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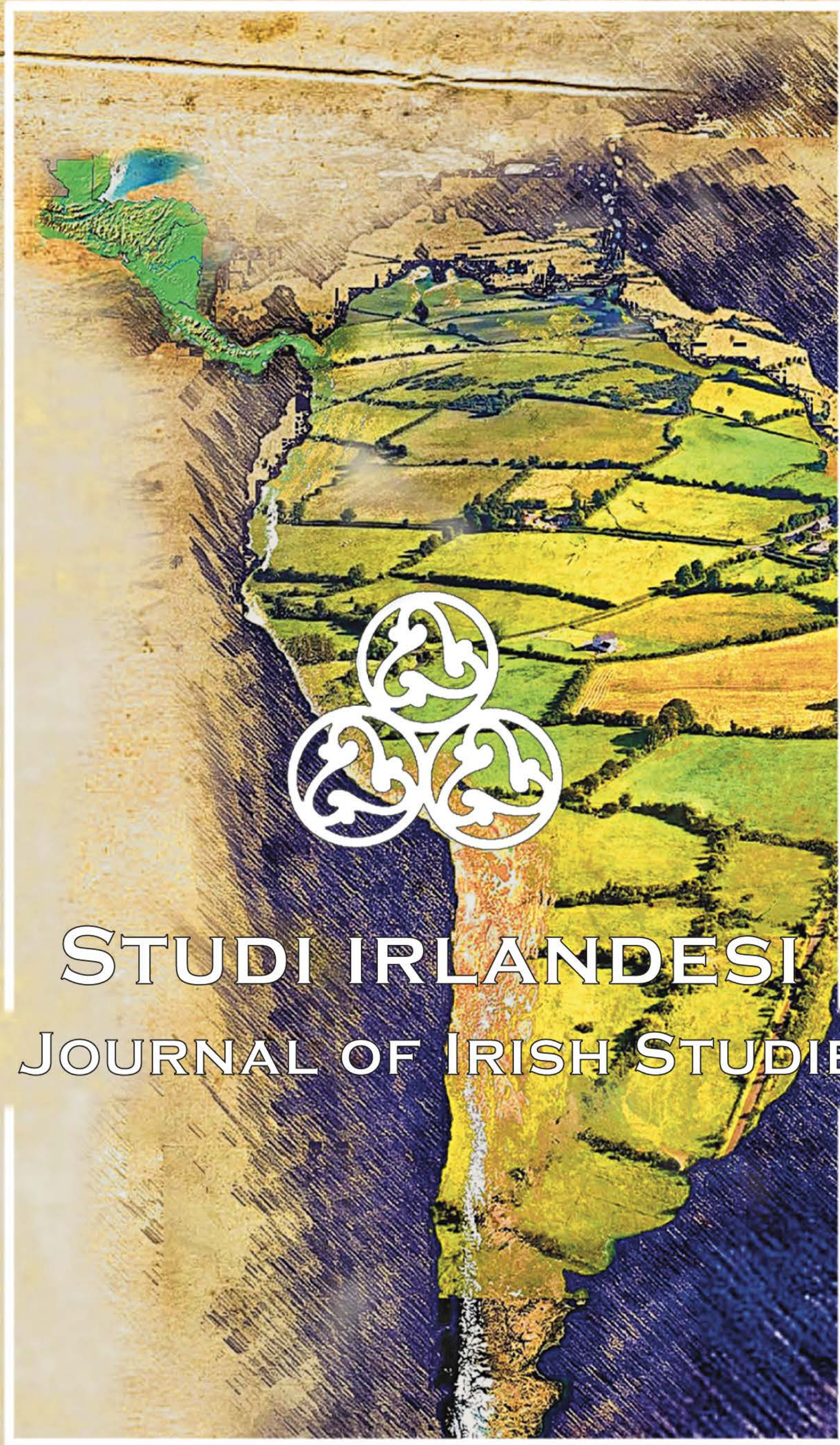

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A Journal of Irish Studies

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* * *

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In memoria di Giulio Giorello (1945-2020), grande filosofo della scienza, insostituibile ispiratore e amico, che amava l'Irlanda perché amava la libertà

Riccardo Michelucci
Journalist (<r.michelucci@libero.it>)

Se provo a riannodare i fili della memoria mi accorgo che ormai ci conoscevamo da quasi vent'anni. Da quel pomeriggio del 2001, un giorno per niente casuale – il 5 maggio – in cui sei sceso a Firenze da Milano per commemorare Bobby Sands. Eri stato invitato da un gruppo di giovani – alcuni tuoi ex allievi – e dal sottoscritto, che allora ti conosceva soltanto di fama. Quella di grande epistemologo, certo, ma anche e soprattutto di appassionato conoscitore dell'Irlanda. Era il ventennale della morte di colui che hai sempre considerato un'icona della lotta per la libertà. Non solo irlandese ma mondiale. Fu una serata memorabile di parole, di musica, di ricordi. Ti colpì molto il luogo dove avevamo organizzato l'incontro, al quale presero parte anche la giornalista Silvia Calamati, la studiosa Melita Cataldi e il gruppo musicale dei Whisky Trail. Era una chiesa non sconsacrata del centro di Firenze, l'Oratorio dei Vanchetoni, tappezzata per l'occasione di bandiere irlandesi, di foto di Bobby Sands e di manifesti contro la Thatcher e il governo britannico. Indossavi un paio di occhiali scuri a causa di una congiuntivite e lasciasti tutti a bocca aperta per il tuo commovente ricordo di Sands. Concludesti con quelle parole che ti avrei sentito ripetere spesso negli anni a venire: "la lotta irlandese è una lotta universale". Ma a colpirmi ancor più furono la tua disponibilità, la tua generosità, la tua capacità di ascoltare. Le stesse che avresti mostrato qualche anno dopo, quando venni a trovarti in un albergo di Firenze per parlarti del progetto cui stavo lavorando da tempo: un "libro nero" degli inglesi in Irlanda. Ricordo il tuo sguardo incuriosito, le tue parole di incoraggiamento, gli immancabili consigli bibliografici. "In Italia ci sarebbe proprio bisogno di un volume così", mi hai detto, dandomi la spinta finale e decisiva verso il completamento di quel lavoro. Le tue non erano parole di circostanza – non eri solito usarle – e me l'avresti dimostrato un paio d'anni dopo, accettando con entusiasmo di scriverne la

prefazione. Non mi sembrava vero, te lo confesso, che un gigante della cultura italiana come te potesse accettare la proposta di un giovane giornalista per un libro ardito ma poi capii che la tua grandezza era proprio quella di saperti calare appieno nelle realtà in cui credevi. Di dare fiducia quasi istintivamente ai progetti nei quali ti riconoscevi senza calcoli di opportunità, né tanto meno di convenienza. E infatti ti capitava spesso di andare a parlare anche nei posti più remoti, senza alcuna forma di snobismo, del tutto privo della spocchia di molti tuoi colleghi accademici. Poco importava che di fronte a te ci fossero grandi platee letterarie o televisive, oppure piccoli circoli di periferia, festival minori o università occupate: se sentivi che lo spirito era quello giusto, se ti andavano a genio gli organizzatori e gli argomenti che proponevano, tu non ti tiravi indietro, non dicevi mai di no. Dialogavi con tutti, trasmettendo la sensazione palpabile del piacere della cultura, del godimento della lettura, della forza dei principi in cui credevi. Conferenze, presentazioni, incontri, dibattiti, interviste. Un paio di appunti su un foglio, gli occhiali sul tavolo e un libro in mano a pochi centimetri dagli occhi. Non ti risparmiavi mai. Soprattutto se c'erano di mezzo l'Irlanda e la causa repubblicana, dove con la tua cultura sterminata riuscivi sempre a infilare l'illuminismo radicale, le etiche senza dio, John Stuart Mill che stava accanto a Bobby Sands, Spinoza e Bruno a fianco di James Joyce. *Ulysses*, mi confessasti una volta, era il libro che tenevi quasi sempre sul comodino, "perché capolavori come quello andrebbero riletti almeno una volta l'anno". Da allora è nato un rapporto speciale, scandito da alcune tappe memorabili. Firenze, Roma, Milano, Trento, Dublino, solo per citare le principali. E dopo ogni conferenza o presentazione non mancava mai la sosta al pub, come avrebbe fatto ogni buon irlandese, ma sempre con leggerezza, generosità, affetto. La tua figura alta e un po' sbilenca, l'andatura oscillante, le camicie e le giacche stropicciate, lo sguardo ironico, la gesticolazione con le mani, gli occhi che sprizzavano una curiosità quasi fanciullesca. Ovviamente avevi anche aderito con entusiasmo al progetto di *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*, entrando a far parte del Comitato scientifico della rivista.

Nell'aprile del 2016 ci ritrovammo a Dublino per una conferenza commemorativa del centenario della Rivolta di Pasqua all'Istituto italiano di cultura. C'erano anche Enrico Terrinoni e Muriel McAuley, nipote di uno dei leader fucilati nel 1916, Thomas MacDonagh. Anche grazie al tuo prestigio e alla tua fama fu possibile far passare un parallelismo che ai più poteva suonare avventato, quello tra i volontari della rivolta di Pasqua e i partigiani della Resistenza italiana. Finimmo la serata a O'Connell street per partecipare alla manifestazione "Reclaim 1916", di fronte al luogo simbolo di quella rivolta e della successiva repressione inglese. Quando dal palco il cantante Damien Dempsey intonò una ballata dedicata a James Connolly, il leader socialista che nel 1916 fu fucilato dagli inglesi legato a una sedia perché non riusciva a stare in piedi a causa delle ferite subite in battaglia, notammo i tuoi occhi lucidi e determinati. Una delle ultime volte che ti sentii fu nel febbraio 2020. Ti chiamai da Dublino – dov'ero andato a seguire le elezioni politiche – per dirti che a breve sarebbe finalmente uscita la raccolta di scritti inediti dal carcere di Bobby Sands che stavo curando con Enrico Terrinoni. Ti chiesi se volevi partecipare alla prima presentazione, che si sarebbe tenuta in maggio al Salone di Torino. "Certo che potete contare su di me. Per Bobby ci sono sempre". Al telefono era risuonato il tuo consueto entusiasmo. Ero sicuro che per Sands saresti stato capace di annullare qualsiasi appuntamento. Ma non avevi fatto i conti con il destino e con quel maledetto virus che ha cambiato le nostre vite. L'uscita del volume con le poesie e le prose di Bobby Sands è stata accompagnata da una profonda tristezza perché non eri più fisicamente con noi, e quel libro non potremo mai presentarlo insieme a te. Dedicartelo era il minimo che potevamo fare. Grazie ancora di tutto, "comrade".

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Omaggio a Dante
Qualche riflessione e una testimonianza sul DanteDì

Rosangela Barone
Independent scholar (<rbarone0@gmail.com>)

Il 25 marzo scorso si è celebrato il primo DanteDì – data chiave dei tanti tributi in calendario per il sommo Poeta nel 7° centenario della sua morte.

L'evento, tanto atteso, è stato coronato dal più grande successo, grazie all'impegno e alla creatività delle nostre Istituzioni culturali, pubbliche e private; grazie alla RAI Radio Televisione Italiana e alle varie connessioni telematiche "sociali", in quella Giornata speciale la parola del nostro sommo Poeta ha trovato ancor più profonda eco nell'intimo di ognuno di noi, "morti in vita" prigionieri del diabolico *virus* blasonato.

Riflettendo sul nome appena entrato nel nostro calendario commemorativo, torno con la memoria ai tempi in cui si cominciò a discutere in merito e, da qualche parte, emerse la proposta: *DanteDay* – presumibilmente sulla scia del *Bloomsday*, inaugurato a Dublino il 16 giugno 1950, nel trentennale della pubblicazione del romanzo di James Joyce, *Ulysses* (*Bloom* è il cognome del protagonista del romanzo, che si svolge in una sola giornata a Dublino, il 16 giugno – giorno del primo incontro dello scrittore dublinese con la donna nativa di Galway Nora Barnacle, poi divenuta sua moglie). Per quanto attiene alla giornata da dedicare a Dante, padre della nostra lingua, molto opportunamente si scartò il termine inglese, *Day*, e ci si concentrò sul termine: Dì, per poi arrivare alla canonizzazione: DanteDì. Personalmente, avrei optato per: Giornata di Dante rispetto a DanteDì, che risente di anglicismo ("Dante" in forma attributiva rispetto a "Dì", sul modello inglese che richiede l'anteposizione dell'attributo/genitivo sassone rispetto al sostantivo di riferimento: *blue sky* = cielo azzurro; *Doomsday* = Giorno del Giudizio; *Bloomsday* = Giorno di Bloom); ad ogni buon conto, mi arrendo di fronte all'efficace *brevitas*/allitterazione dell'ormai canonizzato DanteDì, che, da quest'anno, entra nel nostro calendario commemorativo!

E, dopo la riflessione, la testimonianza.

Tra le tante iniziative dedicate al nostro sommo Poeta nel DanteDì vanno annoverate quelle realizzate dagli Istituti Italiani di Cultura (alcuni collegati con Radio 3) con messa a fuoco delle traduzioni della *Divina Commedia* in altre lingue (58 computate nella Rassegna "Dante nel mondo" – Ravenna 2016). Tra queste figura la traduzione in lingua irlandese ad opera di Mons. Pádraig de Brún (1889-1960), uomo di grande erudizione che dedicò la sua vita all'ampliamento dei contatti tra la letteratura irlandese e quella del Continente europeo. Dopo aver studiato a Dublino, Parigi, Göttingen, insegnò Matematica nel Mynooth College (Università Cattolica); fu poi Rettore dell'University College Galway, Presidente del prestigioso Institute of Advanced Studies e Direttore dell'Arts Council. Tradusse da Sofocle, Omero, Racine, Corneille, Dante e, sempre in irlandese, scrisse una *Vita di Gesù Cristo* (*Beatha Íosa Críost*) e un lungo poema dal titolo *Miserere*. Fu insignito di varie onorificenze, fra cui la Légion d'Honneur francese e l'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. La sua traduzione della prima Cantica dantesca, *Ifreann*, fu pubblicata postuma (1963).

Al tempo in cui ricoprivo il ruolo di Attachée Culturale dell'Ambasciata d'Italia in Irlanda e Direttrice dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Dublino, convinsi la nipote di Mons. de Brún, la grande poetessa Máire Mhac an tAoi, ad affidare a Ciarán Ó Coigligh, noto docente di Irlandese, poeta, scrittore, la cura del testo integrale della traduzione della *Divina Commedia*, ai fini della pubblicazione. Grazie a quel permesso, indi al lavoro certosino, a un tempo rigoroso ed appassionato, di Ó Coigligh, *An Choiméide Dhiaga* uscì alle stampe, per i tipi di An Clóchomhar Tta dublinese, nel 1997 (a quel tempo avevo concluso il mio mandato, ma ebbi l'onore e la gratificazione di partecipare alla presentazione ufficiale del volume a Dublino, il 3 marzo 1997).

Il 25 marzo scorso i versi di Dante nella traduzione irlandese di Mons Pádraig de Brún sono risuonati nell'evento annunciato dall'Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Dublino, diretto dalla validissima Prof. Renata Sperandio, come parte "dell'audiolibro 'Dalla selva oscura al Paradiso. Un percorso nella Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri in trentatré lingue' e alle presenze dantesche nella cultura irlandese". Vi hanno contribuito gli scrittori "Alan Titley e Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, interpreti dei versi della *Commedia*; il compositore Patrick Cassidy; l'attore Barry McGovern; lo studioso e scrittore Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, e l'artista Liam Ó Broin, autore di una serie di splendide litografie ispirate al poema dantesco". La manifestazione è stata onorata dalla presenza del Presidente della Repubblica d'Irlanda, Michael D. Higgins.

In quell'occasione, Barry McGovern ha letto il sonetto di ispirazione dantesca "Gaeltacht" di Seamus Heaney (Premio Nobel 1995 – cfr. Barone 1995, 13) e la mia traduzione di detto Sonetto da me presentatagli come dono a Seamus Heaney per il suo 72° compleanno, il 13.4.2011 (il testo è stato letto da Renata Sperandio, a cui sono profondamente grata per avermi fatto partecipare, *in absentia*, all'importante evento).

Qui di seguito, la riproduzione della terzina d'apertura dell'*Inferno* dantesco nella traduzione irlandese di Mons. Pádraig de Brún, del Sonetto di Dante (Rima IX: "Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io"), del Sonetto di Seamus Heaney: "Gaeltacht" e della mia traduzione di quest'ultimo: "L'area di lingua gaelica".

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I lár an bhealaigh tríd an saol seo againne,
I bhfad ón mbóthar díreach dom as eolas,
Mhothaíos thar n-ais i ndoimhneacht dhiamhair choille.
(*Ifreann*, 1, 1-3, in Dainté Ailígiéirí 1997a, 33)

***

DANTE ALIGHIERI

"Rime"
IX

Guido, i' vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io
fossimo presi per incantamento,
e messi in un vasel, ch'ad ogni vento
per mare andasse al voler vostro e mio,
sì che fortuna od altro tempo rio
non ci potesse dare impedimento,
anzi, vivendo sempre in un talento,
di stare insieme crescesse 'l disio.
E monna Vanna e monna Lagia poi
con quella ch'è sul numer de le trenta
con noi ponesse il buono incantatore:
e quivi ragionar sempre d'amore,
e ciascuna di lor fosse contenta,
sì come i' credo che saremmo noi.
(Dante 1997b, 720-721)

SEAMUS HEANEY

"The Gaeltacht"

I wish, *mon vieux*, that you and Barlo and I
Were back in Rosguill, on the Atlantic Drive,
And that it was again nineteen-sixty
And Barlo was alive

And Paddy Joe and Chips Rafferty and Dicky
Were there talking Irish, for I believe
In that case Aoibheann Marren and Margaret Conway
And M. and M. and Deirdre Morton and Niamh

Would be there as well. And it would be great too
If we could see ourselves, if the people we are now
Could hear what we were saying, and if this sonnet

In imitation of Dante's, where he's set free
In a boat with Lapo and Guido, with their girlfriends in it
Could be the wildtrack of our gabble above the sea.

(Heaney 2001, 44)[1]

"L'area di lingua gaelica"

Mon vieux, i' vorrei che tu e Barlo ed io
fossimo a Rosguill, sulla Costa Atlantica,
e, per incantamento, fosse l'anno
'960 e Barlo ancora vivo

e Paddy Joe e Chips Rafferty e Dicky
là a parlar gaelico, ché, sì come i' credo,
in tal caso Aoibheann Marren e Margaret Conway
e M. and M. e Deirdre Morton e Niamh, le nostre Belle,

sarebbero anche lì. E bello anche sarebbe
se potessimo, a specchio, da quel che siamo ora,
udir quel che ci dicevamo allora e se questo sonetto

alla Dante – la *Rima* in cui egli veleggia
in un vasel con Lapo e Guido e le lor Monne –
potesse rintracciar quel nostro ciangottar in altomare.

(Traduzione di Rosangela Barone, 13 aprile 2011
Omaggio a Seamus Heaney per il suo compleanno)

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[1] "The Gaeltacht" by Seamus Heaney from *Electric Light* (2001) is reproduced by kind permission of the author's Estate, of Faber & Faber and of Farrar Straus & Giraux. Our special gratitude goes to Catherine Heaney.

Ireland and Latin America: an Amazing Network

edited by
María Graciela Eliggi

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And thus, we continued moving further and working together and joining efforts towards a common goal. For us, inhabitants of the pampas and the dunes, hosting the two events was an honour but mostly an opportunity, being a small university in central Argentina, they reinvigorated our community as a whole, motivated our students and added more colleagues to the, by then, "informal" but solid network. Edmundo Murray's virtual presence via videoconference greeted us and sent his best wishes from abroad. Clíona Murphy's excellent opening plenary "Writing Irish Women into Latin American History: Problems, Perspectives and Possibilites" impressed the audience. The presence of well-known Irish writer Hugo Hamilton and Irish-Argentine writer Juan José Delaney in an intelligent and at the same time intimate dialogue with Laura Izarra offered the audience a plus. Lance Pettit (Irish films and television) and Thaddeus O'Sullivan (Irish films) were interviewed by Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos (Brazil) on the screening of "The Woman who married Clark Gable"; Emeritus Professor Ailbhe Ó Corráin (Centre of Irish and Celtic Studies, Ulster University) delighted the audience with his brilliant lecture and last but never, *ever* least the closing lecture by our dear friend Maureen Murphy, once again, generated renewed enthusiasm and a heart-felt applause from the audience. The academic programme was really impressive and we could not have made it possible without the support of all the academic partners involved, Embassy of Ireland in Buenos Aires and Northern Ireland Bureau included. But there was more to that; the cultural part of the Joint Symposium and Conference provided all the attendants with a selection of Irish music, dance, painting and poetry together with local folklore and tango by local singers and dancers organized jointly with our friends from Asociación Argentino Irlandesa de Bahía Blanca (AAIBB), activities celebrated by all those present. Names that come to our mind also attest to the encounter of cultures on Argentine soil: Alejandro Mahon Bertolini and Lucía González Flaherty (Irish dance), Liliana Susana Doyle and Marina Kohon (both reading their own poetry), Ángela Cesetti (popular Irish music) Élida Honoré Kent (painting), Santiago Kincaide Murphy, Nancy Ferracutti Kincaide, María Elena Kincaide, Víctor Ferracutti Kincaide, Luis Cuenca Reyzabal and María Rosa Keegan (AAIBB's choir), Marcela Eijo (tango singer) Juan Andrés Martin (tango dancer).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gracias, Thanks, Grazie

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Becoming Irish-Argentine in the Argentine *pampas*: Identity Representations in Private Voices in Edmundo Murray’s *Becoming Irlandés*

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Abstract:

During the nineteenth century, more than a third of the Argentine population was formed by immigrants, which included the largest Irish diaspora within Latin America. Personal letters and memoirs constitute invaluable first-hand testimonies of immigrants’ lives. *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina (1844-1912)*, formed by two collections of letters and two memoirs plus contextualized and historical information, edited by independent researcher and writer Edmundo Murray (2006a), offers rich insights about their local experience and culture. The purpose of this paper is to analyse strategies of identification in the discourse of those Irish born or Argentine of Irish descendancy, through a postcolonial studies perspective and a narratological approach.

Keywords: Diaspora, Emigration, Home, Identity, Representations

1. Introduction

The nineteenth century was marked by the outburst of great migration waves from European countries to the Americas. At first, most immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe, but between 1815 and 1865 one-third came from Ireland. The history of Ireland in the last two centuries has been marked by the ghost of massive emigration, especially since 1845, as the country experienced the Great Famine (1845-1849) that left Ireland economically devastated for years. This trend would continue till the first half of the twentieth century, due to the lack of available employment in Ireland, enforced by the tradi-

tional agrarian culture fostered by president Eamon De Valera[1], which would change by the late 1970s, with the phenomenon known as the Celtic Tiger[2].

The favourite destinations among Irish emigrants were undoubtedly the English-speaking countries, such as England, the United States of America and Australia. Between 1820 and 1930, almost 5 million Irish migrated to the USA, settling in cities along the east coast. In Argentina, during the nineteenth century, about 40,000 emigrants left Ireland to colonise the Argentine *pampas*, initiating a flourishing Irish-Argentine community. Although Irish migrants were not a majority in comparison with other immigrant groups, they certainly became an important diaspora and set their cultural mark on our country.

The proposed paper will analyse identity patterns in the private narratives of those Irish born or Argentine of Irish descendancy − compiled and edited by Edmundo Murray −, through a postcolonial studies perspective (Bhabha 1994; Brah 1996), a narratological approach (Bal 1999; Genette 1970, 1980, 1991) and a brief approach to Cultural Studies, through some of Hall's main concepts. The research will focus on the representations of identity in Murray's selected letters and memoirs under three categories of analysis: the Irish diaspora in Argentina, the process of adaptation they underwent and the idea of home that prevails in the voices of the Irish-Argentines in mid and late nineteenth-century Argentina.

2. Edmundo Murray's Work

Edmundo Murray is a writer and independent researcher, who was born in Buenos Aires in 1955. He studied in Argentina, Switzerland and the United States. He is a lecturer and frequent contributor of articles in cultural history, regional cultural integration, and in Irish and Latin American Studies. He is also a founding member of the Society for Irish Latin American Studies, and member of Sociedad Suiza de Estudios Hispánicos and the Société Suisse des Américanistes. First editor of *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, a journal focusing on relations between Ireland and Latin America. Among other pieces of writing, he is the author of *Devenir irlandés: Narrativas íntimas de la emigración irlandesa a la Argentina 1844-1912* (2004), which has been published in English as *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina 1844-1912* (2006a) and *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses: Diasporic Models in Irish-Argentine Literature* (2009). *Becoming Irlandés* has been widely praised by important members of the Irish Studies community in Argentina, Brazil and Spain, such as the historian Hilda Sabato, literature professors and scholars Laura Izarra, Inés Praga Terente and Juan José Delaney, and journalist Sergio Kiernan, as the first work of compilation of this sort, emphasizing the richness of the multiplicity of voices involved in it and the portrayal of the everyday life of these Irish-Argentine, which constitutes a very useful source of analysis for researchers in the field of Irish studies, from a variety of different approaches within cultural studies.

[1] Eamon De Valera was one of the leaders in the failed 1916 Easter Uprising. He founded the opposition political party Fianna Fáil. In 1932, Fianna Fáil was elected to power in a coalition with Labour politicians. During the 16 years De Valera was to remain Ireland's Prime Minister, he tried to totally cut Ireland from any form of British linkage. De Valera kept Eire neutral during World War Two. Fianna Fáil won the 1951 election and De Valera returned to the Prime Minister's office until 1954. He was Prime Minister again between 1957-1959. In 1959, he stood for and won Eire's presidential election − an election he won again in 1966. De Valera was the first Irish leader to address America's Congress (1964) and he gained considerable prestige abroad. Under De Valera's rule, the cultural identity of the Irish Republic as Roman Catholic and Gaelic was asserted (Trueman 2015).

[2] Kevin Gardiner is credited with first using the term "Celtic Tiger" in a report for Morgan Stanley in 1994, forecasting more than a decade of surging economic growth for the countrirs which were undergoing rapid economic expansion (Burke-Kennedy 2014).

Becoming Irlandés is a revised edition in English that not only includes the original letters and memoirs of four families of Irish-Argentines in Argentina but also a deeply informative introduction, illustrations and appendixes of genealogy, chronology and a glossary. Letters are rich in their dialogical structure and are full of the narrator's intentions whereas memoirs are described by Murray as "accounts of the writer's own life with an emphasis on the witnessed events, instead of his or her own personality or life (autobiography) or the justification of his or her own faults" (2006a, 15). The book closes with an epilogue titled "Gauchos irlandeses", which recovers the main theoretical concepts Murray dealt with in his introduction, a comparison between *gauchos* and Irish *estancieros* and a conclusion about the book title.

3. Theoretical Framework

During the nineteenth century, about forty-five thousand emigrants left Ireland to settle in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, the majority of whom came from the Irish Midlands (Westmeath, Longford and Offaly) and from Co. Wexford. About 20,000 of them settled in Argentina, whereas the rest moved again to Australia, the United States or back to Ireland.

To start with, it is worth defining two key terms related to migration: emigration and diaspora. Defined as "the act of leaving one's own country to settle permanently in another; moving abroad" by the online Oxford dictionary, emigration is probably the most general of these terms. On the other hand, the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2019, 49) defines diaspora as "migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging, real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background", although it recognises that its meaning has changed significantly over time. Thus, the original meaning of diaspora as a forced displacement has now been widely replaced by one in which migrants identify with a "homeland" but live outside it, a concept that focuses on both first-generation emigrants and foreign-born descendants that keep some kind of cultural bond with the parent country. Besides, in his dialectics of diaspora and Irish emigration (2013) American professor and author David Lloyd argues that the application of the term "diaspora" to people of Irish descent living outside Ireland is of relatively recent use, which came to replace a term of many connotations as that of "emigration".

In addition, for Avtar Brah the idea of diaspora is related to that of a journey, which is concerned with settling down somewhere away from home. However, although Brah focuses on the diasporic construction of home, she argues that not all diasporas sustain an idea of return, as has occurred with the Irish case: "a homing desire which is not the thing as desire for a 'homeland'" (1996, 180). Similarly, James Clifford conceives diaspora as different from mere travelling in that it is not temporary (1994, 308) and compares this concept with that of exile: "diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more than exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future. Diasporas also connect multiple communities of a disperse population" (304). Both authors see the diasporic culture as one crossing the borders in many aspects.

Brah also introduces a model for thinking about diaspora beyond a dual territoriality through the concept of "diasporic space", which provides conceptual connections for historicised analysis of trans/national movements of people, information, cultures and commodities: "diaspora space" (as distinct from the concept of diaspora) is "inhabited" not only by diasporic subjects but equally by those who are constructed and represented as "indigenous" (1996, 16). According to Brah, diasporas are "composite formations" whose members belong to a single diaspora and are likely to spread to different parts of the world (196). Undoubtedly, the

experience of migration is tightly related to that of identity. Life is a process of never-ending adjustments: scientific knowledge advances, technology improves and, in the same way, human beings' identity is in permanent construction (Hall, Du Gay 1996, 4). In *The Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha argues that "the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (1994, 2). Thus, the socio-cultural space of diasporic subjects is always marked by plurality, difference and hybridity, which determines a constant negotiation of values in the permanent process of redefinition of their identity.

As regards the concept of "diaspora", in which the history of Irish migrants is framed, it can be considered in two senses: a) from a literal and historical negative sense, it alludes to communities dislocated from their native homeland by some migratory process; b) etymologically, "diaspora" suggests fertility of dispersion, a definition Brah also agrees with. First, she argues that the word alludes to the trauma and dislocation that results from the experience of leaving one's homeland. Second, diasporas connote the positive idea of hope and of a potential new beginning, since they are "contested cultural and political terrains where individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure" (1996, 193), giving place to a new hybrid identity that is constructed through a daily conciliation of meanings and values.

In this theoretical context, the letters written by Irish emigrants to their relatives abroad or their own personal memoirs offer a rich discursive and social terrain to explore how they negotiate values while they undergo a process of adaptation and cultural insertion into their new country. They do not only offer testimony of a lived time in first person, but they are also interesting as regards feelings and interpretations portrayed from a personal point of view. Thus, as Mieke Bal expresses, "a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates ('tells') a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof" (1999, 5). This allows to understand the selected texts as a mirror of mid-nineteenth-century Argentine society and a representation of how Irish migrants or their descendants see themselves and construct their new identity here.

Another important aspect to consider about the discourse of these letters is their mainly narrative style. Scarcely any description of Argentina and local customs or celebrations are present in the narratives of these Irish-Argentines. This could be explained following Gérard Genette's article entitled "Fronteras del Relato" (1972). According to Genette, the difference between narration and description is one of content since the former has to do with actions and events considered as mere processes and, therefore, focused on the temporal and dramatic aspects of the story; in contrast, the latter centres on objects and beings considered simultaneously and focuses on processes seen as spectacles, which seems to stop the perception of time over a central role attributed to the spatial configuration (201). In this way, the narrative genre that predominates in the texts written by these Irish-Argentines reflects the active involvement of these people in the historical or personal events that had the greatest influence on their lives, chronologically portrayed.

Finally, the narrative texts selected by Edmundo Murray not only deal with everyday aspects of Irish-Argentines in Argentina but also portray the process by which they assimilated the new cultural patterns and develop a new hybrid system of values and beliefs, as well as their degree of attachment to the local community. Since both the construction of oneself is always under development, Murray uses the performative verb "becoming" or *devenir* in the title of his book so as to imply the continuum behind any process of identification that takes place within migration: "becoming-Irish through the discourse is a process represented by narratives of one's own and others' identity, and of the mutation of that identity" (2006a, 6).

4. The Irish Diaspora in Argentina

One of the most dramatic yet reaffirming trait of the recent history of Ireland is, undoubtedly, massive emigration, especially between the mid-nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Considered from an Irish point of view, this could be seen as the failure of Mother Ireland to retain its children and consolidate a national identity. However, from a foreigner's perspective, "the story of the Irish in America is a chronicle of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity" (Coogan 2001, 254) because although ravaged by war, famine and centuries of economic decline, the Irish managed to make their way to the top of political and economic success.

Originally defined by the Greeks as "expansion through outward migration and settlement" (Delaney 2006, 36), the term "diaspora" was later associated with the forced dispersion of the Jews, that of the Armenian (1915-1916), the Palestinian exodus after the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, as well as the movement of the Irish during the Great Famine (1845-1849). But why is it that we talk about Irish migration in terms of "diaspora"? First, because of the number of people involved in the different migration waves along the last two centuries, the Irish case is considered as one of the most significant migration movements in the history of Europe. Second, the term "diaspora" became of wide use during the late twentieth century to designate Irish people and their descendants who live outside Ireland. For Lloyd, "Irish migration is, then, crucially bound up in a narrative of assimilation and citizenship" (2013, 10) since its narrative is thoroughly one of modernization and of the formation of the modern subject: "even though many Irish in fact migrate from urban locations, migration entails the notion of a movement from a backward and largely rural society to a dynamic metropolitan environment at the most advanced sites of capitalist development. It is a story of the economic modernization of the Irish worker *outside* Ireland" (*ibidem*). In addition, Mary Robinson, elected president of Ireland in 1990, had a key role in incorporating the concept of diaspora in political speeches with a positive sense:

> After all, emigration is not just a chronicle of sorrow and regret. It is also a powerful story of contribution and adaptation. In fact, I have become more convinced each year that this great narrative of dispossession and belonging, which so often had its origins in sorrow and leave-taking, has become, with a certain amount of historic irony, one of the treasures of this society. (Delaney 2006, 39)

For Robinson, the key role that Irish diasporas have played in the development and modernization of many cities around the world during the last two centuries seems to be a proof of the strength of the Irish character, which has been able to overcome complex situations as that of displacement and uprooting. In general terms, the concept of "diaspora" suggests a unitary phenomenon. However, the several Irish diasporas scattered along the world have evolved differently and kept a distinctive relationship with the Mother Land, proving it came out to be a very diverse and complex experience. Thus, the Irish in North America mainly settled in mill towns and railroad centres like New York, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco. They became perhaps the most urbanized group in America, as only a small number went west to engage in farming. Curiously, the Irish diaspora since the 1800s was one of the few formed by a high rate of female emigrants. In the UK, Irish migrants could be mainly found in southern Scotland and south Wales. Three-quarters of Irish immigrants were unskilled labourers or farm workers. Many ended up living in Irish areas of towns, especially in Liverpool and Glasgow, where many suffered from racial and religious discrimination. In contrast, the Irish that came to South America were attracted by the vast extensions of green plains suitable for

farming that resembled the Emerald Isle and, mainly, the possibility of enjoying true freedom and improving their lifestyles. As regards the authors of the private narratives collected by Murray, Edward Robbins made a living in Buenos Aires city at first to later move to what he calls a *Quinta*[3]. The Murphy brothers settled in agrarian areas and incipient industrial towns related to farming production near Buenos Aires, such as Salto, Cañuelas, Rojas, as well as in Venado Tuerto (southern part of Santa Fe province). The Garrahans settled mainly in Luján and Lobos, although there is reference to their lands in General Paz, Marcos Paz, Saladillo, General Rodriguez, Las Heras (all of them in the province of Buenos Aires) and also, in the province of Córdoba. Finally, the emotional and geographical space of the three female cousins of John James Pettit (Sally, Kate and Fanny) is restricted to Buenos Aires and its nearby countryside.

Although the Great Famine was certainly a key motive for the Irish emigration along the second half of the nineteenth century, massive migrations to England and the Americas started between the 1830s-1840s, as the economic stagnation prevailing in Ireland due to poor agricultural production and the scarcity of industries led thousands of young Irish − including many women − to leave the native country in search of better opportunities, not only for themselves but also for those who remained at home. But why did they choose Argentina as a favourite country to start their new life? First, the majority of immigrants that settled in this country along the nineteenth century were mainly "the younger, non-inheriting sons, and later daughters, of the larger tenant farmers and leaseholders. Usually, they were emigrating from farms which were in excess of twenty acres, and some were from farms considerably larger", claims Edmundo Murray in his article "The Irish Road to South America: Nineteenth-Century Travel Patterns from Ireland to the Río de la Plata region" (McKenna qtd. in Murray 2006b, 29). So, the likelihood of acquiring land in Argentina attracted them. Many of those farms were located in the rural areas of Ballymahon, Abbeyshrule, or Edgesworthtown (Longford), Ballymore, Drumraney (Westmeath), Kilmore, Kilrane and other towns in Co. Wexford, usually referred to in the narratives here analysed. In these areas and among those social groups, nineteenth-century Argentina enjoyed a reputation similar to that of the United States: "the real or perceived prospect of acquiring land in Argentina (generally called at that time Buenos Ayres or the Provinces of the River Plate) was a powerful appeal to children of tenant farmers in Ireland, who would never have other means to climb the social ladder" (*ibidem*). Second, since Argentina was not part of the British Empire, "most legal burdens at home would not annoy the emigrants in their adopted country" (30). Therefore, emigrants realised that in Argentina they would be free from debts that obliged them in Ireland. Third, letters from early emigrants, newspaper articles in English, and travel handbooks contributed to create this image of Argentina abroad.

In his article Murray states that migrants from Midlands and Wexford sailed from Ireland to Liverpool first and, after staying at the port for some days, they initiated a long journey to the "Río de la Plata". Occasionally, the ports of Dublin and Cork were used to sail directly to South America, but the majority used Liverpool as their port of departure due to the greater availability of shipping frequencies, fares and accommodations (*ibidem*). Thus, Edward Robbins describes this route like this:

> 1849. Early in the month of March I left for Liverpool and I arranged for a passage to Buenos Aires for myself and family with Michael McDonald. On the 4th of April all my family arrived at Liverpool and were kept there until the 8th of May, on which day they sailed. (Murray 2006a, 35)

[3] According to Murray's Notes (2006a, 175), in the mid-nineteenth century, a *quinta* was a small farm located near the cities, where vegetables were produced.

As regards the Murphy brothers, in the introduction to chapter 3, Murray argues that in 1844 John James and many other young men from Kilrane sailed to Liverpool and from there to the River Plate, where they arrived two months later in the *Willliam Peile* (2006a, 37). There is scarce information related to this event since Murray's collection of Letters to Martin Murphy starts with just an epistle from John James to his father Nicholas (dated in Liverpool, April 1844):

> Dear Father and ever affectionate Mother,
>
> I am happy to make known to you that our fortunes have not turned out as we expected but have made a greater progress to our happiness that we expected [...] I have the pleasure of telling you all that we are in the best of spirits and expect to meet with good fortune wherever we go [...] I do not think I'll write until I reach Buenos Aires. (38)

On the other hand, the case of James Pettit (chapter 4) portrays a different though common geographic dynamic in the Irish diaspora. So, when the chosen destination did not work, they went back to Ireland or moved somewhere else because re-emigration was always possible. Thus, James Pettit and his wife left their native land in 1831. Pettit organised a private emigration scheme between Argentina and Ireland, through which John James Murphy and many other young Irish people emigrated some years later. Pettit's only son − John James (to whom the letters by the three female cousins are addressed) − was born in Argentina in 1841 and a few months later Mrs Pettit died. Then, in 1852, James Pettit and his son moved to Australia, settling in Melbourne never to come back to Argentina. Little is said in the letters written by the female cousins about the economic activity developed by the Pettits there. However, the postcards, the photos and newspapers received by the cousins from Melbourne suggest an urban environment and commercial activities instead of farming. In fact, Murray argues that James Pettit was probably a merchant in Ireland before emigrating to Argentina and that he had business links with Patrick Browne and John Mooney, of whom the former was responsible for the early Co. Wexford emigration to Argentina, together with James Pettit.

Bearing in mind the concept of "diaspora" in which these personal narratives are framed, there is no doubt that these Irish-born emigrants or their ancestors shared two of the main features involved in it: a forced or voluntary migration from the country of origin in search of work, progress or to escape conflict, and a collective memory. On the one hand, Edward Robbins's memoir (1800-1853) mirrors how frustrations and debts of mid-to-upper social classes of farmers moved many Irish people to "begin to think of leaving Ireland", as Murray entitles chapter 2 of his book. When Edward Robbins' previous economic security at home starts to fail, he makes the sad decision of emigrating in order not to lose the few assets he still possessed:

> 1846. This was a fearful time for the poor of Ireland. Fever and dysentery to an awful extents in many parts of it. Provisions of every kind doubled the usual prices, the poorhouses filled to overflowing. I had not one rood of potatoes sowed this year and, those who had, met with a poor return. I had a good harvest of corn. (34)

> 1848. On the 23rd day of March my sister Rose died and was buried at Noughville, Co. Westmeath. I was at the September fair of Banagher and dined at uncle John Deehan's for the last time. I began to think of leaving Ireland. My family was large, my two farms too far asunder and both too small apart to support my family, and I could not brook the idea of getting into difficulties and perhaps into prison for debt. The Young Irelanders attempted a revolution. I do not understand them, nor did I then; they were mad, or traitors to their Country, I believed them then, and now, mad. (35)

The memoir of Edward Robbins does not portray hope or enthusiasm at the idea of emigrating. In fact, he seems to have been forced mainly by his economic decline and the reality of Ireland, which offered few prospects of improvement. In his notes, Murray explains this through the "push-pull" theory:

> The considerations to emigrate taken into account by the writer are predominantly economic, of the *push* type, i.e, factors restraining the continuation of lifestyle in the origin (number of family members to feed, strategic difficulties on farm management, potential risk of default). There is no clue in his account about the writer's *pull* factors that attracted him to Argentina as a destination. (174)

Moreover, being a middle-aged man by those times, and after the loss of his first wife and his mother in the previous years, Robbins decided to move to Argentina with his second wife and his eleven children in 1849. Unfortunately, they arrived in Buenos Aires in quarantine due to cases of fever and dysentery on board, ten out of thirteen members of the Robbins family had to go to the Irish hospital - built the previous year - where his wife and two of his children died a month later.

In contrast, many of the letters of the Murphy brothers (1844-1879), reveal the perspective of the successful migrant, in which economic and social progress seem to compensate the dislocation and solitude that voluntary emigration involves. These images continuously clash with the failure and frustration undergone by those who remained in Ireland, to whom John James usually sends money in order to contribute with their daily subsistence and well being. Besides, as Murray claims in his introduction to chapter 3, ten years after his arrival in Argentina, John James managed to buy a huge *estancia*[4] in Salto, making of it a model sheep-farm that was the base of his prosperity:

> Dear friends, My previous letter contained a great deal about this country, and the prospects that is now before us. The people are flocking here from all parts, many without money, others with capital, of which there is a great field open here for investment. The investment of capital in land & sheep and the business is considered so safe now a days, that the foreigners with money and those that can get it even at high interest, are eating up all before them. This business would have been still carried on to a greater extent were it not for the last extremely bad season that prevailed through almost all parts of this country (I mean the drought, which still prevails in many parts of this) yet delightful country […] But the interest desired and obtained in this country are so remunerative that it make labours light and toil an interesting object […]. (42)

In this letter, as well as in many others, John James is usually enthusiastic about the unique possibilities foreigners had in Argentina, even during seasons of bad weather or difficult economic and political times, as he expresses in that same letter:

> You may say that I have enough to live where I like by selling it off and come home, but first just consider that your positions are at home and how your holdings are a mere source of slavery[5].· Secondly, if you could only consider the real state of both countries, you would naturally say what could be the object of making a choice of that country wherein I should be only a looker on at your toiling ill-fed and ill-paid industry. Of course this country has its own inconvenience and newcomers frequently entertain

[4] The word *estancia* is used in many South American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) to refer to a huge rural settlement, usually dedicated to the breeding of cattle (mainly sheep, horses, cows), which are kept in the open air all the year round and fed with natural grass.

[5] The land tenure system in mid-nineteenth century Ireland made it almost impossible for tenants to buy their lands (Murray 2006a, 179).

strong feeling on their arrival. But in a year or two these notions vanish and people only then come to see the great preference this country is entitled to. (*Ibidem*)

Some years after John James emigrated, his brothers William and Patrick followed him to Argentina and also started their own business through farming and land acquisition, as it is expressed by William Murphy in this 1862 letter to his brother Martin, who remained at home as their agent:

Dear Martin, I suppose you know the whole particulars about the place I am now living in […] Nor had I the remotest thoughts of buying land until the 11th or so in the month of February nor then until I weighed well the difficulties I was liable to meet with against the many advantages in my favour by buying an article that at any moment I can make sale of to advantage even a few days after I settled for it. […] It's a good land as there is to be found, well watered and suitable for sheep […]. (39-40)

In addition, the story of the Garrahans in Argentina, written by Tom Garrahan (known as Tom or "Don Tomás") in his estancia New Home (Lobos) between the late 1920s or early 1930s, constitutes another example of hard work and achievement among Irish migrants:

We lived then on Juan Lagos' camp, partido[6] of Luján. Afterwards this camp joined part of General Las Heras, and since 1875, it was taken into the new partido of General Rodriguez. My father, as soon as he started on his own, was on shares with Lagos in three or four flocks of sheep. A few years before this, my grandfather bought 1,500 squares of camp from Lagos and the 'puesto'[7] that my father occupied joined the Garrahan camp. […] Father rented the 'puesto' where we lived for several years and all the family were born there […] In 1879 my father started buying sheep for a 'grasería' in Rodriguez, belonging to a man called Reyna, and at the end of the first year he owed my father a lot of money so they went in partnership and so built a new 'grasería' on halves (apparently, there was no value given to meat at this time, so all was boiled down for grease, hence the name 'Grasería'). (115-116)

Sheep-farming and commercial activities associated to cattle breeding seem to have been the main activities Irish emigrants engaged in along Buenos Aires and nearby provinces. There is scarce reference to cultivation in Murray's collections of private narratives, which appears not only as a secondary activity but also, as one intended mainly for family subsistence. Thus, in Garrahan's memoir, the author says:

In those days we had very few vegetables, excepting potatoes and onions. Peaches of the old criollo type were plentiful at Grandmother's. There were about four hectares of peach-mount and they used to cut a quarter every year for fire wood, and in three years it would give fruit. Again, I used to gather peaches in my bag and carry them home on horse-back and they would arrive as sound as when taken from the tree. (117)

It is in a 1869 letter from Patrick Moore to his cousin John James Pettit that a clear reference to Irish farmers investing in cultivation appears. However, it seemed not to be a favourite economic activity for them, probably because it was a risky one when thinking of weather conditions and other distressful factors:

[6] *Camp* is an ambiguous word with different connotations, according to Murray (24), commonly meaning "countryside" or estancia in these narratives. Loanwords from Spanish populate many of the letters and memoirs in Murray's collection, especially those by J.J. Murphy and Tom Garrahan. Tom Garrahan uses a richer Spanish vocabulary than the other writers, probably because he was born in Argentina and his purpose is to recount his experiences and speak of his feelings in a *camp style* (115).

[7] Outpost on a large farm. *Puestero* is the person in charge of that outpost.

You will see by the papers some clever articles about this country, it is coming down fast, sheep are worth nothing, wool ditto, and the only hope is in agriculture, people are very much afraid of going into this business, as last year the wheat failed owing to the heavy rains, and workmen are so scarce that it requires some capital to start the business at all. (106)

Similarly, Edward Robbins describes agriculture as just a way of earning a living though denoting how unstable economic success could be for emigrants and the consequent sense of frustration and fear it produced in them:

1851. By the end of a year working at the Quinta I had it all sowed under alfalfa, and some fit for sale. I thought I was going on well.

1852 […] I was going on pretty well when on the 6th December the town was blockaded and so for 8 months during the blockade and Rosas war, I lost at least 30 to 40,000 dollars; a bad beginning for a poor man and he getting old. (35)

As it can be noticed, different voices in these letters and memoirs are plenty of representations of successful ranchers or businessmen. Tom Garrahan's memoir describes how, sooner or later, most Irish migrants were able to become landowners in our country when a chance was available:

In 1874 or 1875, rents began to rise and the runs for sheep curtailed to 100 squares to every flock […] In 1874, my grandmother bought La Espadaña camp in Lobos. It belonged to Justo Villegas and was about 4,000 squares with the material for wiring on the camp. It cost $ 2,000,000 old money". (117)

Even John James Pettit's relatives, who lived a life half urban half rural, ended up negotiating with lands and became landowners, at least temporarily:

I think that I told you before that when we sold our house in Parque we bought some land in the camp, it has turned out most advantageous purchase, 850 squares of ground, we paid 350 dollars a square for it and we have sold it at 3,500 dollars a square, lands especially near town have gone up so much that we thought it better to sell and buy land further out for my brothers Robert and John […]. (110-111)

However, not all nineteenth-century Irish emigrants were so successful as the Murphy brothers or the Garrahans. For those like Robbins with little capital to invest in animals, having a business associate could be a solution, but things were not always as they hoped:

1853. I was likely to go on middling with the Quinta until the blockade was put on, or the 6th December past, and was not taken off until the 14th July inst. Asked Mr. Ochoa, with whom I was on shares, if he would buy my part and let me go; he referred to Arbitration […] I got $3,000. Fortunately for me, my poor unfortunate friend George Ford introduced me to Mr. McClymont's and got with what money I could scrape a half of a flock of sheep. I left the Quinta about the last week of October or first week of November […]. (35-36)

As Murray sees it, the fact that Robbins did not attempt more lucrative rural activities like sheep-farming or meat-curing as soon as he arrived in Buenos Aires may imply that he did not have friends or family among the wealthiest Irish settlers in Argentina. Also, cases like that of James Pettit's re-migration to Australia suggest a certain degree of disappointment or frustration on his experience as an Irish-Argentine, to the point of making the decision to start again in a new place far from any relatives or acquaintances. Then, at the other end of the migration

spectrum, were those less fortunate Irish emigrants, too, who either because of bad luck, lack of influential acquaintances who could help them open their own way in foreign territory or because they came from Ireland penniless and needed to survive, the truth is that they were just proletarians or "estancia hands and servants", to put it in Murray's terms (17).

As a whole, although these narratives are constituted by individual experiences and remembrances, they are also crossed by what Émile Durkheim calls "a collective consciousness", formed by social facts: "the beliefs, tendencies and practices of the group taken collectively" (1982, 54), which are acquired through education and culture and, therefore, they exercise a certain control on individuals. This shared consciousness translates itself into a form of collective memory of their birthplace or homeland for diasporic people, related to how groups remember their past. This memory may be about facts or about their interpretations, but they certainly provide a sense of belonging. Since diasporic groups appropriate the places they choose to settle in order to make homes away from home, they have the tendency to reconnect with other communities with whom they feel united by a feeling of original brotherhood that forms the basis of their new identity and a sign of their territoriality. It is in this intersection between the individual and the collective where the new identities are built for diasporic subjects.

5. Becoming Irish-Argentine: In-Between Two Cultures

"Migrations impose a continuous pace, a fluid process that does not stop: becoming" (Murray 2006a, 131). When thinking about socio-cultural processes involved in migration, it seems inevitable to consider the complex issue of identity, an ongoing aspect of the self. In the Introduction to *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall defines "identities" as "never unified […] increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation" (Hall, De Gay 1996, 4). That means that our circumstances can make us change our identity when we stop believing in a set of values and adopt another, or as both systems achieve a synthesis. The fact that identities are always in process means they need resources of language, culture and history to be interpreted. Thus, the question of identity is not about "being" but about "becoming", about how we have been represented or how we might represent ourselves. Therefore, identities are constructed within discourse, through differences and in relation to tradition: "They relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself" and "arise from the narrativization of the self" (*ibidem*), for which they are constructed also in the imaginary and the symbolic. Besides, this process of becoming all human beings are subject to relies on identification. To Hall, identification is constructed on the recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation: "the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed − always 'in process'. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned" (2). From a psychological point of view, Hall follows Freud as he argues that identification can be understood as a "moulding after the other" (3), which compensates for loss, in this case, of one's previous identity, and is grounded in projection and idealization.

To Murray, "The emigrants' discourse is key to understanding their identities" (2006a, 3) because while writing about their experiences they articulate discursive lines of representation in which several aspects of their identities are involved. The chronological arrangement of letters and events in both memoirs in Murray's book shows this lengthy process of identification undergone

by nineteenth-century Irish migrants while trying to recreate a home away from home. Along the private narratives in *Becoming Irlandés*, we can see how the "oppression" discourse (motives for leaving home) usually articulates with their "compensation" discourse (how they turned from frustrated emigrants into successful immigrants) and, sometimes, with the "contribution" discourse (how they contribute to the development and growth of the new community). The "oppression" discourse prevails in the memoir of Edward Robbins, as there are several hints of the dramatic situation of Ireland that led many people to emigrate: cholera first appeared in Ireland causing many deaths in large towns (1832); the distemper that affected his cows and the losses he suffered shook his capital severely (1842); the potato crop almost all got black and unfit for use (1845) and provisions of every kind doubled the usual prices, the poorhouses filled to overflowing (1846), to name some causes. References to the "compensation" discourse are scarce in this text, as Robbins' life in Buenos Aires is just described near the abrupt end of his narrative and shows an ambivalent progress with ups and downs.

Conversely, the memoir of Tom Garrahan, focuses on representations of the "compensation" category mainly, probably because since Garrahan was born in Argentina to Irish parents and grandparents, his reality is different to that of Robbins. Thus, his story is based on his personal diary and represents the values and views of a "typical Irish-Argentine *estanciero*", as Murray claims (115). He does not mention events that indicate his grandfather Patrick Garrahan had emigrated out of debts, famine, or political persecutions.

It is in the Murphy brothers' letters that the three categories can be fully appreciated at work, especially, in those written by J.J. Murphy to his brother Martin and other relatives and friends at home. When he says "There are many causes which induce people to remain at home longer than they should. The fear, or rather shame they so foolishly entertain of being thought by those neighbours of being under the necessity to leave" (65), Murphy implicitly alludes to the economic difficulties that had pushed many Irishmen outside their native land in the last years (oppression). Contrastively, these lines describe how much better life in Argentina proved to be for most migrants (compensation):

> I last wrote in search of land to buy, but has failed in doing so [...] There are many foreigners has purchased land in Santa Fe of late, and has moved up their sheep. The feeling of sheep farmers at present are rather favourable to the scheme, as land is bought at 1/8 of current price of land Buenos Aires, and I believe not inferior in quality [...]. (52)

The last discursive category, "contribution", emerges in lines like the following:

> I believe I mentioned in a previous letter of us having got an Irish priest amongst us in Salto. We are now collecting to build a Church [...] The Irish has subscribed very liberal toward the Church [...] When they finish the Church they are to build a bridge over the River Salto, which is much needed, as it is a dangerous river to pass when flooded. (53)

Undoubtedly, once settled, Irish migrants started to contribute to the development of the receiving country, in order to be accepted by the community: "We are as usual very much respected here both by the authorities and the respectable people of Salto, but we shall have more to do for the future to retain their respect, as there are many Irish rather rum characters come into this neighbourhood of late" (*ibidem*). This reciprocity allowed them to be acquainted with governing elites, to make business but also, to set their mark in the society they had chosen to make a new home.

The preceding lines enhance the portrayal of the Irish diaspora in Argentina in terms of representations of identity beyond the discursive level and allow readers to infer many of its

features. First, Irish migrants were determined to achieve the progress they were denied at "home" (real or imagined), usually as sheep farmers first, and landowners then, as they knew the value of work ethic and sacrifice. A minority got on business, like James John Pettit. Somehow, success acted as a compensation for what they had left behind. Second, the Irish diaspora had a deep sense of community, with strong bonds of brotherhood among themselves. Addressing his fellow countrymen as "the Irish", Murphy creates a distance and establishes a clear distinction between them (local people/other diasporas) and us (Irish people/descendants). In addition, another interesting discursive trait that commonly appears in many of these narratives, as exemplified in the quotations above, is the fact that the author uses a third person verb form when referring to "foreigners" or "the Irish", which suggests the conception that Irish migrants constitute a group, a psychological and cultural unity as diasporic people. Certainly, "emigrants are space makers" (6) because they create spaces of oppression and assimilation, of emotion and emptiness, which can take years or even generations to be achieved, and which give them the possibility of evolving from an initial condition of colonised to one of colonisers:

> My hypothesis is that the greater part of the Irish who emigrated to Argentina were, more than anything, *ingleses*. When they left the British Isles they identified particularly with that European nation that had oppressed them at home. This identification was strengthened after the confrontation with the Argentine natives, gauchos and Indians. The stress provoked by fears of being different to their perceptions of themselves precipitated a return to their cultural mind, which was particularly English-centred [...] In Ireland, the English became their enemies. At this climatic moment in the historic negotiation of Irish identity, the Irish family began to perceive themselves as Argentines in order to have access to the status of the local bourgeoise. (135)

On the one hand, the fact that they were *ingleses* in the eyes of Argentinians gave them a certain status for being Europeans. To a certain point, it provided them with certain cultural superiority compared with that of the different ethnic groups that inhabited Argentina by the 1800s, an incipient independent country still trying to consolidate itself as a nation. However, this perception of themselves as a homogeneous cultural group against "the other" postponed their process of integration with local people, which is portrayed in all the Narratives. Thus, many Irish families settled in mostly Irish neighbourhoods and they continued marrying only Irish or Argentine born people of Irish families. Single Irish women started to rear orphan children from Irish parents after the 1870 cholera epidemic in Argentina. Besides, Sally Moore tells her cousin in Australia: "although we mix very little with the people of the country I like them better than the English perhaps because they are Catholics that we have more sympathy with them" (87), and calls them "native people" to describe the devastating effects of the War in that population: "one meets in the streets about ten foreigners to one native among the male population and so many families in mourning" (93). Her description of the "country people" (*gauchos*) as "ugly, dark, with dark eyes and hair", "savages" and illiterate is completely biased and emerges from a strong Eurocentric perspective. Kate A. Murphy praises their talent for playing the guitar at the "*bailes*" or dances where men and women gathered at night in the shearing season by Christmas time. However, when she claims that people coming out from England do enjoy listening and seeing them, she writes from a clearly detached and outsider perspective.

Also, as explained above, most nineteenth-century Irish migrants came to Argentina as part of a migration network organised by those who had emigrated some time before. Later, J.J. Murphy did the same as a landowner, recruiting mostly Irish workers from morally good families for his camps, with the help of his brother Martin, local Irish priests and other members of the Catholic Church in his native land:

With the plough, you will be pleased to send me out three men, as James, Joseph & Nick, leaving my place left me scarce of hands. I will mention one of you: Tom Laeler, that was with me in Crosstown. The other two may be of your own choice […] If there were any three or four men of respectable family coming out, and choose to come to Uncalito, it would save you the trouble of arranging about the others […] If not the conditions to be understood with others are that they serve me fourteen months hire, and I pay all expenses committed with their coming but the passage money. We must raise the time of their servitude, on account of the exchange so high. (47)

In another letter to his siblings and friends in Ireland, Murray claims that he could find work for more men as every good man you keep employed in Argentina "pay well for the expenses" (53). These quotes indicate what an organised association it was and how selective many Irish sheep-farmers were like at the time of getting hand labour.

A third trait of this diaspora is its strong bond with the Catholic Church both at home and in Argentina, which also describes their cultural separateness. In many passages, J.J. Murphy makes reference to the collection of money among Catholic Irish people to send for Churches at home: (To Martin Murphy) "Tell Father James that I have got 2 or 3 pounds from his parishioners in the country to send him for his church" (52). Peculiarly, Irish migrants resisted attending religious services presided by a non-Irish priest, even if a native parish priest was available:

The families within that space has[8] not seen a priest this last two years or had an opportunity to attend to their spiritual duties […] I am sure if our good Bishop Dr Furlong only knew our situation here, I think he would send us a priest to comfort us, or if there is any charitable young priest that would undertake to come and relieve us I would willingly guarantee his expenses here. (46)

Murray explains that this fact created controversy with the Passionist Fathers and was a sign of how much the Irish feared opening their community to the Argentine society. Once an Irish priest arrived, the Irish congregation increased in the parish. A similar event is portrayed by Tom Garrahan: "Around 1875 there was a chapel built on Brown's camp […] There used to be a great gathering of Irish for Mass as the whole district was occupied by Irish families" (117). Its head was an Irish priest named O'Reilly.

Nevertheless, while negotiating values, the Irish continued contributing with the growth of their new community and even involving personally in it. J.J. Murphy even became a member of the municipal committee responsible for building a church in Salto. Besides, creating schools was another proof of their contribution: "we are now building a public school in Salto, […] and is at present collecting to build a Chapel also, as Mass and all other religious sessionings is at present performed in a private house rented for the Municipality for that purpose" (50). The creation of that school by 1864 could be interpreted as an attempt to open to the locals and facilitate insertion because until late nineteenth-century education of children of Irish families was provided by religious organizations or private tutors at some neighbour's house, as Garrahan remembers: "The first school master we had was an old man called Luke Lynch. He taught us how to read. This was about 1873. Afterwards we had a German for a few months, then Santie and I went to school at Mike Healy's" (116). In spite of this, J.J. Murphy praises "facilities for educating children" in Argentina: "The daughters of all the respectable Irish families born [in Argentina] and those who arrive to it young, are educated in the Convent" (64). Thus, the ambivalent attitude of keeping separate from local people in certain aspects of

[8] Grammatically incorrect forms like this are quoted as they appear in the original text.

life but getting more socially involved in others represents a step forward in their process of becoming Irish-Argentine in the Argentine *pampas*: when thinking about negotiating identities in a foreign context, Bhabha's notion of "border lives" is also appropriate to understand how our identities in process are constantly moulded and enriched in contact with what we perceive as different. Bhabha agrees with Clifford (1994) in that it is theoretically and politically crucial "to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" because "these 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of self-hood – singular and communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha 1994, 1-2). And, in so doing, nostalgia about "home" and fear seem to weaken, giving place to a narration in which pride and satisfaction for their achievements prevail.

Another clear sign of this gradual social integration of the Irish into the Argentine community can be appreciated when Garrahan describes himself as a "dry" man who never attended dances at Irish families' houses and, though he enjoyed them when organised at home, he restrained his wishes of fun due to his responsibility as the eldest son. Later, by 1896 Garrahan became the treasurer of the Lobos Hibernia Club while it lasted, a fact that increased his social circle outside the Irish community. Besides, his eldest daughter was christened at San Miguel church and when his wife recovered her strength after childbirth in 1911, Garrahan and his newly formed family "went to Luján for the pilgrimage" (Murray 2006a, 130). Besides, he visited his friends in the Argentine military service camp, which would have been impossible some decades earlier because Irishmen were afraid of being recruited for the Triple Alliance War[9], as it had happened with *gauchos*. Conversely, Sally's Moore's brother also describes to J.J. Pettit how city improvements in the last ten years and the consequent creation of clubs and societies made all town gather to attend the performances, which anticipates the beginning of a new plural and hybrid Argentine society.

Becoming Irlandés depicts this cultural articulation as a gradual and lengthy process marked by both assimilation and resistance, which is particularly noticeable through the language forms they use: "becoming-Irish through the discourse is a process represented by narratives of one's own and others' identity, and of the mutations of that identity" (6). First, although the Irish were not the only English-speaking foreign group in 1800s Argentina (British, Welsh and Scottish communities were also settled in different areas of the country and involved in a variety of economic activities), the Irish certainly identified more with the English than with the local people for a very long time. Thus, even though their private narratives were not intended to be published, they use English – the coloniser's language – to communicate with those that remained at "home", instead of their native Irish (Gaelic) language, excepted for place names in Ireland. Nevertheless, either as a sign of linguistic resistance or simply because they started to get "contaminated" by the influence of the varieties of English they heard around them daily, the standard English spoken in the first half of the nineteenth century in rural Ireland emerges in these narratives with a grammatical anomaly: singular verb form is commonly used instead of plural in phrases such as "the families within that space has not seen a priest this last two years" (46). In addition, as the Irish community began to establish identity ties with local people and to adopt many of their customs, letters home and memoirs are full of loanwords from Spanish or colloquial expressions used in Buenos Aires, mainly. In this sense, the insertion of Argentine

[9] The bloodiest war fought in South America, declared by Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay against Paraguay (1864-1870).

lexical items by the different authors in Murray's collection of private narratives is worth a quick reflection, although it does not constitute the main focus of this paper. This is mainly observable in letters by J.J. Murphy written after the 1860s (almost twenty years after his arrival), as well as in the second half of the memoir of Tom Garrahan. Thus, in a 1865 letter, J.J. Murphy asks his brother Martin to address his letters to "*Don Juan* Murphy", his Argentine name (63). One of the richest texts in this sense is certainly the memoir of Tom Garrahan, whose last part is full of Argentine words related to rural life, such as *ranchos* (121); *potrero* and *corrales* (123); *tambo* and *novillitos* (126); *tropilla*, *capones*, *agrimensor* and *borregos* (125); *capataz* (130), to mention some. Moreover, the names of the narrator's properties or those of their neighbours and acquaintances appear in both texts in Spanish by the late nineteenth century: *Estancia Bella Vista,* Salto (52); *Flor de Uncalito* (63) and *La Espadaña* and *Los Milagros* (121).

Last, Irish migrants and their descendants shared the need of keeping a steady connection to their country of origin, and fulfilled this necessity either through constant correspondence to those that remained at home or in personal memoirs. Therefore, the discourse of each text varies in style and content according to the reality of each writer. Whereas letters have a more dialogical structure since a reply is expected by narrators, memoirs display a more subtle one. As regards topics, J.J. Murphy's letters oscillate between economic achievements, plans for the future, interest in the well-being of his relatives at home and how their place in Argentina improved thanks to communal effort, in which the Irish had a key role. The letters written by the female cousins to their Argentine-born cousin John James Pettit, manifest an interest more in family news and their vicissitudes than in economic success, and contain references to the exchange of newspapers both in English and Spanish, and family photographies. They are determined not to lose contact with their cousin in Australia. In his friendly-like style, Tom Garrahan depicts his life in Buenos Aires, centring on his own feelings and works. In contrast, the memoir of Edward Robbins mainly recounts the story and genealogy of his family in Ireland, with just a few lines depicting his life after arriving in this country.

A last sign of Irish people's new *Argentineness* (6) can be found in their clothes. Murray (132) describes a 1880s photo of Irish farmers published in the Southern Cross[10] to illustrate an article entitled "Estancieros irlandeses", in which they appear wearing *chiripá* (Amerindian breeches), *chambergo* (a wide-brimmed hat)*, botas de potro* (hand-fashioned boots made with the skin of a colt's hind legs) and traditional *ponchos,* together with leather lassos, a long knife, the typical *gaucho* clothes (6). This outfit symbolises the assimilation of customs and local traditions (like that of having *mate* with *bizcochitos*[11]) that took place when the different cultural groups in the Argentine society started to mix with each other. But there was still a huge difference between them: many Irish migrants became *estancieros*, landlords (as revealed in many narratives in *Becoming Irlandés*) whereas *gauchos* were proletarians. Irishmen saw themselves as English first, but they were not "*gauchos* irlandeses". In fact, as Murray claims, they were different and perceived themselves differently from the natives of the Argentine *pampas* (133). However, each of these stages represents the levels of identification they undergo: from Irish to English at first, and from English to Irish-Argentine, then.

[10] An English-language Catholic newspaper and one of the oldest ones still in production in Argentina, founded by Monsignor Patrick Joseph Dillon in 1875. Today, it is published in Spanish, but until the 1970s the newspaper was published in English, the language of the majority of the original Irish immigrants to the country.

[11] A *Rio de La Plata* hot infusion and traditional small salty biscuits, usually made of grease. This tradition initiated in rural areas in Argentina.

6. *"Home" in Murray's Private Narratives*

In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (1996), Avtar Brah argues that diasporas connote the positive idea of hope and of a potential new beginning, since they are "contested cultural and political terrains where individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure" (193), giving place to a new hybrid identity that is constructed through a daily negotiation of meanings and values. The notion of diaspora implicitly carries the idea of home but mainly, home as a mental construction that may be different from reality; home as a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (192), as an idealised place where one feels safe and welcomed and one which encloses deep emotions related to past experiences. As regards the reach of the notions of "home" and "return" implicated in this term, opinions are divided. Whereas Safran's definition of diaspora includes the "desire of eventual return" (1991) and Lloyd (2013) understands the collective nature of nostalgia for the homeland, Brah claims that the idea of diaspora involves an intention on the part of individuals to settle down somewhere else. This is why for diasporic individuals the necessity of (re)creating home away from home is a question of reconstructing their identity, fragmented by the experience of displacement. Being so, for diasporic subjects a plurality of "homes" and places of belonging co-exist, since the very notion of diaspora carries the idea of ambivalence, dislocation and the avoidance of fixed boundaries.

But how do the discourses of nineteenth-century Irish diaspora in Argentina represent experiences of displacement? What idea of "home" do they bear in mind? How did they construct homes away from home? To start with, the representation of "home" each narrator holds depends on different factors, such as whether they are Irish migrants or Argentine-born children to them, their age, the place they settled in, their relation with "others" in the new community and the success or frustration derived from their respective occupations and experiences. For Edward Robbins, "home" is his native Ireland, the place where most of his memory goes back to while he writes his memoir and where his dead relatives rest. His narrative voice denotes nostalgia for the land and the life he felt forced to leave behind for economic reasons, which made him lose his social position and his family farms. The sad experiences he suffered on his arrival and the subsequent struggle not to fall into a deep poverty give his text a rather pessimistic tone. J.J. Murphy also has Ireland as "home" in his psyche and many of his thoughts are attached to it. However, he is able to build a new home in Argentina, which provides him with a feeling of pride and moves him to continue making plans for the future. In addition, Murphy manages to live on the border of the two cultural systems that surround his existence, since the experience of diaspora is characterized by "blurred boundary markers" (Lloyd, 2013). Similarly, Brah's concept of "diasporic space" alludes to a shared space formed by both immigrants and local people, who live between "boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them'" (209). In this cultural space, he is determined to recreate "home" in his neighbourhood through the multiple political and religious contacts he has that help make it possible for migrants and locals. About the desire of return, Murphy felt that need twice while living in Argentina and he even thought of settling again in Ireland thanks to the production of his farms in Argentina. On one occasion, he even stayed in Ireland for about five years. But the death of two of his children there made him come back never to return to his home country.

On the other hand, for James Pettit and his son John James, being diasporic subjects means that a plurality of "homes" is possible in the dynamic process of migration and identity construction. Little is known from the dialogic structure of the three female cousins' letters about father and son's feelings as regards their first new home in Argentina. For John James,

maybe Australia means "home" since he was a little boy when he emigrated, whereas for his father, Argentina has probably a deeper meaning, since he left many friends and relatives behind, when he emigrated for the second time outside home. As for the three female cousins, they were born in Argentina and live in an urban or semi-urban area of Buenos Aires. They have never been in Ireland. Therefore, their idea of Ireland as "home" is that of a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this case, the references to Ireland are missed probably because their ancestral land only lives in their imagination. Maybe Ireland is for them, the land of their ancestors, the place that psychologically speaking serves them all as a field of identification. Finally, for Tom Garrahan, "a typical Irish-Argentine *estanciero*, first generation born in the country" (Murray 2006a, 115), "home" is Argentina, specifically Buenos Aires and its rural environment where they live and work. As such, he perceives himself as belonging to this society though different from the native people of the pampas.

All in all, no matter what idea of "home" Irish diasporic subjects have, they certainly constitute a new hybrid construction, shaped by elements from their past and their present life, from their culture of origin and that of the receiving country.

7. Conclusions

The chronological arrangement of the private narratives in Murray's book reveals the gradual and endless process of cultural assimilation that nineteenth-century Irish migrants underwent from the very moment they left Ireland. Even though each of these private pieces of writing is different from the rest and tells a unique personal story, all of them reveal moments of anguish, fear, frustration, solitude as well as of satisfaction, happiness and personal pride when looking at their lives in close or distant retrospection. They portray systems of values, beliefs and ideologies that compose their Irish identity, which obviously clash with a local and different cultural system, at least in certain aspects. And it is in those points of clash or encounter where a new hybrid identity starts to develop. As it appears in these letters and memoirs, it was difficult for Irish migrants to mix with native groups in Argentina because they perceived themselves as different and were afraid of becoming "contaminated" by those differences.

For these diasporic subjects, the need of "transplanting" Ireland abroad is a must, which is represented in the determination to keep their cultural heritage as pure as possible but also, in their involvement in the development of their new community. The idea of recreating home away from home implies a gradual process of reconstruction of identity in a new context, marked by plurality, diversity and tolerance. This appropriation of the new cultural system manifests, mainly, in the way in which they become more involved in local celebrations and social causes, in the acquisition of land and other properties, in how they relate to local people over time as well as in the way their language starts to transform from a rather pure English-like style to a hybrid form, in which many Argentine words associated with their daily life "pollute" their narratives.

Since the collection of private narratives here analysed was not intended for publication, they deserve all our respect as readers because they are personal expressions of private experiences and a portrayal of their subjective perspective of the world around them. Therefore, their testimony is full of feelings, fears, hopes, nostalgia and frustration. From the socio-cultural point of view, these texts are rich historical documents, which provide readers with a priceless first-hand testimony, but have been historically relegated as such. Undoubtedly, they offer a rich portrayal of the life of nineteenth century Irish migrants or their descendants in its full process of *becoming* Irish-Argentine.

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Cultural Representations in Irish Immigrants and Their Descendants in *Tréboles del Sur*, by Juan José Delaney

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Abstract:

Prospects of better living conditions attracted thousands of Irish emigrants to Argentina between 1830 and 1930. In a hopeful attempt to redefine their lives, the newcomers contributed to the formation of the identity and the progress of our country. Although they were far away from their homeland, most Irish-born people kept strong ties with their land and relatives back in Ireland. *Tréboles del Sur* (2014 [1994]) by contemporary Irish-Argentine writer Juan José Delaney is a collection of short stories which recount the life of Irish immigrants in Argentina and their descendants, ranging from the 1870s until 1983. This article aims at analyzing the representation of cultural aspects in those Irish immigrants. Stuart Hall's concepts of representation, cultural identity and diasporic subjects, Raymond Williams' concept of culture and the notion of cultural hybridity introduced by García Canclini are taken into account for the study. Our analysis is restricted to some of the fictional characters in Delaney's work. The immigrants' preservation of the links with their country of origin proves to be highly significant while forging bonds in a new environment.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Irish diaspora, Literature, Representation

1. Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth, and even in the first decades of the twentieth century, thousands of Irish emigrants, mostly Catholic, moved to England, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and "to a certainly remote country," Argentina, attracted by the prospects of better living conditions (Delaney 2014, 7), as the economic, social, and political conditions in Ireland at the time were quite poor. However, a majority of the emigrants bound to Argentina came from the Irish Midlands (Westmeath, Longford, and Offaly) and from

Co. Wexford[1]. They belonged to social segments in which the economic conditions were not the worst. Others left Ireland attracted by favourable descriptions from early emigrants.

In his Introduction to *Los irlandeses en la Argentina* (1987), Coghlan[2] recounts the stories of Irish emigrants and their descendants in Argentina, from the period previous to the Declaration of Independence in 1816 and extending to the beginnings of the twentieth century. Around 1810, some 500 Irish lived in the Río de la Plata region, including the prisoners that had been left behind after the British invasions of the Río de la Plata, which took place between 1806 and 1807. In general, those Irish men and women lost contact with their homeland and many hispanicized their surnames, which makes it difficult to trace their Irish ancestors[3]. Along the process of the rise of the Argentine Republic, the local population barely reached half a million inhabitants; therefore, immigration of European colonists was fostered with the aim of occupying the lands which, so far, were populated by the Indians. This political decision to promote immigration was established in the Argentine Constitution of 1853, which also stated that the protection of the law extended to all the inhabitants of the country, including foreigners.

According to Coghlan, the first Irish colonists in the Río de la Plata arrived with their families or married the daughters of other countrymen who had come before, and created a colony, thus strengthening the bonds that distinguished them from all the other colonies which made up the Argentine society of the times. The Irish came mainly from 1830 to 1930, with the largest movement taking place in 1850-1870. These waves of Irish immigration occurring from the third decade of the nineteenth century onwards were the result of special circumstances in Ireland: the 1801 Act of Union, which united the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; the failure of the potato crops[4]; and the news that reached Ireland about the social and economic success of the Irish who had settled in the Río de la Plata region. News had spread that land in Argentina was relatively easy to acquire, and, in fact, by the mid-nineteenth century migration networks had been gradually established by Irish landowners, merchants and Catholic priests, who as *ingleses* were highly regarded by the local bourgeoisie. They actively hired family members, friends and neighbours in Ireland to help them on their sheep-farms in the pampas (Murray 2004), mostly

[1] For further details on how the Irish emigrants travelled from their townlands and rural villages to the most important ports in Ireland and England, and from there to South American ports, on what means of transport they used on land and sea, on how expensive the fares were and how comfortable the accommodation was, on which the most common emigrant ships to South America were and what their usual travel patterns were, see <https://www.irlandeses.org/road.htm> (03/2021).

[2] Eduardo Aquilio Coghlan (1912-1997), genealogist and civil servant, was a notary public and landowner. He was vice-president of the Irish Argentine Federation and member of the Irish Catholic Association. Coghlan contributed articles to the *Review of the River Plate*, *The Southern Cross* and *La Nación* newspaper. He did valuable research over a life-time on thousands of Irish emigrants and their descendants from the date of their arrival in Argentina through the succeeding generations. Coghlan's *Los Irlandeses en la Argentina* (1987) is a 963-pages genealogical catalogue of the Irish-Argentine community, including 4,349 Irish-born emigrants to Argentina and most of their families up to the third and sometimes fourth and fifth generations. Recovered from <https://www.irlandeses.org/dilab_coghlanea.htm> (03/2021).

[3] In this respect, Juan José Delaney in his "Explicación introductoria" to *Tréboles del Sur* , mentions some of the surnames which were hispanicized: Campbell: Campana; Gowan: Gaona, among many others.

[4] The failure of the potato crops gave rise to the Great Potato Famine, also known as "the hard times", which took place between 1845 and 1852. Beyond doubt, it was the most traumatic event of modern Irish history. The cause of the famine was a potato blight which infected potato crops throughout Europe during the 1840s, and was a period of mass starvation and disease in Ireland (Kinealy 1994, 357) as well as all over Europe. During the famine, about 1 million people died and 1 million more left the country, (Ross 2002, 226), causing the country's population to fall by 20%-25% (Kinealy 1994, 357).

single farmers in their twenties or non-inheriting children of Catholic middle-sized tenants, who preferred to emigrate than to enroll in the British army or in the church.

As most of the Irish emigrants came from the country, not from the towns, upon arrival in Argentina some settled in Buenos Aires, but the greater part went to the rural areas of the homonymous province and to the littoral provinces, often surpassing the frontier between what was considered "the civilized world" and "Indian territories".

After the second half of the nineteenth century, with the development and expansion of the railroads, many Irish could reach new areas and set up communities around the railway stations[5], which still today bear Irish names.

The Irish living in urban areas usually worked as labourers, merchants, employees, artisans, teachers, professionals and, increasingly after the 1860s and especially women, as domestic servants. The Irish who had settled in the countryside worked as labourers in the *saladeros*[6], or were employed as *peones* in the *estancias*[7]. Many worked as cattle dealers and shepherds. In the flourishing sheep-farming business of 1840-1890, as a consequence of the expansion of the economic activity associated with wool during the Industrial Revolution in Europe, many of them found sheep-breeding a highly rewarding activity.

According to Edmundo Murray (2006), they led a solitary life, with enormous distances between one house and the other, living in far-away huts minding flocks of 1,500 to 2,000 sheep. They would work on halves or on thirds with their employers and at the end of the year they were paid a half or a third of the produce in lambs and wool, which meant that in two or three years a good shepherd was able to acquire his own flock. Eventually, many of those shepherds were in a position to rent their place and, after ten or fifteen years, to purchase land. However, only ten per cent of the Irish emigrants to Argentina could purchase land (Murray 2006b), thus achieving their dream of becoming landowners.

A large number of Irish migrated to the cities and were committed to tasks related to political, cultural and commercial activities. In the field of journalism, for example, *The Standard* and *The Southern Cross*[8] were created with the aim of spreading the immigrants' ideas and sharing the community news.

The Standard emerged in 1861, and was founded by the brothers Michael and John Mulhall, with the collaboration of Michael Duggan, an influential member of the Irish community. The newspaper was directed at all English-speaking readers, so that the Irish did not consider it an organ of their community and the attitude of the publication was pro-British. *The Southern Cross*, a weekly newspaper, was created in 1875 and became the loyal and principal organ of the ideas of the Irish community. Its first director was Patrick Dillon and one of his successors, William Bulfin, was a man charged with inculcating an Irish nationalist sentiment in the Irish-Argentines (Cernadas Fonsalías 2009, 31).

An outstanding figure of the Irish diaspora in Argentina was Father Anthony Fahy (1805-1871), a Galway Dominican Priest and missionary between 1844 and 1871. He was appointed

[5] The construction of railroads in Argentina began in the 1860s, and performed a remarkable role in national consolidation, facilitating access to new areas, thereby aiding geographical and economic integration (Lenz 2005).

[6] Saladeros are places used for salting fish and meat in order to preserve them.

[7] Peones are laborers who work on a farm and receive wages regularly. Estancias are cattle ranches.

[8] *The Southern Cross* is an Argentine newspaper founded on January 16, 1875, by Patrick Joseph Dillon (1842–1889), a Roman Catholic priest, editor and politician, born in Tuam, East Co. Galway, Ireland. *The Southern Cross*, which is mentioned by Delaney in *Tréboles del Sur*, provides readers with a beginners' guide to the Irish language, helping Irish Argentines keep in touch with their cultural heritage (see *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Southern_Cross_(Argentina)>, 03/2021).

to the Irish chaplaincy of Buenos Aires in place of father Patrick O'Gorman in 1844, and soon became leader of the Irish community in Argentina, encouraging many nineteenth century Irish emigrants to make new homes for themselves in Argentina. Part of his job was to wait for them in Buenos Aires harbor, convince them to make their homes in the country and to work as shepherds. He also acted as consul, postmaster, financial adviser, judge, interpreter, and employment agent for the members of his community.

Father Fahy worked in Buenos Aires and travelled to the interior parishes of the province every six months, and also held stations in different districts to say Mass, administer the sacraments, and preach. He provided more than just spiritual support to Irish immigrants in Argentina, as he got to know his fellow countrymen who worked in the pampas and even managed to find many an Irish bride. Above all, he was instrumental in aiding the Irish families to progress in Argentina so that more Irishmen were attracted to these lands.

Many writers have depicted the life of the Irish and their descendants in Argentina. The fiction writer and essayist Juan José Delaney, in his "Explicación" at the start of his collection of short stories *Tréboles del Sur* (2014), states that the stories gathered in his book deal with "men and women, their descendants, their achievements and failures, people that […] also chose or were chosen to be part, in our country, of a nation made of nations" (8). In fact, *Tréboles del Sur* gives "an account of the Irish in Argentina, their struggles and their ups and downs"(Zuntini de Izarra 2007, 166) over a period ranging from the 1870s until 1983. The identities of its protagonists, in words of the author "fictional beings" (Delaney 2014, 8), are marked by the interaction between their European roots and the Argentine context in which they are immersed.

It is in this spatial-temporal context that this article aims at analyzing the representation of cultural aspects in the Irish immigrants that share geographical spaces with the Argentinian-born people[9]. Our analysis is restricted to the fictional characters of a selection of stories in Delaney's *Tréboles del Sur*. In order to explore this issue, we resort to the concept of representation as described by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who views representation as "an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things" (1997, 15). We also consider the role of language within a wider cultural context. Our analysis takes into account Hall's concern about cultural identity in relation to diasporic subjects, as well as Raymond Williams' concept of culture, as a product of developments of this term in the English cultural studies of the 1970s. Finally, we explore questions of cultural hybridity as a result of the contact between two different cultures.

2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of "representation", according to Stuart Hall, occupies an important place in the study of culture, because "representation connects meaning and language to culture" (*ibidem*). Hall explains that "representation" means using the language, the signs, the images to represent the world meaningfully, to other "people", which is the same as saying that meaning is produced through language.

[9] This topic has also been the subject of the article "Las representaciones culturales en los 'Gringos' de Eduardo Cormick" (Obert, 2016), on Eduardo Cormick's book *Entre gringos y criollos* (2006).

Language operates as a *representational system*, and in language we use signs and symbols, be they "sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects," (1) to represent thoughts, ideas and concepts in a culture. And because members of the same culture share sets of concepts, images and ideas, they are able to think and feel about the world "in roughly similar ways" (4). Semiotics focuses on the study of signs and symbols which constitute essential elements in communication. The semiotic approach examines how language and representation produce meaning, and deepens into the way in which knowledge connects with "power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practised and studied" (6).

Now let us consider the term "culture". This term can be understood in a variety of ways and its different meanings have aroused tension and been the subject of current debates about the place of culture in the social sciences and the humanities. Therefore, it is necessary to contextualize it whenever it is used. British cultural critic and sociologist Raymond Williams, as well as Stuart Hall and other prestigious researchers at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the University of Birmingham, England, identified culture with consumer goods and free time activities (such as the arts, music, the cinema, foods, sports and clothing). In this way, Williams focused on the "popular" as an object of study and gave the subject a central role. In the decade of the 1970s, Williams and the Birmingham researchers developed their ideas about the relationship between culture and society, providing a "social" definition of culture. Culture, in this context,

> is the description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture […] is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture. (Williams 1998, 48)

Raymond Williams also claims that culture is not an end product, but an ongoing process which is defined in the relationship of the social, the political and the historical (48-56). For such a reason, it involves activities, practices, artistic and intellectual processes and products that make up the culture of a specific group at a particular time. Among these is literature. It is therefore possible to analyse literary works in relation to particular traditions and societies, in relation to "the organization of production, the structure of the family, the structure of institutions which express or govern social relationships, the characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate" (57).

