di brandy e di vino fra la Francia e l'Irlanda si vedano: Cullen 1969; Poussou 1974; Cullen 1975; Cullen, Butel 1980; Cullen 1989; Cullen 1998.

[9] Cfr. Giblin 1978; Silke 1976, 617-622.

[10] Si vedano, in particolare, Chambers 2000; Chambers 2001; Chambers 2004a; Chambers 2004b; Chambers 2006; Chambers 2008a; Chambers 2008b; Chambers 2009a; Chambers 2009b.

[11] Secondo lo storico militare Victor-Louis-Jean-François Belhomme c'erano sei compagnie di 200 soldati irlandesi nel reggimento di Concini. Second Ó Ciosáin questa cifra non è però sicura in quanto non è corroborata da altre fonti. Vedi Belhomme 1893, 320; Ó Ciosáin 2001, 98-99.

[12] Cullen 1968; Cullen 1969; Cullen 1972; Cullen 1975; Cullen, Butel 1980; Cullen 1984; Cullen 1989; Cullen 1998; Cullen 2000.

[13] Lyons 2003; Pfister 2006; Sapin 2006.

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Puntualizzazioni, ragguagli documentari e nuove ipotesi su Christopher Hewetson

Marzia Di Tanna
Polo Museale Romano (<marziaditanna@libero.it>)

Abstract:

The aim of this essay is to investigate some aspects of the life and work of the Irish sculptor Christopher Hewetson, who died in Rome 1798. This research involved, on the one hand, the analysis of the historical-artistic context, and on the other, an attempt to reconstruct the artist's life on the basis of documentary evidence in Roman archives such as the Historical Archive of the Diocese, the State Archives and the Archive of the Arcadia Academy at the Angelica Library. The material examined is especially plentiful in consideration of the discovery of the sculptor's last will and testament and the inventory of his property and information on his connections with the members of the Arcadia Academy.

Keywords: Academy of Arcadia, Christopher Hewetson, Cristoforo Prosperi, Irish artists in Rome, Irish sculpture

Le vicende private e artistiche dell'irlandese Christopher Hewetson ricalcano quelle di molte personalità native del nord Europa che, soggiogate dal fascino evocato dalle antiche civiltà mediterranee, nel corso del secolo XVIII, pervennero nel nostro paese rimanendovi per lunghi periodi se non addirittura tutta una vita. Questo è quanto accadde al nostro artista che, giunto a Roma nel 1765, vi si stabilì per il resto della sua esistenza esercitando la professione di scultore. Più d'un trentennio dunque, perfettamente sovrapponibile con il periodo in cui buona parte del territorio italiano e in particolare la capitale pontificia, furono al centro di quell'intenso fenomeno definito *Grand Tour* che, com'è noto, proprio in quegli anni conobbe la sua massima espansione, favorito da un lungo periodo di pace in Europa che incentivò i viaggiatori del tempo a spostarsi dal loro paese d'origine.

Gli studi sin ora effettuati su Hewetson hanno sempre messo in risalto la sua fervida e ricercata attività di ritrattista svolta in gran parte per i numerosi stranieri presenti in città: lunghi elenchi di nomi di uomini e donne di cui sono note le attività e l' interesse per il nostro paese nonché il loro *status* sociale

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d'appartenenza: tra questi, antiquari, collezionisti, diplomatici, aristocratici, nobili di vario lignaggio e persino un papa di cui possediamo più d'un ritratto, Clemente XIV (1769-1774)[1]. Scarsi tuttavia – a eccezione di notizie desunte da carteggi o dai diari di coloro che lo conobbero e lo frequentarono – i dati di tipo archivistico e documentario; non del tutto chiaro è, ad esempio, dove abitò con esattezza *monsù Cristofaro* nel lungo trentennio trascorso nella città eterna.

Terence Hodgkinson, che negli anni Cinquanta dedicò allo scultore un primo fondamentale studio, nell'ultima parte del suo scritto riportava: "Hewetson was living at this time in the Vicolo delle Orsoline, according to a footnote in the Farington Diary giving a list of British artists in Rome in 1790" (Hodgkinson 1958, 51)[2]. Più recentemente John Ingamells, tornando sull'argomento, specifica a riguardo: "He subsequently lived in the Strada Vittoria, where he also had his studio. In September 1779 he was living 'opposite Margherita's', and in 1790 and 1793 in the Strada delle Orsoline (*Rome List 1790, 1793*)" (Ingamells 1997, 494).

Il medesimo autore, facendo riferimento agli *Stati delle Anime*, ossia ai registri parrocchiali conservati presso l'Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma (ASV), mette poi in nota una serie di date che confermerebbero la presenza dello scultore proprio nella parrocchia di San Lorenzo in Lucina in un arco di tempo che va dal 1777 al 1798 (Ingamells 1997, 494-495, nota 2).

In realtà quanto sin qui riportato necessita, come chi scrive ebbe già modo di appurare (Di Tanna, 1994-1995), di un'analisi di maggior respiro a partire da una prima semplice puntualizzazione: un tempo via della Vittoria veniva anche detta 'delle Orsoline'.

1. *L'abitazione*

I registri degli *Stati delle Anime* della parrocchia di San Lorenzo in Lucina appartenente al rione Colonna, costituiscono senz'altro il punto da cui ripartire.

In essi infatti il nostro scultore risulta risiedere sì in "Strada Vittoria verso il Corso", ma già dal 1770. A questa data apprendiamo, inoltre, com'egli coabitasse con tale Felice Prosperi, di professione "infornatore", e con la sua numerosa famiglia composta dalla consorte Antonia Volpi e dai loro figli Gioacchino, Caterina, Agata e dai più piccoli Cristoforo e Anna (ASV 1770, 28). Da questo momento e per circa un trentennio *Monsù* o *Milord Cristofaro*, seguito in qualche caso dalla qualifica di "inglese" e da quella di "scultore"[3], accompagnerà con la sua presenza le vicende del nucleo familiare suddetto anche dopo la morte del capofamiglia, Felice, avvenuta intorno al 1773 (ASV 1773, 38). Si potrebbe perfino ipotizzare che con l'uscita dal gruppo del primogenito ventiduenne Gioacchino, di professione mercante e non più censito a partire dal 1775, Hewetson si sia trovato contro ogni previsione a ricoprire un ruolo di primaria importanza tra i componenti rimasti di casa Prosperi, in qualità di unico uomo adulto e figura autorevole di riferimento. E

sebbene questa sia solo un'ipotesi, di certo un rapporto di quotidianità dovette di fatto instauratasi tra l'artista irlandese e la vedova con i suoi quattro figli, che si concretizzerà nel tempo nella figura dell'ultimogenito maschio, quel Cristoforo nato nell'estate del 1767[4] al quale il nostro scultore trasmetterà il proprio mestiere: nel censimento del 1787, difatti, il giovane, allora ventenne, viene classificato per la prima volta, parimenti a "Monseur Cristofaro", con la qualifica di "scultore" (ASV 1787, 35v).

Ancora con tale qualifica lo ritroveremo nei censimenti successivi, tra i quali di particolare interesse risulta essere infine quello stilato nel 1799 dove viene riportato:

Strada Vittoria verso il Corso […]
26 Casa di un Piano di 2 Stanze e Cucina
Monseur Cristofaro Hewetson an: 63 Scultore
nel Piantereno Stanza 1 di Scultore / Soffitti di 2 Stanziole e Cucina
Ant.a Volpi R an: 70 vedova di Felice Prosperi
Cristoforo f.o an: 30 Scultore. (ASV 1799, 35)

Come appare evidente, il documento lascia presumere che Hewetson fosse ancora vivo in quell'anno di fine secolo. In realtà a confermarci la sua morte allo scadere del 1798 vi sono una serie di ulteriori documenti inediti – perfettamente in linea con le testimonianze lasciate dai contemporanei sulla sua sepoltura[5] – conservati presso l'Archivio Storico di Roma (ASR), tra i quali *in primis* il suo testamento.

2. *Il testamento*

Lo scultore dettò le sue ultime volontà il 3 novembre del 1798 (Appendice 1). Nel documento, redatto dal notaio capitolino Francesco Olivieri, nel quale il testatore si dichiara "indisposto nel corpo", Hewetson così dispone dei suoi beni: quelli esistenti in Inghilterra e Irlanda sono destinati al fratello Guglielmo e alle sorelle Elena ed Elisabetta, i familiari diretti ai quali per primi rivolge il suo pensiero; riguardo invece a tutto ciò di cui era in possesso a Roma, nomina suo erede fiduciario Cristoforo Prosperi, "mio scolaro di Studio", così come viene definito nel documento il giovane scultore. Né dimentica sua madre Antonia e la sorella Agata alle quali, "in ricordo di mia amicizia", lo scultore lascia "quelle cose che crederà il mio erede Fiduciario potere le medesime gradire" (ASR, 3 novembre 1798, 417-419; 500v).

Nel testo non manca poi di ricordare il solidale compagno di una vita, il "defonto Amico Jenckins"[6] in riferimento a un lascito che quest'ultimo volle fargli. Ciò trova piena corrispondenza con quanto riscontrabile nelle ultime volontà, dettate a Firenze solo quattro mesi prima proprio da Thomas Jenkins che così aveva voluto disporre nei suoi confronti: "Al mio antico amico Sig.r Cristofano Hewetson scultore, che i miei esecutori in Roma gli paghino la

somma di cinquecento scudi romani o il valore di cento lire sterline a sua scelta al tempo della mia morte per comprare un anello in memoria della nostra costante amicizia" (Cesareo 2009, 242).

Hewetson cita poi altri nomi interessanti come quelli di Riccardo Bartram e Carlo Ambrogio Riggi[7] e ancora quelli dei signori Robert Fagan e Charles Grignon[8], a riprova dell'amicizia e della fiducia riservata ai due, ma, dato forse ancor più singolare, il testatore accenna anche a una somma di cinquanta once "che mi deve sua eccellenza il Cavalier Hamilton Ministro Britannico presso la Corte di Napoli per li due Ritratti modellati tanto di lui, che della stimatissima sua Signora consorte", opere delle quali ci è ignoto il destino (Appendice 1, 419v).

La morte dello scultore sarebbe sopraggiunta la sera del 15 novembre 1798, come certifica l'apertura del testamento avvenuta il giorno successivo alla presenza di alcuni testimoni (Appendice 2), alla quale fece seguito il 7 dicembre l'inventario dei suoi beni, stilato da un perito rigattiere, signor Giuseppe Rinaldi, e dai valenti scultori Vincenzo Pacetti e Carlo Albacini (cfr. Appendice 3)[9].

L'elenco di oggetti compilato per l'occasione appare estremamente interessante; abituati come siamo a considerare Hewetson principalmente ritrattista dei suoi esimi contemporanei, il luogo di lavoro ci svela invece molto altro: numerose copie in gesso e marmo di figure antiche quali, per citarne qualcuna, una Pandora, la Cerere detta Mattei, la musa Melpomene del Museo Clementino, un torso del Laocoonte, sei bassorilievi raffiguranti i candelabri Barberini e persino la copia di un bassorilievo con putti di Francois Duquesnoy (Appendice 3, 429 e sgg.).

Né meno significativo è l'elenco di quattordici busti di marmo rappresentanti "diversi ritratti il prezzo de quali è stato già pagato dai Proprietari al defonto Cristoforo Newetson [sic], mà per altro non sono terminati" (Appendice 3, 433v e sgg.). Tra le tante personalità citate a riguardo, ricordiamo milord e milady Plymouth, milord la Touche e milord Harvington, senza dimenticare in particolare sir John Throckmorton: sull'effige di quest'ultimo, a noi pervenuta e conservata nel Warwickshire, non stupisce infatti di poter leggere la seguente iscrizione: "CHRISTOPHORUS HEWETSON MODELLAVIT CHRISTOPHORUS PROSPERI SCULPSIT ROME 1800" (Hodgkinson 1958, 51; De Breffny 1986, 59 note 30-30b, 60 nota 37).

Di Cristoforo Prosperi, infine, suo allievo ed erede diretto, non sappiamo molto altro. I dati che lo riguardano sono deducibili principalmente dalle opere pervenute o di cui ci è giunta notizia; tra queste un primo lavoro documentabile con certezza è da ascrivere al 1792. Si tratta di un bassorilievo ritraente il cardinale riminese Giuseppe Garampi che venne collocato sul suo monumento funebre sito nella basilica romana dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo (Moroni 1844, vol. 28, 172; Forcella 1877, 12). Nel periodo immediatamente successivo alla morte di Hewetson, il giovane Cristoforo verrà ancora ricordato come suo proselito; così parla di lui nel gennaio del 1800 Vincenzo Pacetti che nel diario annota: "Adi 14. Hò sottoscritto una stima per il Signor

Cristofano Prosperi, scultore allievo del Iuse [sic]"; ma tale epiteto scompare significativamente qualche anno dopo quando sempre Pacetti riporta: "Adi 15. Aprile 1807. Al Signor Cristofano Prosperi hò fatta una stima di un cammino di marmo statuario di Carrara con bassorilievi di figure nel fregio, ed altri ornati, ascendente in scudi 600, e ciò per la sua grandezza e spese di marmi" (Cipriani 2011, I 203; II 348).

I censimenti stilati infine nei primi anni dell'Ottocento ci confermano la sua permanenza in città almeno sino al 1808[10]; ciò trova rispondenza con quanto sappiamo di lui nel periodo immediatamente successivo a questa data, quando la presenza dello scultore, ormai quarantatreenne e con un bagaglio lavorativo e conoscenze sicuramente coltivate in ambito anglosassone, è segnalata a Londra negli anni tra il 1810 e il 1816, in qualità di autore di diverse opere – due monumenti funebri, due coppie statuarie a soggetto mitologico, ben ventiquattro busti-ritratto e un gruppo scultoreo a soggetto epico – molte delle quali esposte alla Royal Academy e alla British Institution (Grant 1953, 198; Gunnis 1968, 312; Roscoe 2009, 1013-1014; Graves 1969, 225)[11].

3. *L'Accademia dell'Arcadia*

Heweston sovrano
De la scultura alunno,
De l'estro figlio e del roman disegno. (Appendice 4)

Arturo Graf nel suo testo *L'anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia nel secolo XVIII* del 1911, riportava questi versi composti dall'abate Godard, in riferimento all'effige di Don Luigi Gonzaga eseguita dal nostro artista nel 1776 (393)[12]. Entrambi, sia l'ecclesiastico Luigi Godard che il principe Luigi Gonzaga, fecero parte a Roma della ben nota Accademia letteraria dell'Arcadia, alla quale appartenne – dato desumibile da un'annotazione che potremmo definire quasi inedita o comunque sfuggita a tutti coloro che di lui si sono occupati – anche Hewetson[13].

A darcene parziale notizia nel lontano 1887 fu per primo l'erudito Alessandro Ademollo nel testo dedicato a Corilla Olimpica, la più nota improvvisatrice poetica vissuta nella seconda metà del secolo XVIII, protagonista assoluta tra il 1775 e il 1776 di uno degli episodi di maggior scalpore accaduti a Roma in quegli anni, che videro coinvolto anche il nostro scultore.

Ne ripercorriamo brevemente gli accadimenti.

Primi giorni di gennaio del 1775.

Nella capitale pontificia, in attesa dell'elezione del nuovo pontefice, si assiste al ritorno dopo un lungo periodo d'assenza di Maria Maddalena Morelli, già conosciuta in Arcadia col nome pastorale di Corilla Olimpica, che giunge in città in compagnia del principe e letterato don Luigi Gonzaga, dei marchesi di Castiglione e di altra coppia di nobili personaggi al suo seguito.

12 gennaio 1775, di sera.

La poetessa e due dei suoi accompagnatori si presentano inaspettatamente nel Serbatoio dell'Arcadia, luogo preposto per gli incontri accademici, a cospetto di numerosi arcadi ivi riuniti in adunanza generale straordinaria. Improvviserà per l'occasione alcuni sonetti, suscitando grande entusiasmo tra i presenti.

9 febbraio 1775, di sera.

I membri dell'Arcadia, in seguito a una seconda recita sostenuta dalla Morelli, ne annunciano l'imminente coronazione accademica. Per diffondere la notizia dell'eccezionale evento, sarà distribuito nei giorni successivi per tutta Roma un *Avviso* a stampa[14].

16 febbraio 1775, ore 22.

Corilla viene solennemente incoronata d'alloro nella sala del Serbatoio dinanzi a numerose personalità, tanto romane quanto estere, ivi riunite per assistere all'onorificenza accademica attribuitale.

In tale ufficiosa circostanza, conobbe la sua parte di notorietà proprio il nostro Christopher Hewetson. Questo è quanto si evince da un'annotazione rimasta inedita, riscontrabile nei verbali dell'Accademia, dove leggiamo:

> Frà gli effetti di sorpresa e di meraviglia, che produsse il di lei entusiasmo, uno fu quello di aver commosso l'eccellente Scultore Inglese Sig.r Cristoforo Hewetson detto fra gli Arcadi Mirone Doricense a formare in marmo il busto di questa nuova Saffo per farne dono all'Arcadia, nel Serbatojo della quale verrà collocato fra i ritratti che già vi sono, de' più illustri Pastori. (AAA, 772-92, Verbali delle Adunanze, 100v, nota I)[15]

La promessa avanzata si tradusse con tempestività nella messa in opera dell'effige della suddetta. Ce ne lasciano testimonianza alcuni brani epistolari che confermano di fatto come lo scultore fosse alle prese con l'esecuzione dell'opera tra il mese di marzo e quello d'aprile immediatamente successivi (Borchia 2009, 203-216, nota 30).

6 maggio 1776

A più d'un anno dalla coronazione accademica di Maria Maddalena Morelli, di nuovo la sede del Serbatoio è teatro di una assemblea straordinaria: il suo compagno e mecenate, il Principe Gonzaga, noto tra gli arcadi con il nome pastorale di Emireno Alantino declama, alla presenza di numerose personalità dell'alta società romana, un dotto ragionamento da lui composto e intitolato *Il letterato buon cittadino*.

Hewetson, presente anche in questa circostanza, rinnova inaspettatamente l'impegno già preso in precedenza. Nel verbale dell'adunanza tenutasi in quel giorno viene annotato:

> In tale festosa occasione il Celebre Artefice Inglese Sig.r Cristofaro Hewetson già mosso dal genio liberale, che anima la sua Nazione, nel giorno in cui Corilla fu coronata

dagli Arcadi, desiderò che fosse inalzato nella Sala del Serbatojo un parlante Busto di Marmo da lui egregiamente scolpito, e donato all'Adunanza per monumento perpetuo della Coronazione dell'acclamata Pastorella. Quindi gli Arcadi si sono fatti gloria di aggiungervi anche il Busto del prelodato Sig.r Principe, opera dello stesso Scultore, e dono prezioso di si dotto e magnanimo Personaggio (AAA 1772-92, Verbali delle Adunanze, 131v.).[16]

31 agosto 1776, ore 23.

La vicenda è all'epilogo; tutti ne parlano, ed è oggetto di critiche assai accese: Corilla, ascritta alla nobiltà romana, ottiene la concessione da parte del pontefice Pio VI di riceve la massima coronazione poetica nel salone pubblico detto dei Conservatori in Campidoglio.

L'evento, a causa delle implicazioni politiche che lo contraddistinsero, vedrà lo scatenarsi di due fazioni opposte, quella tra lojolisti e antilojolisti, assumendo l'aspetto di un vero e proprio scandalo di stato. Le ripercussioni saranno tali che Maria Maddalena Morelli e il principe Gonzaga fuggiranno da Roma nella notte fra il 3 e il 4 settembre (*Atti della solenne coronazione fatta in Campidoglio della Insigne Poetessa D.na Maria Maddalena Morelli Fernandez pistojese tra gli arcadi Corilla Olimpica*, 1779)[17].

Alla luce di quanto riportato e nella bagarre istituzionale che le vicende sommariamente narrate comportarono, non convince del tutto la dichiarata spontaneità dell'intento di cui Hewetson si fece promotore considerando, oltretutto, che nella sua attività dedita quasi esclusivamente alla ritrattistica di forestieri di passaggio a Roma per il *Grand Tour*, i due busti oggi conservati nel Museo di Roma sono gli unici personaggi italiani da lui mai effigiati, eccezion fatta per i ritratti di papa Clemente XIV, dell'incisore Giovanni Pichler e di quelli del cardinal Giovan Battista Rezzonico posto sul suo monumento funebre. Sarà dunque opportuno riflettere ancora sul contesto storico in cui avvenne l'accaduto.

Una prima considerazione è di carattere cronologico, in quanto dagli elenchi stilati dall'Accademia con i nomi di coloro che nei secoli ne fecero parte, apprendiamo che il nostro scultore fu ammesso tra i pastori arcadici nel 1775, vale a dire sotto il custodiato di Nivildo Amarinzio, al secolo l'abate Gioacchino Pizzi (vedi Giorgetti Vichi 1977, 180)[18]. La data in questione è indicativa poiché non può che coincidere con l'arrivo in città di Corilla e innanzitutto con il lasso di tempo intercorso tra la sua apparizione a effetto la sera del 12 gennaio e la coronazione arcadica che ricevette il 16 febbraio nel Serbatoio.

Cosa desumere da tale correlazione?

La Nacinovich nel testo dedicato al lungo periodo 1772-1790, in cui custode generale dell'Arcadia fu il citato Gioacchino Pizzi, sottolinea in relazione a quanto accadde dal mese di gennaio in poi, come da quel momento gli avvenimenti con protagonista la poetessa pistoiese si fossero succeduti secondo un copione preparato nei dettagli, e come già il suo ritorno a Roma – dopo che ne era stata allontanata nel 1760 forse a causa di raggiri proprio in ambito

gesuitico – assumesse di per sé un particolare significato simbolico, intenzionalmente foriero di una svolta epocale in ambito arcadico (2003, 25 sgg.).

Artefice e ideatore dell'intera e macchinosa messa in scena protrattasi sino all'estate dell'anno successivo sarebbe stato ancora lui, Nivildo Amarinzio, sostenuto nei suoi intenti da personaggi quali il vice custode Luigi Godard e Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi entrambi in accordo con il principe don Luigi di Castiglione, mecenate di Corilla[19]; tutti accumunati, in quel momento di grande fervore intellettuale in ambito arcadico, da impellenti esigenze di rinnovamento e liberalizzazione culturale che si manifesteranno, fra l'altro, con l'apertura dell'Accademia al mondo d'oltralpe e con l'immissione in essa di un alto numero di soci stranieri (Barroero, Susinno 1999, 94; Vergelli 2006, 68). E se già l'elezione di Pizzi a custode generale, nell'agosto del 1772, sembrò rispondere a tali esigenze – non è un caso se la sua nomina si dice possa esser stata il frutto di una votazione pilotata addirittura da papa Clemente XIV (Vergelli 2006, 61) – ricordiamo come solo un anno dopo, la città eterna assisterà a un evento epocale: la soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù, come dire l'abbattimento dell'ostacolo anti-riformistico per antonomasia decretato proprio da papa Ganganelli. La portata di quell'evento nell'estate del 1773 fu tale che sulla figura di Ganganelli il mito illuministico si alimentò alacremente contribuendo a creare la fama del papa tollerante e 'filosofo', favorevole allo sviluppo delle arti liberali e alla diffusione della cultura e, sebbene oggi quest'aspetto sia stato decisamente ridimensionato, certo fomentò gli animi e le speranze riformiste di coloro che vissero in quegli anni. Quello che non si può disconoscere alla figura di Clemente XIV è, tuttavia, come afferma Mario Rosa, una nuova e lungimirante visione in ambito governativo e innanzitutto l'aver "compreso le nuove direzioni verso le quali si volgevano i problemi politico-religiosi e le correnti di idee della società europea settecentesca". In particolare, di grande interesse ai fini del nostro discorso è il nuovo atteggiamento che il papa mostrò, solo qualche anno prima degli avvenimenti riguardanti Corilla, verso il mondo inglese:

> Le grandi accoglienze tributate da C. XIV ai maggiori esponenti della corte e della politica hannoveriana, al duca di Gloucester, fratello di Giorgio III, giunto a Roma nel marzo 1772, al duca di Cumberland (nella quaresima del 1774) e alla duchessa di Kensington, segnano, se non il totale abbandono, certo la fortissima attenuazione della linea sino ad allora seguita dalla S. Sede con la protezione morale e materiale accordata agli esuli Stuart. (Rosa 1982, 353)

Ebbene, non fu forse proprio in ambito anglosassone che il papa coltivò nei suoi cinque anni di pontificato una delle conoscenze a lui più vicine e più intime? Il pensiero va in primo luogo a Thomas Jenkins, presente nella capitale pontificia sin dal 1753 e divenuto arcade già nel 1772 col nome di Eufemo Cristano, colui il quale quasi certamente funse da tramite affinché il Ganganelli affidasse la propria immagine al ritrattista più abile di quegli anni, nonché all'amico di tutta una vita: Christopher Hewetson.

Thomas e Christopher, un connubio perfetto: il primo, pienamente inserito nell'alta società dei suoi giorni tanto da costituire un punto fermo per i nobili stranieri in visita a Roma che alla sua persona, nonché alla sua raffinatezza e competenza in campo artistico e antiquariale si affidano; il secondo in grado di soddisfare invece le loro esigenze auto celebrative, intenzionati a fermare nel tempo, similmente a quanto avveniva con i ritratti pittorici di Pompeo Batoni, il loro passaggio nella città eterna. Sino a quel fatidico 1775 – il decimo dall'arrivo di Hewetson – i nomi più significativi di coloro che da lui si erano lasciati ritrarre, erano stati, oltre al papa, senza dubbio quelli di William Henry, duca di Gloucester e di Frederick Augustus Hervey IV, conte di Bristol e vescovo di Derry, nobili e autorevoli personaggi che avevano o avranno di lì a poco a che fare con l'Accademia dell'Arcadia o quantomeno con la figura della Morelli; il pontefice in primo luogo, che sin dal 1750 era stato arcade acclamato assumendo il nome pastorale di Pistofilo Elidense, così come il conte di Bristol che aveva conosciuto e apprezzato la poetessa già quando la Morelli si trovava a Firenze, mostrandosi nel tempo un suo sostenitore (cfr. Nacinovich 2003, 17 e 102)[20]; quanto invece al duca di Gloucester, ricorderemo come la sera d'agosto del 1776, quando con grande scandalo della fazione opposta si procedette alla coronazione in Campidoglio, presenziò la solenne cerimonia da un apposito palco allestito per lui e per i suoi accompagnatori, palesando con la sua presenza l'appoggio allo schieramento antigesuitico che in quel momento Corilla rappresentava[21].

Ancora diversi saranno poi i personaggi che, divenuti arcadi al tempo di Gioacchino Pizzi o nel corso dei precedenti custodiati, vennero ritratti o avranno rapporti con Hewetson: i più significativi furono senza dubbio Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi, Marta Swinburne, Nicola de Azara, Anton Raphael Mengs e Lodovico Rezzonico[22].

Quali furono le ripercussioni in ambito culturale di questo speciale clima di rinnovamento e fervore politico e intellettuale, promosso dalle menti più progressiste presenti nella maggiore istituzione della capitale pontificia? La tradizione classica, le memorie evocate da un glorioso passato saranno la fonte a cui attingere: "matura una rinnovata coscienza di valori esemplari dell'antica storia romana come modelli, da riproporre all'Italia in parallelo al recupero delle tradizioni 'nazionali' dei popoli nordici" (Barroero, Susinno 1999, 133). Si assisterà così negli anni Settanta del secolo XVIII alla messa a punto in ambito accademico di una nuova ideologia letteraria ed estetica, basata su principi di sobrietà ed equilibrio, per la quale negli ultimi anni si è coniato il termine rivelatore di classicismo arcadico (cfr. Cipriani 2000, 14)[23].

Scendendo ancor più nello specifico, si rammenterà ancora quanto sottolineato dalla Barroero a proposito degli scultori inglesi presenti a Roma e della loro produzione nell'ambito della ritrattistica nel corso della seconda metà del secolo XVIII:

gli artisti britannici restarono fortemente condizionati dal soggiorno romano […] l'apprezzamento per il ritratto scolpito all'antica ebbe un seguito considerevole nell'intera produzione di Hewetson e di Nollekens, insieme a Flaxman e a Banks tra i maggiori scultori del secondo Settecento, non solo britannico. La perizia in questo genere da parte di Cristopher Hewetson si rivelò nei busti di aristocratici (Sir Watkin W.W., 1796; Thomas Brerenton Westfalling, 1785) nei quali lo scultore adottò una formula originale, che tentava di conciliare le esigenze della somiglianza con la voga antiquaria: la parrucca è sostituita alla folta chioma naturale mentre il petto appare nudo o togato […]. Per i suoi colleghi artisti Hewetson scelse invece la soluzione 'filosofica' o 'all'antica'. (Barroero 2011, 92 e 96)[24]

A conclusione di questa lunga digressione, torniamo al dato di partenza, agli eventi intercorsi tra il 1775 e 1776 e al generoso gesto con cui Hewetson contribuì a esaltare la coppia del momento, Corilla ed Emireno. Alla luce dei fatti, tutto quel che era accaduto negli anni precedenti nella comunità degli anglosassoni presenti a Roma sembra in certo senso favorire la decisione dello scultore di proporsi in Arcadia; per questo avrebbe potuto contare sull'appoggio di accademici di sua diretta conoscenza, primo fa tutti Jenkins, arcade, lo ricordiamo, con il nome di Eufemo Cristano, così come non meno determinante poteva risultare il sostegno di Alpino Calidonio, vale a dire James Byres[25]; in altre parole coloro che conosciamo come i suoi principali intermediari nella capitale pontificia. Entrambi, sia nel caso che abbiano suggerito il nome dell'amico agli organizzatori dell'evento, sia che l'abbiano esortato a proporsi gratuitamente per l'imminente e tanto attesa coronazione, ben sapevano che per Hewetson sarebbe stata un'occasione da non perdere, un modo per mettere in risalto il suo operato in uno degli ambienti più colti e in vista del momento[26]. Egli dovette rivelarsi d'altro canto, e sotto molteplici aspetti, l'artista più all'avanguardia, il più capace nonché il più idoneo a ciò che si andava programmando in quegli anni[27].

L'apertura alle correnti europee mostrate dall'Arcadia nei medesimi anni potrebbe aver contribuito al resto: per personalità del calibro di Gioacchino Pizzi, Giovan Cristoforo Amaduzzi, ma anche per l'esterofilo e filo-inglese per eccellenza Luigi Godard come per lo stesso Luigi Gonzaga, fu certamente motivo di orgoglio e di adeguamento allo spirito dei tempi, fregiare l'ambiente più rappresentativo dell'accademia, il Serbatoio, con i primi ritratti di pastori arcadici ideati da una mente per condizione di nascita 'liberale', e perciò priva di preconcetti e sovrastrutture ma pronta invece a far rivivere lo spirito derivante dal mondo classico assorbito a Roma. I due busti costituirono in altre parole i primi ritratti marmorei in seno all'Arcadia in cui sul piano estetico si palesava quell'intento di purificazione formale a cui l'Accademia aspirava su più fronti, in questo delicato momento di transizione sul piano storico e sociale[28]. Ed ecco allora che qualche anno dopo, mentre il principe Luigi Gonzaga, spirito libertario e illuminista, darà alle stampe un testo dal titolo emblematico *Riflessioni filosofico-poetiche sull'Antica Democrazia Romana precettrice di tutte le nazioni libere, ad uso del Popolo Inglese*[29], in ambito scultoreo, i personaggi effigiati dall'irlandese

Hewetson assumeranno sempre più marcatamente un'aura severa e antiquariale, ridotti all'essenzialità dei tratti fisionomici, denudati o comunque privi di inutili orpelli se non quelli ispirati al mondo antico.