When we think about "text", we do not only think about the written language, but also about films, photography, fashion, hair styles. It can be asserted, then, that the texts of cultural studies involve all the meaningful artifacts of a culture. In this context, the concept of "culture" includes not only the traditional culture of "high" classes, but also the "popular" culture, as well as meanings and daily practices.

The concept of identity, which is essential in socio-cultural studies, seems to be inseparable from the idea of culture, as identities can only be shaped by the different cultures and subcultures to which we belong and with which we interact. Without a sense of identity society would not exist (Jenkins 1996, 819 cited in Giménez 2007, 54). In Madan Sarup's words (1996), "identity […] may perhaps be best seen as a multi-dimensional space" (25), which "is fabricated, constructed, in process, and […] we have to consider both psychological and sociological factors" (11-14). As a social construction, it arises as consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices and, in some ways, is "an effect of socialising institutions – mother, father, the family, schooling, the factory/office, friends, media" (48).

With regard to the social construction of our national identity, Sarup claims that "every nation has its own story," and that "nations make claims to land, and they make appeals to blood, native soil, homeland, motherland, fatherland" (131). National culture provides collective self-awareness and is based upon communication. Through language a group becomes aware of itself: "language and place are inextricably interconnected" (*ibidem*). A common language allows people to share meanings, and culture is about "shared meanings" (Hall 1997, 1).

The question of cultural identity, or the identity of belonging to a group, arises especially when considering the case of migrant subjects. Sarup defines a migrant as "a person who has crossed the border," and who "seeks a place to make a new 'beginning', to start again, to make a better life" (1996, 1). As might be expected, certain aspects of the migrants' native culture, such as their mother tongue, are gradually "left behind" (our emphasis) as they spend their time far from their homelands, immersed in a new environment, sharing their lives with subjects whose identities have been constructed in a different space. On the other hand, those aspects of the migrants' native culture can be "revived" and resorted to as a way to nurture their saddened spirits when suffering hardships.

It is possible to analyse the concept of cultural identity from different perspectives. One such perspective is essentialism, which asserts that there exist some objective traits of particular groups of people that are inherent, eternal, and unalterable, determined prior to the individual based on their shared history; "cultural essentialism is the practice of categorizing groups of people within a culture, or from other cultures, according to essential qualities" (Barta, Levitas 2021). On the other hand, non-essentialist theories consider culture as a construction, as not being fixed, but movable and in constant change due to the relations with others. In this article the concept of identity will be approached from a non-essentialist position, which regards identities as fluid, as having different elements which can be reconstructed in new cultural conditions, and as not fixed essences locked into differences which are permanent for all time (Woodward 1997, 29). Understanding cultural identity in this way, it is not surprising that immigrants may retain elements from both cultures and may not feel locked into one single cultural identity, which means that they are likely to construct a hybrid identity. This has been the subject of research of many postcolonial theorists and writers, who have described these identities in their fictional works.

In fact, individuals do not generally live isolated; instead, they belong to groups through which they define themselves. Thus, culture plays a major role in shaping their identity. Individuals are also dynamic in nature and, therefore, in constant interaction with the community to which they belong. The values and attitudes prevalent around them shape their cultural identity along their lives. This fact relates to the individual's need to belong, to feel accepted and "at home" with a certain group. However, it is not only the group the individual belongs to that helps define his identity; the role of personal experiences in combination with his relationships also change or add up to his identity and the identities of those with whom he relates.

The process of identity re-construction of migrant subjects in places to which they do not feel an attachment, or a belongingness, is one of the topics that has worried postcolonial critics so much. Thus, they intend to explain the experiences of these subjects and their representation by focusing on the development of their subjectivities. The migrants' crossing of borders, languages and traditions bring them into contact with other cultures and lead to changes of attitude that characterize their lives (Gikandi 2010, 23-29). For that reason, diasporic subjects usually develop hybrid identities (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2007, 62).

A hybrid cultural identity is created as time progresses, in part based on contingency. The boundaries of hybrid cultures are negotiated and able to absorb diverse cultural influences:

borders are active sites of intersection and overlap, supporting the creation of in-between identities. Where two cultures are combined, new, different forms of culture emerge, and individuals become cultural hybrids. Hence, the background of cultural hybrids is often a blend of two diverse cultures or traditions.

The concept "hybrid culture" has been defined by Argentine-born academic and anthropologist Néstor García Canclini as a phenomenon that "materializes in multi-determined scenarios where diverse systems intersect and interpenetrate" (1995, 53). In *Culturas Híbridas* (1989), Canclini explains that the expression "hybrid culture" refers to a process of integration stimulated by the encounters, the interaction and the reconstruction of different local cultures; that is to say, discrete social practices or structures, that existed in separate ways, combine to generate new structures, objects, and practices in which the preceding elements mix. In this process, culture is changed through adaptation. With reference to this topic, Lowe (1991) explains that in post-structuralist and post-modern analysis, syncretism and hybridity have become keywords. Syncretism refers to the methodology of montage and collage, to the combination of different forms of belief or practice; and hybridity is considered to be the antidote to essentialist notions of identity. Hybridity concerns the mixture of phenomena which are held to be different, the mixing of cultures and not their separateness.

Culture, as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time"[10], mainly as shown in their ordinary behaviour and habits, attitudes to each other, literature, art, music, dance, theatre, etc., allows for the identification of small groups or whole nations that share those characteristics. Nowadays it is common to speak of sociocultural hybridity, or the extent to which cultures are intermixed, because migratory processes give rise to interculturality.

García Canclini asserts that, when "cultural hybridity" occurs, ancestral practices and folklore tend to blur and disappear, previous to changing within new scenarios (1995). This blending process of various aspects of one culture, including ethnicity, religion, language, and even food and drink, precedes the phenomenon of assimilation. Assimilation is a process of fusion or blending, whereby cultural differences tend to disappear and individuals and groups once dissimilar become similar. It results in the modification of attitudes, values, patterns of thinking and ultimately behaviour. Acculturation, on the other hand, is a process whereby a social group (usually ethnic group) loses its cultural distinctiveness and progressively adopts and appropriates the language, religion and other cultural attributes of another group. This process can take place with consent, as in the case of immigration to another country or by imposition or force, as in the case of colonization, for example, in periods of war or conflict. Acculturation, therefore, implies modification but not complete assimilation.

Interwoven with the concept of cultural hybridity is the concept of "interculturality". Processes of cultural hybridity do not always occur; often, there are cases of interculturality. While cultural hybridity occurs when two cultures are combined and new, different forms of culture emerge, interculturality occurs when relationships and interactions take place intentionally between different cultures in order to promote dialogue, mutual respect and the awareness of preserving the cultural identity of each individual. In the case of interculturality, differences between cultures are respected, and the notion of superior and inferior cultures is utterly rejected. Undeniably, contact between people with different cultures usually leads to changes in both systems. The effects of cultures' contact involve changes in artifacts, customs, and beliefs

[10] *Cambridge Dictionary*, "Culture", <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture> (03/2021).

that result from cross-cultural interaction. Hybridity can even be part of a people's identity, a hybrid being a person whose background is a blend of two diverse cultures or traditions.

Argentina can be considered a melting pot of different peoples. Most Argentines are descendants of nineteenth and twentieth century immigrants of European descent, among whom the Irish have formed a large community. Besides, the country is populated by some Amerindian groups who maintain their cultural roots but are under continuous pressure for religious and idiomatic integration, by people from neighbouring countries, and also by people from Asian descent. In the case of *Tréboles del Sur*, Delaney concentrates on characters whose identities are marked by the interaction between their Irish roots and the Argentine environment in which they are immersed. The stories in the book, and in others he wrote, constitute "his personal account as a writer always concerned with creative ways of representing the unofficial version of Irish-Argentine historiography seen through contemporary eyes"(Zuntini de Izarra 2007, 165).

3. Analysis

Migrant literature frequently centers on the migrants' social contexts of origin as well as on their own process of integration and adaptation to the host country. Such process of integration and adaptation is affected by the reception of the "new" country in terms of hostility, sense of rootlessness and search for identity.

Juan José Delaney's own cultural affiliation with both the Irish and the Argentinian cultures permeate most of his books. He has acknowledged that he is nourished by both the Argentinian and the Irish cultures (Amador-Moreno 2018, 143). Being a writer of Irish descent in *Tréboles del Sur* Delaney recounts the lives of his Irish ancestors who settled in Argentina, along the fifteen stories that cover more than a century. The hard experience of immigration together with a search for a better standard of living constitute a recurrent topic in the literary productions of writers of Irish ancestors. Delaney introduces fictional characters, who bear Irish names and surnames, and plausible events that evoke a reality he handles with authority. He makes reference to religion, music, reading material, children's boarding schools, typical food, drinks, language, cities, neighbourhoods where the immigrants landed – Rojas, Moreno, Palermo, Flores and Villa Urquiza, guesthouses, traditional festivities, hispanicized surnames and the history of Ireland. As regards language, Argentina was the only non-English speaking destination for these migrants, so the language was a major difficulty to achieve integration.

Language has always been a major issue for the Irish-Argentine community, being Irish-English the language used by the first generation to address the older people, while the next generation would speak a strange mixture called Irish-Porteño. Nowadays, Spanish is the regular language spoken by the Irish-Porteños. As it has already been hinted at, language is a crucial element in people's identity since it is a system of representation. Stuart Hall claims that there is not a true representation of people or events in a text, but there are lots of ways these can be represented (1997). Through language the meaning of the concepts we hold in our minds are represented. The fact of sharing a culture means sharing the same linguistic codes which allow the members of a community to interpret the world in similar ways and interact successfully. Hall asserts that the culture of a community is made evident by means of the discourse that conveys its identity and provides a place where to strengthen both its identity and sense of belonging (1997).

The Irish immigrants, the same as other diasporic subjects, tried to protect and reinforce their identity and unity by preserving the English language, though it was not their original

language[11]. Thus, the Irish families taught their children their mother tongue in order to transmit a wide range of cultural aspects, including the Catholic religion. However, the English language they spoke admitted Spanish interpolations and neologisms, such as "camp" for "campo", instead of using the word "countryside"; "convention" from "conventillo", instead of saying "boarding house". They would use expressions like: "I'm afraid the food won't alcanzar" or "Throw that into the basura". These changes reveal the slow process of assimilation of the Irish and their descendants into the Argentine community (Amador-Moreno 2018, 146).

The second story in this collection, "El Profesor O'Hara" (Delaney 2014, 17-23), occurs in Rojas, a town in the province of Buenos Aires, in 1888 – year that coincides with the last period of Irish immigration to Argentina. At that time, many Irish people lived in small communities close to Catholic churches, in rural areas of Buenos Aires province. They had their own institutions and the children were educated either at boarding schools or by teachers who were hired and lived with the families. These teachers taught the children the English language and ancient customs and traditions as a way to preserve their culture (Delaney 2000, 131-133). The protagonist of this story, Stephen O'Hara, is an Irish man who, lacking any teacher training, is hired by a widow named Brenda Shannon. O'Hara possesses an "oratorical magnetism" (1994,18) that let him use both languages with ease. This story exposes some of the characteristics of the former generations of Irish Argentines who Delaney recreates in his writing, and which he explains in the aforementioned interview: "They always spoke English (or Irish English), they were very religious, they had a good sense of humour, they loved Argentina [...] they preferred living in the countryside, and, basically, they were very good people" (Amador-Moreno 2018, 146).

Some of the tales in *Tréboles del Sur* have an epistolary style which discloses a means that the characters have found to maintain a fluid communication with their family members back in Ireland and let them know about their lives far away from their homeland. In "Destinos" (Delaney 2014, 53-64), the first letter – dated March 1929 – is written by an Irish immigrant who has settled in New York and is addressed to her cousin who lives in Argentina. The former, Jessie, has achieved "a better destiny" leaving behind "the poverty she has gone through in their [her] beloved Ireland" (53), since she has found a job, prosperity and happiness in her new place. Most of her success is connected to her knowledge of the English language. The latter, Tessie, instead, is unable to succeed in her aspirations, mainly because although she knows English, she lacks knowledge of the Spanish language. However, her command of English eventually turns highly beneficial for her, as she is able to find a way of saving some money by teaching English lessons at a local school. Nevertheless, this does not cater for her feeling of loneliness and isolation. In one of her letters she exposes her feelings,

> I carry so many things deep inside! Education, family bonds, stories, secrets… A pretty hard burden for a needy immigrant. You can share your things through language, but you know it is not the same here due to my poor Spanish, a substitute language that lowers my self-esteem, and isolates me. (55-56)

[11] When Father Anthony Fahy arrived in Argentina as the chaplain of the Irish immigrants, he organized the community in such a way that all its members belonged to an Irish colony, socially and culturally apart from the rest of the population. Fahy felt it was his duty to "protect" his people from the "natives" influence, whose way of living did not conform to the values of the Catholic Irish people of the nineteenth century. In order to keep the immigrants away, great emphasis was put on cultural and ethnic differences, and keeping the use of the English language was a key element to avoid assimilation. Therefore, around the 1850s, most immigrants had little knowledge of Spanish, and could not read the language (McKenna 1997 qtd. in Romera 2009, 223-229).

On one occasion, Tessie remembers Galway Bay and the beautiful but sad "Lament of the Irish Immigrant", and states her feelings about it: "I taught the song to my advanced students, but I think they were not able to grasp its real meaning" (56). Here and in many other cases, language turns into an obstacle. Though the Irish learnt the Spanish language, they often spoke it wrongly, as John Donovan ("La última cena") whose "Spanish was faulty and unnatural" (76).

Nevertheless, in Delaney's collection of stories there are several instances in which having knowledge of English becomes a great advantage. In "El regreso" (111-114), the main character, Bernardo Kenny, succeeds in his job and pursues "a career", "since it turns out to be reasonably easy thanks to the fact that he knew the English language, which positioned him better in relation to those immigrants who had no domain of business English" (112). Bernardo had left the farm where he grew up and gone to the city as a young boy. Like many other Irish Argentine boys belonging to poor Irish families, he had had a hard time in his school days at the Fahy Institute, and after finishing primary school he had started working as an office boy and had gradually progressed, thanks to the English language.

Many of the Irish devoted themselves to teaching English, and so they could make a living in spite of the difficult economic situation they often went through. A clear example is Anette Fleming's, in "La vida imita al arte" (37-51), who, as a little girl, is sent to Buenos Aires to live with some relatives, but she does not find a true home there. When it is time to start school, she has to go to Saint Brigid's boarding school – "the institution the Irish-Porteños threatened their girls with if they misbehaved" (41). Several years later, "since the school had nothing else to teach her, she was assigned the teaching of the English language" (43). Then, in order to find a job as a governess, she places advertisements in *The Southern Cross* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*[12]. Given that she finds a job with an Argentine family, she thinks she can have the opportunity to learn Spanish and the customs of the country. For some time, she teaches English and music to an eight-year-old girl, but after a failed relationship, she devotes herself to "giving English classes at Guadalupe parish school" (47).

Another way in which people retain their sense of identity is by maintaining their links with the past (Sarup 1996). Those links with the past are the foundation of individual and collective identity, and they are "an important agency in adjustment to a crisis" (97), especially when one's sense of confidence is weakened or threatened. In these cases, the past seems to be more attractive than the present, as the individuals seek refuge in it. In the last story of the book, "Las dos monedas" (2014, 115-123), Delaney makes reference to a song, written in English, which the protagonist knows by heart, "Galway Bay" by Arthur Colahan, the lyrics of which he often remembered:

> And if there is going to be a life hereafter
> And somehow I am sure there's going to be,
> I will ask my God to let me make my heaven,
> In that dear land across the Irish sea. (118)

[12] The *Buenos Aires Herald* was an English language daily newspaper published in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 1876 to 2017. Under the original name of *The Buenos Ayres Herald*, it was founded on 15 September 1876 by Scottish immigrant William Cathcart. At first, it consisted of a single sheet with advertising on the front and mostly shipping coverage on the back. It quickly became the main source of local information for the English-speaking population of Buenos Aires (see *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buenos_Aires_Herald>, 03/2021).

The poetic voice expresses that, if there is a life after death, it will develop in Ireland. It is made evident here how nostalgic those who live far away from their country feel; this idea is present in most of the stories since the characters express their bond to their homeland and to their ancestors in different ways. In this tale, Timothy O'Connor keeps an epistolary relationship with a distant relative whom he has never met, as a manner of preserving "bonds with the Old Ireland, the land of his ancestors" (116).

Peter Larkin, the main character in "Una carta de Joyce" (27-30), who settled in La Plata so as to teach English at the beginning of the twentieth century, "was soon involved in rural issues which somewhat returned him to the atmosphere in Ireland" , and he is remembered because he alternated "agricultural work with reading, a habit he had acquired at Belvedere College, in Dublin" (27).

Such emotional bond with Ireland and with the past becomes evident in "La última cena" (65-83) as Delaney explains that Father Charlie Flanagan, 83 years old, "loved Ireland (Celts, Vikings, Normans were in his blood …)" (79). Though he "has a good domain of Spanish […], his voice inflections disclose his origin"; however, "on few occasions he does insert an English voice" […] or some Gaelic interjection such as musha!" which has more than one meaning: "good" or "is this true?" (66).

In the story "El Profesor O'Hara" (17-23), the narrator describes, in a long paragraph, the superstitious nature of the Irish people, as represented by Mrs. McGarry: "[the old woman] had brought from Ireland all the superstitions she shared with the widow" (20). These are some examples of her superstitious character:

> she was afraid of thunder and she lit a 'holy' candle when there was a storm in the area; […] from her window, she used to throw salt towards the fields in order to avert the violence of nature […] She felt the necessity of holding strange rites when she sensed the presence of evil spirits, which was very frequent. Besides, she talked about the souls as frequent visitors and frightened the children with spooky stories about ghosts kidnapping them if they misbehaved. (*ibidem*)

Another Irish characteristic that is present in this tale is the audacity to achieve goals. Teachers are depicted as men "whose audacity leads them to venture into the mysteries of theology" (17). In the case of this protagonist, the daring O'Hara considered himself "a member of the family" (20) so as to win the widow's heart, which he succeeded, through "an audacious strategy" (21): he pretended to be Father Hopkins, "who introduced himself as the new priest of the Irish colonies in the northwest" (22), and who knew well the central role religion played in Irish-Argentine families. Thus, he had no difficulty in persuading the widow to confess her feelings towards him.

Tréboles del Sur also depicts some Irish customs, such as consuming alcoholic drinks or the habit of drinking tea, among others. Professor Stephen O'Hara in "El Profesor O'Hara" (17-23), described as "bearded, red-haired and obese," had the ability to tell "stories and Celtic legends which he unfolded […] according to his curious imagination not rarely stimulated by brandy" (18-19), and usually "the liberating nectars he had roused socially unacceptable behaviour" (18). Father Charlie Flanagan, in "La última cena" (65-83), is depicted as "a strongly-built man, tall, a bit hunched, of light complexion, thick grey hair and big blue eyes" (66). He lives in the refuge next to the Santa Cruz *porteño* temple, and despite the rules at the monastery banning it, "during several afternoons we shared Irish whiskey hidden in tea cups" (67).

In "El Heredero" (97-110), the Flynns' devotion for the consumption of alcohol causes them to lose their jobs on the farm and their moving to the city, facts which lead to family disintegration since the girls are sent to Saint Brigid's boarding school, one of the brothers

goes to Fahy Farm, and the other, Dionisio Flynn, is "rescued" by an old aunt and confined in Metropolitan Seminary. After long years there, and having been ordained priest, Dionisio has doubts as regards his religious vocation. Some years pass, but his hesitation and inner questioning still persist, so "it was not difficult for him to accept the first whiskey and feel that after some recurrent events he could unravel the ropes that submitted him to an undeserved torment" (102). His advisor and friend, Father John Windsor, an Irish Salesian, also enjoys drinking alcohol, and in return for a "banned cigarette" that Dionisio offered him, "he gave him a glass of Irish Mist (women's whiskey), something that boosts the happiness of having met a confidant and the will to gain access to a different_reality" (*ibidem*). Finally, "he has no option but to resort to alcohol which quiets his stormy evenings" but leads him to death because of "the cirrhosis which affects him and consumes his liver" (103).

The characters in *Tréboles del Sur* also find auspicious occasions for alcohol consumption, as for example Saint Patrick's festivity on 17 March. The narrative voice in "La última cena" (65-83) recounts that "there were many people who chose to meet, toast and have a good time" (75). In one part of the story, the narrator considers the fact that "a glass of whiskey is always good encouragement for reflection" (78).

As regards the habit of drinking tea, the Irish women keep this tradition alive. In "La vida imita al arte" (37-51), Anette Fleming, the orphan girl who spends her childhood and adolescence at Saint Brigid's School, finds consolation in "the essential cup of tea that would always be available," (42) though food proves to be scarce. Tea is also mentioned in relation to the possibility of fulfilling her dream of being part of a local filmmaking when "somebody left a clipping from a woman's magazine under her tea cup in the lodge dining-room" (48). For Tessie, in "Destinos" (53-64), "drinking tea is a suitable sedative" (56) to lessen her anguish. Madge Malone, in "Madge los viernes" (89-92), also keeps the tradition of drinking tea – on Fridays, she "cut down the four cups of tea to one" (90); but also "at five o'clock, she went to her sisters' grave where she had a cup of tea with some rubbery scon" (92).

4. Conclusion

As explained at the beginning of this article, our aim has been to explore the representation of cultural aspects in the Irish immigrants and their descendants that share geographical spaces with the Argentinian-born people, as shown in a selection of stories narrated by a writer of Irish descent that lives in Argentina. Delaney's intention was to write the story of the Irish in Argentina from a fictional point of view. In an interview published in 2007, he said: "since I had been immersed in the Irish community all my life, going through all kind of situations concerning that small European community in America, I was in a good condition […] to start a collection of tales on the topic" (Zuntini de Izarra, 166). And so, in *Tréboles del Sur* he gives an account of the Irish in Argentina, their struggles and their ups and downs.

In our analysis we have considered the homeland, social relationships and social spaces, language, and customs as cultural elements that influenced the characters' lives. Having analysed those specific cultural aspects of the Irish immigrants and their descendants in the collection of stories under study, it can be concluded that the characters presented in the stories do not show traits of complete "acculturation", as they have not fully adopted the culture of the host country. Both the Irish immigrants and the inhabitants of Argentina show to have been open to daily interactions, and to have partially achieved integration. The Irish adopted most of the sociocultural structures of the host culture, that is to say, the elements that were meaningful and useful for success, and they were never left aside. In a certain way, the Irish assimilated

without losing their unique traits, as they retained elements of their culture of origin that were important for them to survive in a new environment, mainly because the host culture was open to establishing a relationship with them.

As regards identity issues, in the condition of migration, a "contact zone" develops from the cross-cultural encounter between the emigrant's country and the host country. The experience of cultural contact of the Irish has shaped their identity as individuals or as members of a wider group. In the stories selected, the characters' identities are defined as a process, not as a product, and therefore, they are incomplete, and always in construction in relation to their social context. For this reason, their identities are hybrid identities. Most of the characters have accepted their "inbetweenness" and learned to live as Argentinians while, at the same time, they have kept their links to their homeland.

Apart from undergoing a process of re-construction of their cultural identity, the Irish depicted in Delaney's stories have had to come to terms with their hybridity, and at the same time have maintained their cultural distinctive features. They feel identified with the host culture, which is essential to achieve feelings of belonging and security, thus contributing to their welfare.

However, it is undeniable that they have undergone a long process of detachment and cultural reconstruction, and gradually adapted into a different sociocultural environment, which at times has been hostile. Despite all the hardships, they can be considered "cultural hybrids" because they have been able to keep alive several aspects of their home culture, especially in reference to customs, traditions, religion and language, and transmit them all to their descendants. Asserting their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness implies strategies to face the impact on the immigrants' lives of the multiplicity of situations in cases of intercultural contact brought about by migration. Besides, in a hopeful attempt to redefine their lives, the Irish newcomers have contributed to the formation of the identity and the progress of Argentina. However, though having embraced life far away from their homeland, most Irish-born people have kept strong ties with their land and relatives back in Ireland.

The selection of stories explored also provides insights into the significance of the immigrants' preservation of the cultural heritage from their country of origin in an attempt to soothe feelings of loneliness and nostalgia entailed in exile, as multiple stresses – especially adjustment to the new culture and changes in identity – have surely impacted their mental well-being.

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Hero or Traitor? A Linguistic Analysis of the Literary Representation of Roger Casement in Sabina Murray's *Valiant Gentlemen*

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Abstract:

More than one hundred years after his death, the life of the controversial Irish nationalist and British consular official Roger Casement is still of great interest to historians and novelists alike. In this paper I explore the discursive representation of Roger Casement in Sabina Murray's *Valiant Gentlemen* (2016). In the light of theories on trauma and memory (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011) I analyse the character's development in relation to his experiences in the Congo and the Amazon. From a critical linguistic perspective (Fowler 1986) combined with the system of Appraisal within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, White 2005), I analyse the construction of this character's identity in the process of his transformation from a loyal British subject to an Irish revolutionary.

Keywords: Appraisal, Linguistic Analysis, Literary Representation, Point of View, Trauma Theory

1. Introduction

More than one hundred years after his death, the life of the controversial Irish nationalist and British consular official Roger Casement is still of great interest to historians and novelists alike. Casement is a historical figure who has inspired a variety of works in different genres – biographical accounts, poetry, prose, drama and critical essays. He has been recognized as a pioneer in the struggle for human rights in the Congo and the Amazon as he denounced the abhorrent working conditions resulting from the European ivory and rubber trade at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. However, while some have regarded him as an Irish hero, others have considered him

to be a traitor to the British Empire. Writer and human rights activist Rebecca Solnit states that his "biography is the tale of the evolution of a good imperialist into a great anti-imperialist, […] a man rewarded and then terribly punished for following his principles" (2011, 40). In this paper I explore the discursive representation of Roger Casement in the historical novel *Valiant Gentlemen*, by Canadian author Sabina Murray (2016) – to my knowledge, the last novel published on his life – in relation to the process of his transformation from being in the service of the British government to becoming an Irish revolutionary.

In the light of theories of trauma and memory (Caruth 1995; Eyerman 2003; Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, *et al.* 2004; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011), I analyse the character's development in relation to the imperialist actions he is associated with through his positions as British consul in Africa and South America. His contact with traumatic events in those regions – a consequence of European colonialism – leads him to cease working as a colonial agent in order to become a fervent defender of the Irish nationalist movement. As Roy Eyerman posits (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011), the notion of trauma as a profound emotional response is a fact which can acquire individual and collective connotations (304). I believe that in *Valiant Gentlemen*, the collective trauma produced by colonialism acquires individual relevance in the character of Roger Casement as he acknowledges a parallelism between the European imperial actions in Africa and South America and the history of Anglo-Irish relationships.

Stuart Hall (1997) states that representation is one of the central practices in the production of culture. He sees culture as a set of shared meanings which are produced and exchanged through language – one of the media through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture, in fact "the privileged medium in which we *make sense* of things" (1, emphasis in the original). Being central to meaning and culture, language has always been regarded as "the key repository of cultural values and meanings" (*ibidem*). Along the same lines, Halliday states that language has a representational function: "the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world; and this includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness: his reactions, cognitions, and perceptions" (2008, 91). Following Halliday, Fowler (1986) posits that both experience and the way it is expressed in language differ from individual to individual depending on social conventions and the place the individual occupies in society, thus "a language embodies way*s*, not just *one* way, of looking at the world" (149, emphasis in the original). In the case of literary fiction, language allows readers to access the world view of an author, narrator or character. The writer's regular and consistent use of linguistic choices builds up a particular representation of the world, which is at the same time the major source of point of view in fiction (150).

Since representation through language is central to the processes by which meaning is produced, I believe that a linguistic analysis of *Valiant Gentlemen* will be of value to disclose the resources used by its author to create one of the central characters in the novel, Roger Casement. From a critical linguistic perspective (Fowler 1986) in combination with the theory of Appraisal within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, White 2005), I analyse the construction of this character's identity in the process of his transformation from a loyal British subject into an Irish revolutionary, eventually executed as a traitor due to his association with the Irish nationalist cause and the 1916 Easter Rising. The study of the point of view from which the novel is narrated offers access to the ideological and psychological perspectives of the characters, and the analysis based on the Appraisal subsystems of Attitude and Graduation allows us to observe how the text communicates the values, beliefs and feelings of the protagonist, unveiling his ideology. References to cultural trauma theories and to Casement's life will be used to provide a socio-cultural interpretation of the analysed sections.

2. Roger Casement: the Historical Figure

In Sabina Murray's words, Roger Casement is "an intriguing figure – humanitarian, Irish revolutionary, […] a conflicted man, an Irish Protestant who spent much of his time representing England in different African nations, a gay man who, true to the times, kept his sexual orientation to himself" (Meidav 2017). This historical character – described by many as paradoxical, ambiguous, contradictory, multifaceted; praised as a hero but executed as a traitor – has awakened historical and literary interest for more than a century. In his article "From the Putumayo to Connemara: Roger Casement's Amazonian Voyage of Discovery", Peter Harris posits that while his investigations into the methods of white rubber traders in the Peruvian jungle granted him a knighthood from the British government, his hanging "placed him amongst the most prominent martyrs to the Irish nationalist cause" (2006, 143). He claims that these two moments in his life can be seen as representations of the dichotomies, ambivalences and paradoxes associated with Casement's personality. A brief reference to Casement's biography is due here, as the analysis presented in this paper follows the novel's portrayal of different moments of his life. Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916) was a diplomat in the service of the British government, for which he served as consul in both Africa (1895-1904) and South America (Mitchel 1997, 17). He wrote *The Congo Report* (1904) and the *Putumayo Report* (1911), in which he denounced the atrocities committed by the ivory and rubber merchants against the native populations. He was also co-founder of the Congo Reform Association (Mitchell 2012a, 82), which can be considered as the first massive human rights movement. For these tasks he was recognized as a humanitarian and granted knighthood in 1911 (Mitchell 1997, 26). He resigned from the Foreign Office in 1913 when he started to work for the cause of Irish freedom (17). As the First World War started, he thought that Irish independence could be achieved by siding with Germany (Mitchell 2012c, 7). He travelled to Germany in 1914 to form the Irish brigade with Irish prisoners of war and bought arms from the Germans to be used during the Easter Rising in 1916. His efforts to create a German Irish alliance were discovered by the British intelligence and he was arrested on his return to Ireland, hours before the Easter Rising in Dublin. He was charged with high treason against the British Crown and executed on the third of August 1916 (Mitchel 1997, 17).

As a diplomat, Casement carried out investigations on the work conditions established by the rubber producers in the colonies, adopting "a militant position in defence of the indigenous populations in various tropical regions, at a time when the question of alterity was not really valued in western forums" (Mitchell 2012b, 7). In his challenge to the imperial order, Casement exposed crimes against humanity and his later commitment to the Irish revolutionary cause may be interpreted as his way of expressing his outrage at the colonial system.

3. Valiant Gentlemen*: An Historical Novel*

According to the *Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Childs, Fowler 2005, 107), historical novels are set in a time recognized as historical in which the protagonists are real figures from the past or created characters involved in real events, thus creating a bridge between fiction and non-fiction. Although there are many issues surrounding the limits between history and historical fiction, according to Susan Peabody the main difference between them is related to the point of view. On the one hand, historians are concerned with telling the reader what happened from their point of view and thus they are held responsible for their arguments – which constitutes their identity as historians in the academic community. On the other, writers of historical fiction may tell the story from the point of view of real or ima-

ginary characters, and they may hide things from the readers in order to create mystery or suspense, thus stimulating in the readers the pleasure derived from discovering what happened by themselves (1989, 29-37).

In her article "What Can Historical Fiction Accomplish that History Does Not? On Time, the Past, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity" Sabina Murray states: "I am a writer who often traffics in historical material" (2016b). In her view, historical fiction "thrives in the blank spaces between known and known, supplying plausible fillers" (*ibidem*). In the case of the novel under analysis, I believe the *plausible fillers* Murray mentions can be found in the author's representation of Roger Casement's thoughts, feelings and ideas and in those of the other characters who interact with Casement. Furthermore, in the *Acknowledgements* section at the end of the novel, Sabina Murray writes:

> The reason I decided to write a novel that took on these particular historical figures is because I became fascinated with what it was like to be these people unaware of what the future held. [...] History is essential in the writing of a book like *Valiant Gentlemen*, but I wrote this book to understand what it was like to not know the outcome, to look at history that had not yet become history. (2016a, 488)

In order to achieve this aim, the author uses the present tense to unfold the lives of three characters: Roger Casement, his friend Herbert Ward and Ward's wife, Sarita Sanford. The novel narrates the adventurous youth of the two friends in the Congo and the way their lives develop after that, as Ward marries Sarita and Casement becomes a member of the British diplomatic service. Their political differences become evident when Ward and his sons fight in World War I and Casement becomes involved with the Germans in the hope of freeing Ireland from British rule. These differences separate the friends to the point that Ward believes him to be a traitor and refuses to write a petition on behalf of Casement so that his life is pardoned, as other influential, powerful people had done. The novel ends with Casement's execution in 1916 and Ward's death in 1919, who is survived by his wife.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Cultural Trauma and Memory

The notion of trauma, which can be described as a deeply felt emotional response to some event, has both individual and collective connotations (Schudson 2011, 290). In "Toward a Cultural Theory of Trauma", the American sociologist Jeffrey Charles Alexander offers a general theory of cultural trauma as an attribution of meaning to events. The author states that cultural trauma "occurs when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 2011, 307). Moreover, American sociologist Ron Eyerman presents the idea of psychological or physical trauma as opposed to that of cultural trauma. The former is described as a great emotional anguish at the individual level which occurs as a result of a traumatic experience, whereas the latter is referred to as "a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion" (2011, 304). This definition does not imply that cultural trauma is always experienced by every member of a group but rather that the traumatic meaning of an event is established and accepted as part of the culture of the community, that is, "a negotiated recollection of events" (306).

In her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth refers to the need of literature (in addition to psychiatry, sociology and history) "to explain, to cure, or to show why it is that we can no longer simply explain or simply cure [...] beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma" (1995, 4). The representation of Roger Casement in Murray's novel may be analysed by referring to the effects on the protagonist of the traumatic events experienced by the native populations of the Congo and the Amazon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which have such an impact on Casement that he later decides to abandon the British service to join the Irish revolutionary cause. Being witness to the violence the native workers were subjected to makes him confront the poverty and exploitation suffered by the Irish population under British rule, thus his individual experience acquires the collective connotation Eyerman and Alexander refer to. These shared histories of oppression and violence may be understood as examples of cultural trauma.

Much has been written about Roger Casement as a historical figure and he has also been widely represented in a variety of literary genres. By way of example, in her doctoral thesis, Mariana Bolfarine mentions an extensive list of works, including novels, plays and poems, in which one of the characters – sometimes the protagonist – is Roger Casement. In the light of trauma theory, she explores "the ways in which the figure of Roger Casement has been associated to the traumas that have tainted Anglo-Irish relations for at least 300 years" (2015, 14) in novels and plays by authors as varied as Mario Vargas Llosa and Arthur Conan Doyle, among others. I believe that a linguistic analysis on yet another work on Roger Casement can show the construction of this historical character in his transformation from a loyal British subject into an Irish revolutionary and the role played by cultural trauma in such transformation.

4.2 Point of View

To start unveiling the representation of Roger Casement in Murray's work, I will follow Roger Fowler's analysis of point of view. Though he distinguishes among three kinds of point of view – spatio-temporal, ideological and psychological – for the purposes of this article I will concentrate on the last two, which, according to Fowler, are more fundamental and complex as they overlap. As ideology refers to "the system of beliefs, values and categories by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world" (1986, 130), in a narrative text an ideological point of view refers to the set of values and beliefs communicated by the language of the text. Fowler states that ideological perspectives can be clearly identified in different areas of linguistic structures (such as cumulative vocabulary patterns and certain syntactic structures) and that the style of the text may be adjusted to express ideological development (130-133).

The psychological point of view is concerned with who is presented as the observer of the events of a narrative, while the narrative may show an internal or external perspective. *Internal* narration may be subdivided into two different types: type A refers to narration from the point of view within a character's consciousness, who manifests his or her feelings and evaluations of the events and characters of the story; type B refers to narration from the point of view of someone who has knowledge of the feelings of the characters – traditionally called *omniscient* narrator. *External* point of view is also subdivided into two types: type C relates the events and describes the characters from a position outside the protagonists' consciousnesses, with no privileged access to their private feelings and opinions, while in type D the inaccessibility to the character's ideologies stresses the limitations of authorial knowledge (135). In Murray's view, historical fiction allows the writer to tell stories through created personal perspectives and to give voice to previously underrepresented populations. "Casement would have had his own

complex beliefs and my job – admittedly strange – is to provide a believable model of those beliefs" (2016b). She does this by resorting to a plurality of voices which allow her to build the representation of the main characters. As Fowler posits, a novel gives an interpretation of the world it represents and the vehicle for ideology is the narrative voice, which may coincide with the voice of a character or characters, thus showing one single dominating world view or a plurality of ideological positions (1986, 130-131).

4.3 Appraisal: Attitude and Graduation

Evaluative language allows speakers of a language to construe communities of shared values and feelings. The system of Appraisal within the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is an interpersonal semantic-discursive resource which, I believe, provides useful categories for the analysis of the literary representation of Roger Casement in *Valiant Gentlemen*, as evaluation is one of the main narrative resources used to indicate whose voice a writer is narrating from (Martin, White 2005, 72).

Appraisal focuses on the interpersonal metafunction of language by analysing the attitude writers/speakers adopt towards the content of their texts and towards their readership/audience. Texts are perceived as communities of feelings and values constructed with linguistic tools that express emotions, appreciations and normative evaluations (1). As regards interpersonal meanings, Halliday states that they "cannot easily be expressed as configurations of discrete elements" but are rather "strung throughout the clause as a continuous motif or colouring" (19). This produces a cumulative effect which is referred to as *prosodic realization*, that is "the meaning is distributed like a prosody throughout a continuous stretch of discourse" (*ibidem*). Thus, attitudinal values may work in combination to establish an evaluative prosody which reverberates across a span of text.

Within Appraisal, the system of Attitude is concerned with the linguistic resources used to construe feelings (subsystem of Affect), value judgements (subsystem of Judgement) and evaluation of objects (subsystem of Appreciation). These refer to three semantic regions covering what has been traditionally referred to as emotion, ethics and aesthetics. Affect analyses the linguistic resources that construe emotional reactions, registering both positive and negative feelings. Emotions are classified in four big groups of binary oppositions, each one having in turn additional specifications which relate those general emotions to more specific feelings:

Inclination: desire / Disinclination: fear
Happiness: joy or affection / Unhappiness: sadness or antipathy
Security: self-trust and trust in others / Insecurity: disquiet or surprise
Satisfaction: interest or pleasure / Dissatisfaction: ennui or displeasure. (48-51)

Judgement is concerned with the linguistic resources that construe attitudes to people and the way they behave or their character, and it can be subcategorized into those evaluations that deal with *social esteem* and those oriented to *social sanction*. While social esteem refers to *normality* (how normal or usual someone is), *capacity* (how capable they are) and *tenacity* (how resolute they are), social sanction has to do to do with *veracity* (how truthful someone is) and *propriety* (how ethical they are). This system allows the writer/speaker to show admiration or criticism (52). Finally, Appreciation deals with the evaluation of things including semiotic and natural phenomena. It can be subcategorized into our *reactions* to things (do they please or attract us), their *composition* (their balance and complexity) and their *value* (how valuable they are) (56).

In addition to the system of Attitude, the system of Graduation refers to the upgrading or the downgrading of the value of lexical items. In relation to Attitude, Graduation builds greater or lesser degrees of positive or negative values. On the one hand, the subsystem of *Force* establishes the intensity (force or weakness) of the emotion, and it is frequently realized through intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition, graphological features and intensifying lexis. On the other hand, the subsystem of *Focus* is used to adjust the strength of linguistic items by sharpening or softening their meanings (37)[1]. It is also important to bear in mind that the linguistic expression of all the attitudes in the system can be inscribed – that is explicitly evaluative – or evoked – implicitly evaluative – and that the meaning of the evaluation will be associated with the context in which the linguistic items occur.

This framework will enable the exploration of the way in which the text communicates the representation of the characters' values, beliefs, and feelings, thus exposing their ideology and showing their position towards the narrated events in terms of approval vs. disapproval, enthusiasm vs. rejection, or applause vs. criticism.

5. Methodology

The analysis was carried out by selecting excerpts of the novel that refer to different moments in Roger Casement's life. One hundred and sixty-one excerpts of different length were identified and later analysed according to the type of evaluation used by the author to build Casement's attitudes towards people and events, and other characters' attitudes towards Casement.

The analysis of the excerpts includes both individual words or phrases and whole clauses, and in all cases, the context in which the evaluative items occur was taken into account to interpret their meanings. As a result, the same excerpt was occasionally classified as expressing meaning in more than one system and/or subcategory. The excerpts were selected on the basis of the following topics: Casement's representation of the Congo and the Putumayo, his views on colonialism and slavery, Casement in the eyes of other characters, Casement as a humanitarian, and the representation of Ireland and England in relation to Casement's identity – this last topic being analysed with particular reference to the notion of cultural trauma. Finally, the evaluative language was analysed to show the representation of the different topics outlined above.

The quotations chosen to exemplify the analysis are consecutively numbered and are transcribed using italics for the evaluative linguistic items classified for Attitude and additional upper-case letters for those items which suggest Graduation. Square brackets after the quotes enclose the categories of Attitude identified in the extract and the Graduation involved, if present. Besides, the letters P or N are sometimes included to show the interpretation of the Attitude used in each particular context as providing positive or negative value, respectively. When there is more than one type of evaluation in an example, the words suggesting the evaluation are included between brackets after the classification to avoid confusion. Finally, the page number corresponding to each quotation is included after the quotation.

[1] Both Attitude and Graduation allow for further sub classification, which gives the systems a greater degree of delicacy. Given that such degree of detail goes beyond the aim of this paper, it will not be considered here.

6. Analysis

In the interview "Every Woman is a Nation unto Herself: A Conversation with Sabina Murray" Murray explains that she decided to present the events as narrated by the characters and therefore aligned according to their perspectives. She adds that she decided that her narrative "would have to be about a relationship. Casement needed an adversary or a friend" (Meidav 2017). Consequently, the novel has three points of view corresponding to the perspectives of Roger Casement, his best friend Herbert Ward, and Sarita Sampson, Ward's wife. Though the third person is used throughout, the reader has access to the feelings and thoughts of the character or characters from whose point of view the chapter is narrated. In addition, other voices are present through dialogues among the three main characters and other minor ones. As Fowler states, a character's point of view will be revealed through the linguistic structures used to express his or her emotions, thoughts and perceptions. Linguistic markers such as syntactic patterns, modal structures, lexical and verbal choices will account for the characters' mental processes, feelings and perceptions of the world, thus allowing the disclosure of their psychological stances and their ideological positions (Fowler 1986, 131-138).

The novel is divided into 38 chapters organised in three parts, each corresponding to a stage in the characters' lives. The first one (8 chapters) relates the experiences of Casement and Ward in Africa; the second one (16 chapters) refers to the period of Casement's diplomatic service and that of Ward's married life; the third one (14 chapters) deals with the characters' experiences in Europe, Ireland and the United States. Each chapter receives the name of a place and date and narrates the events taking place in the corresponding setting and from the point of view of one or more characters. Casement's point of view seems to dominate the novel not only because more chapters contain narration from his point of view (24 chapters vs. 18 having Ward's point of view and 19, Sarita's point of view) but also because 14 of those chapters include only Casement's point of view while there is only one for Ward's and 4 for Sarita's. In addition, there are 3 chapters in which the three points of view are included. The novel presents two types of internal narration (A and B) combined into what is called *free indirect discourse* (138), which shows an internal perspective in which the character's subjective feelings (type A) are transformed into third person and interwoven with the narrator's account of the inner state of mind of the character or characters (type B). In the linguistic analysis that follows, the representation of the different topics will take into account whose viewpoint corresponds to the evaluation present in the selected excerpts.

6.1 Casement's Point of View: Congo and Putumayo

Roger Casement was a member of the British consular service for eighteen years, serving the British Government in Portuguese West Africa, South Africa, the Congo State, Portugal and Brazil. However, he had previously been in Africa working for Belgian and British trading expeditions.

In the first chapter of the novel the reader is introduced to Casement's impressions on the Congo and its native population in his role as a member of a British ivory trading company. The character's first words on the native workers (example 1 below) portray them as *savages*, which in its implicit opposition to *civilized* creates a negative evaluation. The evaluation is intensified by the repetition of the word *savage* and the upscaling value infused in the word *eternity*:

(1) Down that path exists an *ETERNITY* of *savages* and *SAVAGE* custom (5-6) [Graduation: force: intensification + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: repetition & infusion]

In the following quote 2, we can appreciate a slightly different attitude, as he seems to show affection through the choice of word related to a family member to describe the natives. However, this affection is tainted with a downgrading attitude because of the use of the word *cousins* rather than *brothers* (which would imply a closer, more balanced relationship) and the modifying adjective *dark* – showing Appreciation –, which in this context constitutes the devalued member of the binary opposition white/black:

(2) These *dark COUSINS* (7) [Affect: happiness: affection + Appreciation: reaction + Graduation: downscaling]

In the next two quotes, both the native population in the Congo (example 3) and in the Amazon (example 4) are represented in Casement's view through positive evaluation in ethical (*honest*, *hardworking*) emotional (*easy relationship*) and aesthetical (*the most beautiful*) terms:

(3) Many Bakongo, who are an *honest* people and *hard-working* and with whom, since he's known to them and speaks the language well, he shares an *easy relationship* (10) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (honest, hard-working) + Affect: security: trust (easy relationship)]

(4) The *gentle* Boras with their *bright skin and warm eyes, straight and strong*, are perhaps *THE MOST beautiful of God's creatures* (328) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (gentle) + Appreciation: reaction/composition P (bright […] strong) + Graduation: upscaling: superlative (the most)]

Quotes 3 and 4 are examples of the prosodic realization of *amplification*, that is, the evaluation is turned up by the combination of adjectives operating together to create a cumulative effect which intensifies the character's positive viewpoint.

In contrast with Casement's point of view, other characters in the novel display an attitude easily associated with the colonizer's perspective. For example Barttelot, a fellow trader, distrusts the natives and portrays them as dishonest and dangerous, thus passing negative judgement on their ethical behaviour:

(5) It is the Manyema that *lie*. The black man *LIES* (39) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: upscaling: repetition]

(6) Take some of these *savages – arm them,* and good luck to you (39) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

6.2 Colonialism and Slavery

Colonialism and slavery are two topics which pervade the novel. As Murray states, "all my work deals with notions of colonialism − an alien force subjugating other peoples and using a sense of superiority to justify the oppression" (Meidav 2017). Thus, the novel includes many instances in which there is a detailed portrayal of what some of the characters think about the subjugated populations. In this section I focus on Casement's viewpoint as regards three groups of people fulfilling tasks related to colonialism: those who participated in the trading business in the Congo – the English, the Belgians and the Arabs. The Belgians were present in the Congo as a result of king Leopold II's annexation of a huge region around the Congo river: the Congo Free State, privately owned by the monarch and used for personal profit. In time, the region became

notorious for the cruel means by which the native population was made to work, "administered as a work camp with such brutality that it was rapidly being depopulated" (Solnit 2011, 45). Many died of starvation or worked to death, others were beaten and tortured when not killed.

Casement's experience in the Congo as a member of trading expeditions (both Belgian and English) leads him to find differences between the behaviour of the English traders and that of the Belgians. From his point of view, the English traders are portrayed as more compassionate than the Belgians in their treatment of the native workers:

(7) *BETTER* that Casement hires these natives for the English, who will *AT LEAST pay them for their labor and treat them well, and with kindness*, as these dark cousins *ought to be treated* (7) [Graduation: force: comparison (better, at least) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Judgement: social sanction: modality (obligation: ought to)]

Although at the beginning of the novel Casement seems to justify the European intervention in Africa in order to *civilize* the continent – as seen in 8 – quote 9 shows his questioning of the methods used to achieve this aim. Thus, the evaluative language of these sections is related to judging the morality of the actions. Example 9 shows Casement is beginning to question the European behaviour in the colonies, simultaneously portraying his disillusionment with the civilizing mission preached by the Europeans, which turns out to be an excuse to exploit the land and the native populations of the conquered territories. However, at this stage in the novel, he still holds only the Belgians and their sovereign as responsible for this cruelty. In Harris' words, at this time in his life "Casement suffered no conflict of loyalty provoked by his Irish nationality and his duty to his British employer" (2006, 145):

(8) There is talk of a railway from Boma to Leopoldville, which would *tear up the country* but most likely have *a civilizing function* (10) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (tear up the country) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (civilizing function)]

(9) *How many men will die* in the construction of this railroad? […] Why build a railroad? And how will they do it without *enslaving* villagers, *scaring* them senseless, *whipping* them? And now the practice of *kidnapping* wives and children has been introduced. […] that's the Belgians […]. How is that not *slavery*? (59) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

The Arabs' role in the region was to provide slaves for the European enterprises. They are represented in Casement's eyes as contributing to colonisation through their trading with human beings and are evaluated negatively in terms of Judgement and of the negative Affect they produce in the native workers:

(10) And these porters are *a deeply miserable lot, malnourished and overloaded, living with the chicote snapping at their heels*. These men are *strung along with iron collars and heave clanking chains*. They are slaves *hunted* and *captured* by Arabs, leased to the Belgians (61) [Affect: unhappiness: misery (as deeply […] heels] + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (strung […] chains, hunted, captured)]

Nevertheless, the reader can ultimately perceive that the difference among all three groups Casement presents at this stage in the narrative is essentially based on the degree of cruelty with which each one treats the native population. This unequal power relation between the colonised and the coloniser is graphically portrayed by his metaphorical reference to hunting, in which a parallelism is established between animals and human beings thus increasing the force of the statements.

(11) And what is “game” after all, but the acknowledgement of an inferiority, as if we had lined up all creatures and decided, “You, gazelle, prey,” and “You, lion, predator”? […] Would this same dividing intellect look upon Casement’s rifle, Bongo Nsanda’s spear, and say, “You, white man, predator,” and “You, black man, prey”? (56-57) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: comparison]

In the prologue to the book *Roger Casement en Sudamérica* (2012b), Laura Izarra states that Casement’s performance in his 1903 investigation into “the atrocities committed in the name of civilization during the reign of Leopold II in the Congo” (13) led the British government to appoint him, in 1910, to accompany the commission investigating alleged atrocities of the Peruvian Amazon Company, a British-owned company which collected rubber in the region of the River Putumayo. As regards the situation in the Putumayo – the Amazon area covering the frontier between Peru and Colombia – Casement expresses his view by comparing this situation to what he had already seen in the Congo. In his investigation of the behaviour of the employees of the company towards the native workers, he finds that they are as cruel as, or even crueller than those he had seen in Africa. The enslavement of the native population both in Africa and South America is evaluated through Judgement as unethical due to its cruelty and ruthlessness:

(12) It’s *THE SAME TACTIC* that the Belgians use to bring in workers to collect rubber. *They round up the wives and children and keep them in pens*. [Men] work to pay off the ransom (234) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: comparison (same tactic)]

(13) The thought that *the Congo could represent A HIGHER STANDARD of justice* to any place anywhere seems impossible (324) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: comparison (higher standard)]

(14) Casement tells Ward of *the practice of cutting hands, how even children can be found maimed in this way* (244) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

Three words used in quotation 15 help summarise Casement’s negative impression of what he sees in Putumayo. The negative evaluation is upgraded by the use of commas separating the three nouns, suggesting an incomplete list, as if open to the reader to add more nouns with similar connotations. The force of the statement is also increased by assembling terms which are closely related semantically, which results in an amplifying effect (Martin and White 2005, 144):

(15) He’s going upriver in search of *atrocity, butchery, horror* (257) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: intensification: repetition]

As regards the topic of colonisation and slavery, the novel represents Casement’s criticism of the brutal treatment of the native populations both in Africa and South America by the Belgian traders and the British trading company respectively, which were exposed in his reports to the British government. This is also present in his travel accounts along the Putumayo river, the *Amazon Journal*[2], which contains frequent expressions of his outrage at the discovery of the English complicity in the Putumayo atrocities.

[2] The *Amazon Journal* is the name given to the diary kept by Casement during his journey into the South American rainforests. “It is a major primary source for the history of the Amazon, in the most decisive moment of its destruction […] It is also a basic source for the history of the humanitarian movement a subject that is in need of much greater historical research” (Mitchell 1997, 47).

6.3 Roger Casement in the Gaze of Other Characters

Murray's representation of Casement is also accomplished by resorting to the perspective of other characters in the narrated events. As regards this technique, she states: "I felt fully invested in my three major characters, and was equally at home in each of their psyches" (Meidav 2017). The author uses two different ways to achieve this aim. On the one hand, Casement is seen through the eyes of the two other major characters – Herbert and Sarita Ward – whose narration gives the reader access to their thoughts and feelings. In addition, Casement's imagined perception of what other characters think of him are also available to the reader. On the other hand, Murray states that "since so much of this book relies on dialogue, it therefore relies on what people are thinking, and how they interact" (*ibidem*). Thus, we have access to the actual voices of these characters through their conversations. The minor characters' viewpoint is also perceived through dialogue, for example in their conversations with Casement.

To begin with Herbert Ward's point of view, Casement's good friend and fellow trader in the Congo portrays him not as a simple man but as one with conflicts and contrasts. In the next three excerpts (examples 16, 17 and 18) we can observe that his evaluation through linguistic choices deploying Judgement is highly positive:

(16) "You're a *PERFECT gentleman*" (8) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: force: intensification]

(17) He is a *GREAT humanitarian* (314) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: force: intensification]

(18) He cannot associate Casement – *straight-spined, sunburned, articulate* Roddie – with [Belfast] (178) [Appreciation: composition P (first two adjectives) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P (last adjective)]

Examples 16 and 17 both judge Casement in terms of appropriate social behaviour. Quotation 16 refers to the nickname given to Casement by the native workers during his trading expeditions and the evaluation points at qualifying his manners and behaviour towards them as ethical. In 17, Ward refers to Casement's work in favour of the natives while he was a member of the Foreign Office, again showing approval for his actions. On the other hand, in example 18, Ward's evaluation shows positive appreciation of Casement's physical features and positive judgement of his intellectual capacity, both stressing Ward's high opinion of his friend despite his low opinion of Irishmen in general.

However, Ward also chooses to portray what he sees as Casement's less admirable side. The next quote 19 shows a shift from positive to negative evaluations which are evidence of the alternation in Ward's perception of his friend. In this case, the use of full stops isolating each adjective in the list creates individual focuses of information, which upscale the value of each word:

(19) [Casement] who is *clearheaded and fair to a fault. Judgmental. Noble. Arrogant. Blind* (38) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity + social sanction: propriety P to N]

Towards the end of the novel Ward's opinion of Casement has changed so drastically that he believes him to be a traitor, thus expressing a negative moral judgement. The *lines* mentioned in quotation 20 may be interpreted as a reference to Ward's refusal to write a letter asking the British authorities to pardon Casement's life:

(20) Just the knowledge that his friend is *NO LONGER* his friend, that this man *who was ONCE all things noble and admirable to him* is in cell somewhere awaiting judgement. Ward knows what to say, he has his lines. Hang him. *He is a traitor. He is a disgrace* (466) [Graduation: force: comparison (no longer, who was once…) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

Sarita Sampson, Ward's wife, is also represented as developing a friendship with Casement. Her opinions point at Casement's personality (examples 21 and 22) and at her admiration for his humanitarian work (23):

(21) He's one of the *LEAST conventional* people I've ever met (169) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N/ social esteem: normality N + Graduation: force: superlative]

(22) Maybe next time I see you, you'll be *A WORLD-FAMOUS hero* (358-9) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity/normality P + Graduation: force: intensification]

(23) How *still* Casement looks, and *fragile*. It's hard to believe that this man is *SINGLE-HANDED-LY trying to overthrow King Leopold and save thousands of Congolese from slavery* (229) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet (still, fragile) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (trying […] slavery) + Graduation: force: intensification (single-handedly]

Some other characters provide their own perspectives, which help the reader to have a more exhaustive image of Casement. In all these quotes (24 to 27) we see an anticipation of his future revolutionary behaviour and heroic character:

(24) [Irish-Americans] Casement is *activist, an organizer, a man who will change the face of Ireland* (349) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity P]

(25) Devoy: He's taking in Casement's *height, the posture, the elegant brow*. […] *looks quite the dandy*. […] the beard that makes him *A CONQUISTADOR*, that makes him *A DON QUIXOTE* (366) [Appreciation: composition / reaction P (height […] dandy) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P + Graduation: force: intensification (metaphor)]

(26) Adler "Someone was saying at dinner that *you're like Wolfe Tone*[3]" (369) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (reference to a hero) + Graduation: force: comparison (simile)]

(27) Alice Stopford Green: "You're *needed* here." […] "Ireland is *counting on you*" (290) [Judgement: social sanction: modality (needed) + Judgement: social esteem: tenacity (counting on you)]

Finally, another means by which the author represents Casement is through what he himself imagines others think of him. The following quotes (examples 28 and 29) also point to the ambiguous nature of this historical figure by again showing a shift from positive to negative evaluation. The fact that we find words which can be considered to carry positive values adjacent to negative ones, such as *useless* and *kind*, or *intelligent* and *irrational* seems to increase the value of their meanings in context:

[3] Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) was an Irish republican and rebel who sought to overthrow English rule in Ireland and who led a French military force to Ireland during the insurrection of 1798 (Britannica 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfe-Tone>, 03/2021).

(28) [Casement] sees a look flicker across Conrad's face and he knows that the captain has already heard about *his poor business skills, his useless, kind nature* (152) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (poor business skills, useless nature) + social sanction: propriety P (kind nature)]

(29) [Casement] wondered how they [men either toughened or diminished by Africa] might perceive him. *Tall, sunburned, intelligent, forceful. Irrational. Sentimental. Lonely* (185) [Appreciation: quality P + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P to N + social sanction: propriety N]

In addition, the positive judgement in 29 is presented in a list of adjectives separated by coma, linking the items in one grammatical unit. Again the list is incomplete, as if the reader could continue adding positive meanings creating an amplifying effect. On the other hand, the three negative evaluations are presented separated by full stops, which, as mentioned before, increases the force of their value by focusing on each word individually.

The diversity of points of view present in the novel offers readers the opportunity to have access to varied perspectives on the representation of Roger Casement. This also contributes to explain the ambivalences associated with the historical figure. We can agree with Rebeca Solnit that "he was among the most thoughtful of Ireland's heroes, and so complex a character" (2011, 38).

6.4 Casement, the Humanitarian

Although the discourse of human rights is a product of recent times, becoming a "widespread and motivating cause for public activism and international law" in the 1970s (Mitchell 2012a, 79), the struggle for a set of universal values to protect those abandoned by the state is the result of earlier struggles and activisms (80). Mitchell refers, for example, to Casement's campaigns against the atrocities related to the rubber business as "a bridge linking nineteenth century antislavery campaigning and humanitarian endeavour with the modern discourse of human rights" (*ibidem*).

In the *Amazon Journal*, Casement expresses his pain and indignation at the atrocities he witnessed, and he states his willingness "to trace those atrocities, and that anger, to their bases in British venture capitalism in colonised territories" (83), also anticipating his realisation of Ireland's position with respect to the British empire. This idea relates to the concept of cultural trauma, which implies the engagement with an event "that involves identifying the nature of the pain, the nature of the victim and the attribution of responsibility" (Eyerman 2003, 3).

Sabina Murray portrays Casement's humanitarianism in different ways which go from expressing his feelings and thoughts to showing his deeds in favour of the oppressed populations. She states that one "compelling reason to write historical fiction is its ability to perform. Fiction takes historical figures – significant or not – and turns them into actors. Casement was a grand humanitarian, so – as he performs in his fictional narrative – he must accomplish some grand humanitarian acts" (Murray 2016b). Thus, the novel presents numerous examples of Casement's performance in favour of the native workers, as the following quotations demonstrate. In these cases, the evaluative items are basically related to the areas of emotion and ethical behaviour:

(30) [The wounded porter] *will be paid for his labor and should take care with his foot* so that it heals now rather than becomes more infected (14) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (will be paid) + Judgement: modality: obligation (should) + Affect: happiness: affection (take care)]

(31) "*I don't want anyone in the sun*. And please take a bucket of water and go up and down the line. There are children and *they must have a drink in this heat*" (262) [Affect: happiness: affection P (I […] sun) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + modality (obligation) (must […] heat)]

(32) When Casement's little column passes them [men in chains, loaded with iron], he can feel the fear rise among his people. *He'll chat to them, to try to keep them calm* (61) [Affect: security: trust]

According to Mitchell (2012a) the official investigations into the administration of the Congo and the Putumayo "detail the degeneracy of the colonial system by using the victims of that system to tell their own stories" (83). Casement's reports were based on interviews with the native workers, who told him of the mistreatment of their employers. His interest in producing a convincing report on his findings was motivated by his willingness to help stop the atrocities he had been told about and had witnessed himself. Murray's desire to show the character's performance also appears in the description of his writing, whose aim is in this case to generate deep changes in society. However, as example 34 shows, he is also aware that his efforts might be useless. Thus, there is an alternation of positive and negative evaluation in examples 33 and 34:

(33) A persuasive essay, a paragraph *with the capacity to enrage the public*, *to make them weep*. Yes, *WEEP* and *then act* (270) [Affect: unhappiness: antipathy (enrage) and sadness (weep) + Graduation: force: repetition + Judgement: social sanction: modality (obligation – make them)]

(34) He's writing a report for the Foreign Office on the use of slavery in the region, and the possible ramifications of such a document, should he execute it well, weigh heavily. *He could save a lot of people.* Or he could *exert great effort and manage nothing* (255) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (save, exert great effort) + social esteem: capacity N (manage nothing)]

Casement is represented as being aware of complaints raised against him about his behaviour towards the natives; however, he is also conscious of his worth for the company (example 35). While the criticism is expressed linguistically by means of negative judgement related to social sanction, his being necessary for the company is expressed through positive judgement related to social esteem. Additionally, his empathy with the suffering of the natives is conveyed by example 36, in which the prevailing Attitude is related to Affect:

(35) I am reportedly *TOO lenient with the natives*. The only reason I am still here is because I'm necessary. […] *Good at keeping the porters healthy*." (53) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (too lenient) + Graduation: force: intensification N (too) + social esteem: capacity P (good […] healthy)]

(36) Casement outpaces his depression by escaping into *a PROFOUND world pity*. He is *DROWNING in sympathy, empathy, sliding into self-loathing, bursting to the surface with anger*. […] They have arrived at some destination, *some suppurating ulcer on the wall of this intestine that is the Congo* (261) [Affect: unhappiness: misery (world pity, drowning […] empathy) and antipathy (sliding […] anger) + Graduation: force: intensification (infusion: profound, drowning) + Affect: dissatisfaction: displeasure (some suppurating ulcer) + Graduation: force: comparison (metaphor)]

Positive judgement as regards his moral standards is also present in his response to Sarita (37), who, being worried about his health, tries to convince him not to go back to the jungle. To her comment "It's not your responsibility to save these people", his answer is:

(37) "It is *the right thing* to do" (248) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P]

The literary construction of Casement's humanitarianism is then achieved by representing his actions, his thoughts and his actual words in conversation. Furthermore, he is also represent-

ed through his relationship with other characters who share his views and who work together with the aim of producing actual changes in society. His relationship with the Irish historian Alice Stopford Green "wealthy and very much into supporting radical causes, in this case the publication of the West African Mail, devoted to exposing the use of slavery in the Congo" (Murray 2016a, 256) and with Edward Morel, its editor and co-founder of the Congo Reform Association, is crucial in turning Casement's attention to the suffering in his own country and in securing his support in campaigns in favour not only of the Congo rubber workers but also of the "illiterate, starving children in Connemara" (352).

6.5 National Identity: Ireland vs England

Along the novel Casement is represented as having contradictory feelings as regards his national identity:

(38) And he is *somewhat displaced*, first as *one who is Irish when he's not being British, British when he's not being Irish, and sometimes both simultaneously* (16-17) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

Evaluative language related to insecurity continues to be used to refer to his difficulties in finding a home. The impossibility of identifying himself as an Irishman or feeling at home in Northern Ireland also contributes to his unrest. The following quotations seem to exemplify Solnit's opinion that "for Casement, Ireland seems to have functioned more as an ideal home, a ground for identity, than as a place that could contain him" (2011, 47):

(39) Home leave is most welcome, and the leave part of it he wholly understands, although *the home part is still a bit of a mystery*. Where is his home, really? (221) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

(40) Belfast *should feel like home, but it doesn't*. No place does, really (339) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

Casement's sense of displacement as represented in the novel can also be related to the ambivalence often associated with this historical figure. Murray's portrayal seems to coincide with Solnit's view that he "dangled between two worlds for most of his life, two countries, two churches, two philosophies, between the respectable and the revolutionary in both his private and political lives, exiled, no matter which he chose" (40). Exemplified below is the idea of displacement expressed in terms of Affect, in particular insecurity. Additionally, in quote 42, the binary opposition civilisation vs. nature points to the industrial vision of England and the pastoral view associated with Ireland, respectively; while both become united, and therefore in a superior position, in comparison to the Congo:

(41) In Africa, he is *one of the English*, but *not in England*. Places do that – throw you into some sort of relief against themselves (191) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

(42) It was a childhood split between *the lush green of the Antrim countryside* and *rattling commerce of his cousins in Liverpool*. Then, he had thought Liverpool and Ballycastle *opposites*, but here, in the *Congo, this feels like an opposi*te (6-7) [Appreciation: reaction P (lush green, ratting commerce) and N (opposite to previous ideas)]

Peter Harris considers that the months Casement spent travelling in the South American rainforest were crucial in the process of recognition of his Irishness, representing "the begin-

nings of an Irish homecoming" (2006, 143). Furthermore, Izarra states that his trips in the Amazon sharpened his perception of the destructive power of empires (2012b, 14) and his investigations in Congo and Putumayo "informed his aspirations for an Éire Nua (New Ireland) rooted in a modern code respecting humanity and encouraging empathy for the marginalised and dispossessed" (2012a, 83).

The deep emotional engagement with suffering that Casement experiences in the Congo and the Amazon help him become aware of the harm caused by imperialism throughout the world. This harm can be interpreted as a traumatic experience that "unsettles and forces us to rethink our notions of experience" (Caruth 1995, 4). His association of such experiences with those of the Irish under British imperialism can be appreciated throughout the novel. The following excerpts show Murray's representation of Casement's coming to terms with his Irish identity. To begin with, his empathy with the natives in the Congo leads him to identify himself with their lack of understanding based on his experience as an Irishman. The text also demonstrates his contradictory feelings in terms of his sympathy for the natives and his duty to the British government. The portrayal of his Irish *heroes* as *losers* may also feel as an anticipation of his own fate:

(43) *The natives don't understand tax – DON'T UNDERSTAND* why suddenly what was theirs now demands payment to another. *Casement understands.* As an Irishman, living on contested land is, if nothing else, familiar. And Casement, because of his Irish childhood, where his heroes were, although *heroic, also losers*, is a *natural sympathizer with those in opposition* to the Hut Tax, although now *as Acting consul, forced to at least act supportive of British policy* (206) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (don't understand) + Graduation: force: intensification: repetition (don't understand) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P (Casement understands) + Affect: happiness: affection (sympathiser) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety (be supportive) and modality (obligation: forced to)]

At the beginning of the novel, Casement is not yet fully aware of the similarity that he will later find between Ireland and the subjugated populations of the colonies. However, his interest in the history of Ireland foreshadows his gradual discovery of his national identity. The reasons for his writing about Ireland while in Africa are not clear for him: "his poem, all Irish history. […] Why write about post-Plantation Ulster[4] in the Congo?" (Murray 2016a, 16-17). Later on, his trips around Ireland in some of his health leaves put him again in contact with his native land eventually leading him to identify himself as an Irishman, which allows him to express his criticism of the British behaviour towards the Irish. In the quotation below (example 44) on the one hand, Casement judges negatively the British action of preventing the Irish from speaking Gaelic while, on the other, he establishes the need to recover it as a moral obligation:

(44) He's come in the shoes of Synge, and all those Irishmen *who had their language stolen* somewhere in the past and now *have to go retrieve it* (280) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (stolen) + P (retrieve) + Graduation: force: modality (obligation: have to)]

His new stance towards Ireland makes him disregard the importance of the honour the British government has granted him, dismissing it as a *joke* and something *funny*, suggesting the irony of the situation:

[4] The Plantation of Ulster is the name given to the movement of British settlers into Ulster during the seventeenth century, Macafee 1992, <https://www.ancestryireland.com/understanding-plantation/movement-ofbritish-settlers-into-ulster-during-the-17th-century/> (03/2021).

(45) There he is, Roger Casement, British consul, honorary Englishman. To deepen *the joke*, now he's received the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. That makes him Sir Roger Casement. That is *funny* and he finds a smile for himself (286) [Affect: happiness: joy]

As the novel moves forward and Casement identifies himself as an Irishman, the critical views of the English become more frequent (examples 46-48). They are represented in terms of both negative judgement and negative affect:

(46) But these are *the English, and their treachery has been proven* (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

(47) "*England is not our friend*" (409) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet / unhappiness: antipathy]

(48) In his quiet moments he acknowledges that he has lost his faith in Germany, but not in Irishmen: these Irishmen who will form his Irish Brigade, fighting on the side of Ireland, against *the English tyrant* (408-9) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

On the other hand, Casement's best friend, Ward, represents the English vision of the Irish. In example 49, Ward judges the Irish negatively, which may also explain why he cannot understand Casement's political views, as seen in example 50:

(49) Ward, who manages *MATCHLESS sympathy for the natives of the Congo*, has *nothing but derision for the Irish, or rather Irishness,* which he sees as *some degraded form of Englishness* (286) [Affect: happiness: affection (sympathy) + Graduation: force: superlative morphology (matchless) + Affect: unhappiness: antipathy (derision) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (degraded)]

(50) [Ward] has a *hard time understanding* how Casement can support the British in Africa and want an Irish Parliament – *how these two things are not at odds with each other* (201) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (hard time understanding) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (how […] other)]

At some other point in the novel, Irish characters also voice the negative judgement of the English behaviour towards the Irish:

(51) "*The English wanted us all on donkeys so that we'd look silly*," O'Malley had interjected. "*Also, so that they could look down on us.*" (350-1) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

As the narrative advances, Casement's feelings of displacement and his ambiguities as regards his national identity seem to be solved:

(52) He feels *his TRUE purpose* is here in Ireland (285) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: focus (true)]

(53) He does not know *what would be BEST for him*, but *clings to what is BEST for Ireland – an Irish Republic* (417) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: upgrading: superlative /repetition]

Casement eventually recognized the British participation in human rights violation in Africa and South America. Consequently, he resigned his post in the British government and

started an active participation in the Irish nationalist movement (Mitchell 2012b, 14) and with the outbreak of the war in 1914 "Casement turned on the British Empire and advocated global colonial revolution" (Mitchell 2012a, 84). In the novel, Murray also wants to represent Casement's performance in favour of the Irish rebellion: "Casement was an Irish revolutionary, so he must have problems with the English and then he must act on them" (Murray 2016b). His trip to Germany to gather this country's support shows his determination to take action in favour of Irish independence. However, his determination is not completely devoid of doubts. Though the character justifies his actions by judging them positively as appropriate (quote 54), he seems not to feel at ease with the implications of such resolves (quotes 55 and 56).

(54) "I'm a diplomat. We're not planning a prison break. We're *negotiating* with Germans, *creating allies*, *creating a future for Ireland* that will hold in the new order" (366) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P]

(55) How can Casement reconcile his life of *seeking peaceful means* with *organizing the purchase of weapons*? (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (seeking peaceful means) and N (purchase of weapons))

(56) On the one hand, he was a *humanitarian*, and entertaining an alliance with Germany was *in opposition to his instinct to peace*. On the other, the Germans wanted Ireland on their side, and the Irish might actually be in league with the winners (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (humanitarian) and N (opposition to peace)]

As he is in prison, facing his own death, he seems to have found his true identity. Yet, he still manifests his confusion as regards the standards used to judge moral behaviour depending on whose side one is:

(57) He is dead and, *as a TRUE Irishman*, has the document to bind to the body. He is not going to fail his people in the one moment when the world can be made aware of what it is to be Irish. […] Why is it *noble* to lay down one's life for England, with its history of harm and oppression, yet *not noble* to lay down one's life for Ireland, who never harmed anyone (473) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (an Irishman) + Graduation: focus (true) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (noble) and N (not noble)]

Finally, a longer quote is worthy of attention here to relate to the notion of cultural trauma:

(58) How could this German man, never enslaved by another nation, understand the subtle, *dehumanizing* way a *conqueror* justified his actions? Casement had been born into this *anger*, had watched his older brothers *beaten* on the streets of London. He had sat through dinners listening to Englishmen *joke* about their "Irishness" as a *romantic, poetic, irrational* thing – what made men sing when drunk. He'd bitten his tongue, not pointing out that a romantic, poetic, singing thing – in essence, the soul – was all one had left after *being robbed, enslaved, and forced by starvation to abandon one's country*. Also, that this "irrational" and therefore *savage Irish ethos* was used to shore up the sense of *English civility and reason* which is what allowed the English to unleash their *criminal abuse across the globe* and persuade themselves that all their victims were somehow raised up in the process (350)

The previous quotation can be analysed basically in terms of the system of Judgement, by considering both subsystems of social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem tends to be regulated in the oral culture, through chat, gossip, jokes and stories of various kinds (Martin, White 2005, 52). In the example above, narrated from Casement's viewpoint, the English are

portrayed as downgrading the Irish by means of *jokes* about their *romanticism* and its association with *irrationality*, which dooms them liable for being conquered in order to bring them *civility* and *reason*, thus justifying the British unethical behaviour. Considering that social sanction is often organised in writing as rules, regulations and laws about how to behave (*ibidem*), the British behaviour towards the Irish *being robbed, enslaved, and forced by starvation to abandon one's country* and *their criminal abuse across the globe* should be interpreted as immoral and illegal. However, this behaviour seems to be socially accepted as they *persuade themselves that all their victims were somehow raised up in the process*. The British self-justification can be explained in terms of cultural trauma theory as "by denying the reality of others' suffering, people not only diffuse their own responsibility for the suffering but often project the responsibility for their own suffering on these others" (Alexander 2011, 307).

7. Discussion

The role that linguistic analysis can play in the analysis of a literary text is sometimes disregarded in favour of other approaches. However, the present analysis attempts to reveal its value in the literary representation of a contested historical figure. Departing from the point of view of the protagonist, the analysis based on Appraisal raises awareness of how his experiences impact on his emotional state and his ideological stance and how they influence his transformation into an Irish revolutionary. Not surprisingly, within the system of Attitude, Judgement and Affect dominate the analysis of the linguistic choices which express evaluation. Judgement – the category which refers to ethical evaluation – is widely present both in the expression of Casement's thoughts and feelings and in those of other characters evaluating Casement. Affect – the category related to the expression of feelings and emotions – also pervades the narrative. The system of Graduation sometimes accompanies the other systems, in particular to highlight the figure of the protagonist. The analysis allows us to see how these linguistic resources vividly represent the events in Casement's life, many of which appear as associated to the traumatic experiences he was exposed to during his work in Africa and South America.

Considering first the subsystem of Judgement, statements dealing with both social sanction and social esteem allow us to understand the admiration Casement has inspired due to his humanitarian work and his commitment to the Irish cause. Particularly prominent is the sense of *propriety*, within the category of social sanction, which is highly suitable to trace Casement's strong criticism of imperial powers on ethical grounds. This can be observed by following his thoughts and opinions as regards the enslavement and appalling working conditions of the native inhabitants of the Congo and the Amazon. In addition, his recognition of the similarities between the British behaviour in Ireland and in the colonies enacts what Caruth states in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory:* that "trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures" (1995, 11). As regards the category of social esteem, it is most often related to the sense *capacity*, especially evaluating Casement's aptitude.

As regards the subsystem of Affect (and to a lesser degree, Appreciation), we can identify mostly positive evaluations in relation to the different characters' views of Casement, though they also point to his ambiguities and contradictions. In this case the predominant categories are *happiness* and *insecurity*. As regards the former, it is expressed in the sense of *affection* in Casement's view of the native populations in the colonies. In the case of insecurity, the sense *disquiet* is mostly related to his feelings as regards his national identity. Most negative evaluations in both subsystems are related to the representation of colonialism and slavery, and to the representation of Britain from Casement's point of view, which is consistent with the character's ideological

evolution. Therefore, the dominant categories are *unhappiness* in the sense of *misery* (related to the native workers and their working conditions) and *antipathy* (related to the imperial powers). The variety of points of view the author includes in the narration contributes to the richness of the construction of the protagonist's personality, since the reader can see how the different value-systems articulated in the work can explain the contradictory views associated with this historical figure. The novel shows "not one overall world-view subordinating every philosophy to a single point of view, but a range of alternative and interacting views of life" (Fowler 1986, 131).

Moreover, Casement's doubts and contradictions are vividly represented, and they seem to be resolved when he identifies himself as an Irishman and eventually joins the Irish cause. This is in line with Alexander's view that "trauma will be resolved, not only by setting things right in the world, but by setting things right in the self" (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, *et al*. 2004, 5). The evaluative prosody of the text reflects the relationship between Casement's experience in Africa and South America and his own experience as an Irishman under British rule. Casement's contact with the traumatic experiences of colonization in the Congo and the Amazon awakens his memory of the Irish trauma at the hands of the British government: the loss of the Gaelic language, the massive emigration due to the potato famine and the exploitation and humiliation suffered by the Irish people. The relevance of this realization is recognized by Rebecca Solnit, as she writes "Casement was perhaps the first to see Ireland as a colony […] and he came to understand his own country's situation by analogy with that of the Congo and the Putumayo of Peru" (2011, 43). The novel also contributes to keep alive the history of exploitation of native populations by imperial powers, coinciding with Izarra's view that "the rubber stories bring to light the politics of memory and the silences of history" (2012b, 14)[5].

8. *Concluding Remarks*

A linguistic analysis framed by a socio-cultural interpretation can shed light into the meanings transmitted by language in a particular text. Focusing on the representation of Roger Casement in *Valiant Gentlemen,* I believe the analysis of the evaluative language used in the novel provides insights into the ideological and psychological views of this character in his evolution from a British diplomat to an Irish nationalist. Evaluative language expressing moral judgement, unhappiness and insecurity allows the reader to understand Casement's behaviour and, as a result, the question posited in the title of this paper can be answered. In fact, the opposition hero/traitor may be seen as the two sides of a coin: depending on who is looking at it, the observer will have a different opinion. However, once Casement decides which his true national identity is, he gives his allegiance to Ireland and therefore he becomes loyal to the country of his birth. Thus, he cannot be considered as a traitor to a country which he does not believe to be his own. I consider that in this particular novel Roger Casement is essentially represented neither as a hero nor as a traitor, but rather as a human being with all its complexities and contradictions but whose actions have heroic relevance. This may also explain Casement's pervasive presence in literature and history, even one hundred years after his death. I hope the linguistic analysis offered here can contribute to explain how Sabina Murray portrays Roger Casement's resignation to the British service in favour of his participation in the fight for Irish freedom. The success of a historical novel is achieved, in Peabody's words, by "mak[ing] the past come alive" (1989, 30) and this is, in my opinion, what Murray has done in this novel. Finally,

[5] My translation.

if we agree that there is a need for the historic recognition of Casement's humanitarian work in favour of his own country and other subjugated populations, I believe *Valiant Gentlemen* is a contribution in this direction.

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Irish Journalists and the 1968 Mexico City Olympics*

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Abstract:

This article examines how Irish journalists depicted Mexico City as a suitable host for the 1968 Olympic Games. Mexican elites believed the event would attract foreign investment and tourists but faced an uphill battle as many European observers criticized the city as undeserving. Irish journalists often presented images of Mexico that were impacted by Ireland's own struggles of achieving sporting modernity and its sense of global importance as a white European nation. The image that emerged portrayed Mexico as rich in history and sporting infrastructure, but also mired in disorganization, superstition, and violence. These negative images may have propelled journalist and president of the Olympic Committee of Ireland, Lord Killanin, to the International Olympic Committee presidency.

Keywords: Ireland, Lord Killanin, Mexico, 1968 Olympics, sport

1. Introduction

As the 1968 Olympiad finished in Mexico City, the Dublin-based *Evening Herald* printed a letter from a reader, Geraldine O'Connor, that complained about the "shame" of Irish athletes underperforming at the Games. She did not blame the performers, but rather "their country" that allowed swimmers to train "in pools that are not fit to let dogs paddle in". Furthermore, she noted that the poor conditions of swimming facilities in Dublin

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impelled foreigners to "speak about that inbred personality, that laziness that exists among Irish people" (26 October 1968). The next day, another Dublin newspaper published a letter from a reader only known as "Sportsman" that expressed concern about the overall fitness of Irish people, especially with the increased popularity of automobiles. This reader expressed hope that the Irish population become more physically active after watching the Olympics because "[m]any Irishmen are overweight and fail to diet properly" (*Sunday Independent*, 27 October 1968). In both cases, the letters' authors used the Mexico City Games to reflect on what they perceived to be negative attributes about Ireland and the Irish people.

It is highly unlikely that the *Comité Organizador de los Juegos Olímpicos* (Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games or COJO) for the Mexico City Olympics considered such thoughts while carefully crafting an image of the city and the Mexican nation for foreign consumption. This article examines how Irish journalists depicted Mexico as a suitable host for the 1968 Olympiad. Mexican elites faced an uphill battle in presenting an image of a stable Mexico to the world, as they faced skepticism from foreign observers, particularly European ones. Irish journalists, although European, came from a nation confronting its own issues with modernity. As a result, their portrayals of Mexico City, and its hosting of the Olympics, often presented mixed images that were impacted by Ireland's own struggles of achieving sporting modernity and its sense of global importance as a white European nation. These portrayals varied greatly and depended on journalists' own experiences, biases, and agendas within the Olympic Movement. The image that emerged highlighted Mexico's rich history and modern sporting infrastructure, but also its reputation as chaotic and mired in superstition and violence. These negative images may have even played a role in the ascent of Irish journalist and president of the Olympic Committee of Ireland (OCI), Michael Morris, Lord Killanin, to the presidency of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1972, although he would eventually employ the sporting infrastructure Mexico City had built to his advantage when negotiating with difficult host cities.

As many scholars have noted, Mexican elites deeply cared about their nation's international perception as an Olympic host because they viewed the Games as an opportunity to attract foreign investment and tourism and they put considerable efforts in presenting a modern image of the Mexican nation for the world to consume, even if those foreigners were skeptical of Mexico's ability to host the Games (Rodríguez Kurí 1998, 114-115; Arbena 2002, 133-144; Zolov 2004, 159-163). Building off this point, Claire and Keith Brewster also have highlighted that Mexico City's actual hosting of the Games engendered differing opinions from foreign journalists (2009b, 858-861), as many Europeans and North Americans remained skeptical of Mexico. Thus, international sports reporters interpreted the Olympics through a variety of lenses that varied in their portrayal of Mexico as an effective Olympic host. Irish journalists were no exception and shared similar attitudes to their international brethren. However, they also viewed the games from an Irish lens that reflected many of the anxieties about Ireland's place in the world, particularly the Olympic world. In highlighting these biases and anxieties, this article joins a small but significant literature on Irish perceptions on Mexico and complements the extensive historiography on the *Irish press*' role in popularizing sport and the impact this coverage has had on consolidating Irish identity (Harris 2007; Butler 2010)[1].

Relying on newspapers from the Republic of Ireland and documents from the Avery Brundage Microfilm Collection, this article sheds new light on perceptions on Mexico by another nation on the international sporting periphery that occupied an important position within the

[1] For an overview of the literature on Irish media and sports, see Crosson, Dine 2011, 109-116.

Olympic movement. It reveals that Olympic ideals intersected with ideas of national progress and modernity and how these intersections often produced contradictory results. Following a brief synopsis of Mexico's and Ireland's involvement in the Olympic Movement, this article examines how Irish sports reporters covered the games, then delves into a discussion about the writings of J.J. Walsh, the editor of the *Munster Express*, who attended the Games and traveled extensively as a tourist before and after them, and ends with an analysis of Lord Killanin as a journalist and Olympic bureaucrat. In the process, this article aims to examine the wide variety of ways that journalists from Ireland interpreted Mexico and its hosting of the Olympics.