Note

[1] Tra gli studi più recenti riguardanti la figura e l'operato di Hewetson: Sanchez Jauregui Alpañés (2012, 106-114); Curzi e Brook (2010, 458); Suarez Huerta (2010, 18-43) e Mazzotta (2002, 463-464).

[2.] Il testo a cui l'autore fa riferimento è il *Diario* appartenuto al pittore inglese Joseph Farington (1747-1821), fonte preziosa per la storia dell'arte e per gli artisti inglesi, compilato negli anni che vanno dal 1793 al 1821.

[3] Negli elenchi che vanno dal 1770 al 1799, il nome di battesimo del nostro scultore è facilmente individuabile, non si può dire lo stesso del suo cognome che, di difficile comprensione per gli italiani, venne trascritto nelle forme più varie (Jovetzon, Parison, Carison, Hatezon…) e così di seguito in tutti i documenti che lo riguardano, dove poche volte appare la trascrizione corretta *Hewetson*.

[4] "die 19 Aug.ti 1767/ ego d. Bapta Caleffi […] infantem die 17 huius ex Felice Prosperi qm Evangelista de Collevecchis in Sabrinis et ex Ant.a Volpi qm Archangeli Rom.a coniugi his huius Parochis […] nomen fuit impostum Cristophorus Vincentius. Matrinaac […] fuit Agnes Buseli qm dom.ci Rom. et ex hac Paroch." (ASV 1765-1771, 117).

[5] L'artista, seguendo le sorti dei numerosi acattolici risiedenti a Roma, venne sepolto nei pressi della Piramide di Caio Cestio come ci viene detto da Charles Grignam, amico dello scomparso e presente, come vedremo in seguito, alla dettatura del suo testamento: "his remains were attended by a few select friends to the Protestant burying-ground in this city, where his body was deposited with the greatest decency, though without unnecessary expense." (Hodgkinson 1958, 53). Per le spese occorse per il funerale e relativa sepoltura si rimanda ad Appendice 3 (487). Nell'impossibilità di rintracciare con maggior esattezza la sua tomba – date le vicissitudini a cui fu sottoposto negli anni seguenti il luogo in questione – ci piace immaginare che un'ultima traccia della sepoltura di Hewetson possa intravedersi nelle parole di uno studio condotto sul cimitero del Testaccio nel quale si annota: "Dalla sepoltura di Guglielmo Grote, russo, morto il 6 aprile 1791, per lo meno le richieste di realizzazione di 'memorie' al di sopra dei tumuli, dopo un avvio rallentato, prendono alfine una cadenza costante. Per il 1792 non si ha notizia di sepolture, una venne effettuata nel 1793. Una nel 1794, cosi come nel '96, '98, '99 e nel 1802" (Nylander 1989, 73). Per chi volesse avere maggiori dettagli su come avvenivano le sepolture degli acattolici si rimanda a Rotili (2005, 41-50) e Jones (1951, 73).

[6] Il personaggio in questione è Thomas Jenkins (ca. 1722-1798), pittore, archeologo e abile mercante d'arte per una clientela di stampo internazionale, presente a Roma dalla metà del secolo XVIII sino al 1798. Jenkins era deceduto qualche mese prima, dopo esser tornato da poco in Inghilterra a causa dell'occupazione francese della capitale pontificia(cfr. Ingamells 1997, 553-556; Cesareo 2009, 221-250).

[7] Nel primo caso si tratta forse del medesimo Richard Bartram(1749-1826), pro-console britannico per diversi anni distanza a Civitavecchia, le cui vicende sono citate nel testo del 1814 dal titolo Raccolta di documenti (1814, 56 e sgg.); il secondo personaggio è invece il milanese Carlo Ambrogio Riggi (?-1808) fratello di Maddalena Riggi, la giovane di cui si invaghì Goethe a Roma e consorte in prime nozze di Giuseppe Volpato, figlio dell'incisore Giovanni. Carlo Ambrogio, presente nella città papale dal 1770, funse da intermediario nell'ambito del florido mercato antiquariale romano, a stretto contatto d'affari con Thomas Jenkins, e ancora fu in possesso di un banco in via della Scrofa che diresse sino al 1808 (cfr. Fossataro 2006, 49-52).

[8] Dei pittori, conoscitori e mercanti d'arte Robert Fagan (c. 1761-1816) e Charles Grignon – Grignan, Grignon – (1721-1810) si veda quanto riportato in Ingamells (1997, 346 e sgg., 433 e sgg.).

[9] Nei diari compilati da Vincenzo Pacetti troviamo due notizie a riguardo. La prima risale al gennaio del 1799 dove si legge: "Adi 24. Sono andato a stimare le sculture del [sic] eredità di Cristofano Iuston assieme con Carlo Albacini", e ancora nell'ottobre del 1801 Pacetti annota: "Adi 3. Ieri sono stato a stimare tutte le sculture dal Signor Cristofano Iuponle quali ascendono a scudi 2381; esso hà un proggetto da fare a Torlonia" (Cipriani 2011, I, 194 e 220).

[10] Nei registri dello *Stato delle Anime* della parrocchia di San Lorenzo in Lucina, per l'anno 1809, accanto al nome di Cristoforo Prosperi appare per la prima e ultima volta la dicitura "Scultore Fuori" (ASV 1809, 25); la sua assenza da Roma in quell'anno sembra confermata dal testo enciclopedico di Guattani che nel IV tomo risalente al 1809 riporta: "Prosperi Cristoforo (attualmente in Inghilterra) Monumenti Sepolcrali, Gruppi, Busto di Pitec."(151).

[11] Alcune notizie su Cristoforo Prosperi sono inoltre desumibili dai *Diari* di Joseph Farington (Cave 1983, vol. VII, 4025; 1984, vol. XI, 4604).

[12] In particolare i versi sono tratti dal poemetto intitolato *L'ombra di Pope* (1777), che Luigi Godard (1740-1824), fra gli arcadi Cimante Micenio, dedicò a milord Hervey conte di Bristol. Il poemetto fu aggiunto al testo di Luigi Gonzaga intitolato *Saggio analitico dell'elogio da farsi dello spirito umano*[…], risalente all'anno 1777 (cfr. Godard 1823, 18-23; Marocchi 2002, 824-27).

[13] L'argomento era stato già parzialmente trattato da chi scrive (Di Tanna 1994-1995; Di Tanna 2006).

[14] Nell' *Avviso* si leggeva: "Giovedì 16 febbraio 1775 alle ore 22 si terrà adunanza generale nel serbatoio d'Arcadia PER LA CORONAZIONE della celebre pastorella Corilla Olimpica" (Ademollo 1887,166).

[15] La notizia è nota nei medesimi termini anche nel testo a stampa facente riferimento all'evento (Adunanza 1775, XVIII). Una testimonianza epistolare dell'accaduto è desumibile anche da una testimonianza dell' abate Giovanni Cristoforo Amaduzzi, tra gli arcadi Biante Didimeo, che riporta: "persino l'entusiasmo d'un valente Scultore Inglese, pieno di quella grandezza d'animo, e di quell'amore di virtù, e di gloria, che corrisponde alla libertà nativa, e che fa il carattere della nazione, il Sig. Cristofano Heweston (che ben merita d'essere nominato e d'essere scritto né registri dell'immortalità) ad eternare in marmo il di lei volto, e a far indi un dono dell'egregio suo lavoro all'Accademia degli Arcadi." (Ademollo 1887, 490). E ancora in un testo risalente al 1821 si legge: "Ivi [bosco Parrasio] si vede finora il di lei semibusto marmoreo col solo nome di Corilla nel piedistallo, scolpito dal valente scultore inglese Fleveston: il quale scosso dall'estemporaneo dottissimo canto della medesima volle tributarle questa gratuita prova di stima" (Salviucci 1821, 158).

[16] Si veda pure Ademollo dove il medesimo autore riporta che, a volere la pubblicazione del discorso declamato dal principe Gonzaga, fosse stato l'abate Amaduzzi (1887, 223 e 213).

[17] Sulle polemiche politiche suscitate dall'evento, Ademollo (1887, 213 e sgg.) e Mazzocca (2002, 463-464). Dopo questi clamorosi episodi, è possibile che tra Hewetson e Corilla siano perdurati dei contatti, se ne ha sentore da una lettera del 1 febbraio 1777 inviata da Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi alla poetessa: "P.S. Lo Scultore Inglese, che ho veduto questa mattina, mi commette farvi mille cordiali complimenti in suo nome" (vedi Morelli 2000, 29).

[18] Andrà specificato che il nome arcadico assunto da Hewetson risulta non univoco nei vari testi e documenti in cui egli è citato; all'appellativo di *Mirone Doricense* si alterna infatti quello di *Mirone Atticense* (cfr. AAA Catalogo degli Arcadi, lettera H, 88).

[19] Luigi Gonzaga principe di Castiglione (1745-1819) originario di Venezia fu letterato e viaggiatore, attivista e sostenitore dei diritti civili, in contatto con quegli ambienti riformistici sorti in Europa sulla scia delle idee illuministiche. Lo spirito libertario e anticonformista da cui fu animato, si palesò in diversi suoi scritti storico-filosofici pubblicati negli anni tra il 1776 e il 1780 di cui questi i titoli: *Il Letterato buon cittadino* (1776); *Saggio analitico dell'elogio da farsi dello spirito umano*[…] (1777); *Riflessioni filosofico-politiche sull'antica democrazia romana* (1780); *Riflessioni sulla poesia e sulla musica* (1780). Grazie al suo scritto del 1776, declamato in Arcadia, fu tra i primi a portare nella capitale pontificia idee di libertà e democrazia; di lì a soli quattro

anni, avrebbe posto, dopo l'esempio massimo lasciato dall'antica Repubblica Romana, quello della Gran Bretagna tra le forme di governo democratico a cui mirare (cfr. Marocchi 2002, 824-27).

[20] A riprova della notorietà della poetessa in ambito anglosassone interessante è quanto desumibile da una sua lettera del 1769, in cui la Morelli annota "sono stata a tutte le feste degl'Inglesi qui fatte" (Ademollo 1887*,* 496). Anche la duchessa Elizabeth Kingston, diviene arcade nel febbraio del 1775 e assumerà il nome di Artemisia Ciparissia (AAA Catalogo degli Arcadi, lettera H, 88). Altri personaggi di spicco nella politica di questi anni già facenti parte dell'Accademia dell'Arcadia sono Henry Benedict Stuart of York che sotto il custodiato del Lorenzini (1728-1743) era conosciuto come Tamisio e il cardinal Francois Joachim de Pierre de Bernis che al tempo di Pizzi, 1773, era divenuto Lireno Cefisio.

[21] Questo il *parterre* presente in Campidoglio per l'incoronazione: "molte Principesse e Dame, tutti i Forestieri di distinzione, che erano in Roma, e tra i Personaggi rispettabili, che decorano la Funzione, si degnò intervenire a essa nel palco a bella posta preparato S.A.R. il Duca di Gloucester con nobile comitiva, che si mosse da Marino, dove in quel tempo faceva la sua dimora. […] Quindi tra i replicati strepitosi applausi degli Spettatori, Corilla, accompagnata dalle tre accennate Dame, si ritirò nelle camere interne Consolari, ed ivi ricevette le congratulazioni di tutte le altre Dame, Principi e Principesse, Cavalieri, e Nobiltà Forestiera, e specialmente del magnanimo DUCA DI GLOUCESTER" (Atti 1779, 38 e 75). Ricordiamo ancora come già nel 1772 il duca di Gloucester, nel corso del suo soggiorno romano, fosse stato motivo di attenzione sia da parte di papa Ganganelli che da quello dell' Ordine Gesuitico: "The Pope was extremely attentive, being anxious to ingratiate himself with Protestant Princes (according to Cardinal de Bernis) '*pour ménager une plus grande tolérance aux catholiques*'. […] The Jesuits were equally anxious to please him […] while he in turn was rumoured to have assured the General of the Jesuits of '*toute la protection qu'il pouvait attendre de Sa Majesté Britannique*'" (Ingamells 1997, 403). Sulla figura del duca si veda anche Cesareo (2011, 301-303).

[22] Se Anthon Raphael Mengs e Lodovico Rezzonico erano già divenuti arcadi sotto il custodiato dell'abate Morei (1743-66) assumendo il nome rispettivamente di Dinia Sipilio e Scamandro Naupatteo, negli anni di custodiato di Gioacchino Pizzi si annoverano: nel 1773 il citato cardinal de Bernis; nel 1774 Nicola de Azara, che sarà chiamato Admeto Cillenio; nel 1775 Giovan Cristoforo Amaduzzi, amico personale e conterraneo di Clemente XIV, diviene Biante Didimeo; Marta Swinburne nel 1777 assume il nome pastorale di Elicera Efesia.

[23] Si veda ancora sull'argomento, Donato (1992, 509 e sgg.), Caffiero (1997, 63 e sgg.), Donato (2000, 160 esgg.) e Borchia (2009, 20).

[24] Si veda in proposito anche quanto riportato da Stefano Grandesso su Hewetson: "era uno degli scultori più rinomati all'arrivo di Canova ed entrò con lui in competizione, senza successo […] Nel campo del ritratto era allora considerato senza rivali e aveva raccolto le numerose richieste dei viaggiatori grazie anche al sodalizio con Jenkins e Hamilton. I suoi ritratti di artisti e letterati […] individuano il suo ambiente intellettuale di riferimento tra i cultori dell'ideale classico e contemporaneamente una tipologia di ritratto moderno dove la severa semplicità e la naturalezza esaltavano la qualità morale, oltre che psicologica, dell'effigiato" (2005, 136 e sgg.).

[25] James Byres era venuto in contatto con l'ambiente arcadico ancor prima di Jenkins, sotto il custodiato dell'abate Morei (1743-66).

[26] Sull'aspetto sociale e il prestigio personale di coloro, gli artisti in questo caso, che venivano a far parte delle accademie si veda Cipriani (2000, 11 e sgg.).

[27] Alla data del 1775 Joseph Nollekens e Joseph Wilton erano già ripartiti da Roma; Thomas Banks vi era giunto invece da soli tre anni; dunque il soggiorno più lungo tra gli scultori di lingua inglese presenti nella città papale, spettava al tempo proprio a Hewetson.

[28] Ricordiamo che sono questi anche gli anni del passaggio dal pontificato di Clemente XIV, deceduto nel settembre del 1774, a quello di Pio IX, eletto nel febbraio del 1775.

[29] Il testo venne dato alle stampe nel 1780 a Venezia ed è considerato una sorta di manifesto del partito antioligarchico veneziano. Portando come esempio da un lato l'antica repubblica romana e dall' altro il modello politico inglese – così come era già accaduto col testo *Il Letterato*

buon cittadino declamato in Arcadia – l'autore ribadiva il proprio sostegnoa un governo di stampo democratico (cfr. Alfonzetti 2012, 135 sgg.).

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Appendice 1

ASR, Trenta Notai Capitolini, *Testamento di Christopher Hewetson*, Ufficio 21 (3 novembre 1798)

f. 419

Al nome d'Iddio

Considerando io sottoscr. Cristoforo Hewetson Inglese / di esser mortale, ora che mi ritrovo sano di / tutti li sentimenti dell'Animo benchè indisposto / di corpo hò risoluto fare il mio Testamento come / siegue. Per raggione d'Istituzione, legato, ed in ogn'altro / miglior modo lascio à Guglielmo Hewetson, Hele= / naHewetson adesso Clementi, a Elisabetta Hewetson, / adesso Balb fratello, e sorelle di me testatore / per egual porzione tutte le raggioni, azzioni, / e pretenzioni à me spettanti, e che mi potessero / spettare, e competere sopra tutti li Beni, ed / effetti esistenti in Inghilterra ed Irlanda di mia perti=

/ nenza, volendo, che il tutto si debba dividere / fra i suddetti miei fratello, e sorelle egualmente. / Avendomi il mio defonto Amico Jenckins lasciato / un legato di cinquanta lire sterline, voglio, che / l'Infrascritto mio erede Fiduciario con detto le= / gato paghi primieramente la cambiale di Colon= / nati cinquantatre dà me dovute à Carlo Ambrogio / Riggi, benchè apparisca detta cambiale come debi= / to dello stesso mio erede Fiduciato, ma in verità / è mio debito, avendo esso mio erede Fiduciario / prestato il solo nome, ed il rimanente di detto / legato doverà erogarsi nella maniera che in voce

f. 419v

ho communicato al mio erede Fiduciario. / Ritrovandomi io testatore un credito di cinquanta / Onze di Oro di Napoli, che mi deve sua eccellenza / il Cavalier Hamilton Ministro Britannico presso la / Corte di Napoli per li due Ritratti modellati / tanto di lui, che della stimatissima sua Signora / consorte, quindi ordino, che con [suddette] Onciecinquan= / ta si debbano pagare docati sessanta di / Napoli al Banchiere [?] emendo Nobile Inglese, / ad oggetto il medesimo Banchiere passi detta / somma a credito del Signor Roberto Fagan per / tanti fattimi somministrare dà detto Banchiere per conto di esso Fagan, e il rimanente doverà / erogarsi nella maniera communicata à voce / allo stesso erede fiduciario. Nel rimanente poi della mia eredità esistente in Roma, Studio di Scultura, Crediti del me= / desimo, e tutt'altro à me qui spettante no= / mino, ed istituisco mio erede Fiduciario il / Sig. Cristoforo Prosperi mio scolaro di Studio / al quale hòcommunicato à voce la mia vo= / lontà, e Fiducia, e voglio che si debba stare / à tutto ciò sarà il medesimo per fare sopra / la mia eredità, assolvendo dà qualunque ven=

f. 500

dimento dè conti e proibisco, ed ordino, che non / sia costretto dà alcuno à spiegar la fiducia, / altrimenti l'istituisco erede libero perche / così mi pare, e piace di fare. Questo dico essere il mio ultimo testamento, / cassando, annullando e rivocando ogn'altro tes= / tamento.
Avendo fatto scrivere il presente mio testa= / mento doppo averlo letto, e ritrovato secondo / la mia volontà l'hò sottoscritto di proprio / pugno Roma 3 Novembre 1798
Lascio per raggioni di legato al Sig. Roberto Fagan un / torso frammento antico esistente in casa in piccolo / contrasegno di mia amicizia.
Al Sig. Carlo Grignon per titolo di legato lascio un / Dizzionario Inglese ed un Puttino di Avorio, come / pure un anellino con ritratto in segno pure di / mia amicizia.
Al Sig. Riccardo Bartram per legato come sopra lascio / un esemplare della Bibbia Sagra in segno pure / di mia Amicizia.

Al Sig. Giuseppe [Hajari] Chirurgo voglio che à scelta / di detto Grignon e dell'erede fiduciario si dia una /copia piccola dell'Antico in contrasegno della stima / verso di lui.
Al Rev: Pre [Concanan] lascio ad arbitrio del mio erede / Fiduciario di dargli un piccolo ricordo di mia

f. 500*v*

Amicizia in qualche cosa che crederà il medesimo di poter / gradire.
Prego il mio erede Fiduciario di dare alle Sig. / Antonia, e Agata Prosperi un ricordo di / mia Amicizia in quelle cose che crederà il / mio erede Fiduciario potere le medesime gradire. / Lascio ad arbitrio del mio erede
Fiduciario di / dare qualche ricognizione alla donna di servi= / zio secondo portaranno le circostanze. / Quali legati sono parte dal detto mio testamento.
ChristoforoHewetson
[?]oto come sopra

f. 418

[su di un foglio già piegato e chiuso con sette sigilli di ceralacca rossa, il notaio attesta che la dettatura del testamento è avvenuta a dì 13 Brumale Anno VII in casa del testatore alla presenza di sette testimoni:
Carlo Grignon del fu Tommaso inglese
Riccardo Bartram del fu Riccardo inglese
Francesco Canetoni del fu [?] romano
Giuseppe Mirri del quondam Giacomo romano
Carlo Dominici del quondam Gioacchino romano
Giuliano Bartoli del quondam Giovan Pietro romano
Carlo Mondini del quondam Giovanni milanese]

Appendice 2

ASR, Trenta Notai Capitolini, *Apertura del Testamento di Christopher Hewetson,* Ufficio 21 (16 novembre 1798)

f. 417

Apertura del Testamento della [Bonanima]
Cristoforo Hewetson
Per
Il Cittadino Cristoforo Prosperi

A dì Ventisei Brumale Anno VII=
Sedici Novembre 1798=
Avanti di Medesimo e Terzij [data] personal= / mente [costo] il cittadino Cristoforo Prosperi / figlio del fù Felice Romano à Ma[?] Sa= / pendo che il Cittadino Cristoforo Hewtson / hà fatto il suo testamento, e quello chiuso / e sigillato consegnato negli atti miei li / 13 Brumale corrente, e credendo di poter / avere in esso interesse, attesa la / morte / del suddetto Cristofaro Hewtson seguita je= / ri sera, quindi à di lui istanza mi / sono portato in casa del defontoHewetson / all'Orsoline, ed ivi avendo riconosciuto il / cadavere di detto Hewetson alla presenza / dell'[?] Testimoni, steso per terra in / una delle stanze della di lui abitazio= / ne fu fatto vedere il sudetto di lui / testamento chiuso, sigillato, e non vi=

f. 417*v*

ziato, e nell'istessa maniera mi fu con= / segnato, e di poi ho quello aperto e / pubblicato ad alta, e intelligibile voce […]

Appendice 3

ASR, Trenta Notai Capitolini, *Inventario dei beni di Christopher Hewetson,* Ufficio 21 (7 dicembre 1798)

f. 428

Inventarium Bonorum Agriorum Bo.Mem.
ChristophoriHewtson
Prò
IlliusHereditate, et d. Christopharo Prosperi
ejus Herede Fiduciario
Die Septimadecembris 1798=
Questo è l'inventario di tutti e singoli Beni [?] / fatto nella casa di sua abitazione posta / all'Orsoline [...]

f. 429

e stima del sig.r Giuseppe Rinaldi perito/ rigattiere ed altri periti scultori [...]

f. 429*v*

Nello Studio di Scultura / spettante al defunto Cristo / foro Hewetson
[l'elenco che segue prende in considerazione gli oggetti più significativi:
una scultura in marmo copia della dea Pandora

Altra figura simile raffigurante Pandora
Una copia in marmo della Cerere detta Mattei
Una piccola copia in marmo della dea Pandora
Una piccola copia in marmo rappresentante la Pudicizia
Una piccola copia in marmo rappresentante la musa Polimnia
Un busto grande al naturale copia della musa Melpomene che esisteva nel Museo Clementino
Una testa in marmo rappresentante la figlia di Niobe
Una copia in marmo della testa di Melpomene come quella che esisteva nel Museo Clementino
Un puttino in marmo che tiene l'uccellino con entrambe le mani copia dall'antico
Altro simile puttino
Testa grande al naturale copia dall'antico rappresentante [?]orbalone
Testa rappresentante Cicerone
Busto di putto copiato dall'antico
Testa di CiceroneBustino di putto
Camino di marmo composto di due colonne con contropilastri, fregio e architrave da terminare
n.55 fra teste e busti di gesso formato dall'antico
un torso di gesso del Laocoonte
un torso del Belvedere
un bassorilievo di Putti al naturale di Francois Duquesnoy
un bassorilievo di gesso con le nove muse
statua di gesso rappresentante Demostene
statua di gesso con musa sedente
n.6 bassorilievi di gesso rappresentanti i candelabri Barberini
n.50 frammenti di gesso
un pezzo di vaso detto della Cicogna di gesso
n.21 pezzi di marmo statuario]

f. 433*v*

Siegue la descrizzione di / numero quattordici Busti di / marmo rappresentanti diversi ritrat / ti il prezzo dè quali è stato / già pagato dai Proprietarij / al defonto Cristoforo Newtson / mà per altro non sono termi / nati […]
[busto ritratto di milord Plymonthe
busto ritratto di sir John Throgmostron
busto ritratto di Lady Corneglia
busto ritratto di milord Buerne, che si è ritrovato
compito e terminato
busto ritratto di milord Harvington
busto ritratto di sir [JhonMarjkeson]
busto ritratto di milord la Touche

busto ritratto di [?] Clifford
busto ritratto di milord [Wemmuster]
busto ritratto del figlio di [Wemmuster]
busto ritratto di [Gruiper]
busto ritratto di milord [Bronick]
[l'inventario si interrompe a f. 435 per poi riprendere a f. 485 e ssg.]
Altro busto rappresentante il Ritratto / di Milord [spazio vuoto] ridotto / [?] altro rappresentante MiledyPlymoud / compito.
Noi dotti Periti Scultori abbia= / mo periziato il sudettoStu= / dio di scultura nella ma= / njera sopra espressa se= / condo la nostra Perizia, / e prattica Vincenzo Pacetti Scultore Principe / dell'Accademia di S. Luca e Conte Palatino / Carlo Albacini Scultore Accademico [...]

f. 487*v*

[le spese sostenute per il funerale e la sepoltura]
Per la sera del Mortorio
Scudi dodici…….....12 –
Per la cassa scudi quattro……. 4 –
Per la fossa scudi otto…... 8 –
Per la [?]ia à Testaccio……60 –
per le tre carrozze scudi
tre……... 3 -

Appendice 4

L'ombra di Pope, poemetto dell'abate Luigi Godard, fra gli arcadi Cimante Micenio in cui si lodano gli studi filosofici di sua altezza, il sig. principe Luigi Gonzaga di Castiglione. (1777)

[...]
A l'invitto Emireno, Arcadia, o madre,
E seggio e nido di felici ingegni
Gli offri tributo di canori accenti,
Onora un genio tuo Heweston sovrano
De la scolturacreatrice alunno,
De l'estro figlio e del Roman disegno,
In Pario marmo la parlante immago
Forma di lui. L'opra compisci, e quando
Novo Prometeo per novel portento
E senso e vita le avrai dato, inarca
Per lo stupore le pesanti ciglia,
E lo scarpel de l'opra alta superbo
Appendi lieto de la gloria al tempio.

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Sul soggiorno del pittore Antonio Mancini in Irlanda nell'autunno del 1907[1]

Michele Amedei
Independent scholar (<micheleamedei@gmail.com>)

Abstract:

This essay focuses on the portraits painted by Antonio Mancini (Rome, 1852-1930) during his stay in Dublin, in autumn 1907. Mancini, who belonged to the Italian Verismo movement, painted several self-portraits as well as portraits of well known Irish figures including Ruth Shine (Hugh Lane's sister), Lady Augusta Gregory and William Butler Yeats. For the Irish intellectuals he met in Dublin Mancini became a symbol of individuality, humility and sincerity. As a result, Mancini's imagination may be interpreted in relation with that of Martin, the young protagonist of Yeats and Lady Gregory's play *The Unicorn from the Stars* (1907). This study concludes with an interpretation of Mancini's painting entitled *The Maker of Figures* donated by John Singer Sargent to the Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane in the early 1900s.

Keywords: Hugh Lane, Lady Gregory, Antonio Mancini, sprezzatura, W.B. Yeats

> Farsi fare il ritratto diventa da parte del pittore e dei suoi personaggi quasi un rito naturale e inevitabile, un omaggio all'arte che è per Mancini "abilità che si sente nell'anima" […], dando così dell'arte una delle definizioni più poetiche e alte che siano mai state date negli ultimi cento anni.
> Corrado Maltese, 1960

1. *Dall'Italia all'Irlanda: Antonio Mancini e i committenti anglo-americani*

Il pittore italiano Antonio Mancini – di cui qui è pubblicato un ritratto dipinto dall'americano John Singer Sargent nei primi del Novecento (vedi Tavola 1) –, fu in Irlanda, nell'autunno del 1907, grazie a Hugh Lane, fondatore e direttore della Dublin City Gallery (che oggi porta il suo nome), a cui fu introdotto dal giro di amicizie legate a Sargent[2] durante il periodo trascorso a Londra fra il 1901 e il 1902[3]. Già negli anni successivi all'ottavo

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decennio dell'Ottocento, Mancini aveva stretto rapporti con artisti, scrittori, e collezionisti anglo-americani. A Roma, per esempio, dalla metà degli anni Ottanta, Mancini lavorò ad alcuni ritratti di americani residenti o di passaggio in città, fra cui quello di Thomas Waldo Story, figlio di William Wetmore Story, scultore[4], e di Daniel Sargent Curtis – parente di John Singer Sargent –, originario di Boston, e proprietario di Palazzo Barbaro a Venezia[5]. Contemporaneamente, forse con il tramite della famiglia Curtis, il Nostro fu anche in contatto con Isabella Stewart Gardner, collezionista americana[6]. Mancini ebbe del resto committenti di altre nazionalità, fra cui il conte belga Albert Cahen d'Anvers[7], il pittore e collezionista olandese Hendrik Willem Mesdag[8], e infine il tedesco Otto Messinger[9].

Sfogliando le carte private di Mancini[10], e scorrendo la cronaca della sua vita[11], si scopre però che questi, cresciuto artisticamente con il pittore *verista* Domenico Morelli a Napoli (città nella quale si trasferì da Roma con la famiglia alla metà degli anni Sessanta), fosse poco informato di quel mondo internazionale con cui fu costantemente in contatto. Ciò può attribuirsi al carattere riservato e schivo di Mancini che lo portò a chiudersi sempre più in se stesso e a dedicarsi solo alla pratica pittorica che fu l'unica e grande passione della sua vita. Gli era chiara, comunque, l'ammirazione che i committenti europei e americani nutrivano profondamente per lui e per la sua opera[12].

Intento di questo saggio non è di tracciare, sulla base dei pochi dati a disposizione, il punto di vista di Mancini sull'Irlanda[13] – di cui egli serbò il triste ricordo d'un "freddo da lupi", d'un "tempo da cani" (Santoro 1976-1977, 87[14]), che mal si confaceva al suo carattere fragile, meteoropatico, facile a cadere nella depressione più profonda –, né di ricostruire nel dettaglio le vicende che lo videro prendere parte, con difficoltà visti i limiti, soprattutto linguistici[15], alla vita sociale di quel posto, e di cui peraltro alcune informazioni, sarà bene rammentare, sono state già fornite da Dario Cecchi nella biografia sul pittore, pubblicata nel 1966[16]. Ci sarà semmai da spiegare il modo in cui l'opera e la personalità di Mancini furono recepiti, assimilati, e soprattutto interpretati, dal *milieu* di Dublino. Dalle memorie di alcuni suoi componenti, sappiamo difatti quanto egli fosse stato studiato con "fervida ammirazione" (Cecchi 1966, 230), giudicato come l'esempio di un'umanità da seguire, come la causa per cui combattere, e come uno dei migliori modelli creativi a cui tendere.

Una volta giunto a Dublino, intorno alla metà di settembre del 1907, Mancini fu dunque introdotto al circolo di artisti e scrittori che si riunivano attorno a Lady Augusta Gregory e a William Butler Yeats[17], da Hugh Lane, amico di Sargent, e suo grande ammiratore. Mancini fu invitato in Irlanda per eseguire il ritratto di Lady Gregory (vedi Tavola 2), da inserire nel percorso che Hugh Lane aveva in mente per la Dublin City Gallery[18]; il pittore finì comunque per eseguire altri ritratti, fra cui quello di Ruth Shine (vedi Tavola 3) – sorella di Lane –, e di Yeats (vedi Tavola 5)[19]. A Dublino, Mancini frequentò alcuni esponenti dell'alta società irlandese che includeva, fra gli altri,

i conti Casimir Dunin Markievicz e la moglie Constance Gore-Booth, e Lord Granfild[20]; fu pure all'Abbey Theatre dove poté assistere, senza probabilmente "raccapezzarci un'acca" (Cecchi 1966, 229[21]), ad uno dei drammi ispirati al mondo folclorico irlandese, i cui personaggi erano "poveri straccioni" (229). In città, Mancini fece pure visita ad alcune biblioteche e studi di artisti, fra cui quello di William Orpen, che aveva già conosciuto a Londra alcuni anni prima[22]. In compagnia di Lane, fu poi certamente a Coole Park, residenza che Lady Gregory possedeva nell'Irlanda occidentale: le iniziali del nome e del cognome di Mancini, difatti, figuravano incise in un grande albero di quella casa a fianco di quelle appartenute ad illustri personalità d'Irlanda, e ad un solo altro straniero: il filosofo italiano Mario Manlio Rossi[23]. La camera d'albergo a Dublino (il Kilworth Hotel in Kildare Street), fu comunque per Mancini l'unico ricovero sereno dove rifugiarsi per sfogare i più intimi pensieri sull'arte – fermati su alcune carte, oggi custodite dagli eredi –, sui maestri che furono per lui modelli incontestati (Velazquez e altri pittori spagnoli fra Cinquecento e Seicento, e gli artisti veneziani), o esercitarsi in solitario eseguendo un numero importante di autoritratti, conservati in Irlanda, due dei quali qui pubblicati (vedi Tavole 6, 7).

Il soggiorno irlandese fu per Mancini l'occasione per ampliare il suo giro di committenti. La conoscenza di una artista come lui, già apprezzato da altre personalità importanti del mondo artistico anglo-americano, fra cui soprattutto Sargent – che tra il 1906 e il 1908 aveva eseguito un ritratto di Lane e, pochi mesi dopo il soggiorno del Nostro, ne avrebbe fatto uno invece di Yeats, a matita su carta[24] –, poté essere per il cenacolo di irlandesi un'inaspettata rivelazione. In quegli anni, com'è noto, quel gruppo stava tentando di costruire un'identità artistica nazionale basata sul recupero delle tradizioni popolari autoctone, che nel caso di Yeats s'innestava anche su modelli dedotti dall'eredità umanistica e rinascimentale italiana[25]. Mancini poté rivelare loro, da un lato, la bellezza di una pittura che mostrava l'armonia tra la più nobile tradizione artistica italiana tardo cinquecentesca e del primo Seicento e le più aggiornate tendenze figurative europee del tempo, fra cui l'Impressionismo, a cui la sua opera è stata talvolta erroneamente associata[26]; e, dall'altro, il temperamento di un uomo che preferiva la spontaneità e l'autonomia da qualsiasi regola preimposta – egli era "artista di occhio acutissimo, ma ineducabile", scrive Roberto Longhi (1984, 7) –, da leggere nella pennellata dal tratto impreciso, segno, fra l'altro, dell'emotività istintiva.

2. *Dagli esordi al soggiorno irlandese: la pittura di Antonio Mancini fra tradizione e modernità*

Nei quadri della giovinezza di Antonio Mancini, che risalgono agli anni Settanta quando a Napoli frequenta Domenico Morelli, il colore era steso con forza sulla tela richiamando le opere dei pittori del Seicento napoletano, in

particolare quelle di artisti spagnoli, fra cui Jusepe de Ribera, che guardavano al "crudo verismo" delle tele di Caravaggio (Dalbono 1878, 37). Con l'attenzione rivolta a quei maestri, Mancini dipingeva quadri che raffiguravano perlopiù scene di vita quotidiana, in particolare i bambini incontrati per strada "che gli erano compagni di vagabondaggi e di avventure birichine" (Zanzi 1940, 8): quei fanciulli – alla cui vista il pittore, racconta Leandro Ozzòla, "si eccitava di gioia" colpito dalla loro innocente bellezza angelica (Ozzòla 1931, 713) – furono il riflesso incondizionato della "biografia sentimentale e spirituale" di Mancini (Zanzi 1940, 11). Con la pennellata "strisciata furiosamente" sulla tela, "lasciando qui una trasparenza, lì una grassezza di colore massiccio, un pezzo di giallo in punta a un dito, un pezzo di cinabro in un orecchio, una sporcatura in un altro sito" (Netti 1875, 314), Mancini illuminava gli *scugnizzi* con una luce fioca che gli accarezzava i volti pallidi, sofferenti, causati dagli stenti che la vita riservava loro. Il pittore li mostrava del resto in associazione ad oggetti che richiamavano lo sviluppo delle potenzialità dell'intelletto: un quaderno di scuola, un grande libro (vedi Tavola 8)[27], una scultura abbozzata[28], o, come nel caso de *Il piccolo savoiardo* (vedi Tavola 9), gli strumenti musicali[29]. L'arte, nelle sue variegate forme espressive, assieme alla conoscenza, sembra voler dire Mancini, è l'unico mezzo per riscattare un'esistenza miserabile o, come scrive il critico Tullio Massarani, l'unico mezzo "per ingannar la fame" (Massarani 1879, 312[30]).

Dal 1883, anno in cui si trasferì da Napoli a Roma dopo aver trascorso alcuni mesi in manicomio a causa d'una depressione che lo aveva colpito a Parigi nel 1878, Mancini concentrò il suo interesse su ritratti di serve e domestiche, o su alcuni esponenti dell'alta società romana[31] o anglo-americana[32], senza perdere il gusto per il colore steso a masse sulla tela e per i forti contrasti chiaroscurali. Fra i primi anni Ottanta e la fine del primo decennio del Novecento, il colore, nota Emilio Zanzi, "si materializzava convulsamente a strati che solo raramente s'amalgamavano con l'immagine che si determinava grossa, pesante e crostosa" (Zanzi 1940, 12). Fu quella "virulenta materia" (Cecchi 1966, 229-230) che più attrasse il circolo di scrittori e artisti di Dublino. Thomas Bodkin ricorda che Mancini, quando era in Irlanda, gli spiegò quanta differenza ci fosse tra i primi quadri della sua giovinezza – periodo a cui risaliva il dipinto intitolato *La Douane*, raffigurante una giovane signorina borghese in partenza per un viaggio, che già a quel tempo era tra le collezioni di Lane – e quelli del 1907, quando all'attenzione per il dettaglio si sostituì un forte interesse per i bagliori luministici ottenuti grazie all'inserimento nella materia pittorica di "actual pigment rough pieces of tinfoil, glass or mother-of-pearl" (Bodkin 1956, tav. XXXVII). Gli irlandesi furono d'altronde anche incuriositi dal particolare procedimento tecnico adottato da Mancini durante la posa del ritratto, che gli fu ispirato dai maestri antichi, e che elaborò e perfezionò nel corso degli anni. Una fotografia del tempo trascorso a Dublino (vedi Tavola 4), che ritrae Mancini sorridente e travestito da poeta a fianco di Mrs Shine e del suo ritratto ultimato (il quadro è oggi conservato alla Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane), ce ne mostra l'ap-

plicazione[33]. Per eseguire i ritratti, Mancini si organizzava preventivamente con un sistema di doppi teleri, grazie ai quali giungeva ad una giusta proporzione e armonia del modello. Uno di quei teleri, su cui venivano tirati fili di diverso colore da un asse all'altro in apparente disarmonia, veniva posto, come mostra la fotografia, di fronte al soggetto; e l'altro, identico al primo, anche nei fili tesi, a contatto con la tela. Alle proporzioni del ritratto, a cui l'artista giungeva grazie alla particolare tecnica poi denominata 'a graticole', Mancini associava l'audacia pittorica, ben espressa nei ritratti femminili del soggiorno irlandese, cioè quello di Ruth Shine e di Lady Gregory (anche questo è conservato a Dublino). I due quadri, d'altronde, presentano differenze[34]: nel primo ritratto, Mancini si dimostra difatti attento a rendere l'eleganza e l'aspetto aristocratico di Mrs Shine, i tratti che più caratterizzavano la giovane modella[35]. In linea forse con la ritrattistica inglese del Settecento – penso ai quadri di Joshua Reynolds o di Thomas Gainsborough che Mancini aveva ben in mente a Dublino[36] –, Mrs Shine è ritratta di tre quarti e vestita d'un abito candido, le cui pieghe, costruite tramite pennellate spesse e grumose, richiamano quelle della tunica del busto antico esibito sul piedistallo alla destra della donna. Mancini, per esaltare la giovinezza dell'irlandese, inserisce simbolicamente la natura rigogliosa alla sue spalle, e un mazzo di fiori freschi che le arricchiscono il grembo. Il ritratto di Lady Gregory, invece, è meno sofisticato nell'orchestrazione compositiva sebbene risulti più emotivamente partecipato nell'interpretazione della personalità della donna[37]. La posa che Mancini consigliò a Lady Gregory di tenere durante la seduta, e di cui lei ci ha lasciato un'importante testimonianza[38], richiama i modelli del repertorio figurativo femminile del Rinascimento italiano: dalla Gioconda di Leonardo, al ritratto di Eleonora Gonzaga della Rovere, a quello di Isabella d'Este, di Tiziano[39]. Ed è una scelta non casuale se pensiamo che Lady Gregory, nella personalità, veniva associata da Yeats alle dame cortesi del Rinascimento italiano: colte e amanti delle arti, raffinate e intelligenti, come proponeva Baldassarre Castiglione ne *Il Cortegiano*, un libro che lo scrittore irlandese, al tempo del soggiorno di Mancini a Dublino, studiava con passione[40]. Mancini, che nelle "piccole cose sa scoprire e far valere l'anima di chi […] le possiede" (Zanzi 1940, p. 10[41]), nel ritratto di Lady Gregory elimina la vegetazione rigogliosa dipinta alle spalle di Mrs Shine, sostituendola con un fondo scuro sul quale la luce tenue filtrata da una fonte alla nostra destra anima il volto rotondo su cui brillano gli occhi vivaci. La calda tonalità scelta dal pittore per bagnare le vivide membra di Lady Gregory, richiama così l'"incarnata colorazione smaltata di toni caldi palpitanti di sangue e di nervi" che Velazquez e Tiziano, maestri indiscussi per Mancini, utilizzavano per rendere vitali, "belli e veri", i loro modelli cortesi (Santoro 1976-1977, 254-255[42]). Il ritratto, dice Cecchi, "piacque immensamente. E gli ammirati dublinesi considerarono subito il bizzarro Mancini alla stregua d'un grande maestro" (Cecchi 1966, 229). Il dipinto fu apprezzato, non a caso, soprattutto per le sue qualità luministiche, tant'è che Lady Gregory lo etichettò "Fiat lux" (Cecchi 1966, 229), e, in una lettera del dicembre del 1907 all'amico

John Quinn, lo definì "a wonderful picture, luminous, radiant and trimphant" (Kohfeldt 1984, 187; e Hill 2005, 219). William Butler Yeats esaltò il quadro in una poesia come "a great ebullient portrait certainly" (Yeats 1967, 369); nella poesia, Yeats riporta anche che John Synge aveva definito il ritratto "Greatest since Rembrandt"[43]. Altri, tuttavia, giudicarono negativamente l'operato di Mancini. John Butler Yeats, per esempio, scrisse al figlio nell'ottobre del 1907 che Mancini era artista di genio ma poco serio[44], analogamente ad un critico del *Pall Mall Gazette*, il quale in un articolo del gennaio 1908, lo aveva definito come "not much more than a temporarily fashionable mannerist, whom it might have been as well to ignore" (riportato in O'Byrne 2000, 94, 97). Anche Robert O'Byrne, infine, non apprezzò la pittura né la personalità di Mancini: se gli impasti pittorici risultarono ai suoi occhi "grotesquely bombastic", il suo comportamento 'caricaturale' era inaccettabile – il carattere di Mancini non piacque nemmeno ai membri del United Service Club, i quali, dice O' Byrne, "baffled [Mancini's] incomprehensible effusions and habit of bowing low before everyone he met" (O' Byrne 2000, 95).

Il carattere del pittore, dunque ambiguo e talvolta puerile[45], rivelò al circolo di artisti e scrittori irlandesi una mente capace di sperimentare ed esibire con franchezza e libertà le più recondite fantasticherie della mente. Esemplare, da questo punto di vista, è il travestimento da poeta di Mancini, esibito in occasione dello scatto fotografico in compagnia di Mrs Shine e del suo ritratto appena concluso, a cui ho fatto cenno. Mancini, del resto, improvvisò travestimenti anche quando eseguiva gli autoritratti nella solitudine della camera d'albergo a Dublino. In quelle occasioni, indossava un turbante che sistemava come un grande fiocco per creare un autoritratto d'effetto: lo strano copricapo, di tonalità chiara, assorbiva e rifletteva evidentemente la luce che sfiorando la sua fronte e il suo naso, lo illuminava con morbidezza facendolo così emergere plasticamente dallo sfondo buio. Le improvvisazioni burlesche, ilari, che nel caso degli autoritratti irlandesi furono per Mancini un modo divertente e intuitivo attraverso cui giungere ad un risultato che mostrava un'estetica ricercata, saranno da interpretare in rapporto alla sua educazione artistica. Il Verismo, a cui fu introdotto a Napoli da Domenico Morelli, gli aveva infatti insegnato a non sottrarsi mai "all'influsso di un gesto o di una voce senza ripeterli" (Sciuti 1947, 25), soprattutto se di aiuto per lo sviluppo dell'immaginazione. Esistono delle analogie, a me sembra, fra questo aspetto della personalità e dell'arte di Mancini, e quella dei protagonisti dei drammi proposti all'Abbey Theatre dal circolo di scrittori irlandesi che ne accolsero favorevolmente l'opera. Difatti, questi ultimi promuovevano, fin dai primi anni del Novecento, *plays* che ritraevano la vita ordinaria di uomini semplici, modesti, mostrando lo scontro tra il desiderio di alcuni di evadere il mondano e rifugiarsi nelle fantasticherie della mente, e la convinzione di altri secondo cui la vita pratica, attiva, fosse un beneficio per l'individuo. Le potenzialità immaginative, secondo quest'ultimo punto di vista, distrarrebbero la vocazione divina da un lato, e la produzione di

beni utili per l'intera collettività dall'altro[46]. Il 23 novembre 1907, dunque poco tempo dopo che Mancini aveva lasciato l'Irlanda, all'Abbey Theatre andava in scena il dramma dal titolo *The Unicorn from the Stars*, scritto da Yeats assieme a Lady Gregory, i cui protagonisti principali sono un falegname, un giovane da lui allevato, di nome Martin, e padre John, un prete cattolico. L'opera mette in luce lo scontro di cui si diceva: quello cioè fra il desiderio di alcuni, in tal caso di Martin, di chiudersi nelle visioni fantastiche[47], e la persuasione del falegname e del prete, secondo cui le 'terribili' fantasticherie distrarrebbero il corso di un'esistenza esemplare basata sulla rettitudine, sul lavoro pratico, e sugli insegnamenti che avrebbero condotto il fedele all'incontro con Dio[48]. Il punto di vista degli autori propendeva dalla parte di Martin. Dalla lettura del dramma, è chiaro come il giovane protagonista rivendicasse prepotentemente la propria autorità sulla libertà dell'anima, sui più intimi pensieri, contro il parere di padre John: "My soul is my own and my mind is my mind… you have not authority over my thoughts" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 39). Mancini, uomo modesto, come il protagonista del dramma, poté per le qualità che abbiamo visto, rappresentare per il cenacolo di Dublino l'esempio palese del laicismo esaltato dalla figura di Martin. La nuova e più libera generazione di artisti irlandesi preferiva, difatti, ai freni imposti da alcuni esponenti della loro società, la bellezza dell'originalità nell'espressione del pensiero indipendente e libero da convenzionalismi obbligati, che influenzavano e frenavano, modificandole, le potenzialità dell'intelletto[49]. I convenzionalismi, nelle parole di Martin, sono così destinati a perire, l'anima, invece no: "We will destroy all that can perish! [...] The soul of man is of the imperishable substance of the stars!" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 92).

C'è un altro aspetto, infine, che può mettere in relazione Martin con Mancini: l'idea secondo cui la pace sperata può essere scoperta col "perenne vivere librato in un'atmosfera non terrena", magari "popolata solo di toni e di luce, e di qualche ricordo, mai di cose e di fatti reali" (Sciuti 1949, 24). Ne *Il piccolo savoiardo*, il quadretto della giovinezza di Mancini, il bimbo difatti stringe a sé il tamburello e regge un violino, e gode estatico la dolce melodia d'una musica interiore, con lo sguardo rivolto verso l'alto, come quando cerchiamo l'ispirazione o siamo presi da pensieri intimi e segreti. Dolce melodia intima e ulteriore, di cui pure Martin è partecipe ad un certo punto nel dramma del 1907: "That music, I must go nearer", confessa ad alta voce quel giovane nel momento della sua estasi, "… sweet, marvellous music […] high, joyous music" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 118). "This is what they call ecstasy", tenta poi di spiegare proprio Martin ai compagni che attoniti lo hanno assistito mentre lui 'viaggia' liberamente, e con piacere, nei meandri della sua fantasia: "But there is no word that can tell out very plain what it means. That freeing of the mind from its thoughts. Those wonders we know; when we put them into words, the words seem as little like them as blackberries are like the moon and sun" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 43).

Penso che le analogie fra Martin e Mancini possano spiegare il motivo per cui Yeats menzionasse nel 1908 il pittore italiano nel tentativo di difendere con

ostinazione il proprio e l'altrui operato per la rinascita della sperata Unità laica fra le arti in Irlanda[50]. "Every trouble of our Theatre in its earliest years, every attack on us in any years", scrive difatti Yeats, "has come directly or indirectly either from those who prefer Mr. Lafayette to Signor Mancini [*sic*], of from those who believe, from a defective education, that the writer who does not help some cause, who does not support some opinion, is but an idler, or if his air be too that, the supporter of some hidden wickedness" (Yeats 2005, 737). L'istintività esibita da Mancini nel momento della sua creazione, poté mostrare ai suoi modelli irlandesi i sentimenti più profondi e sinceri, quelli che rendono manifesta la bellezza della "primavera dell'umanità" (Sciuti 1949, 24). Mancini, difatti, scrive Saverio Kambo,

> [...] comincia [a dipingere] dapprima, scherzoso, bonario, quasi contro voglia. Poi, come la febbre della creazione poco a poco lo investe, si fa silenzioso e cupo; e il volto si trasforma e si contrae come per spasimo. Gli occhi sfavillano. Dalle labbra gli partono parole spezzate, mentr'egli, con foga giovanile, va e viene irrequieto dinanzi alla tela; lanciando nervosamente tre o quattro colpi di pennello, e ritraendosi a misurare il risultato […]. L'esaltazione cresce man mano che il lavoro procede. La battaglia è, ormai, tutta impegnata a fondo con la Natura, sfinge sublime e tremenda […]. E alfine, ansante ma non stanco, egli per quella mattina desiste dal lavoro; e la calma torna ben presto, e con essa il sorriso arguto e la parola umile e buona. (1922, 15)

Fra tutti gli irlandesi, fu Yeats, scrittore interessato e attratto dai misteriosi processi creativi dell'essere, a rimanere più colpito dal temperamento, dalle potenzialità artistiche e umane di Mancini[51]: "He is the man who splashes on great masses of colour, so that his painting looks at times as if it were modelled in rilief" (Yeats 2005, 737), scrive difatti all'amica Annie Horniman, il 6 ottobre 1907, raccontandole l'incontro con il pittore italiano. "He is a dear creature with no English. I met him last night", proseguiva Yeats nella missiva. La sera in questione fu forse quella in cui Mancini gli eseguì un ritratto a pastello su carta in poco più di un'ora "with great vehemence and costant cries" (Yeats 2005, 737); pastello che fu poi pubblicato da Yeats nel frontespizio del quinto volume di *The Collected Works in Verse & Prose of William Butler Yeats* (1908)[52]. La luce, protagonista anche qui del ritratto, è il mezzo attraverso cui Mancini fa emergere dal fondo buio l'esile figura dello scrittore, che sembra vibrare grazie al pastello steso sulla superficie con tocchi febbrili, brevi e intensi. "I am naturally delighted with him", scrive sempre Yeats all'amica, "as he presented me with a large chrysanthemum and with a vehement gesture of his lifted hand, and standing on tip toes cried out in French, 'The Master is very tall – very beautiful' " (Yeats 2005, 737).

3. *William Butler Yeats, Antonio Mancini, e la 'sprezzatura'*

Penso che l'abilità e l'originalità creativa di Mancini, il gesto irresoluto e subitaneo del pennello intriso di colore e poi steso sulla tela con veemenza, o

quello del pastello che strisciando con forza sulla superficie creava effetti palpitanti "di misteriosità incantevoli" (Kambo 1922, 14), convinse Yeats nell'idea che l'arte dell'italiano fosse un valido esempio di quella *sprezzatura* cortese di cui Baldassarre Castiglione parlò ne *Il Cortegiano*. Nel 1907, a seguito di un viaggio in Italia con Lady Gregory che segnerà per sempre la sua esistenza, Yeats lesse con passione la traduzione del libro di Castiglione, e ne trasse pensieri, speranze, e modelli, per la tanto agognata Unità fra le arti in Irlanda[53]. Fu soprattutto la *sprezzatura* e le sue 'applicazioni' in arte, ad averlo profondamente incuriosito. Se da un lato, difatti, Yeats considera la *sprezzatura* in rapporto agli artisti in un saggio dal titolo *Poetry and Tradition*, che fu pubblicato nell'agosto del 1907, poche settimane prima dell'arrivo di Mancini in Irlanda[54], dall'altro negli anni a venire tenterà di studiarla in rapporto alla poesia[55].

Nelle *cose* fatte "senza fatica e quasi senza pensarvi" (questa fu la spiegazione del termine 'sprezzatura' data da Castiglione), in cui l'individuo mostra l'autonomia rispetto a regole imposte da fonti esterne (la "self-possession" di cui Yeats parla nel 1907), Mancini svelò agli amici irlandesi le "sensible impressions of the free mind" (Yeats 1912, 127): *impressioni* che potevano esser scorte nella deliberata schiettezza del pittore d'esprimere con libertà le diverse *forme* che possono nascere dal confronto con se stesso e con l'*altro*, oppure nel preferire l'emozione innata alle ottusità, alle confuse generalizzazioni. "In life courtesy and self-possession", scrive difatti Yeats, "are the sensible impressions of the free mind, for both arise out of a deliberate shaping of all things, and from never being swept away, whatever the emotion, into confusion or dulness" (Yeats 1912, 127). Mancini, un pittore sempre alla ricerca di un "mysterious process like that of the Evil Eye" (Gregory 1921, 93), esaltava attraverso uno stile che preferisce all'*affettazione* – a cui Castiglione opponeva la *sprezzatura* –, la bellezza sincera, di cuore, del gesto libero da convenzioni imposte da fonti esterne; ma esaltava anche, e sorprendentemente in accordo con le speranze di Yeats nel 1907, l'elogio della vita in tutte le sue *forme*[56].

Il "touch of extravagance, of irony, of surprise" (Yeats 1912, 129), esibito da Mancini in diverse occasioni durante il soggiorno a Dublino, rivelò agli irlandesi la "freedom of self-delight" che è compagna, sempre secondo Yeats, di quella "gioiosa fantasia" che vive nel cuore e nell'arte dell'uomo ch'è consapevole dell'irriducibile *verità* dell'esistenza. "This joy […] remains in the hands and in the tongue of the artist", scrive Yeats nel saggio sulla poesia e la tradizione, "but with his eyes he enters upon a submissive, sorrowful contemplation of the great irremediable things" (Yeats 1912, 129-130).

Quest'ultimo pensiero sull'artista Creatore e la sua opera, fornisce a parer mio una chiave attraverso cui è possibile comprendere non solo i quadri giovanili di Mancini dove poveri bambini mostrano la tristezza, il dolore, oppure la gioia dell'ordinaria quotidianità; ma soprattutto è di aiuto per la lettura del dipinto donato alla Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane da John Singer Sargent, dal titolo *The Maker of Figures* (vedi Tavola 10). Sargent, artista

chiave per la fortuna di Mancini nel mondo anglo-americano, aveva individuato nell'arte del pittore italiano il simbolo di una umanità da promuovere fra quanti preferivano ai freni imposti dall'educazione rigida, la bellezza del sentimento puro e sincero: "Dappresso alle audacie [pittoriche] magnifiche", scrive a tal proposito Kambo contemplando la pittura di Mancini, "è tutta un'ondata di calda sincerità, di profonde convinzioni, d'intensa passione. Non per nulla il Maestro usa spesso ripetere che la sincerità, nell'arte come nella vita, è, prima o poi, il segreto della vittoria" (Kambo 1922, 13). Sargent, commosso dall'umanità di Mancini, oltre a regalare un'opera alla galleria di Dublino, scelta tra le varie tele di pittori italiani di sua proprietà[57], fu probabilmente il mediatore per l'acquisto di un'altra, stavolta raffigurante San Giovanni Battista, fra l'amica Ms Hunter, proprietaria del quadro, e il Museum of Fine Arts di Boston (luogo nel quale l'opera è tutt'oggi custodita[58]), confessando che quel dipinto "would be one of the very best pictures as far as better painting is concerned in the museum" (Hiesinger 2007, 106).

The Maker of Figures ritrae l'amato padre di Mancini nelle vesti di 'figurinaio', l'umile artigiano di figurine di gesso che negli inverni rigidi stava chiuso nella bottega a produrre in serie quelle suppellettili poi vendute da ambulante nelle stagioni più miti. Come nei ritratti irlandesi, Mancini costruisce le forme attraverso la luce dando corpo e materia al 'figurinaio' – circondato da un ambiente domestico assai modesto – e soprattutto ai gessi, candidi, che l'uomo tiene affettuosamente stretti a sé. Il quadro, in accordo con quanto diceva Yeats sull'artista Creatore, è così di invito alla contemplazione di una dolorosa umiltà che il 'figurinaio' rende grande, come grande è la sua arte – cioè i suoi gessi, fonte per lui di sostentamento quotidiano –, e infine bella, come belli sono i fiori che, recisi, figurano lì quali unici e parchi compagni di vita.

Note

[1] Ringrazio Fiorenzo Fantaccini per avermi aiutato nella fasi cruciali del saggio e per aver permesso la sua pubblicazione; grazie a Lorenzo Gnocchi che ha pazientemente e più volte con me discusso sull'operato di Mancini in Irlanda, nonché supervisionato lo scritto. Ringrazio poi Emanuela Santoro e Marino Gallo, per la gentilezza con cui hanno messo a disposizione i documenti di loro proprietà, e infine Giovanna Bestagini Bonomi.

[2] I primi contatti fra Sargent e Mancini coinciderebbero con il secondo soggiorno parigino di quest'ultimo tra il marzo 1877 e il maggio del '78. In quel periodo, Mancini, per il tramite, fra gli altri, del pittore italiano Giuseppe De Nittis, entra in contatto con alcune personalità importanti del mondo artistico e letterario parigino – (cfr. Ozzòla 1931, 710): "A Parigi li ho conosciuto tutti, io [Mancini]. Sargent e Paul Bourget mi portavano dappertutto. Ho conosciuto Boldini, De Nittis, Manet, Degas e tanti altri". Di recente Manuel Carrera ha ricostruito i rapporti tra Mancini e Sargent nel periodo in cui l'italiano fu a Londra per eseguire un importante numero di ritratti ad esponenti della società edoardiana (Carrera 2012, 153-180).

[3] Mancini fu in Irlanda perché incoraggiato proprio da Hugh Lane, col quale aveva stretto amicizia a Londra nel 1902 quando frequentava Sargent e alcuni esponenti della famiglia Hunter, amici di Lane (Cecchi 1966, 225-226). Dopo quel primo incontro, Mancini fu in contatto con Lane a Roma nel dicembre del 1904, occasione nella quale gli eseguì il ritratto,

oggi nelle collezioni della National Gallery di Londra. Da un documento conservato nelle carte degli eredi di Mancini, inoltre, sappiamo che in quell'occasione Lane offrì al pittore una buona somma di danaro per velocizzare la conclusione di uno di tre quadri che in prima istanza sarebbero dovuti entrare a far parte della Dublin City Gallery. Scrive Mancini a Sargent nel 1904: "Il Gentilissimo Signor Lane […] pensò di volermi aiutare lasciandomi 50 lire cinquanta sterline per finire un dipinto. Volle anche accertarmi che l'altri due li terminassi per lui. I tre lavori sarebbero a suo dire per la Galleria Nazionale di Dublino Irlanda acquistati, ed esposti e col pagamento ripeto di lire 150 sterline i 3 lavori medesimi" (lettera di Mancini a Sargent, da Roma, del 4 dicembre 1904 [collezione privata], trascritta in Santoro 1976-1977, 251-253). Non è chiaro quali fossero i tre dipinti cui fa Mancini accenna nella missiva; certo è che al momento della sua apertura, nel 1908, la Dublin City Gallery aveva tra le sue collezioni nove opere dell'italiano, le quali coprivano l'intera carriera del pittore: da *La Douane*, quadro che raffigura un'elegante giovane borghese pronta per un viaggio, dipinto negli anni Settanta, al più recente *Ritratto del Marchese Giorgio Capranica del Grillo* (1889), committente e amico di Mancini (per la lista completa delle opere di Mancini esposte nella Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, si veda Gwynn 1961, 31-50). Sui rapporti fra Mancini e Lane segnalo anche le sette lettere inviate fra l'aprile del 1907 e il 1909 dal pittore italiano all'irlandese, conservate presso la National Library of Ireland (Ms. 27,764).

[4] William Wetmore Story e il figlio Thomas Waldo erano scultori americani attivi a Roma, dove il primo era giunto alla metà del secolo. I due avevano lo studio in via San Martino della Battaglia al Macao, e la casa all'ultimo piano di Palazzo Barberini. A Thomas Waldo Story, Mancini eseguì un ritratto (forse all'inizio degli anni Novanta), oggi disperso. Gli Story erano un punto di riferimento per gli americani di passaggio o residenti a Roma. Nel 1883 Sargent, arrivato in città, introduse con molta probabilità gli Story a Mancini, con i quali rimase in contatto almeno fino al primo decennio del Novecento. Sugli Story e Roma si vedano Vance 1989,189-193; Lawrence 2009, 1, 67-85; sui rapporti tra Mancini e gli Story cfr. Carrera 2012, 153-154, nonché un gruppo di lettere inviate da Mancini agli Story (soprattutto a Waldo), trascritte in Santoro 1976-1977, 189-190, 201-202, 206-210, 220-225, 235-238, 245-247.