2. Mexico and Ireland in the Olympic Movement

Mexico and Ireland both officially joined the IOC in the 1920s. Mexico had a member on the IOC since 1901, Miguel de Béistegui Septién, who had the trust and confidence of IOC members like Henri de Baillet-Latour. However, he did not have the same rapport with Post-Revolutionary Mexican politicians skeptical of his work as a diplomat for the pre-revolutionary regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1880, 1884-1911) and the counter-revolutionary regime of Victoriano Huerta (1913-14). Although officially established in 1923, the first Comité Olímpico Mexicano (COM) gained stability a year later when the Mexican government and the IOC reached a compromise on the committee's membership (De la Torre Saavedra 2017, 78-79, 281-295). While Mexico participated in the Summer Olympiads as a nation from 1924 on, Mexican performances disappointed elites. Mexico's lack of success at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympiad inspired future IOC member Marte Gómez to express to the Mexican Minister of Public Education his desire that their nation "appear like the various small countries of Europe", whose participants were "well prepared for triumph", while remarking on "the magnificent examples of Finland, of Ireland, of Czechoslovakia, and of Poland" (Gómez 1978, 377; English traslation by the author). Ireland's relationship with the Olympic movement was impacted by its shifting relationship with the United Kingdom during the twentieth century. Addressing the IOC as one of its Vice-Presidents in Zagreb, Yugoslavia (now Croatia) in 1969, Lord Killanin highlighted Ireland's status as a "small" nation and noted that the Irish "have been represented in previous Olympic Games under different flags and […] we have had over the years emigrants who have represented their adopted countries"[2]. Indeed, while the Olympic successes of members of the Irish diaspora (especially Irish-Americans) had been sources of Irish national pride, an independent Ireland contingent did not participate until the 1924 Olympiad (McCarthy 2010, 4-5). Members of the Irish contingent for 1924 and 1928 came from both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, while the 1932 team that so impressed Marte Gómez only contained members from the Irish Free State. Due to changes in the International Amateur Athletic Association's constitution in 1934 and the creation of separate Irish citizenship in 1935, Ireland was barred from including athletes from Northern Ireland and the issue lingered until right after the Melbourne Olympiad of 1956. Lord Killanin, who had been elected a member of the IOC in 1952, played a large part in framing of the issue as a legal and not a political one. (Hunt 2015, 836-837, 845-846). According to Liston and Maguire, Avery Brundage's election as IOC president in 1952 "was critical to the subsequent adoption of the appellation 'Ireland' at the 1956 Games and the reinstatement of 32-county jurisdiction for the OCI" (Liston, Maguire 2020, 17).

[2] Killanin, "Vice President's Speech - 7th December 1969, Zagreb", Avery Brundage Microform Collection, LA84 Foundation (hereafter AMBC), Box 59, Reel 35.

Like Ireland, Mexico received concrete benefits from the presidency of Brundage. IOC members Marte Gómez and José de Jesus Clark Flores (who became an IOC member in 1952) developed close relationships with Brundage, who awarded Mexico City the hosting rights to a 1953 IOC meeting, the 1954 Central American and Caribbean Games, and to the 1955 Pan American Games. Due to a change in presidential administration and the ensuing political wrangling that took place, Clark Flores did not partake in the organizational efforts of the 1954 and 1955 events hosted by Mexico City (Wysocki Quiros 2016, 50-54). Despite his absence, Brenda Elsey contends that the Mexico City Pan American Games were better organized than the 1951 games in Buenos Aires and the 1959 games in Chicago (2017, 113). Later, Brundage supported Mexico City's bid for the 1968 Olympics, where the members of the Mexico City Organizing Committee stressed Mexican humility and navigated U.S.-Soviet tensions after the Cuban Missile Crisis to succeed over Detroit's bid (Witherspoon 2008, 40-46; Rodríguez Kurí 2014)[3]. As the first Spanish-speaking, the first Latin American, and the first "Third World" host of the Olympics, Mexico City's candidacy engendered a great deal of criticism and controversy, much of which focused on Mexico City's mid-level altitude and the ability of Mexicans to pull off hosting the Games, despite past success in hosting sporting events[4].

Amidst these issues were the concerns of the Mexican government about financing the Games. The bid for the Games was organized with the blessing of President Adolph López Mateos (1958-1964), known as "el presidente deportista" (the sporting president) who also engaged in an ambitious foreign policy. His successor, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, was less excited about hosting the Games and encouraged the local organizing committee to host the Games "on the cheap", which, according to historian Eric Zolov, "placed emphasis on efficiency, utility and display that would build upon the nation's inherent cultural advantages and extant infrastructure". As a result, the Mexican government and COJO united the existing sporting infrastructure of Mexico City through a painting scheme that converted the city into an Op-Art piece (2004, 167)[5]. Mexico had a history of modified Olympic participation. In the 1956, Marte Gómez informed a Polish journalist that it would be "sending to Melbourne a rather symbolic delegation" in order to offset the high cost of travel to Australia[6].

Like Mexico, Ireland had a history of balancing ambitious goals with limited financial resources regarding sporting events. Mike Cronin has highlighted how financial considerations cut short the life of the domestic *Aonach Tailteann* festival, which lasted from 1924 to 1932 (2003, 397, 411). This concern with finances continued into the 1960s. In June of 1967, Killanin warned that only a small number of Irish athletes would travel to Mexico City, noting "it is important that all athletes on the Irish team should be in the best physical condition possible" (*Irish Independent*, 8 June 1967). The same article also reported that the honorary Secretary of the OCI advised that Ireland focus more on representation at the 1972 Munich Olympiad, due to concerns about Mexico City's altitude. By February of 1968, the OCI announced it would send forty-one athletes to the games, with emphases on boxing, "but only in the lighter weights

[3] For analysis that stresses the weakness of the competing bids, see C. Brewster, K. Brewster 2009e. For an analysis stressing Mexico's success in positioning itself as a "Third World" nation in the context of the 1963 Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO), see Elías 2018.

[4] For an analysis of imperialistic European attitudes towards Mexico City altitude and its ability to host the games, see Kasperowski 2009. For studies on how altitude studies for the 1968 Games transformed the idea of amateurism and sport science, see Wrynn 2006 and Heggie 2008.

[5] For a comprehensive investigation of the 1968 Cultural Olympics that emphasizes youth culture and highlights the influence of Mexico City's closing ceremony on future Olympiads, see Huntley 2018.

[6] Letter from Gómez to Z. Mieklajczak, 17 August 1956, ABMC, Box 57, Reel 34.

where they could compete", and track and field, particularly long-distance running (*Evening Herald*, 29 February 1968). Journalist Seamus Martin noted the likely presence of marathoner Pat McMahon at the Games, partly for his "world class" times and partly because his attendance at Oklahoma Baptist University would mean cheaper airfare for the OCI (*ibidem*). An unusual source of founding came for the Irish boxing team in August of 1968, when the British boxing magazine *Boxing News* donated £500 to the Irish Amateur Boxing Association from "the surplus of a fund" for British boxers' training sessions for the Mexico City Games (*Irish Independent*, 28 August 1968). So, while Irish journalists constituted part of the European and North American visitors' Mexican elites wanted to impress, they also lived in a nation whose Olympic participation was mitigated by limited financial resources.

3. Irish Sports Reporters on the Mexico City Olympiad

As noted in the introduction, international perceptions were a vital aspect to the Mexican Olympic project. The Mexican government did not overtly censor the Mexican press but, from the 1940s to much of the 1960s, journalists were confined by "presidentialism", which Eric Zolov defines as "an unqualified reverence for the president as the supreme arbiter of political disputes and the standard bearer of the Mexican body politic" (2006, 13). As Zolov highlights, Mexican journalists were not passive observers in this process and some attempted to push the boundaries of this philosophy. While the Mexican government had a relatively smooth relationship with its own journalists, its relationships with foreign journalists appeared more contentious. According to Claire Brewster and Keith Brewster, foreign correspondents expressed concern about how effectively the government and COJO were working with journalists to promote Mexico. A U.S. correspondent "stressed that Mexicans lacked a basic understanding of how the international press worked", which was especially concerning as COJO members were aware that hosting the Games "would stimulate the largest number of journalists that had ever covered a single event" (2009b, 858-859). The pre-Olympic critiques from the foreign press seem to have affected Mexican organizers, with Marte Gómez dismissing a negative portrayal of Mexico as "written by a person [...] who is not friendly to Mexico", and he critiqued "those coming to Mexico with the particular purpose of looking for mistakes"[7]. In one case, Mexican Olympic figures were able to develop smoother relations with foreign journalists, as Clark Flores invited the president of the International Sports Journalists Federation to visit Mexico City, which apparently caused the journalist to become more positive in his opinion of Mexico City's hosting capabilities (Carmona 1981, 102). It appears, that for all the preparations COJO and the government made to impress foreigner visitors and observers, they struggled to incorporate foreign sports reporters into their mission to portray a stable and orderly Mexico.

From the press accounts of Irish journalists sent to Mexico City, the struggles in accommodating the international press seem apparent. Mitchell Cogley described the press situation as "near chaos" and lamented that, a day before the Games started, no tickets had been sent out. He also claimed, however, that "admission may be gained by just walking in and meeting enquiries with a blank look" (*Irish Independent*, 11 October 1968). J.J. Walsh lamented the lack of programs, the difficulties with communications, and traffic (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). Brundage himself also asserted these difficulties, as he noted his disappointment with the set up at the Hotel Camino Real, which lacked a direct phone line to his room,

[7] Letter from Gómez to Brundage, 11 December 1967, ABMC, Box 57, Reel 34.

a situation further aggravated by the tendency of the operator to cut phone calls short[8]. Despite these issues, it appears that COJO did make attempts to ingratiate these journalists. Paul MacWeeney of the *Irish Times* reported on a reception for 1,000 guests at the Hacienda de los Morales that provided plenty of food, drink, and music, causing the correspondent to note, "every city staging an Olympiad falls over backwards to impress the scribes, and the Mexicans kept up this tradition very fully indeed (12 October 1968).

For sports correspondents, much of the negative attention was focused on the impacts of altitude. Paul MacWeeney noted the faster times for sprinters and the slower times for distance runners but called the 10,000-meter race "a most fascinating affair" as a "group of five dark shapes" (referring to runners from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tunisia) bided their time for the opportunity to pass "their Caucasian pace-setting rivals" (*The Irish Times*, 15 October 1968). He also characterized watching a steeplechaser "collapse in sheer agony" as evidence that "the gloomy predictions of an Olympiad [h]eld in rarified air" had come to fruition (*The Irish Times*, 16 October 1968). MacWeeney noted the difficulty for long-distance competitors from low-altitude countries, as did an article in the *Evening Herald* that further argued, "Mexico must be remembered and regarded as an enduring lesson as where not to site Olympic Games" (17 October 1968). Irish journalists even observed the effects of altitude on the Olympic Village, as Mary Finnegan noted that ascending the steep stairs to the Village dining area meant serious ankle injuries for some and, for others, "10 minutes recovery time from acute breathless bordering on asphyxia" (*Irish Independent*, 18 October 1968).

Although Mexican organizers had been concerned about uniting the different architectural styles of their sporting infrastructure, Irish journalists generally expressed positive attributes to the stadiums, arenas, and the Olympic Village, or as Finnegan called it, "Mexican Tír na nÓg" (*ibidem*). J.J. Walsh, who had attended every Olympics since 1936, called the Olympic Village, "one of the finest […] I have so far seen" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). *The Irish Times* reported that Olympic legend Jesse Owens, an official invitee of the Mexican Government, commented that, although the rooms were smaller, the Olympic Village at Mexico City was superior to that of Berlin in 1936, especially the lounge and pool areas (15 October 1958). In addition, RTÉ's Brendan O'Reilly positively portrayed the Village. In one television report, O'Reilly mentioned that Irish athletes were "enjoying their stay there immensely" and that "the food is first class" (*RTÉ*, 10 October 1968).

Mexican stadiums also received praise from Irish journalists. As Luis Castañeda has highlighted, the Estadio Olímpico, the Estadio Azteca, and the Palacio de Deportes were designed by different architects; the first stadium, built in the early 1950s, was hailed as a nationalist triumph for its use of local materials like volcanic rock, while the second stadium, designed by COJO president Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, was built with Mexico's bid for the 1970 World Cup and with mass television audiences in mind, and the third venue, with design credit given to Félix Candela, was built specifically for the Olympics and his success allowed him to play a significant role in designing the Mexico City Metro afterwards (2014, 112-129, 140-149). A report in the *Evening Herald*, most likely by Mitchell Cogley, characterized the Estadio Olímpico as "a modernistic saucer […] a perfect blend of the new and old Mexico" (12 October 1968). Also of note was the Tartan track material made by 3M, dubbed in the *Cork Examiner* as "one of the great success of the Mexico Olympics" (16 November 1968). J.J. Walsh also lauded the Tartan track surface, claiming it was "worth every peso". He called the Estadio Azteca "the best,

[8] "A.B.'s Visit to Mexico City", 24 February 1970, ABMC, Box 84, Reel 46.

I have to date", as "it accommodates 105,000 who are entirely protected by the sun and rain and everyone has a complete view of the carpet-like pitch". He also characterized the construction of the other venues as "a superb achievement" and lamented that only wealthy nations could host the Olympics (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). In particular, Walsh's comment about "wealthy" nations forces a reconsideration of the simplistic scenario of a Latin American/Third World nation struggling to impress European/First World visitors.

Mexican fans received more critical treatment. Walsh noted his displeasure with their "unprecedented displays of fanatical patriotism", contending that it made competitions featuring Mexican athletes "unfair". He characterized the swimming venues as "too noisy to be enjoyed except by teenagers and swimming enthusiasts". He continued, "Mexicans are too excitable and noisy[.] and the majority of the spectators were of that mercurial race" (*The Munster Express*, 24 December 1968). Walsh further suggested that Mexican fans influenced that judging in Irish boxer Eddie Tracey's loss to Mexican Orlando Roldán, a sentiment shared by an *Evening Herald* writer (only identified as "Second") watching the Games on television. The writer called Tracey "decidedly unlucky" to lose to Roldán "whose every belligerent gesture, let alone a punch, was cheered to the echo" (25 October 1968). This concern with the behavior of Mexican fans continued beyond the Olympic Games and into the 1970 World Cup, where some Mexican elites became concerned that Mexican fans' celebrations of Mexican victories "threatened to turn into a type of patriotic hysteria normally associated with fascism", thus undermining elite's desires to portray a stable and cosmopolitan Mexico to foreigners (Brewster C., Brewster K. 2009a, 871). While it is doubtful that Walsh, a sympathizer of Francisco Franco who attended the Spanish dictator's funeral, was concerned about fascism, it is possible that such energy coming from non-Europeans may have been seen as threatening. These reactions could also be attributed to Irish expectations of sporting decorum or to cultural norms surrounding noise. For example, Paul MacWeeney noted that the reception at the Hacienda de los Morales that impressed him featured three bands whose simultaneous performances produced a "somewhat startling" effect (*The Irish Times*, 12 October 1968).

Looming in the background of this coverage was the massacre of student protesters at Tlatelolco. Irish correspondents frequently wrote about the military presence and sometimes downplayed it. It appears that number of deaths reported in Irish newspapers varied. These variations include reporting the official thirty-nine provided by the Mexican government, contrasting that figure with the number of 200 offered by a Mexican student group, and simply characterizing the number of fatalities as "undisclosed" (*The Irish Press*, 5 October 1968; *The Irish Times*, 7 October 1968; *Evening Herald*, 8 October 1968). J.J Walsh informed that Mexican newspapers reported between twenty-five and thirty-five deaths, "but the public say: 'Add an ought to it and it would be nearer the figure'" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). It should be noted that the number of thirty-nine given by the *Evening Herald* may have come from Mitchell Cogley who supplied reports directly from Mexico City for that periodical in addition to the *Irish Independent*. The *Irish Times*' comparison of that official figure with the claims of the student group had no listed author, meaning it could have come from another source than Paul MacWeeney, who was normally identified in his reports on the Games. The *Irish Press*' figure was proposed by journalist Hugh O'Shaughnessy, who did not attend the games and, although Walsh attended the Games, he did not report his numbers until two months after the massacre occurred and presented a situation where government troops acted "in desperation" against a persistent student movement and "any other people who happened to be in the way became victims" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). It should be noted that British sports journalist John Rodda, who was present at the massacre and reported 500 deaths to *The Guardian*, believed he was under surveillance for

the rest of his stint in Mexico and that Avery Brundage, in conversation with Rodda, questioned why the sports correspondent was reporting on events outside the Games (Brewster C., Brewster K. 2009d, 831). Unlike Rodda, it appears Irish reporters focused on sporting stories, making references to student unrest but using words like "riots" or "rioting" without judging in favor of one side or another (*Evening Herald*, 8, 9, 15 October 1968; *Irish Independent*, 9 October 1968; *RTÉ*, 10 October 1968)[9]. In general, Irish reporters wrote more about the military and police presence around the Olympic venues. MacWeeney noted the rumors of omni-present police were "greatly exaggerated" but noted that "those impassive Indian faces [of the police] have a somewhat menacing look" (*The Irish Times*, 7 October 1968).

MacWeeney's comments on race highlight the fact that the 1968 Olympiad was a contentious site pertaining to race and that Irish journalists where white visitors encountering people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds in their daily activities, social interactions, and at athletic performances. Aside from the student protests, the 1968 Olympics are also famous for the protest of Tommie Smith and John Carlos. Irish journalists tended to either comment that their raised fist protest in support of Black Power was inappropriate for the Olympics, while others conflated Black Power with the success of African and African American track and field athletes. Thomas Myler, a boxing reporter, felt the display by Smith and Carlos "marred the Mexico Olympics", as "the Olympic Rostrum is not a place to air any political beliefs" (*Evening Herald*, 21 October 1968). MacWeeney conflated Black political activism with the success of African athletes, particularly distance runners, at the Games. Under the heading, "Black Power", he asserted that, because there were only two "white triumphs" in the track events, these Olympics may have represented a shift where "the coloured races" began to dominate all Olympic races, from sprinting to the marathon (*The Irish Times*, 15 October 1968). In addition, Walsh, who employed less politique terms than MacWeeney to refer to Black athletes, also noticed their success at the Games and lamented that "[t]he whites are having a black, black time [in terms of performing in races]… No wonder Black Power reared its menacing head" (*The Munster Express*, 31 January 1969). While these journalists viewed Black athletes through racializing or racist lenses, they were not alone in associating the African American Black Power movement with Africans. According to historian Dexter Blackman, African Americans like Harry Edwards joined the campaign to ban South Africa from the 1968 Olympics and the Olympic movement, and these actions spurred a renewed interest in Pan-Africanism in the United States (2012, 1). Through the observations of MacWeeney and Walsh and the analysis of Blackman, it is possible to view the 1968 Olympiad as a Pan-African moment where activism overlapped with athletic performance. This overlapping was clearly outside the agenda of Mexican organizers and COJO and could reflect both racist and anti-racist sentiments.

4. J.J. Walsh, Journalist and Tourist

Amid protests, massacres, and Olympic records, the Olympics were also intended to display Mexico to the world as a popular tourist attraction. The Ministry of Tourism provided significant support for the Games, producing advertisements and films, often in conjunction with U.S. corporations, to encourage U.S. travelers to visit Mexico for the Olympics (Zolov 2001, 259-260). While the efforts to encourage tourism cannot be denied, historians offer different

[9] The focus on sports reporting did not separate these reporters from their counterparts from other nations. For example, Rein and Davidi highlight that for the 1978 FIFA World Cup in Argentina, the majority of international journalists only wrote about the World Cup and avoided discussions about the military junta governing the nation (2009, 677).

opinions on how effective those efforts were. Kevin B. Witherspoon offers a skeptical analysis on the official numbers offered by the Mexican government for the Olympics' impact on tourism, and points to Mexico's lack of economic growth following the Miracle years (2008, 144). On the other hand, Zolov has noted that tourists who visited Mexico during the 1960s often expressed favorable views of the nation and the Mexican government, while Brewster and Brewster have underscored the fact that Mexico's tourist sector continued to grow after the Games, especially in resorts like Puerto Vallarta, Puerto Escondido, and Cancún, despite the events at Tlatelolco (2001, 250-252; 2009a, 876). This section focuses on the writings of J.J. Walsh, who unlike Cogley and MacWeeney traveled Mexico extensively and wrote about these travels.

J.J. Walsh was the editor and owner of the Waterford-based *Munster Express*, inheriting the newspaper from his father, who had been the mayor of Waterford. In the obituary that ran in the newspaper he owned, he was described as "flamboyant", "eccentric", "sometimes ruthless", and possessing "a burning passion for sport and travel" (*The Munster Express*, 11 September 1992). Another Irish journalist once characterized Walsh's periodical as an "eccentric" local newspaper that "devoted acres of space to the worldwide travels of its owner" (*Weekend Examiner*, 20 June 1992). Among these travels were his visits to every Olympiad from 1936 to 1988 and the funeral of Francisco Franco, the Spanish Fascist ruler, in 1975. Walsh was not a "typical" Irish sports reporter in any sense of the word, but his previous experiences with Mexican and Mexican American culture, along with his willingness to travel throughout the country and his financial capabilities, provide a window into one tourist's experiences with elite Mexicans, wealthy members of the Irish Diaspora, and Mexicans working in the tourist sector.

Walsh's first encounter with Mexican culture stemmed from a stop in Los Angeles on his way to the 1956 Olympiad in Melbourne. He meandered Olvera Street in Los Angeles, where he noticed that Mexican Angelinos "retained a zest for amusement [...] imbued with an exemplary religious fervor" (*The Munster Express*, 1 February 1957). Walsh, himself a conservative Catholic, made frequent remarks about Mexico's Catholic practices, criticizing urban Mexicans for possessing "the same apathy towards religion as the Italians in Rome" and taking solace in the religiosity of rural Mexicans, but dismissing many of their beliefs and practices as "ignorance mixed with superstition" (*The Munster Express*, 7 February 1969). He did, however, view the presence of Opus Dei and the Christian Family Movement as positive signs for the nation's religious practices. Walsh also wrote of his visit to the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, which he had previously toured in his first trip to Mexico in 1958, and provided readers with a lengthy description of the story behind the Marian apparition of the Dark Virgin. His overall judgement appears to have been that fewer vendors and the demolition of the gift shop were positive developments for the shrine.

Aside from Catholicism, Walsh appeared to have an intense interest in Mexican history. He admitted to reading about the conquest of Mexico and when visiting for the World Cup 1970 wrote of his interest in Teotihuacán and even presented readers with the entire script of the presentation he witnessed at the pyramids (*The Munster Express*, 11 December 1970). Likewise, Walsh advised his readers to visit the "Museo de Antropología" that had been designed by COJO president Ramírez Vázquez, adding that two guides were "necessary, as the subject is so vast" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). Citing the work of Nestor García Canclini, Eric Zolov contends that this vastness had the planned effect of overwhelming visitors with information about indigenous cultures, so that they emerged with the notion of a single indigenous Mexico rather than having an understanding about different indigenous cultures within Mexico (2001, 244-245). From his writings about the Olympics, it is clear that Walsh emerged with the notion of singular Mexican culture, which served the Mexican elite hopes of presenting a unified, cohesive Mexican nation to the world.

Eventually Walsh left "the turmoil of traffic-choked Mexico City" to visit the resort city of Acapulco on the Pacific Coast, which was the site for the Olympic yachting events and a place he found "delightful" and "clean and wholesome". He enjoyed the food at his hotel, particularly their breakfasts, and noted his fondness for the "quaint old parts" of Acapulco and its "bazaar-like area", which he preferred over "ultra-modern chain stores such as Sanborns" (*The Munster Express*, 24 January 1969). Walsh visited Acapulco during its heyday as the crown jewel of Mexican tourism. As Andrew Sackett has noted, during this time, the city epitomized Mexico's uneven development as the city featured world-class hotels and resorts as well as shantytowns, where many hotel and resort workers lived. The fact that Walsh did not mention the shantytowns was not exceptional, as the architecture for tourist attractions was designed for views of the ocean, not the city (2002, 501, 509). Walsh's time in Acapulco went smoothly but with one exception - the celebrations that followed the British victory in the yachting event. In his observation of the celebration by the British yachters and their fans, Walsh noted, "how they [the British] loved hoisting their flags all over the world and through four centuries of time". He then explained to his readership that no one paid "the Britishers" much attention, as "Acapulco [was] in far off Mexico and not Ireland" (*The Munster Express*, 24 January 1969).

Walsh's highlighting of British behavior he found distasteful brings to light that the Mexico he navigated was influenced by his Irish identity. Throughout his travels, Walsh wrote of his interactions with members of the Irish diaspora, which began on his first trip to Mexico in 1958, when he traveled with a pair of Australians "of Tipperary descent" whom he met at the Melbourne Games. At the 1968 Games he would socialize with North Americans, naming two people who possessed the surnames of Dillon and Connolly (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). On his flight to Acapulco, he made note of his encounter with "a jolly Englishman of Celtic strain" (*The Munster Express*, 17 January 1969). While these encounters on his second trip to Mexico seem to have been fleeting, Walsh appeared to make a strong connection with one of his "Mexican friends", Mary Stapleton, a Kilkenny woman who "had lived amongst her beloved Mexicans for over fifty years and knew their faults and failings". Stapleton "lived in a palatial residence" in the upscale neighborhood of Lomas de Chapultepec "with her lady secretary and servants" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). Walsh spent a great deal of space and words describing Stapleton to his audience, noting that she was a retired teacher who set up a school that she later sold to developers who converted it into the Maria Isabel Hotel, where Walsh stayed while attending the Olympic events in Mexico City (*The Munster Express*, 7 February 1969). Walsh would later revisit Stapleton when he came back to Mexico for the 1970 World Cup.

While amazed by its tourist attractions, Walsh's depictions of Mexico wavered between condescension and understanding. For instance, he lamented that the Metro was not finished in time for the Games, calling the delay "typical of South America", but acknowledged that "[i]t happens in Ireland, too". He favorably compared his patience to that of other foreigners when dealing with the delay in printing tickets, stating that "[m]y previous knowledge of the procrastinating Mexicans stood me in good stead" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968). After losing two rolls of film, he noted, "[t]he picture pool department had the worst service of any Olympics and one could lose one's temper but for the admission of guilt and the exceptional humility and courtesy of the Mexicans in charge" (*The Munster Express*, 24 January 1969).

Overall, Walsh viewed the Olympics as a benefit to the Mexican nation. Not only did he view the Games as a financial success, he also professed that Mexicans benefited from "[t]he experience of running the games and meeting so many foreigners", whose anger and frustration taught the Mexican nation "many salutary lessons" (*The Munster Express*, 24 December 1968). Despite this apparent need to learn lessons from foreigners, Walsh wrote that Mexico "had successfully stated the

biggest Olympics ever held, and that means that the greatest and grandest show ever in the world's history had taken place in the City of Mexico". He further added, "There is no race on earth (and I have experience with scores) more worthy of affection and appreciation than the Mexicans" (*The Munster Express*, 14 February 1969). Walsh's sentiments seem to vindicate both the sentiments of skeptical Europeans and ambitious Mexican planners. In his depictions, Mexico is inefficient and in need of instruction, yet modern and charming. In his return to Mexico for the 1970 World Cup, Walsh called Mexico "one of the richest emerging countries in the world", noting that the country had captivated him and many others (*The Munster Express*, 11 December 1970). Walsh echoed many of the polite, but condescending, remarks of U.S. tourists who visited Mexico, especially in terms of its "progress" (Zolov 2001, 252). However, he still came from a nation whose leaders were also interested in tourism as a form of economic development. In 1967, the publicity director for the Irish Tourist Board in North America told an audience in Mexico City that included the Mexican Minister of Tourism that, for Ireland, the tourist industry "forms the largest single item in our export trade" and encouraged Mexicans to visit the land of "the Latins of Northern Europe" (*Cork Examiner*, 5 August 1967). The success of this appeal is unclear, but it highlights that Irish journalists, whatever their biases and beliefs, did not come from an economic hegemon like their U.S. counterparts.

5. Lord Killanin, Journalist and Olympic Bureaucrat

Lord Killanin, born Michael Morris, was born in England, although his family maintained an Irish lordship. After an elite education that included attendance at Eton, the Sorbonne, and Cambridge, Killanin became a journalist for a series of London-based newspapers: first the *Daily Express*, then the *Daily Mail*, and, finally, the *Sunday Dispatch*. After volunteering to serve for the British army in World War II, Killanin spent his time in Ireland between residences in Spiddal, County Galway and Dublin. He became president of the OCI in 1950 and a member of the IOC in 1952. Within the IOC, Killanin rose to prominence in the mid-1960s, becoming Chef de Protocol and Chairman of the Press Commission in 1965, joining the Executive Board in 1967, and rising to Vice-President of the Board in 1968. In 1972, he succeeded Avery Brundage as President of the IOC (Rodda 1999, 13-14). In his obituary of Killanin, close friend and British journalist John Rodda stated that, prior to his stint as president, the Irish sports bureaucrat "liked nothing better than to finish his days at annual IOC sessions by having a drink with journalists – whose ways and work he understood more than most members" (*ibidem*). While Killanin's days as a full-time journalist were behind him, he still published articles in the *Sunday Independent* and the *Irish Times* to express his feelings about Mexico City's hosting of the Olympics.

The archival record makes clear that Killanin was skeptical about Mexico City's worthiness as an Olympic host. A month after Mexico won the bid to host, Killanin wrote Brundage about better English translations of IOC meeting minutes. The example he mentioned was a sentence that stated that he and another IOC member "were in control of the voting" [to host the Games]. Killanin added "I wish we had been able to control voting!"[10] Months after the 1968 Mexico City games had ended, Killanin continued to criticize the 1963 awarding of hosting rights to Mexico City, telling Brundage "there was considerable criticism about the amount of lobbying, entertainment and free visits to Mexico City", and added, "The Cynics said that Mexico received the number of votes equivalent to the number of people who went on the free trip"[11].

[10] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 27 November 1963, ABMC, Box 58, Reel 35.
[11] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 5 March 1969, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.

In between these letters, Killanin published these thoughts for Irish consumption. His 1964 article for the *Sunday Independent* put forward the idea of Dublin hosting the Olympic Games. Killanin wrote that Ireland could serve as a model for amateurism, contrasting the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Rugby Football Union with the Soviet Union and United States, who systems produced "shamateurs". The article also expressed a concern with the bidding process for the 1968 Olympiad, critiquing "all the ballyhoo" that accompanied Detroit's bid and chided Mexico City because it "spent large sums inviting I.O.C. representatives […] to 'sell' their city" and for "leaving little gifts and mementos" for those voting on the hosting rights. Killanin took partial credit for preventing this type of behavior for the bidding process to host the 1968 Winter Olympiad. While promoting Dublin's candidacy for hosting, Killanin also acknowledged that the Irish capital lacked the sporting infrastructure that Mexico City possessed, specifically a stadium with a capacity of 100,000 and a solution to "the deplorable situation regarding swimming baths"[12]. Much like other Irish journalists, Killanin never portrayed a consistent image in regard to Ireland's and Mexico's comparative modernity. While it is clear he did not view the bidding process for Mexico City legitimate, it also appears that Mexico City's winning bid spurred him to think about Ireland's possibilities as an Olympic host. His argument centered not on Dublin's infrastructure, but on the moral legitimacy it could offer to the amateur movement. It should be noted, however, that many Irish runners attended U.S. universities on athletic scholarship in the 1950s and 1960s, a situation both Killanin and Brundage felt needed to be remedied. The IOC president declared that almost all cases of non-U.S. citizens receiving athletic scholarship were "certainly illegitimate", while Killanin noted his dismay with the letters he received from athletes on scholarship in the United States, noting, "the letters are quite illiterate"[13]. Despite this situation, Killanin still professed that a Dublin Olympics would reinvigorate amateurism within the Olympic movement.

As Killanin increased his influence within the IOC, Mexican sports bureaucrat José de Jesús Clark Flores also established himself as a powerful presence within the Olympic movement. As stated earlier, both joined the IOC in 1952, when Avery Brundage was elected as the first non-European president of that entity. Both seemed to have benefitted from Brundage's election. For Clark Flores, Brundage's presidency proved to be a boon, although both men were fully aware of European skepticism. Regarding the 1953 IOC meeting hosted by Mexico City, Brundage informed Gómez and Clark Flores, "The Olympic movement, of course, is international but our European friends have always felt that they are better able to manage its affairs than those from other sections of the world where progress has not been so great"[14]. The big victory came in 1963 and the winning bid for the Olympic Games. Clark Flores eventually became the head of PASO (Pan American Sports Organization) and earned favorability with the López Mateos administration (1958-1964). With the shift to the administration to Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), Clark Flores lost power in COJO to Ramírez Vázquez and eventually resigned, much to chagrin of Brundage (Rodríguez Kurí 2003, 40-43).

The issue of South African inclusion in the Games likely alienated Clark Flores from Brundage and allowed Killanin to occupy a middle ground between the two. Brundage supported including the Apartheid nation in the Olympic Games, whereas representatives from Asia and Africa threatened to boycott the Games if South Africa were included. Killanin was part of a

[12] Newspaper clipping, *Sunday Independent* [n.d.], ABMC, Box 58, Reel 35. Killanin sent this article to Brundage with a letter dated 19 February 1964.

[13] Letter from Brundage to Killanin, 3 July 1965, ABMC, Box 58, Reel 35; Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 15 June 1965, ABMC, Box 58, Reel 35.

[14] Letter from Brundage to Gómez and Clark F., 23 December 1952, ABMC, Box 138, Reel 78.

committee to investigate the issue of South Africa's inclusion and among IOC executive board members, he argued for a compromising position between the two sides (*The Irish Press*, 24 April 1968). Killanin would later recant this position, claiming he never supported South Africa's inclusion. He also blamed Clark Flores' temper for the lack of discussion regarding the safety of a potential South African delegation at the games (Killanin 1983, 43). Clark Flores was a trusted ally of Brundage but sided with the Mexican government and COJO in supporting the ban, a move that strained his relationship with the IOC President[15]. After the games, Brundage continued to express his disgust with what he characterized as "the gravest crisis" of the Mexico City Olympics and insisting that it was his solution to the issue that was agreed upon[16]. He later informed Clark Flores that "had your Mexican proposal been adopted, the Games of the XIX Olympiad would certainly have been ruined"[17]. It appears then, that although Brundage and Killanin had slightly differing opinions of South African inclusion, the issue benefited their relationship because of the distance it created between Brundage and Clark Flores.

During the games, rumors abounded about Clark Flores and Killanin challenging Brundage for the IOC presidency. Neither did run for president, but Clark Flores was reelected and Killanin was elected to Vice-Presidencies in October 1968 (there were a total of three). Clark Flores apparently had support from IOC members from the Soviet Bloc, African, Asia, and Latin America to challenge for the presidency. However, out of loyalty to Brundage and out of concern about his relationship with the Díaz Ordaz administration, Clark Flores apparently negotiated a deal where he agreed to support Brundage in 1968 and Brundage agreed to step down and to support Clark Flores' bid for the IOC presidency in 1972 (Carmona 1981, 125-126). In an interview with *The Irish Times*, Killanin noted that he also had been asked to run against Brundage but, due to a lack of temporal and financial resources, he chose not to. However, he did note that in his new position as Vice-President he would wield significant power: "As I live in Western Europe and I am the nearest inhabitant to the office [IOC headquarters] in Lausanne, it is quite natural that several responsibilities are put on me"[18].

It appears that one of Killanin's "responsibilities" was to highlight the mistakes of Clark Flores and other Mexican sports bureaucrats. Within his first year as an IOC vice-president, he warned Brundage, "if we continue to allow the Olympic Movement to be run from Mexico and Rome and not Lausanne we are really heading for trouble"[19]. One of these issues was the use of notepaper by members of the IOC, especially board members. Killanin informed Brundage of his concern about the variance of notepaper used by multiple members, but only named one perpetrator, Clark Flores, whom he identified twice for his transgressions[20]. In turn, Clark Flores expressed to Brundage his frustration with Killanin pushing out Clark Flores on a project they were supposed to work on together and with his "interfering" with a committee that he had declined to take part in, adding that Killanin's "schemes have caused an extremely dangerous situation" with the National Olympic Committees[21].

[15] For a more in-depth analysis of Mexico's role in the South Africa dispute see Rodríguez Kurí 2015 and Brewster C., Brewster K. 2009c.

[16] Letter from Brundage to Manuel Ratner, 11 October 1969, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.

[17] Letter from Brundage to Clark Flores, 21 November 1969, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.

[18] Newspaper clipping, *The Irish Times*, [n.d.], ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35. Sent by Killanin with two other articles from the *Irish Times* and a letter to Brundage, 14 December 1968.

[19] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 29 August 1969, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.

[20] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 15 May 1969, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.

[21] Letter from Clark to Brundage, 29 November 1968, ABC, Box 52, Reel 31; Letter from Clark to Brundage, 28 September 1969, ABC, Box 52, Reel 31.

As Clark Flores' and Brundage's relationship continued to show strains – the former even asked the latter for a "direct, private conversation" to discuss their recent disagreements[22] – Killanin continued to confront Brundage with rumors that sullied his and Clark Flores' reputation. In June of 1970, Killanin asked Brundage about "vested interests of [IOC] members", and noted that during the 1968 Olympiad, "rumours were rife that you personally had an interest in the hotel in which we were staying, and further had business interested with General Clark". He also quoted an article that ran in the London-based *Sunday Times* a month earlier that characterized Clark Flores as "still damaged by Mexico's tardy Olympic preparations on which his construction firm held huge contracts", and further noted that a "whispering campaign" against Clark Flores and Brundage and their alleged business dealings had done "untold harm" to the IOC[23]. Brundage denied the allegations and insisted that the construction contracts for the games were handled by the Department of Public Works[24]. Considering the Díaz Ordaz administration's frosty relationship with Clark Flores and Brundage, the allegations in the *Sunday Times* appear doubtful. More importantly, though, the characterizations of "tardy preparations" and corruption related to Mexico City's hosting were weaponized against both Brundage and Clark Flores. It should also be noted that Clark Flores was not the only Mexican to run afoul of Killanin during this time. In a May 1970 letter to Brundage, Killanin questioned the accuracy of Ramírez Vázquez's statements regarding how well Mexico City followed IOC protocol as Olympic host and admitted, "I am sure he [Ramírez Vázquez] thought me a great nuisance!"[25]

Brundage contacted Clark Flores later that month and provided his response to Killanin, "who brought this matter to my attention"[26], as well as the newspaper clipping Killanin had quoted from the *Sunday Times* on the potential successors to Brundage as IOC President. The article described Killanin as "Old Etonian, ex-war correspondent… writer… film producer… Fluent French" and contrasted him with "Mexico's Spanish-speaking General Jose De J. Clark [*sic*]"[27]. Clark Flores responded with a letter from the Mexican Secretary of Public Works denying the awarding of any contracts to him or his company and asked that "if the IOC headquarters, or Lord Killanin in his capacity as Chairman of the Press and Public Relations Commission, officially make the necessary clarifications with the editors of […] 'L' Equipe' and 'Sunday Times' "[28].

This portrayal of Killanin by himself and European media as a cosmopolitan Western European and Clark Flores as a monolingual Mexican reflects a larger consideration of Mexico as a wholly separate entity from European nations, which was a notion that Mexican sport bureaucrats were trying to fight by hosting the games. Clark Flores addressed this issue in front of the executive board of the IOC in March of 1969. In what was clearly an allusion to the massacre at Tlatelolco, he lamented that "[t]he controversial world of today […] presented an unfavorable atmosphere" for Mexico City to host the Games and that protests like those in Mexico City "had been taking place in other parts of the world"[29]. While Clark Flores attempted to place the massacre within a global context, it is clear that not all of his fellow

[22] Letter from Clark to Brundage, 29 July 1970, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.
[23] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 12 June 1970, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.
[24] Letter from Brundage to Killanin, 3 July 1970, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.
[25] Letter from Killanin to Brundage, 8 May 1970, ABMC, Box 59, Reel 35.
[26] Letter from Brundage to Clark, 16 July 1970, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.
[27] Newspaper clipping, *Sunday Times*, 17 May 1970, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.
[28] Letter from Clark to Brundage, 12 August 1970, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.
[29] Clark, "To the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee", 13 March 1969, ABMC, Box 52, Reel 31.

board members agreed. Fourteen years later, Killanin admitted his "complete ignorance of the situation" in Mexico prior to arriving in Mexico City, believing that the protest had "spread from Europe". However, he concluded that "the situation in Mexico was different from that in Europe", as "[t]he roots of discontent went deep in the country's history" (Killanin 1983, 48). Killanin's portrayal of the events separated Mexico from Europe, whereas Clark Flores attempted to include Mexico City within a global 1968 that saw demonstrations and violence in Paris, Chicago, and Londonderry/Derry, among other locations.

In his retelling of the events surrounding Tlatelolco, Killanin blamed Brundage for placing pressure on Díaz Ordaz to stop the protests and chastised Clark Flores for his callous response to the deaths of the protesters (*ibidem*). That he avoided directly blaming Díaz Ordaz afterwards is critical because, in his years as IOC president, Killanin developed a more cordial relationship with the Mexican government and Olympic bureaucrats during the presidency of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976). Clark Flores' death in 1971 ended his threat to become IOC president and Killanin found himself in situations where he needed help from Mexican sports bureaucrats. One of these instances was the 1975 Pan American Games, where Mexico City "rescued" them after a meningitis epidemic prevented São Paulo from hosting the sporting event (*El Informador*, 18 October 1974; 20 October 1974, 16-B). The relationship between Killanin and Mexican authorities continued to improve the following year when the IOC president asked Mexico City organizers to be prepared to host the 1976 Olympic Games, after strikes in Montreal threatened to delay preparations for the games there (*Le Soleil*, 20 May 1975). Although Mexico City did not end up hosting the 1976 Olympics, Killanin visited the Mexican capital for the Pan American Games, the 1976 inauguration of Mexican president José López Portillo, and a 1978 meeting of the IOC (The Times, 8 October 1975; *El Informador*, 1 December 1976; *The Times*, 12 April 1978). In negotiations surrounding the 1984 Olympiad with the Los Angeles organizing committee, Killanin again used the threat of Mexico City hosting the Games to win leverage (*The Times*, 29 August 1978). While Killanin consistently portrayed Mexico as an unworthy Olympic host, once he became president, he employed Mexico's modern sports infrastructure to his advantage.

6. Conclusion

In his recent analysis of 1968 Olympics, historian Lamartine Pereira DaCosta has suggested studying mass sporting spectacles through "nuanced" approaches that emphasize both "progress and retrogressions" (DaCosta 2020, 174-175). A similar approach is needed to understand how Irish journalists interpreted the Mexico City Olympiad and its legacy. On one hand, aspects of the Games impeded the ability of COJO and the Mexican government to sculpt a pristine image of Mexico to foreign visitors and viewers, including the Tlatelolco massacre, the Black Power protest of Smith and Carlos, and the journalists' own previous travel experiences, racial biases, and political agendas. On the other hand, positive aspects of Mexico – at least from the perspective of Mexican elites - permeated the writings of these journalists, including its desirability as a tourist destination, the friendliness of its people, and the sophistication of its sporting infrastructure. Unlike their fellow white journalists and tourists who visited Mexico, these Irish writers could not look down upon a Mexican sporting infrastructure that surpassed their own in many ways. Even the aristocratic Lord Killanin, who for years argued that choosing Mexico City had been a mistake, was forced upon the city's hosting abilities to further his agenda within the Olympic Movement. These conflicting portrayals of Mexico are reflected in J.J. Walsh's observation that "one may laugh one's way, but not force one's way, through Mexico" (*The Munster Express*, 20 December 1968).

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A Nationalist Network in South America: Diaspora and Diplomatic Action

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Abstract:

The apparent failure of the Easter Rising in 1916 set off a chain of events that culminated in the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Considered by the Irish people as the martyrdom of their republican leaders, it served to continue the fight through other strategies, not restricted only to armed conflict. The Sinn Féin began to coordinate a transnational political action network by means of its diaspora. This state of affairs has been studied in cases such as the United States of America, Australia and Canada, but has not been delved into in the case of the countries of the Southern Cone – Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and southern Brazil. In this essay, I intend to analyse the role of immigrants in Argentina and their prominence in this strategy as well as how the network expanded through Chile and Uruguay.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Ireland, Nationalism, Political Action, Southern Cone

1. Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to answer a topic that has not been yet extensively studied: Irish emigration to the Southern Cone countries – in its broad definition, the region comprises Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and southern Brazil[1] – and their transnational[2] political action in favour of Irish national-

[1] In this work we will not dedicate ourselves to Brazil. It is known that Roger Casement served as British consul in that country and had contacts there, but his work was centered in Rio de Janeiro (at the time, capital of the Republic), the Amazon area and Pernambuco in the northeast and, therefore, it exceeds what refers to the Southern Cone.

[2] We use the theoretical framework "transnationalism" as a tool that provides us with an explanation about the way migrant groups simultaneously act in both the sending and receiving countries, although with different levels of intensity in each of them.

ism. This strategy – previous to 1921 – is usually considered as "protodiplomacy" or "paradiplomacy" since it is developed by informal actors instead of states[3].

The existing body of research on various aspects of the life of Irishmen in English-speaking countries, with a particular focus on those territories ruled by the British Empire, is rich and interesting. However, little is known about the characteristics, cultural and economic pursuits, and political action – both domestic and transnational – in the Spanish-speaking countries in the American continent.

It is true that some progress has been made in the last fifteen years, notably in regard to Argentina, the country that has received the largest community of Irish settlers. From Coghlan's pioneering works (1982, 1987), though mainly genealogical in nature, to Korol and Sábato's foundational volume (1981), which approached the topic with historical and scientific criteria, Murray's substantial contribution (2004), Keogh's comprehensive work (2016), Cruset (2006, 2015) and articles about some topics, and the newest by Patrick Speight (2019).

In the case of Peru – though not strictly one of the Southern Cone countries but with a strong historical and cultural relationship with Chile – Gabriela Mc Evoy's book (2018) merits a mention for its substantial contribution to the body of research. Regarding the other countries in the region, Chile (Griffin 2006) and Paraguay, little research has been done. In Paraguay, Maria Graciela Monte de López Moreira (2020) has recently written an article on this topic as well[4]. However, in the case of Uruguay, no studies delved exclusively into the matter with the exception of one article by Murray about both Paraguay and Uruguay immigration (2006), and Tim Fanning's book (2017), who writes about distinguished Irishmen who performed on both shores of the Rio de la Plata. In other words, there have been no specific publications on this topic. Therefore, it is my belief that this paper will be a contribution not intended to exhaust the subject; on the contrary, it aims at inaugurating a path of similar output[5].

With this paper, I aspire, the, to expand the analysis to new regions and countries – recipient of Irish immigration – in order to understand their particular traits and inner logic, thus being able to establish comparisons with the Irish circumstances in other countries. It is my hope that, in the future, it will lead to publications on a greater, global scale. Many unanswered questions remain, several of which we have put in writing, to be resolved at a later date. An essential reminder is that scientific knowledge advances further due to the questions posed than to the answers gathered. The following pages should be considered in the light of this assertion.

2. Irish People in Argentina and their Diplomatic Action

After the Easter Rising in 1916 and its military failure, Eamon de Valera – who had been appointed as *Príomh Aire*, that is as Prime Minister, by the Dáil Éireann[6] – took a series of

[3] These new frameworks are still debatable in the field of International Relations. For further reading Cruset 2006; Mitchell, Ní Bheacháin 2021.

[4] In the case of Paraguay, beyond the popular and romantic figure of General Francisco Solano López's partner, Elisa Lynch (Lillis, Fanning 2009), there are only a few families that arrived mainly during the colonial period through Spain who did not maintain ties with the island nor were they too interested in what was happening there.

[5] Without ignoring the enormous contribution that is being made from Europe and North America in relation to the global studies for the period 1912-1923, in particular the Project "Global Ireland and 1916", this article aims at focusing on the literature produced from the Southern Cone – most of it in Spanish – and offering an original perspective from a "non-central" or "peripheral" area. At the same time, the stress will be laid on the regional countries' historical contexts, as they were the primary field of action for the actors involved.

[6] Since 1922 it has been the Lower House of Parliament in Ireland and the one that appoints the Prime Ministers.

foreign affairs measures in order to get the recognition of the Republic of Ireland on behalf of the potentially allied world powers. With this goal, a committee was sent to Paris, where the Treaty of Versailles was being discussed in 1919 to put an end to World War I[7]. As expected, their attempt failed since the matter was not considered at all. Consequently, de Valera came up with other alternatives to achieve his purpose and, considering the close relationship with the United States, he decided to begin a long journey throughout the country.

That journey took place from June 1919 to December 1920. In the meantime,Terence MacSwiney, Mayor of Cork, died after a 74-day hunger strike in prison. When the news about his death arrived, at the end of October 1920, de Valera decided to go back to his country to reassume the domestic political activity. During those almost two years in America, de Valera travelled from coast to coast organizing political rallies and meetings with personalities from and outside the diaspora. Even when the primary goal was not achieved – the recognition of Ireland as a republic – de Valera managed to achieve two other important things: a considerable amount of money, which later would be essential to finance the government expenditures while working clandestinely, and a favourable public opinion towards the cause.

It is in this context that de Valera realized the importance of diplomatic work and the urgency in adding new delegations to work co-ordinately among them and with Ireland. In order to attain this goal, a special office was created and, from there, delegates were sent to Germany, Russia, South America and South Africa. In addition, press offices were opened in Switzerland, Spain and Italy, and the idea was to replicate that initiative in Argentina and Chile. However, as some active propaganda was already being made in the Southern Cone of America, their main purpose was to boost these previous activities.

During this period, a series of intelligence reports were sent to Ireland with the clear purpose of providing information that might be used in favour of the cause. While most of them were signed with a real identity, in others a pseudonym was used, a fact that prevent us from knowing the author with accuracy. That is the case of one report, dated 10 August 1921, in which there was a detailed account of all the activities conducted in every country. The names of Eamon Bulfin in Argentina and Frank Egan in Chile were also mentioned in the document:

> Argentine: Through our Representative in Buenos Aires (Mr. Eamon Bulfin) steps are being taken for the issue in that country of a 'Bulletin' the material for which would be derived from the 'Irish Bulletin' and other sources of propaganda. We are at present awaiting from Mr. Bulfin an estimate of the probable cost of the proposed production.
>
> Though communication from home with the Argentine is difficult and slow Mr. Bulfin's reports afford great encouragement as to the support that might be expected there for the Republican cause. He emphasizes, however, the urgent need that exists of educating the whole people of the Argentine – as distinct from the Irish there – to the true position of Ireland and her claim to recognition as an Independent Republic, and considers that a publication something similar to that proposed would affect enormous good in this direction as well as helping to secure a solid footing for a special mission from Ireland to the Argentine. In the opinion of Mr. Bulfin, the President of the Argentine is favourably disposed towards the Irish Republican Cause, and if the United States Government recognised the Irish Republic he (Mr. Bulfin) feels sure that the Argentine Government would do likewise. Mr. Bulfin mentions local

[7] American President Woodrow Wilson was a strong supporter of those populations which aspired to be recognized independently of a sovereign state (a concept that has evolved through time and it is currently known as national self-determination). That way of thinking was more than favourable to Ireland's intentions. To expand, see (Keown 2019). For similar cases, Núñez Seixas offers an interesting insight about the way other diasporas made use of the same context (1995).

differences and animosities resulting from a split of ten years ago as factors operating against the power of the Irish in the Argentine but here again he believes the 'Bulletin' could be put to good use in wiping out misunderstandings and working towards complete and effective reorganisation. A number of newspapers published in the Argentine are friendly disposed towards the Irish Cause. Mr. Ginnell T.D. who has been sent as special envoy on a mission to the Argentine and the other South American Republics, was present by official invitation at the *Te Deum* to commemorate the Independence of Peru. (NAI DE 4/4/2, No. 104)

This is an interesting text due to all the valuable information that it contains and the way it reflects how the reality of a foreign country, in terms of distance, customs and language, is seen from Ireland. Eamon Bulfin, born in 1892, was an immigrants' son who had arrived in Argentina to make his fortune and gain prestige inside the community. His father, William, was the director of the community newspaper, *The Southern Cross*[8], and all his family, including his sister Anita and his uncle Padraic MacManus, were strong supporters of nationalism. Young Bulfin had fought in the Easter Rising but later on, once the revolt was suppressed, and in view of his Argentine citizenship, he was sent to Buenos Aires.

It is true that there were some divisions and rifts among the immigrants since some of them were more radical (like Bulfin) while others held a much more moderate position. To better understand this situation, it is necessary to bear in mind that the *hiberno-argentinos*, as they called themselves, were dependent, in many different ways, on the economic relations they kept with the English capital. While a sector of the urban, working, middle-class was employed by the British railways, the upper social class from Buenos Aires (*porteños*) sold the goods they produced in their extensive farms (*estancias*) – firstly wool, and secondly meat and cereal – to London. Some families, as the Usshers[9], made a living out of the import of typically British products, such as tea, which came from Ceylon – a colony of the empire – so, they needed the colonial approval to run their business.

Fig. 1 – Historical Museum of the city of Monte Hermoso, Argentina[10]. Courtesy of the Author

[8] *The Southern Cross* is the community newspaper founded on January 16, 1875, by Fr. Patrick Joseph Dillon, it continues to be published until today. Its aims, which are the same today, were gathering the Irish people in Argentina and bringing the information from Ireland and the new country where they had settled.

[9] The Ussher family held a prominent place in community leadership. In particular, Bishop Santiago Ussher, who was an Irish chaplain.

[10] Monte Hermoso is a seaside resort on the Atlantic coast in the south of the province of Buenos Aires. In 1918 a wooden hotel was built that was meant to be the summer resort for rich families from Bahía Blanca city and the region. This box is kept in the hotel.

In 1911 MacManus founded the newspaper *Fianna,* which was all in favour of an independent Irish state. This initiative not only did emphasize the division among the immigrants, but it also brought about the discussion of other problematic issues, ranging from the children's orphanage administration to the leadership of community associations as well as political matters.

Regarding the chances of getting some support to the cause and the potential recognition of independence from President Yrigoyen[11], I believe that it was too optimistic and unlikely a possibility. Hipólito Yrigoyen assumed the presidency of Argentina on 12 October 1916, thanks to the votes of the urban and rural middle-class sectors and the millions of immigrants that had arrived in the country since the end of the nineteenth century who were now trying to gain some participation in the governmental political life of the receiving country. Precisely, it was in this sector that the Irish people were included, who showed their strong support to the newly elected president.

The Southern Cross provides us with all this information, due to the fact that the newspaper informed its readers, in detail, about Yrigoyen's access to power, making express reference to the massive popular support, to the political party members' honesty and to the active work they displayed against the former official government: "We supported them when it was not fashionable to predict their success [...]" (*The Southern Cross*, 15 September 1916). Nevertheless, the new president was well aware of the fact that the close economic relations the country maintained with England were a real problem to create a kind of enmity towards such a distant country like Ireland.

Much in the same way, this idea is reinforced by P.J. Little[12] in a report he sends from Buenos Aires on 4 October 1921:

> The President of A.[rgentine] Republic Irregoyen [*sic*], of Basque[13] extraction is head of Radical Government and a most determined opponent. Irregoyen's Government tho' favourable to us, would not involve the country in diplomatic entanglements by recognising Republic. (NAI DE 5/21 No. 109)

In September 1920 Laurence Ginnell, representative of the Irish Republic, was sent to Argentina to collaborate with Bulfin. The plan was to expand the activities beyond the country and, with the help of Ginnell's wife, Alice, the three of them did a great job in that respect. The main objectives were to organize and reunite the Irish diaspora by creating a federation of institutions which would include both the sectors from the interior of the country and those from the capital. Eventually, they would be able to send delegates to Paris, to participate in the conference that was being organized to express support to the republican cause and, of course, to enable a bonus with the intention of collecting enough money to support the clandestine government[14].This bonus is an important matter because it was already common knowledge that at least a large sector of Irish immigrants had managed to become wealthy. When Casement visited the country, he gave an accurate description of the situation: "There are many more Irishmen here, and most of them really quite rich. They are, by far, the most successful out of all the immigrants in this wonderful country"[15].

On 29 November 1921, Ginnell succeeded in celebrating the first Congress of the Irish race in Buenos Aires. Over fifty organizations sent their representatives, and they founded a

[11] Dr. Hipólito Yrigoyen was president of Argentina on two occasions, from 1916 to 1922 and from 1928 until a military coup in 1930. He came to power, after the first national elections with universal male vote, through the party called Unión Cívica Radical, representing the interests of the middle class.

[12] Patrick J. Little arrived in Argentina in 1921, succeeding Ginnell.

[13] The reference to the Basque origin of President Yrigoyen has to do with the consideration of that people as friends and possible allies. To see more about this relationship between Basques and Irish people, see Cruset 2015b.

[14] According to Murray (2004), the bonus was expected to raise £ 500,000 but only raised £ 10,000.

[15] The original in Spanish reads: "Hay muchos más irlandeses aquí & la mayoría de ellos realmente muy ricos. Son, lejos, los más exitosos de todos los inmigrantes en este maravilloso país" (Mitchell 2012, 114). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

new Federation. At the meeting, the delegates who would attend the Congress in Paris were selected as well. However, despite this achievement and the delegation's popularity, the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 and its consequences brought bitter divisions not only on the island but also in Argentina. While Ginnel and his group stood against the treaty, the community expressed itself in favour of it. As a result, the whole situation became unattainable for the former who were forced to close the delegation and leave the country. According to Ginnell's widow's memoirs, few people gave them a farewell at the harbour and during the journey "the people on board seem to be boycotting us. Not one of them spoke to us. We were asked if we would mind having some people at our table and said 'no', but the people never came" (BMH, "Mrs. A. Ginnell. Diary of her own and her late husband's national activities, 1874-1923", File No. S2302, 58)[16].

The creation of a network of diplomatic connections in the Southern Cone that had once been conveyed, turned out to be weak and attained little success. Little wrote to Brennan:

> The Irish are very few in point of number outside the Argentine, and scattered. Unless you have a fairly large Irish Community it is waste of time and money to travel enormous distances to produce little or no result. I have remained all the time in Buenos Aires because this is the centre for the Irish for the whole of South America. All the other Republics can be best worked from here. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 216 (4), No. 120)

The only two exceptions were Chile and Uruguay. The former, in particular, displayed an important propaganda activity conducted by Frank Egan. For this reason, in the following sections I will concentrate on these two countries.

3. Irish Nationalism in Chile

Contrary to the case of Argentina, Chile had not received waves of mass migration. During mid and late twentieth century, a group of Englishmen arrived in the country and occupied mid-level management positions in the already settled British companies which were predominantly focused on mining and trade. It was not unusual to find some Irish immigrants among them.

There were already a few Irishmen in Chile during the colonial period. These settlers had firstly spent some time in Spain, as merchants, priests, students or soldiers[17]. In this latter case, they had enrolled in the Spanish Army and, later on, they had been relocated to the overseas Spanish dominions. As trained Catholics and enemies of the English, they were prone to act as mercenaries under the Crown. Thanks to the fact that those immigrants occupied different positions in the colonial administration, they were able to climb up the social and economic ladder. One paradigmatic case was that of the O'Higgins family: Ambrosio was firstly appointed Governor of Chile and then, due to his successful work, he turned to be Viceroy of Peru. Similarly, his son Bernardo was a hero of the Chilean independence and considered the "Father of the Nation"[18].

[16] For a better understanding of the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations, their impact on the Argentine diaspora and the Irish delegation position, see Cruset 2019. To analyse this circumstance both in particular and in its broader context, see Keogh 2016.

[17] To learn more about the Irish in the Spanish armies see Recio Morales (2004).

[18] Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842) was a prominent military man who had an outstanding role in the independence process of Chile. Together with General José de San Martín, they expelled the royalists from the country. Between 1817 and 1823 he was Supreme Director of the liberated nation.

However, it is not until the beginning of the twentieth century that an Irish nationalist movement was set up or, at least, greater awareness in the matter was built. One of the main promoters of this switch is Frank Egan. Frank's father is Patrick Egan, who deserves a special mention for his enrolment in several republican groups and for his ongoing political action both in his homeland and, as an immigrant, in the USA. Owing to his close involvement in the American domestic political arena, Egan was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister of the Government of the United States in Chile, between 1889 and 1893[19], having had an active participation in the American Civil War in 1891, as the historian Augusto Iglesias clearly points out:

On the same day as the *Lo Cañas* events – August 20th – the Revolutionary Army disembarked in *Concón*, in number of 10,000 men. The American Ambassador, Mr. Egan, informs Balmaceda of the arrival of the expeditionary forces seen by the American vessels and of the estimations they made about the number and the capacity of the transports in which they were coming. (Iglesias 1960, 170)[20]

In 1892, there was an incident in Valparaiso harbour, during which some marines of the American ship "Baltimore" lost their lives. Since a group of Chilean people was involved in the conflict, Mr. Egan made a series of complaints about it, a decision that led the tension of the bilateral relation to its extremes. Although the imminent war could finally be avoided, Mr. Egan was declared *persona non grata* by the Chilean government. Eventually, the whole situation turned favourable to Mr. Egan who received a compensation by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1893). All this information is shown in the annual reports that the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to the National Congress in compliance with the National Constitution of 1833, which in section 88 stated that the Ministers had to inform the Congress all that was related to their Department affairs[21].

Patrick Egan had nine children that reached adulthood, among them Frank and Bryan who remained in Chile once he left both his duties and the country. On 30 September 1919, Patrick died in New York; at 78 and was buried in St. Raymond cemetery on 3 October. Described as a retired lawyer in the death certificate, Patrick is now remembered as a conspicuous character who represented the United States' interests and was determined to take part in the Chilean political domestic arena (New York Municipal Archives, Death files, Manhattan, New York, United States, microfilm 1,322,453).

As in Bulfin's case, the nationalist commitment also passed on from father to sons in the Egan family. Francisco Guillermo Egan was married to the Chilean Amelia Rojas. In the registers he appears as American or Irish and with an employment in mining (but not as one of those who actually work in the mines, mostly as someone involved in the business). His Irish brother, Brian (*sic*) Egan (Patrick and Alicia María Mc Gee's son) firstly got married to Elvira Mendeville Alessandri in 1890, and once he became a widower, to Elvira's sister, Amelia Mendeville Alessandri. The Mendeville family belonged to the Santiago de Chile's elite (Chilean Civil Registration Office, Marriages files, Santiago, No. 81, p. 16; Santiago, No. 69, p. 54), a fact that is confirmed by the marriage between Carlos Mendeville and Elvira, president Arturo Alessandri Palma's aunt. President Alessandri Palma was one of the most influential politicians in

[19] He was put in office on 30 March 1889, presented his credentials on 9 August of that year and ceased his functions on 4 July 1893 (<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/egan-patrick>, 03/2021).

[20] The original in Spanish reads: "El mismo día de los sucesos de Lo Cañas – el 20 de agosto –, desembarcó en Concón, en número de diez mil hombres, el Ejército Revolucionario. El Embajador americano, Mr. Egan, informa a Balmaceda del arribo de las fuerzas expedicionarias avistadas por los buques americanos y del cálculo que hicieran sobre el número y la capacidad de los transportes en que vienen" (Iglesias 1960, 170).

[21] This Constitution modifies that of 1828. It is presidential and conservative and gives more power to the president taking it away from the congress.

the twentieth century. These powerful relationships provide us with a clear idea of the Egan family profile: immigrants that arrived in the country with some fortune but expanded significantly, a process that was only possible by the creation of a wide network of local political contacts.

For this reason, Frank W. Egan was designated as "our honorary Representative in Santiago" by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, due to his personal qualities, his connections, and the work that he had been doing until then in favour of the cause – more potential than real, though – all of which was highly praised in Dublin. The designation has to be understood as part of the general and broader policy of support to the nationalist cause that was being fostered from Dublin and implemented through the diasporas' informal work. Egan intended to organise an association of Irish migrants and, at the same time, to influence Chilean internal politics, as it is shown in the excerpt below:

> Mr. Egan hopes to get forward a declaration from this assembly [Chilean congress], and, with this end in view is working with several of the new deputies. Plans are being laid for the formation of an Irish Association and Mr. Egan hopes for great success, judging from the results of his appeal to all Irishmen to join the organization known as the 'Irish Colony of Chile'. In a report recently received from a gentleman in Santiago, genuinely sympathetic towards the Irish Cause, and a close friend of the new President, the writer states that the latter is in sympathy with the Irish Cause and adds: 'The great point is that recognition (of the Irish Republic) by Chile would inevitably bring recognition by the Argentine and possibly Brazil as well in addition to acting as an incentive to the United States to take the step over which they appear to be hesitating'. (NAI DE 4/4/2, No. 104)

Similarly to what happened in Argentina, the distance and the little knowledge about Ireland was supplied with special reports which were intended to provide an overview of the general context and the possible courses of action. The most complete report is the one written by Mr. Simpson in October 1921. The document stands for the detailed account of the country situation and the prospect actions that could be taken, but, curiously, it does not make any reference to Egan. This is a very interesting dossier since it sheds light on the great difficulty for many workers who were Irishmen had to express their ideas freely, due to the presence of the British capitals in the country. According to Mr. Simpson, these were the strong points that could help to tilt the balance in favour of Ireland:

> Favouring Irish Cause.
>
> 1. Several of the chief leaders in Chile's struggle for independence – O'Higgins, McKenna, Lynch - were Irish.
>
> 2. Public opinion is usually on the side of the weaker party in an exterior struggle. Chile has been pro-Boer, pro-Japanese and pro-German.
>
> 3. Public men are friendly. So is labour, Irish priests, nuns, and teachers are very keen, and religious generally, who have much influence, are friendly. There is no specific hostility to Ireland in any quarter. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 16, No. 110)

For propaganda purposes, it was extremely useful to associate the image of the national heroes of the Chilean independence with those who fought for the Irish freedom. The fact that the Irish contributed to the independence of their new land, up to the point of risking their own lives, was more than well received in the Andean country and, at the same, helped to create gratitude and sympathy towards the Irish cause. Simpson also highlights the tendency of the Chilean public opinion to back the weakest causes, an aspect that deserves some attention. In addition, religion is another point that both countries have in common: The Catholic Church beliefs were in alignment with those of the island. This is an interesting feature to be analysed because it is usually used as an influential variable in those countries where the church has enormous power, as in Argentina, Chile and Spain. Finally, Simpson makes a shrewd observation about the press and its ideological orientation. He refers to *El Mercurio* as pro-British, to *El Ilustrado* as conservative and an organ of the Catholic Church, and to *La Nación* as favourable to the cause.

As regards the nationalist propaganda work displayed in the country, Alice Ginnell's memoirs, whom I have already referred to, are also a valuable source of information. In those documents, she mentions a special request that was made to her and her husband from Ireland to visit Chile and Peru, to which they agreed despite their desire to return home. That tour, particularly the one made to Chile, would be financed by Egan and would take place in April or May 1922. However, the political conflicts already described prevented them from making the trip, although for Gavan Duffy[22] it was of utmost importance. It is for this reason that Eamon Bulfin was asked to set off on the journey by himself.

From Patrick Little's Memoirs, who was an outstanding politician, it is also possible to extract important data. In fact, much of this information is similar to the one provided by Alice Ginnell's memoirs, what seems to corroborate them. Little has the same positive opinion about Egan, but there are some additional details about his militant past actions: "In Chile, there was a very reliable man, named Egan, who had been deeply involved in the land agitation in Ireland, many years before, and who had emigrated to Chile" (BMH, "Patrick J. Little. National Activities, 1904-1922", File No. S. 96, 104)[23]. He also adds that, owing to Ginnell's health problems and his anti-treaty position that forced him to come back abruptly to Ireland, the trip to Chile was suspended.

On the other hand, almost simultaneously, Chile opened a consulate in Dublin. On 3 April 1924, the government of Santiago accepts William Kelly's resignation as Honorary Consul, being replaced by Ambrose Aliaga Kelly . This position was neither necessarily filled by a citizen of the sending country nor was it meant to formally represent the state. Thus, the selection was made on account of the candidate's personal qualities.

The Honorary Consuls' duties were mainly notarial ones, although subjected to the express mandate they received. Generally speaking, they did not receive a salary or any money to cover the offices' maintenance expenses. It is clear that Chile was much more concerned about its relationship with London than about the island itself, an attitude that seemed to be totally understandable. On 7 June 1936, the Consul that was located in Belfast, Bernardo Blejer, was transferred to Dublin. He was a career diplomat, who had already served in other European destinations. It is necessary to bear in mind that in 1937, Ireland was given a new constitution, by which the Irish Free State was dissolved and, unilaterally, the country decided to separate itself from the Commonwealth. This radical change explains why the consulate was relocated and also why Chile showed a change of behaviour.

As it was already mentioned, it was necessary for Chile to have a good political and economic relationship with England. For this reason, Agustin Edwards, a remarkable politician, was chosen as Ambassador in 1911. More than a decade later, in 1924, Edwards left his position to go back to his homeland, after 13 years of service. In the speech Edwards gave during the farewell banquet, he made an account of his work and emphasized the notable changes occurred in the empire, which, from his viewpoint, were of a considerable importance and quite incredible:

> I have seen constitutional reforms so profound as the House of Lords' political power disappearance, the creation of a Parliament in the Free State of Ireland, political reforms so radical such as the women suffrage, economic setbacks so significant as those provoked by the war and its aftermath, and, at last, shaken by the tragic convulsions of a fight for the existence itself, to the whole empire that rests on the Great Britain security. (Historical Archive, Uruguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Fund, Box 1004, year 1924)[24]

[22] Mr. Duffy was in charge of International Relations between January 1922 and July of that same year.

[23] In this text it is difficult to know if it refers to Patrick or Frank, because it could be either of the two.

[24] "He visto reformas constitucionales tan profundas como la desaparición del poder político de la Cámara Alta, la creación de un Parlamento en el Estado Libre de Irlanda, reformas políticas tan hondas como el sufragio femenino, trastornos económicos tan profundos como los producidos por la guerra y sus consecuencias y, por fin, sacudido por las convulsiones trágicas de una lucha por la existencia misma, a todo el Imperio que descansa en la seguridad de Gran Bretaña".

It is clear that Chile's real interest lay in England and not in the small island. In both countries, that is, Argentina and Chile, the sympathy that one might have towards the republican cause had been kept in the private sphere, without interfering with the higher interests of the state. Nevertheless, this circumstance does not diminish the constant and arduous work so many men and women carried out in search of an independent Ireland.

4. Uruguay and Ireland: The Bilateral Relationship between Small States

Since the creation of the Spanish Viceroyalty of the Río de La Plata in 1776, Argentina and Uruguay's destinies became intimately linked. Even after both countries obtained their independences from Spain, in 1816 the former and in 1825 the latter, the crossing of people, livestock and capital between the two was a reality, owing to a rather permeable border.

It is in this context that the first Irish immigrants settled in the *Banda Oriental del Uruguay*. The newcomers turned out to be some of the soldiers who once were taken as prisoners after the failing English invasions (Murray 2006) but, later on, decided to remain in the region and married to locals.

Since its independence, Uruguay was well aware of its inferior position in relation to the other two greater neighbouring countries, Argentina and Brazil, which had been fighting over their sovereignty since the eighteenth century (Cruset 2012). For this reason, Uruguay's priority in foreign affairs relied on three aspects: to achieve international recognition, to attract capital and, more urgently, to welcome immigrants.

Uruguay's main goal was a foreseeable one: to get Great Britain's recognition. At the time, Great Britain was one of the strongest world powers so, it was vital to receive its official approval. With this idea in mind, General O' Brien established diplomatic contacts, but it would be Edward Neill who carried out a more sustainable and successful work in this respect. In fact, he steadily set up consulates all around Ireland, as shown in the following chart. Unfortunately, there are no files on record of the oldest consuls; this is all the information available to us concerning diplomatic personnel in Ireland.

Country	City	Surname	First Name	Title	Appointment Date	End Term Date
United Kingdom	Cork	O´Neill	Gregorio	Consul	21/5/1856	
United Kingdom	Dublin	Mahony	Diego	Consul	29/11/1859	
United Kingdom	Dublin	Caldbeck	Guillermo Francisco	Consul	17/3/1860	
United Kingdom	Cork	Foley	Ricardo	Vice-consul	24/4/1878	
United Kingdom	Dublin	O'Connell	John Robert	Consul	29/4/1896	23/10/1925
Irish Free State	Dublin	Rooney	Patrick	Honorary Consul	30/7/1926	
Irish Free State	Dublin	Doyle	Charles Stanislaus	Vice-consul	19/1/1955	
Republic of Ireland	Dublin	Reynolds	Peadar	Honorary Consul	30/8/2000	
Republic of Ireland	Carrick on Shannon	De Bellis	Jessie	------------	16/1/2013	27/4/2015

Table 1 – Uruguayan Consuls in Ireland 1856-2015, data provided by the Historical Archive, Uruguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

As Ireland and Uruguay were two small countries able to identify with each other, after the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, Dublin began to establish connexions with Montevideo. It is thought that the fact that Uruguay was a member of the League of Nations could have been another strong reason for Ireland to reinforce its interest in that nation.

A curious booklet can be found at the Library of Congress, entitled: "Missive for the National Congress of the *República Oriental del Uruguay*, approved in session at the national congress (Dail Eireann) of the Republic of Ireland, held in January 1921" (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921). Its interest derives from its style, written in Peninsular Spanish, which is not used in the *Río de la Plata* region or in the American continent. The translation is very good and seems to have been produced by a native Spanish speaker. Its content explains the reasons for the communication by depicting the two nations as brothers with noble common goals:

> We, the elected representatives of the people of Ireland, recognize you, the elected representatives of the República Oriental del Uruguay, as our brothers in a joint effort to hasten the day in which all nations may live together in harmony, protected by justice; we have the honour of greeting you and communicating the following:
>
> 1. We are certain that the struggles of our people – the people of Ireland – against England's aggressions have not gone unnoticed by you. We hope to hold your regard and appreciate your respect and support [...]
>
> 5. The Irish people have steadily endured this wicked tyranny with all their strength. Nearly every generation has witnessed at least one armed uprising.
>
> 14. An orgy of murders and theft. There was no respect for sex (gender?), age, or profession. Octogenarians and small children, ill, maimed young men and mothers and wives, even the ministers anointed by God, all were killed without distinction – the head of the family before their very eyes, and the mother with her child held to her bosom on the cabin doorstep. (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921)

Clearly, the goal was to be as graphic and dramatic as possible to earn the favour of Uruguayan congressmen and counteract what they believed to be the negative propaganda stemming from England. Hence, the emphasis on the fact that the violence perpetrated against the Irish people "is not the result of any provocation whatsoever" and that they hoped to be able "to make peace with England on a fair basis". Finally, the missive appealed to the claim that Uruguayan congressmen must not "remain indifferent before the conflict" (Communication for the National Congress of the Republic of Uruguay, January 1921).

Beyond this communication sent to the Uruguayan congress as an attempt to associate "between peers", the first efforts made by Ireland to establish informal diplomatic relations can be traced to the report P. J. Little sent to Robert Brennan from Buenos Aires, dated 4 December 1921 (received in Ireland on 7 January 1922). The document contained a detailed analysis of the countries in South America, their chances to support the Irish cause and information about whether the Irish diaspora had settled in each of them, as an asset to facilitate the cause. Regarding Uruguay, he wrote:

> Uruguay – which although so near the Argentine and so rich yet no Irish from there make any attempt to approach or get in touch with the Diplomatic Mission at B.A. – William Morgan – very rich Estanciero (rancher) is the only Uruguayan and his family was and is Argentine and very strong on National cause. He tells me there are a few Irish in Monte Video but timid and very dominated by the English. Generally Uruguay is very much under the English. Capital domination. Morgan came to B.A. for our meeting and he is a trustee for Loan. (NAI DFA ES Box 32 File 216 (4), No. 120).

He would recall as much in his memoirs: "We were in close touch with Uruguay, through Mr. Morgan" (BMH, "Patrick J. Little. National Activities, 1904-1922", File No. S. 96, 105). William Morgan would play a major role in organising the Convention of the Irish Race:

> First Convention of the Irish Race in the Argentine held in the Irish Girls' Home - about ninety delegates present, and, all things considered' might be said to be a success. Mr. William Morgan was Chairman. A Standing Committee for a new organization was appointed consisting of the trustees and Irish members of the Consultative Council [...] Mr William Morgan bought a 500 dollar bond. (MBH, "Mrs. A. Ginnell. Diary of her own and her late husband's national activities, 1874-1923", File No. S2302, 45)

Alice kept a very fond memory of Morgan's wife, thanks to the support and solidarity she showed when the Ginnell couple were forced to return to Ireland owing to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and its consequences – the ensuing civil war –:

> Mrs Morgan went to Uruguay to her son William. Before going away she wrote to Mother Rita not to take any money from L.G. – that she would settle with her on her return! Rev. Mother was told not to mind that. We saw her off and she said she was wondering if anyone would come and was delighted to see us; saying that all she had in the world was at our disposal. (Alice Ginnell's Memoirs, 52-53)

However, beyond Morgan and his wife's good will, it was evident that it would not be entirely feasible to amass greater support in Uruguay through the immigrants settled in that country. Therefore, a change of strategy was in need: since the Irish Free State had already put forth several proposals before the League of Nations, the main ambition would be now to get Uruguay's favourable vote. Uruguay had been a member of that organisation since 1 January 1920 and a non-permanent member of the Council from 1923 until 1926. The Irish Free State had become a member on 10 September 1923.

In fact, the Irish Free State had to settle two different issues through the new international institution: first, the announcement of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and thus, the corresponding acknowledgment of the Irish Free State as a nation state with the highest degree of sovereignty; second, its admission as a non-permanent member of the Council. As for the first issue, there was great concern that the treaty would not be interpreted as a domestic matter within Great Britain, as it would remove Ireland's ability to act on the international stage. For this reason, Uruguay was considered a country to establish relations with, so that it would side with the Irish and support the cause.

5. Conclusion

Even before it became a sovereign state, Ireland already had a very active foreign policy. It clearly understood the need for a favourable international public opinion in order to achieve its objectives against a rival as powerful as the British Empire. This explains why not only propaganda was so important in Ireland's strategy, but also informal networks to carry out diplomatic activities. These networks were basically located in countries considered friendly or like-minded – Spain, for instance – but, primarily, where the Irish diaspora community resided.

In the case of South America, Laurence Ginnell, a distinguished representative, was sent. He collaborated closely with the efforts already being conducted by Eamon Bulfin, hero of the Easter Rising and Argentine citizen by birth. To the underground republican government, which had scarce economic resources, it was clear that Argentina was the priority. There was a committed hard core of nationalists, along with a second and third line that sympathized with

the cause. Therefore, the plan was, firstly, to work in Argentina and, from there, to reach other nations where the immigrant groups were small or inexistent.

What the sources prove is the back-and-forth work, on both ends, of these "paradiplomatic" activities, as well as the differences regarding the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which will culminate in a civil war on the island that will be reflected on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. This demonstrates the transnational action of the diaspora. Despite people's best efforts to create cooperation networks in the region, the lack of enough migrant communities made the work extremely hard. The reality is that the strategies, the objectives as well as the agenda were defined from Dublin. That is the reason why those attempts failed once the civil war broke out on the island and the divisions were replicated in South America.

When the community leadership in Argentina sided with the pro-treaty wing, unlike the Irish delegation, this spelled the end for the relatively successful and hard work of Ginnell and colleagues. On the other hand, the English presence in the region remained very strong, so it was little what these countries could do to support the island, no matter how close they felt to it. Their degree of autonomy in foreign affairs was severely limited. Towards the end of WWII, the United Kingdom was no longer the main dominant power in the region. As a consequence, Ireland faced a new reality and its direct interest in the Southern Cone countries started to diminish. However, a relationship based on gratitude and friendship between the embassies of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay would remain untouched until the present, including the newly opened in Chile in 2019.

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Teaching Irish History to Irish-Argentine Children at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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Abstract:

The purpose of this work is to research on the teaching of Irish history to Irish children in Argentina between 1880 and 1922. It examines two Irish history textbooks – *Stories from Irish History: Told for Children* by Mrs. Stephen Gwynn (1904) and the Christian Brothers' *Irish History Reader* (1905) – published in Dublin and in use in two Irish-Argentine educational and religious centres, St. Paul's Passionist School (Capitán Sarmiento) and St. Patrick Catholic Association (Rosario). The special section of the Argentine Gaelic League on the community's Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, will allow us to analyse and study the educational, pedagogical, cultural and political links between Ireland and Argentina and their strong nationalist connections.

Keywords: Christian Brothers, Irish-Argentine Childhood, Irish History Textbooks, Irish in Argentina, Mary-Louise Gwynn

1. Introduction

> A nation's school books wield a great power: they find their way to the remotest districts, and to all classes of people; they are read by the young and they are listened to by the old, and the sentiments they express take deep root. (Christian Brothers, *Irish History Reader* [IHR] 1905, 310)

The teaching of Irish history to Irish-Argentine children at the turn of the twentieth century poses some questions about the way the Irish transmitted to their next generation – born in a new land – the history of Ireland through formal education at school in a Spanish-speaking country. One aspect to consider are the political and pedagogical ideas behind their decisions at a time when both Ireland and Argentina were nations searching to consolidate their identities. Another important aspect is the selection

of textbooks for their Irish schools which were only available in the River Plate through the few bookshops in Buenos Aires that imported English books for the elite and the English-speaking community. The criteria for this selection, the contents of the books and their country of origin must be taken into consideration. Did these books come from Ireland, from other Irish diasporic communities (the United States, Canada, Australia) or were they written in Argentina? Finally, on account of the period considered, we should attempt to establish if the teaching of Irish history in Argentina reflected the nationalist ideals that promoted the defence of a Gaelic identity and of Éire as an independent nation, as it was the case in Ireland at the time. A question of importance, when researching Irish textbooks in Argentina, is the great difficulty in having access to the books or even to the titles of the textbooks: some libraries were dismantled like the library of Colegio San Pablo (St. Paul's), at the Passionist school in Capitán Sarmiento, Province of Buenos Aires. There is no access to the books – if any left – at Holy Cross, the Passionist Church in Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Schools are reluctant to provide information as are private owners of Irish libraries. The library at Colegio San Patricio (Rosario) kindly offered a list of titles but the oldest books are kept apart and access is not possible. An important source of information is *The Southern Cross* (TSC), the newspaper of the Irish community in Argentina since 1875, whose advertisements for the bookstores in Buenos Aires list some titles on education and religion (see Keegan 2020). In his works on the Irish in Argentina Juan José Delaney (2017) gives the names of some books read at school, a good resource when building a corpus of titles of probable use.

In an attempt to make a first approach to the subject of the teaching of Irish history to children in Argentina we will examine two textbooks in use in two Irish schools in the first decades of the twentieth century. These books are *Stories from Irish History: Told for Children* by Mrs. Stephen Gwynn, published by Browne and Nolan for the national education system in 1904, and the Christian Brothers' *Irish History Reader* (IHR), published by M.H. Gill & Son in 1905, both in use for the education of primary pupils in Ireland at the time. In Argentina, Gwynn's book was in use at St. Paul's (Colegio San Pablo), the Passionist school in Capitán Sarmiento, Province of Buenos Aires at least in 1922. Another copy of Gwynn's book was found at the library of St. Patrick's School (Colegio San Patricio) in Rosario, Province of Santa Fe. This library also has a volume of the mentioned Christian Brothers' *Irish History Reader*. Although we are aware that we are working with a small corpus, we will try to answer some of the questions mentioned. It is important to bear in mind that the public for which these books were chosen was small (a group of children, mainly boys, attending Irish Catholic schools whose curriculum included this specific subject). The Irish community in Argentina was also small when compared to the Italian or Spanish communities. We will start by explaining the nationalist context of the Irish-Argentine community between 1880 and 1922 (the figure of William Bulfin, the role of the clergy and *The Southern Cross*). Then we will consider the question of teaching history in Ireland under the National Education System and the place of the Christian Brothers' textbooks in it. Finally, we will have a look at the Irish-Argentine schools where the books were in use and draw some possible conclusions.

2. Education and the Irish

Education has always been a matter of importance to the Irish in Ireland and in the diaspora. Formal education − both for sons and daughters − was considered a "pathway to success" (Fitzpatrick 1994, 489). At the end of the nineteenth century, in the light of the debate around an Irish identity and the writing of an Irish history, there was a major concern about how their children would be taught Ireland's past and culture, its struggles and glorious deeds.

In the English-speaking diasporic communities where the Irish settled[1] (the United States, Canada and Australia) the question of teaching Irish history to the children of the Irish immigrants had turned out to be as problematic as it was in Ireland. In the United States, the Irish Catholic communities of the 1850s encountered discrimination and struggled for decades with the local education boards to have some textbooks replaced in public schools. The Irish Catholic immigrants and their clergy wanted to prevent their children from being imposed what they considered a false narrative of Irish history with a Protestant and English perspective (Keljik 2014, 99; Keegan 2020, 6). The introduction of national education in Canada and Australia followed a process similar to that of Ireland's and it included the use of the same Irish textbooks produced for the Irish national schools, as "part of an emergent imperial rationale aimed at legitimizing British control and establishing a normalized imperial identity" among white settler subjects (Lougheed 2018, 10).

But the small Irish community that settled in Spanish-speaking Argentina around the 1840s faced different problems concerning the education of their descendants. As the pages of *The Southern Cross* – the community's Catholic newspaper – show, they had to decide whether they wanted their children to have an education in Spanish and according to the Argentine education system, which was a matter of special urgency from the 1880s on account of the new education laws. On the other hand, there was the question of their "Irishness"[2] and whether their children would have an Irish education in Argentina.

3. The Irish in Argentina

The Irish arriving in Argentina during the mid-nineteenth century settled mainly in the northern and western areas of the Province of Buenos Aires. Many immigrants worked in the wool industry. Father Anthony Fahy, greatly concerned with their faith and prosperity, was a major influence in shaping the growing community. He arrived in Argentina in 1844 and soon saw to the education in Ireland of twelve Irish chaplains that were sent to attend religious needs of the Irish immigrants in Buenos Aires. In 1856 he had the Sisters of Mercy take over the Irish Hospital and open a convent and two girls' schools in Buenos Aires (the first Mercy settlement in South America) (Ussher 1951). The Irish priests and nuns were to exert a great influence on the community.

By the end of the nineteenth century the Irish in Argentina were consolidated (a good part of them were prosperous), searching for their new identity and climbing social positions. They had established several churches and schools. In 1875 they had their own newspaper,

[1] Of Greek origin, the word diaspora has acquired different meanings. In general it refers to the mass dispersion of a population from its indigenous territories and in particular to the dispersion of the Jews (*Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*). It may also name any deterritorialized nation. The concept became more flexible when adopted by different disciplines. Cruset points out the complex problem of hybrid identities and split loyalties (2015, 48). The Irish communities which settled in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina mainly during the nineteenth century are often referred to as the "Irish diaspora" or "the diasporic communities".

[2] Irishness is defined as "the fact or quality of being Irish" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). It is a dynamic concept, hard to define for its changing nature. What makes somebody Irish? For nineteenth-century emigrants living in the Irish communities around the world this meant building a new identity in a new land while keeping features of Irish culture and transmitting them to their children (now Irish-Americans, Irish-Australians, Irish-Canadians, Irish-Argentines) at home, at church and at school. It implied "a lengthy process", the process of becoming somebody different, as Edmundo Murray explains in his book, precisely called *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina, 1844-1912*: "The emigrants from Ireland who became English and then became Argentines, eventually became Irish. At the present time they celebrate St.Patrick's Day conspicuously, drink beer, decorate their houses with shamrocks, and prefer tea and scones to the traditional mate with bizcochitos […]" (2006, 6).

The Southern Cross, founded by Canon Patrick Joseph Dillon, which had a Catholic and Irish perspective. At the time, Argentina was consolidating as a nation, receiving large numbers of European immigrants and undergoing important demographic and social transformations which required new laws. The 1880s and 1890s were the decades in which a new social discourse and new policies on childhood were produced in the country. Education meant not only instruction but also inserting the child into a new system. As in many other countries, the child was considered a future citizen that needed to be educated under the law. Children of poor immigrants were under scrutiny, considered not only at risk but also potentially risky for society (Frigerio 2008, 5; Keegan 2020, 8). In the 1870s and 1880s lay education was spreading in Europe. *The Southern Cross* reflected its worries about what they called "Godless education". In 1884 *Ley 1420*, the law for free, lay and obligatory education for children from six to fourteen years old, was passed in Argentina amid intense debates between liberals and Catholics in Parliament and during the Congress of Pedagogues (1882), closely followed by the Irish-Argentine newspaper. The law had a great and long-standing impact on society and in the shaping of an Argentine identity. The policy carried out in Argentina from 1880 to 1910 was intended to prevent social disintegration vis à vis massive immigration mainly from Italy and Spain. As the First Centenary of the Argentine Revolution (1910) approached, the debates about nationality and a national education increased. The new national law enforced the teaching of Argentine history and geography and of Spanish as a "national language", making instruction uniform for all pupils, especially the children of the large number of arriving immigrants (Keegan 2020, 9).

At the turn of the twentieth century, William Bulfin, writer, journalist, editor and later owner of *The Southern Cross*, expresses in the paper his belief that encouraging Irish-Argentine children − boys and girls alike − to learn the Spanish language and the history and geography of their birthland as well as the history of Ireland and the Gaelic language will only produce better human beings and better citizens (TSC, 4 January 1901).

4. Irish History for Irish-Argentine Children

The teaching of Irish history to Irish-Argentine children is a matter that has hardly been dealt with in Argentina and involves aspects of identity, memory and education. Textbooks are valuable instruments that shed light on the political as well as pedagogic function of education at a certain period. What kind of books were available for Irish readers (adults and children) in Spanish-speaking Argentina around 1880? There was a significant import of books and periodicals in the English language to the River Plate during the nineteenth century. Half a dozen bookshops advertised weekly their imported books (all in English) on *The Southern Cross* since its first number in 1875. The number of bookstores increased around 1900 along with a market for consuming goods. The titles included periodicals, religious books, novels, history books, poetry and song books, and several texts for the religious and formal instruction of children. On the list we find readers, spelling books, grammars, geographies, arithmetic books (among them, the Christian Brothers Series, the Young Catholic readers, Colville's Readers, McCullock's, *The British Reading Book*, Mavor's *Spelling Book*, Carpenter's, Sullivan's, Connon's, Fenning's, Markham's, the *Victoria Spelling Book*, the *British Spelling Book*, Plunkett's Catechism, etc.) (Keegan 2020, 15).

It is evident from this source that the Christian Brothers' Readers were imported to Argentina at least from 1875 but it is most likely they had been available before, probably through Father Fahy's and the chaplains' advice. At the time, the Congregation of the Christian Brothers had not yet settled in Argentina. They opened their school, Colegio Cardenal Newman, much

later, in 1948. But as the advertisements show, their instruction books were available in the country. In fact, the Brothers' books were exported from Ireland to their schools in the Irish diaspora around the world (the United States and Australia in particular) through the growing market of English books that accompanied the expansion of the British Empire during the nineteenth century (Molloy 2010; Barr, Carey 2015). There was an important flow of English goods to the River Plate during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Edmundo Murray describes Argentina as "an informal colony of the British Empire in which everything, except probably meat and hide, came from the British Isles" (2006, 6).

The list from *The Southern Cross* also included juvenile books and novels by popular authors (Jules Verne, Louise M. Alcott, Maria Edgeworth, Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Walter Scott, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, Thomas Mayne Reid and Fenimore Cooper). Interestingly, a magazine of nationalist orientation for the young was also on sale: "*Young Ireland*, an Irish magazine of entertainment and instruction" – as the title read –, which included poems, stories, selected chapters from books, and most importantly, texts on Irish history. *Young Ireland* was "issued by [the newspaper] *The Nation* to provide an Irish alternative to children's literature produced in London" (Keegan 2020, 11). We cannot state the number of copies that were actually sold but we can assure that this type of material, written by nationalists with the purpose of developing in the young readers an interest in Irish history and culture, was available in the River Plate around 1880.

On his book on the language and the literature of the Irish-Argentine, Juan José Delaney lists some titles and authors that were at hand in libraries of the Passionists, in Capitán Sarmiento and in the Holy Cross Church and retreat (this now dismantled): books on theology and philosophy, lives of saints, books on poetry (Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Moore, William Wordsworth, Oliver Goldsmith) and Victorian novels (Brontë Sisters, William Thackeray and Charles Dickens), Irish authors (Sean O'Faolain, P.H. Pearse, Cormac Ó Gráda, etc.), books on folktales, dances, ballads, Edmund Curtis's *A History of Ireland*, and several more. He also mentions "Royal Readers" (Christian Brothers School Books) and Mary-Louisa Gwynn's *Stories from Irish History (for children)* (Delaney 2017, 35). The Royal Readers were produced in the United Kingdom to comply with the increasing demand for instructional books after the Elementary Education Act (1870) that established schooling of all children between the ages of 5 and 12 in England and Wales. In 1877, Nelson & Sons launched the "Royal Readers"and "Royal School" series (Harper Collins Publishers 2021). In contrast, the Christian Brothers Series were produced in Ireland for the Brothers' schools after the national school system was established in Ireland in 1831.They contained plenty of readings on Irish culture, Irish literature and Irish history, and were nationalist in their tone and approach. Delaney includes the "Royal Readers (Christian Brothers Schools Readers)" in a list of "texts commonly used in the Irish-Argentine educational institutions up to the beginning of the last [twentieth] century, a legacy that had much to do with the formation of more than one Irish-Porteño generation" (Delaney 2017, 35)[3].

Although research regarding the import of books in different languages to the River Plate during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been carried out in Argentina (Furlong 1944; de los Ángeles Serrano 1984; Costa 2009), none of them dealt with the particular market that provided textbooks for the use of Irish schools, especially those related to the teaching of Irish history (Keegan 2020). Delaney mentioned the topic in his work on the linguistical assimilation

[3] Inhabitants of the city of Buenos Aires are called "porteños" on account of the city port (puerto).

of the Irish-Argentine (2017). The texts in English were intended for the small English-speaking community in Argentina that included not only the Irish but also the English and the Scottish.

5. Bulfin and The Southern Cross

What was the social and historical context of the Irish in Argentina at the time when these textbooks were in use? William Bulfin (1863-1910) was a remarkable figure that spread his influence on the Irish-Argentine community during the turn of the twentieth century. He was an active Irish nationalist with important and numerous connections to Ireland's political and cultural scene and concerned with education. Born into a prosperous family from Birr, he was sent to Argentina (1884-1885) where he worked in the country, learning about the life of the gauchos and the Irish-Argentine of low and high classes, later developing a career as a writer and journalist and often drawing on his youth experiences. In Buenos Aires he wrote for *The Southern Cross* under director Michael Dineen. Bulfin later became the editor (1896-1910) and owner of *The Southern Cross*, improving its circulation and attracting more publicity. From its pages Bulfin helped consolidate the links between Ireland and the Irish in Argentina spreading ideas about nationalism, the Gaelic League and Gaelic sports. He also devoted plenty of space to Catholic matters and the community's religious activities, reflecting the growth of the Passionist and Pallottine orders in Argentina. Many priests, namely Fr. Edmund Flannery and John Morgan Seehy, were, like Bulfin, strong nationalists (Keogh 2016, 75).

In Buenos Aires, William Bulfin married Irish Annie O'Rourke, who came from a strong Irish nationalist family. They had a son, Eamon, and five girls (Mary, Anita, Aileen and Cathleen ("Kid"), who later married Seán MacBride). The first two children were born in Argentina. Finding the city not healthy for young children and concerned about their education, they decided that Annie would move to Ireland and Bulfin would continue working in *The Southern Cross* in Buenos Aires for some time. He travelled back and forth. In this way, Bulfin was in close contact with Ireland's political and cultural activity.

A strong defender of Irish language and culture, in 1899 he founded the Gaelic League Branch in Argentina, whose activities were held in different towns of the Province of Buenos Aires and announced and reported on the pages of *The Southern Cross*. Priests were also involved in the progress of the Gaelic League. Santiago M. Ussher, an important member of the Irish Catholic Association, who in 1932 presided the delegation that attended the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, was also president of the League on many occasions. His works on the life of Fr. Fahy, and the history of the Irish chaplains and the Sisters of Mercy in Argentina have preserved an important part of the community's past (97). Fr. Richard Gearty was also a prominent nationalist and a member of the Gaelic League. He arrived in 1895 and worked for some time with Fr. John M. Seehy in Rosario (*ibidem*). Fr. Samuel O'Reilly (1840-1917), chaplain at Chivilcoy, was also a strong nationalist (98).

Bulfin considered physical activity an important part of a child's education and was a keen promoter of hurling and Irish games in Argentina along with many of the Passionist and Pallottine priests. The priests introduced the Irish games in the Irish Catholic schools. The Irish Catholic Association presided by Fr. Flannery gave Bulfin permission to use their fields for hurling matches on non-working days. *The Southern Cross* gave considerable space to the activities of the G.A.A., the Gaelic Athletic Association (101). Through its pages, the readers could learn the basics of the games. The first Gaelic football club was founded in the town of Lobos (Province of Buenos Aires) in 1892. Bulfin also helped found the Buenos Aires Hurling Club (*ibidem*).

Under William Bulfin's direction, *The Southern Cross* shifted the focus towards the situation in Ireland and the Gaelic League. The paper devoted its second page to the League. This especial section included poems, debated translations, articles and scholarly pieces on the Irish language as well as updated information on the teaching of Gaelic in the growing diasporic communities around the world. Through constant comments and editorials Bulfin never lost a chance to make the Irish aware of the importance of teaching the younger generations the history and language of their ancestors (Keegan 2020). The paper's former editor, Michael Dineen, a native speaker, had promoted and encouraged the use of Irish in the newspaper. Nationalist Patrick McManus, founder of Fianna magazine, also gave his support to the cause of Irish Gaelic (Keogh 2016, 102).

The Gaelic League in Argentina was founded in 1899 presided by Eugene O' Curry's son John. For twenty years, it offered Gaelic lessons, awarded prizes to school students for their proficiency in Irish history, published its own paper (*Tír agus Tanga*), promoted annual festivals (*Oireachtas*) and collected money to support the Gaelic League in Ireland. Bulfin was in contact with many nationalist leaders (146). Douglas Hyde and other League leaders recognized the importance of Bulfin's work in the Argentine community. In 1902 he was elected delegate to Dublin's *Oireachtas* and was honour guest at a dinner presided by Eoin MacNeill where he met Pádraig Pearse. Bulfin and Pearse would exchange correspondence and become friends (104).

On the newspaper, Bulfin promoted prizes for Irish-Argentine students excelling in Irish history in Irish schools that taught the subject, and he encouraged other institutions, especially convent girls' schools, to follow the example and take a keen interest in the teaching of Irish history as well as Argentine history to Irish-Argentine children. The winners received an amount of money to buy books awarded by the League in Dublin (TSC, 4 January 1901). The Prize Committee was composed by Revd. L.E. MacDonnell, Santiago M. Ussher and the editor of the newspaper. The paper published letters from the different schools informing of their numbers of classes studying Irish history and urged parents to see to a matter that "has been too long neglected amongst us, and not only here but at home" (*ibidem*).

In *The Southern Cross* we find evidence of the concern of the teaching of Irish history as early as 1881. At the end of that year, *The Southern Cross* advertised the opening of Michael Dinnen's school, St Patrick's College in the town of San Pedro, Fr. Edmund Flannery's chaplaincy. Its curriculum offered the study of the history of Ireland as well as that of the Argentine Republic. Fr. Flannery had been proposed to supervise the religious instruction of the students (TSC, 23 December 1881) so he was in direct contact with them. On 29 September 1901, *The Southern Cross* published a letter from the Prefect of Studies at St Patrick's College, in the town of Mercedes (an Irish settlement), where Irish history was taught in two classes. After a blessing in Irish, he thanked Bulfin for the proposal to award prizes and stated: "This patriotic act will be a further incentive to the Irish-Argentine student, to bring him, more and more, into contact with the wise and the learned, the intrepid and the martyred sires of the Emerald isle" (TSC, 29 September 1901). The Sisters of Mercy also informed that four of their classes had Irish history so some girls also studied the subject.

The Bulfin children were educated in Ireland. When Pádraig Pearse opened St. Enda's in 1908, a school focused on the study of Irish and Irish culture, whose curriculum differed from the rest of Ireland's schools, the Bulfins immediately decided to enrol their son Eamon. Many renowned nationalists were sending their sons to St. Enda's. Eamon was the second on the school enrolment list. The first was Stephen and Mary Louise Gwynn's son, Denis. Denis and Eamon were schoolmates. The school magazine photographs show them acting in a school play attended by Bulfin, Gwynn and many other important nationalist leaders. This is a detail that

may let us think the Bulfins and the Gwynns were at least acquaintances sharing similar views on education and politics. It is possible that Bulfin, interested in education, may have got to know Mrs. Gwynn's Irish history book for children through the very author. Also, historian Mary Hayden, Mrs. Gwynn's close friend, was a lecturer at St. Enda's (Ferriter, 2009).

William Bulfin returned to Ireland in 1909 and died at home on 1 February 1910. He was 46 years old. His son Eamon (1892-1968) was part of "The Dogs" (a group of former pupils living at St. Enda's while studying at the university and close to Pádraig Pearse) and later participated in the Easter Rising. Although sentenced to death, he saved his life and was deported to Buenos Aires in 1919 on account of being an Argentine citizen (Keogh 2016, 203).

6. Teaching Irish History to Children

Narrating history to children is never an innocent or apolitical decision in that the narrator takes a position to establish a story that necessarily highlights some events and omits others, offering a vision that the child considers legitimized by the adult. The situation in colonized countries – as in the case of Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century – is particularly complex: the account of their history offered in schools to children reflects the point of view of the colonizing nation. Colonized countries feel compelled to narrate their story from their own understanding of events. This also accounts for the high percentage of historical fiction in Ireland, especially in children's literature (by the turn of the twentieth century a quarter of the total production for young readers was being devoted to historical fiction (these novels dealing with the Great Famine, the Independence war, emigration, the Troubles, etc.; Keenan 1996, 69; Whyte 2011).

Children are often seen as instruments to introduce changes in a colonized society and produce new social attitudes (Lougheed 2018). At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in Ireland, politics exercised a notable influence on pedagogy. As Lougheed remarks about the Irish national school readers, the books produced, published and circulated in Ireland for the national education system since 1831,

> [T]he Irish textbooks were designed to unify children of different religions in the classroom, shift knowledge of the Irish child and create a citizen of the Empire rather than an Irish citizen. In this way Ireland would be dissolved as a separate entity in the mind of the child and relocated as part of the imperial centre. (2018, 9)

These school readers were so deprived of Irish content that they were used for educational purposes in other outposts of the British Empire, including Canada and Australia (*ibidem*). The Empire appeared as a family and Ireland was the wayward child, ignorant of the language, the laws, the habits and the rules of life in society, who needed to be civilized by English education. "[T]he project of *regenerating* Ireland relied intimately on the project of educating the new *generations* of Irish children" (Condon 2000, 54). Educational reform was recommended to promote a definitive change in the habits and moral of the new generations. In contrast, the Christian Brothers' books, drawing on nationalist sources, offered children the idea that "there was in existence an Ireland with its own language, customs, laws, physical features and its own history". They intended to give children "the sense that they had a country of their own [Ireland] and a separate cultural identity different and apart from England" (55).

Considering children's literary culture in Ireland in the light of the imperialist and nationalist discourses around 1900, not only textbooks but also juvenile periodicals and fiction reflected the attempts to gain children – boys in particular – either to the Empire or to the nationalist cause (*ibidem*). Nationalists were highly concerned with publications from London that circulated

among the Irish youth which praised Empire heroes and conveyed "English values" (Congáil 2011, 37). In the last decades of the nineteenth century England had established Ireland as a new market for consumer goods, making the Irish children more exposed to English culture (Condon 2000, 56; Congáil 2011, 43). This included an important amount of literature for the young that was often of low quality and, most worrying for nationalists, highlighted the values of British culture and its "civilizing mission". Adventure novels in far Empire outposts and heroes saving "savages" for civilization made nationalists fear that Irish children would become "children of the Empire" through the influence of this low-quality literature, driving the next generation of Irish away from the cause of independence (Congáil 2011, 41).

7. A Textbook for Teaching Irish History to Irish-Argentine Children

At the turn of the twentieth century, education for the children of the Irish in Argentina developed in a small but growing number of schools, in a context of strong nationalism and admiration for the Gaelic language and Gaelic sports. The study of Irish history was highlighted in some institutions and encouraged by *The Southern Cross* and nationalist priests. In 1922 boys attending St. Paul's, the school of the Passionist Fathers in Capitán Sarmiento (north-east of the Province of Buenos Aires) were taught Irish history through the book *Stories from Irish History: Told for Children* by Mrs. Stephen Gwynn. Some 185 km away in the city of Rosario (Province of Santa Fe) on the Paraná River, St. Patrick's Catholic Association held a copy of Mrs. Gwynn's book as well as the Christian Brothers' *Irish History Reader* intended for the fourth and fifth standards in Ireland (ten to twelve-year-old boys). Both St. Paul's in Capitán Sarmiento and St. Patrick's in Rosario were centres of educational, religious and social activities for the Irish in Argentina. However small, this evidence shows that books for teaching Irish history to children and published in Ireland circulated at least in some schools and among the clergy in Argentina. As we will see, children had access to them and they were expected to use them as textbooks. We should remark on the nationalist perspective of the books.

Let us consider the Irish religious institutions where the mentioned books were found, St. Paul's (Capitán Sarmiento), and St. Patrick's and St. Patrick's Catholic Association (Rosario).

7.1 Capitán Sarmiento

Irish priests and nuns were respected and had influence on the community. The Passionist and the Pallottine fathers (St. Patrick Schools in Mercedes and in Buenos Aires) supported the nationalist cause.

The Congregation of the Passionist Fathers arrived in Argentina in 1884. Their members were from Ireland and the United States or were Irish-Argentine. They settled in Capitán Sarmiento, 150 km north of the city of Buenos Aires and were very active and close to the Irish in the area. Fr. Victor Carolan**,** who had helped William Bulfin and his brother Peter upon their arrival, spent fourteen years in Argentina until his death in 1898. He was responsible for transforming the original site of the Passionist church of St. Paul's in Capitán Sarmiento into a modern monastic complex (Keogh 2016, 94) through the generous donations of local Irish families to the congregation. In 1898 St. Paul's, a splendid neogothic chapel, was inaugurated. In January 1900 Fr. Juan María Macklin, dean of St. Paul's Seminary, founded St. Paul's School with the aim of educating the sons of the many Irish living in the area who lacked an educational institution. St. Paul's became an important spiritual and educational centre that congregated the Irish and their descendants. At St. Paul's School, Gwynn's Irish history book was in use in 1922.

At St. Paul's lessons were held in the old chapel of St. Patrick. From 1905, under Headmaster Fr. Guillermo Cushing, the school took in boarders. The school followed the official curriculum for the schools of the Province of Buenos Aires but classes were in English and in Spanish. In 1908 it had a total number of a hundred and seven students (day school and boarders). Most of the children would ride from the nearby estancias to attend classes. The school had sports areas and an artificial lake where children could enjoy a swim. The practice of hurling, the ancient Irish game, encouraged in Ireland by the G.A.A. (Gaelic Athletic Association), was specially promoted at Capitán Sarmiento. It is likely that the first games of hurling in Argentina might have taken place at St Paul's (Cruset 2015, 168). Irish nationalists believed Gaelic games for the youth served three purposes: introducing an Irish pastime among the young, developing a child's body and character, and building social bonds for future "virile citizens and soldiers of the Irish nation" (Hay 2015, 8). Under a nationalist perspective the practice of Gaelic sports was linked to the study of Irish culture (Irish language, Irish history, Irish music and dances). It was vital that children were introduced to Irish historical literature and tales of Irish heroes (Condon 2000, 58). In 1922 the Passionists opened an Apostolic School for students with a religious vocation. Many students from St. Paul's would later be part of the Apostolic College (Taurozzi 2006,100). In 1922, the year in which Mrs. Gwynn's book was in use, St. Paul's school headmaster was Fr. Anselmo Gaynor, a former student born in San Antonio de Areco in 1899 (103). The school closed in the 1960s due in part to the migration of Irish families to urban centres. In the same year of 1900 Fr. Bartolomé Maag founded "La Unión San Pablo" (St Paul's Union) with the purpose of preserving Irish traditions through social, religious and sporting activities. Members were to be Irish or Irish descendants (not necessarily) and over fifteen years old (104). The Passionist Fathers were responsible for the coordination of the activities in Capitán Sarmiento and in Carmen de Areco, they were their chaplains and spiritual guides (105).

The children of the Irish were often part of social, religious and political activities. In September 1920, St. Paul's Monastery in Capitán Sarmiento celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a large gathering where Irish and Argentine flags could be seen and A Soldier's Song, Ireland's new anthem, was sung. Fr. Fidelis Fowler blessed a Sinn Féin flag (Keogh 2006, 254). In 1921, during the Passionist celebrations in Capitán Sarmiento, children were addressed by Laurence Ginnell, appointed representative of the Irish Republic in Argentina and South America, visiting the Irish-Argentine on fundraising. Upon his arrival Ginnell was greeted by a "well trained Sinn Féin regiment" of young men with fake rifles (310-311). The tone of the Irish history books in use at the schools matches the general political and educational spirit of a large part of the clergy and the Irish during the first decades of the twentieth century in Argentina.

7.2 San Pedro and Rosario

By the end of 1900 only seven of the twelve Irish chaplains educated in Ireland and brought to Argentina by Fr. Fahy were alive: among them, Edmund Flannery in San Pedro and John M. Seehy in Rosario (Landaburu 2006, 130). Both chaplains were hardworking, active leaders and highly respected by the Irish. They were also strong nationalists (Keogh 2016, 95). Fr. Edmund Flannery, born in Cork, was ordained at All Hallows College, Dublin in 1868 and was soon working in Argentina as a chaplain for the Irish community of San Pedro and Santa Lucía and the surrounding areas in the north of the Province of Buenos Aires on the banks of the Paraná River. Under Father Flannery, the Irish in San Pedro and Santa Lucía built the beautiful church of St Patrick's (*ibidem*). In 1883, following the initiative of Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Mgr.

León Aneiros, Flannery helped found the Irish Catholic Association and presided over the institution between 1899 and 1902. The Association has played an important role in the Irish community since then in religious and education areas (74-75). Flannery was highly respected among the Irish and was a close friend of Father Fahy's as well as of William Bulfin's. He was in contact with Fr. John Seehy from the chaplaincy of Rosario, 150 kilometres away. In 1918 *Songs of the Gael in Tongue of the Gall* was published by Conor MacNessa in Buenos Aires. It was a book of Irish poetry in English written by Flannery with Celtic drawings on the cover. A volume of the book can be found at the library of St. Patrick's School in Rosario. Flannery died in Argentina in 1923 (95).

Fr. John Morgan Seehy, born in Tipperary, Ireland, settled in Argentina after his ordination in 1887 and was appointed chaplain of Santa Fe. Living in the city of Rosario, on the banks of the Paraná River, he was responsible for a vast area. In 1892 Fr. Seehy bought some land to build a church and a library and in 1902 he founded St. Patrick's Catholic Association, still in existence, with the aim of propagating Catholic faith and preserving Eire's traditions (75). During 1903 Seehy presided over the Irish Catholic Association (*ibidem*). Many years after, in 1969, the Association founded St. Patrick's School. Its library still holds some volumes that reflect Irish nationalism and the Gaelic League ideals: *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906) by Stephen Gwynn, *Songs of the Gael* (1918) by Fr. Edmund Flannery, *Ireland Among the Nations: or, The Faults and Virtues of the Irish Compared with those of Other Races* by James O'Leary in an edition of the Irish National Library, *Celtic Myths and Legends* (1911) by T.W. Rolleston, author involved in the Gaelic League, and *Songs of Ireland* by Michael Joseph Barry, a *Young Irelander*. A native Irish speaker, Seehy used to speak the language with some Irish from Venado Tuerto, an important Irish settlement founded by Eduardo Casey in the Province of Santa Fe in 1884 (Landaburu 2006, 210). Priests had large areas to attend but they were in contact and aware of the situation in the different Irish settlements. Fr. John Seehy died in Rosario in 1949 of an old age.

8. About the Author, Mary-Louise Gwynne

Mary-Louise Gwynne was the author of *Stories on Irish History Told for Children*, the book used at St. Paul's in Capitán Sarmiento. Although she came from a large and prestigious family, information about the life of Mary-Louise Gwynne (or Gwynn) is hard to find. The influence of the Gwynn's family on university life led to Trinity College Dublin (TCD) being dubbed "Gwynnity College" in the early 1900s and deserved an exhibition of the family papers in the Long Room in 2019 (TCD News 2019). A large number of male family members were involved in Trinity's life as high-ranking university officers, professors, scholars, fellows, soldiers, alumni. Moreover, many of the Gwynns were public figures for their achievements in politics, in military engagements and in exploration. However, the exhibition does not include Mary-Louise Gwynn in any of its sections. She is briefly mentioned as the wife and mother of other Gwynns. While it is true that the exhibition is focused mainly on the male members of the family since female acceptance to Trinity College Dublin was opened later, Mary-Louise's life seems to have been outshone by outstanding members of the family (e.g. her husband Stephen Gwynn and her sons Aubrey and Denis).

Mary-Louise Gwynne ("May"), born in 1865, was the second daughter of Reverend James Gwynne and Jane Osborne. At the time, his father was Incumbant of Octagon Chapel at Bath, England. In 1889 she married her first cousin Stephen Lucius Gwynn, an active nationalist and later member of Parliament. He was the son of Reverend John Gwynn (Regius Professor of

Divinity at Trinity College Dublin) and Lucy Josephine O'Brien (daughter of William Smith O'Brien, one of the leaders of the Young Ireland Rising in 1848, convicted to Van Dieman's Land). From 1889, Mary-Louise's married name became Gwynn (The Peerage). The couple had six children. Their second son, Revd. Aubrey O. Gwynn (1892-1983), became a Jesuit priest and a renowned historian. Their third son, Denis R. Gwynn (1893-1973), was professor of modern Irish history at University College Cork. Denis Gwynn is of particular interest to our research since he attended St. Enda's School from the opening year of 1908 along with William Bulfin's eldest son Eamon. It is most likely that the Gwynns and the Bulfins were acquaintances. Although she was the daughter of a Protestant minister, Mary converted to Catholicism in 1902 along with her six children who were educated under her faith. In 1904 her book *Stories on Irish History Told for Children* was published for the national education system. This seems to be the only book Gwynn wrote.

The year of the publication is particularly significant since, four years before (1900), Irish history had been introduced in the school curriculum. Irish language had been admitted earlier, first into the primary school as an optional subject (1879) and later into higher studies thanks to the efforts of its defenders throughout the nineteenth century, namely the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language and the Gaelic League. Irish history had been systematically ignored by the Education Boards (Doherty 1996, 328). Given the lack of Irish content in books for the national schools – with the exception of those of the Christian Brothers –, the inclusion of Irish history in the syllabus was seen as a great achievement by nationalists in a period where the writing of an Irish history was at the centre of a heated debate. Around 1900 the debate on the history of Ireland as an object of study and how it should be transmitted at schools produced numerous academic essays but also popular books on Irish history for adults as well as for children, much needed as textbooks for the new school subject. Nationalist historian Alice Stopford Green believed that the relegated position of Irish history in the national education syllabus imposed by the English was leading children to conclude that Ireland's past was "less important than the rules of English grammar" (*ibidem*). Moreover, the exclusion of Irish history affected teachers' training. The Education Board commissioners feared the knowledge of history could produce reactions to the situation in Ireland and thus sought to regulate the contents of books by close supervision and refused to produce their own textbooks (330). Commercial printers published authorized books, as in the case of Mrs. Gwynn's and the Christian Brothers'. In a context of rising nationalism and the struggle for new educational and professional opportunities, women turned to writing literature, often children's fiction, and history. Their "family support, education, relative affluence and intellectual circles of friends" contributed to the formation of successful female historians (Smith 2006, 1). Mary-Louise Gwynn conforms to the description.

As a nationalist and women's rights defender, Mary-Louise Gwynn's might have considered the publication of her book adequate and necessary to take a firm position on the issue of Irish children's education at the time. Her family was also particularly interested in history. Her sons Denis and Aubrey were to become historians and writers, and her husband was author of works on history and Ireland. Mary-Louise was a kind of a public figure herself: her circle of friends were women and men involved in the agitated intellectual and political Irish life. In 1915, Gwynn and her close friend, prestigious historian Mary Hayden, lecturer at St. Enda's and friend of P. Pearse, launched in Dublin the Irish Catholic Women Suffrage Association. According to Senia Pašeta, Gwynn and Hayden were "very well-known nationalists who had both been involved in a number of suffrage groups before 1915" (2016, 88). Mary-Louise Gwynn was the Honorary Secretary of the Association, which was non-party, non-militant.

She also contributed to "The Catholic Suffragist", an English journal (Murphy 1997, 554). Mary Teresa Hayden (1862-1942), deeply attached to the Gaelic League, was a historian and women's rights campaigner considered a more moderate nationalist. As advising examiner in history for the Education Board (1907-1912), Hayden, like Gwynn, was also involved in education matters related to history. She was professor of modern Irish history at University College Dublin and co-author with G.A. Moonan of *A Short History of the Irish People from the Earlier Times to 1920* (1921), a textbook considered the "most widely used survey of Irish history in Irish schools until the late 1960s" (Ferriter, 2009).

Presenting the book as written by "Mrs. Stephen Gwynn" and not by Mary Louise Gwynn probably did not please the author but it was common at a time when women were expected to marry and depend on their husbands. In this case, it may have well been a commercial strategy to highlight the name of a renowned public figure – Stephen Gwynn – whose surname (ironically, also her wife's) meant academic prestige and a strong nationalist position. Mary-Louise's husband's, Stephen Gwynn (1864-1950), was a public figure and an active nationalist. He worked as schoolteacher, writer and journalist. In 1904 he entered politics and held the office of Member of Parliament for Galway City between 1906 and 1918. He was a strong supporter of John Redmond and Home Rule. In 1915 – at the age of fifty – he decided to enlist (TCD News 2019). Stephen was a prolific writer, closely involved with the Irish Literary Society, the Irish literary revival and active in the Gaelic League. His works count numerous works of poetry, history, biography and literary criticism. The Library at St. Patrick's School in Rosario holds an illustrated volume of one of his books: *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906). Two decades later Stephen also wrote a textbook on Irish History: *The Student History of Ireland* published in 1925. It seems that, due to the nature of Stephen Gwynn's work, much of the family's early life was divided between London and Dublin, which must have given Mary-Louise a glimpse of both worlds when writing her book on Irish history. In the 1920s Stephen and Mary-Louise's marriage showed signs of collapse. Mary-Louise died in 1941. Stephen died in 1950.

9. The Volume of Stories on Irish History Told for Children *by Mary-Louise Gwynn*

The volume of Mrs. Gwynn's book[4] in our possession bears the name of the owner, a thirteen-year-old student, who signed it on the front page, adding "Colegio San Pablo, Capitán Sarmiento" and the date "27th March 1922" (most probably the beginning of the school year, which starts in March in Argentina). The boy's name and the place are repeated on four other pages (in ink and in pencil) in the book. Inside the cover we find the school's oval blue seal that confirms it was in use at St. Paul's: "Escuela San Pablo – Capitán Sarmiento. Bs.As – Padres Pasionistas". Then, on the first four pages we find another blue stamp, stating that the book belonged to the Passionist Fathers' library: "Biblioteca de los Misioneros Padres Pasionistas Argentina-Uruguay", this last seal carrying the Passionist emblem, a heart and a cross. According to the front page, the book was published in Ireland in 1905 ("MDCCCCV") by Browne and Nolan Limited, as a national school edition with a price of 7 pence. On page one we can read that the work was "Sanctioned by the Commissioners of National Education for use in National Schools". The same page also bears the complete title of the book: *Stories from Irish History: Told for Children by Mrs. Stephen Gwynn: With pictures by George Morrow and Arthur*

[4] I am very grateful to Professor Juan José Delaney for the access to the original copy of this book. I am also grateful to Julia Donelly, librarian at Colegio San Patricio (Rosario).

Donnelly, which remarks the fact that it was written and illustrated for a young audience for the teaching of Irish history in primary schools in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century.

According to the National Library of Ireland Catalogue the book was first published in 1904. However, the volumes in offer at the NLI are from years 1911, 1922 and 1945 (all from Browne and Nolan and "National School Edition[s]"; National Library of Ireland Catalogue). It appears that the book was used long after the Independence period into the Free State and the Republic. This may indicate that it complied with the standards and the ideological views of the Education Boards in Ireland after the end of the national education system in 1922, and at least until the end of the Second World War (1945 edition). From 1922 the Free State introduced major changes in the education system, establishing a new curriculum based on three main subjects: Irish language, Irish history, Irish geography, under the belief that the learning of the Irish language would facilitate the study of Irish history and geography, and with the aim of creating an Irish Catholic national identity (Doherty 1996; O'Callaghan 2011). This compliance with nationalist views may explain why Gwynn's book was accused of inciting to rebellion and "magnifying Ireland's rebels" in 1917 after the Easer Rising (Bureau of Military History BMH 1913-1921, 178-180).

We can establish that this book, published in 1904 with the purpose of teaching Irish history in Ireland to the primary pupils of Irish national schools, was used for the same pedagogical purpose in an Argentine Catholic school of the Irish community in 1922. This volume provides relevant data that allow us to link the activity of teaching Irish history to children in Ireland at a time when the island was debating its historical identity and vigorously seeking its independence from the British Empire, with the teaching of Irish history within the Irish community in Argentina, which was experiencing assimilation to Argentine culture and also debating on an Irish or Irish-Argentine education for their children and the question of their language (English/Irish/Spanish). The owner's writings on the book are most important in that they confirm the actual use of the book by students at St. Paul's (on pencil: "Queen Elizabeth 1558-1603", p. 88; "James I, 163-163" p. 92, which appears to be the reference to the pages of another book).

Another copy of Gwynn's book was found in an old library belonging to the Irish priests at St. Patrick's School in Rosario (Province of Santa Fe). As mentioned, Fr. John Seehy, one of Fr. Fahy's chaplains, founded St Patrick Catholic Association in 1902, which has now his office and library at St Patrick's School, founded by the Association in 1969. Although few of its students are Irish descendants, the school preserves the Irish traditions: lessons and activities on Irish dances, Irish music and literature and the promotion of Gaelic Football through the G.A.A. in Ireland, graduation tours to Ireland, etc. School celebrations are presided by the Argentine, the Irish and the school's flags. Students wear a grey and green uniform and a school badge with a shamrock and a cross, and on the third Saturday in May the "Day of the Irish Immigrant" is celebrated.

This copy of Gwynn's book was probably part of Father Seehy's collection. We have not been able to establish whether the textbook was used to teach children since the Irish school in Rosario was founded much later. But it may have been used at Sunday school meetings to teach children some aspects of Irish history and instil in them a feeling of pride and nationalism. On the other hand, providing adequate readings to the Irish immigrants had always been a concern among the clergy in Argentina. Circulating libraries were the work of Irish priests in the Province of Buenos Aires for the early community. Largo M. Leahy was also one of Fahy's original chaplains, arrived in Buenos Aires in the 1860s. His working area in the north of Buenos Aires was so vast that it had to be divided in two, Fr. Flannery working on the other part. Fr. Largo Leahy's work was immense, attending to the poor and the dying, creating

a school and "establishing circulating libraries in several chapels in his area" (Chacabuco, Salto, Rojas, etc.) (Landaburu 2006, 139). Therefore, books – valuable goods not always affordable for the immigrants – circulated among the Irish in different chaplaincies. In Landaburu's words, Fr. Largo Leahy was "a passionate nationalist" (*ibidem*) who organized social and sports activities and patriotic meetings.

The creation of an Irish library in Buenos Aires in 1875 was proudly announced in *The Southern Cross* in its first numbers by Canon Patrick Joseph Dillon (TSC January 1875) but he stated the idea had come from Revd. John Baptist Leahy, one of Fahy's original chaplains and brother of Fr. Largo M. Leahy. A writer in his native country, Fr. John Baptist Leahy had arrived in Argentina in 1869 to attend the needs of the growing number of Irish immigrants. Leahy proposed to open a library for the community at *The Southern Cross*'s office. As Irish chaplain, the trustees of the old British Library had given him the money of the sale of the institution with the purpose of founding a new library. Leahy had increased the money and he had used it to buy a stock of books through Fr. Pious Devine, one of the first Irish Passionists priests, arrived in Argentina from the United States in 1874. Leahy handed the stock to the new society hoping that "they would find the selection useful, entertaining and amusing" (TSC, 13 January 1875). Being himself a writer, the selection must have been adequate. The library, called the Irish Library and Reading-Room, was opened on 3 January 1875, and had temporary reading rooms at Corrientes 243 in the centre of the city of Buenos Aires. Some days later the newspaper comments on the importance of the opening "for our English population": "Few wants are more severely felt in town and camp than that of a good selection of books", assuring that "arrangements will be made or the circulation of books of the new library in all accessible quarters" (TSC, 21 January 1875). This shows that the priests were involved in the selection and purchase of books for the Irish. They were concerned that the community − the young in particular − would have "adequate" readings at hand (of moral and religious content), thus avoiding the growing danger of Protestant and freemasonry material, as many comments on the newspaper stated. We should bear in mind that "[f]rom the pulpit or on horseback, priests were always supervising and controlling readings" (Delaney 2017, 35). As an example:

> It is indeed high time for our clergy, to whom we look up as the guardians of public morals, to take special care that the thirst for knowledge and enlightenment […] should be satisfied with what is pure and unadulterated, and not stimulated by the pernicious or positively poisonous. Buenos Ayres, from its remote position may have suffered less than the great cities of Europe and North America from the deluge of cheap, loose literature that streams from the press in such profusion; and yet we see enough in the windows of some of our book-shops to justify our apprehension that materialism and positive obscenity are doing their work of pollution amongst us. (TSC, 21 January 1875)

It is possible that some decades later Gwynn's book and the Christian Brothers' *Irish History Reader* may well have been part of an Irish circulating library to give the community the chance to learn about Ireland's glorious past. It is not likely the priests had kept the books for themselves.

10. An Irish History Book For Children

Stories from Irish History: Told for Children by Mrs. Stephen Gwynn: With pictures by George Morrow and Arthur Donnelly comprises twenty-four chapters covering the history of Ireland from the ancient times to the Famine.

The book was published in Dublin in 1904 by Browne and Nolan, printers to the Commissioners of National Education. At the end it includes a three-page chart of the principal

historical dates for each chapter. Historical dates are not mentioned in the chapters, except in very few occasions (e.g.: "until 1782"; Gwynn 1904, 40), giving the narrative the oral flow of a familiar story or a folk tale closer to children's tastes. After the front page and the contents page we find a blessing in Irish. The lines are written in the old Gaelic script common until the mid-twentieth century. The translation would be[5]: "I pray, Lord, that you will put a blessing on the beginning of our book and on ourselves in Ireland, in Scotland and in far off places and bless each of us until the Day of Judgement" (vii).

The story advances clearly, at a good pace, in an intimate tone, making use of oral resources ("I must tell you, children […]", 1; "I told you how the kings […]", 7), giving the audience the impression that they are listening to a story in a circle by the fire. The narrator knows how to capture the reader's attention with an adequate narrative style. There are frequent appeals to the audience, specially using the vocative "children" ("You must remember that […]", "I must explain to you […]"; "I told you about how […]", 94). She also appeals to the children's memory not to forget the glories and sufferings of Ireland ("We must never forget […]", "You must read […]", *ibidem*). Mary-Louise Gwynn constructs an excellent narrator for her young audience. The descriptions are colourful and accurate (e.g.: Irish arms and armour on p. 24). We find some powerful, epic images ("In Waterford, Eva, the daughter of Dermot, was married to Strongbow, while the streets were red with the blood of her countrymen slain fighting against him", 20). She makes good use of suspense ("You shall see in the next story how the tide turned", 79). At the beginning of a new chapter she can steer the audience back to the story ("I told you about how O'Neill had retreated to the North", 94). This style is common not only in children's fiction but also in children's textbooks in Europe after the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the child is no longer seen as a 'small adult'. There is no mention of historical sources on Gwynn's book, even when the author seems to quote, using inverted comas (e.g.: about Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, 42). The portrait of characters is not exactly Manichean, what would have been expected of a book objected by the Unionists and there is no violence in the retelling ("The unlucky English troops […]", 34). The Irish people are presented as a "collective" character, they suffer misery, poverty, sickness, loss. They show love to their chiefs and sadness for the Flight of the Earls, the end of a Catholic Ireland and Brehon Laws (94). About to tell the story of Oliver Cromwell, she warns the young audience: "This chapter will be a very sad one for it will tell of how he brought ruin and misery to Ireland" (108). This aspect might have been more questionable for the objectors.

Paratext is of particular importance in books for children. The book cover depicts a wonderful drawing of an Irish warrior, concentrated on shooting an arrow (the artist's signature is illegible), a most attractive image for a child. Gwynn's book contains nine illustrations in black and white by renowned artists George Morrow and Arthur Donnelly. They represent important moments or figures in Irish history (among them St Patrick, Silken Thomas, Red Hugh, The Flight of the Earls, and Vinegar Hill). They attract children's attention and help build identity.

[5] I want to thank Professor Maureen Murphy for her generosity and translation of this text into English. I am also grateful to Fernando Killian for his translation from Gaelic into Spanish.

11. The Christian Brothers' Textbooks – The Irish History Reader *(1905)*

The Irish National School Readers, intended for use in the Irish national school system, were originally produced and published by the British administration in Dublin under the auspices of the Commissioners of National Education. These textbooks for the education of Irish children in Ireland since 1831 showed little "Irish" content and lacked information on Irish history. In contrast, the textbooks produced by the Christian Brothers for their schools "were thoroughly Irish in content" (Walsh 1986, 11).

The Christian Brothers soon joined the new national school system but after four years decided to leave, "feeling it was the 'lion's den' for Irish Catholic nationalists" (Condon 2000, 55). Their textbooks were famous for the bulk of knowledge contained in them and were "welcomed from many sources for their attention to Irish history" (Walsh 1986, 9). Their books reflected the nationalism of Grattan and O'Connell (12). As mentioned, the Brothers produced their own textbooks in which they tried to transmit the idea that Ireland existed as a nation − an entity separated from England – with its own language, laws and customs, and therefore, a separate cultural identity (Walsh 1986, 19; Condon 2000, 54). The Brothers' books included many selections from Irish orators, poets and essayists and had a different approach to Irish life and values. Passages of the Brothers' books were critical of the British rule in India and North America which "helped to create the feeling that injustices had occurred, that Ireland had been wronged by Britain" (Walsh 1986, 14). After the revision of textbooks in 1873, lessons of specific Irish interest were included in the syllabus and the Brothers started publishing Irish history books for pupils: *Outlines of Irish History* (1885) and the Irish History Reader (IHR) (1905). Although the Brothers' books had been questioned over their Irish historical narrative as early as 1825, these publications were much more nationalistic than the previous ones (Walsh 1986). For example, in the preface to the 1905 IHR the teachers are told that pupils "must be taught that Irishmen claiming the right to make their own laws, should never rest content until their native parliament is restored; and that Ireland looks to them, when grown to man's estate, to act the part of true men in furthering the sacred cause of nationhood" (ii). The book ends with an exhortation to readers: "Learn its [Ireland's] language, cultivate its music, cherish its traditions, use its products and promote its manufactures" (IHR 1905, 340). This advice could have been part of any of William Bulfin's editorials in *The Southern Cross*. Lorcan Walsh points out that it was not the overt nationalistic content of the books which was significant but the fact that it was the compilers' Irishness, their own knowledge of Irish life and culture which pervaded the texts. This was the major contrast to National Board books (Walsh 1986, 18). The books proclaimed that Ireland had a past and its own identity and that people had to fight to maintain these distinctions (19).

According to the preface, the Christian Brothers' IHR, published by M.H. Gill & Son in Dublin in 1905, was intended as an "extra Reader" for pupils of the fourth and fifth standards, e.g. ten to twelve-year-old boys (v). The book deals with centuries of Irish History, from the first inhabitants on the island to the Fenian movement, Parnell and Home Rule. It focused on "the chief events" in Irish history, "grouped for the most part around the names of great Irishmen". Its purpose was to "keep brightly flaming the torch of love of country kindled at the hearth of every Irish home" (IHR 1905, 15). But the tone, the style and the narrative are very different from Gwynn's book.

Along its 340 pages there are no illustrations, in the book or on the cover. There are no appeals to the young reader (no vocative "children"). The vocabulary, the length and complexity of the sentences suggests the book was intended for older readers or maybe for the instruction of

the teachers themselves, in urgent need to broaden their knowledge of the subject at the time. This seems the case with fragments regarding the importance of textbooks (310) and the latest changes in the national education system (311). But school books were often read at home by the family who on many occasions did not possess any other reading material. Thus, this may have been taken into account by the Brothers as a way of extending Irish culture to a wider audience. The same can be applied to the reading habits of the Irish in Argentina.

An older reader is also suggested by the number of quotes from academic work and authors (The Four Masters, Giraldus Cambrensis, Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland*, A. M. Sullivan, John Mitchel, etc.). Regarding their political approach, this reader is also much less ambiguous than Gwynn's as to its statements on the hard consequences of the British government on the island and in its explicit questioning of the views of the quoted English historians. Poems and literary fragments by nationalist writers − with a short notice on their life − are numerous (Thomas Davis, Gerald Griffin, John O'Hagan, *The Nation*, etc.). In all, the book holds an incredible amount of information for which the Brothers books were well-known. It is our opinion that this book must have been in the library in Rosario for the interest of adult readers as well as for the instruction of novices and priests, who may later have transmitted the story of Ireland to a younger audience. But the presence of this book in the library allows us to infer other titles of similar nationalist content. The Christian Brothers' *Irish Historical Reader* (1905) must have been chosen in Argentina precisely for its Irishness and nationalist approach.

12. Military Archives

Mrs. Gwynn's Irish history book for children was attacked by the unionists soon after the Easter Rising in 1916. According to the Military Archives of Ireland in the Bureau of Historical Military History (BMH) in the period following the Rebellion, there were many attacks from the Unionist side regarding the teaching of Irish history in national schools as anti-British. They accused schoolteachers of preaching sedition – and even the National Education Department, "held accountable for the mere fact of teaching Irish History" (BMH 1913-1921, 178-180). The National Commissioners strongly rejected the accusation.

The general belief was that, as the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, Dr. Mahaffey, considered, "[t]here has been throughout the national schools a propaganda of hatred to England on the part of the schoolmasters living on the salary of the Imperial government" and "the rising was largely inspired in the national schools" by the careful instilling of revolutionary principles (BMH 1913-1921, 180). Commenting on a text from the *Church of Ireland Gazette* (26 December 1916) the archives state: "In the course of a long dissertation a strong attack is made particularly on Mrs. Stephen Gwynn's *Stories from Irish History* and the Christian Brothers' *Irish History Readers*" (BMH 1913-1921, 179). Since both books were available and in use in (at least) two Irish schools in Argentina (St. Paul's, Capitán Sarmiento and St. Patrick's, Rosario), the mention seems particularly relevant to our study.

The *Gazette* complained about the "magnifying of Ireland's rebels – Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, Emmett and the Fenians" to the point of proposing to "eliminate Irish history books from the curriculum", arguing lack of time in the school hours and incapacity of the teachers (*ibidem*). The archives report that the discussion "of the effect of teaching Irish history was continuous in that period" (180). Certain school managers (from the Presbyterian and Church of Ireland denominations) had objected to some books which led to an order from the Board of Commissioners to revise all sanctioned books in search of "sentences likely to excite religious or political bitterness". If objected by even one member of the Board, books were

not allowed. At least two 'History Readers' were withdrawn having been found objectionable (*ibidem*). It is worth remarking that the books used in Argentina for the teaching of Irish history may be those attacked by the unionists for the 'seditious' Rising and objected to by the Education Board of Commissioners.

13. Conclusion

We have examined two textbooks for the teaching of Irish history to Irish children in a Spanish-speaking country that, however very distant from Ireland, was intimately connected to its fervent cultural scene and turbulent politics at the turn of the twentieth century. Both Ireland and Argentina were consolidating their identities, both reflecting on their history and on their language. William Bulfin's figure was central to this period in Argentina for his strong beliefs and close connections to Ireland, specially through the Gaelic League and its branch in Buenos Aires. *The Southern Cross* was a powerful instrument to spread the nationalist ideals, a task in which Bulfin was supported by a large part of the Catholic clergy and of the Irish Catholic Association. Long after Bulfin's death *The Southern Cross* intensified its nationalism during the Independence War (1919-1921) (Keogh 2016, 249).

The priests were respected and had influence on the community and supported the nationalist cause. Adequate reading material for the young was one of their main concerns. Holy Cross, the splendid Passionist church in the city of Buenos Aires, was the centre of nationalist activities and sermons against the atrocities of the war. The same happened in Capitán Sarmiento, place to the Passionist seminary and St Paul's school (254). Commenting on the religious celebrations of the Irish-Argentine communities in the "camp", Dermot Keogh (2016) remarks that the content of the songs, poems, representations and iconography was Irish, Catholic and nationalist (14). This was the atmosphere that surrounded the education of children at the Irish schools in Argentina in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century. Thus, it is not surprising that textbooks with a nationalist perspective were in use for teaching such a delicate subject to their heart as that of Irish history.

Our choice of the two books examined was based on our luck to find them and not on the fact that the books were precisely those attacked and blamed by the unionists for the "seditious" Rising and objected to by the Education Board of Commissioners. Still, the accusation against the books remains an interesting fact. Indeed, the books may have been chosen by the priests in Rosario and Capitán Sarmiento precisely for this reason.

It is our opinion that further research should be carried out and expanded in the significant libraries of the community, namely those in schools and religious institutions. This would contribute to a deeper knowledge of the life of the Irish in Argentina and to the needed preservation of their bibliographic heritage. Research would also shed light on the import of books in the English language to Argentina in the nineteenth century.

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"O My Pablo of Earthlife!" Heaney's Neruda and the Reality of the World

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Abstract:

Does Seamus Heaney reject Pablo Neruda? That is the view of John Dennison, who argues that Heaney could not give full consent to Neruda's "impure" poetry (Dennison 2015, 117). This essay seeks to challenge that interpretation. It does so by showing the poet's engagement with Neruda's "Towards an Impure Poetry" and contextualising the late poem, "To Pablo Neruda in Tamlaghtduff", not only in the framework of its host volume, *District and Circle*, but in Heaney's oeuvre. Tracing Heaney's interrogations of the ontological status of phenomena the world beyond the self as a constituent part of the inner state of the writer, I suggest that he recognises the value of Neruda's materialism earlier than he truly acts upon it. Selected poems illustrate the redevelopment of this materialism which culminates in the implacable naturalism of *District and Circle*. I also offer parallels between Heaney's and Neruda's understanding of death, similarities that provide further grounds upon which to see how the aging Derry man embraced the Chilean's morally persuasive vision.

Keywords: Death, Heaney, Neruda, Phenomena, Sensation

In his 1985 essay "Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych", Seamus Heaney draws on this passage from Pablo Neruda's "Towards an Impure Poetry":

> It is well, at certain hours of the day and night, to look closely at the world of objects at rest. Wheels that have crossed long, dusty distances with their mineral and vegetable burdens, sacks from the coalbins, barrels and baskets, handles and hafts for the carpenter's tool chest. From them flow the contact of man with the earth, like a text for all harassed lyricists. The used surfaces of things, the wear that the hands give to things, the air, tragic at times, pathetic at others – all lend a curious attractiveness to the reality of the world that should not be underprized. (Neruda 1961, 39)

But Heaney deleted the line "a text for all harassed lyricists". The change earned the attention of John Dennison, who

described it as "neat doctoring" and a rejection of Neruda's view: Heaney, committed to "a transcendental account of poetry's moral function", was "unable to conceive of history as other than a locus of defeat, denigration, violence, and death, his eliding quotation skipping over the contaminating analogy of used surfaces and a lyric poetry of attachment". Neruda, by contrast, was totally committed to revelling in this "broken contingency of life" (Dennison 2015, 117). But this is oversimplification. We should take into account, for example, Heaney's brief discussion of "Hercules and Antaeus" in 1981. He associated Hercules with the intellect and the pattern-making of Borges, which "is so different from the pleasures of Neruda, who's more of an Antaeus figure". As the Antaeus figure of that poem, Heaney's remarks might allow us to infer a long-standing identification with Neruda. Other interpretations are available. Heaney may have been concealing his more arcane interests in textuality and material mysticism. In the early 1980s, Ted Hughes sent him a copy of Frances Yates's *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964). Heaney would later use this as subject matter for *The Haw Lantern* (1987) and *Seeing Things* (1991), as well as part of the designing phase of his dustjackets and titles (Brandes 1998, 2008). The more prosaic reason is that the omitted line is less relevant to Heaney's concerns. It detracts from the vivid description of our world, a reality we all share and not just one accessible to lyricists, harassed or otherwise.

Heaney's essay recognized in Neruda a moral persuasiveness, and his conclusions suggests that he also recognized a challenge in this very authority: the declaration that the reality of the world should not be easily underprized "implies that we can and often do underprize it. We grow away from our primary relish of the phenomena that influence us in the first world of our being" (Heaney 1985, 31). Almost a decade later, the same passage was quoted again in Heaney's 1993 essay "The Sense of the Past". It was a further endorsement of the Chilean, and this time there are glimpses of even stronger spiritual conviction. What Heaney first tentatively called "moments 'the reality of the world' first awaken in us" (*ibidem*) become "archetypal moments, occurring in every life irrespective of intellectual, social or economic differences" (1993, 33). The pleasures of Neruda, then, are archetypal pleasures, the full recognition of the reality of the world with its accretions and retention of the past.

The sensations in which those pleasures are grounded are certainly in evidence when, in 2006, Heaney published "To Pablo Neruda in Tamlaghtduff" in his eleventh and penultimate major volume, *District and Circle*. The poem does not underprize the world; it is hypersensitive to it. Since 1993, Heaney had, of course, cast Neruda as a fundamentally political poet. In the *Paris Review* in 1997, he named Neruda in a category of writers who "share a specifically political understanding of the world" (Cole 1997). Two years after the poem was published, *Stepping Stones* reinforced this categorisation. Whereas Neruda's was an issue-based work, Heaney aspired to the role of visionary-public poet, a role which he was careful to define: the "public poetry of the sort I value", he told Dennis O'Driscoll, "springs from the poet's inner state and gives vent and voice to a predicament as well as addressing the state of the poet's world" (O'Driscoll 2008, 385). It is a subtle difference (and not entirely convincing), as Heaney conceded (*ibidem*). After all, Neruda's work is implicated in this late poem's expression of an inner state which holds a personal past accessed by sensation and recognises the ontological status of the world beyond the self.

But why, then, did it take Heaney twenty years to celebrate in poetry this aspect of Neruda which he so clearly considered an indispensable part of the human experience? This article seeks to address the question by placing the poem in the context of Heaney's development. Implicit in his 1985 essay is the fact that he had indeed grown away from the primary relish of the world. This condition was always bound to happen when he had decided, at exactly the same

time, to actively divest landscape of its corporeality. Starting with the details of the poem, we can circle back to see how this occurs and trace the steady redevelopment and reconfiguration of materialism in Heaney's poetics. And in returning to the objects at rest and the surfaces visible throughout *District and Circle*, there are also parallels between Heaney and Neruda's understanding of death.

"To Pablo Neruda at Tamlaghtduff" describes the moment when Heaney eats crab-apple jelly, a gift from his friend Niall Fitzduff, who appears to have sourced his main ingredient from a tree at Duffs corner in Ardboe. The "home-truth Neruda" addressed at the end of the poem is a good fit for Fitzduff, an indigenous resident of Ardboe and deeply experienced community worker on a local and international scale (and like Neruda he is "round-faced"). Around the time the poem was written, Fitzduff was Commissioner of the Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development (2004-2007) and in the process of co-authoring an academic study entitled "How Did Northern Ireland Move Toward Peace?" (Fitzduff, Williams 2007)[1]. But perhaps the more pertinent fact is that he and his wife, the Irish-American academic Mari Fitzduff, spent a year researching community projects in South America in the 1970s (and were actually arrested in Argentina for cleaning drains alongside liberation-theology priests) (Stout 2019). Heaney evidently associates Fitzduff's work and travels in South America with the work and travels of Neruda.

Yet, if the poem conveys any kind of political message, it is in the oblique and philosophical way in which we tend to recognize *as* politics the importance of personal experience. This is symbolized in Heaney's oeuvre by the Antaeus figure with whom he identifies Neruda. In an earlier discussion of the politics of "Hercules and Antaeus", in 1977, Heaney told Seamus Deane how he regretted how the poem lent support to his contemporaries' tendency to let the rational win out too much, especially when there is "always the question in everybody's mind whether the rational and humanist doom which produced what we call civilisation in the West should be allowed full command in the psyche, speech and utterance of Ulster" (Deane 1977, 67). Like Heaney and the rest of us, Fitzduff would probably always defend the place of rational humanism. But poetry is a different matter. When Heaney began to put his literary house in order and published *Opened Ground* in 1998, he included in the section for "Death of a Naturalist" the uncollected 1996 poem "Antaeus", in which he admits: "I cannot be weaned off the earth's long contour" (Heaney 1998, 16). He thus credited the pull of atavistic pieties. The profane perfection of mankind is the aim of this writer, whereas Fitzduff's role lies somewhere closer to that of the "righter" (Heaney 2009).

So when Heaney lays claim in the second stanza of the poem to *his* Neruda ("O my Pablo of earthlife!"), there are good reasons to believe that he is also alluding to something beyond these suggestive political connotations which suit Fitzduff's profile and the Chilean poet. As well as the epithet "earthlife", the exclamatory "O" and possessive "my" reflect a more fundamental, erotic attachment to the world of phenomena. The taste of the jelly brings the speaker's mind and body back to Heaney family home in the Tamlaghtduff district of Bellaghy. Formally, the

[1] Fitzduff has had several roles. He was the Community Development Officer with the Community Relations Commission from 1970 until 1974, and he was a researcher with the Community Development Review Group in the late 1980s. He worked for the Rural Community Network (NI), which was established in 1991. From 1996 to 1999 he was a Board Member of Combat Poverty Agency and a member of National Economic and Social Forum 1999-2003 in the Republic of Ireland. He was a member of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Stakeholder's Forum and a member of the Government Voluntary & Community Sector Forum. Fitzduff was also involved in the establishment of the Civic Forum for NI. And he established and ran a woodcraft business for 14 years and has been involved in a range of voluntary projects in Ardboe, Co. Tyrone, where he was born and still lives.

poem bursts into life after the exact moment of taste is recounted. The mind recalls the tree at Duff's corner in Ardboe, but the ooze of jelly on the tongue stirs memories of a cardinal point in the first world of being (Tamlaghtduff). When the "unflowery" tree in Ardboe becomes the "corona / of gold" in Bellaghy (2006, 64-65), it begs to be read next to the moment when Neruda's "lemon tree's yellow" blooms into "barbarous gold":

> … a clotting of acids
> brims
> into the starry
> divisions:
> creation's
> original juices,
> irreducible, changeless,
> alive (Neruda 1961, 235)

And the way in which Heaney evokes the feeling of taste – his eyes are "on stalks" (Heaney 2006, 65) – recalls the surrealism of "Ritual of My Legs". In that poem, Neruda compares his legs to stalks in order to conjure, with "infinite tenderness", the "brutish and lubberly" substance of a world where people travel "without thought for their bodies, barely aware of its vigors" (Neruda 1961, 71). Heaney's Neruda-act also stimulates memories and sensations of "foxgloves", transporting us back to the days of his debut volume *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) . It is easy enough, moreover, to see parallels between Neruda's own early work and the revolutionary impact of Heaney's first book. Unlike his classmate Deane, who craved "ideas", Heaney wanted to "write about the sycamores" (Heaney 1975, 70). That early artistic principle is similarly honoured by this Nerudian sensuousness.

But this is a position at which Heaney arrives after years of intense spiritual enquiry. He came to distrust of the world of sycamores. More than a residual Catholic scepticism of worldly desires, Heaney expressed radical doubt about our ordinary perception and the actual reality at our fingertips. His work was not, as his blurb to *Seeing Things* claimed, always faithful to the "grain of things" (1991). Or perhaps it would be better to say the grain of things did not always earn the poet's faith. "Gleaning the unsaid off the palpable" (1979, 58) was one of the ambitions of *Field Work*, but the palpable itself would soon give way to unsayable emptiness.

Traces of Heaney's doubt in empirical realities come in *Station Island*, published a year before "Place, Pastness, Poetry". On the run up to taking flight as the bird-man Sweeney in the third part of the book, Heaney challenges both his professed and proven attachment to Irish topography and his everyday perception of matter. A visit to Thomas Hardy's Brockhampton, in one case, forms the background to this new counter-narrative. Everywhere being nowhere, he speculates, no one can really prove one place more than another, and a range of displaced words denoting real things – "birthplace", "roofbeam", "whitewash", "flagstone", "hearth" – become like "unstacked iron weights / afloat among galaxies" (1984, 35). Other poems do still dwell on the historical and cultural aura of objects, such as a chip from Joyce's Martello Tower ("Granite Chip"). But materiality does not enjoy the same ontological primacy as it does in the earlier work or the more recent landscapes of *Field Work.* In the third poem of "Station Island", the speaker witnesses the decaying corpse of a family dog and subsequently imagines "walking round and round a space / Utterly empty, utterly a source" (68). In the closing stages of "Sweeney Redivivus", words and sensation are divested of meaning rooted in an accepted, embodied reality. The speaker recounts the loss of faith in the Latin phrases of Mass he recited as a child, and as a secularized adult, he walks under birds like "incredible souls" in flight over

Sandymount Strand, Heaney's home ground since 1976: "even the range wall of the promenade / that I press down on for conviction / hardly tempts me to credit it" (118). The wear that the hand gives to the wall not only fails to lend attractiveness to the reality of the world but fails to convince the speaker of the world's reliability – of which more later in connection with T.S. Eliot and James Joyce.

The trees of Heaney's Neruda poem are rooted in his next period of development in the 1980s. But perhaps we should speak of the trees being *replanted*, like we see happening elsewhere in *District and Circle* ("Planting the Alder"). Heaney's (re)visionary lecture on Patrick Kavanagh, in 1985, had changed his longstanding conception of the Monaghan poet – one focused primarily on geographical place as the only way to lend credence to messages of transcendence – to align with changes in his own spirituality which made the tree a symbol of rootlessness. Looking back, this is a paradox. Heaney's endorsement of Neruda's materialism was published in the same year as this endorsement of Kavanagh's inner freedom. But as far as his main poetics are concerned, Heaney was no longer interested in the primary relish of naturalistic data. Instead, he fosters a metaphysical idealism: in the geographical place where a chestnut tree had been planted at Mossbawn to mark his birth in 1939, he now sees the "luminous emptiness" of a placeless, "imagined realm" (1988 [1985], 4). And the same felled tree becomes the ramifying soul in "Clearances", where the final poem draws on the "utterly empty" source (1987, 32). "The Wishing Tree", located in Ardboe like the crab-apple tree, is similarly uprooted to convey weightlessness (36). Each of these poems were collected in *The Haw Lantern*, contributing to the book's central feeling of things melting from our grasp: substantiality, like the promenade walls, looked like it could only be credited when it is embraced *in extremis*.

Heaney's Neruda poem also contains a reference to "our tree ascendant in Tamlaghtduff", terms that recall Rilke's "Orpheus": "A tree ascended there. Oh pure transcendence!" (Rilke 1949, 35). Heaney in fact used Rilke's image as part of the major intellectual statements of his inaugural Richard Ellmann lectures in 1988, collected as *The Place of Writing* (1989). Heaney promoted the idea that the poetic imagination in its strongest manifestation imposes its vision upon the world rather than accept it from it. Heaney accepted potential criticisms of an absurd solipsism, but visionary fiction is praised (credited) because it demonstrates "inner grace" (Heaney 1989). "The Settle Bed", in *Seeing Things*, thus held that "whatever is given / Can always be reimagined" (1991, 29). And elsewhere in that volume, Heaney gleefully cleaves to the Heraclitean dictum: "Everything flows, even a solid man" (85). Moral persuasiveness, in these terms, lies in the transcendental imagination of enlightenment which, by its very nature, underprizes the ordinary way of looking at things (and people) with their own unique histories.

In 1989, Heaney's Oxford lectures – published as *The Redress of Poetry* in 1995 – would continue to promote this idea of poetry as a transcendent counterweight to the heaviness of being. His poetry would remain committed to an enlightened understanding of emptiness and flux, but we can see in the wake of *Seeing Things* the reinstatement of a sturdier, Nerudian-like materialism. The crab-apple jelly of Ardboe which Heaney would spread so generously has a precursor in "Damson", the distinctively tactile poem from *The Spirit Level*. Its historical contexts of the Second World War aside, the poem cooks up the smell of damsons "simmering in a pot. / Jam ladled thick and steaming down the sunlight" (1996, 16). Like *Death of a Naturalist,* the quality of this smell is presented almost in synaesthesia. It is not surprising that Gail McConnell has associated the poem with "Blackberry Picking" and read it in her chosen contexts of the Eucharist. After Henri de Lubac (via Hans Urs von Balthasar), McConnell claims that the poem enacts a "perpetual reactualisation", one which, like the Eucharist, is not simply a remembrance of something in the past, but the continual manifestation of the Body

of the Lord and his Sacrifice, in the same fashion that Scripture is less a question of history than the form and utterance of God's Word uttered unceasingly (McConnell 2014, 104). This is admittedly obscure but it is still helpful, because it works equally well in terms of the human body and its access to a timeless personal past.

Like the eyes on stalks, "Damson" is also conscious of its grounding in the body: the bricklayer's wound is in "glutinous colour fifty years ago" – a weird omen from the past to be experienced in the present – and it is also "weeping with the held -at-arm's-length dead / From everywhere and nowhere, *here and now*" (Heaney 1996, 16. My italics). Everywhere may be nowhere, as the Hardy poem conceded years earlier, but the poem attests to the way in which bodily sensation stores memory for future access. In this way, the heaviness of being *is* the transcendent counterweight. The representation of an inner state of beatitude in *The Spirit Level* – the kingdom of God within – takes on and values this common sense of the world "out there". We should understand that everything flows, but poems such as "The Rainstick" or "The Gravel Walks", which rehearse the idea of private beatitude, increasingly gesture to the unknowable otherness of the physical world without having to undermine the ordinary perception of it.

It is this metaphysical value of visible realities which continues to deepen as Heaney gets older. His next volume, *Electric Light* (2001), provides yet another reading of Kavanagh. He comes full circle to the first set of values. "The Loose Box" is in thrall to Kavanagh's love of "any talk about / The properties of land". Heaney is not asserting the superiority of rural environs, but rather physical properties of any kind which ground us in the world are welcomed as proof of our "inner restitution" (2001, 14). This is a far cry from 1985 – unless, of course, we see that it reflects not the Kavanagh lecture, but the values of Neruda embraced by "Place, Pastness, Poems".

Indeed, further objects are requisitioned from the world to validate the principles of the latter essay. A poorly built crib of Jesus' birth becomes the objective correlative of early religious doubts. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbevilles* anticipates the feeling of horse carts in Tamlaghtduff, bringing up old sensations of farming logistics "in the stilly night, chaff piled in ridges, / Earth raw where the four wheels rocked and battled" (16). The ambush and assassination of Michael Collins at Béal na Bláth in 1922 becomes the archetypal moment: *in extremis* Collins thinks of a trapdoor in the hayloft of his own childhood farm. "True or not true", Heaney avers, there is an "underworld of understanding", one which is more important than official dates of the newspaper reel (*ibidem*). It is almost verbatim of his gloss on Neruda – the personal past is not determined by calendar-dates or any clear time-scale but a "dream-time" learned by sensation (1993, 34).

And thanks to his contemporaneous translation of *Beowulf* (1999), these poems enjoy a wider, rich frame of reference within a volume steeped in the tragic and pathetic air cherished by Neruda in his contemplation of impure poetry. Heaney makes room, at Yeats's expense, for passive suffering in a picture of the soul rooted in the locale, a realist view of things reinforced by the book's concluding scene of Milltown graveyard in Magherafelt, where the fingernail of Heaney's maternal grandmother shines perpetually "among beads and vertebrae in the Derry ground" (2001, 81). "Known World" insists on this tragic disposition ("That old sense of tragedy going on / Uncomprehended, at the very edge of the usual"). So the state of beatitude in *The Spirit Level* (1996) continues to take into account the private, subjective self and its contact with the external world, and it increasingly leans towards the latter for truth and meaning.

Earlier doubts in the *quidditas* of the range wall at Sandymount Strand are also alleviated by *Electric Light*. "Vitruviana" takes us back to Dublin for another look, and the speaker's view

draws upon Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. The present tense evokes the movement of light bathing the strand, and the claim to have an ability to "connect / Some bits and pieces" (53) gestures to Eliot's "Unreal City, / Under the brown fog of a winter dawn" in "The Fire Sermon" (Eliot 1975, 70). Those lines are about Eliot's mental exhaustion in October 1921, and they are also linked with the subsequent references to the Buddhist text which teaches us to forsake the fleeting pleasures of the physical world (Warren 1896, 351-353). Heaney, though, feels energised by love of the flesh. He sees things with his underworld of understanding. The aesthetic realisation of bodily sensuality and being in space are a result of intense focus on the material world: he recalls being in the pool at Portstewart where he stood like a Vitruvian man, "buoyant to the fingertips" and "tickled by the steel-zip cold meniscus" (Heaney 2001, 53). The metaphysical geometry gestures beyond – but does not exist independently of – the immediate phenomenological experience.

In the second section of the poem, in which Heaney and his schoolmates do star jumps at football training, the deathly and self-denying crucifixion painting of *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* is casually transformed into a pleasurable, tactile memory, with the spiritual dimension glimpsed in the lines piercing the saint's palms. The Aristotelian world of the deep pool is framed by the Platonic one, but now it is penetrated by it. In the third section of the poem, the speaker draws on the Proteus episode of *Ulysses*, where Stephen Dedalus walks on Sandymount Strand: "Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes" (Joyce 1922, 31). It is a departure, in this context, from Eliot's Buddhism. As a whole, the visionary perspective embodies an attraction to the point where, in Heaney's terms, the "visible and invisible meet". As Heaney said of Felim Egan, the dedicatee of the poem, one part of the artist is "in love with geometry and the symmetrical ideal represented by Leonardo's diagram", but another part is "all eyes for what is actually there in front of him" (Heaney 1999). But above all, the metaphysical dimension is rooted in "the exquisite ache that the physical world induces" (1992).

This is the lineage extended, I think, by the exquisite ache and inner restitution of "To Pablo in Tamlaghtduff". But the poem is also seamlessly embedded in the omnipresent materialism and historical world of *District and Circle*. The "imagination seems not only to press against reality", as Peter Campion has observed, "but to plunge it in a cleansing solution. The world shines up from these pages with refreshed particularity and tactile exactitude" (Campion 2006). It is a mature vision available to everyone and not just to harassed lyricists. But this is where we press up against another reality: like Neruda, Heaney is a special individual with a special sensibility. Setting out the terms of "Place, Pastness, Poetry" and charting the objects of this volume would not have given an adequate sense of the years of spiritual labour upon which the vision of the book is based. Heaney was, as John Montague said, "a mystic of the ordinary" (Montague 2013). In this connection, Heaney and Neruda each make materialism play a *role* in their artistic visions. And watching the hand that moves over the surface of objects in *District and Circle*, its role in the book is to serve the understanding and representation of death.

Heaney, like Neruda, also revels in the contingency of life in a calculated way. The first object of *District and Circle* is the turnip-snedder which absorbs and articulates the seasons under the watch of the omniscient creator: " 'This is the way that God sees life' " (Heaney 2006, 1). The poem conveys, as Heaney said of Hardy's "Channel Firing", the "patient God's eye view of all things, war included, as a cyclic pattern, a pattern seemingly demonstrated by history to be inevitable like seasonal labour" (1985, 44). War dominates the historical consciousness of the book. "To Mick Joyce in Heaven" and "Edward Thomas on Lagan Road" refer to the British army forces of the Second World War, while "Anahorish, 1944" records the influx of American

soldiers to Northern Ireland. "Anything Could Happen" is an allegory of the 9/11 assault on the World Trade Centre in New York, and "The Helmet" contains the sweat and blood of the rescue mission. The sledgehammer of A Shiver is the object which carries the reality of the Iraq war. Heaney reflected on the poem's meaning:

> […] I think it wasn't just a physical sensation I was trying to get at. It was about the full exercise of merciless, violent power. It was a poem written after Iraq. There were no Iraq references in it, but it is about the sense of transgression you have when you utterly, mercilessly use a sledgehammer, even when hitting a dead post. There's a kind of unrestrained fury, an unforgiving brutality to it that I wanted to get. So I think that you can transmit sensation but hopefully suggest and effect a consequence as well. (Heaney 2010)

The unstacked weights that were once afloat in the galaxies are being hammered down. But the balance has shifted to let us see "unforgiving brutality". Hull-thick, this is a world that cannot be "reimagined". Perception of the eternal flux, or the Romantic transcendent, is of no consolation. Heaney's friend Rand Brandes has neatly summarized this grim landscape of the book: "There is no end in sight, no revelation, no resurrection or rebirth, just meaningless filling the vacuum of space. Even the innocent participate (without irony) in their own demise". In this mechanical universe, ruthlessness and revenge "rule the endless darkness of the animus" (Brandes 2016, 337). If the attractiveness of the world should not be underprized, the blind callousness of it is hard to take. And on this evidence, we may have been better off talking about parallels between Heaney and the Neruda who yells "come see the blood / in the streets!" (Neruda 1961, 113).

But absolute materialism, this violence of nature red in tooth and claw, and absolute emptiness, the eternal flux and timeless moment of enlightenment, are two sides of the one coin – namely, absolute omnipresence, a state of being reserved for God. We cannot pretend to be liberated in either way from human consciousness, as Heaney recognized in another context (O'Driscoll 2008, 200). Heaney's coordinates of history, power and war in the volume make up one dimension of reality – the biological and physical. The other dimension is spiritual, the part of him which recognizes that these things do not have inherent existence. So the surfaces of the world cannot be *overprized* without equally severe costs. Heaney sees the death guaranteed by life through the lens of his spiritual explorations, and in this regard there are parallels between Neruda's and *District and Circle*'s sophisticated perspective on mortality.

Neruda derived the following reflections from his reading of the Spanish poet Francisco de Quevedo, for whom, in Neruda's view, "metaphysics is intensely physical":

> If on being born we begin to die, if each day brings us closer to an already determined limit, if life itself is a pathetic stage of death, if the very instant of budding forth advances toward the decay of which the final moment is the only culmination of its passage, aren't we integrated with death in our daily life, aren't we a perpetual part of death, aren't we then the most audacious part, the part that has already left death? Is the most mortal thing the most vital? (Neruda 1968, 14)

This metaphysical view is embodied by "The Blackbird of Glanmore", the last poem of *District and Circle*. Under the eye of the resident bird, Heaney has a moment of reflection in the car which leads to an onrush of memories. Lines from Sophocles about craving death and union with the father precede the image of the "little stillness dancer" Christopher, Heaney's younger brother who was immortalised by "Mid-Term Break" from *Death of a Naturalist*. Christopher's tragic death, we now learn, was foretold by a woman who read the world by omens. There are myriad allusions to suggest that the Glanmore blackbird is the symbol of death. The aerial view of the poet recalls the

biblical image of *Seeing Things*, where we see the "bare, bowed, numbered heads" of children on a boat, as well as the portrait of the near-death experience of Heaney's father, "his ghost hood immanent" (in the yard afterwards) witnessed by the son who watched him through the house window (Heaney 1991, 16-18). The calm atmosphere of acceptance is informed by a familiar image from Zen Buddhism: the poet sees himself as a shadow on the "raked gravel" of his Glanmore cottage. But when he claims to love the blackbird, Heaney commits himself to death in Shakespearean terms: "I am absolute for you" (2006, 76). Brandes located this allusion for us: in the opening scene of Act III of *Measure for Measure*, the Duke encourages the imprisoned Claudio, who seeks clemency, to imagine death as better than life: "Be absolute for death" (Shakespeare 2008, 2072). As Brandes has informed us, Heaney probably knew this passage was open at Ted Hughes's deathbed. It is a poignant detail, but Brandes surely mischaracterizes Heaney's attitude when he claims that the poet is "rejecting the passage from Shakespeare" (Brandes 2016, 342). It is a positive acceptance of death, of the disappearance of the mind which enacts that acceptance, hence Heaney's response aligning with Claudio's: "To sue to live, I find I seek to die, / And, seeking to die, find life" (*ibidem*). And we should recall another spiritual principle from the Kavanagh lecture of 1985: "abandonment of a life in order to find more abundant life" (Heaney 1988, 12). That same year, as we have seen, Heaney had paradoxically heeded Neruda's warning not to underprize the world. In this closing poem of his penultimate volume, Heaney meets both challenges and transcends them into a single, vital thought of perpetual death integrated with daily life.

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"Across the divide / Of the Andes": Harry Clifton and Latin America

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Abstract:

In his poems of Latin America, Harry Clifton (b. 1952) illuminates "the region of the world most neglected by the Irish state" (Peadar Kirby). Since his return to live in Ireland in 2004, Clifton has sought deeper clarification of his paternal (Irish) and maternal (Latin American) roots. This essay explores how Clifton's cosmopolitanism draws on the freedoms of placelessness alongside the geographical specificities of place broaching issues of colonialism, language and identity. The desolate aridity of the Atacama region of northern Chile and bohemian Buenos Aires are connected to a newly cosmopolitan Ireland. These poems mark Clifton's successful coming home linking his Irish and Latin American origins.

Keywords: Atacama Desert, Chile, Harry Clifton, Irish Poetry, Latin America

1. Introduction: Ireland and Elsewhere

It is possible and profitable to read the well-travelled cosmopolitanism of Harry Clifton's poetry on a number of levels. On one level, there is a quest for "Anonymity, detachment" (Clifton 2006, 12) through which the poet can find an "ideal distance" (Clifton 1997, 12) from which to write about a polyvalent and interconnected world. For this mode of writing, according to Clifton, "placelessness is the ideal" (*ibidem*) and the poet can practice his craft as "a citizen of language rather than a citizen of place" (1996, 41). As he explains in "Coming Home", an autobiographical essay:

> […] we lived in unfashionable, artistically passé Paris, to which only a backward glance was owed. Samuel Beckett, its most famous resident and a magnetising pole for the exiled side of the Irish consciousness, had passed away at the end of the eighties. The chain of Irish exile that had stretched from Moore in the late nineteenth century, through Wilde, Synge, occasionally Yeats, Joyce almost to the end of his days, then Beckett himself, had broken at last, given way to a brash,

cosmopolitan city that had had its artistic moment long ago, and was happy enough to go about its daily business, indifferent as to whether aliens like ourselves, Irish or otherwise, lived or died in it. The conditions were perfect. (2006, 12)

The dividend of these ideal conditions was the composition of *Secular Eden: Paris Notebooks 1994-2004* (2007) which won the Irish Times Poetry Now Award and propelled its author to the forefront of Irish letters with his appointment as Ireland Professor of Poetry from 2010-2013. However, Clifton's transition from Irish writer-in-exile to poet-in-residence at Ireland's leading universities was far from straightforward. Indeed, his return to live full-time in Ireland in 2004 involved "rebuilding an identity from the ground up" (2016) as he acknowledged in a later interview.

Several poems in *Secular Eden* anticipate the problems of confronting anew the "complexity" (1997, 12) and "clutter" (1996, 42) of Ireland, weighed down for the poet by familial and social memories, "the unconscious baggage of childhood, the sins of the fathers, historical background" as he refers to it in "Coming Home" (8). It is this clutter and complexity which serve as another level of engagement for Clifton in his negotiations with social settings at home and abroad. Place, as opposed to placelessness, can hold a burdensome intricacy in Ireland, but also in more distant locales. Indeed, it is the interplay of belonging and estrangement, the voyage out and the return journey which serve as fulcrums for Clifton's aesthetics.

In his poem "A Gulf Stream Ode", from *Secular Eden*, Clifton's anxiety about "The eternal mist, that blots out everything" in Ireland is conjoined with a congruent unease about Latin American "Shadows" embodied in "Granny Allende", Clifton's maternal grandmother (2007, 100-101). "Granny Allende, where on earth did you come from?" the poem asks, posing a self-reflexive question about his "extraordinary family" and his own place in it (101-102, italics in original). Neither Irish mist nor the "legend" (100) of his Latin American roots can offer the poet the much-needed "clarity" (1996, 42) he seeks.

The pattern of exile and return, flight and failed reintegration has been repeated by Clifton in what he identifies as an "Original sin" (2006, 7) which runs in the family:

> It was awhile [*sic*] before I was to learn two things – firstly, that a return to Ireland could be a form of punishing oneself for a realer, truer life elsewhere, and secondly – as my parents had come to realise over twenty years of unease in the not-so-free state – coming back same as coming home. (8)

The "realer, truer" lives led by Clifton in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s included a stint of teaching in west Africa, a period as an aid worker on the Thai-Cambodia frontier, a brief spell in the USA as well as a memorable year in Italy and a decade in Paris to name just some of his extensive travels[1]. Throughout most of these wanderings, the home place, Ireland, has been experienced as a realm of "economic stagnation" and "bleak futurelessness" (7) which would only gradually transform itself into something more "cosmopolitan" in the late 1990s (15). This transformation has belatedly made Ireland more receptive to Clifton's own ideas of "global intersection" (12) and he speculates that the new situation in Ireland "may mark an end to the shouting match between those who go away and are sneered at as writers of travelogue, and

[1] These travels are variously charted in Clifton's first five poetry volumes all published by The Gallery Press: *The Walls of Carthage* (1977); *Office of the Salt Merchant* (1979); *Comparative Lives* (1982); *The Liberal Cage* (1988); *The Desert Route: Selected Poems 1973-88* (1992); *Night Train Through the Brenner* (1994). His memoir, *On the Spine of Italy: A Year in the Abruzzi* (1999) recounts a year in a village in rural Italy and forms a vital backdrop to *Night Train Through the Brenner*.

those who stay home and are sneered at as purveyors of authentic Gaelic misery whether of the Northern or Southern varieties" (15).

2. Legend and History in Latin America

In terms of Clifton's engagements with Latin America, there is a level of equivalence between the gloom of "the rain-sodden bed-sitter land" (2006, 7) of the Dublin that Clifton grew up in and the more arid desolation of Antofagasta, the city in northern Chile where his parents met and from where they began their own journey "home". In the imagination of the poet, Antofagasta joins Dublin in being "the locus of pure suffering", a place overseas where he can "come into the knowledge" of himself "and go back home" (Clifton, "Chile")[2]. What is "foresuffered" in "Chile", a country the poet has not yet visited, are the "sins of the fathers" (2006, 8), those of flight and return:

> Original sin, or the form it took in my family, happened in 1950, when a ship with my parents on board docked at the North Wall in Dublin. A young married couple, they had met in the desolate nitrate port of Antofagasta in northern Chile, on the edge of the Atacama desert where my father, an engineer from Ireland, had overseen the water supply for three years. He was coming back, with his bride, to settle and have a family. He thought he was coming home. (7)

For the poet, struggling with the shadows of his forebears, the act of successfully coming home is one of deep significance and one which, I will argue, Clifton successfully achieves after 2004. *The Winter Sleep of Captain Lemass* (2012) is Clifton's key collection marking his fuller reintegration back into Ireland and it contains a synthesis of poems relating to the "Twenty-Six Counties" of the Irish Republic, the "Six Counties" of Northern Ireland and a final section titled "Elsewhere".