[5] Mancini aveva eseguito un ritratto a Daniel Curtis attorno al 1886 (il ritratto, oggi custodito in una collezione privata, è pubblicato in McCauley, Chong, Mamoli Zorzi, Lingner 2004, 55, n. 39); con lui, e con il figlio Ralph, pittore, aveva intrattenuto una fitta corrispondenza fino ai primi anni Novanta (vedi Santoro 1976-1977, 187-189, 190-191, 192-194, 211-215, 230-234).

[6] Sulla famiglia Gardner, cfr. McCauley, Chong, Mamoli Zorzi, Lingner 2004, in particolare 238-239. Nel settembre del 1884, risulta che Mancini avesse spedito a Isabella Stewart Gardner da Roma una cassa contenente un dipinto a olio, forse *The Stendard Bearer of the Harvest Festival*, ancor oggi parte dell'Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum di Boston (vedi Santoro 1976-1977, 187).

[7] Il conte Cahen, di origini belghe ma residente a Parigi, fu un musicista e un appassionato viaggiatore amante dell'Italia; fu protettore di Mancini fin dai tempi della sua giovinezza artistica a Napoli, negli anni Settanta (vedi Cecchi 1966, 39 ss.).

[8] Sui rapporti fra Mancini e l'Olanda vedi Pennok 1987; sui quadri di Mancini della collezione di Mesdag, cfr. F. Leeman, H. Pennok, S. de Bodt 1996, 254-266.

[9] Sui rapporti fra Mancini e Messinger vedi Cecchi 1966, 223 ss.

[10] Molte di queste carte sono state trascritte da Emanuela Santoro nella sua tesi di laurea (Santoro 1976-1977).

[11] La migliore guida per la biografia di Mancini è Cecchi 1966.

[12] "La squisitezza del gent. animo e più nobile cuore del sign. Daniele Curtis", scriveva a tal proposito Mancini, da Roma, nel febbraio del 1891 a Waldo Story, "à conservato per me un'affezzione [sic] caritatevolissima" (lettera trascritta in Santoro, 1976-1977, 220). In un'altra occasione Mancini scrive, stavolta a Mesdag, dopo che questi gli aveva fatto richiesta d'un numero importante di dipinti: "Sempre ò inteso con piacere che le sue marine all'Esposizione Universale di Parigi piacquero moltissimo, non ò avuto ancora la fortuna di vederne alcuna

se mi potessero inviare qualche fotografia ne sarei oltremodo felice e riconoscente" (lettera di Mancini a Mesdag, da Roma, del 9 gennaio 1890, trascritta in Santoro 1976-1977, 206).

[13] Non sono molti i pensieri di Mancini sull'Irlanda: le uniche testimonianze scritte del pittore sul soggiorno a Dublino, sono alcuni appunti, oggi custoditi tre le carte degli eredi, poi trascritti in Santoro 1976-1977, 86-87, e 253-256. L'unico che comunque riporta qualche informazione più dettagliata sul soggiorno di Mancini in Irlanda è Dario Cecchi 1966, 228-230. Più di recente Ulrich W. Hiesinger ha brevemente considerato il soggiorno di Mancini in Irlanda in occasione di una mostra a lui dedicata a Philadelphia (vedi Hiesinger 2007, 88-90).

[14] "Io non avrei mai creduto", scrive Mancini dopo il suo soggiorno in Irlanda, "senza averlo veduto questo spettacolo supremo dell'arte e degli artisti [irlandesi], con freddo da lupi con questo tempo da cani ladro chiuso come in prigione col calore dei sentimenti dell'arte e del sole che dispare e riappare" (Santoro 1976-1977, 87).

[15] Scrive difatti Lady Gregory: "He would explain in almost incomprehensible French, though sometimes turning to little less comprehensible Italian" (Gregory 1921, 92).

[16] Vedi Cecchi 1966, 228-230.

[17] Yeats, nelle lettere agli amici del tempo in cui Mancini fu a Dublino, chiamava il Nostro erroneamente "Manchini": vedi Kelly, Schuchard 2005, 737, 754.

[18] Scrive William Butler Yeats all'amica Annie Horniman, il 6 ottobre 1907: "He [Mancini] has come to paint Lady Gregory for Hugh Lane's new Gallery" (lettera trascritta in Kelly, Schuchard 2005, 735-738).

[19] Il ritratto a pastello di William Butler Yeats, di cui non sono riuscito a trovare l'attuale ubicazione, fu pubblicato nel frontespizio del quinto volume di *The Collected Works in Verse & Prose of William Butler Yeats* (1908); negli altri volumi, e sempre nel frontespizio, figuravano i ritratti di Yeats eseguiti da John Singer Sargent (fatto per sostituire quello di Augustus John che non piacque a Yeats e agli amici), da Charles Shannon, e da John Butler Yeats (cfr. Kelly, Schuchard 2005, LXXIV). Fra le collezioni della Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, risultano anche due ulteriori ritratti eseguiti con tutta probabilità da Mancini durante il suo soggiorno irlandese: quello di E. P. Alabaster, esperto d'arte (a matita su carta), e quello del "Signor Valero", cantante d'opera (olio su tela).

[20] Cecchi 1966, 228-229.

[21] "Lady Gregory ieri sera mi condusse col nepote [Hugh Lane] all'Hotel Metropolitaine a cena, e poi al Teatro Nazionale di Dublino con soggetto di poveri straccioni irlandesi, poemi di tradizioni loro".

[22] Cecchi 1966, 230. In un documento scritto nei momenti passati in solitudine al Kilworth Hotel, e riprodotto in Santoro 1976-1977, 254, Mancini scrive: "Dunque ebbi 4000 franchi per un grande ritratto del Signor Lane a Roma eseguito ed ora a Londra presso lo studio d'un pittore che qui ò ricevuto l'onore di conoscere. Il Signor Orpen si pronunzia è il Signor Orpen giovane e con moglie e figli ora è qui a Dublino. Il Signor Orpen si chiama ma ignoro come si scriva il nome dell'irlandese artista che anche à esposto dei bei suoi dipinti fra tutti bravi ed eccellenti artisti Irlandesi come Levery [sic] – come Schannon [sic] ed altri tanti Maestri che ignoro il nome, ma non i bellissimi lavori esposti in questi immensi saloni irlandesi". Mancini fa riferimento a John Lavery, ritrattista nato a Belfast ed interessato alla pittura 'di genere', e a Charles Heslewood Shannon, pittore inglese della così chiamata 'Scuola di Glasgow'. Nel catalogo della Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane appartenuto a Mancini, oggi di proprietà dei suoi eredi, il pittore italiano ha scritto in corrispondenza dell'opera di Lavery fra le collezioni di quella galleria: "In persona l'ho conosciuto a Londra" (informazione riportata in Santoro 1976-1977, nota 63, 297); in corrispondenza invece del nome e delle relativa opera di Shannon, Mancini scrive: "O' conosciuto l'autore nel suo studio a Londra, conosciuto lui, la figlia, la moglie a Londra suo studio" (Santoro 1976-1977, nota 64, 297).

[23] Vedi Rossi 1974, 153. Oltre a quelle di Rossi e Mancini, fra le iniziali che figuravano nella corteccia del grande albero a Coole Park, v'erano quelle di William Butler Yeats, George

Bernard Shaw, George W. Russell, Douglas Hyde, Sean O'Casey, e George Moore. Lady Gregory aveva fatto firmare a Mancini anche un ventaglio, "in ivory and white brocade", nel quale figuravano, fra gli altri, i nomi di Sir Edwin Arnold, Henry James, Theodore Roosevelt, Lecky, Froude, John Morley, William Orpen, Paul Bourget, Mark Twain, Horace Plunkett, Thomas Hardy, Ellen Terry, Augustus John, Kipling, Nansen, Bernard Shaw, Jack Yeats, Edward Martyn, John Synge, John Eglinton, Sean O'Casey e George Moore (Coxhead 1966, 31).

[24] Il ritratto di Lane dipinto da Sargent fu commissionato dalla Dublin Public Commission nel 1906 (vedi Ormond, Kilmurray 2003, 178-180), e quello di Yeats, dallo stesso scrittore. Yeats, difatti, dopo aver deciso di non pubblicare nel frontespizio del primo volume di *The Collected Works in Verse & Prose of William Butler Yeats* il ritratto a lui eseguito da Augustus John nel dicembre del 1907, chiese a Sargent di fargliene uno, presumibilmente nei primi del 1908 (vedi Kelly, Schuchard 2005, LXXIV).

[25] Vedi Fantaccini 2009.

[26] Dico *erroneamente* poiché Mancini non amava gli impressionisti. Leandro Ozzola, in un articolo su Mancini del 1931, dice difatti che il Nostro pittore "non era un ammiratore dell'Impressionismo francese, né condivideva naturalmente l'adorazione che gli artisti di quel tempo tributavano ai massimi rappresentanti di quella scuola" (Ozzola 1931, 709). Lo stile di Mancini fu avvicinato a quello dei pittori impressionisti prima da Virginio Guzzi (1943, 14-15), e poi da Roberto Longhi nella prefazione al libro sulla storia dell'Impressionismo di John Rewald, del 1949 (poi ristampata in Longhi 1984, 1-24, col titolo *L'Impressionismo e il gusto degli italiani*). Guzzi, in particolare, scrive: "La verità è che Mancini non aveva alcuna voglia di farsi assorbire da quei pittori [impressionisti] ch'ebbe un giorno a giudicare (e non diciamo a ragione) 'nu poco presuntuosi'"; e prosegue: "L'impressionismo, va bene. Ma cos'è quell'amore per Rembrandt se non un persistere e un nuovo atteggiarsi, nel suo gusto, del luministico Seicento napoletano? E quell'amore per Tiziano vecchio? E ricorrere d'altra parte col pensiero a un Velazquez, a un Franz Hals non voleva dire l'intenzione di scavalcare superbamente i vicini e rifarsi, come aveva fatto un Manet, alle fonti, per attingervi quella sensualità coloristica e quella rapidità, quella concisione e scoperta sintassi costruttiva che sembravano essere i modi naturali della pittura moderna?".

[27] Vedi i quadri *Lo scolaro povero* (1875), *Lo studio* (1875 c.ca), e *Bambina che legge* (1878), riprodotti in Mantura, Di Majo 1991, n. 6, 8, 14.

[28] Vedi *Un ragazzo povero con una statuetta*, del 1875-1878 (Mantura, Di Majo 1991, n. 15).

[29] Sui ritratti di scugnizzi con strumenti musicali vedi anche *Scugnizzo con chitarra* (1877), e *Saltimbanchi con violino e chitarra* (1877) riprodotti in Serafini 2013, n. 58, 59.

[30] "Dimandane al Mancini e a' que' suoi fanciulli che ascendono la corda del funambolo, che si smezzano una crosta di pane, che, precoci d'ingegno e rachitici di fibra, cercano ingannar la fame tra gli scartafacci della scuola". Sull'interpretazione di un gruppo di quadri di Mancini, raffiguranti gli *scugnizzi*, eseguiti nella giovinezza del pittore, rimando anche al saggio di Alfano 2005, 76-103.

[31] Vedi *La servetta* (1885-1890), *Donna con calamaio* (1885-1890), *Ritratto di Elvira Santini* (1887), pubblicati in Mantura, Di Majo 1991, n. 23, 24, 26.

[32] Mi riferisco al ritratto di Thomas Waldo Story (vedi nota 4) dipinto probabilmente da Mancini all'inizio degli anni Novanta, e non rintracciato.

[33] Esistono altre fotografie che mostrano il procedimento tramite il quale Mancini eseguiva i ritratti, come la fotografia che ritrae le modelle de *Il paggio nero* (quadro dipinto fra il 1912 e il 1918) nello studio di Mancini improvvisato nella Villa Jacobini, a Frascati, di proprietà del committente francese Fernand Du Chène De Vère, e un'altra che invece raffigura Mancini nello studio, attorno al 1927, che ritrae il nipote Alfredo (rispettivamente tav. 44 e 52 in Cecchi 1966).

[34] I documenti ci informano che Mancini aveva eseguito due ritratti di Lady Gregory: il primo durante le settimane trascorse a Dublino, e qui riprodotto; e l'altro, a Londra nel dicembre del 1907. Mancini volle fare un secondo ritratto a Lady Gregory poiché non era soddisfatto

del risultato ottenuto nel primo. In una lettera di Yeats a Lady Gregory, del 5 dicembre 1907 (trascritta in Kelly, Schuchard 2005, 787), egli avverte l'amica che "Lane was round to day about Mancini readiness to do you for £50. I suppose he has written & that you will go to London. I think Lane thought you should go before Mancini started on a round of visits he has planned". Lady Gregory, dal canto suo, confessa a Lane, in una lettera di quei giorni (in parte trascritta in Kelly, Schuchard 2005, nota 5, 788), che il viaggio da Dublino a Londra l'aveva molto stancata; chiede, inoltre, all'amico informazioni su Mancini: "If he [Mancini] is not ready for my sittings, prehaps you cd [sic] let me have a *wire early* tomorrow – I told Yeats to ask you this if he shd [sic] see you tonight". Il secondo ritratto di Lady Gregory, di cui non sono riuscito a trovare l'attuale collocazione né una riproduzione fotografica, fu da lei definito di grande bellezza (vedi Gregory 1921, 92-93).

[35] Vedi Coxhead 1966, 131-132.

[36] Vedi nota 42.

[37] Sul ritratto di Lady Gregory, vedi, in particolare, De Petris 2004, 37-48.

[38] Riporto l'intero passo in cui Lady Gregory racconta la sua seduta: "I sat in a high chair in an old black dress, in front of a brown curtain lent by Miss Purser. Mancini set up a frame in front of me. He pinned many threads to this, crossing one another; their number increased from day to day, becoming a close network. The canvas on which he painted was crossed very little by little with a like network. This […] was not his own method, but had been the method of some great master. Having put up a new thread or two he would go to the very end of the long room, look at me through my net, then begin a hurried walk which turn to a quick trot, his brush aimed at some feature, eye or eyebrow, the last steps would be a rush, then I needed courage to sit still. But the hand holding the brush always swerved at the last moment to the canvas, and there in its appropriate place, between its threads, the paint would be laid on and the retreat would begin" (Gregory 1921, 92).

[39] I quadri di Tiziano sono riprodotti in Phillips 2008, 145, 147.

[40] Vedi Fantaccini 2009, 37-40.

[41] Scrive Emilio Zanzi che la "perfetta distribuzione delle luci" da parte del pittore, "fa vivere ogni cosa": "L'artista italiano anche nelle piccole cose sa scoprire e far valere l'anima di chi le ha confezionate, o le possiede" (10)

[42] Si leggano le considerazioni che Mancini sulla vitalità luministica dei pittori del Sud e la freddezza di quella degli artisti del Nord: il brano, appuntato in un foglio custodito presso gli eredi, è trascritto in Santoro 1976-1977, 254-255: "E dove che amano gli antichi – Velazquez – che dire dei Veneziani e dei Spagnuoli od Italiani creati tutti dalla luce sprofondano in incarnata colorazione smaltata di toni caldi palpitanti di sangue e di nervi i più sentiti per il bello e il vero lontano qui non piacere le note delle nebbie fitte che solamente a dipingere quelle malinconie un pittore e la modella che posa morirebbero dalla umidità od al freddo ed allora quanto a ragione la tradizionale arte inglese dei suoi maestri 1900 e che rivedevo con eroi che storpia i ritratti condannati tutti da quegli illustri Signori che posavano assurdi belli e vani se l'Artista celebre che li dipingeva per la sua gloria di riconosciuta abilità non li dominava tutti a tradurli per la sua pittura saporita come nel Reynolds, e Guinsbury, o Laurens ecc...ecc... Infine io lo stimo ed ammiro ma che a differenza di quei tempi all'opposto annichilito povero come oggi si fa da certi un'arte da nonsochi".

[43] Cfr. la poesia di Yeats intitolata *The Municipal Gallery Re-Visited* (1937): "Mancini's portrait of Augusta Gregory, / 'Greatest since Rembradt', according to John Synge".

[44] John Butler Yeats aveva del resto fatto un ritratto a Mancini a matita su carta, oggi conservato tra le collezioni della Sligo Municipal Art Collection; il disegno è pubblicato in Murphy, Pyle, Woods 2003, 35.

[45] Vedi Sciuti 1947, 24.

[46] Vedi Runcini 2001, 234.

[47] Martin, una volta provata la bellezza della *fantasticheria*, si chiede con insistenza nel dramma: "How can I get back to that place?" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 32).

[48] Il prete, alla domanda di Martin, lo ammoniva come segue: "You must not go back, you must not think of doing that. That life of vision, of contemplation, is a terrible fate, for it has far more temptation in than the common life". E il falegname, dal canto suo, così si rivolge a Martin: "But put it out of your mind. There is no man doing business that can keep two things in his head" (Gregory, Yeats 1908, 36).

[49] Vedi Runcini 2001, 231-232.

[50] Vedi Fantaccini 2009, 18.

[51] Nel dicembre del 1907, Yeats mostrò a Ralph Shirley, esperto di occultismo, una riproduzione fotografica del ritratto che Mancini aveva eseguito a Lady Gregory pochi mesi prima, ed ebbe la conferma che "those Jupiter and Scorpio people", fra cui anche Mancini, "have such a grand way with them" (Kelly, Schuchard 2005, n. 12, 796).

[52] Gregory 1921, 93: "The pastel which I still have", raccontava Yeats a Lady Gregory a proposito di quel pastello, "was an evening's work. Mancini put his usual grill of threads where the picture was to be and another grill of threads corresponding exactly with it in front of me. He did not know anything about me, we had no language in common, and he worked for an hour without interest or inspiration. Then I remembered a story of Lane's. Mancini, Italian peasant as he was, believed that he would catch any illness or deformity of those whom he met. He was not thinking of microbes, but of some mysterious process like that of the Evil Eye. He had just been painting someone who had lost a leg, and whose cork leg he believed was having a numbing effect on his own. He worried Lane with his terror – `My leg is losing all power of sensation´, he would say at intervals. The thought of this story made me burst into laughter, and Mancini began to draw with great excitement and rapidity".

[53] Vedi Fantaccini 2009, 33-45.

[54] Vedi Yeats 1912, 124.

[55] Vedi Fantaccini 2009, 44.

[56] Vedi Yeats 1912, 124: "Three types of men have made all beautiful things, Aristocracies have made beautiful manner, because their place in the world puts them above the fear of life, and the countrymen have made beautiful stories and beliefs, because they have nothing to lose and so do not fear, and the artists have made all the rest, because Providence has filled them with *recklessness*".

[57] Jacques-Émile Blanche visitò lo studio di Sargent a Londra nei primi del Novecento e vide che in possesso del pittore, fra gli italiani, c'erano "de toiles de Mancini, de Boldini, de Morelli" (Blanche 1928, 62).

[58] Il *San Giovanni Battista* (1901-1902) di Mancini è riprodotto in Hiesinger, 2007, Tavola 37.

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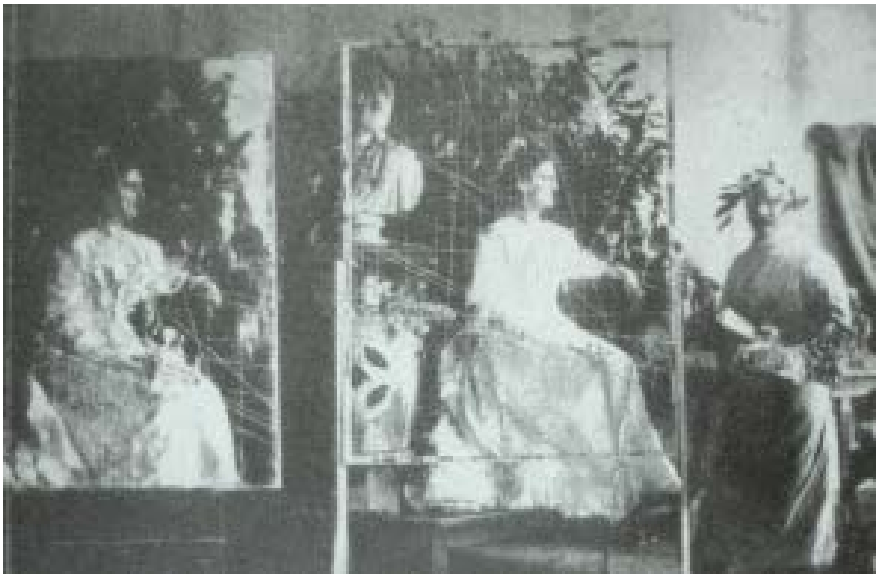
1. John Singer Sargent, *Antonio Mancini*, 1902, olio su tela, 67 x 50,5 cm, Roma, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

2. Antonio Mancini, *Ritratto di Lady Augusta Gregory*, 1907, olio su tela, 74 x 57 cm, Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane

3. Antonio Mancini, *Ritratto di Ruth Shine*, 1907, olio su tela, 141 x 109 cm, Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane



4. Antonio Mancini a Dublino che sta lavorando al ritratto di Ruth Shine, al centro, in posa dietro alla graticola. Bologna, collezione privata

5. Antonio Mancini, *Ritratto di William Butler Yeats*, 1907, pastello su carta, da *The Collected Works in Verse & Prose of William Butler Yeats*, volume V, Stradford-on-Avon, Shakespeare Head Press, 1908

6. Antonio Mancini, *Autoritratto*, 1907, pastello su carta, 55,9 x 40,6 cm,
Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane

7. Antonio Mancini, *Autoritratto*, 1907, pastello su carta, 54,6 x 41,9 cm, Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane

8. Antonio Mancini, *Scugnizzo che legge*, 1873, olio su tela, 54 x 44 cm, Milano, collezione privata

9. Antonio Mancini, *Il piccolo savoiardo*, c. 1875, olio su tela, da F. Petriccione, Mancini, Milano, Edizioni dell'Esame, 1949, tav. XI

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Polifonia nelle antologie di W.B. Yeats: il dialogo complesso tra folklore e letteratura

Vito Carrassi
Università degli Studi di Bari (<vito.carrassi@uniba.it>)

Abstract:

Compiling and publishing a folk narrative anthology is anything but a trivial, neutral undertaking, especially if this is set in a period of great literary and cultural fervour as was the late nineteenth century in Ireland. With his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) and *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892) W.B. Yeats gives rise to a complex narrative system in which, necessarily, heterogeneous, if not contradictory voices and points of view meet, and the editor's task is precisely to make this polyphony work. In the anthologized stories one observes the overlapping and interweaving of narrative levels that reflect a wide range of ideas, beliefs, knowledge, values from which emerges a picture of cultural and social Irish stratification, as well as of relationships being established between the lower and ruling classes, folklore and literature, orality and literacy. After examining in general the folk narrative anthology as an inherently polyphonic object, this essay proposes a specific reading of the Yeatsian collections, focusing in particular on the paratextual apparatus, namely on the borders, the frames of the text – where interactions take place between several narrative levels, as well as historical, cultural, and social meanings – in order to identify, if possible, elements of unity and coherence in a system constitutively plurivocal and open to a variety of interpretations.

Keywords: anthology, folklore, Irish Revival, storytelling, W.B. Yeats

Quando, nel 1888, William Butler Yeats pubblica, in veste di *editor*, l'antologia intitolata *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* dà alla luce un'opera di straordinaria complessità, per quanto a prima vista possa suscitare un'impressione ben diversa. Dietro un'apparente immediatezza e linearità essa cela infatti una molteplicità e varietà di meccanismi, moventi, voci, punti di vista e soprattutto interazioni che ne fanno un campo di studio tanto intrigante quanto insidioso. La mia potrà sembrare una pretesa eccessiva, ma ritengo che la raccolta yeatsiana (insieme alla successiva *Irish Fairy Tales*, del 1892) costituisca un osservatorio privilegiato dal quale e tramite il quale farsi un'idea

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non solo del contesto letterario e più ampiamente culturale dell'Irlanda di fine Ottocento, ma direi anche, in retrospettiva, di quasi un secolo di storia irlandese – per lo meno nel campo dei rapporti tra folklore e letteratura[1] –, una storia che tale opera, sostanzialmente, rispecchia e riassume in maniera emblematica, sia pure dallo specifico e soggettivo punto di vista del suo autore (che, d'altra parte, non è certo una figura secondaria nel contesto in questione[2]).

In effetti, è proprio dalla parola 'autore' che possiamo partire per interrogarci sulla natura stessa di un'antologia narrativa e, di conseguenza, sui processi che essa mette in moto, in maniera esplicita o, più spesso, implicita. Un'antologia comporta, giocoforza, la coesistenza di elementi – nel nostro caso racconti[3] – più o meno estranei l'uno all'altro che solo l'atto consapevole e mirato del suo autore, se così è lecito chiamarlo, mette l'uno accanto all'altro per formare un insieme più o meno omogeneo. Autore, tuttavia, può essere più correttamente definito chi, per le ragioni più disparate, decida a un certo punto di raccogliere in un unico volume racconti 'propri' (o poesie o drammi o altro ancora) in precedenza pubblicati separatamente (magari accanto a racconti altrui in antologie comprendenti testi di più autori). Che dire invece di chi si dedica alla raccolta e alla pubblicazione di racconti scritti e/o narrati da altri? Si può ancora parlare di autore? O meglio, a chi ascrivere – se è possibile – la paternità di un'antologia che si compone di narrazioni attribuibili a un numero più o meno cospicuo di individualità distinte (peraltro non sempre identificabili)?

Chiariamo subito un concetto. Qui non si parla di antologia *tout court*, bensì di quel genere di raccolta narrativa i cui testi possiamo definire di provenienza orale/popolare, diciamo pure 'folklorica' (aggettivo che uso con cognizione di causa, malgrado le distorsioni e gli equivoci cui ha dato origine nella nostra lingua[4]), e che sono stati riportati e assemblati in forma scritta e più o meno fedele all'originale da uno o più individui afferenti a un'*élite* culturale. Antesignani di tale genere, al contempo etnografico e letterario, sono ovviamente i fratelli Grimm, con il loro *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, la cui prima edizione risale al 1812 e che rappresenta solo il primo (ma anche più universalmente conosciuto) episodio di una lunga e articolata vicenda che, ispirata dalla svolta culturale coincisa con il Romanticismo e il conseguente fiorire di ideali e movimenti di riscossa patriottica e di riscoperta delle proprie radici 'nazionali' (in opposizione a un razionalismo e un cosmopolitismo di matrice illuministica), si dipana lungo l'intero arco del XIX secolo, interessando la gran parte dei paesi europei. Ciò che ne deriva è un incontro senza precedenti – sia sul piano quantitativo, sia su quello qualitativo – tra popolo (inteso più che altro come classe contadina) e ceti dirigenti e intellettuali, e dunque tra retaggio folklorico e cultura letteraria, tra oralità popolare e scrittura erudita, un incontro che comporta tutta una serie di conseguenze politiche, sociali, culturali, ma che, per quanto ci riguarda, è innanzitutto luogo e fucina di complessità, sia in senso sincronico – in quanto implica il confronto e la valutazione delle reciproche distanze e differenze fra compagini

umane socialmente e culturalmente stratificate che coesistono all'interno di un medesimo contesto spazio-temporale – sia in senso diacronico – in quanto la tradizione orale veicolata dal popolo-narratore permette, almeno teoricamente, di ritornare al passato più o meno lontano (e più o meno mitizzato) in cui si presume che il racconto sia stato creato e di ricostruire così un pezzo della propria storia (nazionale e/o locale).

Per intendere il tipo di complessità che caratterizza un'antologia folklorica, mi pare opportuno richiamare un concetto portato alla ribalta da Michail Bachtin, "polifonia", benché lo studioso russo lo applichi più propriamente al romanzo e alla parola romanzesca[5]. Orbene, il termine polifonia, a stretto rigor di etimologia (e nella sua più comune accezione musicale), rimanda a una 'molteplicità simultanea di suoni', una molteplicità che innanzitutto – e in questo mi attengo al ragionamento di Bachtin – si contraddistingue per la sua intrinseca e sostanziale dialogicità[6] e si contrappone all'unilateralità e univocità del monologo, con la conseguenza di produrre una visione del mondo plurale e pluralista che si esprime, appunto, in virtù di una pluralità di suoni, ossia di voci, di punti di vista che, consapevolmente o meno, delineano un quadro più complesso – e più problematico – della realtà di quello che può essere elaborato da un punto di vista singolare, per quanto sfaccettato, articolato e perfino contraddittorio possa essere il suo spettro d'osservazione[7].

Un'antologia rappresenta un luogo intrinsecamente polifonico, e tanto più lo è un'antologia che nasce con l'intento programmatico di raccogliere e far conoscere a un pubblico più vasto e più 'colto' una produzione narrativa fino a quel momento confinata nell'ambito più circoscritto e più 'umile' della tradizione orale tenuta in vita dalle classi popolari e, più in particolare, da coloro che preservano e rinnovano l'antico e fondamentale rito dello *storytelling*, insieme a tutto il corredo di miti, credenze, saperi, valori che attraverso di esso si tramanda. Esemplare, in tal senso, è ciò che scrive Yeats nell'"Introduction" di *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, da cui emerge pienamente la sua prioritaria funzione di 'mediatore' tra popolo ed *élite*, tra oralità e scrittura, tra folklore e letteratura, coppie (apparentemente) antitetiche che, nell'opera yeatsiana, si mutano in binomi chiamati a svolgere nuove funzioni e sprigionare nuovi significati, in particolare al servizio di quella rivoluzione culturale che fu l'Irish Revival[8]. Da un lato, infatti, egli afferma: "As to my own part in this book, I have tried to make it representative, as far as so few pages would allow, of *every kind of Irish folk-faith*" (Yeats 1977, 8; corsivo mio); qualche pagina prima aveva però puntualizzato: "These folk-tales are full of simplicity and musical occurrences, for *they are the literature of a class* for whom every incident in the old rut of birth, love, pain, and death has cropped up unchanged for centuries: who have steeped everything in the heart: to whom *everything is a symbol*" (Yeats 1977, 5; corsivi miei). Volendo riassumere – e tocchiamo qui un punto nevralgico del pensiero yeatsiano – *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (così come la successiva *Irish Fairy*

Tales) è sì una raccolta di folklore – e più precisamente delle credenze che caratterizzano la cultura del popolo irlandese e che sono essenziali per giungere a un'esatta comprensione della tradizione orale –, ma tale folklore è già in partenza inteso come una forma di letteratura, una forma di letteratura alternativa dotata di un proprio simbolismo che merita almeno lo stesso rispetto e la stessa attenzione che si concedono alla letteratura ufficialmente riconosciuta come tale[9]. Del resto, quale che sia l'approccio specifico di Yeats, in generale l'antologia si presta a fungere da arena di confronto tra mondi più o meno distanti – dunque, nel nostro caso, tra folklore e letteratura, o magari tra letteratura di matrice folklorica e letteratura erudita, o ancora tra differenti concezioni del folklore e della letteratura –, configurandosi come una sorta di area di transizione, di zona franca, di spazio ibrido dove, a prescindere dalle reali o presunte intenzioni dell'*editor*, si verifica una complessa intersezione e interazione di voci, idee, valori, moventi, finalità che, tutti insieme, danno vita a un sistema eterogeneo che solo in parte gli attori in gioco sono in grado di percepire e padroneggiare[10]. Per quanto unitario e ben congegnato possa essere il progetto elaborato dall'*editor*, egli dovrà, consapevolmente o meno, pagare il prezzo di un dialogo che non può essere ridotto alla mera somma delle sue parti (ché altrimenti sarebbe solo una sequenza di monologhi), ma che va compreso nella complessità delle relazioni che le parti intrecciano (in senso sincronico e diacronico) e nella pluralità delle risonanze che esse producono[11]. Pertanto, ritornando al punto da cui eravamo partiti, appare assai problematica (e persino fuorviante) l'identificazione di un chiaro e ben definito concetto di autorialità, in quanto esso si scontra con una realtà in cui i confini fra un narratore e un altro e fra questi e il loro pubblico e fra la tradizione orale e una scrittura più o meno influenzata dalla letteratura sono quanto mai fluidi e mutevoli e dove è forse più corretto parlare di una narratività più o meno condivisa di volta in volta incarnata da una serie di voci individuali.