In this latter section, we find five significant poems situated in Latin America: "Mother Tongue", "*Maté*-Drinking", "Letter from Buenos Aires" (in memory of emigré Polish author Witold Gombrowicz), "The Rain Shadow" and "Estación El Retiro, Buenos Aires". Of these, "Mother Tongue" and "*Maté*-Drinking" are most obviously connected to Clifton's maternal ancestry. Both poems explore a psychological and cultural hinterland, "the milk of origins" (Clifton 2012, 81), in a Latin America dramatized in developmental terms. An adult world is viewed through a child's eyes with belated recognition in adulthood of the what this "vanished world" of his forebears might have been like (82).

Vague animosities rise up, "recriminations" and "family sagas" (81). Indeed, the "long pre-natal chain" (*ibidem*) of these poems is a dark enough affair:

> A door blows open, into a vanished world.
> A woman sits there, *maté*-drinking,
> Arucanian Indian – my grandmother. (82)

This is a conversation with ghosts. There is an otherness, a focalised spectrality which casts this actual social environment as almost otherworldly, as well as being distant and long gone. But this is also, importantly, a conscious effort to recuperate lost maternal ancestry and an acknowledgement of the hardships and exclusions suffered by women in Latin America and

[2] Harry Clifton, "Chile", unpublished poem.

Ireland: “They married me off, you see. I was only a girl, / And falseness, lack of love, became my portion” (*ibidem*). The recuperative endeavour is affirmed by Clifton’s comments in an interview that “I had to go looking for the other side [of my personality …] to find its second half, the part that didn’t correspond to external Irish life” (1996, 41).

In both of these poems, “the ghostly Andes” lie behind an adult creative consciousness, as Clifton’s unpublished poem “A Ship Came from Valparaiso” confirms. A wide gulf of space and time is traversed and an unfamiliar, barely imaginable social universe speculatively “blows open” (Clifton 2012, 82). Although “Ireland” lies “ahead” in the narrative line bringing Clifton’s mother to Ireland, the psychological unfolding takes place “In between” (Clifton, “A Ship Came from Valparaiso”). Alluding to the Irish poem “Tháinig Long ó Valparaiso” by Pádraig de Brún (1889-1960), Clifton anchors his own sense of belonging equidistantly from the “grey republic” (2006, 9) and the “desolate nitrate port” (7). His preferred locus is in the exotic voyage, “A city of dreams, / Concepción”, where his parents’ ship did actually pause, we understand, *en route* for Buenos Aires on their original voyage home. Clifton’s “dreams”, we realise, are founded on the staging post, the voyage in-between, not on the dreary destination (Dublin) or on the “desolate” departure point (Antofagasta) and this interstitial sensibility is one we will re-encounter in other poems.

Although Clifton chooses to utilise oneiric language in many of these poems (“ghostly”, “mist”, “legend”, “shadows”), it can be argued that there are more palpable contexts, social and historical realities grounded in place, which serve to anchor the poems in ways that are, arguably, more vividly informative than the speculative framing often adopted by Clifton. Indeed, history can be fruitfully deployed alongside familial legend in order to read Clifton’s engagements with Latin America as productively as possible.

“The Rain Shadow” is another of the five poems set in Latin America from *The Winter Sleep of Captain Lemass*. It refers to a precise climacteric phenomenon in the Atacama Desert whereby moisture from the sea is pulled over the arid desert region towards the Andes mountains beyond. Clifton’s poem links this aridity to an emotional climate which is “Tearless”, “Emotionless, remote” in the fashion of mid-century Ireland and which contains only “The clarity of despair” (2012, 85). Nevertheless, the poem is not just a metaphorical treatment of these psychological “Shadow[s]”, it also charts *in nuce* some of the historical woes of the Atacama region. For example, “the tinkle of ingot trains” (*ibidem*) is heard by Clifton’s “Mother” to remind us of the wealth generated by nitrate, copper and sulphur mining in northern Chile and the concomitant cycle of boom and bust, wealth and poverty brought in its wake. The poem alludes to “religion” (*ibidem*), a brief reminder that the Catholic faith is held in common between Irish and Latin American societies and that missionary expansion was an important facet of European colonisation of Latin America and the Americas more generally. The reference to “Astronomy” (*ibidem*) points in the direction of scientific innovation in the *Norte Grande* of Chile which nowadays hosts some of the most advanced astronomical observatories in the world[3]. For example, the ALMA (Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array) observatory on the Chajnantor plateau is home to one of the most powerful telescopes in the world and was built with international collaboration to render visible the so-called “dark Universe”, a term not without psychological undertones which refers to hitherto-unseen portions of the universe[4]. All of this goes to show that “The Rain Shadow” builds its depiction of a “puritan”

[3] For an overview of northern Chile’s range of advanced observatories, see Schilling 2015, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/star-trekking-chile-astronomy-180955798/> (03/2021).

[4] For further details on the discoveries made possible by advanced radio telescopes, see <https://www.almaobservatory.org/en/about-alma-at-first-glance/how-alma-works/how-does-alma-see/> (03/2021).

(*ibidem*) emotional climate in Ireland through precise allusion to the Atacama region and that the familial occasion of the poem is freighted by the economic, religious and scientific contexts of that region.

"Mother Tongue" covers similar psychological terrain to "The Rain Shadow" but seems to occupy an even "deeper, darker level" in its encounter with "social contradiction" and "family denial" (2006, 14). In the poem, a family drama is being played out in "bitter words" and with "Shouts, recriminations" (2012, 81) so that the wounded son-speaker is left bewildered:

> Years would pass,
> I would run away. It was out there somewhere,
> The mother-tongue. By now she was striking camp
> Or putting down new roots, in another town,
> With an absolute stranger, who would educate me
> In gambling, horses, family sagas
> Endlessly added to, nowhere written down. (*Ibidem*)

The linguistic otherness of the "mother-tongue" carries the same weight as Granny Allende's mysterious origins in "A Gulf Stream Ode" just as "Origins of the Tango", also from *Secular Eden*, covers a "wide *hispanic* space" (2007, 50, italics added). Clifton's mother was raised bilingually in Antofagasta, northern Chile[5] but the poem hints at even more enigmatic ancestry, "I came from gypsies, on my mother's side" (2012, 81). These origins, the poem implies, impinge themselves on the middle-class household in the puritan Dublin of the 1950s, like an unspoken family secret.

These considerations are suggestive of another layer of linguistic and cultural complexity. While Spanish is the main language of the majority of countries in Latin America, the poem refers to a language "Not of this world" (*ibidem*) as the "Mother Tongue" of its title. Could this refer to a language which is literally and tragically "Not of this world", the now-extinct Kunza language once spoken by the *Atacameños*, or indigenous peoples of the Atacama region? We understand from "*Maté*-Drinking" that Clifton's grandmother was "Arucanian Indian" and therefore, ethnically, from one of the indigenous peoples of South America who pre-date Spanish incursions[6]. "Mother Tongue" and "*Maté*-Drinking" together would seem to refer to an Indian language rather than a European one and this would account more fully for the strange aura of mystery that surrounds the mother-tongue and its speaker.

A scholarly review of the cultural heritage of the *Atacameños* explains that, as for much of the American continent, linguistic and cultural (not to say, physical) genocide was a common enough practice during the colonial period:

> The sixteenth century's violent invasion of colonizers seeking gold and other precious metals, […] was the start of a socio-cultural and socio-ecological rupture […] the imposition of new values of

[5] This information is from Harry Clifton, email to the present author, 11 February 2021.

[6] Writing in 1941, Donald Brand explains that: "The term Araucanian [*sic*] most properly refers to the language once spoken by the many Indian groups between the Rio Choapa (Coquimbo Province) and the Gulf of Corcovado (Chiloe Province). However, growing usage […] makes advisable the use of this name for the Indians themselves, although they were never a political, physical, or cultural unit". His outline of the impact of Spanish colonial conquest on the Araucanian Indian populations gives considerable detail on the plurality of Indian groupings and the ethnic complexities of Chile as well as the devastating consequences of Spanish colonisation for these indigenous peoples and their languages. See Brand 1941, 19.

domination over people, culture, and nature. The disappearance of *kunza*, the now-extinct Atacameño language […] can be explained by the conquerors' practice of cutting out the tongues of those who spoke it. (Parra, Moulaert 2016, 248)

Such barbarism on the part of European conquistadors is a reminder of darker chapters in the history of European emigration or conquest in Latin America up to and including the exodus brought about by the Holocaust itself in Europe. In Clifton's signature poem of displacement "Benjamin Fondane Departs for the East" from *Secular Eden*, European victims of Nazi persecution ("Call us the Paris crowd") are "Bound for Buenos Aires, bound for the New" (2007, 200). But many of them, including Romanian-born poet Benjamin Fondane (1898-1944), were victims of "the real Apocalypse" in the gas chambers at Auschwitz (*ibidem*). Others, such as Polish novelist Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969) were more fortunate and the life of Gombrowicz is the occasion for another significant poem of displacement "Letter from Buenos Aires" (2012, 83-84).

3. Ill-Starred Exiles

Clifton's gift for writing poems and elegies on intellectuals in transit is one of his most characteristic accomplishments. Fondane and Gombrowicz join a distinguished line of *emigrés* whose fate has provided Clifton with a way of voicing his sense of travel as a journey "from innocence to experience" (2015, 20). Poems like "Death of Thomas Merton" (2014, 49-50), "Dag Hammarskjöld" (2014, 55-56), and "Søren Kierkegaard" (2014, 84-85) use the voyage as a means of dramatizing the forces of Eros and Thanatos in these exceptional, but ill-starred figures. These poems of innocence and experience recall the divide between the worldly and the spiritual, and between the profane and the sacred which Clifton's poetry traverses. "Death of Thomas Merton" is a poem which enacts, in its very structure, a move from worldly realities to sacred realities as it traces the last hours in the life of Trappist monk Thomas Merton and the aftermath of his death by electrocution in Bangkok, Thailand on 10 December 1968. Merton traverses the city of Bangkok from the "Temptations" of "heroin, women and incense" in stanzas 1-3 "To the other side of the city" towards "Spiritual masters / Shrunken in skin and bone" in stanzas 4-7 (2014, 49-50). Indulgence and self-denial, carnality and mysticism oppose one another as Merton journeys from West to East in a show of "nonpolitical […] unity" against the Vietnam conflict (50).

We learn in the poem that "Shortly" Merton will "be dead" (49). It transpires that this untimely event will serve only as an "anti-climax" to Merton's personal "crisis" (50). As John Cooney (former Irish Times religious affairs correspondent) explains, the circumstances of Merton's death are shrouded in mystery:

His official biographer, Michael Mott, concluded that Merton's death was by electrocution […] caused by one of three factors: suicide, murder or an accident. Mott opted for accidental death, without fully ruling out assassination, but dismissed, however, suicide on the grounds that there was neither motive nor circumstance for this. (Cooney 2015)

Cooney argues strongly, however, for Merton's death by suicide on account of guilt and regret at a romantic liaison with a younger woman and suggests that, by 1968, "Merton's extra-mundum moorings were loosening" (*ibidem*). He gives details of Merton's "mid-life fling with a young woman" called Margie Smith who Merton had met in hospital in Louisville, Kentucky where she worked as a nurse (*ibidem*). Clifton's and Cooney's accounts both reveal how Merton was mired in the less-than-sacred environments of politics, doomed love and the war

in Vietnam. Arguably, Merton's moral vacillations and his "unworldly" temperament (Clifton 2014, 50) make him a victim of forces around him in ways that resemble "the sacrifice" of Dag Hammarskjöld (55) whose labours as UN Secretary-General were brought down under "alien skies" and "different weather" in his premature death in an aeroplane accident in 1961 (56).

Witold Gombrowicz was exiled in Buenos Aires on the eve of World War Two and would remain there until 1963 before enjoying belated recognition:

> Returning from the dead, to find myself famous,
> Milosz, Jeleński, back in Paris,
> Calling me home to Europe, where the ghosts are laid. (2012, 84)

But his greatest works were written in Argentina, including his novel *Trans-Atlantyk* (1953), a Spanish translation of his pre-war novel *Ferdydurke* (1937-1947) as well as his acclaimed *Diary* composed between 1953 and his death in 1969 and published from Paris in Polish expatriate magazine *Kultura*[7]. Clifton's poem offers glimpses of a Polish *emigré* community connected across the world by their shared Polish heritage, set adrift by the circumstances of World War Two and its aftermath. It is a trans-Atlantic relationship between Argentina and Europe with the prospect of a literary afterlife beyond "A city of exile" (83).

Gombrowicz enjoys homosexual liaisons in Buenos Aires "Behind the Retiro, haunt of the illicit loves" and he shares this love life in common with another of Clifton's subjects, Italian poet Sandro Penna (1906-1977) whose "tortured irascibility of temperament" and "avowed [...] homosexuality" made him "inconvenient" for fellow Italian poets and writers, according to Clifton (1992b, 15). Penna also would gain belated recognition for his poems of serenity:

> Ageless, limpid contemplations of primary images, the recollected Umbrian countryside, the Adriatic coast, the parched valleys of Lazio, south of Rome, drenched in heat and light, his "prenatal landscape" as he called it, [...]. (16)

In both cases, one feels that these are writers cut adrift from their own native communities, out of their element, "abandoned by history" as "Letter from Buenos Aires" suggests (2012, 83). Gombrowicz reneges on his aspiration to be "cold and disciplined" (83-84) and succumbs to the louche atmosphere of Argentina's capital in wartime just as Penna indulges his taste for drugs and young men:

> Did you only recognise me
> By my bitten nails, like all pederasts?
> Nembutal, Mogadon, Tavar and Mictasol
> Turning my urine blue -
> I am old, alone. My reputation? It's invisible -
> A poet, they say, for the very few
> Who see, through the murk of the twentieth century,
> The universal, the sun corning through. (2014, 80)

Clifton manages to convey the mixture of vulnerability, irascibility and equipoise in these lines as if to suggest that the imperfect life, and the hoped-for afterlife is the natural way of

[7] Gombrowicz 2012. See an illuminating review: Franklin 2012, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/30/imp-of-the-perverse> (03/2021).

things: "my destiny half-complete" in Gombrowicz's terms (2012, 84). For Gombrowicz, amid "*empanadas*, beer / At a sidewalk table", an embrace of serendipity seems wise and, in any event, "the will / Disintegrates" in the "Unpressurised vacuum" of "middle age" (83).

4. Travel and Identity

The trans-Atlantic framing of Gombrowicz's life history recalls the transnational scale of *Winter Sleep* where the whole of the Americas provides a context for the collection, not only Latin America. Clifton imagines "A Canada of pure space" in "Bloor and Yonge". In "The Mynah Bird", the life of Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) is celebrated. Her journey from childhood and youth in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia to New York, Florida, San Francisco as well as fourteen years residence in Brazil covers the length of the Americas. Antarctica receives its own poetic treatment in "The Whaling Station" from *Secular Eden* (2007, 91-92), discussed below.

Bishop's first full poetry collection North and South (1946) reflects the scope of her wanderings and Clifton's tribute in "The Mynah Bird" affirms Bishop's voice as one of transit:

> the mynah bird
> In the hanging cage
> […]
> The chatter of the ages
> In transit, in their millions,
> Neither here nor there,
> Is your only true heir. (2012, 88)

The sequence in *Winter Sleep* of "The Mynah Bird" (*ibidem*) followed by "Bloor and Yonge" (89) followed by "Mercator" (90) in the concluding "Elsewhere" section, allows Clifton to make expansive references to the whole globe and its respective "continents" (*ibidem*) which were first mapped by Dutch cartographer Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594).

After "Mercator" comes "Somewhere" (91) which canvasses certain epistemological issues posed by Clifton's reimaginings of distant locales. In his discussion of "Irish poetry and the Diaspora" in *Metre* magazine, Clifton wrote that:

> The city of Paris rubs off in a different way than the American Midwest, the Jos plateau of Nigeria differently than the mountains on the Cambodian border. Having lived and written in all those places and many others, it is no longer the difference between them that interests me, but what they share in terms of a common human experience. (1997, 11-12)

While being aware of the specificities of place in Paris, the USA, Nigeria and Cambodia, the poet nevertheless asserts here a commonality in "human experience". However, tension is evident in the variegations of place and placelessness, the local and the universal in the wider corpus of Clifton's poetry which oscillates between these interconnected positions. It is within the in-between zone that we can most lucidly situate Clifton's poetic imagination, a zone which separates "common" human experience from very "different" ways of living in particular places.

Certain poems problematise these issues of travel and identity in more philosophical terms. In "The Whaling Station", Clifton uses the language of the Antarctic to express uncertainty about what is meant by poetic discovery or knowledge. "And that is all I know about Antarctica – / Or nearly", he writes, as the poem accumulates layers of imagery (2007, 91). These "secondhand images" amount to visual and aural fragments which have broken away from the more solid

"ice-cap of the world" (*ibidem*). They comprise both "doubt" and "knowledge" and circulate in the poet's imagination "till the mind cries *Cut*!" (*ibidem*). They include whales ("the weird, submersible music / Of cetaceans") and the "slow butchery" of "the whaling station" itself, with Clifton's "Imagination" taking "flight" (*ibidem*) as if falling asleep over a chapter of *Moby-Dick*.

The informed reader may also think of Stromness, South Georgia, site of a former whaling station off the coast of Argentina, where Antarctic explorers Ernest Shackleton (1874-1922), Tom Crean (1877-1938) and Frank Worsley (1872-1943) made landfall on 9 May 1916 after crossing the Weddell Sea in their makeshift vessel the *James Caird* to rescue other members of their polar expedition who were stranded on Elephant Island. Clifton uses the language of exploration, rendered familiar via the exploits of Edwardian pioneers like Shackleton and his rival Captain Robert Falcon Scott (1868-1912)[8], to conclude this epistemological poem:

> It is cold and getting colder. I am almost there
> At the pole of pure unknowing.
> The march is hard, but somehow satisfying.
> […]
> The whaling station, yapping dogs and sleds
> Are nothing now. I have not moved an inch
> Since the beginning of this long disvestiture.
> I will not be planting any flags
> Or laying claim to anything not my own. (92)

This poem draws on the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration (approximately 1897-1922) to explore the boundaries of experience and imagination and to map the contours of imaginative flight versus real crossings and voyages. While the final two lines appear to eschew "secondhand images", the poem is really a triumph of such images and challenges notions of firsthand encounter as the basis for poetic "fulfilment" (*ibidem*). Indeed, it plays with notions of ownership, incorporation and conquest by using the term "disvestiture" to describe the poetic activity of drawing together images and words. The customary idea of cohesion, integration and the achieved poem is countered by the semantically alien term "divestiture", the selling of assets in a business. The poem plants a flag at "the pole of pure unknowing" or terra incognita as Scott and Shackleton attempted to do in their real-life expeditions, but in a Beckettian fashion, it makes a virtue of ignorance and unsuccess, and eschews Edwardian ideals of colonial conquest. So, in its very achievement, "The Whaling Station" divests itself of notions of integration and synthesis using outmoded imperial references to underline the point and, in the process, reminding us that neither Scott nor Shackleton fully achieved their goals in their most famous expeditions[9].

[8] See Worlsey 1999; Piggott 2000; Shackleton 2002; Brandt 2004.

[9] Although Robert Scott reached the South Pole, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (1872-1928) had planted the flag of Norway there first and Scott perished on the return journey. Shackleton's ambition to cross the Antarctic was scuppered when his boat, *Edurance*, was trapped by ice. Thereafter, his expedition was a desperate and heroic struggle for survival. Clifton's poem, arguably, takes up the theme of heroic failure which is common to both Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 1914-1917 and Scott's Terra Nova expedition, 1910-1912 and uses it figuratively. Clifton's wider engagements with Beckett are evident in such poems as "Vladimir and Estragon" (1988, 12-13); "Reductio" (2007, 20-21); "A Talking Head on the Rue de Bac" (22-24); "Marriage" (2012, 30-31). These influences may also indicate that the "fundamental unheroic" in Samuel Beckett's writing serves as further contextual background to "The Whaling Station" (Ackerley, Gontarski 2004, 474). Robert Scott's "Message to the Public" which was found on his body in November 1912 concludes: "Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions […] These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale" (Bowers, Scott 1995, 277).

Clifton's interstitial imagination thus rests somewhere between the poles of achievement and failure, knowledge and ignorance and it refuses to rest exclusively on the *terra firma* of lived experience. In other important poems, "doubt" and "knowledge" are also taken up, as here in "The Whaling Station", as themes in themselves, worthy of poetic exploration. In "Somewhere", the extent to which other places and other people, their lived realities, are overlooked by aspirant writers, is highlighted. The poem urges the would-be writer to "Join the external universe" but to seek "the unreported zone" which is "never" or seldom "shown" (2012, 91) by the majority of poets. The gap is between well-worn roads and byways and between imagination and reality. In Secular Eden, "The Place" is a poem which likewise considers where and how a claim to identity and knowledge might be made:

Unnameable, that blinding sheet of water
High in the hills I came upon out of the blue
And off the map, on my own way through
The sites of famine and the sites of slaughter
That called themselves Ireland. […]. (2007, 115)

In this journey poem, "travel" nevertheless belongs to "the shadow-world" and an ethical or spiritual "state of grace" on a separate plane from lived "reality" seems to be the sought-after destination. In Beckettian fashion, the location is "Unnameable" and belongs partly to the figurative realm that the poet "could only imagine" (115-116). A return to innocence is implied in the speaker's lonely baptism in an icy mountain tarn with real-life "travel" cast off, like the "disvestiture" of "The Whaling Station". As if planting a definitive flag in the waters of the imagination, the poem concludes: "This, at last, was the place" (116).

5. Desert Crossings

The desert is a locale that encompasses many of these ambiguities and axes. It is a site where the profane and sacred exist together, it is both "nasty" and "nice" (2012, 85), "desolate" and "a place of clarity" (1996, 42). Clifton explains:

> I think that anybody who has read my poems will probably have noticed my interest in deserts: real deserts, as in "The Desert Route", or metaphorical deserts, as in "The Walls of Carthage". Where I live at present in Paris is for me a desert, and I use the word desert in a positive sense. For me the desert is a place of clarity and emptiness, and a point of departure; I don't see it in terms of desolation. (*Ibidem*)

Even though Clifton alludes to 1990s Paris as a place of "emptiness" and thus in some sense, "perfect" (2006, 12) for writing, "real deserts" in his work are often compromised places. "The Desert Route", title poem for his *The Desert Route: Selected Poems 1973-1988*, is a mottled vignette of a desert convoy setting out, at once physical and metaphysical:

[…] chaos, preparations
For the desert . . . camels genuflecting
To necessity, loaded with iron bedsteads,
Struggling to rise; and donkeys

With lank, hopeless penises,
Jesuit eyes,
Marking time. (2014, 33)

Like its corresponding dry-zone in Latin America, the Atacama, this is a place where history and poverty weighs upon the population. The probable departure-point for "The Desert Route" is Sokoto in northern Nigeria which Clifton visited in May 1977[10]. Here, the changing fortunes of the Sahel region, between north and sub-Saharan Africa, are reflected in the corruption and lawlessness found there in the twentieth century and more recently. Tom Collins explains how: "[…] policy-makers […] are at odds over what to do with the rising lawlessness of the Sahel. Security imperatives frequently trump development and strategy is muddled in the absence of any panacea" (Collins 2018, 42) and he highlights, in the same article, the contrast of past prosperity with more recent social disorder:

> Across much of West Africa a trend has developed. As the Atlantic Ocean feeds the economic powerhouses on the coast, the Sahara has given way to instability, contraband and disrepair. This wasn't always the case. In fact the very opposite was true. Transit routes criss-crossing the desert connected once-powerful cities like Timbuktu, Gao, Djenné, Sokoto and Kano with North Africa and the Middle East. Goods like gold, salt, cotton, leather and ostrich feathers were transported and traded in large caravans and it was the interior that flourished. (*Ibidem*)

Clifton's poetry from his time teaching in Nigeria from 1976-78 reflects this sense of economic decline and moral malaise. For example, "Gold and Base" in *Office of the Salt Merchant* (1979) refers to "a moral wilderness" created by "the postwar mining boom" (38) while "Dry Savannah" describes:

> Nigerian tribeswomen
> Travelling slowly to market,
> Economies balanced
> On their heads, illiterate eyes
> Scanning the known horizons, sure manifestoes
> Of earth and sky. (41)

These grim realities of survival in the Sahel region of Africa are similar in tone to the response of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) to Chile's Atacama Desert which he visited in June 1835 on the round-the-world voyage of H.M.S. Beagle. This journey would take him to the Galapagos islands and would lead ultimately to the development of his theories of evolution by natural selection in *The Origin of Species* (1859)[11]. Looking for fossils in the Atacama, Darwin commented on its extreme aridity which depressed him:

> While travelling through these deserts one feels like a prisoner shut up in a gloomy court […] We rode on to Ballenar, which takes its name from Ballenagh [sic] in Ireland, the birthplace of the family of O'Higgins, who, under the Spanish government, were presidents and generals in Chile […] an uninteresting country […] barren and sterile […] Every one seems bent on the one object of making money, and then migrating as quickly as possible. All the inhabitants are more or less directly concerned with mines, and mines and ores are the sole subjects of conversation. (Darwin 1995, 78, 80, 86)

[10] This information is from Harry Clifton, email to the present author, 11 February 2021.

[11] Darwin's *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle* (1839-1843), commonly known as *The Voyage of the Beagle*, helped to establish his scientific reputation. On this five-year voyage, Darwin made several discoveries about the geology and fossil-record of South America, and the so-called *Copiapò Notebook* contains his original field notes on northern Chile, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/EditorialIntroductions/Chancellor_fieldNotebooks1.7.html> (03/2021).

A more recent British expedition to the Atacama from Cambridge University in 1958 responded more enthusiastically to the terrain compared to Darwin's apparent "indifference" (Aarons, Vita-Finzi 1960, 14). These visitors described the Atacama as "a shy desert" lacking the "majestic proportions of the Saharan serir" and revealing its "charms only reluctantly" (28). The town of Antofagasta is not desolate, according to them, but "picturesquely seedy" (34)[12].

Other visitors to Chile's *Norte Grande* have found the "clarity and emptiness" Clifton discerns but also extremes of desolation and occasional hope. Chilean author Ariel Dorfman uses his extended road journey for self-discovery and as a means of chronicling modern Chile:

> That desert […] had engendered contemporary Chile, everything that was good about it, everything that was dreadful. The Chile of inequality and misery […] the Chile [… of] political struggle […] Allende himself […] though born in Valparaíso, in Chile's región central, had ended up later in life as a senator representing the region of Tarapacá in the north of the country […] And Pinochet, yes, General Augusto Pinochet […] he had also spent many years commanding different posts in the North. (Dorfman 2004, 12-13)

Dorfman's journey is one that brings him to the town of Pisagua, "a blighted place, a port cursed by history" (2004, 221) where Dorfman's close friend and fellow political activist Freddy Taberna was murdered on Pinochet's orders on 30 October 1973. Dorfman's journey to the town where his friend spent his last days and hours juxtaposes "the insanity of being here […] alive" while Taberna "was dead" (229). Dorfman's narrative is concerned with echoes and hauntings from the trauma of the Pinochet dictatorship and the desert allows him the introspective space to reflect on the "dungeons" (246) and the "missing" (253) of that period.

In the same way, Clifton's poetry is very much alert to the hauntings and aftermaths of history. "The Winter Sleep of Captain Lemass" is a political poem in which absences reverberate across time; indeed, it is a lament written:

> In the name of the lost, the disinherited,
> All who never came back from the dead
> To tell their story, claim their place - (2012, 46)

In the location in the Dublin mountains where Captain Noel Lemass was murdered by Free State troops in 1923, an aura of absence lingers[13]. "It's always cold up here / […] Infinite winter" (*ibidem*) and the poem visualises "the force of exclusion" and "execution" (44) in ways that invite comparison with the "horror" sensed by Dorfman in Pisagua (2004, 229).

However, the desert is also a site for contemplation where "clarity and emptiness" have sacred and spiritual associations. In his Introduction to *The Wisdom of the Desert* (1960), Thomas Merton explains the essential ordinariness, as he sees it, of the contemplative life lived by the

[12] John Aarons and Claudio Vita-Finzi, co-authors of *The Useless Land: A Winter in the Atacama Desert* (1960) respond in these comments to Darwin's diary entry from the voyage on H.M.S Beagle where Darwin noted: "It was almost a pity to see the sun shining over so useless a country. Such splendid weather ought to have brightened fields and pretty gardens" (quoted in Aarons, Vita-Finzi 1960, 13-14).

[13] Captain Noel Lemass, brother of future Irish Taoiseach Seán Lemass and veteran of the Easter Rising, was murdered for his involvement on the anti-Treaty side in the Irish Civil War 1922-1923. The inscription on his tombstone in the Dublin mountains reads: "In proud and loving memory of Captain Noel Lemass, 3rd Batt Dublin City Brigade I.R.A who died so that the republic might live. His murdered body was found on this spot 13th October 1923". See "But who is Captain Lemass?" (2016), <https://wfupress.wfu.edu/arts-and-culture/but-who-is-captain-lemass/> (03/2021).

"first Christian hermits" (3) whose sayings Merton translates for his book. This is the mode of life closest to the one Merton chose for himself when he joined the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, Kentucky in 1941 as a Trappist monk. For Merton, the Desert Fathers: "had come to the desert to be themselves, their *ordinary* selves, and to forget a world that divided them from themselves" (23).

In his poem "Skellig Michael", Harry Clifton considers Irish monasticism in terms of the wisdom of the desert using contrastive meteorology not unlike that of "The Rain Shadow" and "A Gulf Stream Ode". The island off the coast of Co. Kerry even shares some of the maritime features which unnerve Ariel Dorfman during his stay at Pisagua: "the waves […] tide [… and] *pi-pi-pi* lament of seabirds" (Clifton 2012, 229):

> The 'vine transplanted out of Egypt'
> Is, they tell me, Ireland.
> I, who did my penance on the mainland,
> Now look back
> From a lost Atlantic rock
> At all those towns named Dysart
> Meaning 'desert'. Surely to Christ
> They knew of us, the Fathers,
> Way back then, in the Middle East –
> Occluded in our weather,
> Or call it a spirit-mist,
> Where the selkies bark, the oceans break,
> Invisible therefore real
> As the books insist. (37)

Just as "The Rain Shadow" merges aridity with moisture, the "Dry-eyed, / Tearless" suppression of emotion against "A shuddering sob at the kitchen sink" (85-86), so here we are asked to consider a desert that is both humid and arid, Irish and of "the Middle East" (37). The poem ponders: what is "Occluded in our weather", what is "Invisible" (*ibidem*)? And so, the speaker seems preoccupied by the hiddenness of what is "real", be this mystical, emotional, or social. Arguably, the solitary penitents who, in Merton's monastic vocabulary, have sought to "forget a world" in the desert or on Skellig Michael, may not always attain the vantage point that the poem's speaker supposes, the ability to "Look back" with clarity or understanding (*ibidem*). Merton did not fully achieve a world undivided from himself, as his biography tells us. And, rather like the protagonists of Clifton's "The Rain Shadow", the "weather" (*ibidem*) of the past pursues those who flee it in such a way that only "a haunted future" awaits (86).

In "Skellig Michael", Clifton's interstitial sensibility locates its meanings in the "crossing" from mainland to island and the poem's almost "medieval" iconography, its "croaked-up devils", align the theological imagination, I suggest, with the voyage of history (37-38). In broader terms, the global wanderings of Clifton's rootless protagonists – Merton in Thailand, Hammarskjöld in New York, Gombrowicz in Buenos Aires – are *transmigrations*. Drawing on teachings from the East, Clifton characterises expatriate identity as multiple or fractured, akin to the soul in Hinduism passing to another shape in a subsequent life, being reincarnated in a new form or, in the expatriate's case, a new country. The displaced victims of war in "Benjamin Fondane Departs for the East" are "transmigrating / Like souls, through the neutral space on the map" (2007, 200). In "Estación El Retiro, Buenos Aires", the migrants to South America are:

[…] transmigrating
Out of Europe, dragging sailors' trunks
Aboard the Pullmans […]. (2012, 87)

Clifton sees the migration of souls and people, the process of being "Dead, reborn / In the place of eternal return" as both generational (familial) and in more strictly religious terms (*ibidem*). And this "praxis of the soul" (*ibidem*) has a monastic colouring, being collective and austerely individual.

6. Conclusion: The Gulf Stream

These speculative framings help us to interpret the Atlantic Ocean as the symbolic vector linking Latin America and Ireland and to read more closely "A Gulf Stream Ode" as Clifton's reticent homage to these waters:

How had we fetched up here, in this maritime state
Of "warm wet winters, summers cool and damp"
Our house so filled with pebbles, sea-shells, bird-cries,
Hurricane-lamps, that threw gigantic shadows,
Calcified fishes, drifted tropical seeds
Inscrutable with oceanic force
The Gulf Stream brought us? Shadows, Granny Allende
Even then, I was spooked by my own lost origins. (2007, 101)

The unstated and hidden reverberate in these lines. The current is elemental, like the "Sargasso eel", driven by its own forces (100). The "Anterior life, the darkness of origins" mentioned in "Origins of the Tango" retain their mystery, including the sketchy past of Granny Allende as well as that of Clifton's "Grandad out from Europe" in Buenos Aires "At the turn of the century" (50)[14]. What is familiar to the young Clifton – "our summer house" near "Killary Harbour", "Carney's acres", "Ownie King's post office" – is subsumed by the mysteries of the "Inscrutable" current that brings the temperate and intemperate Irish weather from afar (100).

All these lines and images are faithful to the moodiness of the current they describe which, oceanographers now realise, is a notably discontinuous stream of water. The Gulf Stream is, in fact:

A powerful river […] but unstable […] tormented by ceaseless regrets or second thoughts […] where the current changes its mind and turns back […with] long-lived whirlpools, circles in the water, twenty, thirty, forty kilometres across […] sustained for months in the same circular motion, […] These giant whirlpools are autonomous worlds, each endowed with its own personality. Some are composed of warm water and others of cold; there are those whose waters are salty, and those whose waters are quite fresh. (Orsenna 2008, 42)

One can readily see that the mystique of the current, thus described, has valency in characterising the "extraordinary family" that Clifton senses beyond the solid presences of the western Irish seaboard (Clifton 2007, 101). Unlike the "clarity" of a desert, we are closer here to the impalpable "spirit-mist" and "selkies" evoked in "Skellig Michael" (37). The unseen presences

[14] Clifton's maternal grandfather came to Latin America from Britain around 1905 entering the continent at Buenos Aires, a city which the poet has visited. Harry Clifton, email to the present author, 11 February 2021.

of past generations in the poet's lineage, "the darkness of origins" (50), find expression as migratory souls, metamorphic and aquatic, like the legends of the selkies[15].

Clifton's "Fathers and forefathers" (2012, 87) as well as the "Female archetypes" (2007, 50) represented by his mother and Granny Allende seem to gather together as kindred "Inhabitants of the Gulf Stream" (101). Connections made poetically are affirmed in the findings of oceanography which tell us that "against all expectation, Latin America plays a key role" in the current's progress: "more than half of the Gulf Stream's surface waters […] originate, surprisingly, in the South Atlantic. And, via the Amazon, in a small portion of the Andean snow melt" (Orsenna 2008, 43-44). Clifton enables us to sense all these currents, whirlpools and transmigrations in his poetry.

It seems fitting that Clifton's elegy to his mother, "A Woman Drives Across Ireland" should be another journey poem with its speaker driving westwards on "that road" she had been down "a hundred times before" (Clifton 2020, 80)[16]. The poem imagines all the paths and roads taken or refused: "all the lives I might have lived / Instead of choosing Ireland, and one man" (81); singularity and multiplicity are held in balance. The poem voices reconciliation and closure even as it articulates an expansive openness.

> Above the Inagh valley, I stopped my car
> Out of sheer wonderment, at how far
> I had come, and how much I had survived.
> […]
> A million grassblades, whispering in the breeze,
> Reminded me I was no-one, and the peace
> Felt huge inside me, as the night came on. (*Ibidem*)

In this retrospective poem of a woman's life, written by her son, one feels in the "invisible ether" (80) the complexities of a life lived between two continents, as the unspoken background to a homecoming and laying to rest.

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[15] According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, a selkie is "An imaginary sea creature resembling a seal in the water but able to assume human form on land; it was traditionally believed unlucky to kill a seal in case it might in fact be at least partially human", <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100453561> (03/2021).

[16] Dorothy Clifton (*née* Brandon) died peacefully on 2 December 2019 in Dublin.

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Gaelic Surnominal Place-Names in Ireland and Their Reflection in Argentina

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Abstract:

District-names like Casey, in *Provincia de Buenos Aires*, or Murphy, in *Provincia de Santa Fe*, are mirrored by their Irish counterparts such as Ballycasey (*Baile Uí Chathasaigh*, "Casey's town"), and Ballymurphy (*Baile Uí Mhurchú*, "Murphy's town"). This paper explores some of the Irish Gaelic surnames which have not only made the transfer across the Atlantic, but subsequently found themselves immortalised in Argentinian place-names. In doing so, and by examining the corpus of Irish place-names containing these surnames, it attempts to establish a connection back to the native homelands of these Gaelic families, thus contributing to the wider narrative of the Irish in Latin America.

Keywords: Emigrants, Gaelic families, Onomastics, Surnames, Toponyms.

1. Introduction

Place-names, no matter where in the world they are, offer us an insight into the history of a place. By uncovering their origins and etymologies, we are afforded an opportunity to gain an understanding of the various political, social, religious, and geographical influences which shaped the nomenclature of an area. Quite often in Ireland, place-names are merely descriptions of the local topography. As such, names which simply describe features of the landscape tend to be our most common category; and place-names like Dromore (*An Droim Mór*, "the big ridge") or Mullaghboy (*An Mullach Buí*, "the yellow hilltop") are found throughout the island. Another category of names is that which commemorates titans of the built environment, thus highlighting the influence of settlement and settlers on the naming process. This is evidenced in names like Lisdoo/Lisduff (*An Lios Dubh*, "the black ringfort") or Cashelbane (*An Caiseal Bán*, "the white ringfort"). Sometimes, however, place-names immortalise the surnames of ancient noble Gaelic families in Ireland and show us that these families were important or significant enough in a particular area to have a place named in

their honour (or name a place in their own honour). Therefore, place-names like Ballyneill (*Baile Uí Néill*, "O'Neill's town(land)") and Ballydonnel (*Baile Uí Dhónaill*, "O'Donnells's town(land)") are proof of the former influence of these Gaelic septs in various regions.

In many cases, this influence does not come to a halt at the Irish sea borders. A number of these surnames have made the voyage of emigration across the Atlantic and once again made their way into place-names, centuries after their toponymic parallels in Ireland were first coined[1]. To that end, this article looks at a small number of Gaelic surnominal place-names in Argentina, and seeks to discover if toponymic links can be established back to the homeland of those who gave their names to these places. If so, we may be so bold as to suggest an ancestral connection between the individuals and families who are commemorated in Gaelic surnominal place-names in Argentina and those very Gaels who named their places in Ireland long ago.

2. Anglicisation of Irish place-names

Before we discuss the place-names themselves it would be worthwhile to make a brief mention of Irish place-names in general. For the most part, the modern forms of Irish place-names have undergone a process of Anglicisation which has concealed the original Irish language etymologies. This process has taken place as a result of the language shift from Irish to English. However, the native Irish place-names were not annexed during the language shift, they were merely adopted or "transliterated" into the English language[2]. As such, the historical toponymist is able to look at older spellings of the names as preserved in various English language documents compiled by incomers. Even though they were not composed in Irish, these historical spellings are often the key to unlocking the Irish language origin of the name. The majority of the place-names discussed in this article belong to this category. However, as well as adopting the native Irish place-names, settlers from Britain also coined new place-names in their own language, often by simply adding the word "town" after their own name or surname. For example, names such as Walterstown in County Meath, or Adamstown in County Louth (henceforth "County" will be abbreviated to "Co.")[3]. Likewise, a small number of the place-names cited in this article belong to this stratum.

3. Gaelic Surnominal place-names in Argentina

The following eight names were selected from a list entitled "Irish Place Names and Landmarks in Argentina"[4]. They were selected because biographical information is provided

[1] The Irish surnominal place-names were found by searching the database of the Northern Ireland Place-names Project (NIPNP) at < www.placenamesni.org> (03/2021) and the database of the Placenames Branch, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (PNB) at <www.logainm.ie > (03/2021). Under the discussion for each Irish surnominal place-name in Argentina, I have included every example I could find of the same surname in a place-name in Ireland.

[2] See Ó Mainnín (2017) for a comprehensive discussion on the anglicisation process and the journey of Irish place-names from their Irish origins to their contemporary forms.

[3] It was not uncommon for English names coined by the Anglo-Normans to undergo a process of Gaelicisation. For example, in the case of *Walterston*, Co. Down, the name was adopted into Irish as *Baile Uaitéir*. As Ó Mainnín denotes, "There is an ironic twist, however; when the tide turned again in favour of English from the seventeenth century, the name re-emerged not as *Walterstown (i.e. as a modern reflex of the Middle English name) but as Ballywalter, a name in English (and of English origin) which was now unmistakably Irish" (2017, 17).

[4] See: <https://www.irlandeses.org/ipnl_argentina.htm> (03/2021).

on the link at footnote 4 for the individuals and families who gave their names to these places in Argentina. However, there are many other Irish surnominal place-names in Argentina; for example, Cullen, Lynch, MacCay, Mackenna, Maguire, Mulcahy. Further study of other sources would reveal the families or individuals from whom these places were named[5].

3.1 Casey

The town of Casey in Partido de Guaminí, Provincia de Buenos Aires, was named in honour of Eduardo Casey. He was born in 1847 and was the son of Irish emigrants Lawrence Casey, from Co. Westmeath, and Mary O'Neill, from Co. Wicklow. Eduardo ended his own life in 1906 after a long battle to recover his financial losses (Murray 2010, 318). He is most notable for having founded the city of Venado Tuerto in southern Provincia de Santa Fe, in which there is also a main avenue, "Casey", named after him (IPLA)[6].

Woulfe (1923, 455-56) lists six distinct septs of the surname *Ó Cathasaigh*, the original Irish form of Casey. One was an ancient family in Co. Meath; another was a Dalcassian family in Co. Limerick; elsewhere in Munster was a family who were in possession of a territory in Co. Cork. In Connacht there were two erenagh families, one in Mayo, and another in Roscommon; and finally, in Ulster, there was another erenagh family in Co. Fermanagh.

There are two townlands named Ballycasey (*Baile Uí Chathasaigh*, "Casey's town(land)" in Galway and Tipperary, as well as Ballycasey Beg and Ballycasey More in Co. Clare[7]. Elsewhere in Clare there is a townland called Coolycasey (*Cúil Uí Chathasaigh*, "Casey's corner/nook")[8], and another called Liscasey (*Lios Uí Chathasaigh*, "Casey's ringfort")[9]. This name is seemingly mirrored by another in the north, in Co. Tyrone, called Liscausey (Ó Doibhlin 2021, forthcoming). Another interesting example is the place-name Garrancasey, in Co. Tipperary, which the PNB takes to have derived from *Garraí an Chathasaigh*[10]. What we have here is an example of a fairly common phenomenon in Irish surnames, where a name beginning with the "Ó" prefix swaps this for the definite article "an" (the), thus taking on a nominal form[11]. As such we can translate *Garraí an Chathasaigh* as "garden of (the) Casey", or simply "Casey's garden". In the east of Ireland, we have two places containing the surname, one is Dallyhaysy in Dublin which seems to come from *Dál Uí Chathasaigh*, "tribe of Casey", which would render it a very early name[12]. A final example is the intriguing place-name Clonadacasey, which contains this surname in its nasalised genitive plural form, i.e. where the place was named after a local family bearing

[5] The *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, for example.

[6] See Landaburu (1995) for a detailed biography on the life of Eduardo Casey.

[7] *Baile* is generally anglicised as "Bally" and it is the most common element in Irish place-names. There has been significant academic discussion regarding the use of the word in place-names; see Price (1963), Flanagan (IPN, 8-13), and Toner (2004). It may denote "town" or "townland", or simply "settlement" in the wider sense. For the purpose of the place-names in this article which contain the element, I have translated it as "town(land)".

[8] *Cúil* means "corner, nook" (Ó Dónaill s.v.) and it is common all over Ireland as an initial element in place-names.

[9] In Old Irish, *lios* literally meant "the space about a dwelling-house or houses enclosed by a bank of rampart" (eDIL s.v. *les*). As Deirdre and Laurence Flanagan point out, however, in place-name terms, it is generally translated as "fort" (IPN, 112), or "ring-fort" (Ó Dónáill s.v.).

[10] *Garraí* may denote a few different things, "small (enclosed) field, plot", "yard, enclosure", or more simply, "garden". It is in this latter sense it is generally translated for place-name purposes.

[11] For example, *Ó Cathasaigh* becomes *An Cathasach*, i.e. "the Casey". Other examples include *Ó Doibhlin* (Devlin) becomes *An Doibhlineach* "the Devlin"; *Ó Donnabháin* (Donovan) becomes *An Donnabhánach* "the Donovan".

[12] *Dál* is attested in Old Irish as "a sept, a tribe; the land inhabited by a tribe" (eDIL s.v.).

the surname, and not just one individual (*Cluain Fhada Ó gCathasaigh*, "long meadow of the Caseys")[13]. It is highly likely that the Caseys who gave their names to these two latter places in Leinster were of the ancient Meath sept of *Ó Cathasaigh*. Likewise, it is possible that Eduardo Casey's father, Lawrence, from Co. Westmeath descended from the same sept.

3.2. Dillon

The street-name Dillon in Merlo in Provincia de Buenos Aires was named after a Juan Dillon (1819-1887), who was a public official and businessman. He was the second son of John Dillon (d. 1826) from Dublin. This in itself is noteworthy as it shows an example that migration to Argentina took place from the capital of Ireland as well as from rural areas. Juan Dillon was responsible for building the church in Merlo, as well as the municipality and several schools. Dillon was appointed to the key position of Immigrations Commissioner in 1875 by President Avellaneda. He was subsequently elected senator during three terms in the Buenos Aires parliament (Coghlan 1987, 241; DILAP). Given the fact that he had a monumental impact on the development of the town we may speculate as to why the name Dillon appears to have been employed so sparingly.

The surname Dillon is common throughout Ireland, particularly in North Connaught and the Midlands (de Bhulbh 2008, 48). They were one of the great Hiberno-Norman families in Ireland, and it has been a surname of some significance throughout Irish history. As MacLysaght (1985, 73) informs us, their stronghold was "Dillon's Country" in Westmeath, and another branch settled in Co. Mayo. As the Dillon family integrated into the Irish and Gaelic society, their name underwent a process of Gaelicisation and became *Díolún*.

Being a family of such importance, they have understandably left their mark on a number of Irish toponyms. As is to be expected, many of these are in Leinster, the province in which the Anglo-Norman presence was strongest, and in which the Dillon family themselves settled. We have three examples of place-names coined in English, Dillonstown in Co. Louth, Dillonsdown in Co. Wicklow, and Dillonsland in Co. Meath (PNB). As well as these we have a hill range in Co. Louth called Knockdillon, which derives from Irish *Cnoc an Díolúnaigh* "Dillon's hill"[14]. In Co. Meath we have a townland called Mullaghdillon, and although the PNB has not yet suggested an Irish origin, we can be fairly certain in postulating *Mullach an Díolúnaigh*, or perhaps simply *Mullach Díolúin* "Dillon's summit/hilltop". Further south, in Co. Tipperary, in the province of Munster there is a townland named Garrandillon, which comes from Irish *Garrán an Díolúnaigh* "Dillon's grove" (PNB)[15]. We can also find an example of the surname in one Ulster place-name, in the north of the country; Artidllon in Co. Derry was originally *Ard Tí Díolúin* "the height of Dillon's house" (Comer 2016, 139)[16]. Our place-name evidence indicates clearly that the surname Dillon had a greater influence on the toponyms of Leinster than any other part of Ireland – which, interestingly, was the native province of Juan Dillon's father, John.

[13] *Cluain* is a very common element in place-names and it means "meadow" or "pasture-land" (IPN, 56).

[14] Here we have another example of the definite article *an* being used with a surname. *Díolún* (Dillon) becomes *An Díolúnach* "the Dillon".

[15] *Garrán* is a word meaning "grove" or "shrubbery". It is rather numerous in Munster, Connaught, and Leinster, but does not seem to be well attested in Ulster (Joyce I, 498).

[16] *Ard* is the most common word in Irish place-names which signifies a "height" (IPN, 17). *Teach* (or the oblique form *tigh*) is the Modern Irish word for house. When found in a place-name, it frequently denotes saints house, i.e. a church (147).

3.3 Duggan

The town and railway station of Duggan in *San Antonio de Areco* is named after Tomás Duggan, who sold 40 hectares to the Western Railway in 1896 (Murray 2005, 144; IPLA)[17]. Tomás first arrived in Argentina from Ireland in 1859 and he became a leading member of the Irish-Argentine community. According to the memoir of John Macnie the Duggans went on to become "one of the wealthiest families in Argentina" (1925, 62). They were the sons of Hugh Duggan and Jane Kelly, and they hailed from Ballymahon in Co. Longford (IPLA).

The surname comes from Irish *Ó Dubhagáin* which is rendered *Ó Dúgáin* in Modern Irish, and has its origins in the Irish adjective "dubh", meaning "black". It may be anglicised alternatively as "Doogan" or "Dougan". There were several distinct septs with the surname. What is deemed to be the original and most important were from Fermoy, in Co. Cork; there was another sept elsewhere in Cork and 3 others in Connaught (Woulfe 1923, 508-509).

The surname *Ó Dúgáin* has left its mark on quite a few Irish place-names. If we begin in the sept's ancestral home county of Cork, we find two townlands containing the surname as a qualifying element; Caherduggan (*Currach Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's marsh")[18], and Lisduggan (*Lios Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's ringfort") (PNB). As mentioned above, the Duggans also had a strong foothold on certain areas of Connaught, and this is reflected in the nomenclature of the province. There are 2 townlands called Ballydoogan in Co. Galway and Sligo, which come from *Baile Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's town(land)". We also see the surname appear in another Galway townland name; Cartrondoogan (*Cartrún Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's quarter(land)")[19] is situated in the same parish as the aforementioned Ballydoogan, which shows us the family held particular importance in the district (*ibidem*). Another Ballydoogan in Co. Westmeath (Leinster) has the same derivation, and two townlands called Ballydugan in Co. Down (Ulster) (NIPNP; PNB; McKay 1999, 12). The surname appears in no less than three place-names in Co. Donegal, and all are situated along the northwest coast of Ireland; Binnyduggan (*Binn Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's peak/point")[20] and Scoltydoogan (*Scoilt Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's crack")[21] (PNB). The third place, Duggan's Town, differs from the two former names in that it was coined in English and not Irish. We have another example of a similar composition in Co. Wexford, in Leinster; Doogan's Warren (*ibidem*). Our final, and most noteworthy example is in Co. Longford, the native county of the Duggan Brothers. Farranyoogan (*Fearann Uí Dhúgáin*, "Duggan's ploughland")[22] is located a mere 18km away from the town of Ballymahon, the homeplace of Hugh Duggan. If any of these names are to have an ancestral link to Duggan in *San Antonio de Areco*, this one must be deemed our most likely candidate.

[17] See Murray (2005) for a discussion on the development of the railway system in Argentina.

[18] *Currach* (or *corrach*) is one of several Irish words meaning "swamp", "marsh", "morass", or "wet bog" (Ó Dónaill s.v.; IPN, 61).

[19] "Cartron" was a term brought to Ireland by Anglo-Norman settlers. As Joyce explains, "*cartron* signifies a quarter, and is derived from the French *quarteron* […] it was applied to a parcel of land varying in amount from 60 acres to 160 acres" (Joyce I, 245). It was subsequently Gaelicised and adopted into the Irish language as *cartrún*, *cartún*, or *cartúr* (Mac Gabhann 2014, i 123). Although not an overly numerous element throughout Ireland, it is not uncommon around the Midlands and in Connaught (see: <www.logainm.ie> (03/2021)).

[20] *Binn* (or *beann*) means "peak" or "mountain peak" (IPN, 29), but can also denote "horn, antler" (Ó Dónaill s.v.); or simply "point" in the wider sense.

[21] *Scoilt* literally translates as "crack" or "split" (Ó Dónaill s.v.). In place-name terms, it generally denotes a coastal feature, i.e. a crack in the rocks.

[22] *Fearann* is a word which means simply "land" in a general sense, but more specifically "ploughland" (IPN,186).

3.4 Kenny

Another such railway station in Provincia de Buenos Aires is Kenny. Antonio Kenny (1857-1921) was the son of James Kenny (1798-1857), who came to Argentina before 1837, and Honoria Murray (1811-1904) – they were from Co. Westmeath. Antonio himself was born in San Vicente a short time after his father died, and he himself died on 21 February 1921. In 1897, he granted a parcel of land to the Central Buenos Aires railway director, and thus the Kenny station was founded (IPLA).

The surname derives from Irish *Ó Cionaoith*[23], and it was the name of a number of distinct septs. The most notable of these were the lords of the *Uí Máine* in counties Galway and Roscommon, and in this region the surname is still very numerous (MacLysaght 1985, 115). In Ulster there was an *Ó Cionaoith* sept in Co. Tyrone, and another sept called *Ó Coinne* in Co. Down which became anglicised as Kenny (Bell 1988, 111)[24].

Various families and individuals called *Ó Cionaoith* have become immortalised in place-names all throughout Ireland. For example, there are two townlands in Co. Donegal, and another in Co. Limerick called Ballykenny, these derive from Irish *Baile Uí Chionaoith*, "Kenny's town(land)". Further names include Clonakenny in Co. Tipperary (*Cluain Uí Chionaoith*, "Kenny's meadow/pasture"), Coolkenna, Co. Wicklow (*Cúil Uí Chionaoith*, "Kenny's corner/nook"), and Tullycanna, Co. Wexford (*Tulaigh Uí Chionaoith*, "Kenny's hillock")[25] (PNB). We also have an example of this surname appearing in its genitive plural form in Carrigogna, Co. Cork (*Carraig Ó gCionaoith*, "rock of the Kennys")[26]. Cluntganny in Tyrone may be another example of this as it possibly derives from *Cluain Ó gCionaoith*, "meadow/pasture of the Kennys" (Ó Doibhlin 2021, forthcoming). Kenny also appears in Irish place-names of English origin. There are townlands called Kennystown in counties Tyrone and Wicklow which undoubtedly were named from local inhabitants bearing the surname (NIPNP; PNB). The above place-names are well distributed throughout Ireland, with four in Ulster, three in Munster, and three in Leinster. Ironically, none appear in the province of Connaught, from which the most significant *Ó Cionaoith* family hailed[27]. There also appears to be no examples of the surname appearing in a place-name in Co. Westmeath, the homeplace of the family of our Antonio Kenny.

3.5 Lennon

The majority of the place-names featured in this paper are towns, or railway stations which subsequently grew into towns. However, sometimes Irish landowners named features within their properties (Murray 2010, 71). Lennon stream in Capilla del Señor, Provincia de Buenos Aires, is one such example. The landowner in question was one Edward Lennon, born in Co. Westmeath in 1819. This stream which was on his *estancia* in Capilla del Señor was named after him (DILAB).

Although the surname Lennon is found throughout Ireland, it is particularly common in Ulster and Leinster. In general, it comes from Irish *Ó Leannáin*[28] and it was the name of various

[23] Woulfe (1923, 466) gives the alternative spellings *Ó Cionaodha* and *Ó Cionáith*.

[24] The more common anglicised form of *Ó Coinne* is (O') Quinn.

[25] *Tulaigh* is an oblique form of *tulach*, meaning "Low hill; hillock, mound" (Ó Dónaill s.v.).

[26] Carraig means simply "rock", and Flanagan also gives the meanings "large prominent stone" (IPN, 44).

[27] It should be noted that the family's native homeland in Co. Roscommon was known as Munter Kenny (*Muintir Uí Chionaith*, "the people of Kenny"). This is now a non-official place-name, and although it is still known locally, it no longer serves any administrative purposes.

[28] As MacLysaght explains, "some confusion arises because […] the Irish surnames *Ó Lonáin* (Lenane) and even *Ó Luinín* (Linneen) are also sometimes Lennon […] in English" (1985, 120).

distinct septs. The most notable of these were an erenagh family in the parish of Inishmacsaint, Co. Fermanagh; a number of the members of the family were priors or canons in the same county in the fourteenth and fifteenth century (Bell 1988, 120).

Ó Leannáin has left its mark on many place-names all over Ireland. There are no less than nine townlands which derive from *Baile Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's town(land)"; two called Ballylennon in Co. Offaly and Carlow, two called Ballylennan in Tyrone, and two more in Donegal and Galway, Ballylannan in Wexford, Ballylinane in Limerick, and Ballylenane in Waterford (NIPNP; PNB). Other examples include Aghalinane in Co. Cork which comes from (*Áth Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's ford")[29], Killina in Co. Monaghan (*Coill Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's wood")[30], and Cappalinnan in Laois (*Ceapach Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's tillage-plot")[31]. Two townlands in Co. Cavan contain the surname as a qualifying element, they are Corlattylannan (*Corrleacht Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's odd grave-mound")[32] and Cullyleenan (*Cúil Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's corner/nook"). Although the townland on Keyanna in Limerick comes from Caothanna "swamps", the PNB informs us that historical evidence from the seventeenth century proves *Cúil Uí Leannáin* was a former name for the townland. *Corr Uí Leannáin*, "Lennon's round hill" seems the most likely etymology of Corralinnen in Co. Fermanagh[33]. Of all the above place-names, the majority are in Ulster, and somewhat unsurprisingly, most of these are in counties bordering Fermanagh, the county in which the *Ó Leannáin* sept held significant importance. Only three are in the province of Leinster, and none are in Westmeath, the native homeplace of our Edward Lennon.

3.6 Murphy

John James Murphy is the individual who has found himself immortalised in the name of the town and railway station of Murphy in General López, Santa Fe. The town did not receive the name Murphy until 1911 and it was the descendants of the original migrant who were still in the area who named it. He was born in the parish of Kilrane, Co. Wexford, in 1822, and was the eldest son of Nicholas Murphy and Katherine Sinnott. Edmundo Murray gives a good account of his emigration to Argentina, and his subsequent endeavours and exploits in the country[34].

Murphy is the single most numerous surname in Ireland, and it is common in every province. It is an intriguing surname as it was used with both the "Ó" and "Mac" prefixes, depending on what part of Ireland it was found. The vast majority of those called Murphy nowadays originally came from Irish *Ó Murchadha*, meaning, "descendant of *Murchadh*", which was an

[29] *Áth* is the most common Irish word for a "ford", and it forms part of hundreds of place-names all over the island of Ireland (Joyce I, 354).

[30] *Coill* is a one of a number of Irish words which signifies a "wood". It is generally anglicised as "kil(l)" and for this reason it is often difficult to distinguish it from another Irish word in its modern spelling; *cill* "church".

[31] As Joyce (I, 228) points out, *ceapach* is a word meaning "a plot of land laid out for tillage". It is not uncommon in place-names but is not found in Ulster as frequently as it is in other provinces.

[32] *Leacht* means "grave or burial monument", and is quite common in place-names, often referring to wedge-tombs but can also refer to other sorts of megalith (IPN, 107). It is preceded here by the adjective *corr*, meaning odd or conspicuous (Joyce I, 397).

[33] As Joyce (I, 397) alludes to, the noun *corr* is troublesome for place-name scholars as it can signify a few different things. These include, "projecting point", "round hill", "hollow", "pit". As mentioned previously, as an adjective it means "odd" or "conspicuous" (Ó Dónaill s.v.).

[34] Murray's account is available online at <https://www.irlandeses.org/murphy.htm> (03/2021).

ancient personal name meaning "sea-warrior" (Ó Corráin, Maguire 1981, 142). The surname has now been standardised in Modern Irish as *Ó Murchú*. It was the name of three separate septs in three separate provinces, one in Cork (Munster), one in Roscommon (Connaught), and one in Wexford (Leinster). However, most Murphys in the province of Ulster actually come from a further distinct sept, *Mac Murchadha*, which is more commonly rendered *Mac Murchaidh* in northern dialects of Irish. They were an important *Cenél Eoghain* family who controlled extensive lands in modern day Co. Tyrone (Bell 1988, 201).

Understandably, there are quite a number of place-names all over Ireland containing the surname Murphy as a qualifying element. *Baile Uí Mhurchú*, "Murphy's town(land)" is the origin of no less than seventeen townlands on the island; fourteen of these were anglicised as Ballymurphy, in counties Cork, Clare, Carlow, Antrim, Limerick, and Galway; and three became anglicised as Ballymurragh, one in Co. Kerry, and a further two in Co. Wexford. More examples include Coolymurraghue in Co. Cork (*Cúil Uí Mhurchú*, "Murphy's corner/nook"), Garryvarragha in Co. Limerick (*Garraí Uí Mhurchú*, "Murphy's garden"), and Rathmurphy in Co. Sligo (*Ráth Uí Mhurchú*, "Murphy's ringfort")[35]. If we venture northwards, we find examples of the alternative Ulster spelling in the names Golanmurphy (*Gabhlán Uí Mhurchaidh,* "Murphy's small fork")[36] and Mullamurphy (*Mullach Uí Mhurchaidh,* "Murphy's summit/hilltop")[37] in Co. Monaghan. Three townlands in Co. Down and another in Co. Antrim called Ballymurphy all most likely derive from *Baile Uí Mhurchaidh*, "Murphy's town(land)" (*NIPNP*). As well as the above place-names which incorporate the surname Murphy with the *Ó* prefix, we have no shortage of examples containing the "Mac" prefix. Ballymurphy in Tyrone is one example of this, as historical spellings from the seventeenth century indicate, the original Irish form was *Baile Mhic Mhurchaidh*, "Murphy's town(land)" (Ó Doibhlin 2021, forthcoming). Both Lismurphy in Co. Derry and Lismacmurrogh in Co. Longford derive from *Lios Mhic Mhurchaidh*, "Murphy's ringfort") (Comer 2016, 304; PNB). The townland of Ballycurragh in Co. Offaly as well as two townlands called Ballymacmurragh in Offaly and Cork have been given by the PNB as *Baile Mhic Mhurchú*, "Murphy's town(land)"; which combines the *Mac* particle, which was in use in Ulster, with the *Murchú* ("Murchadha") form of the surname, which was more common in the south. Finally, of particular interest to us here, we have two interesting townland names from Co. Wexford, John James Murphy's native county; they are Macmurroughsisland and Macmurroughs. They differ from all the previously mentioned names, however, in that they seem to be later English coinages.

3.7 O'Brien

The individual who named the town of (Eduardo) O'Brien in Provincia de Buenos Aires was Eduardo O'Brien, born in Co. Wexford. Eduardo (Edward) O'Brien first emigrated to South America at the age of 14 when he and his parents Patrick and Frances went to Brazil. They subsequently settled in Carmen de Areco, a town in Provincia de Buenos Aires. At the age of 72, in 1906, Eduardo donated 46 hectares for the purpose of building a railway station. The town which grew up around the station was founded officially on 21 March 1909. The name of the station (and town), O'Brien, was selected by Eduardo not to commemorate himself, but

[35] In the older language, *ráth* had the significance, "An earthen rampart surrounding a chief's residence, a fort, rath" (eDIL s.v.). In place-names it is generally translated simply as "fort".

[36] *Gabhlán* is a rather uncommon place-name element. It means "fork, bifurcation, inlet, creek" (Ó Dónaill s.v.).

[37] *Mullach* simply means "summit" or "hilltop" and it is very common in place-names all over Ireland.

General John Thomond O'Brien, who was no relation to Eduardo (IPLA). A few years after Eduardo's death, the station was subsequently renamed "General O'Brien".

O'Brien is one of the great Gaelic families who have been prominent throughout the history of Ireland. The family descends from none other than Brian Boru, who was High King of Ireland until his death at Clontarf, Co. Dublin in 1014. O'Brien is the most common anglicised spelling of *Ó Briain*, other variants include "O'Brian", "O'Bryan", and "O'Bryen". The O'Briens eventually dispersed and divided into several branches: two in Co. Tipperary, two in Limerick, and another in Co. Waterford (Woulfe 1923, 442-443). Although originating in Munster, O'Brien has now spread all throughout Ireland where it is the fifth most common surname (MacLysaght 2007, 27).

Being a surname of such significance and importance throughout Ireland's history, O'Brien has left its mark on many toponyms all over the island. There are two townlands named Ballybrien in counties Limerick and Longford, they derive from Irish *Baile Uí Bhriain*, "O'Brien's town(land)". Furthermore, there is a townland in Tipperary called Ashpark, but this name does not appear until the ninenteenth century. Historical evidence dating back to 1552 shows us that *Baile Uí Bhriain* was a former name for the townland (PNB). Derryvreen in Cork derives from *Doire Uí Bhriain*, "O'Brien's oak-wood", as does Derrybreen in Tipperary[38]. Other townlands in Tipperary include Cloneybrien, from *Cluain Uí Bhriain*, "O'Brien's meadow/pasture", and Lisheenbrien, from *Lisín Uí Bhriain* "O'Brien's small ring-fort". The etymology of Rossbrien in Cork is *Ros Uí Bhriain*, which the Placenames Branch translates as "the high place of O'Brien"[39]. The surname is also immortalised in the townland of O'Brienscastle in Co. Clare, which is clearly an English composition. All but one of the above townlands are in the province of Munster, which is to be expected, given that that is where the surname originated, and where the various branches of the family became chieftains. None are in Co. Wexford, Eduardo O'Brien's native county.

3.8 O'Gorman

This is one of a number of streets in the city of Buenos Aires which is named after eminent Irish residents. See for example other streets in the city named Lynch, O'Higgins, and O'Brien (IPLA). The O'Gormans hailed from Ennis in Co. Clare and upon arrival in Argentina, many members of the family went on to be instrumental members of the Irish Argentine community. Thomas O'Gorman was in Buenos Aires from as early as 1797 and it has been suggested that he may have been central in creating a continuous migration scheme from Co. Clare (Murray 2005, 21-22). Father Patrick J. O'Gorman was another member and he first arrived in Buenos Aires in 1831 and became just the second Irish chaplain in Argentina (141).

The surname originally comes from Irish *Mac Gormáin* and Woulfe (1923, 381-82) states the "Ó" prefix was a later addition, giving us *Ó Gormáin*. They were formerly a powerful Leinster family. After the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, they lost their territory and were dispersed; some went to Co. Monaghan, but others went to Co. Clare. This latter group are undoubtedly the ancestors of the Irish Argentine family of O'Gorman.

[38] *Doire* means "oak-grove" or "oak-wood" and is a very common word in Irish place-names (IPN, 70). The most notable example is the city and county of Derry, in the north of Ireland.

[39] The word *ros* may cause difficulty for place-name scholars as it has two completely separate meanings. It may mean "promontory, headland" or "wood, grove" (IPN, 137-138; Ó Dónaill s.v.). The Placenames Branch also gives the significance "(wooded) height". See: <www.logainm.ie> (03/2021).

There are quite a number of place-names in Ireland containing this surname as the specific element. There are places called Ballygorman in counties Armagh and Donegal (*Baile Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's town(land)". Elsewhere in Ulster we have Killygorman (*Coill Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's wood") in counties Fermanagh and Monaghan. Limerick seems to be the county with the most instances of this surname in its nomenclature, with a townland called Coolygorman (*Cúil Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's corner/nook") and a further three townlands called Gormanstown. Gormanstown also appears as a townland name in Tipperary, as well as Gormanston in Co. Meath. Tipperary has a place which is interestingly named Kilballygorman (*Cill Bhaile Uí Ghormáin*, "the church of O'Gorman's town(land)". Remaining in Munster, we see the surname appear twice in Co. Cork, Cloonygorman (*Cluain Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's meadow") and Meengorman (*Mín Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's mountain pasture")[40]; and once in Co. Kerry, Derrygorman (*Doire Uí Ghormáin*, "O'Gorman's oak wood"). Another Derrygorman, in Co. Mayo appears to be the sole example in the province of Connaught, and the PNB gives the postulated Irish form as *Doire Mhic Gormáin*, "Gorman's oak wood"; using the "Mac" prefix as opposed to "Ó". As a result of all of this, a connection between our O'Gormans and any of the places mentioned above seems extremely unlikely.

4. Observations

Coghlan's genealogical catalogue (1987) is an invaluable source for determining the demographics of Irish emigrants to Argentina. It lists Westmeath, Wexford, and Longford as the counties from which the most emigrants came. Therefore it is not entirely surprising that of the eight people who gave rise to the Argentine place-names under discussion, six came from one of these three counties. As can be seen from the discussion under each name above, we may be able to draw some connections between our place-names in Argentina and their Irish counterparts. With others, due to a lack of toponymic parallels in the homeplace of our emigrants, no connection makes itself immediately apparent. It seems that by examining the full corpus of Gaelic surnominal place-names in Argentina, there is scope in this area for further research. In doing so, we may be able to raise a number of queries; have surnames from other migrant groups also been employed in place-names in Argentina? If so, what is the difference, between them and the Irish names? Is it possible that the Irish naming followed a pattern which was already established in the country? In due course, we may be able to answer these questions in further studies on the surnominal place-names of Argentina.

5. Glossary

Province. This is the largest administrative division in Ireland. There are four provinces: Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, and Munster. There were once five, however, with Meath being a former province.

County. Counties were created by English administration in Ireland and they became the major subdivision within the provinces. There are 32 counties in Ireland.

[40] *Mín* can cause difficulty for place-name scholars as it can signify a couple of different things. As an adjective it means "smooth". However, when used nominally it can be used in the sense "smooth place" or "smooth' surface" (IPN, 120-22). In place-name terms, it is often translated as "mountain pasture", i.e. a smooth place in the middle of rough mountainous land (PNB).

Civil Parish. These parishes were based on medieval church parishes, but they became administrative land units. In total there are over 2,500 civil parishes in Ireland.

Townland. The smallest administrative land unit in Ireland. There are over 60,000 townlands on the island of Ireland and the majority of our toponyms discussed in this article are townland-names.

Partido. The second-level administrative subdivision, and they are only in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. They are considered to be a single administrative unit, and usually contain one or more population centres.

Provincia. Similar to the Irish provinces mentioned above. Argentina is subdivided into 23 provinces or *provincias*.

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An Irish Artist's Travels from Buenos Aires to Araxá

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Abstract:

In 2020, during lockdown as an Irish emigrant in the UK, I re-evaluated being Irish in a foreign country as I examined pictures taken in Latin America during my travels, as artist-in-residence at Zona Imaginaria. This paper reviews three contemporary artists in Argentina and Brazil, Mónica Girón, Mariana López and Pedro Lopes, whose work focuses on diverse cultures, history seen in this context, and colonisation and emigration as influences on three artists' work. In Brazil, I visited farms, small towns and Minas Gerais state, and compared life there with my native Ireland. The effects on the contemporary art and culture of both countries due to colonisation, is noted by an Irish artist, heavily influenced since this trip in her own artwork.

Keywords: Argentina, Brasil, Contemporary Art, Dona Beja, Tupí-Guaraní

1. Introduction

In this winter of 2020-2021, it is evident that our world has been totally transformed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK has the highest figure in the world for deaths per capita, with over 100,000 people dead making us afraid. As an Irish immigrant, I have been unable to visit family for 12 months and even though they have been vaccinated, it is unlikely I will see them before this summer, if then. It is ironic to contemplate the apocalypse that European colonisers wreaked upon an unsuspecting Latin American population in the Colonial period with smallpox, measles and chicken pox wiping out vast numbers of the indigenous populations, while here in the UK and worldwide, this modern pandemic situation forces everybody to re-evaluate that devastation in person. Brexit, in addition to the pandemic, has affected travel and borders and there was a huge rise in applications for Irish passports received by the Dublin government (O'Carroll 2019). In 2015, 6,011 applications made from Great Britain. In 2019, first time ap-

plications from Great Britain rose to 31,099 and 47,645 from Northern Ireland, according to the deputy Prime Minister, Simon Coveney. The number of applications has risen sharply since the EU referendum, with five times as many applicants, according to Lisa O'Carroll, Brexit Correspondent.

Sobering times, so reliving my Latin American travels has been joyful; my experiences as artist-in-residence in Zona Imaginaria and Argentina are already recorded (Lawlor Mottram 2020). I viewed the modernist Kavanagh Tower built in 1934 in the centre of Buenos Aires, which was financed by an heiress of Irish descent, Corina Kavanagh, whose offer of marriage to their son was declined by the Anchorena Argentine family of "old money". Legend has it that the jilted lady waited for them to leave town for the holidays, having sold two ranches to finance it, before buying land in front of their favourite church. Her classic skyscraper blocked the view of their favourite church for said family, who had refused her hand in marriage. Romeo and Juliet, Argentine style! As I admired Kavanagh Tower, my eye was also drawn to the Monument to the Fallen in the Falklands War, behind which the Kavanagh Tower reaches for the skies. This poignant and elegant monument, listing the names of every soldier who lost their life in this territorial war, is situated opposite La Torre de los Ingleses (the English Tower). Living in the UK has brought me a great awareness of a war waged by Great Britain for these islands, so close to Argentina, so far from the UK. Before arriving, I had dreamed of seeing the steps where Eva Perón, famous actress turned President's wife, had stood on the famous balcony of La Casa Rosada (The Pink House), the House of Government, to address her adoring crowds. She worked tirelessly, becoming known as the defender of the shirtless (*descamisados*) impoverished, of Argentina. The day I visited however, the famous balcony was barricaded because the families of 44 soldiers missing in a submarine explosion, were campaigning and protesting outside the famous Casa Rosada. Remembering the mothers of The Disappeared, who went on strike every week to find their missing children executed during the military coup, there seemed to be a protest every day on Buenos Aires elegant streets. From this one, to later pensioner protests about the rising cost of inflation as President Macri worked closely with the IMF and pensioners saw their income brutally slashed. Ordinary Argentinians were blasé; they had seen it all before in 2001. For those on the breadline, for whom foreign travel was impossible, the peso devaluation affected their salaries, their pensions, their ability to buy food and their security. Other protests during my visit were those against the revelations of corruption, evidenced in *La Lista* of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, and the strange co–incidence of the Irish abortion legislation passing in the same year that the Argentinian Parliament refused to make that law. Argentinians were vocal on the street, car horns blowing at every opportunity, with placards, drums, ghetto blasters and banners, outside train stations, outside Parliament, outside supermarkets, with ages ranging from youngsters to pensioners. My trip led me to a better understanding of how the themes of colonisation had affected my chosen contemporary artists in Argentina and Brazil. Starting in Buenos Aires, I visited museums and galleries in order to learn more about these indigenous cultures as a visual artist, which later developed into themes and patterns which I would use in my own artwork.

2. Background to Indigenous Culture in Argentina and Brazil

Fig. 1 – Weaving with geometric patterns, in the Museum of Mankind[1]

Gathering visual research would deepen my understanding of the complex nature of Latin America, so I visited the National Museum of Mankind (Museo Nacional del Hombre*)* in Buenos Aires, which is dedicated to social anthropology and folklore. The colourful exhibits here explained the prehistory but also provided a contemporary view on the status of indigenous South American peoples and Argentinian groups. Pre-Colonial indigenous tribes were intensely connected with their natural environment; dependent upon it and able to survive using agriculture, hunting, fishing and collection of herbs for medicinal use as well as fruit and fungi. Museum labels, photographed by the Author (Museo Nacional del Hombre 2018) explain that the veneration of their natural environment seemed to be reflected in every tradition.

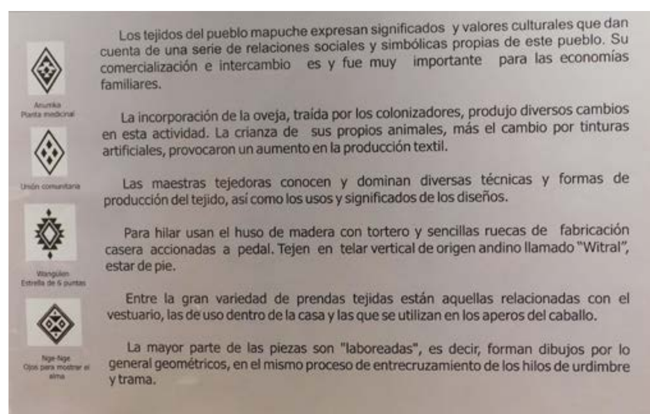

Fig. 2 – Mapuche symbols, photographed in the Museum of Mankind

[1] Pictures 1-5 were taken by the Author during her visit to the Museo Nacional del Hombre, Buenos Aires. The Museum is currently closed due to the Covid-19 emergency. Offical permissions to reproduce them in this essay will be provided after the reopening of the Museum.

Fig. 3 – Two boys called Arturo and Antonio, the only known members of the Klóketen people of Hain in 1923, photographed in the Museum of Mankind

For the *Selk'nam* – the *Onas* in Spanish – whose spirit "Matán el gran bailarin del Hain" – the great dancer of Hain – is said to have descended from the heavens in Tierra del Fuego. They are also said to have had deities at the four cardinal directions, a tradition which is also observed in many Latin American cultures, including in Yucatán with Maya and Aztec populations (Miller, Taube 1993). The *Mbyá* tribe, of *Guaraní* heritage, believed in "La Tierra sin mal" (Land without evil/badness) in which they would never die, where there was no illness, meat and honey were plentiful and "todos viven con felicidad" (Museo Nacional del Hombre, 2018). Drawing parallels with worldwide human longing for paradise on earth – Cornucopia and the Irish Land of the Young, *Tír na nÓg* (Heaney 1994) have similar traits. In the Fenian cycle, Niamh tempts Oisin to "Come back with me to the Land of Youth. It is the most beautiful country under the sun. The land flows with honey and wine, as much as you could ever want. You will never fall ill or grow old there" (*ibidem*).

Fig. 4 – The enigmatic Hanu from the Southern sky/heavens, with hooded costume and his back to the public

The beautiful black and white portraits of these people displayed in the museum show a deity, Hanu (or a human dressed in his likeness) with his back to us, a huge pointed hood pulled up over his shoulders with white, downward vertical stripes, perhaps signifying his astonishing leaps and acrobatics on his descent to Mother Earth. The Tupí-Guaraní speakers were well established before the Spanish arrived, and according to Viveiros de Castro, in AD 1492 Tupí-Guaraní speakers numbered in the millions (Ozorio de Almeida, Neves 2015). They inhabited over 4,000 km in the Rio de la Plata basin, close to coast and rivers, and also the Brazilian Atlantic Coast: Tupí-Guaraní speaking groups were spread over vast regions of South America when the Europeans arrived. Speculation about the process of dispersion of these groups has been ongoing for decades. [...] studying the history of the Tupí-Guaraní groups from Eastern Amazonia, producers of pottery related to the Amazonian Tupinambá Subtradition, is fundamental to the comprehension of the mobility and internal complexity of the Tupí-Guaraní (*ibidem*). In Brazil I would hear again of the Tupí-Guaraní, in the name of Sorocaba, translated in Portuguese as "terra rasgada", ploughed, furrowed or tilled earth in their native language (Sorocaba 2021). "Tupi or not Tupi: that is the question" (Andrade 1972 [1929]). This line was written in English by Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade, in his "Anthropophagy Manifesto" in 1929, which defined a cultural adaptation to the foreign, the European, and the non-native in which it was consumed whole and then transformed into something entirely new. This manifesto was inspired by "Abaporu", a painting that his artist and wife, Tarsila Do Amaral (1928), had painted for him as his birthday present. Tarsila do Amaral, commonly known simply as Tarsila, was a Brazilian artist, who trained in Paris and Europe with André Lhote, Albert Gleizes, and Fernand Léger. On her return to her native São Paolo she created work in a completely new style, which greatly influenced Andrade's "Anthropophagy Manifesto" the following year. It is difficult to imagine the emotions stirred by "Abaporu" in 1928. The strange perspective, the inability to decide if this figure is masculine or feminine – and its ability to embody both, the huge cactus, the childish sun, the massive foot in the foreground and the primary colours are striking even in the twenty-first century. The painting inspired not only her husband's writing but indeed a whole new artistic movement in Brazil, "specifically Brazilian culture arising from the symbolic digestion – or artistic 'cannibalism' – of outside influences" (MoMA 2018). The painting is now exhibited in Argentina's MALBA − Museum of Contemporary Art Buenos Aires – and was shown in 2018 in the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) in the US. Andrade's play on Shakespeare's famous words in "Tupi or not Tupi: that is the question" seem to show pride in indigenous roots. This idea that the original natives of Sorocaba, the Tupí-Guaraní, played a part in the swallowing of a European master writer in order to inspire Brazilian art is, I believe, the central idea of Andrade's Cultural Cannibalism. As an artist, not a student of ethnography or anthropology, at this point on my trip, I made a conscious effort to stop trying to interpret what I saw in my limited way, and simply behaved like a large sponge absorbing information visually, sketching in notebooks, photographing and collecting memories for analysis at a later date. There is a famous quote from Saint Augustine reminding us that "the dead may be invisible but they are not absent". The millions that had died during the Colonial period seemed to live on in the spirit of both countries I visited and when I explored the work of Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral in more detail, I began to remember how colonisation worked in Ireland – where the invaders became "more Irish than the Irish themselves [...]. The well-known phrase 'Hiberniores Hibernis ipsis' (more Irish than the Irish themselves). These formed septs on the Gaelic–Irish pattern, headed by a chief. The Gall & Gael became virtually indistinguishable" (MacLysaght 1982).

In Brazil the theory that led to the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade's "Manifesto of Anthropophagy" and that this manifesto was a conversation starter in any art opening in modern Brazil,

was something I learned at Pedro Lopes's exhibition later on my trip (see 2.4 below). Therefore, my next step towards a better understanding of this area before the arrival of the Europeans, was grasping the linguistic classification of these groups. Linguistic families were listed in the museum, such as the *Guaycurú* family: *Toba, Pilagá and Mocoví*, the *Mataco-Mataguayo* family: *Wichí, Chorote and Chulupí*, the *Tupí-Guaraní* family: *Chané and Chiruguano, the Mapuche, the Tehuelche, the Diaguita, Guaraní* (200,000 speakers) and *Quechua* (65,000 speakers). As an artist, this clarified very little for me except that many old languages had almost been lost and the memorable fact that European colonisers had wiped out huge numbers of most of these groups through disease and slavery. Visiting Minas Gerais, I realised that individual languages and tribes had left only a tiny mark of their occupation of this land by its adaptation into its current name, as in the case of Araxá in Minas Gerais state. Moreover, a sign that the arrival of the Europeans caused adaptations in local populations is evident in that they brought sheep with them, whose wool allowed the Mapuche to adapt their textile weaving techniques, providing a new material which could be dyed, which added value in local economies. I saw explanations of symbols used in traditional Mapuche textiles, which were a useful interpretation of some of the geometric patterns I saw all over, both in Argentina and Brazil. Not only in textiles, but also on menus, tiles, fabric, weaving, even shop decorations (in the way the Irish people use the shamrock or the harp), these are a visual which perhaps expresses underlying meaning known to the natives, but not to me. The triangle and the diamond shape can be easily woven and knitted (and I saw variations of 2 triangles joined also appearing in textiles from other groups).

Figure 2 (Museo Nacional del Hombre, 2018) shows diamond shaped symbols showing in descending order, first Anumka, a medicinal plant; the second a sign for Community Union (I interpret organisation); Wangüien, A six pointed star; and finally Nge-Nge, Eyes to view the Soul. This tiny museum in Calle 3 de Febrero, 1370/8 was crowded with videos, exhibits and labels of techniques for tool making, basket weaving, musical instruments, maps, exquisite clothing, jewellery, toys and Chané mask making, displaying the range of flora and fauna. Figure 5 shows these striking Chané masks, each with a generic name of the aña-aña (spirit, death, demon/devil) showing (from top left) 1 and 3, aña-uru, uru means chicken or bird, these are usually decorated with feathers. 2 and 4, aña-tairusu and aña-hanti, each of these has a horn, pole or bony structure on an elk and these masks are used during Carnaval celebrations. In the second row (from the left) 5, aña-ngora has a small visor or peak, suggested that this may be similar to military helmets; 7 (far right) is aña-ndechi, meaning old, this type is used in the last days of Carnaval. The remaining masks are of animals local to the area.

Figure 5 – Chané masks on display in the Museum of Mankind

The fact that these masks were used in *Carnaval* celebrations surprised me because it implies that indigenous mask making continued after European festivals arrived in Argentina. *Carnaval* is believed to originate from a pagan or Roman festival, adopted by the Catholic church to coincide with the celebrations (similar to Pancake Tuesday in Ireland and the UK), where food supplies are cooked in anticipation of the 40 fasting days of Lent. *Carnaval* celebrations are still held annually all over Europe (including Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Greece) in the middle of February. Brazil's first *Carnaval* celebrations date to 1723 whereas in Argentina it commenced in the 1600s but was later forbidden under military rule. Nowadays European festivals are usually masked, with special costumes and food while in Brazil, its development is linked to the invention of the Samba dance, when the significantly large African slave portion of Brazil adapted the tradition to become a living, joyous dance celebration. Brazil's *Carnaval* is also known for the annual opportunity to hide behind a mask, to shed social status or the lack if it, for a time. Brazilian men in drag are now commonplace all over social media and pictures as early as the 1930s show the intricacy and delicacy of their dresses (Carnaval History 2020). Clearly this celebration is a direct import from European colonisers and flourishes now with the combination of locals, European visitors and settlers, indigenous people and the descendants of African slaves, all dancing and enjoying a tradition transformed for Latin American usage. Nowadays in Argentina it has been adapted to a *Murga* festival in Buenos Aires and some other northern cities. Latin America adopts European festivals and does it in mid summer with samba bands, compared to freezing February skimpy outfits in Europe – given the choice I know which one I wanted to attend!

2.1 Visual Art in Argentina and Brazil

As my reason for visiting Argentina was primarily to work at Zona Imaginaria, a not-for-profit art organisation, situated in Buenos Aires province, my stay there has already been described in detail (Lawlor Mottram 2020). In my spare time, I visited every gallery I could, the first being *Arte Munar* in La Boca (the mouth, of the river, for non-Spanish speakers). So, in 2021, I re-live gazing out to sea at the widest estuary in the world where the river Plate meets the sea. This is La Boca neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, with its statue of Irishman Admiral William Brown (22 June 1777-3 March 1857) the "father of the Argentine Navy", which is also the site of several art galleries in the harbour.

2.1.1 Mariana López: "Mar de Solís"

Fig. 6 – "Mar de Solís" installation by artist Mariana López, August 201. Courtesy of Mariana López and Arte Munar Gallery, La Boca

Artist Mariana López, born in 1981, studied art in Switzerland and Argentina and exhibits widely in Argentina, Latin America and Europe. It was a cold August day and *Arte Munar* is well hidden from the public. Entrance was by knocking at a large, metal door and then stepping into a chilly, spacious building with a "being renovated" feel. In the first room, imagine at ground level observing a set of 10 rolling, rectangular canvasses moving grindingly slowly, stretched out on a series of revolving camp bed structures it seemed, each blue canvas painted very differently from the one adjacent and positioned to fill the entire gallery. "The sea of Solís", Mariana López's installation, is named as the first view of the River Plate, seen by Juan Díaz de Solís, the Spanish explorer, who named the Río de la Plata in 1516, sailing upriver to the confluence of the Uruguay and the Paraná rivers, with 9 members of crew. Mechanical noises creaked, each piece rolling continuously so nothing remained still, evoking light reflections, wave motions, on what is essentially a flat surface. Is this the view of a sailor? I know from my own sailing in the UK that you need to fix on something on the horizon to stabilise, because the world whizzes past – up above there are clouds, rain, sun and birds, while underneath is a dark expanse, whose depth is uncertain. Modern sailors have the benefit of depth sounders to avoid damage from rocks or getting stranded in shallow waters. This is the widest (and probably the most polluted) river estuary in the world as the Paraná, the Plate and the Luján rivers converge on the sea in a massive area. Although Solís was purportedly the first foreigner to arrive, labelling it "mar dulce" (literally: sweet but translated as "fresh(water) sea") (Britannica 2021). Solís never actually landed. The conquistador was unwilling to touch earth, despite months at sea. Instead, he sailed up towards Uruguay, where he unfortunately met a group of natives, known as the *Charrúa* Indians. It was reported by the only surviving crew member that the entire crew was murdered, then eaten by this cannibalistic tribe. Nowadays this route is for day trips by boat to Colonia del Sacramento, in Uruguay, from Buenos Aires, to see well protected colonial architecture and sometimes to provide visitors with a visa stamp for their passports! This historic section of town takes you back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with an array of interesting museums, an historic lighthouse and Uruguay's oldest church. Most people reach Buenos Aires by plane but entering from the sea on the north to south route the explorer took, would encourage people to land on the Uruguay side first, as it is closest. Uruguay is also where Almirante Brown landed and settled, later than Solís admittedly. Borders are fixed now but imagine it through the eyes of a Spanish, Portuguese or Irish sailor…

For this Irishwoman, it is the scale of Latin America that has gripped my artistic soul. 121 Irelands could fit into Brazil. This estuary, one of the widest in the world, is as broad as your imagination will take you. So Mariana López's "Mar de Solís" halted me in my tracks. When one lingers as I did in this gallery, you become the eye of the absent Solís, watching the surface changing continuously over the length of the gallery. While people passed by, I observed these long blue movements hypnotised by the abstract shapes while simultaneously observing the play on technology being used. In 1872, an expedition ship named "Challenger" had left Spain and Portugal, to cross the deep seas from the Azores to Cabo Verde, "all the way ploughing the seas, raking its seabed, measuring temperature, heat and cold while gathering samples of flora and fauna, scraping reefs, measuring salinity and examining the relationships between light and colour" writes Curator Irina Podgorny (2018), of the Museo de la Plata. López's installation seems to visually question their experiments – how to reveal the bottom of the ocean in a time where submarines did not exist? "Challenger" measured depth using inventions offered by the Royal Society. The complex drawings referred to in the artist's presentation, were used by Sir William Thompson, the future Lord Kelvin. These were a far cry from our modern seafaring ability with Wi–Fi depth finders and online navigation maps but also the precursor to them.

This eminent physicist, mathematician, engineer and inventor, was born to a Scottish father and an Irish mother and is nowadays well-known for his research and development of the second law of thermodynamics, the electromagnetic theory of light and the absolute temperature scale, which is measured in Kelvins. López's use of mechanical cables and engineering to rotate the canvasses, references the sound of wheels and pulleys that Kelvin utilised, using piano wire to determine marine depths. Podgorny continues "sometimes one believes that the sea is flat; the river unmoving ("un río o un mar que no se atraganta con los restos de la historia nacional"), a river or a sea which does not choke with the remains of the national history (2018). The absent Solís observes with me alongside him. I left uplifted. This piece of art really stays with me to this day.

On my return to the UK, I follow López's more recent work using the internet. In 2019 "Frontera" (border; frontier), was exhibited in *Galería Mite* in Buenos Aires. This installation played with sky and wind, turning from the surface of the sea to that of the Celestial. She explains that it is based on her journey in the boundary spaces between Argentina and Chile in the Patagonian region, more specifically in the area near Lake Nahuel Huapi. She describes the unformed shapes of clouds, and her childhood observation of them. For me, perhaps Solís was at last laid to rest; instead, the cloud formation and the wind had become her canvas.

2.1.2 Art in Argentina; Mónica Girón: "Ajuar Para un Conquistador"

Fig. 7 – Hand-knitted jacket, scarf and leg warmers knitted in Merino wool by Mónica Girón, Barro Alto Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires. Courtesy of Mónica Girón

Fig. 8 – Hand knitted gloves for a Patagonian bird by Mónica Girón, Barro Alto Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires. Courtesy of Mónica Girón

Fig. 9 – Hand knitted costume for an absent bird, Barro Alto Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires. Courtesy of Mónica Girón

Argentine artist Mónica Girón was born in San Carlos de Bariloche, Patagonia in 1959 and studied art in Geneva, returning to live in Buenos Aires in 1985. She has exhibited widely all over the world, has won many prizes and her work is in the MALBA, Argentina (2021).

Mónica Girón's contribution to the IV Biennial Exhibition of La Habana, Cuba in 1994, was entitled "Ajuar para un conquistador" (Jackets for a Conquistador). Her famous jackets for Patagonian birds were knitted using the "technology of the new inhabitants", i.e. knitting needles and Merino wool, a legacy of Colonial settlers to Patagonia, evoking a strange emptiness in the eye of the viewer. Girón's inspiration was the childhood museum in her hometown in San Carlos de Bariloche, and she describes its collections as "combining an advocacy of the conquest and displays of the territory established by the nation state" (2018). These "jackets" were chosen for a collective retrospective of artwork in Buenos Aires in 2018, which I attended. Surrounded by noisy, private view visitors to this retrospective, I wished I was in a quieter setting in order to become aware of what was absent, what was invisible. These dainty, hand-knitted, colourful jackets in minuscule sizes with their accompanying claw gloves and socks and hats, hung on a pristine gallery white wall, allowing the empty costumes to make the imagination run riot, filling them mentally with bird bodies with long legs, filling the small dainty gloves and caps with absent claws and heads. One long black knitted neck has a red beak shape at the end and the hanging of all pieces is by a knitted loop, making these absent creatures resemble stuffed birds or pinned butterflies in an old-fashioned museum display. Their names were tempting too, for an Irish woman. *Caburé, Chucao, Bandurria:* Despite my reasonable Spanish, I cannot translate these, and so look to the English translation: the same. Patagonian woodpecker, Andean flamingo, black necked swan, which explains the long black neck with red beak and the Maroon head hummingbird. To me, this sounds like poetry, the words so exotically different from any Irish birds I know. Robin redbreast is hardly able to compete! To a viewer in 2018, these jackets have such a strong, environmental message with ongoing human destruction of their wildlife habitat combined with the materials used so I interviewed the artist again by email in 2020 to find out more, regarding the importance of protection of the environment in her artistic practice.

"Most of my work is related to helping raise awareness and create consciousness about our possibility of growing spiritually and thus improving our relationship to planet Earth, to

nature in general, to water in particular, and our human bodies" (Girón 2020)[2]. Her recent work, which I saw initially in her studio in 2018, is related to the Chinese medicine system or reading the "meridian lines", where acupuncture or massage or gym are applied in order to make them work correctly. "I studied Tai Chi very intensely. (See figure 10). It is one of the branches of Taoist knowledge and I have developed a long study and practice in Feng Shui, another of the Taoist ways of practising interaction with the world". Girón describes becoming aware of environmental issues as a child, living in her hometown and region, Patagonia. Summers are very hot in Buenos Aires so now she likes to travel south to Patagonia or to be in the countryside, in order to be able to work (Girón 2020).

Fig. 10 – Mónica Girón, *Swimmer* (wood), 2019. Oil on canvas, 110 x 90 cm,
Barro Alto Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires. Courtesy of Mónica Girón

She is extremely conscious of materials and tries not to work with materials that create pollution or that are very difficult to process and recycle. She uses public transport in the city, preferably electric motorisation, which in Buenos Aires means the underground subways and trains. Her car is a hybrid: natural gas and petrol, only travelling by planes if absolutely necessary, and mainly for work, not for vacations or leisure. In her garden she has a compost bin to recycle food waste and she eats mainly organic food, not industrially processed. When I asked her about her best case scenario for the future of the planet, she replied "better interaction with all natural beings and nature; less human reproduction, more awareness" (Girón 2020). So having viewed the estuary of the River Plate through the eyes of the invisible Solís, now Mónica Girón had shown me life through the eyes of absent birds.

[2] This information and what follows is from Mónica Girón, email to the present Author (personal communication).

In April 2019, at the Society for Latin American Studies conference in Leicester University (UK) I attended a workshop entitled "The limits of official memory: Representing the Native Patagonians in Chubut's Welsh museums" delivered by Guillermo Williams, from the University of Patagonia. His argument concerned the exhibits belonging to native Patagonians in such museums often appear to disrupt the museums' narrative "operating as an antagonist alterity, aiming to highlight the 'civilizing' role of the Welsh in Patagonia" (Williams, Barros, Lublin, *et al.* 2019). On the same theme, Kimberly Berg adds "In an attempt to escape British hegemony, the Welsh established a Patagonian colony in 1865. The historical struggles the immigrants faced upon settling the land are rooted in the landscape and commemorated in different versions of Patagonian regional history through provincial museum narratives that serve as a method of solidifying Welshness in Chubut" (2018, 1). Discussions at this workshop about how the Welsh narrative was displayed in museums in Chubut, Patagonia bring forth comparisons with the Welsh-British and the Irish-British relationships. Are a people escaping oppression in their homeland destined to become settled in a new country, perhaps to be viewed as colonisers themselves? This may ring true of the Welsh colony set up in Patagonia in 1865, as well as for the thousands of emigrants from Ireland who settled as farmers in the Pampas. It certainly seems to correlate with Girón's description of the Francisco P. Moreno Museum of Patagonia she used to visit as a child and many of the narratives I heard in this workshop about the portrayal of the indigenous original populations, compared to the newly-established Welsh settlers. The theme of an invisible history with untold stories, established in community museums, inevitably cause tension and discomfort by failing to display historical information from a diverse viewpoint, including that of the indigenous peoples, who were obviously resident prior to the arrival of Europeans.

Returning to Mónica Girón's jackets examining the plight of Patagonian birds, who can argue that avian life was certainly from the outset, at the very least co-resident with all human inhabitants of Patagonia and as worthy of consideration in terms of its environment and its survival Lucas Fragasso (1994), curator of the exhibition in Cuba, also offers a further interpretation to view these absent birds, stating that the fundamental purpose of the life of an animal could be seen as its death, in the sense that it is annihilation then resurgence every season, every year, in the harsh environment that is Patagonia. Suddenly for me in 2019 in Leicester, the tiny jackets, the knitwear itself almost begins to breathe, then exhale, while I examine the life of birds, teetering on the edge of extinction each brutal winter and indeed, man's destruction and exploitation of natural resources in Girón's native Patagonia. From Buenos Aires, I travelled to Brazil, viewing an exhibition of my third artist Pedro Lopes, whose work I viewed in Sorocaba, my first stop in that country.

2.2 Brazil – First Stop Sorocaba

It takes 13 or 14 hours to fly from London to São Paulo, Guarulhos but just 2 or 3 hours from Argentina, that is if the weather behaves itself. It is about 5pm; there were storm clouds hovering above the city with a vast expanse of skyscrapers, clouds and rain. I could not believe the visual extent to which the city spread – as we were delayed, we kept circling round with lightning shooting down on the high buildings and it was so unlike my expectations – grey, then more grey and some grey after that. This was not how I pictured arriving in Brazil. The extensive traffic jams when I finally left the airport, were "normal" the taxi driver, Carlos, assured me. I was headed for a private house in Sorocaba, staying with a friend, Eriane, in Sorocaba, and finally arrived at my destination. Here, like Buenos Aires, the locked gated communities are the norm

because security is such a threat. Everybody seems to own a barking dog. The barking woke me during that first night – another storm was raging. It seems winter in Brazil is not much different to winter in the UK, although the insect net on the windows should have reminded me where I was. Maybe the weather fooled me because when I actually got outside the following day, everything was so different to the UK and Ireland. The first difference is that of personal safety; my hosts were reluctant to let me walk alone promising I could do so after I became more accustomed to the area, worrying for my safety. Luckily, my knowledge of Spanish could be put to good use speaking Portuñol, so I set off with Eriane, camera well-hidden in my bag.

Wildflowers, some distant Latin American relative of our cultivated Busy Lizzie seemed to be abundantly flowering (in winter) from every drain in the streets, in winter! A type of jasmine was flowering over a stone wall, there were exotic yellow and red flowers on most trees on the roads and the first shopping centre had *suco* – a real Brazilian juice bar from fruit I could not identify, indeed had never heard of. The layout was similar to fruit and veg markets in Spain and France but the fruit, veg and nuts being offered were unrecognisable apart from oranges, bananas, mangoes and pineapples. I asked the provenance and believe they said the Amazon; I bought juice made with things I pointed at and the taste was like nothing I ever have had before or since. I have since learned to call them *açaí, pequi* and *jabuticaba* but if you have never visited Brazil, that won't be much help. Later I had juice at a riverside café whose speciality was coconut water. Now I've had coconut milk but this was different. You get a whole fruit with a straw inserted, and sit there, wrapped up for winter in scarf and gloves with this green ball in your hands. Next, we visited the monastery of São Bento – which is one of the oldest in Sorocaba. Later I would see this painted in one of Pedro Lopes' paintings. Outside the monastery, a suited black metal sculpture of a male conquistador stood proudly. I had seen several of these in Buenos Aires and beyond, but I still could not agree with my posing in front of what were essentially land grabber portraits. As I look back, I remember the distaste I felt then and now with Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 in mind, the memory was revitalised. Public statues would cause much concern everywhere, ignited by the death of George Floyd in the US, but this was all in the future. Taking photos here with blonde hair, tall with blue eyes sporting a blue beret, Eriane tells me I could be from Bahía. I learn later this is a state mostly peopled by ex-slaves from Africa, who were liberated and now inhabit the coastal northern corner of Brazil. Sorocaba had many surprises. We stumbled onto a street garden shop, run by an old couple from Nagasaki, Japan and bought herbs.

Our next stop was the municipal zoo Quinzinho de Barros which is one of the largest zoos in South America. It is not a habit of mine to visit zoos because I cannot bear to see caged animals but this one promised exotic flowers, trees and butterflies so I agreed. Very tired and sad wolves, tigers and felines, wandered in their allotted space while we observed feeding time. Zelfa, my host's mother later informed me these are all rescue animals, which does put a sweetener on it and the surroundings are truly magnificent. We stopped continuously for me to photograph butterflies and to admire flowers which defy description – one with red catkins and then an amazing orange type of lily. I even saw a banana in flower! Just visible with eyes above water – fed by the keepers – grazing alligators or maybe caimans; I did not go too close but local people just milled around, kids going so near. My heart was in my mouth! After this, another must visit place was the bakery Padaría Do Gonçalo in Avenida Noguiera Padilla, 261, Alem Parte, Sorocaba. This wood-lined shop had portraits of the famous and historic scenes of the town all over its walls and I insisted on my selfie too. Here we purchased the favourites of the household, and a new delicacy for me – *pão de queijo* – bread filled with cheese. This brief taster was my introduction to Sorocaba and next was my first visit to the contemporary art gallery in Sorocaba.

2.2.1 Sorocaba – Pedro Lopes Exhibition "Yby-Soroc"

Pedro Lopes is a Brazilian painter, born in 1951 in Sorocaba, São Paulo state, studied in the Faculty of Fine Arts in São Paulo. His work has developed through many styles, from abstract to pop in the 1970s and since 1980 he has worked in a neoexpressionist style, working on figurative landscapes.

The Sorocaba of Pedro Lopes' paintings is drawn from historical events ranging over four centuries, the first panel dating from 1532 right up to the present day. More than 450 years of memories from the city's past fill 20 large canvasses, each painted in a contemporary style of the period in the title. The work was presented in the Museum of Contemporary Art (MACS) in an annexe of the old railway station. The curator and Artistic Director of MACS, Fabio Magalhães (2018), commented in the catalogue how rare it was to find a modern painter who devotes himself to historical painting, adding that Lopes has "executed these paintings in styles varying from Joshua Reynolds, the English 'grand manner' painter to Hans Holbein, Tintoretto and historical painters in Brazil such as Victor Meirelles' portrait of Felipe Camarão" (Shikama 2018). These paintings would be well known to local visitors, and Lopes' intention was to explain history using this visual method. This incursion into the beginning of colonisation of the continent up to the present day, was presented in 20 large painted panels, each inspired by an artistic style of the period. Panel 1 (1532-1580) is inspired by Hans Holbien's "The Ambassadors" which is situated in the National Gallery in the UK.

The title "Yby-Soroc" is inspired by the original name of the city in Tupí-Guaraní (Sorocaba 2021), the indigenous language spoken in this region prior to the arrival of Europeans, meaning *rasgada*, in Portuguese, which can be translated as "torn" but also "ploughed earth, furrowed land". Later when I saw the hue of the soil colour in Minas Gerais, I began to understand this but at first, it was difficult to understand the historical references, which seemed very clear to all the other visitors to the gallery, so I enlisted the help of Silvana Sarti, who works in the museum and also spoke English. Sarti, a visual and performing artist who also works at MACS gallery, describes how the exhibition shows the greatness of an artist who manages to put in a single work:

> Several layers of human knowledge, the history of the city of Sorocaba, with its characters from the official and everyday history, the artistic styles of each evoked time, the events of art history and its artists, bringing together different techniques and styles, traditional oil painting and overlapping graphics as hieroglyphics of a brief future. (Sarti 2018)[3]

She commented that few cities in the world are fortunate to have a collection of works that represent their cultural heritage and past so well.

I had just visited a very modern shopping centre, close by a few hours previously, which was actually a relic of Sorocaba's industrial past, when it was twinned with Manchester. During the American Civil War, English textile companies supplies of cotton vanished, which used to be imported from the southern, cotton producing states of the US. In 1862 the first cotton plantation was set up in São Paulo state, including Sorocaba. The local environment and weather proved ideal so English investors built branches in the city, one of which was the supermarket I visited. Nowadays, the natives of Sorocaba shop in living history, the building looking familiar to an Irish or UK resident, with its tiled rooves, large, orange brick buildings

[3] This information is from Silvana Sarti to the present Author (personal communication).

with chimneys, which had been responsible for Sorocaba's title of "Manchester Paulista". The city's railway station, a pretty building next to MACS gallery was opened in June 1872 when six locomotives and 62 bandwagons were brought from England, with seven stations initially planned. The Ferroban railroad used to connect São Paulo and Santos Seaport, with trains almost unused in Brazil – my friend Eriane commenting that "automobiles won that war". As I observed Sorocaba through Pedro Lopes' eyes, I viewed a visual history of the city which encouraged me to delve into a history of the city and the people who spoke Tupí-Guaraní. Seeing history from an Irish, English and European perspective, here was the opportunity to view famous historical Brazilian battles scenes and to see that industrial revolution in Brazil had caused a huge political awakening. Brazilian people now includes the indigenous peoples, descendants of the African slaves, the European settlers who were granted land and modern immigrants, completing a melting pot of cultures, languages, religions and inheritance. I found myself particularly drawn to the panels which highlighted "the invisible women", as Silvana Sarti described them, using her finger to delineate them in the air in front of Panel VIII (2020). Her interpretation of those who worked in those textile factories, are carefully painted as outlines in Lopes' paintings, and connected me instantly to the absent Solís in Mariana López's installation and the missing birds of Mónica Girón's knitted jackets.

Fig. 11 – Pedro Lopes, "Da flor e do fruto o novo produto, Panel VIII", 2018, oil on canvas. Exhibition "YBY Soroc", Macs - Museu de Arte Contemporanea de Sorocaba. Courtesy Pedro Lopez

Fig. 12 – Pedro Lopes, "A passagem dos cometas, Panel XVIII", 2018, oil on canvas.
Exhibition "YBY Soroc", Macs - Museu de Arte Contemporanea de Sorocaba. Courtesy Pedro Lopez

We examined Panel VIII, which covers the period from 1852 to 1909 and is entitled "Da flor e do fruto o novo produto" (From flower and fruit, the new product/commodity). Its theme of the exclusively female working force behind the fortune accumulated by these rich, suited gentlemen standing so proudly. Their exploitation of the workers lends pathos to the plight of the poor in this era and a social commentary by the artist on the nature of industrialisation. Lopes has delicately added colourful lines of paint, outlining the women who manufactured the textiles. Behind every successful man, there is a woman literally painted here. Panel XVIII, 1947-1965, "A passagem dos cometas" translates as "The Passage of Comets", referring to the musicians Bill Haley and his Comets, who resided in Sorocaba in the 1950s. Here, Lopes depicts many famous men from the period including Abstract Expressionist local artists, doctors, historians, scientists (Alexander Fleming) and the facades of famous buildings in the city such as the Science and Law universities. Only two females are pictured, one top right is Dona Tereza de Lucca alongside Victor de Lucca and the other lone female central to the painting is Francisca da Silveira Queiroz, the first female elected councillor in Sorocaba. It is wonderful to see her represented, however, Silvana Sarti and other researchers reveal that another "invisible woman" Salvadora Lopes Perez had previously stood for election and won outright in 1947 as the first woman to be elected to Sorocaba's council but was unable to assume her post, due to her membership of the (then illegal) PCB, the Brazilian Communist Party. Women and 90 years of communism in Brazil ("As mulheres e os noventa anos do comunismo do Brasil") (Buonicore*,* Garcia 2012). Augosto Buonicore and Fernando Garcia explain the social context.

Salvadora Lopes Perez (*ibidem*) started work in a textile factory when she was ten or eleven. Conditions were dire, ten hour days were the norm and women were badly affected, not only oppressed by employers but also lacking a voice in politics with no chance to vote. Indeed this book documents that, of course, there was no elected representation for women at all in any political party at that time. In 1938 she refused to work the standard ten sometimes twelve-hour day and was sacked as a result. However, she continued to protest, becoming the voice of the strikers when women began to take action against the oppression. These horrendous working conditions proved fertile ground for the Communist Party to recruit many members, whose strike outraged many journalists and indeed, society at large, at that time. However, with help from the party, she was reinstated and visited the USSR in the post war period. A contemporary journalist's outrage at the groups of unhappy young girls who worked in factories, who were striking and shouting outside the factory, was seen as inflammatory at that time. Salvadora Lopes Peres (2020), regained her job in 1939 and workers were given an eight-hour day. There were many issues of safety for children of mothers who were employed (cases of children of 7 years forced into unsafe conditions in factories) and in 1949 she presented "*A exploração da mulher dentro da empresa e a falta de proteção á infância*" to the first Convention of Women of the State of São Paulo.

My interest was also hooked by the fact that another famous Brazilian woman had also visited the USSR as part of the communist party in this era: Tarsila do Amaral (MoMA 2018), the modernist painter. Her earlier work was influenced by her studies in Paris in 1920, and on her return to Brazil just after the 1922 "Semana de Arte Moderna" (Week of Modern Art), she began a series of paintings which defined a new style, working closely with the poet Oswald de Andrade who would become her husband. Tarsila's "The Black Woman" (1923) portrait of a stylised, nude Afro-Brazilian woman outlined with a geometric background marked the beginning of a period of avant-garde experimentation. Accompanied by Andrade, Tarsila was instrumental in the formation of the aesthetic movement, Antropófago (Andrade 1972 [1929]), a method to devour or consume European culture in order to transform the energy into a more powerful art, a uniquely Brazilian art, perhaps like wood which had become an important export from Brazil. Silvana Sarti (2018) described it as a consumption of something powerful, cannibalism in effect, which nourishes and is used to create something entirely new. It was Tarsila's celebrated painting "Abaporu" (1928), which inspired Andrade's famous "Manifesto Antropófago". I had always loved Tarsila's "Operários" (1933; Factory workers) showing factory towers in the background and diagonally placed heads filling the right hand side of large paintings with its human faces of every ethnicity – possibly united workers but maybe a reflection of the racial mix of Brazil, and showing Tarsila's interest in the impact of industrialization on society and perhaps her travel to the USSR as a member of the communist party, where she participated in art exhibitions. However, she was imprisoned for a month during the Constitutional Revolution, accused of subversion. On her release from prison, it appears that she decided to abandon her political militancy but continued to use the themes in her art. Her contribution to and effect on the direction taken by Brazilian art is undeniable.

"Yby-Soroc" had whetted my appetite for Brazilian countryside and after viewing it, this Irish artist hitched a ride with Miguel Cinquini, who worked as a soil fertility consultant for Celta, selling organic soil improver for farms and garden centres, who was travelling through Minas Gerais state for a working week. Hardly "On the road" but this certainly provided me an opportunity to view countryside and farms and I was tempted by the famous cuisine of another Brazilian region.

2.2.2 En Route to Minas Gerais, the Indigenous, the Colonisers and the Irish Story

Miguel had warned me we were in for many kilometres on the road, so I used the opportunity to read up on the cuisine of Minas Gerais, Anthropophagy and the indigenous mix of Brazil, including how many Irish lived there and their equivalent in the Emerald Isle. Unlike

Argentina, there is not a huge population of Irish descent in Brazil. Indeed, the statistics seem to show that an increasing number of Brazilians are choosing instead to emigrate to the Emerald Isle for economic reasons, which surprised me. 13,000 Brazilians lived in Ireland at the last Irish census. Garret Maher detailed some of the reasons, linked to the intervention of an Irish priest:

> Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Ireland was in the midst of an economic boom, there was a need for migrant labour to work in a number of industries in which Irish people no longer wished to work. It seems that an Irish resident in Brazil made the initial contact. The Celtic Tiger was very keen for agricultural labour and also for workers for meat processing and construction, mainly in the areas of Gort and Roscommon. In 2002 just over 1,000 Brazilians were recorded in Ireland; by 2006 this increased to more than 4,300 according to census data, yet other estimates suggest that the figure was closer to 8,000 at that time (CSO 2003; O'Neill 2007). (Maher 2011, 77)

Simultaneous with their arrival and playing an influential part in integrating some of the Brazilian immigrants with each other, at least five Evangelical Churches were established in Gort and three in Roscommon, including the Assembly of God (Assembleia de Deus), God is Love (Deus é Amor) and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, also known as the UCKG Help Centre), all of which were founded in Brazil. No Evangelical Churches existed in either Gort or Roscommon, prior to their arrival. In the USA, the influence of the evangelical churches is practical, offering assistance with housing, employment and often documentation (*ibidem*).

Moving on from the Irish, it surprised me to learn that there are more people of mainly African descent in Brazil than in any other nation outside of Africa, and African music, dance, food, and religious practices have become an integral part of Brazilian culture, particularly in the North and also in Minas Gerais where in the eighteenth century, the mining of gold and diamonds began and many slaves were sent to work as agricultural labourers and domestic servants. Most African slaves were sent to labour on sugarcane plantations in the Northeast of Brazil in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, some who escaped and fled into the interior established independent farming communities and/or mixed with Indian groups. The abolition of slavery happened in 1888, and many Africans chose to leave the areas where they had been held captive and settled in other agricultural regions or in towns; however, the Northeast retained the heaviest concentration of Africans and mulattoes. From the 1860s to the 1920s, Brazilian manufacturers hired millions of European immigrants but largely avoided employing the descendants of slaves, who remained at the margin of Brazil's economy.

Before arriving, I had been warned about gun crime and violence on the streets of Brazil and seen incredible photography of the favelas. On 15 March 2018, it was reported that politician Marielle Franco, had been assassinated in her car, alongside her chauffeur, shocking Brazil and adding two more deaths to the numbers of dead protesters. More than 300 human rights activists were killed in 2019, according to a Front Line Defenders report, 14 Jan 2020 (Front Line 2019). While Colombia topped the list for the most murders with 103, with The Philippines second, this was closely followed by both Brazil and Mexico. Details of the physical assaults, defamation campaigns, digital security threats, judicial harassment, and gender-based attacks faced by human rights defenders across the world, on the frontline of protests against deep seated inequalities, corruption and authoritarianism, it is accepted as the status quo. In the cases for which the data is available, the report found: 85% of those killed last year had previously been threatened either individually or as part of the community or group in which they worked. 13% of those reported killed were women. 40% of those killed worked on land, indigenous peoples and environmental issues. In nearly all countries that experienced mass protests in 2019, human rights defenders were specifically targeted. They mobilized marches, documented police and military abuses, and helped citizens who were injured or arrested. So this is the background for the 2018 election campaign of Bolsonaro, the Brazilian candidate for the presidency who was stabbed in Brazil while I was in Argentina. The result for him was victory

in the polls, as the country rallied round a wounded politician, who was "standing up" to gun rule. The Ele não campaign flooded Facebook and social media, as a feminist protest against Bolsonaro's previous actions, while in Argentina the Ni Una Menos campaign was coming into its own. His election caused opinionated family discussions with the people I met at parties and socially; strong support against violence was topical but some espoused the idea that force needed to be met with force, and Bolsonaro's election has led to many changes in Brazil in public behaviour; in the arts, censorship and environment, which is not the purpose of this paper but has been noted.

3. An Irish Woman in Minas Gerais State, Brazil; Swapping Urban for Rural

After six weeks on my travels mainly in urban areas, the trip to *Minas Gerais* state allowed me an opportunity to view real Brazilian countryside. For somebody who had never seen a coffee plant, I was about to see kilometre after kilometre as well as bananas, bamboo, sugar cane and unidentified, exotic fruit, driving though rural areas with a salesman for organic, agricultural products to farmers in these areas. Minas Gerais is industrialised, with a large urban and finance centre based in Belo Horizonte, which we completely avoided. Despite knowing that this is the second most populous state after São Paulo, my trip was to remote farms, garden centres, even a private cactus/succulent grower. The huge distances we drove daily made me pity the travelling consultant's job but permitted me a delightful vista of farms, small provincial towns and a real taste of inland Brazil. I had visited Tigre and La Plata in Argentina on day trips but this was complete immersion for a week. The coffee plantations I insisted on photographing on every occasion, stunned me by their sharp, acid green growth but I was equally mesmerised by the rich, red colour of the soil in this state which contrasts deeply with soil seen either at home in Ireland or in my allotment in Kent. Perhaps it was the influence of my travelling companion that I noticed it so much but the colour was unbelievable. Imagine the rust that forms on an old, unused bicycle and mix that with a dash of blood-red and there it is; the perfect growing medium for that favourite breakfast beverage of half the world.

Fig. 13 – First view of coffee plantations, showing the rich rust red colour of the soil in Minas Gerais. Courtesy of the Author

Leaving Sorocaba we drove to our first overnight stay in Mococa, still in São Paulo state. In what seemed to be a personal message to me that it was time for a nocturnal wake up, another thunderstorm awakening in Hotel Dani, this time at 4:34 am with a pack of barking, howling stray dogs running wild in the car park, in case anybody thought they would be permitted to sleep through this. The weather in Latin America is worth describing because it's not like English or Irish rain. It is pouring down roof drainage pipes, overflowing. The car park visible from my window has rivers of brown water running into huge slatted drains, which are not coping. The lightning, which by now, I have seen all over Latin America, is excelling itself tonight. The crackling sound and the silver shocks are visible through the blind. I am in awe, the dogs howling and dervish-like while I sit in this motel in the middle of nowhere with no Wi-Fi wondering how I got here? These moments of weather were later painted into my "Rainbows for Meditation" landscapes – floods of rain, crackling lightning, howling animals, scudding clouds, swaying palm trees, unknown street signs, night-time. My trip commenced with a downpour and so it would continue. Early breakfast is on the cards for business people and "Café da Manhã" (breakfast) in Hotel Dani – was just 4 of us, the rest suited, me slightly more casual in this formal room, in the middle of nowhere, all in suits. We are almost in one of the best coffee growing areas in the world with friendly staff. My driver would continue to work on this trip – stopping at small farms to fulfil an order of Zeolita, a soil improver, meaning sometimes, I would be deposited in a small town to be collected later. Our first day Miguel went to a farm and I wandered on a tourist trip, with camera clicking.

Lunch is a big meal in Brazil, and we stopped in a huge city with a skyscraper skyline called Alfenas, in a pretty restaurant Miguel knew, with bottles of wine and liqueurs adorning the walls. People were arriving to eat in droves, queueing to buy takeaways and I am wistful now at the freedom of movement we had back then. I had a luxurious Tilapia lunch – Miguel, seasoned driver, knew that a good lunch stop is essential and he had warned me that dinner would be late. However, the Irish newbie was so excited by the unfamiliar food presented, struggling to pronounce it. The pristine, ironed, gingham cotton tablecloths, blue and white squared, the waiter's obsequious service, Miguel's insistence that I eat a lot and sate my hunger should have warned me about the distance we were going to travel. That afternoon's drive was steep – upwards and upwards, the scenery of agricultural fields. At one point I dropped off and woke at the top of a really high mountain with a super dramatic descent – a curling winding down road to Rifaina, a small town which is the last place to buy petrol before we cross into Minas Gerais.

Strangely, I pondered on whether the Conquistadores to foreign lands also felt the same. For me there was WhatsApp and social media so they could see snapshots of my experiences at home, but a sixteenth century explorer had no such resources. Although I was completely lost in a landmass of Minas Gerais, I knew I could switch on Maps at any stage and understand the latitude and longitude and consult TripAdvisor.

Just before where we crossed the river, we stopped at a petrol station in Rifaina, a town that is next to the Rio Grande. Route 464 crosses the river so first we stretched our legs at a huge viewing place, a lake with fishermen. It was absolutely heavenly here after sitting in the car for so long, still light, with groups of fishermen and waves from a motorboat long gone. I know this from my own travels on the River Medway in the UK; if a fast boat passes you, you wait tensely as a curling wave approaches you, preparing yourself for the swing wildly in one direction or the other. It had been a very long drive already. The life of a travelling salesman is long and solitary and for Miguel, this provided him with an opportunity to practise his English and probably a welcome extra person to reflect on the sights. The sky was leaden, and it changed so quickly. Rain was again dropping as we dashed for the car, me getting wet as I had stopped to take pictures of this beautiful, unfamiliar tree in full bloom with bright yellow flowers. Drops began to patter down all of a sudden, we dashed

back to the car as the storm hit. You could feel the electricity in the air, watch as clouds chased each other across the sky and there was a beautiful yellow bloom tree which was battered by the rain. The grey and yellow interacted in the most magical visual way, etched on my brain for later painting. These are *Ipê*, I learned back in the car. We dashed for the car and the element of surprise here leaving Rifaina behind, is that we are about to cross a huge river. Like everything else in Brazil, it is the sheer scale of it. It seemed like an insanely long crossing – it is – but more so because lightning was flashing as we drove. We could see it actually overtaking us and knew with a sinking feeling (if you are me) that we might actually catch up with these scudding clouds and jagged lightning strikes. I see why the ancient civilisations visualise the Lord of Thunder, as on a chariot racing with the clouds, a Celestial noise maker. Once we cross this bridge, Miguel assures me, we arrive in Minas Gerais, as this bridge is also the border between São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

It has to be said that darkness was approaching at this point and once across the bridge, we snaked through a mountainous landscape going higher and higher, chasing the storm clouds. It was pitch black and it suddenly reminded me of a childhood trip on the Conor Pass in Kerry, where the width of the road allowed for no accidents and there were few streetlights. Rivers of rain were pouring down the narrow little roads to the left and right of this main drag. Cows in darkness were lit up occasionally by our headlights or that lightning flash. Trucks came chugging up the hill from the opposite direction. And down. No houses. A land seemingly deserted by humans, perhaps human habitation was concealed by angry clouds, thunder and lightning. We seem to be totally insignificant with clouds threatening to overwhelm. The noise of this storm is overwhelming. Miguel said nothing because he was concentrating on driving, but he was laughing at me and my exclamations and I cannot believe he didn't feel the power and majesty of Mother Nature pouring down on us. Maybe he is used to it? I felt very tiny in the car, like ants on a massive landscape, with the deities above chucking massive buckets of water on a parched land. I was petrified and Miguel kept saying he wasn't scared but it was certainly a type of intense, glad to be alive moment, albeit locked up like a tin of sardines in the small metal shell of a car, terribly aware of our human vulnerability.

Fig. 14 – Rainy weather and a palette of colour in Minas Gerais, which proved inspirational for the Author. Courtesy of the Author

A thought about distances occurred to me. Brazil is almost half of South America, with a total area of 8,514,215 km² (3,287,357 sq. mi.). As the Republic of Ireland is 84,421 km² this means over 100 Irelands could fit into Brazil. While comparing the Republic of Ireland to Minas Gerais, this state is larger than the whole Republic! It is really mountainous too and we could see them in the distance if we drove in the valleys, no matter where we were. When on high, it seemed like a continuous farm with neat rows of cultivated crops stretching in pleasing lines. Comparing myself to a Conquistador, imagine reliving the motives for their trips into this unknown; riches, fame, Royal favour, religion? It must have been terrifyingly different from home. My many hours spent alone while Miguel was selling his products gave me plenty of time for reflection; the kilometres in the car passing through the most miraculous of scenery for me but for the driver it meant a constant scanning of the road, the weather, the traffic and also listening for updates on a phone. I, by contrast, was a mere shadow in the car and the scenery *inolvidável*, unforgettable. Miguel seemed interested in what I was observing, seeing the world though a foreigner's eyes instead of his own, strictly eyes to the road. I revised my idea that this was a script for an on-the-road movie, Jack Kerouac style. The longer it continued, the more it turned into Zen and the Art of Driving Safely Through Minas. Finally we arrive at a destination; it is not raining. I breathe a sigh of relief – we are in São Sebastião do Paraíso.

3.1 São Sebastião do Paraíso, Minas Gerais

Worn out from 11 hours travelling the day before, next morning we settled into breakfast in Hotel Cosini. This hotel is really busy considering it is off season early spring, offering a lavish breakfast with tables of fresh fruit, cut into patterns, pastries and bread sliced with cheeses, sliced meats and yogurt and a kind of sweet cottage cheese. We are served by a smiling waitress, keen to know where we are from and the purpose of our visit. Miguel has meetings to attend; for me, an opportunity to read the *Folha De São Paulo*, the free newspaper provided and to try asking for more coffee, to practise the phrases learned as my usual translator had already departed on his busy schedule. Tiles of exquisite workmanship lined the walls and I glanced into the swimming pool, which was quiet but in full summer I could see this would be a tourist destination. Alone in this sweet little town, its name translating as Saint Sebastian of Paradise, I wandered towards the square and the church outside the Hotel Cosini. The square was full of really mature trees, their roots emerging out of the ground, their shade covering various wooden seats in this busy street where cars zoomed up and down on either side. The weather was kind comparing it to the storms I had seen the day before and in previous weeks. Two statues graced this elegant square – one of a breastfeeding mother, and another of Saint Sebastian (c. AD 256-288) the early Christian saint and martyr. We had arrived so late and under cover of darkness that we had no idea of the beauty of the little town in which we stayed overnight. The colours here were so incredibly different to either Ireland or the UK but the architecture certainly had a European colonial feel. I watched over a railing as school children were playing in a playground, and the building could have been a Spanish or Portuguese restaurant. While our schools seem very functional; this was curved, painted green with little arches and natural hiding places for children to play. Bright blue was another favourite for exterior painting. This town became a municipality in 1870, with a population of about 70,000 and it is known for its high-quality coffee and agricultural production of sugarcane, fruit, rice and beans. However, this is not the state of huge multinationals; the majority of farms are owned as small holdings and agriculture employs 8,400 people. José Carlos Gonçalves, a well-known coffee producer was born here and his farm is also the largest avocado producer in the whole of Brazil. This area

is equally well known for its milk products. For me, the friendliness and beauty of the town are reflected in its high rankings for its quality of life; Paradise indeed.

Fig. 15 – Main Square in São Sebastião do Paraíso showing the church, several statues and abundant tree growth. Courtesy of the Author

Fig. 16 – The interior of the church with a Black Madonna. Courtesy of the Author

Fig. 17 – Street vendor with vegetables displayed in a wheelbarrow. Courtesy of the Author

Atop the tower of the church, Igreja Matriz São Sebastião do Paraíso, Christ's outstretched hands overlook this picturesque square inviting visitors to prayer. It is busy – cars are beeping, people are playing in the square and shopkeepers are shouting out prices. However as eyes struggle to adjust to the darkness on entry, then I push a crafted, beautiful stained glass window door. Inside, the dark interior reveals a treasure trove above my head, a circular night sky painted with stars in the foyer, and standing underneath them are four statues, one of which was a Black Madonna. To date, I had seen these statues in Montserrat in Spain, in Dublin, in Poland, in La Plata, in Sorocaba and now this town.

When I arrived home, these faces of Black Madonnas seemed to speak to me. These were developed into a series of mono-prints in my exhibition, "Patterns for Peace" in 2019 (Lawlor Mottram 2019). Inside the church, the overall feeling is lightness, with colour provided by red marble columns lining the aisle, beautifully painted frescoed ceiling overhead and wooden pews to rest a while and enjoy the peace. On a street close by, I found a vegetable seller – his wheelbarrow full of home-grown lettuce, several types of spinach, leeks and onions. I found a souvenir shop and tried my luck in clothes shops for presents and also a supermarket, to view the local produce. Local coffee, sugar, fruit, sweet dairy cottage cheese products and something I had never imagined – sugarcane chopped into pieces to use in juice making. By now, my Spanish had been left in Buenos Aires and I could understand written signs and make myself understood in most situations, ordering lunch and having a Brazilian beer in an outdoor café. I would certainly recommend this town for a slow easy holiday, particularly if you like swimming and can use the sauna and pool in Hotel Cosini.

For our afternoon outing I was due to meet up with Miguel after his first meeting, to visit a farm; Fazenda Nossa Senhora da Conceição. My eyes gazed on gentle hills with fields of trees in bloom – lilac purple, high Jacaranda trees and coffee planted in rows, on wet sodden fields,

water logged after the previous night's storm. A proud "Approved by ILLY coffee" adorned a wall. This farm manager discussed production – how coffee beans are grown on slanting hills all around, then collected in a large flat area laid out on the ground on a pitch about the size of 4 or 5 football pitches to my eye, then carefully graded into green coffee or red coffee, the green being slightly inferior and for local use. The red beans are selected, dried and sent for export. As we wandered about, I was on the lookout for *canastras*, a local animal with no luck but we saw an abundance of butterflies, lizards and birds. A fruit tree I could not identify; we picked a tiny orange, oval shaped one off the ground and tried it – discarded on the soil under a tree. Deliciously sweet, looks like an apricot but certainly not one. This is a fruit of the *Cerrados* (Savannah) Miguel tells me, so it might be a *pequi*. I tried a piece of it and it was so sweet.

Accompanying a soil consultant, we were able to visit huge storage rooms and drying rooms, where the precious beans were stored. We could also admire the farm's own little brick-built church, for the family's use. I also spotted an old Volkswagen from the sixties or seventies, which was being fixed for use. This so reminded me of parts of rural Ireland, where youngsters would fix up old cars. In fact, it seemed such a worldwide activity, this re-modelling of old bangers that it made me smile. Here too, we saw an allotment, a garden for use by the workers to grow salads and herbs, all growing wonderfully in winter. I began to think longingly of hotter temperatures but Miguel said he was relieved it was cool because he was working.

Minas Gerais is famous for many agricultural products – *pequis* are grown all over the state and it is permitted to pick them by anybody. They can be eaten fresh, although they have spikes so locals often dry them, after removing these. The seed can be salted, then and eaten like peanuts. They also have a high oil content which can be used for biofuel. *Goiabada* is a sweet made with Guava fruit, often eaten with local cheese; *queijo com goiabada* is a Minas delicacy. Another strange sounding fruit is *jabuticaba* which you can buy on roadside stalls in boxes, a light brown, roundish fruit I had never heard of. Another state special was *coxinha*, chicken and potato croquettes fried in oil. I even read that there is now a market for loquats grown here in Minas to sell to Asia; some local farms are also growing lychees for foreign export. Today is another long drive. Feeling like I have learned a lot about local produce and flora, we climb higher and higher up hills in darkness now, to reach a place with little lights sparkling in the distance, a town famed for being the best place to catch a view of the rising sun.

Fig. 18 – Boxed *jabuticabas* on sale in a street market. Courtesy of the Author

3.2 Minas Gerais State – Araxá

"The name Araxá" said the lady in the tourist office in the centre of town pointing at a tourist leaflet, "is a reference to the name given by the indigenous population who lived here until the eighteenth century. In their language, it means a high place from where you see the sunrise first" (Côrtes 2011). This description perfectly describes this picturesque town on a hill, overlooking lush scenery in the spring time I visited. The city is famed for its healing mineral waters and in the nineteenth century, there were studies undertaken with regard to its use in the treatment of tuberculosis. Legend has it that these waters give eternal youth, and speakers of Irish will know the term The Land of the Young or *Tír na nÓg* (Heaney 1994) and The Water of Life or *Uisce Beatha*. Having recently introduced the story of the Salmon of Knowledge (Lawlor Mottram 2020) to children in Buenos Aires province, I found myself relating the legends of Fionn MacCumhail once again, marvelling at how similar mythology and beliefs survive across all five continents. The natural mineral waters of the Dona Beja Springs (DBS) named after the town's most famous citizen (see section 3.5 below) and Andrade Júnior springs (AJS) from Araxá city, in the Brazilian State of Minas Gerais, are well known since the nineteenth century when started the studies of their healing properties for the tuberculosis treatment (Bonotto, de Oliveira Thomazini 2019). The period 1930-1950 in Araxá saw a boom in thermal and non–thermal spas, both for therapeutic and leisure purposes.

Assumed to be American in the Tourist Information Centre, I corrected them and as the first ever Irish visitor to the town, I proudly signed the Visitors' Book in the central Municipal buildings and asked if anybody there could help me in English, with some of my questions. Employee Madalena Aguiar gave me a guided tour of the city and the town's produce, in her excellent English, showing me home-made local fruit preserves and other items in storage, and explaining where I could buy them as gifts. I was disappointed that the museum of Dona Beja was closed for renovation so she suggested the general museum instead. I was made so welcome here too – Madalena explaining that I was the first Irish visitor to the town, the guides rushed to tell me in as much detail as possible about the town.

Fig. 19 – The old railway station in Araxá, converted into a cultural centre. Courtesy of the Author

Fig. 20 – The weavers who work in the cultural centre in their workshop. Courtesy of the Author

I had already found an arts and cultural centre by chance, Fundação Calmon Barreto de Araxá – next to the railway lines. The Foundation was set up in the disused railway station in 1996 to celebrate the work of Araxá's most famous visual artist, Calmon Barreto. It is a beautiful building, with many original features intact and is now used as a centre for local artists and writers to meet, also housing a weaving workshop where local female weavers still work and sell their textiles in the shop. I had learned about the arrival of the railway in Sorocaba and I knew the level of foreign investment and engineering. Barreto, a native of the town, had moved to São Paulo where he had exhibited widely and won many awards for his paintings before moving back to his hometown. In 1987 an exhibition entitled "Dona Beja recebe Calmon" showed twelve of his paintings in the Municipal Museum of Dona Beja. It was this painting of Dona Beja which caught my attention, which I saw in the town's museum; – an equestrian picture of a blue-dressed, beautiful young woman, seated mounted on a horse, not in the classic female side-saddle position but seated as a modern rider of a horse. By now, my curiosity was whetted to discover more about the town's famous citizen and the answer was a commentary on how history is made according to the standards of the era.

3.3 In Memoriam: Dona Beja and Ann Lovett

Araxá's most famous resident has been immortalised by TV Manchete's television soap opera loosely based on her life, which aired first in the 1980s, called *Dona Beija: A Feiticiceira* (the sorceress) taking its name from the beautiful beijo flower. This series concerned the protagonist's strength in overcoming the events that clouded her life, including the disapproval and prejudice of a small-minded rural town. The series was also made in Spanish called "Doña Bella", which was commissioned by Telefutura. Although some facts are based on her life, the true story would make headline news as horror today. Ana Jacinta do São José, was born in 1800 in the municipality of Formiga. The family moved to Araxá when she was young, where

she lived her adolescence happily until the age of 15. Information provided by a local Town Councillor, Sidney Ferreira (2020), describes her as an extraordinarily beautiful teenager who in 1815, aged just 15, was abducted then raped by the General Ombudsman of the county, a man named Dr Joaquim Inácio Silveira da Motta. Her grandfather died in the attempt to stop the kidnap. After this initial rape, her mother, Maria Bernardo, made a formal complaint to the local authorities but Councillor Ferreira says at that time, events like these were quite common especially when the offence was committed by somebody of a higher social status and the doctor forced the girl to live with him for 12 years, as his lover. The only recourse available to her mother was an appeal made to the neighbouring Governor of Goiás, known to be a sworn enemy of Dr Silveira da Motta. His response to Dona Beja's mother's complaint was to pass a decree transferring Araxá's judicial and sentencing bodies to became part of the Minas Gerais district (Côrtes 2011).

When said Ombudsman was recalled to the Royal Court twelve years later, Ana Jacinta then aged 27, was able to finally return to her home town. Her arrival in Araxá was not without problems, after 12 years of abuse (if viewed in contemporary terms), where she was met with quite a hostile reception. Conservative society decided that she was not a victim but a seductress. Leonardos (1957) in his book about her narrates a story which illustrated the rivalry which existed between the Ladies of Araxá (*Dona Beija: A Feiticeira do Araxá* narra uma passagem que ilustra a rivalidade existente entre Beija e conservadoras "senhoras do Araxá"). In response, Dona Beja built a sumptuous house in Chácara do Jatobá, where she settled with her family. There she entertained the men of the district, holding parties and receptions in colonial style, living out her days in semi-luxury from the high fees charged to anybody seeking her favour. So although some tourist leaflets label her as a courtesan-type character who was "loved by men and hated by women", the real life character now has her own museum in pride of place close to the centre of town, painted in sky blue. However, the facts about Dona Beja's life, if re-told with a twenty-first century perspective, read incredibly differently from how she is portrayed by history and contemporary society.

The age at which she was brutally raped is exactly the same as that of Ann Lovett in Ireland, the teenager whose baby died after giving birth outdoors in a freezing, cold grotto in February 1984, followed by the death of the mother due to exposure. In both cases these young women were initially seen as bringing shame upon their local community but ultimately Ann Lovett's death "changed Ireland forever" says Niall O'Dowd (2018) in an article about her in 2018. The story was originally covered by Rosita Boland of *The Irish Times* (2004); O'Dowd referred to Ann Lovett's death, which happened just four months after the outcome of a divisive abortion referendum in which a two-thirds majority voted to enshrine the right to life of the unborn in the constitution. After Ann Lovett's untimely death, the local community remained silent, although there was a police investigation, with connections to the local priest and a missing letter from the young girl which supposedly had been burned. Several questions remain unanswered. At that time the identity of the baby's father never came to light and there was no talk of criminal charges of having sex with a minor or if indeed, he was of age himself. The Garda investigations petered out. There was a private inquiry into Ann Lovett's death, but the report was not made public. Later articles uncovered the girl's sexual partner who claimed there had been an unreported incident, where her thighs were bruised, he suspected rape but she refused to report it to the local police. The tragedy of her death meant her name resounded in the public debate about whether the rights of a mother were equal to that of her unborn child. Extenuating circumstances of another underage child X in 1992, who had been raped and sought to travel to terminate that pregnancy, was in danger of becoming criminalised and also the death of Savita

Halappanaver in 2012, who had been denied an abortion while suffering a septic miscarriage. All of these tragedies increased calls to repeal the Eighth Amendment in Ireland. The debate surrounding these cases questioned whether the rights of the mother should be given equal importance as those of the unborn child which caused national discussions about Church and State. The Citizens' Assemblies formed to gauge and inform public opinion were successful in framing the debates during the referendum in 2018. This was the year I travelled to Latin America, where the same issue was being discussed by the Argentine parliament; to equally loud protests for and against with graffiti, posters and debates on the streets of Buenos Aires during my visit. The "invisible" men who fathered the children rarely faced the public outcry faced by young women. I imagined that Tarsila do Amaral would have certainly swallowed their stories, including the governor, with passion and converted them into something huge.

4. Summary: How This Journey Impacted the Artist's Creative Work

> El emigrante por sí mismo y a través de las instituciones que crea, vive simultáneamente en el país emisor y en el receptor. (Cruset 2019)

Writing these memories has also brought waves of nostalgia; this trip was a once in a lifetime event and the themes of invisible and visible histories and their preservation in the collective mind, in food and festivals, in agriculture, in churches and monuments became obvious to me only in writing this paper. My fascination with that which is absent, like Girón's bird jackets or the invisible Solís and those outlined women workers in Lopes' paintings, somehow is the theme that emerged after my trip. It may stem from my upbringing on tales of the mythical Irish heroes the *Fianna* (Heaney 1994), the exploits of Fionn MacCumhail but also the *Tuatha Dé Danaan*, that tribe forced to leave Ireland forever and move into the *Sidhe* (fairy) underground who are less well known but do linger deep in my own knowledge of Irish mythology and which echo ever present in the imagination of the Irish. We live with two languages, like many of the places I visited and in a similar manner I imagine that the spirit of the indigenous mind still co-habits the land and the genetics of the inhabitants. "The dead may be invisible but they are not absent" as Saint Augustine of Hippo is reported to have coined.

So how does this fit into my own artistic practice? The artwork created after my Latin American trip was exhibited in my exhibition "Patterns for Peace" (Lawlor Mottram 2019) at the Royal Engineers Museum, UK, based on my artist-in-residence in Argentina incorporating Black Madonna portraits and *Rainbows for Meditation.* Recently, one of these Black Madonnas illustrates the cover of a book called *Hag's Well* by Honor Ní Fhactnáin (2021), a story of a single mother in the Gaeltacht area of Ireland. However, I feel that my experience in Brazil is now also coming forward and the vast areas of countryside, the different species of trees, fruit and flowers seen there are ever present in my drawings of vegetation. In 2021 I created "A Stump to view the Ghost of a Tree" (Lawlor Mottram 2021) in which I plan to place a sawn off log in front of the funereal black velvet artwork of a dead tree, created as a protest for a tree that no longer exists – the Cubbington Pear (Bond 2020), destroyed during lockdown in the UK to make way for the new, high speed railway HS2. In 2015 this tree was voted Britain's favourite and it is ironic that during the pandemic of 2020, the world valued their green spaces so much while this ancient tree was felled. I fear for our natural world.

Fig. 21 – Black Madonna photographed in Sorocaba, Brazil. Courtesy of the Author

Fig. 22 – Tina Lawlor Mottram, *A Stump to view the Ghost of a Tree*, moulded paper and fabric installation, 2021. Courtesy of the Author

The travellers and the foreigners who settle, bring with them their skills and experience, in addition to their language and any disease to which the local population may not be immune. Travel broadens the ability to view your own life from a distance and enables some recognition of similarities in situations; the abortion debates, the struggle against an occupier, territorial struggles in which I include Brexit, different languages and different viewpoints. The Dona Beja story brought memories of Ann Lovett, the Me too movement and also Ni Una Menos, so strong in Argentina. The 2020 BLM movement was also a call for change – in our pandemic disease-struck world, the young and the active protested wearing masks on the streets and toppled statues into the waters in Bristol.

In 2021, casting an eye backwards on my travels in a landmass I can barely see on a whole page of my atlas, I track my journey with pleasure while also plotting the journey of the COVID-19 virus making me feel that I have travelled back in time. The sheer distance – from Sorocaba to Araxá was about 1000 km, from Buenos Aires to Brazil was huge in relation to Irish distances. When the first European travellers arrived, they brought silent killers such as smallpox, measles and influenza which decimated native populations, unaccustomed to them. Our daily TV flashes of scenes in intensive care COVID–19 units in hospitals worldwide, all of them masked, covered in protective clothing makes 2020 a year the world will never forget. I last visited Ireland in Feb 2019 and there seems to be no hope in the near future of going there until I have my vaccination passport. As Cruset (2019) maintains, the emigrant lives in both the new world chosen in addition to carrying their country of origin deep inside. For me, on my travels I was deeply aware of how embedded in British culture I have become through employment, marriage and friendships while also relishing future contact with Ireland and future collaboration on Latin American art and environmental projects.

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Tea for Two, Scones, and Literature!* An Interview with Juan José Delaney

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Juan José Delaney is an Irish-Argentine or much better an "Irish-Porteño" as he likes to call himself. His family arrived in Argentina in the nineteenth century and he is part of the fourth generation in our country. Prominent member of the Irish community in Argentina, he has developed a career as writer, professor of Argentine Literature at Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, and headmaster of a school situated in the suburbs of the same city. In his writings, or in most of them, he deals with characters and topics that are representative of his Irish ancestry. Praised in 1974 on occasion of his first collection of short stories by acclaimed Argentine literary figure, Jorge Luis Borges, he published in 2018 a book called *Borges and Irish Writing* on the relationship between Borges and Irish literature and its influence on his writings. He has also written, *Marco Denevi y la sacra ceremonia de la escritura. Una biografía literaria* (2006). This biographical text constitutes an interesting issue, since Denevi, together with Borges and Julio Cortázar is considered one of the three best Argentine short story writers, as María González Rouco (2006), claims in her review of the book. Delaney himself has stated in other interviews (Amador-Moreno, 2018) his preference for that genre, a topic which we will explore later.

As this monographical collection for the 11th issue of *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* is devoted to the amazing relationship between Ireland and Latin America, it is my intention to engage Juan José in a dialogue, over a cup of tea – only that virtually – to reflect upon his life as an Irish-Porteño, on his writings and on literature in general.

* This interview was carried out virtually, but it would have been a face-to-face one if the Covid-19 pandemic had not struck, isolated and locked us down in our home and home towns. I'm sure that the best meeting place to talk about Juan José Delaney's life as an Irish-Porteño and about his literary works would have been, as on other occasions, "Los Galgos" coffee shop and bar, which due to being close to his agent's offices and to his university was frequented regularly by the writer.

MGE: Juan José, we first met for the II Symposium of Irish Studies in South America (at Manzana de las Luces, Buenos Aires) that our friends from ABEI, generously offered to move from São Paulo. It was indeed an extraordinary event, full of energy, with a synergy which generated a positive mood among participants, and I dare say, it was the beginning of Irish Studies as we know them today in Argentina. What are your thoughts about it?

JJD: I remember that. It was a wonderful Symposium which included presentations of relevant academics and writers like Colm Tóibín who read passages from *Brooklyn* his work in progress. That very high occasion helped to promote Irish Studies in Buenos Aires and, probably, the project of an Irish Studies Program I had presented at Universidad del Salvador in 2006, finally accepted in 2016 thanks to the Irish Embassy in Buenos Aires.

MGE: Certainly, and also in other parts of Argentina as well, through initiatives in several National Universities such as La Pampa (UNLPam), La Plata (UNLP) and Córdoba (UNC). Since we first met in 2007, we talked several times about interviewing members of the Irish community in Argentina, and you once said "That's an interesting idea … I'll pass you on some names for you to contact…". That project never materialized but my first name in the list would have been, and in fact now is "yours". So, my first question for you is related to your childhood as an Irish-Porteño. What was it like to be born in a family with Irish ancestry on both sides: Delaney/Coughlan?

JJD: For special reasons having to do with my mother's health, I spent my childhood with my great aunt and great uncle (Kathy Dunne and James Coughlan) who had no children. They spoke Irish-English, sometimes Irish-Porteño (a variation consisting in a curious combination of Spanish and English), and when they tried Spanish they did it in a very awkward way. They were active members of the Irish Community in Buenos Aires, their friends were all Irish and they used to receive the visit of the Pallottines from St. Patrick's Church in the Villa Urquiza neighbourhood. Villa Urquiza, Belgrano, Villa Devoto, Almagro, in town, and Santos Lugares or Palomar in the suburban area were some of the typical districts where the Irish settled. In the countryside (the "camp", after the Spanish word "campo"), San Antonio de Areco, Capitán Sarmiento, Arrecifes, Junín, General Pinto, Ameghino, Rojas, Salto, Mercedes and Suipacha were, in the Province of Buenos Aires, among the preferred areas for stockbreeding and farming. I remember when the Coughlans took me to St. Patrick's Church on the occasion of the visit of Irish-American Bishop Fulton Sheen to Argentina. When the mass was over, together with the rest of the Assembly they saluted the bishop and asked him to bless me, which he did. They also used to take me to the Holy Cross Church, run by the Passionist Congregation, at that time the Irish Church, and to the bazaars organized by different Irish Argentine societies. They were subscribers to *The Southern Cross*[1];but when they wanted fresh international news they would buy the *Buenos Aires Herald*[2]. My uncle enjoyed reading detective stories and that was the beginning of my devotion to Cornell Wollrich, John Dickson Carr and others. Agatha Christie, Conan Doyle and Chesterton came after. That personal "Paradise" was definitely lost when, years after, my parents sent me to a Salesian boarding school in Ramos Mejía, Buenos Aires, where the present Pope and his brother had spent a boarding year in 1949.

[1] *The Southern Cross*, is an Argentine Roman Catholic English language newspaper founded in 1875. It is still in print to this day on a monthly basis. See <https://thesoutherncross.info/> (03/2021).

[2] The *Buenos Aires Herald* was a daily newspaper in English founded in 1876. It ceased publication in 2017.

MGE: I see a parallel here with Rodolfo Walsh's[3] school life in the convent school in Capilla del Señor and the Fahy Institute in Moreno, which for him also meant another Paradise lost, only that in your case the Salesians, as a congregation, did not have a strong connection with the Irish. Boarding schools in the past were not a rare option for families, was it a hard time or did you enjoy or benefit from that type of schooling?

JJD: Though the Salesians were not hard on us and we were well fed, I didn't like to be there. I wanted to be free. I remember that they controlled our readings, and that Borges was banned. "Borges es destructor", they would say. But I used to disguise *Historia universal de la infamia* (Borges 1935), *El Aleph* (Borges 1949) and books by Cortázar or Sabato with covers torn out from lives of saints or spiritual handbooks... On the other hand, I'm thankful for the education I received: Latin, Literature, Philosophy, Theology and the official subjects. Not to speak of our teachers, most of them brilliant and very well prepared. Sports was also an important activity, but I was terribly awkward. We graduated with an official degree known as "Bachiller Superior en Letras" (it could be similar to a GCSE in Spanish Language and Literature). During the last period at that school, I met an Irish Salesian called John Windsor. We became friends and, as a former student, I regularly visited him at his residence in Colegio Pío IX, in town. He was then nearly eighty and had come from County Wicklow when he was 26. He had never been happy in this country and, in the end, he admitted that he had made a serious mistake becoming a priest. Hidden in his wardrobe there was always a bottle of Irish Mist which he enjoyed sharing with the friends who visited him.

MGE: Do you mean, the liquor? I suppose you counted as one of his friends and enjoyed both his company and a glass of Irish mist, too. His story was not unusual, though, only that back then they just accepted it as their fate, today, perhaps, that would be different. I see that either at home or at school you grew up among elderly people and books and this, seems to me, gave you the chance to "overhear" many stories, anecdotes, and as you say to participate in many celebrations and activities proper of those relatives, friends or teachers who continued in many aspects living according to past traditions. That seems to later on serve as inspiration for several of your short stories and novels and in the creation of characters, can you confirm this?

JJD: No doubt. It still appears to me as an endless source of inspiration, together with what I saw, heard and went through afterwards, since I never stopped being an active member of the Hiberno-Argentine community, mainly in relation to cultural undertakings.

MGE: And that is made evident in your literary production; you not only narrate but also portray Argentina, your native country, in close relation with an Ireland which is also yours through your family history, through your readings and through the links you established with the Irish here in Argentina, those back in Ireland or elsewhere. How do you feel fluctuating between different countries and cultures, when you are Argentine but your "blood" says you are also Irish?

[3] Rodolfo Jorge Walsh (1927-1977) was an Argentine writer, journalist and translator of Irish descent. He is considered the initiator of investigative journalism. He is most famous for his *Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta* (<http://www.jus.gob.ar/media/2940455/carta_rw_ingles-espa_ol_web.pdf>, 03/2021) which he was able to post before being kidnapped and disappeared. The letter is a protest pamphlet denouncing the widespread human rights abuses perpetrated by the Junta Militar which had taken power in a coup the previous year.

JJD: I'm really proud of the two cultures I've inherited, and I wouldn't say that I fluctuate from one culture to another. A new, different identity appears to be the natural culmination of the encounter of dissimilar cultures. I'm convinced of this that is why I'm always preaching about the richness of integration and assimilation.

MGE: A synthesis, would you say? I see your story as the story of the majority of the Irish community in our country. So my next related question has to do with your meeting Ireland. When did you first visit the land of your ancestors? How was that first meeting with the "imagined island", with the island of your great-grandparents? Where had they come from, by the way?

JJD: I first visited Ireland in 1997. With the only exception of the country's geography, I wasn't surprised at what I found. More than ever, I understood Borges's statement in the sense that many Argentinians are Europeans in exile. But it was the spoken language of the popular Irish people that really moved me: syntax, tone, inflections, rhythm… On the other hand, within the academic milieu, I met people who, surprised, defined my speech as that of the Irish-English of the 19th century, already gone from Ireland. I was considered a kind of linguistic "Noah's Ark". All my ancestors came from County Westmeath. I still have relatives in Walderstown, Athlone.

MGE: Westmeath was one of the counties from which many Irish emigrants came to Argentina, isn't that so? Were your ancestors involved in rural or urban activities here in Argentina?

JJD: Yes, you're right, most of them came from County Westmeath. My ancestors started trying luck in the "camp", but they all failed. They moved then to the city and taking advantage of their English (or Irish-English) ended working for American or British companies.

MGE: I see, the idea of becoming well-off by working the land was generally the first idea of many immigrants, but then as you say if they were not lucky they moved to the cities. In La viuda de O'Malley *(2005) your play, you describe in detail how life in the "camp" was like, daily routines and tasks, the monthly visits of the community priest, the rules of the house. All this is disrupted after Mr. O'Malley's death. The eldest son, Charlie, wants desperately to move to the city, for instance, and he shows the feeling many descendants of Irish immigrants have to return to a land they never knew as if it were their homeland. Have you ever been seduced by that mythical return? Why, do you think, this feeling that you portray in the character tends to persist in the minds of many immigrant's descendants?*

JJD: To me, Ireland is not a place but a deep feeling, an emotion. I'm in Ireland when I read Flann O'Brien, Walter Macken, Seamus Heaney or John Banville; I'm in Ireland when I listen to songs like "Come back to Erin", or "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling", and in this same sense I can say that I spent great part of my childhood in Ireland during the period I lived in Villa Urquiza with the Coughlans. I know that many Irish-Porteños constructed their own mental Ireland, probably forced by the hard reality they went through in this damn country we all love so much. It's a way of spiritual evasion, I would say.

MGE: Yes, you are right, and that is what the character in your play seems to represent. In that play you present many aspects of the Irish settlement during the nineteenth and early twentieth

century in our country. Reading it allows us to understand Father Fahy's[4] *"Irish Settlement Model" developed between 1843 and 1871. He definitely played a central role at the time. What are your thoughts about his work in our land with his fellow countrymen and women?*

JJD: Everybody knows the part Father Fahy played within the Irish community in the River Plate till his death in 1871. To the Irish and their descendants, he was a true patriarch. But it can't be denied that as a consequence of "protecting" and "preserving" the Irish, he delayed the integration process to the host country.

MGE: That is also clear in the play, the eldest son would follow that pattern, he definitely does not want to be an Argentine citizen, even though by birth he is one, anyway you also suggest that things would begin to change. The female characters in the play – mother and daughter – show differences which seem to derive from the generation to which each belongs. The mother and widow tends to repress her feelings due to her strong Victorian upbringing but Brenda, her daughter, is not ready to comply with such a strict pattern. She decides will not marry an Irish person for instance and elopes with her Jewish boyfriend. What can you tell us about women's roles, their expected behaviours and marriage patterns within the community at the time in which you set the play?

JJD: Irish women, up to, let us say the 1960's, did their best to preserve "the values of the race", as I heard more than once. Up to my parents' generation they hardly intermarried. "Have nothing to do with the natives", "Never get in with the blacks" were regular and offensive remarks. It is in this context that a society for the youngsters called "The Cross and the Shamrock" was created. Its subliminal aim was to encourage marriages between members, all of them Irish-Porteños.

MGE: That would continue the original plan for the first Irish immigrants in Argentina. But you go against that tradition in the play, even though it is set at an earlier time, Brenda rebels and breaks away from community and family impositions, why?

JJD: At that time it wasn't common, but it happened. You can see it in the "Social Events section" published by *The Southern Cross.* Intermarriage was a scandalous affair and it used to arise a hell of a commotion in the family. My mother told me the story of a friend of hers who married an Italian (a "nap", as they were called). His surname was Lamberti, and thanks to my mother's inventiveness the news in the "Wedding Bells section" of *The Southern Cross* appeared with a slight change, an apparent typing mistake: "Lambert". It wasn't Irish but at least it sounded English…

MGE: That's funny, I mean the way it was solved before society but I suppose it was a real scandal as you say. Then, an absolutely interesting character is Ben, the mentally disabled child of the family. What struck me when I read the play is the fact that Ben is "disabled" under the gaze of the family

[4] Anthony Dominic Fahy (1805-1871), an Irish Dominican priest, missionary and head of the Irish community in Argentina between 1844 and 1871. The "settlement model" which the nineteenth century Irish found on entering Argentina was an established structure based on cooperation so that the wealthy could subsidized the poor and the experienced immigrant helped the ones who arrived, carefully organized by Fr. Fahy who also was in charge of keeping savings from immigrants and giving them reasonable advice later regarding what to do and how to invest their money, mainly buying land and cattle.

and people in general, but he has the ability to perceive life in a much simpler yet comprehensive way, he may be said to encapsulate the encounter of cultures. Can you mention the reason for your choice of tango as the music Ben enjoys listening to instead of typically Irish songs?

JJD: The character is based on the life of one of my sisters with Down syndrome. She was very perceptive and intuitive. I always thought that she was able to perceive and see what appeared to be invisible to others. She loved music, and although she enjoyed Jigs and Reels, tango was her favourite form. She possibly recognized the essence of that blue vernacular music linked to the immigration process in Argentina.

MGE: I see, it is remarkable the way people with different abilities as is the case of the character have this acute perception that allows them to grasp what other "normal" human beings are unable to grasp.

I remember the first time I read a text written by you; it was, as most wonderful experiences occur, introduced by a common and dear friend, Laura P.Z. Izarra. She included your novel Moira Sullivan *(1999) in a course she taught at the National University of La Pampa, in 2006. The novel deals, as its title clearly points out, with the life of a woman, an Irish-American woman. Writing afterwards a critical piece on that novel I found that the main character, Moira, was to a certain extent a diasporic subject, I say to a certain extent because, according to some scholars (Safran 1991; Clifford 1994) it does not fulfil all the characteristics of a diasporic subject. Where did you get the subject matter for the novel? Was it inspired by a real-life character? And would you think of her as a diasporic subject?*

JJD: The subject comes from my love for silent movies, from the songs by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart during the Roaring Twenties in New York, and, certainly, from my wonderment at the power of words. Beckett is probably there, as well. You're right when you say that Moira Sullivan is a diasporic subject "to a certain extent" because, although she is always stuck to her culture (not the American but the Irish one), the essence of her existential case is mainly concerned with solitude, with isolation. Moira's human condition of loneliness is, in the novel, stronger than her links to her people's culture.

MGE: I believe that characterization has been the most important aspect in that novel. Moira is an incredible being, someone who arouses all sorts of feelings on readers and also many doubts. She undergoes displacement processes: it is as if she would constantly need to move away: from her family home to New York, first, then to Buenos Aires, Argentina, always in search of a place of her own where she would not be disturbed, where she could be free. But she never gets what she desires. She is a world traveller caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts and uncertain futures. Hers is a very sad life but for a brief span of time where she reaches a state of happiness. Would you say that Moira is someone who could not adapt to new developments and situations and that is why she is not only displaced but also encapsulated?

JJD: The character is based on two old Irish-Porteño sisters I knew when I was a boy. As far as I can remember, their problem was not adaptation but communication. One of them, the basic model for Moira Sullivan, was an old maid whose only serious companion was an old wooden RCA Victor radio.

MGE: Well, a radio is something that accompanies Moira, too. Another striking element and central to the way you build up your character is the use of silence and sounds. Silence is what defines her from beginning to end, together with an impossibility to communicate with others: the unfinished and unposted letters, the telephone calls full of interferences, her reluctance to learn Spanish when she moves to Argentina. These are some distinctive traits you imbue your character with. She uses "silence" as an armour. And this connects with another element present in the novel: music. Can you refer to your choosing – here again – tango, to connect people, as you made it happen in La Viuda de O'Malley.

JJD: When words are not enough, silence seems to be the option. Or music. Sometimes music is able to convey what words cannot. In a way, it polishes or corrects its limitations. Tango or what we know as *tango-canción* (music plus lyrics) is sometimes an effective attempt to combine two means of communication. Moira discovers in tango (in the music not in the words: she wasn't able to understand them) anguish, sadness and desperation which is in the essence of immigrant souls.

MGE: Introducing characters with certain disabilities or different abilities is also present in this novel, for example Lucio, the child with Down syndrome, who works out the miracle of transforming the main character's lonely life into "the four less unhappy *years in the life of Moira Sullivan in Buenos Aires" (Delaney 1999, 145; my own emphasis). Again you choose tango to complement this relationship between Moira and Lucio, as background. And silent movies, without unnecessary words, just images to make both characters meet and share. Different cultures, different ages, different languages united by a common feature: isolation. One was isolated by her own choice, the other – especially in the 1960s – by his syndrome and the lack of knowledge about social integration. What did you want to convey with this connection between both characters?*

JJD: That there are other means of communication rather than language. And sometimes more effective, explicit and absolute: music, love, silence, feelings…

MGE: One other crucial aspect of this novel and of your latest novella Memoria de Theophilus Flynn *(2012b) is your use of point of view. In* Moira Sullivan *you use third person narrator but also the first appearing through Konrad's pieces, again another displaced subject, and in her letters, mostly which show revealing features of her life. In* Memoria de Theophilus Flynn*, however you use both first and third but also the second person, something which I consider a challenge; not easy to maintain. How and when – along the writing process – do you decide the point of view from which you are going to write?*

JJD: While planning *Memoria de Theophilus Flynn* I thought in a third person narrative voice. But when I completed what I considered would be the first chapter, I knew Theophilus so well that I wondered what would be the vision of this character seen by an *alter ego.* Finally, Theophilus writes a letter, completing the story and rounding off a portrait of his curious personality. In brief, the three points of view technique appeared unexpectedly during the writing process. It worked.

MGE: Yes, it did work, really. It must be said that you have an additional ability, that to condense texts, as you do in Moira Sullivan *– a real gem, which I'd be delighted to talk endlessly about – and in the short stories and also in* Memoria de Theophilus Flynn *your last novella. But*

we'll move back to Memoria de Theophilus Flynn *because even though it is short, it is surprising how crowded it is with detail, cultural references, real life people made into characters such as Eibhear Walshe and Dermot Keogh, intertextual references – Walshe's* Cissie's Abattoir *(2009) to give an example – and places which connect the green island with different urban and rural Argentine landscapes. You dedicate it to celebrated Irish writer John Banville who, as you put it, "made me notice that I only talk about the 'Old Ireland'" (Delaney 2012b). In fact, in* Memoria de Theophilus Flynn *you do so but you also talk about effects of Celtic Tiger Ireland and a relatively recent time. So, linking one thing with the other: old and new Ireland and Argentina, why do you make Theophilus long for and be tempted to move to Argentina if now Ireland is a land of opportunities and no longer a country of emigrants?*

JJD: Because what he longs for is Old Ireland which is gone. He discovers that within the Irish community in Buenos Aires, Old Ireland is still alive, and feels that he is facing a curious and unique opportunity to recover his past, his lost Paradise. And in more than a way that is what really happens. Just think of the Irish-English language of the Irish-Porteños I mentioned previously...

MGE: Yes, you are right, and I remember you once said "we speak a fossilized variety of English"… There are two frequent elements which we had not mentioned but which appear regularly in your fiction, one is your subtle humour which pervades your work, even in passages that could be considered tragic. The case of Clancy, the Morgan sisters' dog and how you narrate the events around the adoption of the stray dog, using words which suggest a serious or even grave decision, until the day of its funeral, is absolutely hilarious if you consider the whole situation. I see this use of humour, in many cases combined with irony as something distinctive of your prose. How do you plan (or not) those pieces which are part of longer texts?

JJD: I don't plan what role humour will play in my works. It just happens. In real life, humour, irony and even jokes are an important part of my existence. It seriously helps me to put up with the misfortunes that besiege me in this "valley of tears".

MGE: It is true that irony is part of your real life. I found myself many times wondering whether what you were saying in a given situation was true or ironic! You also have dramatic qualities. Now, going back to your work, the other thing I'd like to suggest refers to the abundant references to real life characters, in Argentina, mostly, but also in Ireland and the U.S. related to music, film, history, literature, philosophy, the business world, together with multiple places, that can be used to identify a given time and place in history, a chronotope. Are these part of conscious decisions when planning your story-lines, or they just emerge while you are writing?

JJD: Some of them are part of a plan (New York during the 1920s, musical comedies, language), others (consciously or unconsciously) emerge as functional to what is going on in the story…Finally there are references and subjects or *leitmotifs* that are part of my interests.

MGE: Getting into the terrain of the short stories, the genre that you had admitted to prefer, who of the great short story writers in Argentina, Ireland or the world do you find closer to your style of writing?

JJD: In Argentina, Borges, Marco Denevi, Rodolfo Walsh, Julio Cortázar and Silvina Ocampo. When I was a teenager and started writing, Horacio Quiroga was one of my models,

together with Edgar Allan Poe. The Irish short story writers I prefer are Joyce, John McGahern, Mary Lavin, Edna O'Brien and a forgotten writer called Walter Macken. There are many other authors I always re-read: classics like Anton Chekhov and Franz Kafka, American writers such as O.Henry, John O'Hara and Francis Scott Fitzgerald… I consider Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose work I discovered a few years ago, an extraordinary master in the art of writing short stories.

MGE: That's an amazing and comprehensive array of writers. And I suppose they have influenced you one way or another. Talking about your stories I want to ask you about "Poema del Mar" included in the collection Papeles del Desierto *(2012a) in which you evoke famous Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni's final moments before committing suicide by drowning in the sea. I found the story as a kind of elegy and it is also charged with lyricism. She had her own view of suicide and you seem to show her and her decision as something natural, even pleasant not tragic as it might be expected. Was it a homage paid to Alfonsina and her way of conceiving life and death?*

JJD: I was always moved by the fact that between 1937 and 1938 three great Argentine writers took their lives: Horacio Quiroga, Alfonsina Storni and Leopoldo Lugones. In her poetry, Alfonsina Storni links the act of sleeping with death. Death, then, has not a negative connotation, it is one more fact in life. I feel the same and as a kind of a homage I wrote "Poema del Mar", which is not exactly a short story but a poem in prose (at least that was my intention when I wrote it).

MGE: And I must say you achieved your goal because the story is imbued with that unusual lyricism and tone proper of poetry that I mentioned before. It's a wonderful text that called my attention because from the start it was different to all other texts I had read written by you.

In the story that gives name to the same collection, Papeles del Desierto I sense a kind of oxymoron. Contrary to what it might be expected we witness the life of an ordinary citizen and office clerk in downtown Buenos Aires "urban jungle". But his life is a solitary one, again we can see a state of isolation and detachment in your characters. And a deep sense of feeling a tiny presence "in an immense desert inhabited by ghosts" (Delaney 2004, 67). Aurelio Napodano begins to live an illusory life to make up for his real life lacks.

JJD: You're right. The story is based on an old porteño tradition which takes place in the heart of the city. The last working day of the year, office clerks get rid of all kind of papers by throwing them through the windows. At the end of the day, streets appear paved with torn commercial papers written by anonymous hands. I imagined a piece of private paper picked up by my character. It is part of a handwriting memorandum. My character creates and writes the missing segment of it, building up a love story with the idea of becoming part of it. Solitude is the topic and, one more time, words appear as a possibility of getting over it, not always successfully.

MGE: Going back to the notion of the encounter of cultures, in the Introduction *you wrote to the 2014 edition of* Tales of the Pampas *by William Bulfin, you refer to the stories in that collection as a "document, a text in which words reveal the power and richness of the encounter of cultures" (Bulfin 2014, 15). Why do you think so, and why do you consider language and literature as the epitome of the history of the Irish in Argentina?*

JJD: In a symbolic sense the linguistic mixture we find in *Tales of the Pampas* resembles the country as a hybrid that revealed a higher dimension which was the adaptation and assimilation of

all kinds of people to the host country. Although the samples are limited in Bulfin's work (English, Irish-English, Irish Gaelic, Spanish and Italian voices) it shows that in a subliminal way something significant was going on in terms of linguistics and society. In the end, the history of our Nation showed that works like this collection of stories (together with other expressions like the *lunfardo* repertoire, *sainetes* and tangos) were also microcosms of our "melting pot". It is because of this slow and revealing linguistic transformation the Irish went through that I stated that the story of the language and literature of the Irish in Argentina is the story of the Irish in Argentina.

MGE: Now that we are talking about the importance of language, I'd like to move from fiction to research. In your doctoral thesis What, Che? Integration, Adaptation and Assimilation of the Irish-Argentine Community Through Its Language and Literature *published in 2017 by Ediciones Universidad del Salvador, you explore the phases underwent by the Irish community in its settlement process in Argentina through the study of the language they used and its evolution into Hiberno-Argentine or Irish-Porteño and also through an analysis of the literature produced and read by the Irish in Argentina. How did you manage to build up the corpus for your work, which in your own words, you consider a work of ethnography or as I would put it an ethno-linguistics endeavour? Because many times people feel reluctant to share personal/family letters, diaries and private documents…*

JJD: It wasn't easy. It took time. First of all I examined what was in my memory: funny expressions, Gaelic words, curses half in Spanish, half in English, statements, opinions, unexpected linguistic reactions… I was lucky to inherit the Coughlan / Dunne papers: letters, photos, clippings, documents… The hard part was my work going through *The Southern Cross* collection: editor's reflections, letters (people happy and people complaining), "Social Events", "Wedding Bells", "Wit and Humour", literature written by Irish porteños (poems, short stories, and essays) … I remember I paid for a small ad asking for letters and documents that could be useful in my investigation. Only three replies I got from the readers of the Irish-Porteño paper. But what became a golden mine were the interviews I recorded at Saint Patrick's Home where I found out that the old people were willing to speak and tell their stories. Long and regular conversations with Irish-Porteños provided me with interesting stories and reflections on the local community. I also remember my chats with Fr Windsor, whom I already mentioned, and Passionists Michael Egan and Fred Richards. Not to speak of my uncle Luis Delaney (a Fahy Boy, now in his nineties) still an important source in relation to the fortunes and misfortunes of the Irish-Porteños in the Great City. It was easier to select the representative literature works of each one of the periods.

MGE: I found your thesis not only original but a good starting point for other researchers to expand the field, especially since mostly what I have seen is the study of Irish diasporic literature from a socio-cultural perspective or applying post-colonial or post-modern approaches; however, the linguistic study that you carried out is not the norm. How do you envision possible new developments or variations on the topic?

JJD: The initial intention of my thesis was a systematization of the different stages of the process which, in real life was, obviously, asynchronous. It would be interesting to examine what happened with language and literature in each period considering social status. An analysis of a different or expanded literary corpus could also offer interesting conclusions. It was Laura Izarra who noted that my section on Rodolfo Walsh embodies a hint at a new kind of identity. I am now working on that.