Anche perché, in un'antologia folklorica, oltre alla dimensione 'orizzontale' – ossia l'insieme dei racconti che vanno a comporre la totalità del corpus testuale e che, esprimendo ciascuno uno specifico punto di vista su un determinato soggetto folklorico, danno vita a un, sia pure implicito, dialogo intertestuale – occorre prendere in considerazione la dimensione 'verticale' della polifonia, vale a dire la simultaneità metanarrativa che connota ciascun racconto, tanto più complessa quanto maggiore è la distanza tra la fase orale – talvolta solo ipotetica o addirittura fittizia[12] – e la stesura o rielaborazione scritta, ovvero tra la performance contestuale di un racconto e la sua fissazione testuale, con quest'ultima che estrapola il racconto dal contesto originario e lo ricontestualizza in un'antologia[13]. Tra i vari piani del testo si instaura così un ulteriore dialogo, diciamo pure un meta-dialogo che, quando assume una forma esplicita, si svolge in quelle sezioni testuali che Genette ha efficacemente riunito sotto la nozione di 'paratesto'. In tale categoria rientrano, ad esempio, i due passi precedentemente citati dell'"Introduction" di *Fairy and*

Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, di per sé già indicativi non solo dell'approccio yeatsiano alla sua materia, ma anche di una più generale esigenza, per l'*editor* di un'antologia folklorica, di elaborare una cornice che inglobi o che tenti di inglobare la molteplicità dei racconti e delle istanze ad essi connesse all'interno di un quadro sufficientemente coerente e comprensibile, dunque unitario[14]. L'apparato paratestuale funge insomma da ponte, da raccordo tra i diversi livelli del testo e, in definitiva, funziona come una sorta di pausa che l'*editor* si prende tra un racconto e l'altro o tra una sezione e l'altra – sotto forma di introduzioni intermedie[15], commenti a margine e note che denotano tutta l'importanza che Yeats dà al suo ruolo di 'folklorista' e al corretto inquadramento della cultura che si esprime attraverso i racconti dei contadini irlandesi – per fornire, a un lettore presumibilmente a corto delle nozioni utili a orientarsi in una tradizione narrativa estranea alla sua esperienza, i chiarimenti necessari a sostenere il suo sforzo interpretativo, nonché una traccia che lo aiuti a non smarrirsi nell'intricata rete inter- e meta-testuale che caratterizza un'antologia[16].

D'altra parte, esempi di inserzioni paratestuali compaiono anche all'interno dei testi antologizzati, riferibili dunque a coloro che hanno raccolto 'sul campo' i racconti e ne hanno poi curato la pubblicazione da cui ha attinto l'*editor* Yeats. Tali cornici o intermezzi sono interessanti soprattutto perché ci danno un'idea, sia pure parziale, dell'intreccio di voci e punti di vista, del dialogo intertestuale, dell'intersezione di contesti che connotano l'occasione concreta della narrazione che sta all'origine del testo che poi leggeremo tra le pagine di un libro. Grazie a questi brani, a prescindere dalla loro attendibilità, entriamo nei meccanismi e nei moventi che presiedono al costituirsi di un racconto, alla sua trasmissione e perfino alla sua discussione.

Leggiamo, ad esempio, l'incipit di "Daniel O'Rourke": "People may have heard of the renowned adventures of Daniel O'Rourke, but how few are there who know that the cause of his perils, above and below, was neither more or less than his having slept under the walls of the Pooka's tower" (Yeats 1977, 90). L'informatore dal quale il *collector* (in questo caso Thomas Crofton Croker) trae il suo racconto parte dall'assunto che già in molti conoscano le avventure del suo protagonista, suggerendoci perciò che la sua è una storia già più volte raccontata e con una ricca tradizione alle spalle, ma subito dopo specifica che sono molti di meno coloro che conoscono la causa scatenante delle famose avventure, introducendo così l'elemento di peculiarità e di interesse della sua versione[17]. Una versione che egli ha attinto dalla viva voce del protagonista, in un'occasione ben precisa su cui non lesina dettagli: "An old man was he, at the time he told me the story, with grey hair and a red nose; and it was on the 25th of June 1813 that I heard it from his own lips, as he sat smoking his pipe under the old poplar tree, on as fine an evening as ever shone from the sky" (Yeats 1977, 90). La puntuale ricostruzione del contesto spazio-temporale in cui si è svolta la narrazione e la suggestiva descrizione del protagonista, oltre a riportarci al momento concreto della trasmissione orale del racconto, con-

feriscono un prestigio particolare a un testo che, in virtù della sua successiva trasposizione scritta, tenderà inevitabilmente a oscurare tutti gli altri che, sullo stesso argomento, continueranno a circolare in forma orale. Ma non per questo potrà dirsi autonomo da tale tradizione, non foss'altro che per la condivisione della fonte, ovvero lo stesso Daniel O'Rourke che, prendendo direttamente la parola, afferma: "I am often *axed* to tell it, sir […] so that this is not the first time" (Yeats 1977, 90). L'informatore (e di conseguenza il *collector* che da lui ha tratto il racconto) è solo *uno* dei beneficiari delle performance narrative di Daniel O'Rourke, per cui la sua versione è più esattamente il frutto del sovrapporsi e intrecciarsi delle precedenti narrazioni, sulla cui fisionomia hanno certamente influito i diversi pubblici e le mutevoli occasioni che a queste hanno fatto da cornice. Il testo crokeriano, a sua volta, diverrà probabilmente fonte per ulteriori versioni orali della storia di Daniel O'Rourke, fornendo così il proprio contributo a quella stessa tradizione di cui è tributario; ma, soprattutto, sarà poi inglobato nell'antologia yeatsiana, dove naturalmente assumerà una funzione e un significato differenti rispetto a quelli avuti nell'antologia di provenienza, così come quest'ultima aveva modificato funzione e significato di un racconto orale attinto dalla viva voce dell'informatore-narratore, il quale, a sua volta, l'aveva ascoltato dallo stesso Daniel O'Rourke che, da parte sua, era stato certamente ispirato da chissà quante storie simili di precedenti narratori prima di elaborare la sua *personale* storia su quella figura del folklore irlandese che è il *pooka*.

Altrettanto emblematico è un passo che troviamo in chiusura di "The Lazy Beauty and Her Aunts", allorché la narratrice, dopo aver terminato il suo racconto, si rivolge direttamente al suo pubblico per commentare la storia e proporne la *giusta* esegesi: "And in troth, girls and boys, though it's a diverting story, I don't think the moral is good; and if any of you *thuckeens* [sciocchine] go about imitating Anty in her laziness, you'll find it won't thrive with you as it did with her" (Yeats 1977, 262). A differenza dell'esempio precedente, in cui il narratore-protagonista era sollecitato a raccontare la sua storia per soddisfare una curiosità 'individuale' (ricalcando sostanzialmente il rapporto *informant-collector*), qui facciamo un passo indietro ed entriamo in un contesto nel quale lo *storytelling* è un rito collettivo e lo *storyteller* interagisce e dialoga con un pubblico in funzione delle cui esigenze e reazioni deve modellare e adattare il suo racconto. Siamo cioè introdotti in un contesto puramente folklorico, un contesto nel quale la narrazione svolge una funzione eminentemente pratica, come emerge dalla morale che la narratrice distilla dalla sua storia e dal giudizio che ne dà. Ed è talmente pragmatica e concreta la narratrice nella sua interpretazione da assumere un approccio schiettamente disincantato, con il quale spazza via ogni eventuale illusione cullata dalle fervide menti del suo giovane pubblico: "There's no fairies now, and no prince or lord to ride by, and catch you idling or working; and maybe, after all, the prince and herself were not so very happy when the cares of the world or old age came on them" (Yeats 1977, 262-263). Neanche principi e principesse sarebbero insomma immuni al trascorrere del tempo e agli

affanni della vita quotidiana: una vera e propria dissacrazione dell'*happy ending* che siamo abituati ad associare alle fiabe dal nostro punto di vista forgiato dalla "Perrault-Grimm-Disney tradition" (Bacchilega 2012, 455). Il testo si conclude con un'ultima, interessante annotazione: "Thus was the tale ended by poor old *Shebale* (Sybilla), Father Murphy's housekeeper, in Coolbawn, Barony of Bantry, about half a century since" (Yeats 1977, 263). A prendere la parola è colui o colei che ha riferito il racconto al *collector* Patrick Kennedy (il testo è tratto da *The Fireside Stories of Ireland*, del 1870), allo scopo di dichiarare l'identità della narratrice e il contesto spazio-temporale in cui ha avuto luogo la sua performance narrativa. Ciò che più colpisce è il lasso di tempo intercorso fra quest'ultima e la sua trasposizione scritta – circa mezzo secolo – in quanto presuppone la presenza di uno o più mediatori tra l'originaria fonte orale e il *collector*, mediatori che, assecondati dall'inevitabile azione esercitata dal tempo, hanno verosimilmente modificato il testo di partenza, consegnando all'orecchio di Kennedy e poi alla sua antologia – tra i due momenti ci può essere uno scarto determinato dagli intenti e dalle necessità del *collector* – qualcosa di differente rispetto a ciò che era stato raccontato dalla 'povera' *Shebale* (a sua volta tributaria, presumibilmente, di una più o meno lunga catena di narrazioni sullo stesso tema). D'altra parte, se anche il testo fosse arrivato formalmente invariato, non possiamo ignorare o sottovalutare il fatto che, soprattutto a causa della distanza temporale, il contesto nel quale è ora fruito e tramandato non corrisponde più a quello originario, dando così luogo, necessariamente, a letture più o meno divergenti rispetto a quella esposta in prima persona dalla narratrice[18].

Utile a farsi un'idea della complessa stratificazione che è generalmente implicita in un racconto di matrice folklorica è lo schema proposto da Bengt Holbek, benché esso si riferisca più specificamente all'insieme dei punti di vista che occorre considerare per tentare un'interpretazione esaustiva di un *fairy tale*:

> (1) That [the point of view] of the people who created the first versions of our fairy tales […]. (2) That of the people who transmitted the tales down through the centuries. […] (3) That of the storytellers from whom the tales were actually recorded. They are a subgroup of 2, but they differ in two respects: they are more or less known to us and they represent the last links of a chain that has been broken. […] (4) That of the traditional audiences for whose benefit the tales were customarily told. […] they are important for two reasons: first, because the traditional storytellers were recruited from their midst […] and second because they exerted a "preventive censorship"[19], i.e., they decided which tales they wanted to hear again and which might as well be forgotten. (5) That of the collectors and (6) that of the publishers of fairy tales. The points of view of collectors and publishers interest us mainly as an interference if we want to study the traditional fairy tales in their original setting: but the interference is in itself a factor of cultural history and also worthy of study as such. (Holbek 1985, 25-26)

I sei punti di vista individuati da Holbek possono essere letti come i sei stadi che attraversa un racconto prima di essere inglobato in un'antologia,

ma anche come i sei piani che esso in ogni caso conserva in sé, sebbene non più riconoscibili o non precisamente distinguibili. Da un lato chi ha creato il racconto, coloro che lo hanno tramandato nel corso del tempo e chi, da ultimo anello della catena, lo ha recitato permettendone la registrazione e trascrizione, senza dimenticare l'influsso esercitato dall'uditorio che di volta in volta ha ascoltato la narrazione; dall'altro i raccoglitori, che si sono incaricati di registrare e trascrivere il racconto, e coloro che lo hanno pubblicato, rendendolo fruibile a un più o meno vasto pubblico di lettori. Queste ultime due figure rappresenterebbero, secondo Holbek, altrettanti fattori di interferenza, se ci poniamo nell'ottica di chi volesse esaminare unicamente la tradizione orale del racconto, ma il passaggio dall'oralità alla scrittura, e dunque da un contesto folklorico a uno etnografico/letterario, rientra, come lo stesso Holbek sottolinea, nella storia culturale, che per noi coincide in particolare con la quasi secolare vicenda che, cominciata con le prime raccolte di testi orali in Irlanda, arriva fino alle antologie curate da Yeats. Perché, come già detto in apertura, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* e *Irish Fairy Tales* non rappresentano semplicemente un tentativo fra tanti di mettere insieme un corpus di racconti orali, bensì un'operazione di più largo respiro che, riannodando i fili della storia e rileggendo con forte consapevolezza teorica l'intera tradizione delle *folk collections* irlandesi[20], dà vita a un'antologia di antologie o, se si preferisce, a un'antologia di secondo grado, una 'meta-antologia' che si caratterizza certamente per la varietà e peculiarità dei testi raccolti (e dei relativi *collectors*, nei confronti dei quali Yeats agisce da *publisher*, se vogliamo attenerci alla terminologia adottata da Holbek), dunque per la sua complessità in senso orizzontale[21], ma forse ancora di più per il valore paradigmatico di una pluridimensionalità folklorico-letteraria e più ampiamente culturale che noi possiamo apprezzare in particolare nelle cornici e nei margini dei testi (il paratesto), là dove l'*editor* Yeats, pur non potendo inibire l'innata polifonia della sua macchina narrativa, si ritaglia uno spazio di autonomia dal quale può far sentire la *sua* voce, voce alla quale, in fin dei conti, spetta l'ultima parola e quindi la possibilità di dare un 'tono' generale e un abbozzo di unità a una raccolta altrimenti ingovernabile; è significativo in proposito che, proprio per conferire omogeneità e coerenza alle sue antologie, Yeats intervenga, anche in maniera radicale (si tratta infatti soprattutto di vistosi tagli), sui paratesti di alcuni *collectors* che, suggerendo una visione dissonante dalla sua, rischierebbero di traviare il lettore verso interpretazioni per così dire *eretiche*[22].

C'è un interessante passaggio nella già citata "Introduction" in cui Yeats traccia, in effetti, una specie di consuntivo della tradizione antologica della quale è erede. È l'occasione per sottolineare la diversità di approccio alla narrativa orale autoctona da parte dei principali *collectors* irlandesi, una diversità che è il riflesso stesso della storia culturale d'Irlanda di quasi un secolo e del progressivo riconoscimento del valore intrinseco del folklore, un riconoscimento che la prima antologia yeatsiana (e in seguito le altre[23]) intende consacrare

in chiave consapevolmente letteraria, oltre che rendere noto a un pubblico il più ampio possibile[24]:

> Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not – mainly for political reasons – take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist's Arcadia; its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing. […] Carleton, a peasant born, has in many of his stories […] especially in his ghost stories, a much more serious way with him, for all his humour. Kennedy, an old bookseller in Dublin, who seems to have had a something of genuine belief in the fairies, came next in time. He has far less literary faculty, but is wonderfully accurate, giving often the very words the stories were told in. But the best book since Croker is Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends*. The humour has all given way to pathos and tenderness. We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy-songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming.
>
> Besides these are two writers of importance, who have published, so far, nothing in book shape – Miss Letitia Maclintock and Mr Douglas Hyde. Miss Maclintock writes accurately and beautifully the half Scotch dialect of Ulster; and Mr Douglas Hyde is now preparing a volume of folk tales in Gaelic, having taken them down, for the most part, word for word among the Gaelic speakers of Roscommon and Galway. He is, perhaps, most to be trusted of all. He knows the people thoroughly. Others see a phase of Irish life; he understands all its elements. His work is neither humorous nor mournful; it is simply life. (Yeats 1977, 6-7)

Nell'abbozzare questo profilo storico-critico, Yeats si assume sostanzialmente la responsabilità di individuare le figure e le tappe salienti della tradizione irlandese della *folk narrative collection*, e si potrebbe anzi dire che egli 'inventa' tale tradizione, nel senso che è il primo a delineare un quadro d'insieme del fenomeno e a sistemarlo e modellarlo in quello che si configura come un canone d'eccellenza, che è il prodotto di una precisa concezione del rapporto tra folklore, letteratura e idea di nazione[25]. Croker e Lover da una parte (anni '20-'30 dell'Ottocento) e Hyde dall'altra (contemporaneo di Yeats) rappresentano, strategicamente, oltre che i due punti estremi di una parabola storica, i poli antitetici di un processo di maturazione ed emancipazione culturale che, all'approccio paternalistico, superficialmente (ma validamente) estetico e disimpegnato di un Croker o di un Lover, impregnati di una mentalità coloniale, sostituisce man mano un approccio più serio, eticamente responsabile e politicamente impegnato, che tocca il suo apice nella figura del 'patriota' Douglas Hyde, tra i primi assertori – ed esecutori, come attesta la sua antologia *Beside the Fire* (1890), cui si richiama entusiasticamente Yeats – di una de-anglicizzazione e conseguente gaelicizzazione del folklore irlandese[26]. Ciò non toglie che Thomas Crofton Croker sia la fonte privilegiata da Yeats, colui dal quale egli attinge più materiale, quasi a sancire il valore prioritario

della qualità narrativa (e letteraria) di un testo rispetto a qualunque altra considerazione[27].

D'altra parte, non molto diversamente da ciò che aveva fatto Croker con i racconti ascoltati dalla voce dei suoi informatori – e diversamente da un 'fedele' trascrittore come l'osannato Hyde –, Yeats si accosta ai testi dei suoi predecessori con la (rispettosa) libertà dell''autore', purché tale concetto venga interpretato in chiave folklorica. Egli infatti (ma, in definitiva, tutti coloro che si cimentano nella raccolta di racconti della tradizione orale e che non nutrono pretese o esigenze di 'scientificità'[28]) costruisce le sue antologie ricalcando un processo che è proprio del folklore, dove autore non è tanto chi ha creato un racconto (figura che solitamente resta ignota), bensì ciascuno dei membri di una comunità che, nel corso del tempo, lo ha ripreso per proprio conto, lo ha rielaborato e in questa nuova forma lo ha reintrodotto nel flusso della tradizione, esponendolo a eventuali (pressoché fisiologici) ulteriori cambiamenti[29]. Yeats si inserisce così in una sorta di circolo virtuoso, dove dal folklore dei racconti orali dei contadini irlandesi si passa alla letteratura (variamente intesa) delle antologie che i suoi precursori ricavano da quegli stessi racconti, ma questa letteratura viene poi rivisitata e rimaneggiata dal bardo di Sligo come se si trattasse di folklore – materia cioè collettiva e non individuale, o meglio frutto del contributo, nel tempo e nello spazio, di più individui – per consegnare alla tradizione letteraria e alla collettività – ovvero a una nazione irlandese che viveva allora una fase decisiva di quel processo di (ri)costruzione identitaria ed emancipazione culturale e politica che, circa trent'anni dopo, sarebbe culminato nella nascita dello Stato Libero d'Irlanda – un'ulteriore interpretazione, una sorta di 'aggiornamento' di un patrimonio narrativo più o meno condiviso che necessita di essere continuamente riletto e rivissuto per non isterilirsi in una vuota ripetitività. Il racconto folklorico non viene dunque recepito alla stregua di un inerte, pur se venerato, relitto di un passato illustre, ma come un prodotto ancora vivo e vitale, selezionato non tanto per la sua arcaica (o 'esotica') esemplarità, quanto per la sua capacità di influire sul contesto letterario (e non solo) contemporaneo[30]. Non è un caso, evidentemente, se, a differenza dei suoi predecessori, Yeats scelga di non attingere in maniera diretta alla materia folklorica, ma lo faccia attraverso la mediazione di una nutrita schiera di *collectors* e *collections* che, a prescindere dall'estrema varietà e spesso discutibilità dei criteri adottati nella trasposizione su carta (o forse proprio in virtù di questo), sono la dimostrazione più eloquente del potenziale letterario insito nella tradizione orale.

Nel dialogare con le sue fonti – che a loro volta sono il prodotto dialogico di un confronto tra fonte orale (folklore) e stesura scritta (letteratura) – Yeats non fa soltanto luce sulla propria personale posizione rispetto a quello che dovrebbe essere il rapporto tra folklore e letteratura, tra oralità e scrittura, tra popolo ed *élite*, ma coglie, più in generale, la natura intrinsecamente intertestuale e, direi, intercontestuale non solo del racconto di matrice folk-

lorica, ma della cultura nella sua interezza, la quale si plasma, si trasmette e si modifica in virtù dell'intersezione e dell'interazione di testi e contesti, per cui al folklorista o al letterato, così come a qualunque individuo che cerchi di interpretare la realtà, non potrà mai offrirsi una materia immediata, originaria, pura, primigenia, bensì mediata, filtrata, depositaria di un numero imprecisato (e quasi mai precisabile) di strati storici e livelli culturali accumulatisi nel tempo e nello spazio[31]. E per quanto "Yeats was interested in the imagination of the peasant, not of previous collectors" (Sundmark 2006, 106), e in base a questo interesse preminente impronti il suo lavoro di antologista, con tutta la libertà d'intervento che abbiamo visto, egli non potrà mai realmente 'emendare' il testo dallo specifico contributo depositatovi da ciascuno dei suoi predecessori[32], che si tratti dei *collectors* o, prima ancora, degli *storytellers* che si sono avvicendati nella trasmissione del racconto e che non necessariamente corrispondono all'idea 'mitica' che Yeats ha di una *peasantry* con la quale sente di condividere una peculiare visione della realtà[33].

Ad ogni modo, Yeats si impegna molto seriamente per riuscire a dare alle sue antologie un carattere spiccatamente personale e per piegarle ai suoi specifici canoni estetici e ideologici. Egli opera una selezione accurata e mirata sul vasto materiale che gli hanno messo a disposizione i suoi precursori, una selezione che ha il chiaro intento di costruire e tramandare una precisa immagine del folklore irlandese, della classe sociale che lo aveva preservato (i *peasants*) e dell'identità profonda della sua nazione, un'immagine tutt'altro che scientificamente mimetica o politicamente neutrale, ma piuttosto, a suo modo, rivoluzionaria, intesa cioè a risvegliare e mettere in moto, o anche solo a evocare, potenzialità, energie, risorse – artistiche e non solo – represse dalla cultura dominante (inglese) e/o non riconosciute dai suoi compatrioti e in grado, in prospettiva, di ispirare e avviare un reale processo di decolonizzazione, in primo luogo culturale e letteraria. Mary H. Thuente evidenzia i principali criteri che Yeats adotta per scegliere i racconti più 'consoni' a costruire tale immagine, criteri che sono probabilmente l'unica vera arma di cui l'*editor* dispone per porre un limite all'incontrollabile plurivocità delle sue antologie, o quanto meno per indirizzarla nel senso che più gli conviene:

> After examining Yeats's sources for the materials he included in *Fairy and Folk Tales*, it is apparent he invariably chose the weirdest and most inexplicable materials available in them. And when he had to choose between similar materials in the various folklore collections, Yeats always used the most unusual and mysterious versions he could find. […] He carefully distinguishes between imaginative extravagance and ridiculousness. […] Yeats also rejected any story written to inculcate a moral […]. He rejected any stories concerned with earthly matters only; stories which took place in countries other than Ireland; and stories […] in which the Irish country people were characterized as especially materialistic, gullible, or silly. […] Due to his dislike of historical interpretations of Irish folklore, Yeats omitted all legends concerning the early settlements of Ireland, a common type of Irish folklore […]. (Thuente 1977, 74-75)

Il passo riportato chiarisce come l'approccio di Yeats alla tradizione narrativa irlandese comporti per lo più un'opera di sfrondamento, di minuziosa cernita tesa a 'salvare' solo ciò che risulta in linea con l'idea precostituita che egli ha del folklore, o meglio di ciò che il folklore *deve* essere affinché possa svolgere nel migliore dei modi le funzioni che gli sono richieste nel presente[34]. In tale ottica si spiega la preferenza accordata alle varianti più insolite, più inspiegabili, più misteriose e, soprattutto, più ricche di immaginazione, tutte caratteristiche che si sposano con la concezione poetica ed esistenziale di Yeats e del movimento culturale di rinascita nazionale di cui vuole essere ispiratore. Il folklore irlandese deve veicolare di sé e dei suoi depositari un'inclinazione verso la magia, la poesia, la fantasia (una fantasia solida e non 'ridicola'), il soprannaturale, il trascendente, una tendenza insomma a superare una visione prosaicamente materialistica e storica della realtà. Si spiega allora il rifiuto di tutti quei racconti che dipingono il popolo irlandese secondo stereotipi denigratori, quelli che si concentrano su temi troppo terreni, quelli che pretendono di inculcare una morale, quelli che sono ambientati fuori dall'Irlanda e, un po' a sorpresa, quelli che vertono sugli albori della storia irlandese; questi ultimi, come Yeats certamente non ignora, rientrano in uno dei filoni più prestigiosi della tradizione (la cui trasposizione letteraria più famosa è quella del medievale *Leabhar Gabhála*), ma soprattutto, come sottolinea Thuente, rappresentano "a common type of Irish folklore" (75), qualcosa cioè di ben radicato nella cultura del suo popolo. Nel progetto yeatsiano, però, non c'è spazio per ciò che potrebbe contribuire a 'storicizzare' (e dunque limitare, ridimensionare, smitizzare) il folklore, ovvero per ciò che rischierebbe di compromettere il delicato equilibrio e la funzionale coerenza della sua (ri) costruzione. A Yeats non importa di travisare la realtà o darne un'immagine parziale, giacché la sua è una missione, non solo in nome dei suoi ideali, ma per il bene della patria, della letteratura e del folklore stesso. Si potrebbe anzi dire che, proprio in nome di quest'ultimo, Yeats giunga perfino a travisare o ridefinire volontariamente la nozione di *fairy tale*, termine che campeggia in entrambi i titoli delle sue due antologie e che, a rigore, dovrebbe rimandare a un genere narrativo – la nostra fiaba – che, in realtà, è pressoché assente dalle sue pagine, quasi totalmente occupate da *fairy legends*, racconti che, rispetto ai più 'letterari' *fairy tales*, hanno una ben più evidente connotazione 'folklorica', in quanto esprimono in maniera più diretta e più seria il *lore* del *folk* irlandese, soprattutto la sua predisposizione al contatto e al confronto con la realtà soprannaturale[35].

L'approccio yeatsiano al folklore irlandese, così come quello dei *collectors* che lo hanno preceduto, ci fa riflettere, più in generale, sul peso che può avere un singolo individuo – con tutto il corredo delle sue idee, esigenze, preferenze, idiosincrasie – nel costituirsi di una tradizione che dovrebbe rispecchiare una collettività più o meno ampia. Questo è tanto più vero in ambito folklorico, in virtù della relazione asimmetrica che si crea fra l'intellettuale e il potere della sua scrittura da una parte, i suoi informatori 'illetterati' (aggettivo variamente

modulabile) e la loro 'vulnerabile' oralità dall'altra, asimmetria che, nel caso delle antologie yeatsiane, vede invece la scrittura dei *collectors* occupare una posizione di debolezza rispetto al potere, teoricamente assoluto, esercitabile dalla meta-scrittura dell'*editor*. Ciò nonostante, resta il fatto incontrovertibile che ciascun racconto incluso in un'antologia folklorica è l'esito di un dialogo complesso, diciamo pure di un compromesso raggiunto sul campo, in maniera sempre nuova (in ragione del mutare del contesto), fra lo *storyteller* e il *collector*, anche se poi le cose possono essere ulteriormente modificate a tavolino, quando il *collector* (e tanto più l'*editor*) gode della libertà e della distanza necessarie a fare del suo lavoro di raccolta un'opera coerente con il suo pensiero e i suoi obiettivi e fruibile da un pubblico, presumibilmente, ben diverso da quello originario. A Yeats in quanto ultimo anello della catena tocca in sostanza il compito di assemblare e dirigere un'orchestra che, per quanto amalgamata e indirizzata dalle sue scelte e dalle sue esclusioni, presenta una molteplicità di elementi più o meno differenti e più o meno in contraddizione fra loro, senza contare che ciascuno suona contemporaneamente su più di uno spartito (i vari strati narrativi di un racconto). Data l'oggettiva complessità dell'impresa, l'unico risultato che ci si potrà ragionevolmente attendere dall'*editor* sarà quello di far sì che la polifonia non si tramuti in una cacofonia. Che è come dire conferire dignità letteraria al folklore, un obiettivo che, a giudicare dalle vicende successive della letteratura irlandese (ma non solo), è stato tenacemente perseguito e (non di rado) brillantemente conseguito[36]. Ciò dimostra la sostanziale validità dell'operazione antologica di Yeats e fornisce un'ennesima riprova della profonda correlazione esistente tra quelle due sfere della creatività umana che sono il folklore e la letteratura[37].

Note

[1] Cfr. Foster: "These [le due antologie yeatsiane] would be useful starting points for an investigation into the history of the relationship between folktale and fiction in Ireland. […] Yeats is a pioneering transitional figure. His early anthologies once commemorate fiction's exploitation of folklore during the nineteenth century and try to undo some of the damage to folklore (and to Ireland) so inflicted" (1987, 206-207).

[2] Cfr. Foster: "At the center, radius, and circumference of these issues [i rapporti tra folklore, letteratura e Irish Revival] moves the restless, protean figure of Yeats, poet, playwright, fictionist, field-collector, anthologist, theorist of folklore, and student of matters spiritual" (1987, 206).

[3] In *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* sono presenti anche tredici *ballads* (due delle quali, *The Stolen Child* e *The Priest of Coloony*, composizioni originali di Yeats) che in questa sede tralasceremo, ma che ad ogni modo si saldano in maniera organica al più vasto insieme costituito dai racconti.

[4] Ricordo che il termine *Folk-Lore* viene usato per la prima volta dall'archeologo William Thoms (sotto lo pseudonimo di Ambrose Merton) nel 1846, in una lettera inviata alla rivista *The Athenaeum*. Si tratta di un neologismo coniato a partire da due parole arcaiche di origine sassone, *Folk* 'popolo' e *Lore* 'sapere', dunque 'sapere del popolo', per intendere un patrimonio culturale specifico delle classi popolari e considerato come il residuo o la sopravvivenza di un passato più o meno remoto. Se in altri ambiti culturali *Folklore* (che nel frattempo è diventato una parola

unica ed è passato a indicare anche la scienza che si occupa della materia 'folklorica') ha mantenuto, a grandi linee e compatibilmente con l'evoluzione degli studi, il significato originario, in Italia il termine è andato incontro a un progressivo svilimento, come è attestato dall'uso che se ne fa nella lingua comune. Di conseguenza l'aggettivo 'folklorico' sembra richiamare fenomeni di vuota e superficiale ripresa, se non di contraffazione e mistificazione, di elementi della cultura popolare o, più correttamente, tradizionale, specialmente nell'odierno clima di revivalismo e febbre identitaria. Da parte mia rivendico l'uso scientifico di 'folklore' e 'folklorico' e rimando ai termini 'folklorismo' e 'folkloristico' per esprimere tutto ciò che concerne il loro travisamento ed erronea interpretazione. Per un'accurata ed esauriente analisi storica e teorica del concetto di folklore suggerisco in particolare Bronzini 1970, 7-32 e Ó Giolláin 2000, 32-62.