MGE: I suppose that this new direction that you are taking will lead to thought-provoking results. Finally, it is inevitable not to ask about the year 2020. You are a writer; you are naturally trained to make up "worlds". Have you ever thought that this new life of the Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown, isolation, and other side effects would be part of our daily lives?

JJD: No. I never imagined I would live to go through this terrible experience. It happens to me that sometimes, when I get up, I say to myself "this is a nightmare". But unfortunately it is real.

MGE: Unfortunately, it is! How did you cope with it? Was writing a way out?

JJD. This unexpected damnation gave me extra time to complete a pending project, which was a new collection of short stories related to the Irish and their descendants in Argentina. The title of the book is *El arpa y el océano* (The Harp and the Ocean). I shouldn't say it, but I'm happy with the result. It seems to me an effective and sincere combination of feelings and ideas I was able to convey by giving way to a free personal voice.

MGE: I'm glad to hear that you are happy with it and I'd love to be reading it soon, will it come out in 2021?

JJD: Yes, the book is supposed to be released at the end of this year. The cover has been illustrated by Irish artist Nuala Gorman, a cousin of mine who lives in Walderstown, Athlone.

MGE: I like this collaborative work "across the ocean", it will certainly be a plus. Juan José, I'm very pleased that after all these years since 2007, meeting at symposia, conferences, lectures and sharing both the academic and the social parts of those events, we could finally "sit over a cup of tea" to have this conversation about aspects of your life as an Irish-Porteño and of course about your brilliant career as a writer. Thank you very much for your time!

JJD: Thank *you!*

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Embracing the Challenge[*]
An Interview with Patrick Holloway

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Back in 2019, celebrating ABEI's (Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses, Brasil) thirtieth anniversary I found myself in São Paulo, Brazil, ready to share the opening of the fourteenth Symposium of Irish Studies in South America: *The State of the Art: Local and Global Contexts in Dialogue*. This was meant to be a Joint Symposium, gathering efforts of the host association, ABEI, in collaboration with AEIS-Asociación de Estudios Irlandeses del Sur[1], Argentina. We had begun to consolidate the Latin American Irish Studies network that Professors Munira Mutran and Laura P.Z. Izarra, both from USP (Universidade de São Paulo), Brazil, had envisioned years before.

Our expectations were high, at that fourteenth Symposium, because the Programme was really impressive, carefully "crafted" by Mariana Bolfarine's energy – ABEI president – and Laura Izarra's expertise. It was as part of that Symposium that I came to know Patrick Holloway, novel Irish writer whose lecture "Writing the Rising: Yeats' Poetry of a divided nation" I was going to chair.

It was a real delight to listen to him, and I was sorry to have pushed him towards the end of his presentation, showing him cards with 10', 5' signs so as to keep the schedule tight. He was

[*] The idea for the title came after re-reading Colum McCann's *Letters to a Young Writer* (2017) where he uses the phrase "embrace the challenge", which I have changed slightly.

[1] AEIS: this Association was only two years old at the time (2019) since it's founding date, October 17 2017, during an *ad hoc* meeting at the National University of La Pampa, Argentina. Present at that meeting were the Ambassador of Ireland to Argentina, Justin Harman, an unconditional friend and promoter of the initiative, Professor Laura P.Z. Izarra (USP, Brazil, ABEI), hard-working and always enthusiastic scholar, friend and projects' advisor in the field of Irish Studies, and several other representatives of Argentine universities, writers, researchers and members of the Irish-Argentine community, who, either in person or virtually, gave their support and best wishes to the newly created Association. Its name intended to include, from the start, several of the Spanish-speaking countries of South America, namely Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, so as to promote the field and strengthen links among members.

kind, understanding and we proceeded to the round of questions and later coffee break. It was not until one evening, that same week sharing a group dinner at a marvellous Paulista restaurant that we engaged in a more relaxed dialogue about his writing career and his early works.

Patrick is 32-years old and was raised in Cork, Ireland. His work has been published by *The Stinging Fly*, *Carve*, *Overland*, *The Irish Times*, *The Illanot Review*, *Scoundrel Time*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Lonely Crowd*, *Write Bloody Publishing*, *New Voices Scotland*, *Papercuts*, among many others. His story, "Laughing and Turning Away" won second place in the Raymond Carver Short Story Contest. "The Lift, the Fox, and the Lilies" won the Overland Literary Journal contest and was also published by *The Irish Times*. His story "Counting Stairs" was highly commended for the Manchester Fiction Prize. He has been shortlisted for numerous other prizes including: Bath Short Story Prize, Moth Poetry Prize, Moth Short Story Prize, Bath Flash Fiction Prize, Dermot Healy Poetry Prize, Over The Edge New Writer of the Year Award (for both fiction and poetry) and the prestigious Alpine Fellowship for Fiction. *And All the Rest of Life Was Waiting*, his debut novel and a collection of short stories in process are part of his recent production. His greatest achievement are his baby girls, Aurora and Luna Faye.

MGE: Patrick, since we met in São Paulo for the Symposium, we exchanged a couple of mails, but then, all of a sudden 2020 began and soon we all felt that someone had snatched it from our hands. The world learned early in January 2020 about the first cases of the COVID-19 virus in Wuhan, China, and then February was chaos and… March saw great areas of the world locked-down and away from their previous "ordinary and free" lives. How did you take this "abrupt change", considering you lived with your family in Porto Alegre and Brazil is one of the countries in Latin America with a huge population and high number of cases?

PH: Firstly, I just want to say how great it is to speak to you again, albeit virtually. It was such a pleasure to get to know you in USP, doesn't it almost feel like another era altogether? To answer your question, when the pandemic first hit I felt like most people I suppose, at the start maybe I was naive, or better, uneducated in the language of viruses and pandemics, so I thought it would pass. The ramifications of what we have all been living through is yet to be seen, I imagine there will be a wealth of literature written about it, to try and better understand how much it has changed us. My second daughter, Luna Faye, was born in April 2020 and it was really a frightening time to be going through something so major. Frightening on so many levels, not just about health but about what comes next. We were both working from home, isolated, with a two-year-old and a baby. It made us question pretty much everything and what we realised is how important human contact is. With family, with friends, and how much we took it for granted.

It was also very difficult to be away from my family and friends in Ireland, and I suppose in times of crises a longing for the familiar, for the comfortable comes to the surface. It definitely made me miss home. Especially when I looked at the news in Brazil and the disrespect and irresponsibility was always at the forefront, camouflaged by misogyny, arrogance and ignorance – and yes, I am talking about the president. It was hard to bring Luna Faye into a world that we couldn't really grasp anymore.

MGE: Yes, we must admit that the whole world was in a state of turmoil, but certain countries were more dramatically affected by political decisions than others. And those decisions in turn make people think about options when they have access to them. Ours is not an easy world.

Patrick, I know that apart from writing you also teach, how were your teaching activities affected by last year pandemic and its 2021 follow-up?

PH: Well, I run an English language school called Holloway's English Zone in Porto Alegre, Brazil. We used to have some students who lived in other states who had class online, but the majority of students had class face-to-face at the school. I closed the school down ten days before advised by the state and I suppose it was a mad rush to understand new platforms and technologies in order to give the same quality of classes online. I must say I was pleasantly surprised as I had always been a little critical and wary of online courses, believing the paragon of teaching had to be face-to-face. I'm not embarrassed to admit that I was wrong. Now, looking forward I think the ways we learn and teach will be a hybrid methodology that combines the best of both worlds.

MGE: I absolutely agree with you and remember back in 2008 taking up courses on blended learning and applying those strategies in our regular university courses as optional. But at that time virtual teaching and learning was not "as necessary" as it became last year. I must say, though, that changing from face-to-face to only virtual teaching is not only tiring for all the parts involved but also deprives education of its socializing nature. That's why I say blended or hybrid forms are a good option. So, you had to adapt your school and also adapt yourself to new forms of teaching and living I imagine…

PH: Yes, exactly. It was a time of growth and I really enjoyed finding out new ways to teach. With that came new ideas, too. As I migrated the school to an online modality, and after revenues stabilised, the question of moving to Ireland again surfaced – it had been dormant for a while, but was always there, ready to peek its little head up from the calming waters. Me and my wife have always believed that we could give our daughters a better quality of life in Ireland and seeing as the school could now be run from anywhere, we started looking into ways of moving back. We arrived here in Ireland at the start of March 2021 after an excessive amount of stress and hassle. Now, as we settle into life here, I have some free time to ruminate on our decade spent in Brazil and can honestly say, even though there were many aspects of life there which I found difficult to accept, we had a wonderful life there and I will always think of it with fondness.

MGE: Would you say, then, that this change that had always been at the back of your mind as a family was prompted by last year's experience or not? You turned from Irish emigrant to South America in the twenty-first century to Irish family in search of a promising future back in Ireland. This process is the opposite of the one the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Irish emigrants underwent when they moved to the Americas and other destinations for similar reasons, isn't it?

PH: Yes, that's a great point. Ireland is a very different country now than it was back in the twentieth century and I feel it has more to offer its citizens and is welcoming to people from abroad who can make Ireland their home. I first moved to Brazil for love, I had never really thought about living there to be honest, and even when I first went it was supposed to be temporary, so in a way I never made that huge decision to leave everything I knew behind – it just happened. Moving back to Ireland was a much more thought-out decision. And it definitely wasn't an easy one to make.

MGE: I see; however, circumstances as the ones you refer to many times hurry our decisions.

PH: When I became a father in 2018 it did change the way I saw the world and what I thought was important. And it is here that the reasons you mention for Irish immigrants in

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries come to the forefront. Back then, there was certainly a higher level of necessity, whereas for us we were lucky to have a stable, profitable life in Brazil. But looking forward we had to think of our girls and where they could best thrive, and as I mentioned, safety definitely was a key issue.

MGE: Thanks, Patrick, to allow us to know a little bit about your life. I believe that it always sheds light at the moment of reading literary works to know something about the writer, before or after reading those works. Even though writers create worlds and characters they do not come out of a vacuum, which does not mean that we have to take all of a writer's production as self-referential, either. But it definitely helps. Let's move, now, to your work as a writer. You wrote poems, short stories and a novel. When has your writing career begun and how? Which genre do you find particularly close to your voice?

PH: Honestly, that is a really difficult question to answer – especially the first part. When did my writing career begin, well honestly I don't know if it has. As an aspiring writer, I suffer quite heavily and quite often from imposter syndrome, and can consider all my publications to date, pure luck. On other days I recognise the merit and the hard work and see myself as a writer. I feel being back in Ireland now, with an agent and a novel and short story collection, things might move a little quicker.

I started writing more poetry and then short stories. I feel now, at this moment, more comfortable writing fiction, but I would say it is poetic in its own right. The novel was a huge challenge, just the determination and discipline in sitting down every day to write the same narrative was intense. Also, the longer narrative has so many links, so many nuances that need to work together to create something of stature, something that works on many levels. But, when finished, it was probably the most satisfying feeling ever. I am already working on a new novel and have recently won a mentorship in Ireland to help work on it, I have also applied for a writer's bursary, which, if I am lucky enough to receive, would give me the time to work on it completely.

MGE: Well, from what you say and from what I could read, written by you, I see your poems intimately connected with personal feelings and emotions, I don't know if "recollected in tranquillity" or flowing directly from your inner "you". And your fiction, I'm referring to the stories, to life in general but with definite strokes of the personal, of the life you lived or are living and the places you've had come to know. I read your winning short story "The Lift and the Fox and the Lilies" (2019) published by Hennessy New Irish Writing. I found it both full of affect and also interesting in your choice of point of view, that of a child. The way a child perceives what goes on in the world around him/her is not that of adults. I see this boy you created experiencing disorientation as a result of trauma. The way in which the events are presented adds to this lack of clarity of mind, not knowing exactly what is going on, or better, trying not to bring that knowledge into the conscious mind.

PH: Yes, it is fundamentally a story about loss but also about memory. I feel that in times of loss, or trauma of any kind, memory becomes a very fickle thing. At the best of times, memories can be manipulated, can be unreliable and can be misleading. As well as being incredibly subjective. The boy in the story is unreliable to an extent but through his unreliability he presents the reader with what it is to remember and how we remember.

He is thrown into a situation that not even adults are prepared for, and in the midst of the chaos, he is somewhat forgotten and left to wander on his own. He, like maybe the reader

at the start, is disorientated and unsure of the environment around him. It is somewhat alien. I wanted him to be able to explore on his own in order for him to remember certain events in his life. The most important being "The Fox and The Lilies".

MGE: The description of the fox and the situation in which father and child meet him is at the same time heart-breaking and ominous, foreshadowing the final outcome. There is also an additional element of guilt in that scene previous to the car accident, as the father was complaining that the boy was always misbehaving or being selfish, which adds tension to the passage.

PH: Yes, exactly. The Fox does work as a symbol of foreshadowing and also so the boy can reflect on his only experience with death. The scene with the fox is tense and yet there is a tenderness in the father's sacrifice. Of course, the fox, in the boy's mind is tangled up with his father who is about to pass away. The memory of the fox questions the morality of death, or better still, the morality of keeping someone alive. The idea actually came when I was a teenager, although I did not know it then. My aunty was dying and I remember how tenuous she was, how each breath took so long to take. And I remember the lengths to keep her alive, which to me then, and now, seemed speciously worthwhile. I remember thinking, if a dog was in this position it would be put down, it would be humane. There was something about death then, that seemed humane, and that living became not an opposite of humane, but something juxtaposed. The boy then tries to understand what is happening to his father by remembering how his father, in a way, did the humane and perhaps moral thing, by putting the fox out of its misery, to use a colloquial expression. This then is furthered by the taking of flowers from the ground. Again, it is through remembering what his father says about flowers that upsets him when his Aunty takes fresh flowers to his father's bed. The boy is limited in the way he can see what is happening and by the way he will end up remembering what happened, but even still, there is an inquisitiveness in him that seeks to understand the great scheme of living and of dying.

MGE: There is also parallelism between the death of the fox and that of the boy's father. But as I see it, the boy only records and recalls what had happened to the fox and unconsciously seems to avoid the fact that his father is also dying. The wheezing sound appearing in both scenes – on the road and also at the hospital – adds to building this correspondence. Does this make sense?

PH: Yes, it does. The parallelism is evident and the boy's memory fails him somewhat in the events of the father's death. I don't know if he is avoiding it or if this is a way to face the impending death. I think we all deal with things by "avoiding" but that in itself is a mechanism of dealing. So the boy remembers his father's death as The Fox, The Lift, and The Lilies. He cannot exactly remember what and how his father died, he cannot remember climbing onto his father's body, to maybe ground him to this terrain. But at the end of the day, I wonder if it matters? Is the way he remembers the father's death not more real, does it not explore the confusion, emptiness and vulnerability that we all feel in times of loss and mourning?

MGE: Indeed! You capture all these feelings and you show how the associations operate in the child's mind at the mere sight of the lilies, what brings about another fascinating detail about the transmission of knowledge from father to son, and the miracle of generating natural life.

PH: Exactly. The memories and lessons of the father are already a tribute to him, and through remembering them the boy is eternalising his father.

MGE: Great, great story, congratulations, really! I was thinking… how long have you been living in Brazil? Because in another story, "Laughing and Turning Away" which won Second Prize in the Raymond Carver Contest (2017), you make use of Portuguese words as part of the story written in English. Why would you choose such a strategy? It reminds me of Chicana writers using the same strategy but I believe in your case the purpose may be different… I would like you to comment on that…

PH: I was living in Brazil for 9 years and this story was born really, in the first year of living there. I had so many observations on chauvinism, misogyny and violence in those first months but could never really put pen to paper. I think it took me a long time to understand the depths of these and how complex these issues were. I suppose when I was robbed at knife-point the story started to solidify.

About the usage of Portuguese words in the story: firstly, I wrote a lot of poetry that dealt with and embodied interlingualism. I feel language is such a paramount aspect of identity that it is hard not to play within languages when bilingual or polylingual, or not to feel different when speaking different languages. Funny you mention Chicana writers, for my PhD thesis I studied and used them as a reference. I think the book was called *Interlingualism: the Language of Chicanos/as*.

In the context of this story, we have a young Brazilian woman who is studying abroad in the U.S. I decided to use the Portuguese words as these words connect her to her culture, and therefore to her identity. She is evidently going through a crisis of identity, whether it be sexual or not, and the usage of these words ground her in a language that is wholly hers and yet one she is moving away from. The Portuguese language, for her, is representative of who she is, yet she is still trying to discover who that *she* is. It was definitely not a way to isolate non-Portuguese speaking readers, but I feel each insertion of a Portuguese word does not take away from the context of what is happening.

MGE: Well, yes, I agree about the strong and almost inseparable connection between language and identity, we are the language we speak, so to say. Your character evokes her native land while living abroad and the words you chose do not merely add "local colour" but they are charged with meaning(s) that take readers to the culture of her country and point to the topic of sexual abuse and violent behaviour towards others which tends to be naturalized as time passes instead of rejected. The young woman you mentioned began experiencing this kind of street abuse at the age of 14 and by the time she was 18 she had already learned not to tell when new violent or abusive episodes took place because she knew that was the state of affairs, she was no longer burra, she simply knew nothing could be done, or very little. And this cultural violence does not make distinctions between women and men or between social classes, it shows in the story as a deeply rooted practice.

PH: Yes, wonderfully put. The violence and misogyny within the story are reflective of things I saw in Brazil. I definitely think that this cultural violence, or even the threat of it, is something that affects everyone, however the day-to-day occurrences of sexism, misogyny and abuse, I think affect women much more so. Whether it be the seemingly innocent wolf-whistling, the "flirtatious" abusive slap on the ass, they are all examples of something that is common, and in its own right deeply worrying, but on a larger scale, it reflects a fundamental flaw in the way groups in the same society co-exist. The fact that it happens and is overlooked is a real sign of people's position towards this kind of violence.

MGE: The movements Ele Não in Brazil as well as Ni una menos in Argentina are doing a lot to change this situation but still a lot of work is still needed and it must begin at home, early at school, if not, it will be impossible to change minds.

PH: Yes, I agree. I think there are so many ways that children pick up on what is right or wrong, or in this case, what is seen as normal. It starts at home, then school, then community. It's not just one aspect of society that can influence change.

MGE: Of course not, it's a very difficult subject altogether. Now, I'd like to ask you about the novel you told me during the Symposium you had just finished writing and that was why you were in search of an agent. What is the novel about and have you found a suitable agent for it?

PH: Oh the novel. It's been a long journey. When I got second place in the Raymond Carver contest an agency in New York got in touch with me asking if I had a novel ready, I told a white lie and said yes, and maybe rushed a novel I hadn't set out to write. In the end they really enjoyed it but felt it needed tweaking in many parts, and when I set out to do it I realised that it wasn't the book I wanted to write. I took a break for a year and then went back to it at the start of 2020.

I find it so hard to say what it is about, but it is a family drama. It's written from two perspectives, Rosie and Frankie, who are brother and sister. Rosie's narrative opens with the news her father has died and it follows her trying to find her brother Frankie, who the last time they spoke had been in rehab. Frankie's narrative is told from when he was a boy and it is a flurry of thoughts that show a complicated childhood plagued by deception and loss.

It really deals with memory, too, and trauma in a way. But deep down it is a story of love between siblings, the power of family bonds and hope for a future.

MGE: I do want to read it, especially since family issues are always close to my heart, not just on a personal level but also because at a social one I believe that family as a unit (no matter how it is composed) is a crucial element in the social structure. It can be a place of growth and contention or an absolute impediment for the development of its members.

So, this novel saw a metamorphosis between 2019 and 2020. How did you re-structure the novel and how did you manage to keep all threads in order to make it interesting and not a messy text?

PH: The novel changed so much, so it made it even more difficult to keep everything tied together without it being limited or heavy handed. The differing narratives helped in this but also presented problems in their own right – it was difficult to know when to reveal information in the narratives, and in whose narrative. The most difficult challenge was to maintain the suspense of finding Frankie without it becoming a suspense novel – which I had made the mistake of trying to do the first time round. I wrote chapter summaries to reflect on before starting a new chapter, which helped especially in the later stages.

MGE: That's a great idea to organize how you are advancing or not and if the reader will be able to follow your line of reasoning. I was thinking that many other Irish writers have also written about families in Ireland and the complexities of family life, not adopting precisely an idyllic perspective. There is always a traumatic experience underlying the texts. I'm thinking of Colm Tóibín, Anne Enright, Edna O'Brien, John McGahern, Nuala O'Connor, for instance. Would that be part of a universal preoccupation or an Irish obsession?

PH: Yes, you're right. I mean I think Anne Enright at the moment is the holy grail of writers, in my opinion, and *The Green Road* is such an exemplary piece of writing in family dynamics, as is *The Gathering*. Donal Ryan's *Strange Flowers* is also a wonderfully told tale of a rural Irish family. I think Ireland's history is quite traumatic on many levels, and certainly countless families had their own traumas that they tried to overcome and keep hidden. It's these stories that really do interest me and the complexities of human relationships – especially family dynamics – and connection that I continue to try and understand and deconstruct in my writing.

MGE: I must agree with you in that this subtext of trauma is present in great part of Irish literature and I found that novels and short stories present family relationships as difficult mostly and full of secrets, lies, things which are left unsaid, people that had to be suppressed or forgotten.

Going back to the collection of short stories you mentioned earlier. Do the stories deal also with aspects of family life? I was wondering if the stories already have elements derived from last year's pandemic as regards topics, characters, etc.

PH: At the moment it is a partial collection. The two stories we spoke about today are both in it. I really want to find the time to edit the stories that are already there and I think there is space for another 3 or 4 stories. Or maybe new stories will come and will tie into the overall arc of the book, and others will be taken out. There is one pandemic story in there, actually there were two and my agent recommended changing one of them to not be about the pandemic. We spoke about that a lot – how much people would actually want to read stories about the pandemic and how sick to death we would all be by the time the books came out. The one story that is about the pandemic is about a man who has been very much isolated long before the pandemic, due to anxiety and depression, and the pandemic actually helps him in finding a way out of the rut he has found himself in.

MGE: Perhaps your agent is right, but in your case you could see the positive side of a negative situation, something that in fact happened in real life along the course of the past year. And it is really important to highlight those moments in which hope prevails and serves as a survival kit.

PH: Exactly. And I think a lot of my stories might not be exactly happy in their tone and themes, but I think there is always hope within them, a look forward to the future and what it can bring.

MGE: How are the ideas for a short story, in general, come to your mind? What things around you motivate your writing?

PH: About how a short story appears – I wish I had a simple answer, if I did I'd write a collection a month. Sometimes it's the first line, for example "Laughing and Turning Away" started that way, I thought the word "first" in the sentence did so much work for the tone of the story and the rest came easily. My latest short story, that is actually going to be my next novel, was well thought out. I had an idea about a woman with Alzheimer's who was brought up in Ireland and Irish was her first language. As she worsens she stops speaking English and only speaks Irish – her son has moved back to take care of her and starts Irish classes as a way to connect to her again. It's very much about language and identity.

MGE: And family ties as well. It keeps coming back to your writing. It is as if the woman wants to go back to her roots and seeks refuge in the language of her past…and the son on his part wants

to find the common ground that would or could help him be closer to her. Do you have a deadline to hand in your manuscript?

PH: Yes, again it is a family story. It is about leaving family and coming back to them, and what time and distance can do to the relationships. It is really about connection again, how to connect, why we need to connect, and the importance of connection. In this novel, trauma, distance and language alter how these connections and relationships grow, or cease, for some time. I have no deadline but I might give myself one so I have something to work towards.

MGE: Well, yes, many times we need a limit to help us organize our thoughts and how to give them a given phrasing in your case. Patrick, my next and almost last question has to do, again, with the choice of an agent to represent you and to promote your work but also as an advisor, I'm asking out of total ignorance about the commercial circuits.

PH: Actually, agents are very difficult to get. It is a huge achievement for any writer and it was a dream to find Eleanor Birne. As I said, I had nearly signed with other agencies back in 2018 and I'm very happy I was mature enough to see that I, more importantly my writing, wasn't in a place I wanted it to be. With Eleanor, I approached her as she represents an Irish writer I admire greatly, Louise Kennedy, whose collection, *The End of the World Is a Cul de Sac*, is out now and is being treated as an instant classic. So I sent Eleanor an email and she asked for some stories and the first 50 pages of my novel. From there we exchanged emails and had some Zoom meetings before she signed me. Now we are in the frustrating period of waiting to hear back from publishers. It's a long, complicated and arduous process, so I'm honoured to have her by my side for this.

MGE: Though waiting may be frustrating quite often, I'm very glad to hear you say your agent provides you with the necessary support. I think that it could be a huge mistake to make the wrong choice just for the sake of seeing the work published when perhaps the eye of a qualified and serious agent will position you on solid ground even though it could take longer to make things happen.

PH: Exactly, I have maybe made that mistake with individual stories and poems, and maybe I rushed my book of bilingual poetry *When Now Era Antes* that was published in Brazil. I think time with a text is very important, and when I was younger, I was very impatient to get rid of what I'd written so I could write something new. Now, I enjoy reflecting on my writing for longer and making sure it is something I am proud of before sending it anywhere.

MGE: Reflection comes as you grow older. Also, as you mature as person and as writer, I believe. Patrick, I really want to thank you for this conversation we had and for the possibility to interview you not only talking about your work as a writer and professor but also about your life and life in general. I wish you a wonderful future; your career is in its beginnings as you said but it has all the necessary ingredients to make it a long and successful one. Good luck with your present and future projects and I'll be looking forward to reading And All the Rest of Life Was Waiting *soon.*

PH: It was a pleasure. Hopefully, we'll be able to see each other one day soon.

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Postcards. From the Argentine *pampas* to the Irish Shores Eight Photos by Carmen Casey

Introduction

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Carmen Casey is an Irish Argentine photographer and artist currently living in Buenos Aires. She was born in Cañuelas, province of Buenos Aires. Over the past twenty years she has lived in Dublin, London, Vienna, Strasbourg, Moscow and Madrid, cities where she has exhibited her art.

For this 11th issue of the *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* she has selected two groups of photographs in which the Argentine *pampas*, with their immense extensions of land and sky, enter in a dialogue with the Irish wild western shores. The artist reflects on the powerful attraction that the *pampas* have always exerted on her from early life, recollecting her childhood summers spent on the paternal family farm in Moll, near Chivilcoy, 50 km away from the nearest paved road, and she remembers : "those summers left their traces on me". The family farm today is located between the cities of Cañuelas and Monte, in the province of Buenos Aires, an area which along the nineteenth century was the chosen destination for many of the Irish immigrants arriving in Argentina. Also present in the postcards and in the artist's memories are the West of Ireland landscapes of County Mayo, magnificent places where as a family they spent their European summers. The artist also notes that those horizons made her remember the *pampas*, especially the dramatic and sudden *chiaroscuros*, part of an already dramatic landscape in itself.

At present, Carmen Casey is trying to upgrade the profile of the "Guardia del Juncal" Natural Reserve with her art, where by the end of winter thousands of birds go for the mating season, a rather unknown and yet superb area whose history can be better understood visiting the artist's Instagram portal @ guardiadeljuncal.c.casey.

1. Argentine pampas

2. Irish shores

The 11 July 1921 Truce: Centenary Perspectives on the War of Independence

edited by
Dieter Reinisch

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Introduction

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Ireland is amid the "Decade of Centenaries". While the Island has experienced a turbulent history since the landing of the Normans in the twelfth century, arguably no decade changed the fate of Ireland as much as the ten years between 1913 and 1923. These ten years are usually referred to as the Irish Revolution, which was indeed a political revolution, following the social revolution of the late nineteenth century, as some scholars would argue. The Irish Revolution saw a rise of militant trade union and suffragette struggles, the formation of paramilitary organisations on nationalist and unionist sides, and the Proclamation of the Republic. This proclamation was followed by a failed military uprising in 1916, proceeded by a landslide victory of Sinn Féin in the Westminster elections, and the War of Independence, also known as the Anglo-Irish War. This war resulted in the partition of Ireland and the formation of the Freestate, sectarian clashes in Belfast, and a bloody Civil War. Between 1913 and 1923, modern Ireland was founded.

Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies (*SiJIS*) devotes one or two monographic sections to selected topics in the field of Irish studies to each annual issue. Over the past decade, the Irish Revolution has been intensively researched. A vast number of publications, ranging from monographs, edited volumes, collections, and journal special editions, were produced to commemorate the Decade of Centenaries. This is the second *SiJIS* monographic section commemorating these events. In addition, some of the research articles in the miscellanea section as well as book reviews reflected the growing interest in the events of the first two decades of the twentieth century in Ireland. This eleventh issue of *SiJIS* adds to his growing academic and popular interest and includes a section devoted to the centenary of one of the most significant events of the decade – the 1921 truce.

Several other important anniversaries are occurring this year – at the time of writing, Northern Ireland and the partition of the Island turned 100 years, and the 1981 hunger strikes were commemorated. These two events, the partition of Ireland and the death of hunger striker Bobby Sands only weeks after his victory

in the Westminster by-elections, are arguably the two events that shaped modern Ireland like none else. The partition planted the seeds of an ongoing, deadly bloodshed, while the popular movement supporting the hunger strikers laid the foundations of the conflict transformation in the 1990s and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. We decided to devote a special section, particularly to the 1921 truce, because this centenary occurs almost on the same day this issue of *SiJIS* is published electronically.

As one of the first colonies of the British Empire, Ireland fought a War of Independence against its colonial power from January 1919 to July 1921. A direct consequence of this war was that the 26 Counties, the later Republic of Ireland, became independent, and the Island was partitioned. The six north-eastern Counties remained under British control, laying the seed for further unresolved conflict which became a cornerstone of the current Brexit negotiations.

While most of the Island became officially independent from the British centre one hundred years later, there are still vastly divergent interpretations of these ten years and the War of Independence. The height of the Northern Ireland conflict, also called "The Troubles", was, among other factors, characterised by a fierce historical debate over the interpretation of Irish history. This debate between revisionists on the one side, and anti-revisionists on the other side, was only one of many ongoing discussions.

These opposing perspectives on events that shaped the decade of centenaries became recently evident in the commemorations of the War of Independence. On the one hand, the New IRA detonated a car bomb outside Derry Courthouse to commemorate the Soloheadbeg ambush, Co Tipperary, starting the War of Independence on 21 January 1919. On the other hand, the Irish government initially intended to commemorate the colonial police force RIC before tracking back due to public backlash.

We took the conscious decision to issue a broad call for proposals in Spring 2020. We wanted to see how scholars reacted to the 1921 truce. Which topics are currently researched? Which scholarly interest have emerged? Unsurprisingly, we received a wide range of proposals. The editorial board chose to select a smaller number of the proposals, based on their thematical link to the call and their scholarly qualities, and invited the authors to submit articles. A number of these submissions are presented in the following section for our readers. Other submissions that reflected the qualitative standards of *SiJIS* could not be included in this issue for various reasons; yet, they will find entry to the twelfth issue of *SiJIS*.

The thematic range of the papers collected in the following section reflects the open call for research articles linked to the 1921 truce. This eleventh issue of *SiJIS* explores the interpretations of the end of the War of Independence from an interdisciplinary perspective. As a special edition, it provides a smaller overview of various academic approaches and interpretations concerning multiple forms of the War of Independence and its aftermaths from various cultural, national, social, political, religious, pacifist, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist perspectives.

This special issue starts with an article by Shahriyar Mansouri, Assistant Professor of Modern Irish Literature at the Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran. His multidisciplinary research examines Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* (1999). The article turns to historical revisionism as reactionary readings channelled through traumatised voices. To this end, concepts such as traumatised memory, especially the shift from episodic to semantic memory and its function in retaining historical memories of national events such as wars and revolutions, are explored. He argues that postmodern revisionist texts are artefacts of a timeless cultural-historic memory scape. In these memory escapes, autistic verbosity and traumatic self-referential memory reciprocate, thereby producing a polyvalent locus that is not only textually attentive to describing details but also contextually multifaceted in crafting a history that simultaneously flirts with fact and fiction.

Cónal Creedon, a celebrated writer and an Adjunct Professor of Creative Writing at the University College Cork, is the author of the second article. His work builds on his experience as part of the centenary celebrations for Frank O'Connor's birth. In 2003, he was commissioned by the Irish National Broadcaster RTÉ to adapt O'Connor's short story "Guests of the Nation" for radio. Creedon explains that his research led him to several real-life incidents that echoed O'Connor's emotionally charged exploration of the tragic consequences of friendships formed between sworn enemies in a time of war. Creedon was later invited by descendants of the IRA unit who had kidnapped and executed Major Compton Smith during the War of Independence to visit the isolated farmhouse in which he had been held hostage. He shares these intriguing experiences with us in his article.

Author of the critically acclaimed book *Inventing the Myth* (2017), Connal Parr, a Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University, has arguably provided one of the most interesting and original contributions to the historiography of Northern Ireland in recent years. In this article, he turns to the emergence of the Northern Irish state. He investigates the "Rotten Prods" through an archival and historiographical survey of the shipyard expulsions of the summer of 1920. The historical background to the "insult" is discussed, as is racial violence in British cities and industrial unrest in 1919. It charts the development of the original Home Rule-supporting Protestants to the more radical, working-class "Rotten Prods" of a later era. It assesses three exemplars of the tradition: Belfast Labour counsellor James Baird (who was expelled from the shipyards in 1920), the Communist Party of Ireland's Betty Sinclair, and trade unionist Joe Law.

The fourth article is contributed by emerging scholar Armin Langer from Humboldt University in Berlin. In light of increasing antisemitism and assimilationism at the turn of the twentieth century, as he explains, a growing number of American Jews discovered Zionism as a tool of resistance. One of these was Boston lawyer and later Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, a prominent supporter of Zionism in the US. In his original approach to Brandeis, Langer retells the inspiration from non-Jewish independence movements on early Zionism. Brandeis repeatedly referred to the Irish nationalist movement and offered the Irish experience as a model for Jews to realise their dream of an independent Jewish nation in Palestine. Langer's contribution is a particularly timely article. 75 years ago, on 22 July 1945, the Zionist Stern group bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing almost 100 people, including most of the members of the British colonial administration in Mandate Palestine. As the late US academic J. Bowyer Bell demonstrated, the Zionist terror campaign that led to the formation of the modern state of Israel was heavily influenced by the anti-colonial struggle of the Irish Republican Army against the British Empire. Langer shows that the Zionist interest stretched back several decades. As such, his article is an essential contribution to our understanding of transnational radicalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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The Problematics of Disability: Negotiating History through Self-referential Autistic Memory in Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry*

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Abstract:

In *Aesthetic Nervousness* (2007) Ato Quayson claims that the "confrontation between the 'normate' as the nondisabled and the disabled person creates a tension and causes […] nervousness" (17). To embed the binary of "the disabled and the normate" in the context of the history of Irish wars, especially the Irish War of independence with its social delicacies and politico-cultural bifurcations, unlike Quayson's examination of physiological traits, this article explores the memory as the source that has survived intrapersonal and communal investigations of the past. Memory will be investigated as an autonomous source wherein references to past events are stored and independently reconsidered. The disabled will be examined in this article as central interlocutors who revisit and revaluate national and political histories through a semantic, timeless memoryscape. As a multidisciplinary research, by examining Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry*, this article treats historical revisionism as reactionary readings channeled through traumatized voices. This article claims that postmodern revisionist texts are artifacts of a timeless historico-cultural memoryscape where autistic verbosity and traumatic self-referential memory reciprocate, producing a polyvalent locus that is not only textually attentive to describing details but also contextually multifaceted in crafting a history that simultaneously flirts with fact and fiction.

Keywords: Diegetic Exuberance, Disability Studies, Memoryscape, Self-Reference Effect, Self-Referential Historical Timescape

> To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. (Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, 2003)

1. Introduction

In his seminal work on disability studies, *Aesthetic Nervousness* (2007), Ato Quayson finds the disabled to always be accompanied

by fears, embarrassments, and anxieties as a result of physical differences that according to social totalitarianism is regarded as disability and disabling; these fears and anxieties are directly maintained by the non-disabled hegemonic body known as "the normate", a term Rosemarie Garland-Thomson first used in *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997, 8). Such anxieties can squarely disable the individual, for instance, the fear of marginalization, castration, othering, or simply being judged. Not all disabling fears, in other words, are caused by somatic differences, as some are triggered by hidden social hegemonic tendencies, being superimposed; by the "normate", demanding a certain form of ontology, the perception and application of which is neither general and systematic nor socio-culturally acknowledged such as traditions. It is the latter, however, that provokes what Quayson calls the "unacknowledged social assumptions" (2007, 21), imposing a state of normalcy explicated through social discourse, only internally stipulating the binary of normal and acceptable and disabled and the other. Such multifaceted reading of disability places it beyond a medical as well as a colonial structuration of the term, emerging as a discourse of historical division and political bifurcation, or in short a historico-political marginalization that, as Quayson claims, "lie[s] on the social margins of society" (2007, 5). By reading Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* (1999), set against the backdrop of the problematics of memory specially as debated by Henry as a marginalized, disabled individual this article investigates the ways in which post-millennial narratives such as Doyle's novel engage with the fourfold of memory, trauma, war and a non-temporal perception of history accounted by othered characters. To accommodate the problematics of traumatized memory and history, this article commits to a fusion of research horizons, and hence reads autism as an independent memory-oriented mechanism that defies its socio-medical context.

2. Marginalization of the Disabled Individual as well as an Unreliable "Ground"

Historically, marginalization has proven to be not only the most dominant but also the most inevitable form of fear that, flirting with a Heideggerian conception of the ground [*grund*] [1], emerges as an ontological justification and divides people into those who politically and socially matter and those who do not; it is only the former, on the account of political as well as social significance, that is provided with a voice to historicize their narrative of being and belonging. In this spirit, the normate sympathizes with a branch of elitism that reads history and politics through a dualistic binary of physiological abilities and impairment, and physical presence/absence by stipulating rules that warrant their superiority and at once rebrand any physiological prejudices at the heart of social and political interaction as inevitable paradigms of functionality. The normate, in this respect, will function as an obdurate Heideggerian ground although in his cultural context, appearing as cultural artifacts "connect[ing] the terms of their judgement" of not just history but other socio-cultural as well as political issues that fit their "account" (Heidegger 1974, 210). In other words, the normate and a concomitant mentality function as cultural components of division, being founded on social biases and contextual preconceptions that marginalize anyone who is affected not just by physiological and psychological impairment but also racial, historical differences; moreover, the division extends so that it could include the notorious political binary of absence/presence, stigmatizing those who failed to physically attend national events such as wars and risings as the disabled or simply as the other. Moreover, the normate's presence is irrevocable and significant since on the one hand they "render" a required foundation of history, or at least a political variety of it, and on the other they define what in

[1] On Heidegger's conception of ground see Heidegger 1974, 207-222.

Heideggerian understanding is known as the *ratio*, which means the justifying "account"; yet most importantly it also means "vindicating something, calculating it as justified and correct, and securing it by means of such calculation" (Heidegger 1974, 212). It is in the latter sense of the term "account" that the normate appear as the sole authority who can confirm historical and/or political accounts, and judge who matters and why. In non-Heideggerian terms, they emerge as catalysts who unite the historical subject and the object by crafting an account, connecting historical events (as historical objects) and how they were perceived by the people, i.e., the subjects based on a calculated and vindicated reality; hence the history presented and preserved by the normate becomes the only available form of reality. The normate, so it seems, pose as the binding element, albeit essentially hegemonic and totalitarian in nature, required for the confirmation of any national *account*, connecting social and political realities in an anthropocentric rendition of history, and hence singlehandedly becoming the "*rationem*" or "that ground for […] reality" (207).

To bring national unity and a mirage of social equality, the normate seek a new flesh and reincarnate as the "average citizen", namely, a "non-heroic", even proletariat, individual who advertises normalcy as virtue, and confirms social wholeness and unity as herd efficiency (Quayson 2007, 19). To the "average citizen" social wholeness translates as inclusion, participation, and an unacknowledged social privilege; in other words, an individual must overcome his fears, anxieties, and fascinations, should he require national and historical inclusion. The pretentious advertisement of wholeness invites the individual to either hide their potential differences and disabilities or follow the hegemonic trend only superficially. The result, therefore, is a simulacrum of wholeness, for within this matrix of social unity only a mirage lies, treating polyvalence and multiplicity as signs of deviance, difference, and non-belonging. This is the point, for instance, where the youth either abandon or mask their historical, political, and personal differences and only cosmetically harmonize their perception of national history and historical events with the hegemonic normate and their historical *account* lest they be marked as the socio-politically disabled or the other. The generation that had participated in war, however, completes the other side of the polarity by supporting those who defend wars and risings; these were once young revolutionaries who embraced their differences, understanding war as a resolution or a national grand narrative. This is the very generation whose revolutionary values are either branded as radical conservatism by the othered populace or deemed as national achievement by their peers. While the former results in constant masking of individualities and values, the latter proclaims resistance and war as national treasure, immortalizing such causative differences by baptizing them in sacred taxonomies such as patriotism or nationalism. It is specially the latter state of conservatism that Declan Kiberd famously, in his Fanonian reading, regards as the recourse to "internal colonialism" (2005, 163); this is when the hegemonic normate "asks the people to fall back into the past – and to become drunk on remembrance" (Fanon 1967, 135). Regardless of such generational stratifications, it is the disabling difference that emerges as a dynamic symptom, affecting the othered individual and steering them towards rebellion, revolution, or socio-historical non-conformity. The desired effect, as this paper seeks to identify, is to see the disabled emerge as a cornerstone of differential independence or in Quayson's words a "marker of sharp otherness", defying the prescriptive nature of national historiography, rejecting it as all too preconceived and politically too narrow (2007, 38).

Maintained as a chronologically lenient discipline, in this respect, history is curated by the hegemonic average citizen to such an extent that it can justify and vindicate or chastise the binary of war/pacifism, or being drunk on conformity and commemoration or seeking

Tiocfaidh ár lá [our day will come][2], or even *up the RA*[3]. Historical *accounts*, in this respect, can be read as narratives that enable the non-disabled to discipline and punish people and their historically conditioned preunderstandings of delicate concepts such as resistance and war on the one hand, and revisionism or pacifism on the other. In either case, the individual operates as a historiographer whose engagement with history and historical events either produces a rebel or a conformist normate. In such forked accounts, the pacifist is marked as the other who lacks presence due to debilitating physical or mental differences in understanding the underlying objective of war or resistance; on the other hand, a radical or a revolutionary will also be ignored and forgotten by others for jeopardizing national unity and peace as the architectonics of nationhood. In either case, lack of participation is treated as otherness, informing the corporeal margins of a disabling mechanism that commences a counterintuitive engagement with any constructed form of historical truth. The disabled as an image of the other, in this respect, flirts with a Hegelian conception of the other, namely, a transcendental being who gives shape to our reality of being; it is the projection of our image reflected in the mirror of the other that enables us to challenge the pertinence and accuracy of our ever-expanding claim to authority and autonomy.[4] The disabled individual becomes a catalyst that processes our ontological relevance vis-à-vis historical, political or socio-cultural affairs. To David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder this catalytic function of the disabled is part of its prosthetic features, namely, to "resolve or correct – to 'prostheticize' ", to amend a false autonomous account by way of providing a resolution that appears alien and foreign at best yet leads to a correctional pattern for other characters (2003, 53). What Mitchell and Snyder, however, have failed to notice, and forms the crux of this article, is that this prosthetic feature is not always corrective for it connects with an understanding of reality that has not been experienced or expressed publicly by the normate as the leading majority. The disability can be a constructed othered object, a concealed personality trait, a physiological difference, or even a psychological deviance that is invested less in realizing normal accounts fomented by the *average perceiver* than in perceiving a reality that reflects the flaws in such constructed and prescriptive histories.

The disabled emerge as the surreptitious other, a dynamic noumenal entity whose uncategorical revision of reality not only contradicts structured conceptions of social and cultural values but also brings balance to such monolithic accounts by introducing metonymic opposition. In short, the disabled provide a contrapuntal reading of historical reality by allowing for the silenced, marginalized variety to be heard and experienced. This othered and alien projection of reality clashes with the normate's limits of formalistic tolerance and their structured consciousness, hence provoking fear, anxiety or a simple fear of castration for they are introduced to an ontological condition that was previously regarded as invisible, ghostly, or phantasmagoric. The reality envisioned by the disabled, in this respect, is not only that unknown noumenal layer of reality but also that which transcends the very comprehension of normalcy, becoming a non-lenient artifact that, as P.H.N. Wood and E.M. Badley understand, fails "to adapt to the demand of their environment" (1978, 149). While for Wood and Badley this lack of resilience can be read as a manifestation of physiological disability and an explicit actualization of physical limitation, I read it as a sign of resistance. Traditionally, the disabled individual was seen as a prosthetic end, namely, to correct or resolve a social abnormality or an immoral inaccuracy through his narrative, becoming a logical ground and emerging as an object of catharsis for

[2] On its literary use see Joyce 2004, 179.
[3] As openly shouted in Irish and British courts by IRA defendants.
[4] On Hegelian alienation of the other see Kain 2005, 39-41.

both the historical narrator and the reader. However, a postmodern variant treats the disabled as a radical entity whose presence is to resist any imposed transcendental form of balance. The first phase of resisting marginalization by the disabled, in my reading, lies in superimposing an idiosyncratic insulation on their interaction with not just various waves of hegemony, such as any authoritative account of history or grounds for political polarization but also the rules and paradigms that indirectly warrant the translation and manifestation of conformity as normalcy in its historical and political polity.

The disabled, in this respect, appear as a volatile formation, representing radically resistant individualities whose difference or ab-normalcy portrays a repressed dimension of socio-historical accounts. Moreover, to borrow from Catherine Malabou, the ontological "plasticity" of the disabled, namely, an ontological passivity that is in a close dialogical relationship with an imminent aggressiveness, rejects any image of historical accounts and cultural norms as sacred affairs, transforming them into debatable daily issues (2005, 7). In other words, the disabled individual materializes as an ontologically plastic entity solely for their ability to oscillate between being a ghostly apparition, or a "marker of sharp otherness" (Quayson 2007, 38) whose presence is avoided by the normate on the one hand, and a radically animate object on the other, who resists accounts of historical and national events that the average citizen or the hegemonic normate had confiscated and vindicated as national grounds. It is by experiencing the latter stage, I argue, that the disabled can reconsider the concept of wholeness by crafting a heterogeneous society wherein historical normalcy is reimagined as a self-referential, multifaceted practice that lacks singularity in its treatment of temporal discipline and historical awareness.

3. Disability as Prostheticization of Historical Accounts

An original understanding of disability and its prostheticizing function adjudges disability as a tool in the hands of the average citizen to remove immoralities and correct impurities; the disabled, in this respect, would be a noticeable yet at once marginalized cultural phenomenon. A radical, more recent engagement with disability, however, sheds light on its noumenal, multifaceted nature, especially in being able to appear in forms that are unacknowledged by the normalizing cultural and historical agents. Such innate radicalism can reconstruct certain modalities of perceiving historical accounts by engaging with a systematic dialectical dialogism. This is when concepts such as Linda Hutcheon's "trans-contextualization" actualize, allowing for the socio-historical protocols maintained by the non-disabled to be materialized as textual elements that can be analyzed and revisited publicly (2000, 8). History, therefore, is no longer an unknown, transcendental thing-in-itself that lends itself to no revisionist logic. By way of proximity and materialization of past events, the epistemic essence of the disabled as a radical prostheticizing agent or an independent catalyst removes various layers that had previously prohibited any reconsideration of history. A politized history of a nation will become an attempt at reality, moving away from a metaphysical image. Disability, thus, emerges as an uncharted threshold that moves from a theoretical trans-contextualization towards praxis by not fitting consecrated paradigms previously set by the normate. It is the traumatized, the disabled, the marginalized other, the minor, the autistic, and the mentally anxious who raises our awareness vis-à-vis a flaw in an inherently Cartesian anthropocentric engagement with history, privileging us and marginalizing the disabled others. It is the disabled, moreover, who brave the day and allow us to see through such broken dichotomies, and eventually emerge as odd individuals who had looked through historical realities from both sides without any apparent involvement in prostheticization of history, i.e., correcting or resolving anyone's accounts. The disabled, in

this respect, becomes a third ground, namely, that which is rooted in an idiosyncratic logic and yet not manipulated by political or historical polarities.

In the context of narrating national conflicts such as wars or revolutions, an account envisioned and expressed by a politically othered, and hence disabled, is not the result of medical deficiency; rather, it is a result of social, cultural, and political reductionist readings of the binary of ability/disability, dictating the fate of the individual as a minority. A person who had not physically participated in wars used to be swiftly branded as disabled, and whose account that was based on other oral historical accounts or even memories of those events would be marked as fictitious. What is generally ignored in this context, however, is the dynamics of memory, and how the retained information will be stored and used to form composite histories of a singular event. Not all the accumulated knowledge does refer to a physical presence; rather, information can be retained and evaluated by individuals based on their interaction with the other disabled individuals as well as the non-disabled, sharing their experience of attending those events. As the event is narrated based on emotional and personal vicissitudes and the ways in which such vicissitudes are remembered, it becomes a universal site that can be revisited and relived by the disabled and the non-disabled alike. This anticipates an inclusive myth of participation and presence in its vast religious, historical and even political commemorative form. In its political context, for instance, mythologizing the dynamics of memory is manifested in *The Wasted Island* (1919), and the ways in which Eimar O'Duffy's and Bulmer Hobson's roles as recounted by O'Duffy's alter ego is grounded in history and yet has not been granted any historical authenticity. Based on O'Duffy's actual participation in the Rising, his account should be granted formal verification and demythologization; whereas it has widely been ignored as either a politico-historical amnestic myth or a personalized historical shortsightedness, and thus treated as an account founded on pure memories. In other words, O'Duffy's historicized narrative like many other memory-oriented accounts appears as an inconsistent process of mythmaking and hence as Quayson notes, "suffers from some form of amnesia", enveloping not just O'Duffy's character-narrator but also the very historical event around which the account is structured (Quayson 2007, 40).

Although O'Duffy's narrator is not affected by any form of disability or impairment, he is politically and historically traumatized as the other, being stigmatized as a legend only in his own myth, or a hero only in his self-made mock epic that will be forgotten after its emotional rupture vanishes. In this respect, O'Duffy's character-narrator as an othered individual lends himself and his resources to a classical treatment of prostheticization by focusing on corrective or resolutive objectives whereby other characters can learn a lesson and at once make a dream come true, namely, to actualize the 1916 Rising. This is when the narrator and his narrative become one with an inclusive historical amnesia by producing an account that confirms the dominant, hegemonic tendencies. Such character-narrators are key agents in "memorializ[ing]" the hegemonic normate and at once "peripheralizing" their own historical ground as the socially othered, politically disabled persona even though they are the central narratorial voice of their account (*ibidem*). In this respect, the ontological presence of the character is rejected as being insignificant, allowing him to be at once a central and a peripheral entity whose recognition and remembrance of the event and its outcome serves the grand narrative of nationalistic formation and unity. With contemporary narratives, as I shall discuss in what follows, the narratorial pattern of confirmation and amnestic submission is replaced with a variety that sporadically confirms historical accounts vindicated by the State and at once places the disabled, peripheralized character-narrator on a pedestal as the epicenter of not just the process of memorialization as a historical glorification of the non-disabled but also revisiting history in the form of self-referential reminiscence.

4. Postmemory and Post-Millennial Narrative: Disability as an Advantage

Current trends in historical narratives, unlike classical forms, place less stress on the individual and their physical presence as well as social criteria that define and mark them as disabled or otherwise than on their account grounded in the memory of the event that serves as the epistemic structure of their narrative. This is specifically highlighted in Marianne Hirsch's exemplary study of the concept of postmemory, investigating the traditional binary of physical presence versus the confluence of oral historical accounts and cultural imaginations significant in the formation of one's memory of history and concomitant events:

> My postmemories of the war were not visual; it was only much later, after leaving Romania and the censored history to which my age-mates and I were exposed there, that I saw images of what I had until then only conjured in my imagination. But neither were my postmemories unmediated. My parents' stories and behaviors, and the way that they reached me, followed a set of conventions that were no doubt shaped by stories we had read and heard, conversations we had had, by fears and fantasies associated with persecution and danger. (2012, 4)

The main objective in contemporary historiographic narratives is to instantly engage in a strategic negotiation of history, assessing it as a product of cultural, political, and most importantly cognitive multiplicity rather than a monolithic artifact. Such epistemological assessments will be achieved by reconsidering platforms that shape one's perception as well as maintenance of history and historical events in a memory-oriented archival depository, or in Maria Beville's words, creating a "dialectic between the subjectivity of memory and the impassive but disputed past" (2018, 23). As Hirsch notes, hearing stories of participation, displacement, relocation, marginalization, and departures will not only traumatize the population, especially the first few generations, but also operate as an agent of disability by stirring severe emotional reactions in individuals, resulting in further political and ideological bifurcation (2018, 242). While the first-generation recounts history as a composite construct of personal experiences and accumulated empirical knowledge, it is the second and later generations that fall under the specific rubric of Hirsch's postmemory community, maintaining an asynchronous connection with a timescape that is distant and at once empirically unknown. The generation of postmemory, in this respect, is in constant struggle with a hegemonic tendency that deals with history through a politically motivated self-referential mythmaking necessary for its survival on the one hand, and a composite memory of events founded on diverse platforms on the other. The postmemory generation, similar to O'Duffy's character-narrator, is torn between memorialization and peripheralization, eventually operating as a politically othered, socially disabled persona whose account will be verified should it only authenticate and hence memorialize the normate's historicized account of, for instance, the inevitability of war without highlighting resistance or political divisions. Under such circumstances the produced accounts are grounded in only what was earlier seen as amnestic mythmaking; and characters are central only by centralizing a confirmed reality, and at once peripheral in alternative facets of an already existing historical reality.

This is the same self-referential historical amnesia that contradicts Beville's reading of memory as mere "subjectivity" and emerges as a self-sufficient agency that envelops Roddy Doyle's Henry Smart as a character-narrator, who relives and revisits history in his severely critical, albeit parodic, capacity; they are the disabled (autistic or contextually traumatized) characters who are central to memorialized histories; and yet at the same time their historicity places them at the center of a critical reading of history rather than peripheralizing them as parodic caricatures. Their differences in remembering a memorialized history, therefore, does

not result in instant rejections and marginalizations; rather, as Bjornar Olsen claims in "Material Culture after Text", their difference as a product of amnestic historical mythmaking is less seen as oppositional than "facilitating collaboration, delegation, and exchange" (2003, 88). Henry's treatment of history, in this respect, is twofold: on the one hand he deals with history based on events and his participation in the progress of such events; and on the other by provoking a general memory of national phenomena such as the Rising in the mind of his audience, narrating how the event is being retained collectively, he then inserts his catalyst-like presence within its grand narrative and makes historical reassessment a mere possibility. His narrative poses as a self-referential reminiscence wherein an already authenticated past is brought to the critical fore, enabling the disabled and the othered to reassess their traditionally prostheticizing role, emerging as autonomous mediators who restructure and revisit history in light of their archival agency. While Beville's cartographic object-oriented reading of Enright's *The Gathering* (2007) places it as "memory in practice" being "devoted to things", I argue that Doyle's historiography is less about Brownian "Thing Theory" and the effect of objects on the subject than events as anthropocentric products that underline the autonomous role of the individual in maintaining and reassessing such events by way of reminiscence (Beville 2018, 27). However, one question remains: how can a disabled child like Henry who cannot identify with his present timescape, and who "was never a child", introduce his traumatized memory-oriented account as a reliable context for historical and political notions such as war, independence, and national unity (Doyle 2000, 3)? Moreover, to which of Quayson's categorical definition of disability does Henry's traumatic memoryscape belong? As I shall explain shortly, Henry's narrative is a temporally fragmented account, succinctly referring to radical temporal jumps such as "I grew" to signify a forgotten rite of passage, which can be scrutinized in light of Quayson's concept of disability as normality and disability as hermeneutical impasse (Doyle 2000, 43). Henry's self-reflexive memory-oriented account, I contend, is rooted in not just a temporally dislocated perception of his time but also a fractured cognition of being that as a disabled individual further separates him from a community that finds solace in submission, conformity, and normalization.

5. Autistic Memorialization as Centralization of the Periphery in Henry Smart's Account

In "Experience of Trauma and PTSD Symptoms in Autistic Adults", Freya Rumball, Francesca Happé and Nick Grey, citing American Psychiatric Association, consider autism as "a neurodevelopmental condition", symptomatic of difference and "difficulties", "characterized by impairments in reciprocal social interaction and social communication across multiple settings, and restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests" (2020, 2122). The condition, the researchers argue, invites "heightened rates of depression", "elevated rates of anxiety", and "heightened risk of post-traumatic stress disorder" (*ibidem*). Aside from its medical rootedness, ASD-inflicted depression disseminates silence, isolation, and an eventual form of othering in its cultural and social context, whereas anxiety leads to emotional ruptures and uncertainty in decision making. According to Rumball, Happé and Grey, some of the most notable symptoms of trauma caused by autism are: "re-experiencing the trauma through flashbacks, intrusive memories and nightmares, hyperarousal, negative alterations in mood and cognition" (2020, 2123).

In less technical taxonomy, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ASD, appears as lack of communicational skills in lower-functioning autism or an exaggerated verbosity specially in High-Functioning Autism, HFA, hypersensitivity to light and sound, excessive self-centrism and lack of collective empathy most notably in forming dialogues, resulting in extended monological stories. Moreover, according to Rose A. Cooper and Jon S. Simons, recent research has shown that in

autism lies a pattern of "diminished episodic recollection, in terms of the ability to retrieve and re-experience the specific details and spatial-temporal context of a previous event", whereas a timeless semantic biographical account of such events remains intact and easily accessible by the individual (2019, 163-164). In other words, while the characters with ASD can retain and revisit history and historically significant events, his perception of history as the confluence of spatial-temporal elements is diluted and self-referential. Considering the problematics of memory as the scope of this article, I shall only examine two apertures out of four through which trauma penetrates the individual's perception of history: first, "Learning that the traumatic event(s)", as in "exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence" had "occurred to a close family member or close friend" (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

The claim that "individuals with ASD see and understand the world differently and often show intense anxiety responses to apparently harmless situations" informs Henry's account of peripheralization and memorialization (Rumball, Happé, Gray 2020, 2123). Biogra-fiction, as a literary fissure, of not only his life as a traumatized, disabled individual but also national unrest and revolution allows Henry to deal with such personal and socio-cultural stimuli. In this respect, Henry's biographical account of his personal life tied to political and national upheavals according to Quayson allows for a normalization of disability, or as he calls it "disability as normality", and at once deepens his peripheral role in his personal life-narrative (2007, 51). By normalizing disability, society imposes a subtle, ignorant rejection of disability as a condition that deserves attention and care, treating the disabled as peripheries whose accounts should be normalized so much so that it could only authenticate the memorialization of the politically central, non-disabled. While Quayson's critical consideration of autism deals with an apparent absence of communicativeness and narratorial reticence, I investigate the less examined form of HFA narration manifested in literature as pleonasm and diegetic exuberance, namely, a never-ending digressive zeal for description and narration.

Henry is implicitly presented as an individual who struggles with autism, a child whose difficulty in dealing with emotional pain such as a mourning mother and lost siblings is peripheralized by a society that suppresses such hardships and regards them as normal crises; as a result, Henry is portrayed as a reticent child who has embraced uncommunicativeness as the only available solution. Under such suppressive-normalizing conditions, Henry begins his narrative of trauma, fragmented memory by remembering a depressive account of his departed siblings and a mother who mourns for all her lost children as in "little Henry [...] Little Gracie, Lil, Victor, another little Victor. The ones I remember", instead of appreciating the one who had survived his time, namely, Henry the narrator: "she held me but she looked up at her twinkling boy. Poor me beside her" (Doyle 2000, 1). Eventually, he reaches the climactic moment of namelessness in his narrative, signifying a presence that matters to neither his family nor his friends: "I was Henry but they never called me that. She wouldn't; he couldn't [...] So they called me nothing. I was the boy. The lad. Himself. He. The child" (33). His memory of presence is imbued with a consistent traumatic feeling of superfluity, a paradox of individualism and existence as his mother treats him as being unwanted and redundant and at once valued, further confirms his traumatic condition:

> She poked me, as if to prove that I was there.
> – You're big, she said.
> She was accusing me, weighing me, planning to take some of me back. (1-2)

The second phase of exposure to a disabling effect of trauma in Henry's narrative is what Rumball, Happé and Gray cite as, "witnessing, in person," as the traumatic event "occurred to

others" (2020, 2123). In the case of Henry, he is a witness to not just his loss of siblings but also his mother, Melody, being deprived of childhood, proper upbringing, and parental attention as he recounts, "what age was she when she learnt the truth, when she found out that her life would have no music? The name was a lie", and especially as he claims that, "Like me, she was never a child" (Doyle 2000, 3). Grounded in retrospect and pure memories of such traumatic events, Henry's account vindicates a temporally detached timescape that allows him to not only map the past but also form a perspective, albeit personal and fragmented, of his current state of affairs as a peripheral, disabled individual. Such temporally disconnected timescape, in other words, gives shape to a biographical account that lacks chronological rigor and narratorial order since Henry himself due to his disabling differences in perceiving an orderly function of time also cannot engage with a classic understanding of time-space continuum.

As an individual who struggles with ASD, I contend, Henry's account poses as a spontaneous narrative of events and presences, registered and stored in his memory. To normalize and hence to benefit from a social sense of belonging, Henry indulges in providing an autobiographical account of his life, set up in an event-based memorialized order, known as self-referential episodic memory. In his Preface to *Elements of Episodic Memory*, Endel Tulving defines episodic memory as one that is "concerned with unique, concrete, personal experiences dated in the rememberer's past" (1985, v). This is the biographical account manifested in Henry's narrative. However, the floating, timeless manner in which he inserts his presence in political events resonates with Tulving's understanding of semantic memory that "refers to a person's abstract, timeless knowledge of the world that he shares with others" (*ibidem*). In "Exploring the Neurocognitive basis of Episodic recollection in Autism" (2019), Cooper and Simons expand Tulving's reading of episodic memory, introducing it as a form that "refers to our ability to recall and re-experience specific episodes that have a unique spatial-temporal context and involves 'autonoetic awareness,' requiring self-reflection" (164). In light of Cooper's and Simons's reading of episodic memory and autism, Henry's non-temporal, self-referential timescape can be seen as another subtle marker of his autistic difference, the others being his preference for isolation, lack of communication, and becoming street children with his brother Victor instead of joining a larger community of children: "But I loved the street, from the second I landed on it. The action, the noise and smells […] I was starving for more. I was looking at misery that matched my own. […] I was there, at home, an instant street arab" (Doyle 2000, 45).

In terms of Quayson's categorical understanding of disability, Henry's convoluted timescape combined with his self-referential biographical account can be seen as Disability as Hermeneutical Impasse whereby disability as in Henry's autism emerges as a simulacrum that covers the reality of an internal perceptual deficiency in its spatio-temporal, communicative, social and sexual dimension. His biographical account, in other words, is only a cover for his shallow and often absent understanding of political events such as the Rising. The more he divulges his historically conditioned account in a self-referential, diegetic exuberant fashion, which will be discussed as a marker of HFA, the more he fails to notice the absence of an epistemic logic behind that which is enveloping his life as a normalized citizen such as revolution, civil war, and a gradual rise of local organized crime such as Ivan and his gang. What Quayson regards as a hermeneutical impasse caused by character's intensified "capacity for interpretation"(Quayson 2007, 50) and obsessive examination of various elements, a trait that aloofly resembles obsessive-compulsive disorder, I argue is inflicted upon the character as a result of neurological conflict, which erroneously recollects one's biographical presence in time through the semantic portion of memory instead of reconstructing it based on one's episodic memory. This conflict of interest can be investigated in light of Sandrine Kalenzaga *et al.* examination of semantic

and hence timeless structure of memory, and its complicated relationship with processes that retain and illicit memory under certain conditions.

In "Episodic memory and Self-reference via Semantic Autobiographical memory: Insights from an fMRI study in younger and older Adults", Sandrine Kalenzaga, Marco Sperduti, Adéle Anssens, *et al.* (2015) introduce "Self-Reference Effect (SRE)" as an enhanced memory retention mechanism that "gives rise to a mnemonic advantage since this kind of processing promotes organization and elaboration of the material to the be remembered" (2). In this respect, to remember an event one can either rely on the episodic memory that functions as a platform founded on temporally curated personal experiences or refer to semantic memory as a non-temporal cornerstone. To remember war and its traumatic effects on Henry and his generation, they can either resort to their personal memories of participation or refer to their understanding vis-à-vis the history of the event based on accounts accumulated through stories narrated by others.

To practice inclusion, Henry treats his biographical account as a historically efficient, temporally reliable ground, open to revisions. In other words, the chronological order and the narratorial authority intrinsic only seemingly in an autobiography will normalize Henry's otherwise fragmented perception of, for instance, a chaos-oriented realm of war. In his participatorial account, however, Henry treats war and his adventures of being a "street arab" equally as though he was "playing being [a] soldier", still pursuing his objectives of freedom and carelessness in a freewheeling spirit of childhood (Doyle 2000, 102). Such an account is symptomatic of an autistic recollection of not only personal timescape but also national historical moments wherein games and war appear as mere analogous wordplays in which only "process-specific alliances" will be recognized by the individual, that according to Cooper and Simons will "give rise to altered episodic recollection in people with ASD" (2019, 174). Such neurocognitive alteration of memory, especially in grouping games and war into "process-specific" or in short event-oriented "alliance" is manifested in Henry's recollection of war that lends itself to a hysterical portrayal of hide and seek:

> The Vickers guns and snipers were [...] impossible to find. They were playing hide-and-seek with the men on the roof, using and vacating all the vantage points around. The spray of lead coming from the Anzacs on the roof of Trinity and other shifting points was constant now and nearing all the time. (Doyle 2000, 121)

Henry's perceptual deficit is never addressed or resolved completely in his self-referenced account but rather transformed into a mature descriptive form, resisting the removal of hermeneutical impasse. The transformation takes place at both neurocognitive and linguistic front, where in the former it is manifested as a shift from episodic to semantic memory, allowing for his act of remembrance to be structured less on temporality than on events. While in the latter front, his ecstatic pleonasm in identifying-remembering events and characters are gradually replaced with a mature descriptive mechanism as his narrative unfolds. Such a shift in one's timescape, moving away from episodic to semantic, is confirmed by Kalenzaga, Sperduti, Anssens, et. al, regarding Self-Referential memory Effect (SRE) as the only residue the existence of which was spared by various traumatic and non-traumatic life crises. In this regard, since "the semantic component" was the only survival, it is automatically tethered to SRE during one's reminiscence. For Kalenzaga et al "SRE via autobiographical processing" appears to be more "effective if it is based on semantic autobiographical memories" (2015, 3). Therefore, the only lingual feature that remains intact and survives Henry's memory-oriented narratorial transformation is his exuberance in narrativizing his memories by pleading with words to help

him "writ[e] the history of [his] nation […]", acting like "the gods here" (186). According to Kalenzaga, Sperduti, Anssens, *et al.* Self-Referential memory Effect (SRE) that uses "nouns is typically […] promoting autobiographical memory retrieval, while the SRE using adjectives" allows the individual to "describe their personality" (2015, 2). In Henry's account an excessive use of nouns appears in the first part of the narrative, cementing its autobiographical ground, enabling him to freely divulge the peripheralized accounts of Granny Nash, his mother, his father with whom he shares the disabling effect of trauma, and his traumatic attachment to Ms. O'Shea as his school teacher turned love object, which according to Rumball, Happé, Gray appears as the other sign of Henry's traumatic formation as an ASD, namely, "sexual abuse"(2020, 2127) [5]. Yet in the latter half, specifically from the middle of Chapter 5 where he understands that being "handsome and filthy and bursting out of […] rags […] wasn't enough" as he was "itching for more", and that to "better [them]selves" Victor and Henry should attend "the national school behind the big railings", the narrative heralds not just a discursive but also a perspectival evolution in Henry's personality and perception of history as a spatial-temporal register, especially as he sees through the foggy ocean of trauma, autism, and peripheralization and eventually crafts a personality that is temporally independent of all the traumatic departures (Doyle 2000). This internalized discursive metamorphosis in Henry's narrative, replacing biographical account of events with a descriptive variant, flirts with Michael Riffaterre's understanding of a hidden interdependence between diegesis and mimesis, as "It seems therefore logical to employ the term to indicate the discursive and textual actualization of narrative structures, and actualization in which the syntax is narrative and the lexicon descriptive [...] far from being a means to the narrative end, description generates the narrative" (1986, 281-282).

In this respect, Henry's yielding to an attributive nature of description complements the biographical segment of his narrative and follows one objective: to include as many fragments of memories as possible from his memoryscape so that his account appears as an accurate representation of reality. The reality Henry braves to depict constructs a dialogue founded on a non-binary of historical inclusion and social normalization; in this respect, Henry's semantic timescape informs a reality that is highly demanded by the hegemonic normate, and by narrativizing this reality it will warrant his social and historical inclusion. Although Henry's fragmented account had awarded him inclusion and presence, the account is a mere act of presenting "disability as normality" (Quayson 2007, 51). This is where a peripheralized individual such as Henry is required by the hegemonic normate to hide his disabling difference so that, as Quayson claims, "it becomes almost impossible to detect signs of […] disability from [his] writing" (*ibidem*). Nevertheless, his seemingly normalized account, which suffers from excessive digressions, extensive focus on the self and of course numerous temporal inconsistencies, should be regarded as another marker for his disability. In HFA, extensive attention is paid to one's self, for instance, in the form of a diegesis that only reflects one's memories of presence and participation. According to Simon Baron-Cohen, in HFA conversations are "hijacked" due to speaker's lack of empathy, confiscating the topic and then modifying it so that it would fit their needs of self-expression:

> Talking 'at' a person is not real communication. It is a monologue. If you talk for significantly more than 50% of the time […] it is not a conversation. It is venting, or storytelling […], or controlling, […] or filling silence. There is a risk in any conversation […] that one party will hijack the topic [where] the speaker […] is only fulfilling his or her *own* needs, not the listeners'. (2005, 169)

[5] On nouns as markers of (auto)biographical accounts see Wolfe 1960, 16-21.

In Henry's case, there are numerous instances of venting, storytelling or filling the silences, especially when he remembers his libidinal time at school with Ms. O'Shea, his General Post Office (GPO) war memories, and as his post-school time as a young soldier on the path of becoming "private Smart" (Doyle 2000, 128). However, even as a sign of HFA narration this changes specially in Chapter 6 and onwards when Henry not only historicizes his memoryscape but also embeds it in a personalized structure of morality, camaraderie and collective consciousness so that it would fit the criterion of inclusion and normalcy by moving away from autistic self-centrism. For instance, as he remembers his peers, like the seventeen-year-old O'Toole, his account reflects a move towards nationalistic stoicism and selflessness: "Good man, O'Toole. The fuckin' eejit. […] he was one of the Christian Brothers' boys, here to die for Ireland, dying to please his betters […] I was ready to die myself - I was banking on it" (89); whereas his memory of the Connolly, Pearse and Clarke reading the earlier draft of the Declaration is imbued with a detached selfless participation: "my part. My contribution. My present to Victor. Only the night before" (96). Although Henry's disabling autistic perception of historical presence and political radicalism introduces it as a mere redecoration of semantic memoryscape, selflessness as a mere oddity vis-à-vis autistic self-centrism allows for such memories to be translated as the return of a classical role in the disability studies for the disabled, namely, the prostheticization of the disabled as a catalyst for the normate. Henry in his renewed function, therefore, still appears as a socio-culturally conscious catalyst whose presence will memorialize the ruling historical and political normate such as the likes of Connolly, Pearse, Collins, and Clarke even though his self-referenced reinsertion into history will appear as a modern variety, enabling him to revisit and address historical uncertainties and political departures for generations to come.

Quayson's understanding of prostheticization treats it as a "fail[ed]" endeavor "not because of the difficulties in erasing the effects of disability in the real world, but because the aesthetic domain itself is short-circuited upon the encounter with disability" (2007, 26). Nevertheless, I argue that the failure of classical conception of prostheticization falls less on a confrontational encounter between the aesthetic domain and the disabled than on the narratorial integrity of the narrator who authoritatively reimagines his nation at the time of crisis out of pure memory and at once consciously peripheralizes his fundamental capacity in such revisions, the latter ironically becoming a norm in post-millennial historiographies. Henry's memory-oriented task in reimagining his national history confirms such a failure without inviting the normate to hold him accountable as a disabled narrator. While his account is diluted with autistic self-centrism and trauma, presenting it as only a simulated and self-referential variety of history, his amnestic presence in his narrative autonomously defies an instrumentalization of prostheticization by the hegemonic normate. In other words, his role as a disabled character-narrator both confirms his function as a catalyst and at once defies such fixed categorizations. He emerges as a hybrid stuck in a third space, oscillating between mythmaking and revisionism or as Maria Grever and Tina van der Vlies claim, "national revisionism", familiarizing "the masses" with "war by providing myths and distorted interpretations of the past" (2020, 132). Henry's semantic, and hence temporally amnestic memoryscape, on the one hand serves the larger canvas of the hegemonic political normate who find mythmaking and nationalism as covered stimuli for the progress of revisionism, by "producing national narratives" (*ibidem*); and on the other combats the normate as the history-making machine by exercising his narratorial agency and autonomy, challenging particular varieties of national history as laid out by the normate. For instance, the monumental moment when he masquerades as a mythical representative of his generation, Henry at once revisits national history and at the same time hellenizes it with his historically asynchronous non-conformist presence remembered through a vague, amnestic account:

> Connolly, Pearse and Clarke went out. […]
> − He's reading it, I whispered.
> − Reading what?
> − *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, said Paddy Swanzy.
> […]
> − Here, son. Have a read of that and tell me what you think.
> I read it, the first man after Connolly and Pearse to do so. *The Proclamation of Independence*.
> […]
> − What do you think? he asked.
> − It's the stuff, I said.
> − Is it perfect?
> − Well, I said.
> − Go on, said Connolly.
> − There should be something in there about the rights of children.
> He looked at me. He saw my pain, and the pain of millions of others. And his own.
> − You're right, he said. − Where, though?
> − Here, I said. − Between that there and the bit about the alien government. That's where it would fit.
> − Good, he said. − I'll suggest that, so. (Doyle 2000, 95-97)

6. Conclusion

The confluence of mythmaking and an amnestic revisionism poses as an inseparable element in Henry's account, reintroducing disability as a ground that can reconstruct unacknowledged modalities of history and historical narratives by engaging in systematic dialectical dialogism. While Quayson regards mythmaking and amnesia as peripheralizing artifacts, conversely in Henry's case they emerge as the only uplifting poles that award him historical agency and cultural presence in his seemingly supra-individualistic examination of national history and war by forgiving his disabling differences. Moreover, although wars and risings, as Grever and van der Vlies understand, emerge "as major sources for producing national narratives" by creating a context in which the disabled and the non-disabled can practice agency and ontological relevance, it is the perception, accumulation, and retention of national phenomena in participants' memories that function as a vehicle for memorialization and recognition rather than the war itself, regardless of its disabling impacts on the masses (2020, 132). In narratives of war and rising as sources of trauma, the hegemonic normate appear as the ruling "interlocutor", establishing the conceptual paradigms, or simply put, the grounds of the account while treating the disabled as the periphery (Quayson 2007, 151). In Henry's treatment of history, however, his semantic timescape shrouded in historical awareness creates a revisionist rift that provides not just him as the main interlocutor but also other peripheralized characters with centrality and recognition and, as Walter Benjamin claims, allows them to remember history by seizing "hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (2003, 391). The seized memory, therefore, contradicts Quayson's intended aesthetics nervousness, masquerading as a historical and interlocutory variety.

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Art Imitating Life Imitating Death. An Exploration of "Guests of the Nation" by Frank O'Connor[*]

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Abstract:

In 2003, as part of the centenary celebrations for Frank O'Connor's birth, I was commissioned by the Irish National Broadcaster (RTÉ) to adapt his short story "Guests of the Nation" for radio. My research led me to a number of real-life incidents that echoed O'Connor's emotionally charged exploration of the tragic consequences when friendships are formed between sworn enemies in a time of war. In the twilight zone where life imitates art, I was invited by descendants of the IRA Unit who had kidnapped and executed Major Compton Smith during the Irish War of Independence, to visit the isolated farmhouse in which he had been held hostage. I welcome you to join me on my journey into a world where history and story go hand in hand, and fact and fiction dovetail together seamlessly without contradiction or contrivance.

Keywords: Fiction, Frank O'Connor, History, Irish War of Independence, Short Story

Frank O'Connor creates a colourful and textured narrative that captures the Cork City of my childhood in all its idiosyncrasy and eccentricity. Born on Douglas Street and reared in Harrington's Square (via Blarney Street), O'Connor was a neighbour's child. He was one of our own. His words were our words. His stories were our stories. His characters were steeped in our parish yet resonated across the planet. Embraced by Irish-America at a time when the recently established Republic of Ireland was taking its first faltering steps as an independent nation, O'Connor cast a larger-than-life shadow from the footlights of the world stage. Meanwhile, here in his hometown, we basked in the reflected glow of his global glory.

[*] "Art Imitating Life Imitating Death. An exploration of 'Guests of the Nation' by Frank O'Connor", was first presented as a lecture by Cónal Creedon at the Swiss Centre of Irish Studies at the Zurich James Joyce Foundation, Zurich University, 24 January 2020.

Fig. 1 – Cónal Creedon outside Frank O'Connor House. Douglas Street, Cork. Courtesy of the Author

I first came upon "Guests of the Nation", in the pages of "Exploring English I", my Intermediate Certificate school anthology (Martin 2011 [1967])[1]. Barely a teenager, I was bored by textbook experts spouting textbook theories. The education I craved was to be found beyond the school gates, for out there was the greatest educator of all – life itself. My rampant imagination ran with the fox and chased with the hound. But then, one day, while thumbing through my schoolbook, my fingers hesitated at "Guests of the Nation". Something about that story just stopped me in my tracks. Seduced by a narrative that was deeply rooted in a culture, a history and a landscape so familiar to me, I was captivated by this wartime parable, that somehow elevated me above the tedium of the classroom. In time, O'Connor's curly tales of shawlies (Martin 2017)[2] steps and steeples, became like a gateway drug that unlocked the magical mystical world of Irish literature in the mind of this adventure-seeking youth.

[1] Great credit is due to Augustine Martin the editor of this anthology of short stories. This collection of short fiction originally intended as a school textbook in the mid-1960s became so popular that it was republished "by public demand" forty-five years after it was first published and became a best seller.

[2] Shawlies – a name given to a very specific class of Cork women of an earlier generation, identified by the distinctive black shawl they wore. Usually working-class women, fruit sellers, street vendors – renowned for their sharp wit and cutting turn of phrase.

In retrospect, I now understand why "Guests of the Nation" made such a profound impression on me at that time. I was fourteen years of age, and Ireland was a place of change just as I was coming of age. The cosy cartel of church and state that had been enshrined and embraced since the formation of the Irish Free State[3] was beginning to show hairline cracks, and after eight hundred years of asset stripping and despotism as a colony of our nearest neighbour, the Republic of Ireland was finally getting up off its knees and finding its "place among the nations of the earth" (Vance 1982, 185)[4]. The island of Ireland was in transition – a short few decades had passed since independence, and the capital "R" of Revisionism was poking its finger in and around the soft underbelly of Irish sacred cows (Costello 2014).

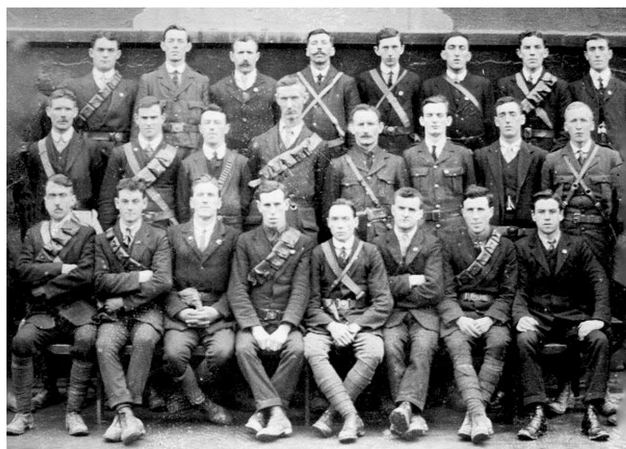

Fig. 2 – Cork City Volunteers, 1916. Courtesy of the Author

Something momentous happened in 1970, when a young Catholic schoolgirl stepped out from behind the sectarian barricades of Derry (Londonderry; Ferguson 2015)[5] in Northern Ireland (The North of Ireland) and won the Eurovision Song Contest for the Republic of Ireland. Her gentle song of love soared above the sabre rattling, gunfire, rioting and unrest. And when the British tabloids asked what sort of a name was Dana, they were told it was an Irish name meaning bold, fearless or brave.

[3] The Irish Free State was established in 1922 in the aftermath of the Irish War of Independence.

[4] This is a reference to "Robert Emmet's Speech from the Dock", in which, the Irish patriot Robert Emmet, facing execution in the aftermath of the failed rebellion of 1803, insists that his epitaph should not be written, and no headstone should be erected in his honour until Ireland is free and independent and "takes its place among the nations of the earth".

[5] Derry or Londonderry? What's in a name? The London prefix was added to Derry when the city was granted a Royal Charter by King James I in 1613. The name, Derry, with its connection to the ancient Gaelic name of the city is preferred by nationalists and it is broadly used throughout Northern Ireland's Nationalist community. For the most part, Derry, is also used south of the border in the Republic of Ireland. Unionists prefer the name Londonderry. However, I am reliably informed that Derry is also used by most residents of the city – Nationalist & Unionist. There exists a similar cultural and political schism regarding the name of a relatively small north eastern portion of the Island of Ireland. Ever since the The Government of Ireland Act 1920 and Anglo-Irish Treaty 1922, this specific six-counties which is part of the nine-counties that make up the Irish province of Ulster is known variously as The North of Ireland or Northern Ireland? Ulster or The Six-counties? Depending on which side of the political or cultural divide one is aligned.

Down south of the border, the lines of demarcation between Catholic, Republican and Nationalist had become so tangled, entwined and confused, that when Dana and her mother were invited by the Catholic Bishop of Derry to receive a blessing before setting out for Europe, it left us in no doubt, but that Dana was singing for Ireland; a holy Catholic and united Ireland (Scallon 1999, 13). It is difficult to contextualise or quantify the significance of Ireland winning the Eurovision Song Contest in 1970. But at that particular moment in time, when Dana appeared on every single television screen across the land, live from Amsterdam in her white *báinín* dress embellished with ancient Celtic knots of emerald green, it was as if a united Ireland had stepped onto the world stage wrapped in the tricolour of the Republic. There was something about those seemingly inconsequential three minutes of popular music history that fed into the lifeblood, soul and marrow of the nation – it was as if, for the first time since partition, Ireland, north and south of the border, was united as one.

At that time, Ireland was seldom represented on the world stage, so, to witness Dana standing toe to toe against all comers and emerge victorious, imbued a spiralling sense of national pride. Dana highlighted the notion that nationalist Ireland was one nation divided by a man-made line drawn on a map – and the ink was still wet. For my generation, it seemed to mark the moment when everything changed. Europe, which had always been such a far away and exotic place, now seemed somehow closer[6], and the Irish were standing proudly centre stage at the heart of it. We had taken our first tentative steps to align ourselves with the Continent on an equal footing and, in doing so, we further severed the apron strings of the toxic and unequal arrangement that had existed between Ireland and our nearest neighbour since the eleventh century (McGreevy 2019).

1970s Ireland seemed politically charged and ideologically confused. The fiftieth anniversary of the Easter 1916 Rising (Foy, Barton 2011)[7] had rekindled the flames of nationalism. The Republic was experiencing its first flush of nationhood. The martyrs of 1916, who had laid down their lives, were eulogized from every parish pump and pulpit to the point of beatification. The GPO[8] in Dublin had become our "Alamo" – a venerated shrine of national pilgrimage to hold dear the blood-sacrifice of a failed rebellion.

But amid all the flag waving and cheering, a number of complicating loose ends of history remained untethered and dangling. Not least the glaring anomaly that the planned commemoration of the 1916 Rising happened to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of World War One – a far greater tragedy in terms of carnage, a conflict in which almost quarter of a million Irishmen volunteered to join the British army and march through the blood-drenched fields of Flanders. To add further complication to the national celebrations, fifty years had also passed since The Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). This exposed the convoluted irony that while many Irishmen had volunteered to fight for the British army during World War One for the "freedom of small nations" (Collins 2014), Britain had no qualms about executing the Irishmen who had attempted to free the small nation of Ireland from British rule during the 1916 Rising. When the Great War ended – like Óisín on his return from Tír na nÓg[9], many

[6] Dana (1970), "All Kinds Of Everything", *Eurovision Song Contest*, Amsterdam, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xmnd3uiK_Y> (03/2021).

[7] Ireland has a long and gory history of failed rebellions, risings and insurrections, but the failed rebellion that took place in Ireland at Easter 1916 holds a special significance and continues to be a hot topic of debate right to the present.

[8] The General Post Office, O'Connell Street, Dublin. GPO was the headquarters of the Irish Rebels during the 1916 Rising.

[9] Óisín is a character in Irish mythology who had been away from Ireland in Tír na nÓg for a short while. On his return, Ireland had undergone such dramatic change in his absence that it was unrecognisable.

Irishmen returned home to a dramatically changed Ireland, a people who had been militarised and politicised, a land where all had "changed and changed utterly" (Yeats 1989, 287)[10]. Some former British soldiers joined the survivors of the 1916 Rising in the ranks of the IRA[11] and went on to play a pivotal role in the war against Britain during the Irish War of Independence (McGreevy 2020a).