[5] Vedi Bachtin 1979, 67-230.

[6] Vedi Bachtin: "Il fenomeno dell'interna dialogicità, come abbiamo detto, in misura maggiore o minore è presente in tutte le sfere della vita della parola. […] nella prosa artistica, in particolare nel romanzo, essa compenetra dall'interno l'atto stesso con cui la parola concepisce il suo oggetto e il modo della sua espressione, trasformando la semantica e la struttura sintattica della parola. Il reciproco orientamento dialogico diventa qui come un evento della parola stessa che dall'interno vivifica e drammatizza la parola in tutti i suoi momenti" (1979, 92).

[7] Va d'altronde sottolineato che, diversamente da un'antologia, un romanzo, per quanto complesso, composito e stratificato possa essere, è solo *relativamente* polifonico. Per dirla con Cesare Segre: "L'orchestra che il narratore [leggi anche 'l'autore'] dirige è composta di una sola voce infinite volte rifratta: la sua" (1991, 5).

[8] Cfr. Foster: "The two volumes [le due antologie yeatsiane], despite their entertaining variety, are given unity by Yeats's fundamental requirements and by his omissions and editing, which on occasion follow the demands of genuine folklore but more often follow these of the Irish revival in disguised, popular form" (1987, 207). Avremo modo di tornare sul tema dell'unità delle antologie e dell'*editing* operato da Yeats.

[9] Tanto più che il folklore irlandese può vantare la prestigiosa continuità con un passato illustre. Cfr. Ó Giolláin: "He [Yeats] considered folklore to be a continuation of the same imagination that created medieval Irish heroic literature" (2000, 105). Un punto di vista, questo, che, sebbene bisognoso di un'attenta contestualizzazione storico-culturale, ritengo fondamentalmente corretto e soprattutto eccezionalmente gravido di (positive) conseguenze teoriche.

[10] La redazione di un'antologia folklorica pone sul tavolo alcune questioni basilari che, se ignorate, determinano una comprensione assolutamente limitata e perfino distorta del fenomeno in questione. Cfr. Abrahams: "[…] what happens to an oral composition when it is set down in writing – especially what occurs when an improvised performance designed for a small-group audience suddenly becomes a permanent composition capable of being perused by an audience of infinite numbers? What compositional habits remain when performers learn to channel their creativity into a medium of record? And what does this do to expectations and demands of their audience?" (1972, 84).

[11] In questo senso appare particolarmente appropriato il concetto di 'intertestualità', che così viene inteso da Cristina Bacchilega: "Intertextuality, to gloss Julia Kristeva, is not the dialogue of fixed meanings or texts with one another; it is an intersection of several speech acts and discourses (the writer's, the speaker's, the addressee, earlier writers' and speakers'), whereby meanings emerge in the process of how something is told and valued, where, to whom, and in relation to which other utterances" (2012, 453).

[12] Come denuncia Richard Dorson, allorché conia la nozione di *fakelore*, che illustra in questi termini: "Fakelore is the presentation of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim that they are genuine folklore. These productions are not collected in the field but are rewritten from earlier literary and journalistic sources in an endless chain of regurgitation, or they may even be made out of whole cloth […]" (1969, 60). Tuttavia, ciò che Dorson identifica (in tono critico) come *fakelore* caratterizza in realtà buona parte delle antologie folkloriche più rinomate

(a partire proprio dalla raccolta dei fratelli Grimm) ed è, in fin dei conti, insito nei meccanismi stessi che sovrintendono al folklore come processo di creazione, fruizione e ri-creazione culturale. Per una ridefinizione e ricontestualizzazione del concetto di *fakelore* vedi Dundes 1985.

[13] L'estrapolazione del racconto dal contesto vivo della narrazione orale fatta dinanzi a un pubblico più o meno partecipe comporta inevitabilmente delle perdite, sul piano dei significati, a cui il testo scritto (e pubblicato) non può certo rimediare, come sottolinea Lauri Honko: "We are not able to say much on the basis of folklore texts alone about the actual meanings that a particular text sets in motion in a particular situation; large parts of these meanings go beyond and past the text: they are formed, conveyed and elicited extra-testually" (1985, 37-44; vedi in particolare 39)

[14] Cfr. Genette: "È attraverso il paratesto dunque, che il testo diventa libro e in quanto tale si propone ai suoi lettori e, in genere, al pubblico. […] Questa frangia [definizione del paratesto data da Philippe Lejeune e ripresa da Genette], in effetti, sempre portatrice di un commento autoriale, o più o meno legittimato dall'autore, costituisce, tra il testo e ciò che ne è al di fuori, una zona non solo di transizione, ma di *transazione*: luogo privilegiato di una pragmatica e di una strategia, di un'azione sul pubblico, con il compito, più o meno ben compreso e realizzato, di far meglio accogliere il testo e di sviluppare una lettura più pertinente, agli occhi, si intende, dell'autore e dei suoi alleati" (1989, 4).

[15] In *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* Yeats, oltre all'"Introduction" generale già citata, inserisce un'introduzione specifica in apertura di ciascuna delle sezioni (significativamente identificate in base al tipo di creatura o fenomeno soprannaturale che caratterizzano i relativi racconti) in cui è suddivisa la raccolta. Come sottolinea, in proposito, Mary H. Thuente: "Neither Croker nor Kennedy had used introductions to separate groups of stories. Yeats's categories and his carefully prepared introductions indicate a much more serious approach than that of any previous Irish folklorist" (1977, 72-73).

[16] Va comunque sottolineato che anche nell'apparato paratestuale Yeats è il più delle volte tributario delle sue fonti, dunque, come nel caso dei racconti, egli rielabora e assembla materiale altrui più che esprimere posizioni del tutto inedite. Diciamo che è dal disegno d'insieme e dalla finalità dell'opera che emerge la vera originalità di Yeats, come è del resto inevitabile per un *armchair folklorist*. Vedi in proposito Kinahan 1983.

[17] Quello di "Daniel O'Rourke" è in effetti uno dei temi narrativi più noti e apprezzati della tradizione irlandese, anche in virtù di trasposizioni letterarie e teatrali di cui lo stesso Croker rende conto in un commento esplicativo che colloca in appendice al racconto (omesso da Yeats nella sua antologia), commento nel quale, però, rivendica innanzitutto la maggiore 'autenticità' della sua versione: "The tale of Daniel O'Rourke, the Irish Astolpho, is a very common one, and is here related according to the most authentic version" (1825-1828, 291).

[18] Alan Dundes propone un'interessante analogia fra la critica letteraria e ciò che definisce *metafolklore*, ossia l'insieme dei significati e delle interpretazioni che i diversi contesti e gli individui ad essi afferenti attribuiscono a un testo folklorico. Anche nella tradizione orale c'è insomma spazio per una sorta di 'critica del testo' ed è un dovere dello studioso prenderne atto e cercare di esplicitarla, come sottolinea lo stesso Dundes: "For each item of oral literature, there is a variety of oral literary criticism. This is an important point inasmuch as folklorists, despite the fact that they are accustomed to thinking of variation in the texts of folklore, often wrongly assume that there is only one correct meaning or interpretation. There is no one right interpretation of an item of folklore any more than there is but one right version of a game or song. […] There are multiple meanings and interpretations and they all ought to be collected" (1966, 507-508).

[19] Si riferisce al ben noto e fondamentale concetto elaborato da Pëtr Bogatyrëv e Roman Jakobson (1929), secondo i quali "l'esistenza di una opera folclorica presuppone necessariamente un gruppo sociale che l'accolga e la sanzioni. Nello studio del folklore si deve sempre tener presente come principio basilare la *censura preventiva della comunità*. Adoperiamo qui con intenzione l'espressione 'preventiva', perché di un fatto folclorico non si tratta di consi-

derare i momenti della biografia che ne precedono la nascita, né del concepimento, né della vita embrionale, bensì i momenti della nascita del fatto folclorico come tale e della sua sorte successiva" (trad. it. in Bronzini 1980, 85). Un passo che spiega bene quale sia il peso esercitato dal pubblico su un racconto orale (e dunque l'importanza di tale punto di vista, benché quasi mai esplicitabile).

[20] Cfr. Thuente: "In the process of compiling *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) and *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892) Yeats claimed to have read 'most, if not all, recorded Irish fairy tales'. He spent the whole summer of 1887 in Sligo collecting oral folklore and then devoted at least seven months to searching out, reading and selecting published folklore. Yeats's attempt to bring together selections from as many authors and sources as possible indicates *he intended to survey and comment upon the entire tradition, not merely to publish whatever materials came randomly to hand*" (1977, 64; corsivo mio).

[21] Stando alla "List of Sources" curata da Mary H. Thuente e pubblicata in Yeats (1977, XVII-XXI), sarebbero ben quaranta (compreso se stesso) gli autori (alcuni dei quali con più di un'opera) e una decina tra riviste e pubblicazioni di vario genere a cui Yeats avrebbe attinto per la stesura delle sue antologie. Numeri sufficienti a dare un'idea della complessità dell'operazione messa in atto, ma anche del grande interesse suscitato nell'Irlanda dell'Ottocento dal folklore e dell'importanza attribuita alla sua salvaguardia e divulgazione.

[22] Cfr. Thuente: "*Authorial commentary and superfluous literary atmosphere* which did not support Yeats's presentation of Irish folklore as a uniquely subject matter free from stale English literary conventions were omitted. [...] All of Yeats's criteria of selection, including his *omissions and alterations in his sources*, reflect his attempt to present fairy land as representative of a separate spiritual realm which was to be taken seriously even if it could not be understood" (1977, 75-76; corsivi miei).

[23] Nell'arco di cinque anni, ossia tra il 1888 e il 1893, Yeats si contraddistingue per una febbrile opera di antologista, che lo porta a pubblicare, oltre ai già citati *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) e *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892), *Stories from Carleton* (1889), *Representative Irish Tales* (1891) e, soprattutto, *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), che è in realtà un testo più composito e variegato, nel quale Yeats si cimenta fra l'altro nella raccolta diretta di racconti dalla viva voce dei narratori.

[24] Cfr. Bramsbäck: "[…] Yeats worked for the preservation and spreading of folklore and its communication to a larger number of people as well as for artistic use of it in creative writing: native tradition should function as a living organism in a country's literature" (1971-1973, 56).

[25] Cfr. Kinahan: "In the years that followed the appearance of *Fairy Legends* [*and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, la prima antologia folklorica pubblicata in Irlanda, ad opera di Croker], Irish folk-tales in English began to appear in print in a variety of books and journals. Their accumulation in the course of the century was gradual but steady; and *Fairy and Folk Tales* was the earliest attempt made by anyone to anthologize the most notable among the published tales, stories that, taken *en bloc*, made up what Yeats of 1892 called 'perhaps the most beautiful folk-lore in the world'" (1983, 255).

[26] Vedi Ó Giolláin, che dedica un intero capitolo a "The Gaelicization of Folklore" (2000, 114-141), il quale prende avvio proprio da un discorso tenuto da Douglas Hyde alla National Literary Society nel 1892, intitolato *The Necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland.*

[27] Prova ne sia che la prima antologia di Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825-1828), riscosse un grande successo editoriale e fu vivamente apprezzata da figure eminenti quali Walter Scott e i fratelli Grimm i quali la tradussero in tedesco ad appena un anno dalla sua uscita.

[28] Dilemma annoso e sempre attuale quello tra un approccio più libero e 'letterario' e uno più fedele e 'scientifico' al folklore, sollevato dalla natura stessa di quest'ultimo e che riflette plasticamente l'ampio ventaglio di interpretazioni e di usi a cui esso ha dato luogo. Dilemma cui non è estraneo lo stesso Yeats, il quale si esprime nella maniera che ci si potrebbe aspettare da un letterato: "The various collectors of Irish folk-lore have, from our point of view, one great merit, and from the

point of view of others, one great fault. They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive religion of mankind, or whatever else the folklorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocers' bills […]. Instead of this they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day" (1977, V-VI).

[29] Particolarmente appropriata, per comprendere la nozione di autorialità in ambito folklorico, mi sembra una similitudine proposta da Antonino Pagliaro, pur se riferita al campo linguistico: "[…] il sentiero nel bosco si forma, perché prima uno, poi altri lo hanno percorso e i passi hanno finito per segnarne la traccia: un'attività ha creato la sua forma" (Pagliaro 1957, 79).

[30] Cfr. Fitzgerald: "In contrast to Ferguson, however, Yeats did not attempt simply to recount the old legends for a modern audience. […] For Yeats, legends, myths, and folk tales had a present force and reality that went beyond mere antiquarian value" (1989, 21).

[31] Anche se, in realtà, nel suo approccio alla tradizione irlandese, e in particolare nei confronti della classe contadina depositaria di tale tradizione, Yeats culla appunto l'illusione di giungere alla primitiva purezza di un'originaria *Irishness* non ancora contaminata dal cristianesimo e dalla squallida modernità. Cfr. Fitzgerald: "It is the peasant as *primitive* that catches Yeats's imagination. […] Yeats's peasant, as primitive, is not only pagan, but 'pure': he is the distillation of a folk tradition that extends back to before Christianity reached Ireland. It is thus essential that he be protected from the impurities of the modern world" (1989, 28). D'altra parte, questa stessa aspirazione a una primitiva purezza può essere letta come una legittima, ancorché discutibile, chiave interpretativa con cui Yeats si accosta alla tradizione e la fa propria, diciamo pure il suo personale filtro ideologico attraverso il quale egli (al pari di chiunque altro) contribuisce ad arricchire (o a compromettere, a seconda dei punti di vista) lo spessore culturale dell'oggetto in questione.

[32] C'è un passo di Bachtin che mi sembra particolarmente efficace per spiegare questa insopprimibile stratificazione testuale: "Ogni parola ha l'aroma del contesto e dei contesti nei quali essa ha vissuto la sua vita piena di tensione sociale; tutte le parole e tutte le forme sono abitate da intenzioni" (1979, 101).

[33] Cfr. Sundmark: "Yeats was originally drawn to folklore because of the 'proof' it seemed to offer of a supernatural reality. Belief in Fairyland also gave Yeats and the peasantry a common denominator – Irishness defined as belief in the occult" (2006, 105).

[34] Yeats sembra operare in maniera inversa rispetto a quanto fanno altri intellettuali dell'Ottocento intenti a 'manipolare' il folklore per perseguire determinati obiettivi extra-folklorici (identitari, politici, letterari, ecc.). Se i secondi tendono ad aggiungere o, all'occorrenza, a inventare rispetto a ciò che offre realmente la tradizione (e ritorniamo così al concetto di *fakelore*), Yeats preferisce sottrarre, scartare ciò che ritiene superfluo o inadatto e preservare solo ciò che rispecchia la sua 'alta' concezione del folklore (che però potremmo considerare come un'ulteriore forma di *fakelore*). Cfr. Dundes: "Fakelore apparently fills a national, psychic need: namely, to assert one's national identity, especially in a time of crisis, and to instill pride in that identity. […] It may be true that ideally folklore serves the cause of national identity cravings, but where folklore is deemed lacking or insufficient, individual creative writers imbued with nationalistic zeal have felt free to fill in that void. They do so creating a national epic or national 'folk' hero *ex nihilo* if necessary, or what is more usual, they embroider and inflate fragments of folklore into fakeloristic fabrications" (1985, 13).

[35] Cfr. Sundmark: "Yeats was not especially interested in the fairy tale itself – not the form, nor the genre; what interested him was the 'folk', especially the Irish peasant and the Irish poet (himself), and how they/he may come in contact with the supernatural. The legend and the memorat do that well, whereas the fairy tale, which is a world unto itself, does not. For Yeats fairy tales are really 'fairy legends', which is a word he uses in his introduction to *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*; they are not fairy tales in the sense of *Märchen* or wonder tales. 'Fairy legend' is suggestive of legendary encounters with supernatural beings" (2006, 101).

[36] Sull'uso del folklore nella letteratura irlandese del Novecento e sulla varietà di esiti prodotta da tale connubio rimando in particolare a Quintelli-Neary (1997).

[37] Riprendendo e in parte rimodulando le tesi classiche di Bogatyrëv e Jakobson (1929), Cristina Bacchilega afferma: "[…] we can say that, as artistic and communication systems, folklore and literature share an affinity, but often serve different social functions and operate according to distinct, but non mutually exclusive, dialectics of *langue* and *parole*" (1989, 83).

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Voices

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Chasing the Intangible: a Conversation on Theatre, Language, and Artistic Migrations with Irish Playwright Marina Carr

Valentina Rapetti
Università degli Studi Roma Tre (<valentina.rapetti@gmail.com>)

Abstract:

Offally born Marina Carr is amongst the most prolific, influential and internationally renowned Irish playwrights of our times. Since her debut on the avant-garde side of the Dublin theatre scene in the late Eighties, she has had seventeen plays professionally produced, both in and outside Ireland. Her earlier work is influenced by Samuel Beckett's Absurdist drama, while in her most mature and recent plays she draws on both classical and Irish mythology, Greek tragedies and Shakespeare's poetics. In the interview, Marina Carr recalls and discusses some pivotal moments of her upbringing and career; she also speaks about language, landscape, dreams and the unconscious in relation to her playwriting and aesthetics.

Keywords: Contemporary Irish Drama, Irish Theatre, Irish Women in Theatre, Marina Carr, Midlands

Spanning twenty-five years of uninterrupted audience acclaim coupled with critical and academic recognition, the career of playwright Marina Carr (Dublin, 1964) is amongst the most enduring, prolific and influential in the history of Irish theatre. Four years ago[1], she was awarded with an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature in University College Dublin. In her citation, Cathy Leeny said:

Marina Carr is a playwright of genius, distinguished, accomplished, and fearless. A woman warrior, the power of her creativity has made theatre that is huge in its achievement, stunningly theatrical, and internationally recognized as remarkable. The philosophical, emotional and poetic scale of her work shows audiences a world where life is intense, tragic, and hilarious; where the conversation between life and death spans the oily currents of the Styx: this is a bigger life. Her work is loved and admired by audiences and by theatre people. Her importance to students of theatre worldwide would be hard to underestimate.[2]

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Since her professional debut in 1989 with the absurdist, Beckett inspired *Low in the Dark*[3], Carr's eclectic work has never ceased to attract both theatre-goers and scholars alike, granting her a prominent role in the male-dominated literary canon[4] of her native country. Her achievements as a writer who challenges stereotypical and prescriptive notions of womanhood, motherhood, family and national identity, have helped a whole generation of committed scholars to rediscover and acknowledge the work of many twentieth and early twenty-first century women playwrights who have been unjustifiably marginalized from mainstream theatre and intellectual discourses, such as, just to name a few, Teresa Deevy, Eva Gore-Booth, Dorothy Macardle, Mary Manning, Marie Jones, Anne Devlin, Christina Reid, Patricia Burke Brogan, Hilary Fannin, Ioanna Anderson, Anne Le Marquand Hartigan, Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy, Deirdre Hines, Paula Meehan and Morna Regan.

Besides stimulating new stylistic experimentation and injecting unusual perspectives and female characters of unprecedented force in domestic drama, Carr's plays have expanded beyond national frontiers to reach international audiences. Since the Irish production of *Portia Coughlan* directed by Garry Hynes hit the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1996, Carr's dramatic creations have travelled extensively outside Ireland, in either stage or book form, firstly in England, and shortly after in a number of different European countries, in the United States, Russia, South-America and Asia[5].

Amongst Carr's vast and varied body of work, the most renowned and internationally acclaimed titles include *The Mai* (1994), *Portia Coughlan* (1996), *By the Bog of Cats…* (1998) and *On Raftery's Hill* (2000); this cycle is usually referred to by critics and scholars as the 'Midlands Plays', given the extensive use of Hiberno-English and the distinctive rural, boggy setting where the dramatic actions take place. Even though embedded in quintessentially Irish atmospheres and set in contemporary times, the unsettling narratives of these widely produced, worldwide translated and praised plays, teem with mythological resonances and are modelled around ancient Greek tragedies, thus their universality. The Mai, protagonist of the play by the same name, bears traits of Dido and Penelope as well as Portia Coughlan recalls Antigone and Electra; tinker Hester Swane in *By the Bog of Cats…* is an original, compelling version of *Medea*, while *On Rathery's Hill* stands out as a dark and uncompromising exploration of tragic fate, miasmal crime and doom looming over different generations of the same family. The following play, *Ariel* (2002), is a retelling of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, but also a parting, both temporary and long-lasting, from Classic mythology, tropes and characters, which Carr further scrutinized in her most recent play to date, *Phaedra Backwards*, presented on October 2011 at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton.

In the intervening time, Carr wrote a trio of small cast *pièces*: *Woman and Scarecrow* (2006), *The Cordelia Dream* (2008) and *Marble* (2009); all three are

haunted, to a greater or lesser extent, by Shakespeare's poetics and deal with recurrent themes of Carr's imaginary world: ageing, death, the supernatural and the oneiric, liminal spaces, shifting identities, derelict marriages, betrayals, the role of art and the disruptive power of creativity. She also wrote a large cast play on Anton Chekhov entitled *Sixteen Possible Glimpses*, the result of a decade of unrelenting research into the life of the nineteenth century Russian playwright. The play opened at the Peacock Theatre as part of the 2011 Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival and provided the audience with a prismatic overview on the most intimate affairs of Chekhov's family and love relationships, as well as offering an account of his professional and ethical struggles, both as a doctor and as a writer. Even though Carr started from a biographical standpoint and drew on reliable sources, she did not dismiss her distinctive metaphysical approach to stagecraft. The supernatural figure of the black monk, a symbol of death as well as eternity (that is, death's oxymoron or its hyperbolic counterpart), appears on stage as soon as the play opens and speaks witty, lapidary words to the anything but appalled protagonist. Both hints and explicit references to the after-life, heightened by the insistence on themes such as the immortality of the artist and the everlasting permanence of the artistic creation, punctuate the dialogue and the dramatic action, thus reasserting Carr's poetics as "a metaphor for the crossroads between the worlds"[6] (Carr 1996, 297).

Mixing as they do a range of stylistic approaches, playing remorselessly with shifting notions of time and space, and deliberately failing to point at a fixed, universal truth, the plays of the Irish writer could indeed stand as effective dramaturgic equivalents of 'the Empty Space' Peter Brook envisaged in his 1968 book. In fact, her work seems to encapsulate the four major characteristics of the word theatre laid down by the renowned English director: deadliness, holiness, roughness and immediacy. Carr's theatre is deadly as "every art form that once born is mortal and must thus be reconceived" (Brook 1977, 16); it is holy as it deals with universal and supernatural themes such as destiny, genealogy, doom and death using the framework of Greek tragedy and plunging into the oneiric world. It displays elements of roughness and popular culture influences by using an extremely harsh, explosive language, grotesquery and black humour. It is also immediate as it works as "an acid, a magnifying glass, a searchlight or a place of confrontation" (Brook 1977, 137), for audiences, scholars and practitioners alike, posing questions on national and gender identity, mortality and eternity.

To date, Carr has written fifteen full-length plays[7], two plays for children and the tale *Grow a Mermaid*[8]. She has won many prizes and awards, including the Dublin Theatre Festival Best New Play Award with *The Mai* (1994), the Edward Morgan Forster Award for Literary Achievement from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2001), the American Ireland Fund Annual Literary Award (2003), the Macaulay Fellowship, and the Susan

Smith-Blackburn Prize. Carr is a member of Aosdána and has been writer in residence at the Abbey Theatre, Trinity College, University College Dublin, Dublin City University and Princeton University.

She recently travelled to Rome to attend the conference *Performing Gender and Violence in National and Transnational Contexts*[9], starring women playwrights from Italy and the English speaking world, whose work has been analyzed and discussed by Italian and international scholars[10]. Fellow playwrights participating in the conference included Raquel Almazan and Carolyn Gage (USA), Van Badham (Australia), Erin Shields (Canada), Tamara Bartolini, Betta Cianchini, Lucilla Lupaioli and Fausta Squatriti (Italy).

Carr had already visited Rome in February 2011 to attend the Italian *première* of her play *Marble*, but it was not until her last journey to the Eternal City that the idea of the present interview occasioned.

Notes

[1] The official ceremony was held on 31st August 2011 at the Department of English, Drama and Film (University College Dublin).

[2] Cathy Leeney is lecturer in Drama Studies at the Department of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. Her citation is quoted from the Department's official website and can be found at the following link: <http://www.ucd.ie/englishanddrama/news/sedfnewstitle,55902,en.html> (06/2014).

[3] *Low in the Dark* premiered at the Project Arts Centre (Dublin) on 24th October 1989 in a Crooked Sixpence Theatre Company's production directed by Philip Hardy, starring Bríd Mhic Fhearai (Curtains), Joan Brosnan Walsh (Bender), Sarahjane Scaife (Binder), Peter Holmes (Baxter) and Dermot Moore (Bone).

[4] It is worth remembering that Seamus Deane, general editor of the 1991 *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, obliterated the names and the work of many Irish women writers, as well as crucial texts and events of Irish women history. One of the most anticipated events in the history of Ireland's contemporary literary criticism, the anthology aroused a huge controversy among Irish women intellectuals, critics, scholars, novelists, poets and playwrights because of its blatant omissions. In September 2002, the protest campaign launched in 1991 by journalist and writer Nuala O'Faolain on the RTÉ television programme *Booklines* and on the columns of *The Irish Times*, resulted in the publication of two new volumes of the anthology (Volume IV and V), devoted to writing by and about women.

[5] In 2001, Carr's 1994 play *The Mai* was presented in Czech translation with the title *Maja* at the F.X. Salda Theatre in Liberec, Czech Republic. On the same year, the Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre Company production of *Portia Coughlan* premièred at Chatham's Eddy Theatre (USA) and *By the Bog of Cats…* was presented by Irish Repertory in Chicago and by San Jose Repertory Theatre in California. In 2002, Rotterdam based company RO Theater staged both *Portia Coughlan* and *By the Bog of Cats…* (Dutch title: *Kattenmoeras*) in the Netherlands, in Dutch translation. In 2006*, Woman and Scarecrow* was presented at the Royal Court Theatre, starring Fiona Shaw in the role of Woman, while in 2008 the Royal Shakespeare Company presented *The Cordelia Dream* at the Wilton's Music Hall in London. More recently, Paolo Zuccari directed Carr's 2009 play *Marble,* a co-production of Officine Puricelli and Associazione Culturale Tournesol. The play opened, in Italian translation, on 15th February 2011 at Teatro Vascello, Rome. After its world première on 18th October 2011 at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, *Phaedra Backwards* was presented in German translation at the Staats theater in Darmstadt, Germany. For reasons of space, the present list of selected

productions of Marina Carr's plays outside Ireland is far from being exhaustive. It is worth pointing out that by 2010, *By the Bog of Cats…* had been translated and published in Chinese.

[6] Carr chose these words to describe the liminal quality of the Midlands landscape in her "Afterword" to *Portia Coughlan*, published in *The Dazzling Dark*, general edited by Frank McGuinness (see works cited). The writer portrays the Irish Midlands as a metaphorical, osmotic place haunted by supernatural forces and creatures, where mortals can communicate with the dead and linger between past and present, myth and reality, the sacred and the secular. For a thorough discussion on the unorthodox treatment of the categories of time and space in Carr's theatre, see *Theatre on Eleven Dimensions: A Conversation with Marina Carr*. The interview was carried out by American scholar Nancy Finn, lecturer in dramatic literature and Irish studies in the English Department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is fully accessible on the World Literature Today website at the following link: <http://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2012/july/theater-eleven-dimensions-conversation-marina-carr-nancy-finn#.U5a-ZSjI8is> (06/2014).

[7] Only eleven out of fifteen amongst Carr's full-length plays have been published. Carr's works are is published by The Gallery Press in Ireland, Faber and Faber in the United Kingdom and Dramatists Play Service in the USA.

[8] The tale *Grow a Mermaid* won the Hennessy Prize in 1994.

[9] The conference was held at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures of Università degli Studi Roma Tre on 27th and 28th March 2014.

[10] Scholars included: Kate Burke, Alessandro Clericuzio, Masolino D'Amico, Carla De Petris, Cristina Giorcelli, Cathy Leeney, Valentina Rapetti, Caterina Ricciardi, Marinella Rocca Longo, Melissa Sihra, Maria Anita Stefanelli, Sabrina Vellucci.

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Q&A with Marina Carr

VR: You were born in Dublin, the most anglicized and, in more recent years, the most globalized city of the Republic of Ireland, but you spent your childhood and adolescence in County Offaly, right in the heart of the Midlands Region. To be more precise, you lived in Gortnamona, between Tullamore and Birr, for the first ten years of your life and then you moved with your family to Pallas Lake, a small village set on the shore of the homonymous lake. What are your memories of those early years spent in a rural setting that most foreign people would regard as the idyllic, iconized epitome of Irishness and associate with the illusory and nostalgic ideal of an authentic, though bucolic and mythic, Ireland?

MC: My memory is not good on the early years. I remember trying to climb a stairs. I remember being stung by a bee as I climbed a tree. I remember swimming across Pallas Lake in the middle of the night, but I'm not sure I didn't dream that. I remember playing till all hours the long summer evenings. I remember praying in front of the sacred heart picture, putting on plays in the shed with my siblings, a huge oak being felled because it threatened a neighbour's house, a midnight picnic when we were caught and sent back to bed in disgrace. I remember my playmates and the passion of the games and the easy camaraderie that would erupt into a full-scale row with skin and hair flying only to calm down again. The freedom and space is what I remember most and the colours, the earth and sky, the leaves and the sound they made, the dragonflies on the water on scorching summer days.

VR: How did the peculiar landscape of the Midlands and the experiences of those early years in the countryside influence your subsequent writing in terms of setting, characterization, and thematic content?

MC: It is difficult to say how much the Midlands have influenced me. It all started there for me. It was my first stage, where I opened my eyes first and took in what was around me. In short, an immense influence I would imagine but so a part of me that I can't really discern or pinpoint what it is exactly.

VR: You attended secondary school at the Sacred Heart Convent in Tullamore, and then you went to Presentation College at Mountmellick. Did Catholicism and religious upbringing play a major role in those educational institutions? If yes, to what extent was Catholicism linked to the notion of Irishness and to that of a (national) identity?

MC: I went to my mother's school first. She was the principal of a small country school only a stone's throw from the house. Then, when I was twelve, I went to the convent in town and then at fifteen to another convent as a boarder. I hated school. The stupidity of it, the awful timetable and stifling rules, the uniforms that itched and made you sweat. That people could and did tell you what to do all day, every day. I thought I would never get out of there. I was an indifferent student. I liked music and reading and that was pretty much it. The ethos of the schools was catholic, very rigid and strict with very little imagination at work in the curriculum or from the teachers. There were exceptions. There always are but not enough to alter the overall depression of the atmosphere. We had to go to mass three mornings a week. We spent an awful lot of time praying, before each meal. After each meal, evening prayers before bed and so on. I enjoyed slipping into the chapel for a bit of peace.

VR: Besides being constitutionally recognized as the national, first official language of the Republic of Ireland, the Irish language was, and still is, a required

subject of study in all schools within the Republic. How long did you study it for? Was there any subject specifically taught in Irish rather than in English? Did you perceive or regard the Irish language as a paramount aspect of your cultural upbringing and (linguistic) identity? Has your perception, or your opinion, changed over the years?

MC: Irish children study the Irish language from the age of four until the age of seventeen, eighteen, that is until their leaving certificate. It used to be a requirement for entry into university, the catholic ones anyway. So every child has a relationship to the language whether good or bad. It was hugely important in my education. I spent many summers in the west of Ireland at Irish college as did my siblings. I even spent a winter there and had at one time excellent Irish but it is almost forgotten now as I don't practice it. I think it has to be spoken to you from the cradle or it doesn't sink in enough.

VR: Historically and culturally speaking, English is the imposed language of the colonizer/oppressor, both dominant and domineering, while Irish is the aboriginal, ancestral language of the colonized/oppressed which stands out as an identity bulwark and a symbol of resistance, rebellion and independence. In Ireland, the two languages have been coexisting, however conflictingly and controversially, for centuries. To what extent and in which ways has the coexistence of the two official languages, Irish and English, shaped your identity and influenced you as a writer?

MC: English is my language. I can live with that. If I was passionate enough about my native tongue I would have pursued it. I don't think there is enough time. What we speak in Ireland is Hiberno-English, an English that is informed by and sometimes carries the rhythms of Irish in it, a ghostly imprint.

VR: At the age of seventeen, you left your family home in the country, moved to the city and enrolled at University College Dublin, where you studied Economy for one year before switching to English and Philosophy. Dealing with the city must have been an exciting and enriching change for you at that time. Was it also demanding and anxiety provoking? How did the urban setting, the academic environment and the language of the city, with all its different sounds and accents, impact on you? Was it like the seductive song of the Sirens in the Odyssey *or rather an overwhelming, disorientating, babelish cacophony?*

MC: Moving to the city to go to University was wonderful. I couldn't wait to get out of Offaly and be independent. Yes, there was an adjustment period but I had been used to fending for myself for quite some time or so it seemed to me.

VR: After having obtained your degree from UCD, you moved to New York where you taught girls English in a convent school. It was your first time in the

United States and your first working and teaching experience, moreover on the other side of the Atlantic. Did you envisage your future transatlantic artistic journeys at that time?

MC: Yes, I taught in a Catholic school in Brooklyn after I graduated for one year. I had already written my first play by the time I graduated, but no, I don't think I envisaged future transatlantic journeys regarding the work. I was a fledgling playwright but quite lost. Who isn't at twenty-one?

VR: Once back in Dublin, you started a collaboration with the Project Arts Center that resulted in the first professional production of your work. The play was Low in the Dark *and the year was 1989. The last time we met in Rome you told me how different the Project Arts Center was at that time, what a vibrant and creative environment it provided for you, for all the artists and practitioners who gravitated around it and, in general, for the Dublin, thus the Irish, theatre scene. Could you tell us something more about it?*

MC: Yes, I started out at The Project Arts Centre. At that time it was a hive of activity. There were a lot of people around with a real passion for theatre. There was no money in the country so we made plays out of nothing.

VR: Soon after what the critics usually refer to as your "Beckettian phase", you left Dublin to go into a voluntary, so to speak "inland" exile in Inishnee, Connemara. How much time did you spend there? What were you fleeing from and what were you looking for at that time?

MC: I wasn't fleeing from anything when I went to Inishnee. I'd had four plays on in a very short space of time. I had been rushing things and wanted time to think, read, write. I had also just met the man I would marry. We decided to rent a house on the island. You had to walk through fields to get to it. I wrote *The Mai* there and then we moved back to Dublin and shortly after I wrote *Portia Coughlan*, *On Raftery's Hill* and *By The Bog Of Cats*. These three plays are written in Midland dialect. Much has been made of this. For me it was very simple. It was just how I heard them.

VR: The New Millennium marked the beginning of a long-lasting theatrical dialogue and fruitful cultural exchange with the United States. In 2000, the Irish production of On Raftery's Hill *directed by Garry Hynes toured to Washington. Despite the shocked response, the following year you received the Edward Morgan Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters,* Portia Coughlan *was staged in Pittsburgh and* By the Bog of Cats *had two American productions, one in Chicago and the other in California, starring Oscar winner actress Holly Hunter in the leading role of Hester Swane. In 2002 you were Heimbod Chair*

in Irish Studies at the University of Villanova; in 2003 you received the American Fund Annual Literary Award. Five years later you were appointed Writer in Residence at Princeton University, where your latest play Phaedra Backwards *was produced in 2011. In the same year,* Woman and Scarecrow *was produced in Philadelphia and one year after you were appointed Puterbaugh Fellow at the University of Oklahoma. What do these fifteen years of constant collaboration and recognition mean to you as a playwright? How did they impact on your writing and on your life?*

MC: What I feel about constant collaboration, and any appreciation there is for the work, is eternal gratitude both for those I work with and for those who come to see or read the work.

VR: Who are the European and the American playwrights you feel most indebted to, or you appreciate the most?

MC: The playwrights I feel most indebted to are Tennessee Williams and August Strindberg. Henrik Ibsen, too and Anton Chekhov. It goes without saying that Shakespeare is the one.

VR: Your 2006 play Woman and Scarecrow seems to have marked a watershed in your perpetual experimentation with theatrical forms. You switched from Hiberno to standard English, reduced the number of characters and distanced yourself from the pattern of Greek tragedies to focus more closely on individual dilemmas and one-to-one visceral disputes. Was this transition partially or significantly motivated by the looming economic crisis and the subsequent necessity to contain production's costs?

MC: Yes, with *Woman and Scarecrow* I went back to standard English. I just got fed up writing in the Midland dialect. It wasn't about economic necessity. I never seem to have a plan, always chasing characters down by the tail and hanging on until they reveal themselves. I'm wary of plans,[mettere un punto?] I think they often are at odds with the writer's instinct which at its best is to explore and discover and allow the unexpected to happen.

VR: The Cordelia Dream *(2008) was the outcome of your first collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company. What did it mean for you, both as a Shakespeare's erudite admirer and as a professional Irish playwright, to write for such a prestigious English theatrical institution? Do you have other projects with RSC?*

MC: *The Cordelia Dream* was written for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Yes, it was thrilling to work with them then as it is now. I am currently working on two plays for them, one finished and the other in progress as they say.

VR: The Cordelia Dream*, as the title itself reveals, is your transformation of Shakespeare's* King Lear*; it explores a conflicting father-daughter relationship envenomed by the old man's jealousy of the woman's talent. Why did you decide to focus on one of the daughters only (Cordelia), leaving aside her two sisters (Goneril and Regan) and the other fascinating characters of the Shakespearean tragedy?*

MC: I focused on Cordelia because I think the heartbeat of *King Lear* is that relationship. In a way, she carries aspects of Regan and Goneril within her or so it seems to me.

VR: The dream you refer to in the 2008 play's title (The Cordelia Dream) *becomes a crucial theme in* Marble *(2009). In both plays, dreams act as forebodings of an "impeding catastrophe" and as a propulsive force that provokes dramatic changes in the character's lives, pushing them towards the pursuit of their wildest desires or, alternatively, towards death. You seem to share Freud's ideas about dreams, Eros and Thanatos and Tennesse Williams's belief that "desire is the opposite of death". Do you believe in the language of dreams and their power to reveal our innermost desires and fears? Did you consciously and craftily use dream as a device to trigger off the dramatic action?*

MC: Yes, *Marble* is powered by the dream. The dream as portent and the dream as beauty and the unattainable. That and the fact that we carry so much mystery in us, mystery that we mainly deny until it forces itself on us and makes us pay attention or, at least, acknowledge its presence.

VR: In October 2011, 16 Possible Glimpses *premiered at the Peacock Theatre in Dublin and the American production of* Phaedra Backwards *opened at McCarter Theatre in Princeton. Both are large cast plays, but very different in terms of dramatic form and content. The first one is an attempt to glimpse at the life of Russian writer Anton Chekhov through fourteen scenes. I was just wondering why the possible glimpses of the title are 16 and not 14…*

MC: I called it *16 Possible Glimpses* because I liked the title and thought it might give an impression of what I was trying to do. I know there are fourteen scenes. I just don't like the sound of fourteen. It's not a romantic number for a man. Sixteen is.This I think makes no sense to anyone except me.

VR: Phaedra Backwards *is your original retelling of the Phaedra myth and a dramatic statement of your ongoing fascination with Greek tragedy. Nevertheless, it is very different from earlier plays inspired by classic tragedies like* By the Bog of Cats… *or* Ariel*. To start with, the action of* Phaedra Backwards *does not take place in Ireland and the characters do not speak in dialect. Setting and language apart, the time as described in the stage directions is "Now and then. Then and now. Always". Did Sallust's words "These things never happened, but are always"*

(Sallust, Of Gods and The World*), quoted by Roberto Calasso in the epigraph of* The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony *guide you someway? Did you want to be as universal as possible given that the play was meant to be produced in Princeton?*

MC: I wanted a timeless quality to *Phaedra Backwards*. It seemed to me that nothing was to be gained by nailing it down timewise or geographically. The myth has a timelessness about it and I was trying to respond to that in the truest way I knew. Yes, "These things never happened, but are always" – Sallust puts it where I imagine it to be.

VR: In the course of your career, you have also written children plays: Meat and Salt *(2003), and* The Giant Blue Hand *(2009). You have four children aged between seven and fifteen. Did they inspire you? How was the experience of delving into a theatrical language imagined and shaped so as to attract and entertain children? I was lucky enough to attend a performance of* The Giant Blue Hand *in 2009, and I remember you did not spare your young audiences a certain amount of violence and suffering. Despite the happy ending, the play certainly had some dark, appalling elements in it. Did you mean, or maybe wish, to bring back to life the atmosphere of the plays you wrote as a child, the ones you performed with your siblings in the little theatre in the shed?*

MC: I have written three children plays so far: *Meat and Salt*, *The Giant Blue Hand* and have just finished a new play for The Ark called *Beetlefang*. I enjoy writing for children. It's a different energy, more free in some aspects. They aren't as conservative as us adults and have no problem with the incongruous and the potential for magic and swift plot changes and contradictions. It is amazing. Maybe it goes back to the plays in the shed I wrote as a child, which were dark and horrific and always had a happy ending.

VR: Your plays have been translated into a number of different languages, among which Bulgarian, Chinese, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Do you usually play a role or get involved in the translation process? Do you like talking to the translator, guide him/her in the difficult task of re-creating your wor(l)ds? Do you attempt to read the translation once it is over?

MC: A lot of the plays have been translated into other languages. Usually I am not consulted in these matters but I am always happy to talk through matters or areas of difficulty.

Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies, n. 4 (2014), pp. 259-260
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Libri ricevuti / Books received

Colin Barr, Michele Finelli, Anne O'Connor (eds), *Nation/Nazione. Irish Nationalism and the Italian Risorgimento*, Dublin, University College Dublin Press, 2014, pp. 245. €50. ISBN 978-1-906359-59-1.

Eugenio Biagini, *Storia dell'Irlanda dal 1845 a oggi*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2014, pp. 242. €18. ISBN 978-88-15-25065-0.

Scott Brewster, Michael Parker (eds), *Irish Literature since 1990. Diverse Voices*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2011 (paperback edition), pp. 300. £15,79. ISBN 978-0-7190- 8560-4.

Giuseppe Cafiero, *Los fantasmas de Joyce. Pieza teatral en 3 actos y 16 escenas*, trad. par Wenceslao Maldonado, Buenos Aires, Editorial Parabola, 2014, pp. 146. $109. ISBN 978-987-1447-96-1.

Mariavita Cambria, *Irish English. Language, History and Society*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2012, pp. 154. €12. ISBN 978-88-498-3486-4.

Manuela Ceretta, *Il momento irlandese. L'Irlanda nella cultura politica francese tra restaurazione e secondo impero*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2013, pp. 159. €27. ISBN 978-88-6372-605-3.

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Anthony Roche, *Synge and the Making of Modern Irish Drama*, Dublin, Carysfort Press, 2013, pp. 288. €20. ISBN 978-1-904505-64-8.

Enrico Terrinoni, *Attraverso uno specchio oscuro. Irlanda e Inghilterra nell'Ulisse di James Joyce*, Mantova, Universitas Studiorum, 2014, pp. 202. €14. ISBN 978-88-97683-38-4.

Pilar Villar-Argái (ed.), *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland. The Immigrantin Contemporary Irish Literature*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2014, pp. 273. £65. ISBN 978-0-719-08928-2.

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Recensioni / Reviews

Irene De Angelis, *The Japanese Effect in Contemporary Irish Poetry*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. xvi+193. ISBN 978-0-230-24895-3.

Irene De Angelis, Research Fellow at the University of Turin, is not new to the topic of 'Hiberno-Japanese' relations. Back in 2007, with Joseph Woods she co-edited *Our Shared Japan: An Anthology of Contemporary Irish Poetry* which shows the strong and rather peculiar bond between these two distant islands. A bond that, as we can read in her new book *The Japanese Effect in Contemporary Irish Poetry* (2012), has significantly deepened in the course of the twentieth century.

For centuries Japan has been "absent from Western culture, except as a distant reverie" (3), a place of imagination and of legendary accounts. Its isolation, caused as much by an inconvenient geographical position as by the resolutions of myopic rulers, has contributed to its aura of mystery, and ultimately to its charm. Even in the time of globalisation Japan still appears baffling and enigmatic in the eyes of most Westerners, and thus extremely fascinating. Probably, in the West we are not thoroughly aware of the fact that Japanese aesthetics has influenced European and North American taste to a significant degree. This is why De Angelis' book is important. It testifies to the weight that Japanese culture has had in the shaping of much Western poetry.

As De Angelis clarifies in the "Introduction" to her book, this Western interest in Japan started in the second half of the nineteenth century, after Commodore Matthew Perry had breached Japan's isolationism for the sake of trade. Thanks to the ensuing vogue of *Japonisme*, via Imaginism and the rediscovery of ancient epigrammatic poetry, 'Oriental' taste and aesthetics entered Western culture for good. In the early twentieth century, together with the French, intellectuals such as Lafcadio Hearn, Oscar Wilde and W.B. Yeats were responsible for the popularization of the Japanese style. Thus, the 'Japanese effect' in contemporary Irish poetry is the trace of a modernist fad that the Irish passed on to the West.

Even though not all-encompassing, De Angelis' research is extremely well accomplished. She deals with a wide and varied selection of Irish poets, whose work she analyses with a well versed knowledge in Japanese poetic structures and conventions. The outcome of her research is structured around six chapters that comprise aspects of the work of Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon, Ciaran Carson, Gabriel Rosenstock, Michael Hartnett, Paul Maldoon, Thomas Kinsella, Eoghan Ó Tuairisc, Anthony Glavin, Andrew Fitzsimons, Sinéad Morrissey and Joseph Woods.

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The first chapter, titled "Petals on Sandymount Strand", is dedicated to the recently disappeared Seamus Heaney. Heaney, who visited Japan twice, cultivated a lifelong interest in Japanese poetry. His poetry went through a "haiku phase" when he was confronted with grave loss and mourning. Writing haikus helped him express his melancholy or, as the Japanese say, his *mono no aware*. Heaney found comfort in the sense of absence and reticence that short Japanese poetic structures, like the haiku and the tanka, are able to convey. He appreciated the clarity and the semantic density that Japanese poets like Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson and Kotabayashi Issa mastered. They wouldn't use "unessential frills which obfuscate the central image" (17), but would rather rely on the power of suggestion.

The Japanese themed work of Derek Mahon and of Ciaran Carson are the subject of respectively the second and the third chapters, titled "Snow Was General All Over Japan" and "Self-Contained Images and the Invisible Cities of Tokyo". Of Mahon, De Angelis takes into account unpublished materials included in the Derek Mahon Papers at Emory University. Hers is an experiment in French genetic criticism which she supports with pictures of Mahon's crossed out drafts. De Angelis reveals all the stages that turned the unpublished poem "Hiroshima" into the 1975 poem "The Snow Party". The pictures show Mahon's efforts to subtract from the text, a *labor limae* at the service of both aesthetic and political engagement. For Ciaran Carson, who visited the country in 1998, Japan is a psychedelic experience instead. During his five-day visit he was struck and exhilarated by the utter foreignness of Tokyo. Comparing Carson's imagery to the work of Italo Calvino, De Angelis argues that "Carson's Tokyo is an 'invisible city', or a multiplicity of 'invisible cities'" (65). Reminiscing the "Tears in Rain" speech by Rutger Hauer in *Blade Runner* (1982; "I've seen things…"), the author explains that Japan has had the greatest impact on Carson's imagination.

Probably, the following three chapters represent the most interesting part of this book. The fourth chapter, "The Gentle Art of Disappearing", analyses the differences in the work of three Irish authors of haiku, Gabriel Rosenstock, Michael Hartnett and Paul Maldoon. The premise of this chapter is that haiku poetry has become an international form. Indeed, its popularity is attested by the World Haiku Festival, established in 1998, and by various Haiku societies around the world. Chapter number five instead, tackles one of the most painful moments in the history of the twentieth century, the bombing of Hiroshima. In "Tu n'as Rien Vu à Hiroshima", De Angelis explores the multifarious ways in which Thomas Kinsella, Eoghan Ó Tuairisc and Anthony Glavin managed to "represent the unrepresentable" (115).

Finally the last chapter, "Between East and West", contextualises the work of three younger authors, Andrew Fitzsimons, Sinéad Morrissey and Joseph Woods. All of them have a deeper link with Japan. Fitzsimons has married a Japanese woman and has moved to Tokyo, while Morrissey and Woods have

lived there for some time. Their image of Japan differs significantly from that of the older poets discussed here. It is not a place of the imagination, but of emigration. Their viewpoint is candid, devoid of that hardwired sin of exoticism which usually taints our image of Japan, and thus they are "reluctant to accept the idea of an affinity between Ireland and Japan" (145). To them Japanese poetry is an inspiration more than a model for poetic composition. They use it to expose their alienness, their bitterness and frustration, but also, as the following words by Fitzsimons show, their love, "I live in Tokyo, and I love Tokyo, but it is by no stretch of the imagination a beautiful place. It is surrounded by ugliness, intense ugliness and chaos" (144).

De Angelis' book is filled with beauty and is a pleasure to read. She guides the reader through the discovery of an aspect of Irish poetry that is probably not so well known. Most importantly she manages to highlight the impact that Japanese poetry has had on contemporary Western poetry at large. Her approach is crisp and fresh like the poetry she investigates. Moreover, through her description of the "Japanese effect", we are introduced to the specificities of some contemporary Irish poetry, i.e. its political engagement, which is not limited to Irish troubles, and its preoccupation with aesthetics, balance and reticence. It is commendable that De Angelis never gives way to exoticisms and final sentences. Admittedly, there is one thought we are left with that looks like an ultimate truth: "What the Japanese beauty is I don't know. There are so many varieties of Japan" (144).

Arianna Gremigni

Mariavita Cambria, *Irish English. Language, History and Society*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2012, pp. 154. ISBN 978-88-498-3486-4.

What is Irish English? Which are its origins, development and key features? Which, following the demise of Irish Gaelic, has been the role of language in constructing a new identity and culture in a country subjected to a colonisation process stretching over many centuries and whose psyche is still now strongly marked by "a fractured identity continually renegotiating its own position between two languages and partly expressing its instability" (12)? These are some of the questions to which the interesting, well grounded, persuasive and lively written book by Mariavita Cambria tries to provide an answer by acutely exploiting the scholarly traditions dealing respectively with Irish English and with theories of the postcolonial, but even more by investigating the specificities of the historical, social and cultural background of the language also through the analysis of a selection of well chosen texts used as case studies.

Thus, while Cambria's main intention here is to investigate the case of Ireland as a sort of "colonial laboratory" (15), where the English applied and

experimented with colonial strategies which were, at a later stage, applied all over the world contributing to the construction of the British Empire, she does this in the first place by using the metaphor of language as house or home to describe the relationship between the mother tongue and the language imposed by the colonial power, specifically the British Empire, and arguing that "The British Empire did not build homes but houses. Houses made of British stone, of the English Language" (11). From this it follows that Irish English, the variety of English spoken nowadays in Ireland, can be considered as one of the first 'Englishes' which have been the subject of so many academic works for the last decades.

To support her argument, the author illustrates the main factors playing a role not only in the construction of Ireland and Irish people as the 'colonial other', but also in the mechanisms that contribute to the variety of Irish English. And it is in order to provide examples for her theory, that she undertakes an Hallidayan approach to texts, considered as units of meaning and as the place where representation is created. Therefore, besides the four Chapters into which it is divided, the book contains twelve "Insets" which run through the volume and exemplify how "representation and language go hand in hand and cannot be separated when discussing Irish English" (14). The Insets include different genres and text types, they range from paintings to letters and embody the place where concrete examples of the main issues of the volume are given.

In Chapter 1, "Ireland: the Dislocation of language", Cambria rephrases Homi Bhabha's pivotal study and highlights the links between Ireland and the dislocation of representation when the other that is represented has the same skin colour of the subject representing. In particular, she here accounts for the inclusion of Ireland in the framework of postcolonial studies by illustrating some of the most recurrent techniques of representation. Extracts taken from Derricke's *Image of Ireland* (1578) and Keating's *The History of Ireland* (1620) are given and analysed as examples of the representation of Irish people during the Elizabethan period showing how the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer was often built in terms of dichotomous pairs.

In her second chapter "Inventing a Celtic audience: the birth of the Abbey Theatre", the author tackles the issue of nationalism and the construction of national identity in postcolonial contexts. The chapter addresses the problem of how a counter narrative was created and elaborated in Ireland in order to get rid of the British conquerors. A huge role was played by the founding of the Abbey Theatre which helped the recovery and creation of a cultural heritage and which "runs parallel to the choice of theatre as a form that provided a sound basis for a political process of liberation" (59). Lady Gregory's *Our Irish Theatre* (1899) is included as Inset 6 to exemplify the idea of a counter narrative contrasting the stereotyping *Stage Irishman.*

While the first two chapters constitute the theoretical framework for considering Ireland a postcolonial context, Chapter 3 and 4 investigate the

issue of the language and link the case of Irish English to the more general issue of the English language varieties. The title of Chapter 3 "Irish English: History and origins" clearly shows the aim of the chapter. It illustrates the historical and linguistic process that gave birth to Irish English. The Chapter shows the role that the repressive British language policies played in the language shift that brought most Irish people to the partial abandonment of Gaelic in favour of English. The extract from *The Statues of Kilkenny* (1367), given as Inset 10, epitomizes the brutality of some English laws.

Chapter 4 "A concise outline of Irish English grammar", shifts its focus to the main features of Irish English and provides examples of how this variety of English works in terms of vocabulary, phonetics and syntax. After illustrating the main approaches in the studies of Irish English, the Chapter accounts for the links between Irish English and Gaelic. It also stresses the fact that some of the features of Irish English are common in other varieties of English confirming the theory of Irish English as a contact variety. The use of "ye" in a letter from an Irish emigrant living in the U.S. given as Inset 12, is an example of this.

In conclusion, while one of the merits of the volume lies in the detailed language analysis related to the more general picture of postcolonial studies inserted in a terrain where linguistics meets cultural studies, Mariavita Cambria's book also provides the reader with a fascinating analysis of how language and imperialistic power are strongly interwoven in postcolonial environments and highlights the painful relation many colonized countries have with their stepmother tongue.

Gemma Persico

Villar-Argái Pilar (ed.), *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland. The Immigrant in Contemporary Irish Literature*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2014, pp. 273. ISBN 978-071908928-2.

It is difficult to imagine a more dispiriting time to review this collection of essays. Race relations in Ireland are at a seemingly all time low. This is particularly evident in my own - times utterly depressing times beautifully bewildering – north. In May of this year James McConnell, a firebrand evangelical pastor, described Islam as "heathen", "satanic" and "a doctrine spawned in hell". Even more ignominious than these remarks was the support McConnell received from First Minister Peter Robinson who described Muslims in a television broadcast as trustworthy enough "to go down to the shops for [him]", but not for much else! He offered a public apology of sorts, one that did not, however, prevent Anna Lo, Alliance MLA and the country's first Chinese born parliamentarian, from resigning. If ever a serious engagement with constructions of otherness in Ireland was called for then surely now is the time. For although still predomi-

nantly monochrome, literature produced on the island is undoubtedly beginning to display a much more deliberate and contemplative approach to inward migration, something capable of facilitating change in the wider social arena.

Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland is a wide-ranging and even collection of eighteen essays exploring the emerging multiethnic character of Irish literature written in English. Discussing contemporary poetry, fiction (long and short), and drama, it embraces a healthy soup of genres and writers, some well known within the Irish canon, some not. Examining the cultural impact of inward migration, especially on literary representations of the Other, the work addresses a substantial critical lacuna. For while much has been written on constructions of ethnic otherness in the past, the immigrant and itinerant margins depicted in twenty-first-century texts have received less scrutiny from scholars. Addressing this imbalance, the collection has very clear parameters. It is primarily concerned with the relationship between white Irish "hosts" and immigrant "guests", those brief and abiding encounters embodying myriad subtle and not so subtle, heart-full and disheartened, leaden and splendidly slippery, dynamics. The book considers the effect of immigration on Irish culture, especially areas of stasis and change, asking when and why diversity or hybridity is embraced, or alternatively, when and why "hosts" batten down the ethnonational hatches. It interrogates the concept of multiculturalism and what this means for contemporary Irish writers. Central concerns in these essays are: "How has literature in Ireland responded to inward migration? Have Irish writers reflected in their work (either explicitly or implicitly) the new influx of immigration? If so, are elements of Irish traditional culture and community maintained or transformed" (5). Divided into four sections (I "Irish Multiculturalisms Obstacles and Challenges", II "Rethinking Ireland as a Postnationalist Community", III " 'The Return of the Repressed': 'Performing' Irishness through Cultural Encounters", IV "Gender and the City") the volume discusses texts produced during a time period commencing roughly a decade before the birth of the Celtic Tiger up until 2012. The emphasis is on how Irish writers conceptualise inward migration and multiculturalism. The introduction makes it clear that the viewpoint of the Other lies beyond the bounds of this study. While it is true that such considerations necessitate a full-length work, I nevertheless feel that an opportunity to translate critical multiculturalism to something more "inter", something messier and more vigorous, has been lost by that exclusion. And yet, accents do mingle in this collection, accents informed by discourses of race, gender and, crucially with regards to inward migration in Ireland, class. Strangely, the latter variable is not flagged up in the introduction, an omission rectified, however, by Charlotte McIvor's solid and compelling research.

Opening with a reminder of Patrick Lonergan's injunction that "it is important not to exaggerate the value of white middle-class writers producing plays for white-middle class audiences about the marginalization of Ireland's most recent immigrants" (2004, 150), McIvor's paper explores the work of

three white Irish-born male playwrights, Donal O'Kelly, Declan Gorman, and Charlie O'Neill. It is not only thematic preoccupations that attracted McIvor to these writers but also their longstanding involvement with the Irish community arts movement, a movement that emerged out of what was possibly the worst period of the Troubles, the 1970s. McIvor's socially situated analysis provides an overview of community theatre on the island. Demonstrating awareness of discursive interaction between race and genre, it is a useful essay which could function as a roadmap, or at least spark ideas, among writers wishing to construct the subaltern as speaking/seeking/seeing subject, or among those wishing to facilitate participation and creation out on the protean margins, a space always moving beyond and around narrow binarisms. This sense of marginal restlessness is evident throughout Amanda Tucker's analysis of short and long fiction. Tucker's contribution underpins the pivotal point that "a wider context than an immigrant/native binary is necessary to truly grasp Irish multiculturalism" (61). Affiliations are manifold. One's position with regard to the centre eschews any notion of stasis. Tucker's use of the sociological term "transmigration" – suggesting as it does "immigration that is multi-directional, open, and continuous" (61) – is particularly germane to Ireland. Inward migration did not begin with the Celtic Tiger; neither did it begin, as McIvor suggests, in the 1950s. Ireland's history is one of arrival-departure-arrival, and again. Despite the post-partition drive to construct a single subject north and south, monolithic and Catholic/monolithic and Protestant, Ireland has always been a space of contested identities, a space of identities-in-the-making. Drawing attention to "systemic inequalities of gender, race, and geography" (58), Tucker's sensitive and balanced political readings of Roddy Doyle, Claire Keegan, Emma Donaghue and Cauvery Madhavan help to highlight the slipperiness of connections and the shiftiness of the centre/periphery divide. Tucker's analysis of Emma Donaghue's novel *Landing* (2007) is particularly interesting, drawing attention, as it does, to the potential of "chick lit" for redescribing world, the first step, according to Salman Rushdie, towards "changing it" (1991, 13). Change is sadly absent in Kinga Olszewska's poem "Site for Sale" discussed in Pilar Villar-Argáiz's chapter "'A Nation of Others': the Immigrant in Contemporary Irish poetry". The speaker in the poem, inquiring about a "Site for sale to locals in the area", is told that she is not local enough despite being resident in the area for ten years. Villar-Argáiz rightly compares this discrimination to "colonial treatment of the Irish by the British" (66). Olszewska is overlooked in favour of a local. And perhaps, to a certain extent, something similar happens in this essay. Whilst her inclusion in a text about Irish born writers is laudable, the brief discussion of her poem could be viewed as an introduction to the real subjects of the piece, Colette Bryce, Mary O'Donnell and Michael O'Loughlin. Spanning urban/rural and north/south divides, Villar-Argáiz's selection of poets covers a good geographic area, and by including O'Laughlin her paper also incorporates

the perspective of the returned, long-travelled, migrant. These finely-tuned close readings depict an Ireland in which the newly-arrived, conceptualised in the press as "hungry, pushy, shifty, gypsy" (67), are emphatically Other. Nevertheless, the trajectory of this group of essays indicates a general shift in awareness away from mere representation of multiculturalism towards what Edna Longley refers to as "engaging with genuine differences and making them fruitful" (2001, 5, 9). In the final essay in this section Margarita Estévez-Saá suggests that there has been a demonstrable increase in the prevalence of the ethnic Other in contemporary Irish fiction: "An exhaustive study of the Irish novels published since 1990 reveals it is not until the twenty-first century that Irish writers begin to systematically include the representation of immigrants in Irish society" (80). Discussing, among others, Hugo Hamilton's novel *Hand in the Fire* (2010), possibly the first in Ireland to be written from an eastern European perspective, Estévez-Saá states "Hamilton is able to offer the Irish reader a brilliant example of how the immigrant is able to "enter into the story of the country at last", becoming "a participant, a player, an insider taking action" (90).

Part II of the collection, "'Retinking Ireland' as a postnationalist community" effectively argues that Irish writers are interrogating the concept of nation as a fixed entity, offering instead a subject that is radically in process, a subject affiliated with any number of flags or no flag at all. These essays suggest that the old loyalties, congealed in blood and time, are becoming increasingly frayed at the seams. New associations are being invented, and new communities imagined. Identities, as Staurt Hall has pointed out, are not "an essence but a positioning" (1994, 395). Eva Roa White, in a detailed and astute essay entitled "'Who is Irish?': Roddy Doyle's Hyphenated Identities", coins the useful term "identity migration" to describe such positioning. She uses the phrase to suggest a "diaspora of the mind or inner voyage from one's state of origin into another that affiliates one to another culture, race, gender or ideology with which one feels a connection" (96), thus infusing identity with a sense of mobility antithetical to the idea of monoculture. Not that Ireland ever was a monocultural space as the author rightly points out. However, like Charlotte McIvor, she places too much emphasis on the 1950s in relation to inward migration. In section I, McIvor, identifying certain groups who have lived in Ireland in small numbers since the 1950s, mentions Jews. By the 1950s the Jewish community in Belfast, a very influential group within the city, had been in existence for approximately ninety years. Otto Jaffe, a German born Jewish businessman, was twice elected Lord Mayor of Belfast. Chaim Herzog, 6th president of Israel, was born in Belfast. His father, Yitzhak Halevi Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Israel, had been the spiritual leader of the Belfast congregation from 1916-1919. By 1898, Belfast had a Hebrew National School and two synagogues. There were also smaller Jewish communities in Derry and Lurgan. Another important group, not mentioned at all, was the Italian community. By the mid 1800s Little Patrick Street in Belfast was home

to numerous Italian families: Marconi, Fusco, Rossi, Forte, Notarantonio, Vergatti, Capitanio and the Morellis. Italian names listed for Nelson Street includes: Pasquale, Dragonetti, Sacilio and Marcello. This area of Belfast became known as "Little Italy". The community was, however, broken up and spread across the city as a result of post World War II building development. Leo D'Agostino in an interview for BBC Legacies (2004) describes Italian migration to Ireland as "*pendolare*". Evoking a sense of constant to and fro, "*pendolare*" also proves an apposite description of Irish harvest migration to Scotland which took place throughout the nineteenth century. Open-ended and multi-directional, it was a transmigration, something not all migrants desire. In Hugo Hamilton's *Hand in the Fire*, Vid, a Serbian migrant, wants nothing more than to belong somewhere, a single clearly identified somewhere. Escaping the horrors of war in the Balkans, Vid comes to Ireland and tries desperately to fit in, to assimilate. But as Carmen Zamorana Llena states in her nuanced textual analysis of Hamilton's work in chapter seven: "This approach initially relegates him into a passive, non-participatory existence in his host country, which in turn perpetuates his sense of *heimatlos*" (116). It is only through an act of civic responsibility, "by engaging actively and critically in the life of the country that Vid finds a sense of belonging and is able to transform Ireland into his own *Heimat*" (116). This chapter opens with a brief discussion of Mary Robinson's attempt to broaden the boundaries of the phrase "the Irish people" by including "all those emigrants and exiles who live beyond the territory of the nation state" (108). Carmen Zamorana Llena concludes by arguing in favour of a move away from this type of ethnic based identity, acknowledging instead the Irishness of the Other within one's own community. For as Anne Fogarty, drawing on the work of Paul Ricouer, states "self and Other are mutually constitutive" (121), a position the state is reluctant to accept. Fogarty recognises that literary texts "mirror and reflect upon aspects of the problematic of immigration as enunciated by Irish sociologists and political theorists while also attempting to undo the silence frequently associated with this topic" (122). She argues convincingly that "the short story is a more flexible form than the novel" and thereby "has the capacity to register the effects of social change more rapidly than longer narratives" (123). Her fresh and insightful close readings of a range of stories go some way to proving this point. Drawing attention to an area of Irish literature that is sometimes overlooked, Fogarty observes that "the stories considered in this chapter evidence the conjoint concern of a wide range of writers with the figure of the immigrant" (130). This section concludes with Katarzyna Poloczek very full engagement with the poetry of Sinéad Morrissey, Leontya Flynn, Mary O'Malley and Michael Hayes. Poloczek states that "poetic representations of the 'new Irish' by Irish writers tend to be full of lyrical, pensive but, sometimes, also stereotypical depictions" (139). There is a need for greater specificity not only among poets, but also among academics. Phrases, such as migrants

from "the new EU member states" (134), prove unhelpful. This suggests an indistinguishable mass rather than diversity, disposable identities rather than identities in process. Poloczek's chapter ends with an excellent choice of poem, Michael Haye's "Survivor" which lists some, not all, of the peoples who have disembarked on Irish shores, reminding us that the unprecedented wave of immigrants associated with the Celtic Tiger was preceded by an unprecedented wave and an unprecedented wave and an unprecedented wave.

"'The Return of the Repressed': 'Performing' Irishness through Intercultural Encounters" is the third and, containing five chapters, longest section in the collection. Part III opens with Paula Murphy's "'Marooned Men in Foreign Cities': Encounters with the Other in Dermot Bolger's *The Ballymun Trilogy*" (2010), a work which, according to Murphy, demonstrates "how Irish identity in the twenty-first century must be understood and defined in relation to immigration as well as emigration" (156). Whilst this is undoubtedly true, Bolger's staging of the plays with the same actors playing different characters from different geographical backgrounds could be viewed as a negation of specificity and a move towards essentialist levelling. However, Murphy's stalwart and heartfelt defence of Bolger's delineation of the commonalities of experience and the efficacy that such shared space can unleash in the political arena does much to distance the plays from any notion of a well-meaning liberal humanism intent upon diluting difference. Not that difference remains fixed, it can, and usually does, take on a different patina when the door is opened to our own strangeness. Julia Kristeva's work on the foreign and Wolfgang Welsch's concept of transculturality provide the theoretical framework for Michaela Schrage-Früh immensely enjoyable essay "'Like a foreigner / in my native land': transculturality and Otherness in twenty-first-century Irish poetry". Schrage-Fruh draws on a fairly wide range of poets and, as should be more evident in a collection concerned with the marginalised, places centre stage the work of less well-known, emerging poets, Betty Keogh, Eileen Casey, Siobhan Daffy, and Adenike Adedoyin, concluding her contribution with a discussion of Pat Boran's poem, "Bread". It is a pity that more authors in the collection had not moved beyond the tried, the tested, the well-published, and the well-critiqued. Hugo Hamilton's work, discussed previously, is the subject of chapter twelve, Jason King's "Irish Multicultural Epiphanies: Modernity and the Recuperation of Migrant Memory in the Writing of Hugo Hamilton". Beginning with memoir, King offers a critique of Joyce and Hamilton's shoreline epiphanies, arguing that in *The Speckled People* (2003) "The modernist sensibility of transcendental homelessness is transformed into a less elitist susceptibility to feelings of homesickness, linguistic confusion, and anxieties about belonging that become registers of a 'new Irish' identity" (180). Moving on from memoir, King further examines this theme of self-realisation through fracture in Hamilton's novel *Hand in Fire*, a somewhat ubiquitous text in this collection, and yet there is no sense of traversing old ground. This is an illuminating analysis which shows how a Serbian man, Vid Ćosić, constructs an identity and field of belonging through

identification with the ancestor: "From this anachronistic narrative perspective, Hamilton's protagonist imagines the complete and utter disempowerment of the would-be emigrant – who has lost any hold on her community and is confronted with expulsion - to be akin to the predicament of the illegal immigrant on the threshold of deportation" (184). Chapter thirteen, "*The Parts*: Whiskey, Tea, and Sympathy", is an outstanding essay from Katherine O'Donnell exploring a fleeting encounter between an Irish-born radio presenter and a Nigerian-born doctor in Keith Ridgeway's comic novel, *The Parts* (2003). O'Donnell states: "no more than a few riffs in the jazz symphony of the novel, but these moments reveal so much about the practices of Irish identity and culture that they bear a forensic attention" (190), an assertion effortlessly supported by her incisive and very human reading. Part III concludes with Charles I. Armstrong's essay "Hospitality and Hauteur: Tourism, Cross-cultural Space, and Ethics in Irish Poetry". No serious engagement with multiculturalism in contemporary Ireland would be complete without a recognition of the important role tourism has played in changing the social fabric of the country. Tourists, invariably translated into an iconic and homogenising "the", have in many instances been othered as much, if not more, than inward migrant workers. Moreover, their solid contribution to the economic and cultural vibrancy of the nation is frequently dismissed or simply ignored by cultural critics. Armstrong's essay is therefore essential. It is also particularly satisfying as it interrogates the ersatz and elitist traveller/tourist dichotomy, a narrow, and tremendously tenacious, binarism. Examining a selection of poetry by Derek Mahon, Sinéad Morrissey, Mary O'Donnell, and Seamus Heaney, this analysis of literary representations of tourists ends on a positive note, "Heaney's gesture of welcome" (212).

The concluding section of the book opens with "Towards a Multiracial Ireland: *Black Baby's* Revision of Irish Motherhood". Maureen T. Reddy's reading of Clare Boylan's ground breaking novel, published in 1988, foregrounds gender and, in particular, motherhood as crucial variables in the construction of an effective and fruitful interculturalism. Reddy argues that Boylan's novel makes a case for "a thoroughgoing reassessment of Irishness and womanhood themselves, separately and together, positing antiracism as the requisite foundation for that reassessment" (217). In this lucid essay, Reddy argues very convincingly that interrogations of the racial Other, and reconfigurations of that construct, are utterly dependent upon a radical revision of constructions of Irish femininity, especially the mother. In chapter sixteen, "Beginning History Again: Gendering the Foreigner in Emer Martin's *Baby Zero*" (2007), Wanda Balzano effectively problematises any simplistic approach to interculturalism, flagging up the all important intersection of gender and class: "What needs to be added to this broad parallel is the consideration of how women experience gender differently because of their access to or lack of social privilege" (237). Not that these two variables can be cleanly separated from race. Balzano makes it clear that social privilege is "often based on the grounds of race and even

degrees of skin colour" (236). Balzano also highlights racism and stereotyping amongst migrants themselves which is important because "if these overlapping hierarchies are ignored, we run the risk of creating a feminism that serves only the interests of women who have more privilege" (238). This is a useful essay; it nudges, prods and generally shakes things up. Moreover, it draws attention to the role of the press in the perpetuation of racist attitudes, something which really should have been given much more attention – possibly a chapter - in this collection. The following essay, "'Goodnight and Joy Be with You All': Tales of Contemporary Dublin City Life", is Loredana Salis' fascinating engagement with Dublin drama. Salis focuses on Paul Mercier's unpublished *The Dublin Trilogy* (1995-1998), Sebastian Barry's *The Pride of Parnell Street* (2007), and Dermot Bolger's *The Parting Glass* (2011) in an analysis which, at times, makes use of the vernacular, thus helping to transport the reader into a Dublin cityscape. Highlighting different periods in Dublin's recent history, these plays work well together. Mercier sets his play at the height of the economic boom. In his work Ireland is a building site, a betwixt and between, signifying "the unfinished project of modernisation, suspended between its haunting past and the desire for globalisation" (252). In Barry's play, set at the turn of the century, inner city Dublin is an austere terrain in which "there is no place for those who do not conform or fail to actively participate in the country's economy" (250). The transnational movement at the end of Bolger's play offers more hope. His protagonist states that the only country he belongs to is his "wife", and that he now feels ready to enter his "native city like a foreigner" (252), meaning he now feels ready to accept his own strangeness, a prerequisite for accepting the Other. The book concludes with David Clark's ruminations on Irish crime fiction, "Mean Streets, New Lives: the Representations of Non-Irish Immigrants in Recent Irish Crime Fiction". Discussing the genre, Clark states that "Even the recent 'appropriation' of the genre by transgressive non-white, non-male or non-heterosexual protagonists has failed to alter the fact that racism, like sexism, is a 'necessary element' of crime fiction" (257). This is a statement that clearly requires explication. None was forthcoming. Nevertheless, this is an interesting essay that, analysing a wide range of texts, provides detailed close readings and a comprehensive overview of the genre in contemporary Irish writing. Ending on an encouraging note, Clark's chapter concludes a stimulating and insightful collection of essays which without doubt is essential reading for any scholar interested in contemporary Irish fiction, multiculturalism or postcolonial theory. *Literary Visions of Multicultural Ireland* is also an accessible, eminently readable, text. It is a book that could, should and hopefully will be read by people outside the academy. The publication of this collection comes at a time when racist attacks in Belfast, following the pastor and the politician's remarks, have escalated. Once again the word is made flesh.

Clare McCotter

Walsh Fintan (ed.), *That Was Us: Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance*, London, Oberon Books, 2013, pp. 256. ISBN 978-17831-9035-5.

A few yeas ago, Fintan Walsh challenged audiences with his groundbreaking edited collection of plays, *Queer Notions: New Plays and Performances from Ireland* (published by Cork UP in 2010), which for the first time recorded the work of contemporary queer Irish playwrights and performers. This recent edited volume is another compelling effort that acts, once again, as testimony to the vitality of contemporary Irish performance, in spite of major cutbacks in the arts in Ireland over the last fifteen years. *That Was Us…* takes its lead from the connections of performers, practitioners, companies, venues with the Dublin Theatre Festival from 2007 to 2013, and was commissioned by the Irish Theatre Institute. The title is taken from ANU Production's site-specific piece, *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012), a work which features in several essays that make up the book, and rightly so. "I borrow this line as the book's title", Walsh admits, "[…] because it serves to remind us of the ongoing role theatre and performance have to play in exploring questions of identity, responsibility, and civic participation" (1).

The five parts that make up the collection – "Theatres of Testimony", "Auto/Biographical Performance", "Bodies out of Bounds", "Placing Performance", and "Touring Performance" – are focused on key political, social, and cultural issues of present-day Ireland, emphasizing on the promising future of Irish theatre and performance. More scholarly, theoretical works by academics in the field of Theatre and Performance Studies are complemented and enriched by emotionally-charged first-hand recollections by practitioners – including pieces by the ANU Productions Co-Artistic Director Louise Lowe, the actor Dylan Tighe from The Stomach Box, the dancer John Scott, the writer Michael West, and the co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of Bronketalkers Gary Keegan. In this, the book departs from the conventional academic publication, and clearly aims at a much broader audience, as perhaps implied by the title – performance is where "we" all speak to our own personal and public traumas, past haunts, yet with a will to move on and to effect change in the world that surrounds us, here and now.

In Walsh's introductory essay, "The Power of the Powerless: Theatre in Turbulent Times", we are led to recall the peculiarities of "theatre and performance in a time of crisis" (2), during which Ireland has moved from the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger to recession, and, more recently, has witnessed the scandals ensuing from revelations of State and Church involvement in child and woman abuse (the 2009 Murphy and Ryan, and the 2013 McAleese reports). This has been responded to by the artists gathered in the volume, says Walsh, through recourse to an engagement with the concepts of "space" and "place", which in the collection is exemplified by site-specific and site-responsive performance; "remembering, witnessing, and questioning

responsibility", as shown mainly by documentary theatre; "staging marginalised and minor stories", such as those of queer and/or post-queer subjects following the decriminalisation of homosexuality, of working class citizens, and of other marginalised groups; and "feeling and affect" (10-16). Walsh has previously interrogated contemporary performance and culture from the standpoint of scholarship on feeling(s) and affect(s), as in his recent *Theatre and Therapy* (2013); and, indeed, this seems to form a common ground among the seventeen essays and reflections collected in *That Was Us…*, spanning biographical performance to adaptations for the stage, contemporary dance, and plays for children, among others. What Walsh has in mind is

> an affective power, mainly trading in a politics of feeling, emotion, and sensation (rather than rhetoric), which seems to appropriately capture and intervene in the variously shamed, anxious, and disaffected moods that characterise our times. In this it can be seen as a response to tangible economic, political, and social difficulties, but it might also be interpreted as a fiery antidote to the steely discourse of austerity, and even political and religious cynicism. (15)

Walsh does not fail to do justice to the commitment and support shown to the arts by newly established statutory and other organisations and bodies during the first decade of the 2000s, such as the National Academy of Dramatic Art at Trinity, the National Campaign for the Arts, Culture Ireland, as well as the "ReViewed" and the "Next Stage" strands at Dublin Theatre Festival. In post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, companies have been suffering from major cutbacks for the production of their works, and thus have been forced to ensure a maximum chance of economic success in terms of return from money invested in projects: "This shift has gravely impacted upon the economic lives of artists […] but it also altered the way work is made, and the kind of work that's made" (3). This is a crucial aspect which Irish practitioners are increasingly called to deal with by inventing innovative approaches to their work.

That Was Us… brings together different generations of artists, while shedding light on traditionally marginalised sectors of performance-making in Ireland, namely, dance and children's theatre. As such, the book offers both fresh takes on more established and critically discussed works, and innovative looks at the work of, for instance, Michael Keegan-Dolan and his company, Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre, as well as the children's theatre company, Theatre Lovett. Concern with national matters is counterpoised by the international profile of Irish theatre, which is explored in greater detail at the end of the book. In the essays by scholars, the internationally acclaimed works by Martin McDonagh and Conor McPherson, and the biographical plays by Marina Carr and Emma Donoghue – playwrights who all belong to the much-celebrated 1990s generation – alternate with the canonical plays and with new adaptations for the stage of J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, and James Joyce, as well as Sebastian Barry and Samuel Beckett. New playwriting

includes the pieces of Úna McKevitt's, Veronica Dyas, Amy Conroy, and Mark O'Halloran, whose take on queer subjectivities on stage has been welcomed by audiences, critics, and academics, and the trilogy by ANU Productions – *World's End Lane* (2010), *Laundry* (2011), and *The Boys of Foley Street* (2012), and, the pieces of documentary theatre of Brokentalkers – *Silver Stars*, *The Blue Boy*, and *Have I No Mouth*, which the company presented from 2008 to 2012. The artists and characters' voices are intermingled with the activity of established and new companies and groups; among them, the aforementioned ANU Productions, Brokentalkers, and Theatre Lovett; THEATREclub; The Company; THISISPOPBABY; The Stomach Box company; The Corn Exchange; PanPan; Rough Magic Theatre Company; and the eponymous Druid Theatre Company, a continuing example of success not only at home, but also abroad, mainly due to the skilful artistic direction by Garry Hynes.

Part I begins with the leading theatre scholar Brian Sinlgleton's reading of ANU Production's trilogy, in which the company explores the potential of site-specific performance to relate to pressing social issues such as prostitution, woman abuse at the Magdalene Laundries, and the heroin epidemic in 1970s and 1980s Dublin. As recalled by Singleton himself, in their works "[r]eal life was as much performance itself as the theatrical one but it was also spectating, moving in and out of the spaces, journeys of the performers, and intervening occasionally with the dialogue" (37). Similarly for the Brokentalkers and their "theatre of the real", where, says Charlotte McIvor, they constantly push limits to extremes, rejecting conventional dramaturgy in favour of "staged interruptions in form and genre" (55) as they shift the subject of their work from gay men's coming of age from the 1950s to the 1980s, to Ireland's Reformatory and Industrial Schools, to meditating upon death. In Part II, Oonagh Murphy's essay on female-authored queer performance exemplifies a tendency in queer drama to "navigate the subtleties of the documentary form, creating spaces for queer bodies to exist and be recognised" while also challenging the homogenisation of the legislative, medical, and social spheres by thrusting LGBTQ issues centre stage (74). Still in Part II, Helen Meany discusses three biographical plays – Carr's *16 Possible Glimpses* (2011), on Anton Chekhov; Donoghue's *The Talk of the Town* (2012), on Maeve Brennan; and The Stomach Box's *No Worst There is None* (2009), on Gerard Manley Hopkins – that all pose interesting questions as to the meaning of "fiction" and "truth", and most importantly, where the boundaries lie between them and how, as audiences, we are supposed to relate to their crossing. Part III opens with Michael Seaver's reading of the role played by choreographer and director Michael Keegan-Dolan in the development of contemporary dance in Ireland, something he accomplished from his unusual position as "insider and outsider" in the Irish arts and culture. In works such as the Midlands Trilogy – *Giselle* (2003), *Bull* (2005), and *James son of James* (2007) – or his and his company's more recent *Rian* (2011), Keegan-Dolan shows how "the

spoken word can be betrayed by the silent body", where memory is always part of a collective project (100, 113). The collection continues with Eimear Beardmore tracing the novel approaches that characterise plays for children by Theatre Lovett – *The Girl Who Forgot to Sing Badly* (2010) and *The House That Jack Filled* (2012) – which move from a desire to bring different generations of audience together by sharing a common passion and commitment towards "theatre" (128). James Hickson opens Part IV with his discussion of representations of working-class Dubliners as they have appeared at the Dublin Theatre Festival, in works by Sebastian Barry, The Corn Exchange, ANU Productions, Phillip McMahon, Mark O'Halloran, and Amy Conroy. Trish McTighe then offers an account of Samuel Beckett as "icon of the European modernist avant-garde" as well as "a source of Irish cultural pride" (169), calling forth a reassessment of the effect of the role played by the relationship between art and commerce/the market on society in general. Lastly, Part V deals with the impact of Irish theatre on the international stage: Tanya Dean and Sara Keating offer different perspectives on the work of Druid Theatre Company, and of the marathons *DruidCasey* (2004) and *DruidMurphy* (2012) in particular, and Peter Crawley frames the works of Irish companies within a European context.

The practitioners' reflections at the end of the sections emerge as pure jewels improving the overall quality of this challenging and timely collection, as when Tigh remembers his encounter with Romeo Castellucci and his Socìetas Raffaello Sanzio's *Genesi*, which was presented at the Dublin Theatre Festival in 2000, or when Scott takes us back to his involvement with The Living Theatre after watching the Dublin performance of *Prometheus Changed* (1978) – two very powerful momentary releases of feelings and emotions centre stage. Elsewhere, Lowe, West, and Keegan in their reflection pieces question their own roles as theatre practitioners, demonstrating that there is also so much more to theatre than can be said or grasped.

That Was Us… follows by a year the publication of *The Oberon Anthology of Contemporary Irish Plays*, edited by Thomas Conway, with which the highly esteemed London-based publisher demonstrated their investment in the contemporary performance scene beyond Britain. It may very well function as a companion piece to it, thus reminding us that Irish theatre still has and will continue to have so much to offer.

Samuele Grassi

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Autori / Contributors

Michele Amedei (<micheleamedei@gmail.com>) is an art historian. He has published several articles on the relations between Nineteenth-Century Italian and British painters (Stefano Bruzzi, Giovanni Costa, Arthur Lemon, Matthew Ridley Corbet, William Blake Richmond and John Roddam Spencer Stanhope among others), and the consequent cross-fertilizations. Recently, he has expanded his interests to include Antonio Mancini and his British and Irish patrons/friends, the Florentine painter Cesare Mussini, as well as the Swiss artist Émile David.

Matteo Binasco (<matteobinasco973@hotmail.com>) cooperates with DAFIST Dipartimento di Antichità, Filosofia e Storia, Università di Genova. He is the author of *Viaggiatori e missionari nel Seicento* (2006), editor of *Little Do We Know. History and Historians of the North Atlantic* (2011), and has also published articles on missionary expansion in the Atlantic World during the early modern period. His research interests include the history of Ireland and Irish migrations to continental Europe, with particular emphasis on the Italian Peninsula, and the West Indies since the sixteenth century.

Debora Biancheri (<debora.biancheri@nuigalway.ie>) graduated in 2007 with a *laurea magistralis* from Pisa University. She holds a PhD earned in the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, National University of Ireland, Galway, where she is currently an Irish Research Council Post-Doctoral Research Fellow.

Mariavita Cambria (<mariavita.cambria@unime.it>) holds an MPhil and a PhD in "Irish Theatre Studies" from Trinity College Dublin. She is a lecturer in English Linguistics and Translation Studies at the University of Messina. Her interest in Irish Studies is reflected in her volumes *Irish English* (2012), and *Militanti, madri, mogli. Il movimento delle donne in Irlanda 1880-1890* (2001). She has also published several articles on multimodality, genre and discourse analysis, and has co-edited a book on web genres.

Marzia Di Tanna (<marziaditanna@libero.it>) is an art historian who cooperates with the Museums Commission in Rome. She teaches in the Educational Department of this Commission and is the author of essays on art history and scripts for RAI (Italian State Television).

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Benjamin Keatinge (<benkeatinge@gmail.com>) is Associate Professor and Dean at South East European University, Macedonia where he teaches English literature. He has published widely on modern Irish poetry and on Samuel Beckett. His co-edited essay volume *France and Ireland in the Public Imagination* was published in 2014.

Ciaran McDonough (<c.mcdonough1@nuigalway.ie>) is a Doctoral Researcher at the Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her work investigates Irish antiquarianism through a comparative study of nineteenth century Protestant and Catholic antiquarian cultures. She is the recipient of a Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship.

María Martínez Lirola (<maria.lirola@ua.es>) holds a PhD in English Studies. She is Full Professor at the University of Alicante (Spain). Her main areas of research are Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, multimodality and methodology. Author of five books and editor of two, Dr. Lirola has done research, given lectures and attended congresses all over the world (Sydney, 2005; South Africa 2006, 2012; México, 2008). She is a Research Fellow at the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, University of South Africa (UNISA).

Maureen Murray (<mreenamurray@gmail.com>) is a Senior at Swarthmore College. She will complete a B.A. in Linguistics and a minor in Peace and Conflict Studies. Her academic interest in the Northern Ireland conflict was fuelled by her time spent in the region visiting family and studying abroad.

Monica Randaccio (<mrandaccio@units.it>) is a Lecturer of English Language and Translation at the University of Trieste, Italy. She was awarded a PhD in contemporary Irish drama in 1998 and her research has resulted in numerous publications and conference presentations. She has written *Il teatro irlandese contemporaneo: soggettività e comunità in Friel, Murphy e Kilroy* (2001) edited the Italian translation of Friel's *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (1999), translated and edited Carville's *Observatory* (2005). In recent years her research has also focused on language teaching and drama translation.

Valentina Rapetti (<valentina.rapetti@gmail.com>) is a PhD Candidate in Anglo-American Literature at Università degli Studi Roma Tre. Her research project is focused on rewritings of Shakespeare's *Othello* by contemporary North-American female playwrights. She has translated works by Marina Carr, Morris Panych, Netta Syrett, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Anne Enright, Gary Kirkham, Sam Hall, among others, for publishing and theatre productions in Italy. She has translated scripts of TV series, documentaries, full-length films and cartoons. In 2013, she won the DARTS Award for Best Translation (Hannah Moscovitch's *East of Berlin*).

Loredana Salis (<lsalis@uniss.it>) is a Lecturer of English Literature at the University of Sassari. She obtained an MA in Irish Literature in English at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, where she also completed a PhD with a thesis on the use of Greek drama in contemporary Irish theatre. She has researched the representation of migrants and Irish Travellers on the stage, theatre and cultural encounters in global Ireland, the theatre of Dickens, Gissing and Italy, contemporary stage and screen adaptations of Elizabeth Gaskell's works, and the use of proverbs in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. She is currently working on the short fiction of Mary Shelley.

Emanuela Zirzotti (<emanuela.zirzotti@yahoo.it>) is Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Comparative literature at "Sapienza" Università di Roma, where she obtained her PhD in 2008 with a dissertation on Greek and Latin influences in the work of Seamus Heaney. Her publications include essays on W.B. Yeats, Joyce, Kavanagh, and translations. She is currently working on a monograph on Heaney.

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Volumi

Stefania Pavan, *Lezioni di poesia. Iosif Brodskij e la cultura classica: il mito, la letteratura, la filosofia*, 2006 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 1)

Rita Svandrlik (a cura di), *Elfriede Jelinek. Una prosa altra, un altro teatro*, 2008 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 2)

Ornella De Zordo (a cura di), *Saggi di anglistica e americanistica. Temi e prospettive di ricerca*, 2008 (Strumenti per la didattica e la ricerca; 66)

Fiorenzo Fantaccini, *W. B. Yeats e la cultura italiana*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 3)

Arianna Antonielli, *William Blake e William Butler Yeats. Sistemi simbolici e costruzioni poetiche*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 4)

Marco Di Manno, *Tra sensi e spirito. La concezione della musica e la rappresentazione del musicista nella letteratura tedesca alle soglie del Romanticismo*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 5)

Maria Chiara Mocali, *Testo. Dialogo. Traduzione. Per una analisi del tedesco tra codici e varietà*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 6)

Ornella De Zordo (a cura di), *Saggi di anglistica e americanistica. Ricerche in corso*, 2009 (Strumenti per la didattica e la ricerca; 95)

Stefania Pavan (a cura di), *Gli anni Sessanta a Leningrado. Luci e ombre di una* Belle Époque, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 7)

Roberta Carnevale, *Il corpo nell'opera di Georg Büchner. Büchner e i filosofi materialisti dell'Illuminismo francese*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 8)

Mario Materassi, *Go Southwest, Old Man. Note di un viaggio letterario, e non*, 2009 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 9)

Ornella De Zordo, Fiorenzo Fantaccini, *altri canoni / canoni altri. pluralismo e studi letterari*, 2011 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 10)

Claudia Vitale, *Das literarische Gesicht im Werk Heinrich von Kleists und Franz Kafkas*, 2011 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 11)

Mattia Di Taranto, *L'arte del libro in Germania fra Otto e Novecento: Editoria bibliofilica, arti figurative e avanguardia letteraria negli anni della* Jahrhundertwende, 2011 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 12)

Vania Fattorini (a cura di), *Caroline Schlegel-Schelling: «Ero seduta qui a scrivere»*. Lettere, 2012 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 13)

Anne Tamm, *Scalar Verb Classes. Scalarity, Thematic Roles, and Arguments in the Estonian Aspectual Lexicon*, 2012 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 14)

Beatrice Töttössy (a cura di), *Fonti di Weltliteratur. Ungheria*, 2012 (Strumenti per la didattica e la ricerca; 143)

Beatrice Töttössy, *Ungheria 1945-2002. La dimensione letteraria*, 2012 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 15)

Diana Battisti, *Estetica della dissonanza e filosofia del doppio: Carlo Dossi e Jean Paul*, 2012 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 16)

Fiorenzo Fantaccini, Ornella De Zordo (a cura), *Saggi di anglistica e americanistica. Percorsi di ricerca*, 2012 (Strumenti per la didattica e la ricerca; 144)

Martha L. Canfield (a cura di), *Perù frontiera del mondo. Eielson e Vargas Llosa: dalle radici all'impegno cosmopolita = Perù frontera del mundo. Eielson y Vargas Llosa: de las raíces al compromiso cosmopolita*, 2013 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 17)

Gaetano Prampolini, Annamaria Pinazzi (eds), *The Shade of the Saguaro / La sombra del saguaro : essays on the Literary Cultures of the American Southwest / Ensayos sobre las culturas literarias del suroeste norteamericano*, 2013 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 18)

Ioana Both, Ayşe Saraçgil, Angela Tarantino (a cura di), *Storia, identità e canoni letterari*, 2013 (Strumenti per la didattica e la ricerca; 152)

Valentina Vannucci, *Letture anticanoniche della biofiction, dentro e fuori la metafinzione*, 2014 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 19)

Serena Alcione, *Wackenroder e Reichardt. Musica e letteratura nel primo Romanticismo tedesco*, 2014 (Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna; 20)

Riviste

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