But then the most difficult commemoration of all – The Civil War. How would the fledgling Irish Republic mark the fiftieth anniversary of the unholy trinity of truce, treaty and civil war (Kissane 2005). Therein lay a twisted tragedy of interconnecting events; a chaotic period of savage and personalised bloodletting between former comrades that ended in vindictive stalemate. Some might argue that the Irish Civil War never did end. The battle lines remained intact, the conflict just moved from the rural heartlands and city street corners into the newly established Irish Free State parliament, where former comrades continued to face each other as enemies across the floor of Dáil Éireann, the lower house and principal chamber of the Irish government, and the vitriolic war of words and ideologies continued to rage day after day.

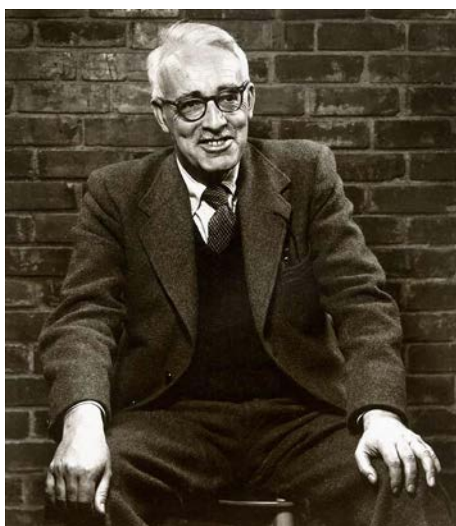

Fig. 3 – Frank O'Connor. Courtesy of the Author

My teenage years saw a heightened sense of nationalist fervour running rampant throughout the country. The scars of unresolved conflicts that had been festering for decades, were once again rising to the surface in a weeping open wound. And while the Republic of Ireland was struggling with the contradictions of the past, a few miles up the road, the North of Ireland was focused on resolving the complications of the present. North of the border had become a powder keg set to explode. News was filtering south of civil rights denied and the persecution

[10] "changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born" – is the iconic line from the poem, "Easter 1916", by W.B. Yeats.

[11] The IRA – Irish Republican Army. A paramilitary organisation, that has reinvented/regenerated itself on various occasions. It was first officially established in 1919 as a natural successor to the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858 to 1924). The IRA (1919), The Official IRA (1969-1972), The Provisional IRA (1969), The Continuity IRA (1986), The Real IRA (1997), etc.

of Catholics. The escalating sectarianism saw northern nationalists burnt from their homes and forced to flee to the South with nothing but the shirts on their backs. British troops were once again on the streets of Ireland. Catholics were manning the barricades of Free Derry Corner, the carnage of Bloody Sunday (McGlinchey 2019, 161)[12] and the willful murder of innocent civilians, shot down in the streets of Ballymurphy in Belfast by the 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment of the British Army (Hutton 2021), made a shocked international media sit up and take notice (McCann 2006, 4). This pressure cooker of rising tension set the scene for what some would view as the generational mandatory split in the ranks of militant nationalism (Turner 2002)[13]. The Official IRA stepped back into the shadows. Meanwhile, amid rumours of southern Irish government ministers actively gunrunning to the North (Heney 2020), the Provisional IRA were busy replacing the "pike in the thatch" (O'Toole 2012)[14] with an armalite (White 1993, 81).

In keeping with the sense of militant urgency of the times, The Dubliners[15] were belting out "The Merry Ploughboy"[16] with its simple unambiguous message that we should all pick up a gun and join the IRA. And though the song celebrated the IRA of a previous generation, it captured the mood in the country – a new day had dawned and regardless of what shade of green was recruiting beneath the tricolour, the IRA was the IRA. The song became an extremely popular street ballad that climbed to the top of the Irish music charts within days of its release and held that position for six weeks – and every child old enough to shoulder a hurley or a hockey stick joined in the chorus:

> We're off to join the IRA.
> And we're off tomorrow morn.
> Where the bayonets clash, and the rifles flash,
> to the echo of the Thompson gun.[17]

So, when I first stumbled upon "Guests Of The Nation" by Frank O'Connor in the pages of my "Exploring English I", Intermediate Certificate anthology, my imagination was fertile ground. This tale of reprisal and counter-reprisal held up a mirror to real-life events unfolding north and south of the border, right across the island of Ireland. I felt compelled to follow O'Connor's tale on a journey to the beating heart of Irish nationalism.

[12] Bloody Sunday (Bogside Massacre). On 30 January 1972 in Derry, British soldiers shot 26 civilians during a protest march. Fourteen people died: 13 were killed outright. The British soldiers were from the 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment – also implicated in the Ballymurphy Massacre on 11 August 1971.

[13] Renowned Irish writer, wit and IRA volunteer, Brendan Behan once described the tendency of militant republicanism to split with each new generation as the first item on any republican agenda is the split in the organisation following the previous meeting.

[14] "Pike in the Thatch" – is a metaphorical symbol of revolutionary readiness. Historically, in the aftermath of defeat, Irish rebels would hide their weapons (pikes) in the thatched roof of their cottages, to be used when the time comes for the next generation of Irish revolutionaries to step forward.

[15] The Dubliners – an Irish folk group who spear-headed the ballad singing era of the late 1960s-1970s.

[16] "The Merry Ploughboy", a hit single by Dermot O'Brien and the Clubmen in 1966. It reached the top of the Irish music charts in only seven days and held that position for six weeks in late 1966.

[17] The Dubliners, "The Merry Ploughboy", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR12Q4kcdqQ> (03/2021).

Fig. 4 – Sean Keating, *Men of The South* (1921-22) © Estate of Seán Keating, IVARO Dublin, 2021. Collection: Crawford Art Gallery, Cork

"Guests of the Nation" is an exploration of friendships, ideologies and divided loyalties – tested against the cold brutality of duty. Set against the spiralling violence of the Irish War of Independence, "Guests of the Nation" creates a world where history and story go hand in hand. Though often cited as a powerful anti-war story, it seemed to tap into the renewed nationalism that was taking root in 1970s Ireland. Maybe that's why the crisis of conscience explored in O'Connor's tragic anti-war story seemed to justify the extreme personalised bloodletting that occurs in a time of war, particularly in the context of a guerrilla war.

The story unfolds in a small, isolated hillside cottage where two young and inexperienced IRA volunteers (Noble and Bonaparte) are set with the task of guarding two captured British soldiers (Belcher and Hawkins). In a classic example of "The Stockholm Syndrome" (Westcott 2013)[18] a familiarity between captors and captives develops into a deep and profound friendship, a friendship enhanced by the maternal presence of the woman of the house. This amiable and comfortable dynamic is interrupted from time to time, when the IRA commander, Jeremiah O'Donovan, calls to the cottage to check up on his raw recruits and the hostages. But when Jeremiah O'Donovan eventually takes his leave and disappears off into the night, life in the homestead relaxes and returns to normal.

The blossoming friendship between friend and foe is typified by the constant banter between the young IRA volunteer Noble and the British soldier Hawkins, like two young bucks with their antlers locked in eternal conflict. Meanwhile, Belcher, the older more philosophical of the two British soldiers, steps comfortably into his role as man about the house, fetching water, chopping wood and generally making himself useful. Belcher quickly establishes a gentlemanly

[18] Stockholm Syndrome is a condition in which hostages develop a psychological bond with their captors during captivity.

and caring relationship with the woman of the house. This could well be interpreted as his personal desire for the domesticity of family life, particularly in light of his revelation later in the story that his own wife and child had abandoned him. The other young IRA volunteer, Bonaparte, is the narrator of this story. He is contemplative by nature and seems more mature than his comrade Noble. As the narrator of the piece, Bonaparte seems removed from the main action. His mind internalising and analysing the unfolding situation as he struggles to make sense of the camaraderie that develops between sworn enemies. Bonaparte's detachment is brought into sharp focus at the end of the story when he finds himself centre stage – his finger on the trigger, barrel of his gun pressed to Belcher's head.

The intensity of this ever-deepening bond between enemies is accentuated by the claustrophobic intimacy of the isolated setting. This is a friendship fuelled by late-night card playing and kindled with fiery discourse on such diverse topics as the merits of capitalism over socialism and the existence of God. Meanwhile, the woman of the house remains adamant that the Great War was caused by neither capitalism nor socialism – God, King nor Kaiser, but rather, she insists that the recent carnage in Europe during World War One was a direct result of, "the Italian Count that stole the heathen divinity out of a temple in Japan".

When I first read "Guests of the Nation", I was too young and politically naive to grasp the full implications of the complexity and competing loyalties explored in O'Connor's story. But the sheer pain and heartbreak when a friendship is tested by the demands of duty has resonated with me down through the years.

In 2003, as part of the national centenary celebrations of Frank O'Connor's birth, I was commissioned by RTÉ, the Irish National Broadcaster, to adapt "Guests of the Nation" for radio[19]. Thirty years had passed since I had first read the story, and I found myself revisiting and exploring O'Connor's work from the perspective of a writer rather than a reader – and there is a difference. Reading as a writer demands a more intense level of concentrated focus. It became a project of research as I found myself striving to get inside O'Connor's head in the hope that my adaptation would do justice not only to his storytelling and characterisations but also to his creative intent. And so, I set about deconstructing the story, every twist in the narrative was forensically examined, every character was held up to the light for scrutiny.

I was struck by the notion that this tale offered more than a nod of recognition to an earlier wave of guests to our nation, the Hiberno-Normans of the thirteenth century. Belcher and Hawkins, two soldiers of fortune, find themselves in enemy hands as hostages. Their surnames are British and alien – Frank O'Connor makes a very conscious decision that these two soldiers would not have names that might identify them as sons or grandsons of Ireland, for to do so would set in place a very different dynamic and exploration. The realisation that Belcher and Hawkins were not of Irish immigrant stock is subtle but significant. Similar to their Hiberno-Norman (Anglo-Irish) counterparts of the thirteenth century, Belcher and Hawkins very quickly began to show signs of becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves" (Ellis 1999). Unwittingly, they pay homage to pivotal moments in Irish history by learning the traditional dance steps such as "The Siege of Ennis" and the "Walls of Limerick". This detail is extremely noteworthy, as one of the early casualties of colonisation was the banning of Irish cultural practice including dance. The Statutes of Kilkenny (Foley 2017), passed into law in 1366, were specifically aimed at curtailing the behaviour of the Hiberno-Norman (Anglo-Irish) ruling class, who, after two hundred years in situ in Ireland, were perceived by the London administration

[19] Guests Of The Nation, this is the link to my radio play adaptation of O'Connor's short story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EjX3Vu6dfY&t=930s> (03/2021).

as being in danger of "going native". Such an assimilation of culture was perceived as dangerous, interpreted as a potential divided loyalty or a conflict of interest, if not, a direct threat to England whence they originally came.

The friendship between sworn enemies is quickly established in the story, but commitment to duty brings the loyalty of friendship into sharp focus. When the order arrives from a higher authority that the British hostages are to be shot in reprisal for the execution of IRA volunteers in Dublin – the cold wind of reality sweeps across the bog, and the fragile utopian dream of peace among all men dissipates.

Selecting a name is a seminal moment in the life cycle of every fictional character. I found myself examining the names of the characters in this story in an attempt to uncover why O'Connor had opted to choose a particular name for a specific character. I will take this opportunity to present a brief analysis of the names attached to the various characters in "Guests of the Nation" with a view to understanding and unlocking their significance within O'Connor's story.

1. A Brief Analysis of Character Names – "Guests of the Nation"

1.1 The Old Woman

The importance of the old woman in "Guests of the Nation" is often overlooked, maybe because O'Connor decided *not* to assign her character a name. Yet her presence looms large in the narrative. All the action unfolds in her cottage and on her land. The development of her very personal relationships with the IRA volunteers and the hostages, particularly Belcher and Jeremiah O'Donovan, acts as a barometer tracking the changing mood within the story. So, I wondered why O'Connor had actively decided not to name a character of such significant presence.

There are a number of aspects regarding the old woman that are worthy of consideration. Historically, guerrilla and revolutionary armies don't have the luxury of auxiliary resources such as barracks, canteens, hospitals, centres of recreation or prisons for incarceration at their disposal. They travel light, living off the land and the support of a non-combatant public is essential. Active service units appear as if out of nowhere from the general population and having carried out a specific duty they disappear back into the population. Consequently, a network of discrete support systems is the lifeblood of survival and ultimate success for a guerrilla army.

That sense of a network of public support is referred to in "Guests of the Nation", when Hawkins reveals that a brother of one of the girls (Mary Brigid O'Connell) had a pair of Noble's socks. We can gather from this, that Hawkins and Belcher met Mary Brigid O'Connell while they were held hostage by the 2nd Battalion – a different IRA unit. This presents that sense of IRA active service units travelling light through the countryside, stopping off at safe houses along the way, where they change into clean and dry clothes, eat a hot meal, sleep and then move on.

A safe house is by definition a secret place of sanctuary. Anonymity, security and isolation are the fundamental requirements of a safe house. In a hostage situation, as presented in "Guests of the Nation", when enemy prisoners are incarcerated in a safe house, it demands more secrecy, more security and a more long-term arrangement. In such a case, it is vital that the old woman is discrete, trustworthy and her loyalty to the cause must be unquestioning and unquestionable. Maybe it is precisely that sense of discretion and secrecy that O'Connor was implying when he decided not to reveal the name of the woman of the house – her name was on a need-to-know basis.

The old woman represents that section of society who support the cause, but for many and various reasons decide not to participate in the military action. She represents the sympathiser, the enabler, the facilitator – that highly valued non-participatory resource which is so essential to any guerrilla army in the field.

The old woman in this story is not politicised, she is not militarised. Her ill-informed analysis of World War One is revealing, particularly when she claims the war in Europe was caused by "the Italian Count that stole the heathen divinity out of a temple in Japan" (O'Connor 1931, 5). Yet despite her political naivety, she is wholeheartedly committed to the cause of independence and is without question willing to risk everything – her home, her land, her life by offering her cottage as a safe house to the IRA.

It is significant that O'Connor did not assign a name to the old woman. I believe she represents the faceless voice of Irish nationalism – that section of society who, for generations, have always had a deeply engrained loyalty to the cause of liberty, yet are not actively involved in the conflict. She represents that anonymous section of the population who offer crucial support to a guerrilla army in the field, yet whose names are seldom engraved on monuments or recorded in the history books.

1.2 Jeremiah O'Donovan

Jeremiah O'Donovan is a gruff, uncompromising and seasoned IRA veteran. He is the officer in command of the younger IRA volunteers (Noble and Bonaparte). Clearly, Noble and Bonaparte are raw recruits. The task of guarding the hostages could very well be their first experience of active duty. Jeremiah O'Donovan spends most of his time barking out orders as he attempts to knock the young volunteers into shape.

Jeremiah O'Donovan is a dark character, with little time for small talk. He arrives without warning and leaves at short notice. His bitterness towards the British is extremely deep-rooted and unwavering. It is significant that the two young volunteers find it challenging to comprehend Jeremiah's coldness when it comes to the actual deed of executing the hostages.

O'Connor's choice of the name Jeremiah O'Donovan is a direct evocation of the Fenian leader, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. The Fenians, also known as The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), were hardcore militants who had survived the previous failed Irish Rebellion of the late 1800s. The Fenians (IRB) were the nucleus of militant nationalism during the early 1900s – a strictly secretive inner circle and driving force behind the 1916 Rising. They were the leaders, the planners and above all, they were responsible for "blooding" and bringing on the next generation of young militant nationalists (Dorney 2017).

One Fenian in particular stands head and shoulders above all the rest, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. His funeral was staged as a showcase of support – a call to arms for the many and various strands of Irish nationalism at home and abroad (McGreevy 2015). When Patrick Pearse gave his oration at Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's graveside (Hull) to a mass gathering of as many as 10,000 fully armed paramilitary Irish Volunteers (Roche 2015), the authorities were left in no doubt that a rising was imminent.

There is no ambiguity in O'Connor's use of the name Jeremiah O'Donovan, the character in the story is an old Fenian (IRB). His role is to focus the minds of the young recruits. Instructing them to carry out the execution is the defining test he will set them.

Within the context of the story, Jeremiah O'Donovan could have quite simply executed the two British soldiers himself, but his insistence that the hostages should be executed by the two young IRA volunteers is clearly a test of their willingness to kill in cold blood, and an exercise in blooding the next generation. This is precisely the significance of O'Connor's reference to

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa – a figure who keeps the flame of insurrection burning long enough to influence the next generation of militant nationalists.

1.3 Feeney

Feeney's presence in the narrative is intriguing. As a character he seems totally insignificant and superfluous. He is often neglected, written-off or ignored as a non-character in this story. Feeney's only appearance is on the fringes of the final scene. He does not speak. There is no sense of his physical appearance. He is always lurking in the shadows. He does not enter the light of the house. The reader is offered no glimpse of the physical features or the character of Feeney.

But if Jeremiah O'Donovan represents Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and the Fenian (IRB) influence on militant nationalism – then the case could be made that the illusive Feeney may be the most influential character of all. As his name suggests, Feeney could well be interpreted as the anglicisation of Na Fíníní, the Irish language word for The Fenians. The name Feeney also echoes the mythical Irish warrior class Na Fianna, and of course, Fianna Éireann, the Irish nationalist youth organisation established in 1909, most of whom went on to form the core of the Irish Volunteers during the 1916 Rising (Hay 2019).

We are told that Feeney is an "intelligence officer" which would place him as senior to Jeremiah O'Donovan in the chain of command. In the darkness of the bog, on the night of the execution – could it be that the silent Feeney, lurking in the shadows, is the judge and presiding senior officer in command. Is he present not only to ensure the executions are carried out in a correct and due military fashion, but also to appraise the actions and suitability of the young IRA volunteers (Noble and Bonaparte) for future duties.

Feeney's presence at the end of the story brings a great sense of menace and immediacy to the moment of execution. We can hear the urgency in Jeremiah O'Donovan's voice when he orders Noble to shoot Hawkins. We can feel his frustration, when Noble refuses to carry out his duty. Could it be that Jeremiah's leadership ability is also the subject of appraisal by Feeney?

One might question the validity of including a character who does not speak, a character who remains concealed in the shadows. But it is a testament to O'Connor's literary brilliance that this unseen character, who lives in the shadows, offers such contextual depth and historical detail to the narrative, bringing a heightened reality to the core cast of characters who inhabit the spotlight.

1.4 Belcher

Belcher is the older, mild mannered and courteous British hostage. Curiously, his name seems at odds with his character. Belcher's personality is the very antithesis to the ill-mannered crudeness his name suggests. Described as a "gentleman" by the woman of the house, Belcher is presented as a philosophical man, a calming influence on the younger IRA volunteers and the argumentative Hawkins.

Belcher has lived a full life and seems comfortable with his own mortality – at ease with his impending fate. Belcher goes to his death with a certain resolve and detachment. It is significant that in his final words before execution he makes the point that he does not blame the volunteers who are about to carry out the deed, referring to them as "good lads", adding that he never quite understood the notion of duty.

1.5 Hawkins

Hawkins is the younger of the two British hostages. He is impetuous and argumentative and provides a perfect foil for Noble's character. Hawkins declares himself to be a communist and an atheist, and tends to be hawkish, combative and independent by nature. He represents the new generation who believe the next war to end all wars will not be nation versus nation, but rather it will be a clash of ideologies – the struggle between capitalism and socialism. Hawkins is not particularly committed to the British Army. He says that he would willingly desert (Ó Ruairc 2011)[20] and join his newfound comrades (Noble and Bonaparte) in their fight for Irish independence. This is not necessarily just a ploy to save himself from execution, he genuinely considers the two young IRA volunteers as friends. It is apparent that he has found a kindred spirit in Noble, and there is a strong sense that he has misgivings about his role as a British soldier in Ireland.

1.6 Bonaparte

Bonaparte narrates "Guests Of The Nation". The story unfolds as a retrospective personal retelling of Bonaparte's involvement in a traumatic and tragic event during the Irish War of Independence. Bonaparte's character undergoes a dramatic shift, particularly in the context of his role in the execution of the two British soldiers, an event which ultimately had a profound effect on his life.

I believe his name, Bonaparte, was most likely a nickname given to him by his fellow IRA volunteer recruits – possibly a name he earned while participating in training camps. The implication being that he was viewed by his peers as a little Napoleon – gung-ho in training, a volunteer who had wholeheartedly embraced the demands and challenges of guerrilla warfare, a young volunteer who craved action and the cut and thrust of battle, an enthusiastic volunteer who would carry out orders.

This is significant, because while the other young volunteer (Noble) is unable to shoot the hostages, Bonaparte steps up to the mark when duty calls. He has the steeliness that is required to pull the trigger and ultimately kill the hostage. Through this action, Bonaparte sets himself apart from Noble. Bonaparte has been "blooded". The inferred narrative is that he will go on to become an active and full-blooded militant nationalist in the IRA.

Bonaparte's statement at the end of the story – "and anything that happened to me afterwards, I never felt the same about again" (Martin 1967 [2011], 86) – is often interpreted as an expression of his revulsion for the bloodletting of war. But alternatively, it seems to me, that having taken the step to actually kill a British soldier in cold blood, there was no going back. His life and his commitment to the cause had risen to a higher level. Unlike Noble, who was unable to execute Hawkins, when Bonaparte pulled the trigger and killed the hostage, he learned something new about himself. Maybe that's why he "never felt the same about" anything that happened after that.

[20] Commenting on British Soldiers deserting in Ireland, William McNamara 1st Batt. Mid Clare Brigade IRA said, "They were a decent body of men and the vast majority of them did not relish the particular class of soldering at which they were employed in Ireland. On pay nights, when a good number of them got a bit tipsy, they could be heard in the pubs in Ennis singing Irish rebel and Sinn Féin songs" (Bureau of Military History 1951).

"Guests of the Nation" unfolds during the final months of the War of Independence, obviously the characters in the story do not have the gift of foresight and are not aware that, within a year, following the disputed terms of the treaty with the British, Ireland would erupt into full-blown civil war (Kissane 2005).

The terms of the treaty between Ireland and England included partitioning the island of Ireland. Six counties of Ulster became known as Northern Ireland and remained within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. The treaty not only divided the island of Ireland, it also effectively split the IRA in two – Republicans and Free Staters. The Republican side vowing to continue the war against England to the bitter end, in an attempt to achieve an all-Ireland Republic. The Free State side opted to agree with the terms of the Treaty. This led to the inevitable clash between former comrades-in-arms, and so began the Irish Civil War (Clarke, Litton 2008).

Frank O'Connor identifies two individual and opposing personality traits in the young IRA volunteers, Noble and Bonaparte. When duty calls Bonaparte, is able to pull a trigger and kill. Noble on the other hand, is unable to kill. It is speculation on my part, but the character profile of Bonaparte, not least his ability to kill, leads me to believe that Bonaparte will align himself with the IRA hardliners and will continue the fight with the Republican side during the Civil War.

1.7 Noble

Noble is a young, hot-headed and argumentative IRA volunteer. Despite his characteristic bluff and bluster, it becomes apparent at the end of the story that the order to execute the two British soldiers was a test set by his commanding officer Jeremiah O'Donovan, and Noble failed in his duty to carry out the order to kill. Noble would not have been aware that, within months of the Irish War of Independence, a civil war would sweep the land. It would be a brutal conflict of bloodletting between former comrades and once again, Noble and Bonaparte's sense of loyalty and duty would be tested. Judging by Noble's character, it seems to me that he would support the peace terms of the treaty as negotiated by Michael Collins (Hopkinson 2004), and most likely would go on to become a supporter of the Free State rather than a Republican. Frank O'Connor deftly plants this subtle signpost to the future diverging lives of the two raw recruits. There is a sense that within a short time Noble might find himself fighting against his former comrade Bonaparte on the opposing side of the Irish Civil War.

O'Connor's choice of the name Noble for this character is intriguing. Noble is argumentative, impulsive and hot-headed by nature. The name seems at odds with the character as presented in the story, although beneath his combative exterior is a mild, considered and emotional soul. Noble's quarrelsome exterior leads me to believe his character is more brittle than hard.

When I first read this story over forty years ago, I was baffled by O'Connor's choice of such an obscure character name. It was a name that stood out. I had never come across the name Noble in Cork, or anywhere else for that matter – except in the pages of Frank O'Connor's story "Guest Of The Nation". In the course of my research, I found myself in the Cork City Archives thumbing through dusty old Irish Volunteer application forms from 1913. There, among that stack of maybe 2,000 documents, I was surprised to come across a young volunteer by the name of Noble Johnson. On closer inspection, I was amazed to find that this volunteer's address was – 11, Devonshire Street. Cork.

Leanfam go dlúṫ do ċlú ár sinnsir.

Company .... No. 775

Óglaiġ na hÉireann — **Irish Volunteers.**

I, the undersigned, desire to be enrolled in the Irish Volunteers, formed to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland without distinction of creed, class, or politics.

Name ... Noble Johnson ...

Address ... [illegible] ...

Date ... April 2 1914 ...

Corcoran, Printer, 21, Sullivan's Quay, Cork.

Fig. 5 – Irish Volunteer: Noble Johnson. Courtesy of the Author

I live on Devonshire Street – 1, Devonshire Street to be precise. My family has traded on Devonshire Street for over a century. I knew instinctively that number eleven at the end of our street is now, was then and always has been Pa Johnson's Pub. Considering our two families have lived and traded on this street spanning a time frame that straddles three centuries and two millennia – it might be interesting to point out that generations of Creedons have stood at Johnson's bar counter, just as generations of Johnsons have stood at Creedon's shop counter.

So, in the interests of research, I visited Pa Johnson's pub, where my neighbour Barry Johnson is the current licensee. And having called a pint of Murphy's, I enquired as to how vigorously I would have to shake his family tree for a Noble Johnson to fall out of its branches. Barry smiled, and he informed me that his grandfather, uncle and older brother were all named Noble. This kernel of information came as a great surprise to me. Noble was a name I had never known except as a character in "Guests of the Nation", and there I was in my neighbour Barry Johnson's pub, hearing for the first time about three individuals named Noble – all of whom had lived on my street.

I wondered whether it was possible that the character Noble in "Guests of the Nation" was inspired by my neighbour, Barry Johnson's grandfather. Frank O'Connor and Noble Johnson would have certainly known each other. Cork was a lot smaller back at the turn of the last century, the population and city boundary was only a fraction of what it is currently. Noble Johnson and Frank O'Connor were both members of the (Cork) Irish Volunteers. Both were from the Northside of the city. Johnson's pub was then and continues to be, a very well known, if not a landmark drinking establishment in the city.

For me, the process of adapting Frank O'Connor's short story could never be merely a matter of joining the narrative dots. Adaptation of another writer's work required that I find an emotional if not personal connection to the original. I like to think that there is a possibil-

ity of a connection between the character Noble the Republican in the story and Noble the publican on my street.

And so, before I put pen to paper, I broadened my research.

2. Art Imitates Life

In that twilight zone where art imitates life, there are many recorded incidents of hostage taking by the IRA during the Irish War of Independence.

Frank O'Connor, a former member of the Irish Volunteers (IRA), would have been familiar with the numerous tales involving British hostages that were circulating at that time. Such incidents became headline international news, with daily updates reported in the press, including the publication of extracts of highly personal and emotional love letters between hostages and their loved ones at home[21].

Attempting to pinpoint the precise source of a writer's inspiration is near impossible, but tales of kidnapped British soldiers were very much part of the zeitgeist at that time. And of course, O'Connor's story would have brought its own influence and inspiration to bear on the work of future generations of writers – *The Hostage* and *An Giall* (1958) by Brendan Behan and Neil Jordan's film *The Crying Game* (1992) tackle similar themes and focus on the potential tragic outcome when friendships are formed between sworn enemies – specifically, in the context of British soldiers taken hostage by the IRA.

Certain aspects of the various hostage-taking situations display a great degree of similarity, such as anecdotal stories of captives being moved from safe house to safe house, and the custody of prisoners being handed from one IRA unit to another. Letter writing between captives and their loved ones became another common feature – and numerous accounts of socialising between captives and captors, including card playing, sing-songs and dancing – which inevitably brought about the complicating dilemma of friendships formed between enemies during wartime.

The kidnapping of Brigadier-General Cuthbert Lucas stands out as one of the more bizarre accounts. Brigadier-General Lucas was Officer in Command of the 16th Infantry Brigade, stationed at Fermoy Barracks in East Cork. He holds the dubious honour of being the most senior-ranking British army officer taken captive by the IRA (McGreevy 2020b).

Liam Lynch of the East Cork 2nd Battalion IRA devised a plan to capture a high-ranking British officer with a view to holding him hostage in exchange for IRA prisoners who were facing execution at Victoria Barracks in Cork City (Ryan 2012). The opportunity to put the plan into action arose on 26 June 1920, when Brigadier-General Lucas, Colonel Danford of the Royal Artillery and Colonel Tyrrell of the Royal Engineers were spotted fly fishing on the River Bride near the town of Fermoy in East Cork. Word was relayed back to Liam Lynch, who made his move, and a plan was hastily put into action.

[21] An indication of the international media/press interest in the Major Compton Smith story, full details of the kidnapping, incarceration and execution of Major Compton Smith, including transcripts of letters sent to his wife, his regiment, and the House of Commons debate feature in the Christchurch, New Zealand newspaper – *The Star*, Tuesday (18/05/26). <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/imageserver/newspapers/P29pZD1UUzE5MjYwNTE4LjEuNiZnZXRwZGY9dHJ1ZQ==> (03/2021).

Fig. 6 – A fascinating photograph of Brigadier-General Lucas (seated centre) during his captivity. Seen here in the company of his captors: Paddy Brennan, Michael Brennan, James Brennan and Joe Keane of the East Clare Brigade IRA. Brigadier-General Lucas wearing the suit bought for him by his captors in Ennis Co. Clare. The photograph beautifully captures the recreational and comfortable atmosphere that existed between friend and foe. Note: Commandant Michael Brennan of the East Clare Brigade IRA (second from left) with revolver in trousers belt. Courtesy of Cork Public Museum

A unit of East Cork 2nd Battalion IRA made their way to the riverbank and took the three British officers captive at gunpoint. The hostages were transported from the scene in two waiting cars (API Parliament, UK- HANSARD 1803–2005, 28 June 1920). But the abduction was not without incident. Colonel Danford and Colonel Lucas, who were travelling in the second getaway car, made an attempt to escape. In a botched effort at overpowering the driver, a fight broke out causing the car to career off the road and crash. The fist fight which began inside the moving vehicle spilled out onto the road and erupted in a full-scale brawl between the IRA volunteers and the British army officers. The lead car carrying Colonel Tyrrell returned to the scene of the skirmish to find Colonel Danford had broken free and had made a run for freedom. Order was only restored when two gunshots rang out and Colonel Danford fell to the road wounded. Liam Lynch decided that Colonel Tyrrell would be left behind to care for Colonel Danford, and the IRA hightailed it with their prized possession, Brigadier-General Lucas (Murphy 2020a).

When news of the kidnapping reached Fermoy Barracks, a massive manhunt was mounted right across the Province of Munster. Two nights later the East Kent Regiment ransacked and looted the nearby town of Fermoy in reprisal for the kidnapping of the Brigadier-General. *The New York Times* reported on 28 June 1920,

> Barracks and camp were immediately alarmed and all soldiers turned out of bed. Soldiers of an artillery battery mounted their horses and numerous parties of fully equipped troops in motor cars, scoured the country for miles around all day and all night. But the general had vanished completely. (Carroll 2010, 50)

And so began an intriguing and highly dangerous game of cat and mouse as Brigadier-General Lucas was moved from safe house to safe house through North Cork, Limerick, Tipperary and Clare – always one step ahead of the British authorities.

A peculiar aspect of Lucas' time in captivity was his insistence that he should receive a bottle of whiskey every day. As an officer this was his statutory prisoner-of-war allowance. His request was duly honoured. The whiskey intensified the social aspect of his incarceration. As one would expect, friendships developed – as related by Jack Hogan of the Shannon Social History Project,

> He [Brigadier-General Lucas] was a very affable sort of man who was easy to get on with. They played cards with him. He was particularly good at poker. He also played bridge and they taught him to play Forty-fives. He also liked his whiskey and had plenty of help drinking it. He was particularly good at poker. The trouble was that they couldn't keep him. He used to drink a bottle of whiskey every day and he cleaned them out at poker. (Hogan 2011)

Shortly after Lucas was taken hostage, his wife, Poppy Lucas, gave birth to their first child. He was granted permission by the IRA on compassionate grounds to write home to his wife. In due course, Poppy replied to her husband, she simply addressed her letters to: General Lucas, c/o THE IRA. Ireland (McGreevy 2020b). There followed a relay of letters between Lucas and his wife which are currently held in the Lucas Family Archive. Their correspondence makes for fascinating reading. They contain many references to how well he was treated by the IRA, including accounts of playing croquet and tennis, games of cards that stretched late into the night, fishing expeditions on the River Shannon and days spent helping farmers in the fields "to save the hay" (Murphy 2020b).

There were a number of farcical escapades during his incarceration, including a shopping trip into Ennis, Co. Clare to buy clothes for the Brigadier-General who was still in his fishing attire since his abduction. There's also the amusing anecdotal tale of Brigadier-General Lucas and his IRA captors salmon poaching on the River Shannon in Co. Limerick. Seemingly, Lucas expressed concern that they might be caught fishing illegally by the river bailiffs. His concerns were laid to rest when he was reassured that the IRA volunteer rowing the boat was in fact the local river bailiff (Brennan 2012).

Lucas was held hostage for over a month, but the IRA became frustrated due to the British lack of interest in facilitating a prisoner exchange. The incarceration of Lucas was costing the IRA heavily in manpower and resources. It has been suggested that Lucas' skilful card playing and his capacity for the consumption of alcohol may have played a part in the IRA's decision to release him unharmed. Eventually, on 30 July, Commandant Michael Brennan of the East Clare Brigade IRA decided that Lucas would be allowed to escape (Brennan 1980).

Brigadier-General Lucas' release by the IRA was not the end of the story. It is on record that he made his way on foot to the RIC barracks in the nearby village of Pallas Green, Co. Limerick. There he had a bath and a change of clothes. He then wrapped the clothes he had been wearing and instructed that they be posted. The parcel eventually reached the IRA in East Cork with a note attached that simply read:

> To the Sinn Feiners, or to the IRA, with compliments of General Lucas. (Murphy 2020b)

Another extraordinary episode unfolded as General Lucas was on his journey home to Fermoy Barracks in Co. Cork from Pallas Green, Co. Limerick. By pure chance, that very same day, the 3rd Tipperary Brigade IRA under Sean Tracy had planned to ambush the mail convoy, unaware that Lucas, released a day earlier by the East Clare Brigade IRA, was on board.

The convoy rolled into the IRA ambush near Oola in Co. Tipperary. An intense firefight ensued and within a short time, two British soldiers lay dead on the road and three others were wounded. When the gunfire ceased and the smoke cleared, it was found that General Lucas had survived the attack – once again, the fickle finger of fate intervened and deemed that Lucky Lucas would live to tell the tale.

The IRA failed to secure a prisoner exchange with the British authorities, but the kidnapping of such a high-ranking officer and their efficiency in concealing his whereabouts across a number of counties was a great morale boost for the Irish Volunteers. The kidnapping made international news headlines – it was reported that the then Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill was "purple with rage" (McGreevy 2020b). Meanwhile, a satirical street ballad, "Where Did General Lucas Go?", aimed at taunting British soldiers, became popular around the towns and villages of North Cork. But most significantly, at a time when the British authorities were actively portraying the Irish Volunteers as murder gangs and indiscriminate killers, General Lucas' accounts of the friendships he had formed during his captivity became a source of embarrassment. In particular, on Tuesday 29 June 1920, the *Irish Bulletin* published an extract from a letter to his wife, in which Lucas stated that his captors were "delightful people", and he went on to say, "I was treated as a gentleman by gentlemen". Lucas reaffirmed these sentiments when he got back to Fermoy Barracks. He addressed his troops and admonished those who had committed outrages and atrocities in retaliation for his abduction – insisting that the troops under his command had shown "an overzealous display".

The kidnapping of Brigadier-General Lucas had an air of an Ealing Comedy slapstick adventure, but the same cannot be said for all such incidents. There are a number of recorded examples of strong bonds of friendship formed between friend and foe that came to a profoundly tragic end when duty called, and the inevitability of execution had to be carried out.

During the course of my research, the kidnapping of another senior British officer, Major Geoffrey Lee Compton Smith, attracted my attention. Not only because of the striking similarities to the narrative of "Guests of the Nation", but Major Compton Smith had been held captive in Donoughmore, Co. Cork – the birthplace of Frank O'Connor's mother. O'Connor had many happy childhood memories of visits to extended family in Donoughmore – it is noteworthy that he adopted his mother's family name (O'Connor) as his pen name in favour of his paternal surname (O'Donovan; Ní Shíocháin 2018).

The fictional tale explored in "Guests of the Nation" presents many close similarities to the true story of Major Compton Smith, who was taken hostage by the IRA and held in exchange for the release of four IRA volunteers facing execution in Victoria Barracks, Cork. Considering Frank O'Connor's family connections to the locality of Donoughmore and his membership of the Irish Volunteers, it is highly probable that O'Connor would have been very familiar with the key individuals and locations associated with the tragic events surrounding this particular kidnapping.

It was reported at the time that Major Compton Smith had been on a landscape painting excursion to Blarney on the outskirts of Cork City when an IRA unit chanced upon him. In an interview published by *The Cork Examiner* on 4 June 1921, Compton Smith's wife, Gladys, picks up the story:

> Sketching was a favourite amusement of my husband, and he had gone to Blarney, presumably to sketch the castle, when he fell into the hands of the Sinn Feiners. I received a letter from him written the next day, in which he said, – while away sketching yesterday I had the misfortune to get held up by

the IRA. I am now a prisoner but being very well treated. I have no doubt I shall get out of this scrape as I have got out of others. There is nothing to worry about.[22]

But the painting excursion theory is unconvincing. It seems highly unlikely that a senior British Army Intelligence Officer would be ambling around the countryside painting landscapes in a known IRA stronghold at a time when the War of Independence was at its height and raging out of control. The previous six months had seen a sharp escalation in IRA unilateral attacks on British army personnel. General Strickland, Officer in Command of the Southern Division at Victoria Barracks in Cork, had issued strict guidelines regarding the security of senior staff and officers.

Local lore in Donoughmore has it that Major Compton Smith had been lured to Blarney Station in a honey-trap to meet a nurse. This assertion was given some credence when Sir Harmood-Banner stated in The British House of Commons,

> Major Compton Smith left his home in mufti [civilian clothing] to meet the monthly nurse. (API Parliament UK – HANSARD 1803-2005, 23 June 1921)

But Compton Smith's reason for being in Blarney that day was irrelevant, be it his love of art or an affair of the heart. We now know that no nurse was waiting on the platform when the Major stepped from the train. Instead, he was greeted by an active service unit of the local IRA under Frank Busteed and was taken prisoner. Major General Strickland, Officer in Command of Victoria Barracks, Cork, was subsequently contacted and informed that Compton Smith would be released unharmed in exchange for four IRA prisoners who were due to be executed on 28 April 1921. And so began the deeply moving story of Major Compton Smith's captivity.

Some years ago, I and two friends of mine, John Borgonovo and Dan Breen, were invited by the descendants of the IRA volunteers involved in the kidnapping of Major Compton Smith to visit the key locations where he had been held hostage.

We were met at the railway station in the village of Blarney, just as Compton Smith had been met by Frank Busteed and his IRA unit that fateful day back on 16 April 1921. We travelled in convoy along a maze of disorientating back roads and boreens, our driver pointing out significant locations along the way; stopping off at various ambush sites and a string of safe houses that had held Compton Smith. He shared details of another more controversial event: the kidnapping and execution of Mrs. Lindsay and her chauffeur, Mr. James Clarke (Gordon 2015) – which, incidentally, had also been carried out by the local IRA under the command of Frank Busteed just a short few weeks prior to the taking of Major Compton Smith. We were also told the fascinating story of a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost armoured car, known locally as the Moon Car, an IRA war machine of mythical status. We were brought to the farmyard where the Moon Car had been buried after the Free State Government put a bounty of £10,000 for information leading to its whereabouts (National Museum of Ireland). It struck me that every twist and turn of the road through this beautiful tranquil, green and leafy countryside had a story to tell of a violent and bloody past.

[22] As a measure of the international interest in Major Compton Smith story, full details of the kidnapping, incarseration and execution of Major Compton Smith, including letters sent to his wife, his regiment, and the House of Commons debate feature in the Christchurch, New Zealand newspaper – *The Star*, Tuesday (18 May 26). This is an extract of a letter sent by Major Compton Smith to his wife Gladys as reported in this article. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/imageserver/newspapers/P29pZD1UUzE5MjYwNTE4LjEuNiZnZXRwZGY9dHJ1ZQ==> (03/2021).

Fig. 7 – The Cottage in Donoughamore where Major Compton Smith was held hostage before his execution by the IRA. Courtesy of Denise Sheehan

Eventually we reached our destination – a sidetrack at a bend on the road. There we parked the cars, the remainder of the journey was made on foot, along a hillside track to the isolated cottage where Major Compton Smith spent his final days.

The rain was driving hard, so we took shelter in the derelict cottage. Lightning flashed and thunder crashed, as if nature had presented us with a magnificent theatrical backdrop for that most evocative of days. Standing there looking out across the valley, there was talk of the people of Donoughmore and Major Compton Smith. The conversation was peppered with memories that had been handed down through the various families from generation to generation. Gradually, the story emerged of how a series of catastrophic events in another part of the county had led to the kidnapping of Major Compton Smith.

In February 1921 an IRA ambush in Mourne Abbey near Mallow, Co. Cork went badly wrong. Four volunteers died as a result of the incident and several were taken prisoner. Two of the prisoners, Patrick Ronayne and Thomas Mulcahy, were court-martialled and sentenced to death. The executions were to take place on 28 April 1921. Then a few days later another IRA flying column found themselves surrounded in a farmhouse near Clonmult in East Cork. There are a number of accounts of what happened at Clonmult – but the only certainty is that twelve volunteers were shot dead, and a number were taken prisoner – Maurice Moore and Patrick O'Sullivan were court-marshalled and scheduled to be executed on 28 April 1921. The IRA decided they would take a senior British Officer hostage to be held in exchange for the release of the four volunteers facing execution. Major Compton Smith was that hostage, and so the waiting game began.

In an interview on *The Cork Examiner* on 4 June 1921, Gladys Compton Smith quoted from another letter she had received from her husband which highlights the social and informal nature of his incarceration:

> I am still going strong and write this lying on a heap of hay in a barn. It has been most interesting to compare notes with the Sinn Féiners. Last night I had a discussion with a lot of them representing different ranks, and rebels with various grades of education were sitting round the cottage fire. I was single-handed among many. Some of them were very bitter against us, but they treated me most fairly. The night ended up with a song in which I joined in most heartily. (*The Star* 1926)[23]

It becomes apparent that, similar to Frank O'Connor's short story, a deep friendship and mutual respect developed between Major Compton Smith and his captors, the deepening relationship is highlighted in a letter to his regiment written shortly before he was executed:

> I intend to die like a Welch Fusilier with a laugh and with forgiveness for those who are carrying out this deed. I should like my death to lessen rather than increase the bitterness which exists between England and Ireland. I have been treated with great kindness, and during my captivity have learned to regard the Sinn Feiners rather as mistaken idealists than as a murder gang. (O'Halpin, Ó Corráin 2020, 398-399)

Once again, the heightened emotion of the time becomes evident in what has become known as the "shot in an hour's time" letter, which Major Compton Smith wrote to his wife, Gladys. In it, as a dying wish, he asks that his watch be given to the IRA volunteer charged with the duty of carrying out his execution – he goes so far as to describe his executioner as a gentleman:

> Dearest,
> your hubby will die with your name on his lips, your face before his eyes, and he will die like an Englishman and a Soldier. I cannot tell you sweetheart how much it is to me to leave you alone – nor how little to me personally to die – I have no fear, only the utmost, greatest and tenderest love to you, and my sweet little Anne. I leave my cigarette case to the Regiment, my miniature medals to my father – whom I have implored to befriend you in everything – and my watch to the officer who is executing me because I believe him to be a gentleman and to mark the fact that I bear him no malice for carrying out what he sincerely believes to be his duty. Goodbye, my darling, my own. Tender, tender farewells and kisses.
> Your own, Geoff. (Kenefick 2011)[24]

Of course, Compton Smith would not have been aware that his alleged meeting with the monthly nurse at Blarney Station had been discussed in the British parliament and the details were reported in the British Press – his intended liaison with the nurse would have been a source of great public humiliation for his wife and family.

[23] As a measure of the international interest in Major Compton Smith story, full details of the kidnapping, incarceration and execution of Major Compton Smith, including letters sent to his wife, his regiment, and the House of Commons debate feature in the Christchurch, New Zealand newspaper – *The Star* (18/05/26). This is an extract of a letter sent by Major Compton Smith to his wife Gladys as reported in this article. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/imageserver/newspapers/P29pZD1UUzE5MjYwNTE4LjEuNiZnZXRwZGY9dHJ1ZQ==> (03/2021).

[24] This final letter between Major Compton Smith and his wife Gladys, was given the name "Shot In An Hour's Time" by Sir Harmood-Banner, when he read the full transcript of the letter to the House of Commons (01/06/1921). The emotional content of the letter was immediately siezed upon by the internationl media, propelling the story of Major Compton Smith's kidnapping and execution onto the world stage. See <https://historicgraves.com/story/major-geoffrey-lee-compton-smith>.

The rain stopped, the wind eased, and with the lull in the weather our guides decided to take the opportunity to lead us up the hillside to the place of Major Compton Smith's execution. As we made our way along the track there was talk of mundane but no less important matters: the land, the weather, sheep and cattle. It occurred to me that not a lot had changed around Donoughmore since the time Compton Smith came and lived among these people. The land continued to be farmed by generations of the same families – back as far as anyone cared to remember. This landscape had been shaped by the people, just as much as the people had been shaped by the landscape. These were not a professionally trained military machine, they had little by way of weaponry or resources. For generations, they had eked out a living on small holdings. They ploughed and they harvested – for not to do so would have meant that they and their families would most certainly starve. First and foremost, the people of Donoughmore were farmers. Clearly, they had been willing to fight and die for the cause of Irish Independence. And just like so many other villages, parishes and townlands across the land, the people of Donoughmore had stood up to one of the most powerful warlike nations on the planet – and surprisingly, they were victorious.

I wondered if Major Compton Smith had made similar observations during his time in Donoughmore. He had recently returned from the mindless human carnage and destruction of World War One, it must have been a surreal experience to be held captive in an isolated Irish rural townland such as Donoughmore where the main activity of any particular day would be centred around domestic pursuits: milking cattle, feeding chickens, baking bread. To find himself sitting at a farmhouse kitchen table sharing meals with a family, playing cards, singing songs – living as a guest of the enemy. This country cottage was a busy hub in a rebel stronghold: the sound of children playing, cattle lowing, cats and their kittens lapping up saucers of milk, the sheep dog barking and putting the run on the phantoms of the night and the beady-eyed chickens pecking at the window. In his letters to his wife, Major Compton Smith refers to the social gatherings at the fireside, the comings and goings of gunmen to the house, "a lot of them representing different ranks, and rebels with various grades of education were sitting round the cottage fire". The Major must have reevaluated his indoctrination about the Sinn Féiners and questioned their portrayal as bloodthirsty murder gangs. Did he conclude that his hosts, these hillside farmers were just ordinary people caught up in the events of extraordinary times?

When we finally reached the place where Major Compton Smith was shot, the conversation turned to the events that led to his execution. There was a general sense of seething anger at the "800 years of oppression" that had been inflicted on the people of Ireland by the English, but a particular fury was reserved for the British authorities whose inaction during the Spring of 1921, had placed the local people in an impossible moral dilemma − faced with no alternative but to execute this enemy who had become a friend. It was suggested by one of our party that – if the British had only met them halfway and commuted the death sentence of the four Irish Volunteers to life imprisonment, Compton Smith would have been released. But the British were not for turning. Major Compton Smith's fate was sealed on 28 April 1921, when Patrick Ronayne, Thomas Mulcahy, Maurice Moore and Patrick O'Sullivan were executed at Victoria Barracks in Cork City. Two days later Compton Smith was taken to the very spot where we were standing in that lonely bog on a hillside near Donoughmore – he died by a single bullet to the head.

The details of his execution are recorded in the Bureau of Military History Witness Statement by Maurice Brew:

> When removed to the place of execution, he placed his cigarette case in his breast pocket of his tunic and asked that after his death it should be sent to his regiment. He then lighted a cigarette and

said that when he dropped the cigarette, it could be taken as a signal by the execution squad to open fire. (BHM 1951)

Before we departed, our guide stepped forward and spoke of the respect and friendship that had been forged between Compton Smith and the local people of Donoughmore. Like an echo from the past, the emotions and feelings had survived through the generations right to the present day. We were reminded that 1920-1921 was a time of war. A list of atrocities that occurred throughout the centuries of abuse, poverty, starvation and death during the eight hundred years of English occupation were recalled like steppingstones through time. Then, following a moment of reflection, he proceeded to recite a decade of the Rosary "as Gaeilge"[25] – for the repose of the souls of Major Compton Smith and the executed IRA volunteers: Patrick Ronayne, Thomas Mulcahy, Maurice Moore and Patrick O'Sullivan.

In 1921, Michael Collins (Coogan 2015)[26] made several attempts on behalf of Compton Smith's family to find, exhume and repatriate his remains to England. But the horrors of the Irish War of Independence had been overtaken by the more poignant and personalised blood-letting of the Irish Civil War. With former comrades taking up arms against each other, the country was once again plunged into turmoil. Major Compton Smith's body laid buried in an IRA stronghold, making it next to impossible for the Irish Free State authorities to retrieve his remains.

In his correspondence with Gladys, the wife of Major Compton Smith, Michael Collins outlined the difficulties he faced in locating her husband's remains:

Dear Madam,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 21st April.

You will understand that in the present circumstances here in Ireland, it is extremely difficult to attend to matters of this kind. Even though it is not possible to secure all the information I should like to secure for you, you may rely on me to keep the matter in my mind with a view to giving all remaining details, and securing, if necessary, the transfer of the remains, as soon as conditions become restored here. (Kenefick 2011)

Within a few months, Michael Collins was dead – killed in an ambush set by his former IRA comrades at Béal na Bláth, just 15 miles west of Donoughmore.

When peace was eventually restored to the land, Compton Smith's body was recovered. On Friday, 15 March 1926. *The Cork Examiner* reported:

The remains were located in Barracharing wood and brought in a lead covered coffin to Collins Barracks – they will remain there pending the receipt of instructions as to their removal to England.[27]

[25] Translation: "as Gaeilge": "In the Irish Language".

[26] Michael Collins was an Irish revolutionary leader during the War of Independence, a leading figure in the early twentieth century Irish struggle for independence. He was Chairman of the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State during the Irish Civil War. Because of disputes arising from the agreed peace treaty with Britain, The Civil War unfolded as a particularly personalised bloodletting between the Irish Free State and their former comrades in the IRA.

[27] In the intervening four years since the Civil War had ended (1922-1926), Victoria Barracks in Cork City which had been the centre of British Military administration, had been re-named Collins Barracks by the Irish Free State Government − in memory of Michael Collins.

By this time Major Compton Smith's widow had remarried and was living in Italy as Gladys Mary Peterson – the wife of Major Guy Lansberry Peterson. Protracted negotiations took place between the Irish Free State and the Compton Smith family but, for some unspecified reason, the family declined the opportunity to bring his remains home to England. In April 1926, Major Compton Smith was finally laid to rest in Fort Carlisle Military Cemetery, Whitegate, Co. Cork, where it is interred to the present day. At the base of his headstone is a bronze wreath with a short inscription from his daughter Anne:

Major G L Compton Smith D.S.O.
With Love from Anne. (Kenefick 2011)

3. In Conclusion

That day I spent as a guest of the people of Donoughmore is indelibly imprinted on my memory. The mood was solemn and dignified in accordance with honouring the memory of past generations. Having paid our respects, we made our way back down that lonely hillside track and regrouped at a local farmhouse. There a fine spread and a blazing turf fire awaited us. The talk was of tales of the townland, times past and hopes for the future, and as afternoon drifted towards evening we sang songs – I believe I may have given a verse or two of the "Lonely Woods at Upton"[28].

Our reason for gathering that day was never too far from our minds, someone mentioned Major Compton Smith's watch. *The Cork Examiner* of 15 March 1926 published a letter sent by Major Compton Smith to his wife Gladys prior to his execution, in it, the Major expressed as a dying wish, that his watch would be given the IRA volunteer charged with the duty of carrying out the execution:

> and my watch to the officer who is executing me because I believe him to be a gentleman and to mark the fact that I bear him no malice for carrying out what he sincerely believes to be his duty. (Bennett 2010 [1959], 191)

There was general agreement that the gifting of such a personal possession to his executioner was a clear indictment of the genuine affection and meeting of minds that had occurred between two sworn enemies. When asked about the current whereabouts of the watch the reply was vague, but I understood it is still in the possession of a family in Donoughmore, not too far from the kitchen table where we were sitting. And there was something very reassuring in the realisation that Major Compton Smith's watch was not displayed as a trophy of war but rather it was held as a treasured personal gift from a friend.

There was talk of the very public humiliation endured by Gladys Compton Smith when it was announced from the floor of the British Parliament that her husband had not been on a landscape painting expedition, but rather, he went to Blarney to meet a nurse. We wondered whether the decision by the Compton Smith family not to repatriate his body to England, and the omission of his wife's name on the bronze wreath at the Major's headstone, was in response to his alleged indiscretion with the nurse at Blarney Station? Could it be the case that sometimes all is not fair in love and war? Such are the fascinating speculations of love and lore.

[28] "Lonely Woods Of Upton", commemorates an IRA ambush on a train at Upton Station in North Cork. This is the link to Sean Dunphy singing the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WpOoil9eB8> (03/2021).

The many and varied tales of British soldiers taken hostage by the IRA are invaluable to historians and academics. They offer a precise and factually detailed account of Ireland and the inner-workings of IRA active service units at the height of the War of Independence – on the cusp of the Civil War. But the genius of Frank O'Connor's fiction is found in the depth and complexity of the characters he creates. The story as it unfolds is but a backdrop from which a fascinating cast of full-bodied characters come alive. "Guests Of The Nation" brings us on an emotional rollercoaster journey that leads directly to the beating heart and very soul of rural Ireland. O'Connor invites the reader into a magical world where history and story go hand in hand and fact and fiction dovetail together seamlessly without contradiction or contrivance.

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Expelled from Yard and Tribe: The "Rotten Prods" of 1920 and Their Political Legacies*

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Abstract:

This article investigates "Rotten Prods" (Protestants) through an archival and historiographical survey of the shipyard expulsions of the summer of 1920. The historical background to the "insult" is discussed, as is racial violence in British cities and industrial unrest in 1919. It charts the development of the original Home Rule-supporting Protestants to the more radical, working-class "Rotten Prods" of a later era. It explains the political dynamics of violence in 1920 and considers the predicament of "Rotten Prods" per se in the early years of Northern Ireland and beyond. Finally, it frames and assesses three exemplars of the tradition: Belfast Labour counsellor James Baird, the Communist Party of Ireland's Betty Sinclair, and trade unionist Joe Law.

Keywords: Communism, Labour, Ulster Protestantism, Unionism, Violence

Even by the standards of Ireland's "decade of centenaries", 1920 in Ulster is an emotive time to consider because to many it corresponds with a later phase of Irish history. The legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland (1968-1998) has powerfully shaped historical writing on the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence in Ireland (Townshend 2005, 354; Fanning 2013, 3). Patterns of violence were established in 1920, though, of course, there was precedence well before that. Belfast, raised to the status of a city in 1888, regularly saw serious sectarian rioting – for the first time in 1835, and again in 1857, 1864,

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1867, 1872, 1886, 1892, 1898, 1902, 1907, 1911 and 1912, with further outbreaks in the 1920s and especially in 1935 (Goldring 1991, 22). Indeed, it was the most consistent site of violence in Ireland since the mid-nineteenth century and would erupt once again in the late-1960s. Catholics and Protestants were persecuted and "burnt out" in 1920, as they were in 1969. Shipyard "expulsions" occurred in both 1920 and 1970[1]. Younger generations have grown up in the shadow of divisions established back in the 1920s, reinforced during the 1960s and 1970s, and low-scale sectarian violence is ongoing in Belfast and across Northern Ireland (*The Irish News*, 21 May 2018; *Belfast Telegraph*, 6 October 2020). Before considering the evolution of the "Rotten Prods", it is essential to establish the way political currents have coloured interpretations of an event that occurred over a century ago, with political pressures entering and informing certain histories of Unionism and northern affairs in 1920 (Barton 2020).

This article investigates the term "Rotten Prods" [Protestants] via the pivot of July 1920, when approximately 1,850 Protestant workers (of a Labour/Left-wing vintage) joined Catholics as part of an estimated 7,500 workers who were physically driven out of Belfast workplaces – including Harland and Wolff and Workman Clark's shipyards, engineering works (including Sirocco's), and other textile mills – by "loyalist" workers (Patterson 2019, 14)[2]. In part it is an archival and historical survey of these expulsions, but it is also concerned with the "Rotten Prods" term *per se*, and how the vein continued on in later political figures. It proceeds to examine three exemplars of the tradition: James Baird, Betty Sinclair, and Joe Law, who reflect over a century of "Rotten Prod" history through their trade unionism, Marxism, opposition to sectarianism, and their experience of finding themselves caught between the dominant ideologies of Irish politics.

Historian Henry Patterson has described how his father fought in the Second World War (in North Africa and Italy), only to find his "loyalty" questioned – as part of stock Unionist tactics – when as a supporter of the Labour movement he challenged the economic record of the Unionist government after the war (correspondence with the author, 9 March 2021). For this connective reason, Patterson's various works offer an important reassessment of the shipyard expulsions and, indirectly, "Rotten Prods". Patterson questions in a recent paper whether "it is legitimate to tar the trade union movement in the shipyards and indeed the wider labour force with [the] sorry history of discrimination" (Patterson 2019, 1). Re-examining the "Rotten Prods" and the expulsions of 1920 allows us to address this. In a useful revisiting of the concept, Graham Walker and James Greer coin a separate but connected classification: "Awkward Prods", with several in this caste including Harry Midgley, Albert McElroy, and Jack Hassard – all "reformist Northern Protestants" with progressive credentials (Walker, Greer 2018)[3]. The "Awkward" designation is appropriate in the sense that these names represent a different strand of Protestant politics: gradualist, supportive of the Labour movement through a British lens, and capable of co-existing within Unionism's laager. Though the lines between "Awkward" and "Rotten" could be blurred, and both could easily work alongside other in mutual campaigns against the official forces of Unionism, the latter variant moved more defiantly beyond – or

[1] Roughly 400 Catholic workers were forced out of the shipyard in July (*The Irish Times*, 30 June 1970). On this occasion, however, reinstatements were rigorously enforced shortly after.

[2] Alan Parkinson (2020, 30) puts the final figures of expelled workers over the course of the summer at roughly 10,000, with 2,250 from the shipyards.

[3] Hassard for instance, remains the only Labour councillor ever elected in Dungannon, and he was active in the civil rights movement having served in the British Army and the B Specials. He later supported the Sunningdale Agreement and was returned as an Independent Councillor from 1977 to 1981 (*The Irish Times*, 20 February 1979).

were ejected by – their original community, while also retaining traces of its history. This article explores some of these distinctions.

Why should we reflect on “Rotten Prods”? Many histories now just flatly ignore the fact that around one in four evicted during the shipyard expulsions of 1920 were Protestant workers (Morgan 1991, 269). The popular television programme *The Spirit of Freedom–The Irish Revolution*, a three-part series voiced over by Cillian Murphy and first broadcast on RTE in February 2019, covers the convulsions in Belfast in 1920 and neglects to mention the Protestant contingent expelled, presenting it as a solely Catholic experience. It would appear, therefore, that the “Rotten Prods” were not just expelled from the workplaces in 1920 – they have also been expelled from history (at least, many popular and general histories, see Ferriter 2019). This was contemporaneously voiced by Westminster MP for West Belfast Joe Devlin, whose communal emphasis led him to only issue calls for “protection of Roman Catholic workers” in the House of Commons (*Belfast Newsletter*, 27 July 1920). Ostensibly Left-wing studies of the Irish working class also present a one-way stream of persecution: a “Holy War” prosecuted by “armed Orangemen” against Catholic workers alone (Beresford Ellis 1972, 251, 254)[4]. This common reading ignores the complexity of historical facts and once again expels the “Rotten Prods”.

1. Origins

In retrospect, the original nucleus of the “Rotten Prods” might be located in the United Irishmen, drawn mainly from the Presbyterian tradition, who had led the movement for Irish independence in 1798 (see Stewart 1993). Names such as Henry Joy McCracken and James “Jemmy” Hope, weaver of Templepatrick, could be construed as early “Rotten Prods”. However, this article focuses on the twentieth-century usage. Indeed, the designation originally became widespread when it began to be directed against Protestant Home Rulers in Ulster. As Conor Morrissey has shown (2018, 744), this was a well-heeled version of “Rotten Protestantism” in the form of industrialists such as nonconformist shipbuilder William James Pirrie (1847-1924). Pirrie began public life as an opponent of Home Rule, who had switched to being a supporter by 1902 (Simpson 2012, 33; Hartley 2014, 246-249).

Despite his Home Rule views and financing of independent working-class unionist Thomas Sloan in the Belfast South by-election of 1902, Pirrie was “looked up to by the shipyard workers and by the people generally” (Tom Boyd, quoted in Hammond 1986, 107; see also Goldring 1991, 117). His respect flowed from economic power. As a partner and Chairman of Harland and Wolff, Pirrie was responsible for almost 25,000 jobs, and his connection with White Star Line enabled him to gain orders for vessels like the Titanic, the Britannic and Olympic, unprecedented in other parts of the British Isles. Port investment allowed Liverpool shipping capital to fund the “Yard”, while expertise in engineering initially developed for local linen machinery began to forge the same equipment for a world market. Though Pirrie had been disparaged in the Unionist press for his views and membership of the Ulster Liberal Association, one former shipyard worker claimed that, by and large, “The people didn’t seem to mind that Lord Pirrie

[4] This also links to the description of the events of 1920 as a “pogrom” – a word that suggests that the victims of this violence were drawn from only one community. Though not the remit of this article, a famous publication from G.B. Kenna (a *nom de plume* of Father John Hassan) was accordingly entitled *Facts and Figures of the Belfast Pogrom 1920-1922* (1922). For a refutation of the propagandistic tone of Father Hassan see Goldring (1991, 84), and for a defence of Hassan’s language see Glennon (2020, 31).

had those political [Home Rule] ideas" (*Ulster Herald*, 17 February 1912; Morrissey 2018, 754; Boyd, quoted in Hammond 1986, 107). Teeming slipways after the Great War, at a time of decline in other regions, appears to have kept Pirrie in credit with "the people".

As a transition between the Home Rule supporting-element to "Rotten Protestantism" and the later more radical lineage, it is worth mentioning Robert Smillie (1857-1940). A Belfast-born Protestant, he grew up in a tall terrace near the Crumlin Road and worked as a youth in the mills before emigrating to Glasgow at the age of 15 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 29 November 2016). Two years later he entered the pits as a coal-miner in Larkhall, though it was his later leadership of the miners and founding of both the Scottish Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party, during which time he became closely linked to Keir Hardie, that marked him as a presence within the Labour movement (Wrigley 2004). He attended the annual Trades Union Congress in Belfast in 1893, where his appearance was said to antagonise loyalists (Boyd 1987, 180), and he would eventually become a member of Parliament for Morpeth in 1923, having helped shift the axis of miners' support from the Liberals to Labour. By the summer of 1920, Smillie was still being lamented in Unionist newspapers as a miners' leader responsible for the "Labour Threat of a Strike" across the United Kingdom (*Belfast Newsletter*, 26 July 1920).

However, the First World War was key to the development of the "Rotten Prod" tradition. As a later labour historian put it, an expanding Labour Party in Ulster "threatened to create new political alignments as well as social and economic issues of a more radical character than Unionists had had to contend with to date – an economic depression, getting deeper every year, made that party alarmingly relevant" (Devlin 1981, 6). This was of great concern to the political leadership of Ulster Unionism, who began to adopt Labour nomenclature in an effort to sweep up this constituency. Sir Edward Carson was particularly attuned to combating the threat, with the Ulster Unionist Labour Association, fronted by the paternalist employer profile of John Millar Andrews, formulated to this end by June 1918. This body was explicitly concerned with ensuring Protestant working-class voters stayed ethnically loyal to Unionism and would resist socialist alternatives. The Ulster Unionist Council thus decided to sponsor "Unionist Labour" candidates in future elections, with the same representation to be made on the Council. It is vital to understand, as Graham Walker has pointed out, that Ulster Unionism "spoke only for a portion of the working class, and indeed the Protestant working class: in 1919 a strike by predominantly Protestant (and on the constitutional issue Unionist) engineers caused consternation in Unionist party ranks" (Walker 2004, 42-43). Furthermore, the Belfast Labour Party, bringing together Independent Labour Party members in the city, reminded Unionists that they could not rely on unanimous Protestant working-class electoral support when they won twelve seats in the 1920 local elections. Predictably, Unionist political elites and strategists began linking this emerging Labour vote with "Bolshevism" and "disloyalty", with unemployed ex-servicemen incorporated in Unionist strategy towards sectarian ends and the Orange Order also expanding its proletarian dimension (44; see also Parkinson 2020, 27, 32)[5]. This is an ideal juncture to provide a working definition of later "Rotten Prods": "Protestant trade unionist militants and socialists who refused to support the Unionist Party" (Newsinger 1998).

However, there is a specificity to the "Rotten Prod" label. They were not simply supporters of Labour and trade unionism. In their case a Protestant working-class background combined with radical trade unionism, anti-sectarianism, class politics, and the experience of finding themselves ultimately caught between Unionism and Irish nationalism. "Rotten Prods"

[5] This accelerated after partition, when feelings of uncertainty were not unreasonable and the future of Northern Ireland as a devolved UK entity was by no means guaranteed (Greer, Walker 2019, 220, 238).

pointed out from a Left-wing perspective that the syndrome of "Catholic Nationalism versus Protestant Unionism diverted attention from the harsh and evil effects of the world economic crisis upon ordinary people" (Gray 1986, 111). At the same time, a few could be found in the trade union-based Northern Ireland Labour Party from 1924 until its political demise in the 1970s. After a few turbulent years (1920-1922) when "Labour undoubtedly did well just to survive" (Walker 1984, 19), the NILP brought together Protestants with Catholics to advocate for better terms and conditions, more "fair shares" in working conditions, as well as electoral, political, and social rights that were enjoyed across the United Kingdom by their brethren in the wider British labour movement (Edwards 2009). It was the NILP, rather than the Unionist Party, who set up advice centres for constituents, after they won four seats at the 1958 Stormont election, and by demanding their entitlement, "British rights for British citizens", the NILP paradoxically became opponents of the Unionist regime at Stormont. This Labour vote was undercut by Unionist abolition of Proportional representation for municipal elections in 1923 and in 1929 for Northern Ireland parliament elections.

2. A Note on Sources and 1920

An abundance of memoirs, especially from upper-class Unionists, characterise the era of the Home Rule crisis and the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (Orr 1987, 237). By 1920, the well dries up. Newspapers remain an excellent resource to determine grassroots attitudes, but there are surprisingly few accounts written by Unionists (or working or middle-class Protestants) about what happened on the ground in 1920. We simply do not have memoirs detailing much about the actions and attitudes of Unionists in the storm-centre of 1920. It is a fascinating and revealing moratorium. Labourer Robert McElborough, who began writing his memoirs in 1946, does not linger on the events of 1920 in any detail (McElborough 2002). Another case is that of a labourer who worked at Workman Clark's shipyard, Thomas Carnduff (1886-1956), who later became a well-known playwright (see Parr 2017, 45-80). Active in the Young Citizens Volunteers and the Royal Engineers in the First World War, he demobilised in 1919 and returned to work at the shipyard, where an anonymously authored "Portrait Gallery" piece in *The Irish Times* stated that he helped Catholic workers escape over the River Lagan during the shipyard expulsions of 21 July 1920 (*The Irish Times*, 2 October 1954). The difficulty is that Carnduff's writings on this episode, if they ever existed, have not survived. Despite extensive research on Carnduff's life, there is little or no documentation relating to 1920. The aforementioned detail is a fleeting claim published in a newspaper thirty years later.

As with any other source, newspapers are not beyond reproach. However, as pointed out by Dennis Kennedy, they were "the windows through which the vast majority of Northern Unionists viewed the nationalist struggle from 1919 onwards. For most they were the only sources of information". Similarly, titles such as Unionist *Belfast Newsletter*, still apparently the oldest English language newspaper in the world (and still very Unionist),

> were widely read in a highly literate society and were, through editors, staff and ownership, closely integrated into the Unionist community. Editors and proprietors could be, and were, politicians up to government level. They were influential lay members of church committees; journalists at all levels were often active members of the Unionist Party, of the Orange Order and of the Masonic Order. (Kennedy 1988, 6)

Kennedy is aware that these newspapers also have "clear limitations" (*ibidem*). These are apparent from a basic check of the *Newsletter*, where one searches for coverage of the shipyard

expulsions of 1920 to discover that, according to this outlet, they did not happen. The nature of the violence from 21 July that began two years of violence, in other words, do not exist as *their* record – unreported, as absent as the memoirs. What is reported is violence on the Falls Road and wider Belfast in the days following, with descriptions of a "violent mob" who "shot at and stoned the troops who eventually were compelled to fire" (*Belfast Newsletter*, 22 July 1920)[6]. The IRA and "disloyal" Sinn Féiners were thus exclusively guilty of starting and maintaining the disorder. The partiality of sources is not always retrospective. Nevertheless, "as aids to understanding Unionists' perceptions of both what was happening to them and what was going on in the island", Kennedy is correct to note that they are significant and convey ground-level Unionist vision.

3. The Violence of 1920

Going against the cliché of cyclical and identical violence over decades (Boyd 1987, *passim*), working-class riots in Belfast were more an increasing manifestation of social organisations within Protestant working-class communities, both gaining in prevalence from the ninetieth century onwards (Gibbon 1975, 72). The politics of the shipyard expulsions are particularly bound up in the specific status of shipyardmen as workers, and the unskilled element in this workforce that felt threatened at this time. As a pioneering study points out, the shipyardmen were the "labour aristocracy" of workers in Belfast (83), settling in different parts of the city from their fellow workers (in Ballymacarret, for instance, rather than the Shankill) – askance from the city and proud outsiders to it. They even had their own [Queen's] "Island"[7]. Connectedly, though trade unionism was stronger in Belfast than anywhere else in Ireland, unskilled Protestant workers were less likely to be members of trade unions (Hepburn 1996, 227). Alastair Reid has clarified that the shipyard expulsion attacks were,

> not acts of aggression by Protestant skilled workers against Catholic unskilled workers, but actions of *insecure* groups of Protestant workers keen to ensure that their Catholic rivals should be first out in period of depression (1886, 1921). As the impact of such insecurity and competition on Protestant tradesmen and unskilled workers was highly uneven, the apparent unity of such actions had a crucial political component, being more influenced by the effects of broader political conjunctures and alliances than just a simple expression of economic privilege. (Reid 1980, 123)

Henry Patterson concurs that as the aggressors were apprentices and "mostly unskilled workers" (such as rivet-boys), Catholics were the "easy target" for Unionist and Loyalist resentments as they were most prevalent in the expanding unskilled labour force during the War (Patterson 2019, 15; see also Parkinson 2020, 26). It was, in other words, "economic vulnerability, not economic privilege, that reinforced their strong sectarian group consciousness" (Norton 1996, 155). The postwar pressures of unemployment and economic depression, also prevalent in the wider United Kingdom, played its part, along with ongoing atrocities committed during the Irish War of Independence. Unemployment in shipbuilding began to rise throughout the UK

[6] Sub-headings to this column include "Sinn Feiners attack workers" and "Sinn Feiners at the shipyards".

[7] Playwright Wilson John Haire, who like his father worked in the shipyard, recalled "elitist trades" within its workforce and how this often expressed itself in uniform. Electricians "who scarcely got their hands dirty" often wore a collar and tie, along with brown overalls "to distinguish themselves from everyone else". This was succeeded in rank by joiners, who could sport "suits or sports jackets with a white carpenter's apron", with some wearing silver or fine metal on their cuffs to prevent them touching glue or timber (Haire 2020, 30).

in May 1920, meaning that by July of that year, 27,000 men were employed in Belfast's two shipyards, two thousand fewer than the previous year (Morgan 1991, 271).

1920 began ominously with the chairman of the West Belfast Unionist Club informing those present at a January meeting in an Orange Hall on the Shankill Road that,

> Until the employers of Belfast took up their proper position and cease employing Sinn Feiners and other rebels from the south and west, they could never hope to occupy their right position in the city, which had been built up by Protestant energy and enterprise. The murders going on throughout the country might before long lead to retaliation. (Patterson 1980, 135)

Fear of Sinn Féin political successes throughout the island were mounting, leading to Unionists viewing Catholic populations as coterminous with Sinn Féin. The latter's members and other nationalists combined to control 23 local authorities (in Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone especially, and Derry City) which in some cases declared allegiance to Dáil Eireann (Grant 2018, 91–92). Statements by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that same month cemented this identification, which was taken in Ulster as evidence of their backing for Sinn Féin (Kennedy 1988, 44). Across Ulster, Unionist apprehension was about to boil over. It was a decidedly two-way process, with the approaching "exclusion" from the "Free State" and the postures of Protestant extremists spiking Catholic resentment, as well as further Sinn Féin support (McMahon 2011, 185).

On 12 July, at a field at Finaghy, near Belfast, Carson delivered a speech that drew comparisons with those he had given back in 1912. He castigated "tacking on" the "Sinn Fein question" to "the Labour question", exclaiming:

> What I say is this – these men who come forward posing as the friends of Labour care no more about Labour than does the man in the moon. Their real object, and the real insidious nature of their propaganda, is that they may mislead and bring about disunity among our own people; and in the end, before we know where we are, we may find ourselves in the same bondage and slavery as is the rest of Ireland in the South and West. Beware of these insidious methods…we in Ulster will tolerate no Sinn Fein – (cheers) – no Sinn Fein organisation, no Sinn Fein methods. (Clarkson 1970, 365)

Carson was essentially warning the British government that if it did not take adequate measures against Sinn Féin, he would "call out the Ulster Volunteers" (that is, reorganize the UVF). Though the *Irish News* thought the speech "a harmless and commonplace harangue…(comprising) platitudes and conditional threats" (quoted in Patterson 2019, 8), alarms sounded in London. Attitudes to Unionists in Britain were already hardening, with "the sympathy of the pre-war days giving way to a sense of frustration and a feeling that the Ulstermen had all along thwarted a settlement in Ireland" (Stewart 1981, 118). An attempt was duly made to censure Carson in Westminster. Back in Ireland, that same week letters continued to appear in the *Newsletter* linking the Sinn Fein menace to ordinary Catholics. On 16 July, one – signed "THOR" – referred to the insidious system of "peaceful penetration"' of Ulster by Catholics, of a new plantation, and of the "well-intentioned but foolish" policy of employing Catholics: "The old spirit which existed in 1914 is still alive in Ulster – it only needs wakening" (*Belfast Newsletter*, 16 July 1920). A recurrent image was of Catholics from the south moving north to seize the jobs of those who had volunteered for war service. The belief that those who had "served" should be prioritised with employment naturally belied the fact that Catholics, as well as Protestants, also fought in the War (*The Irish Times*, 3 August 1920). On 21 July, as British Army officer and senior civil servant Wilfred Spender arrived in Belfast to begin reorganising the UVF (Farrell 1976, 30; Moore 2019, 30; Boyd 1987, 193), violence began.

The immediate trigger was when the Cork IRA's Seán Culhane shot dead Colonel Gerald B.F. Smyth in the Cork County Club on 17 July. Born in the Punjab but raised as a Protestant from Banbridge County Down, Smyth was a Royal Irish Constabulary Divisional Commissioner who had gained a level of notoriety for incendiary pronouncements to a gathering of Royal Irish Constabulary personnel in Listowel, County Kerry, on 19 June (Farrell 1976, 28; Lynch 2008, 379-380). His hard-line, anti-IRA opinions made him popular with Loyalists, though his speech, during which he said "You may make mistakes occasionally and innocent persons may be shot, but this cannot be helped and you are bound to get the right person sometimes", also left some RIC officers aghast (O'Halpin, Ó Corráin 2020, 149). Nonetheless, Smyth's distinguished war record in the Royal Engineers at the Battle of the Somme and elsewhere – he was disabled following the loss of his arm at Givenchy in September 1914 – meant that his death caused serious anger in the north, a situation heightened by disruption in bringing his body there for burial when the driver and fireman refused to make the engine function on the train from Cork. Smyth's funeral took place on the day the expulsions began: 21 Wednesday July – the first full day of production after the annual holiday for Orange celebrations.

Alan F. Parkinson (2020, 26) suggests that despite the lack of evidence for planning of the violence, the timing of the attacks with the return to work of several thousand workers suggests a "degree of opportunism". A group thought to be the Belfast Protestant Association (BPA) posted up notices in the yards and approach roads calling on "all Protestant and Unionist workers" to attend a "Mass meeting" during the dinner break (all placards ended with "God Save the King"). The meeting which took place outside the gates of the Workman Clark South Yard was estimated to have comprised between two and five thousand men. The main topic raised was the IRA campaign in the south and west of Ireland, where it was claimed the British administration had collapsed and Sinn Féin was in control (Patterson 2019, 8-9). Recent rioting in Derry in which at least twenty people had been killed was highlighted as evidence of an attempt to import the situation in the south and west to Ulster (*The Irish Times*, 23 June 1920; Parkinson 2020, 19), and a resolution was passed ensuring that any worker who refused to sign a declaration that he did not belong to or join Sinn Fein should get no work with employers. An invitation was also issued to every member of "Carson's navy" to join the Orange Order, the Ulster Volunteer Force, or the Ulster Labour Party (Clarkson 1970, 367).

After this meeting a mob armed with hammers, wooden staves, iron bars, and – it was claimed – revolvers, went on the rampage. While some workers who anticipated trouble left before lunchtime (leaving behind expensive tools and belongings), unluckier ones were stripped to their undergarments in the search for Catholic emblems like rosary beads. Many were beaten up (Moore 2019, 28). A deputy named Travers from the Belfast Expelled Workers later described the gates being hammered down with sledges, whereupon "One man was set upon, thrown into the dock, had to swim the Musgrave Channel, and having been pelted with rivets had to swim two or three miles, to emerge in streams of blood and rush to the police office in a nude state" (Clarkson 1970, 366). This soon spread to the other four main engineering works: Mackie's, Musgrave's, Davidson's Sirocco works, and Coome, Barbour, Fairbarin, and Lawson's. Catholic workers and "Rotten Prods" were also forced out of the linen mills and McLaughlin and Harvey's, the main building firm. Disturbances took place for days after and were not limited to Belfast, with violence being directed at Catholic businesses and homes in Banbridge (Colonel Smyth's hometown), Dromore and Bangor. The spectre of militant Sinn Feiners materialised in Belfast with the IRA engaging its snipers and volunteers armed with revolvers (*Belfast Newsletter*, 22 July 1920). More was to follow the following month when District Inspector Oswald Swanzy of the RIC was shot dead on 22 August in the centre of Lisburn

on his way home from Church[8]. Severe repercussions followed against Lisburn's small Catholic minority over three days of rioting, during which sixty public houses, the parish priest's home, and shops were set on fire. One person was killed, and 600 families forced from their homes. Many resettled in Dundalk (and a small group in the Falls Road). The violence continued on into early September and verbal threats indefinitely (*Irish Independent*, 16 September 1920; Farrell 1976, 31; see also Lawlor 2009).

The sectarian actions at Lisburn led to the imposition the Belfast boycott, which also took place against other towns and only formally ended in 1922 (and went on unofficially beyond that) (*Irish Independent*, 20 August 1920; *Irish Examiner*, 28 October 1921; Moore 2019, 36-37). Northern newspapers regularly reported the destruction of goods from or to Belfast, with bread, newspapers and other items destroyed and whisky stolen. Meanwhile, killings of Protestants like Thomas Bradfield, a farmer who was shot dead near Bandon, carried on in the new year (Kennedy 1988, 49). 20 people were killed in August and 400 (mainly Catholic families) evicted. Overall, between July 1920 and October 1922, an estimated 498 people died in the violence that gripped the northern part of the island (Parkinson 2004, 12; Glennon 2020, 31), and expulsion episodes continued against both Catholics and the "Rotten Prods". By November 1920, 10,000 Catholics – and their 20,000 dependents – looked for relief from the Belfast Expelled Workers' Fund (McMahon 2011, 187), an organ of Bishop Dr Joseph MacRory, Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor. Roughly one in five of the entire Catholic male workforce (and one quarter of the Catholic workforce *per se*) had been expelled from their workplace, with 9,000 remaining unemployed for the next few years[9]. Many at this time became undoubtedly reliant on charity, emigration to Glasgow and Dublin, and jobs on the Belfast Corporation's tramline reconstruction scheme (Parkinson 2020, 36-37). The threat and fear of future violence ensured "maintaining the ethnic boundary in many areas of employment" (Hepburn 1996, 226, 232).

In something that is increasingly uncredited in modern Irish historical writing, it is worth Unionising this history through investigating not just what was going on in Ireland, but also in the wider United Kingdom. 2019 saw the centenary of what were known as the "Yemeni riots" of 1919, which took place in the North East of England in South Shields, around four miles downstream from Newcastle Upon Tyne. It becomes clear that 1919 was a precedent for the events of 1920, with a similar process occurring in this case whereby returning servicemen resented arriving back on Tyneside to zero or few jobs and became frustrated by seeing a new Yemeni community who had arrived in South Shields (by way of the Empire) mixing with the local English population (Jenkinson 2009). The sight of white English people entering Yemeni shops in February 1919 sparked attacks on Yemenis in South Shields (the name "Yemeni riots" is itself misleading, as the Yemeni community was on the end of the attacks). Robert Lynch notes how, as in Belfast, "Similar expulsions occurred in many port cities across the country caused by the economic strains of demobilisation and competition for postwar employment, housing and pensions" (2018, 93; see also Loughlin 2018, 125-126). They occurred in Glasgow

[8] Swanzy had been in Cork at the time of the killing of Tomás Mac Curtain in March 1920 and was charged by a coroner's jury with the wilful murder of the Lord Mayor. Shortly afterward he was transferred to Lisburn, nine miles south-west of Belfast. A recent journalistic "micro history" of the Troubles hammers home the point that violent assassination of the kind explored in the book (in April 1978) had not been seen in the town since the shooting of Swanzy (Cobain 2020, 81-87, 144).

[9] Relatively untouched were the deep-sea dockers of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, as this was a mainly Catholic cohort.

(where black sailors working in Govan were attacked), Salford, London, Hull, Liverpool, Barry, Newport, and Cardiff, with attacks on Asian, Arab and Chinese minority ethnic populations "triggered by intense job competition in the merchant navy, the first sector to feel the bite of the postwar economic downturn" (Lynch 2018, 94).

On 26 July 1920 a deputation from the Belfast District Committee of the Engineering Federation met the management of the shipyards and called for those expelled to be reinstated (*Belfast Newsletter*, 26 July 1920), but this was countered by a different meeting of shipyard workers held outside the Milewater Basin gate of Workman Clark's North Yard two days later. A resolution was passed which deplored "wrecking and looting", but declared "we will not work with disloyal workers until the railwaymen decide to handle Government stores and troops as heretofore and Sinn Feiners cease the foul murder campaign which has destroyed the fair name and fame of our beloved country"[10]. It added a "respectful suggestion" to employers that in future applications for employment "first consideration be given [to] loyal ex-servicemen and Protestant Unionists". The "loyal" was an addition to cover the way a large number of those expelled had been Catholic ex-servicemen. The chief speaker at the meeting was a joiner and member of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, William Barclay, who proceeded to outline four reasons for the expulsions. Firstly, he said:

> 1) Many of their men, who were loyal to King and Country, and who joined the forces of the Crown when the war broke out, were now walking about the streets unemployed……while in the yards were employed disloyal members, earning good livelihoods at the expense of the men who joined the Army.
> 2) Another cause was the action of some of their trade unionists and trades council in trespassing upon political territory which had caused a cleavage in their ranks --- some of the trade union executives had passed what were virtually Sinn Fein resolutions.
> 3) Then there were those terrible outrages in different parts of the country.
> 4) The last cause of the trouble was the circumstances surrounding the fate of that gallant Ulsterman, Commissioner Smyth.

The meeting ended with a rendition of the National Anthem and all present who were not already members of the Orange Order, the Ulster Volunteer Force or the Ulster Unionist Labour Party were invited to join (*The Irish Times*, 29 July 1920; *The Irish Times*, 31 July 1920).

In local trade union terms, the strongest challenge to the expulsions came from the Carpenters' Union, who issued a call in September for their workers in the shipyards to strike and would take their objections to the Trades Union Congress the following year (Bell 2016, 88-93)[11]. For the most part, however, unions remained typically divided in their response. The Belfast Central Branch of the Electrical Trades Union quickly issued statements condemning the expulsions and calling for "the co-operation of all trade unions to see that their members are allowed to peacefully pursue their lawful occupations", while two months later employees

[10] The munitions strike started in May 1920 when Dublin port dockers refused to handle war materials being imported into Ireland. Dun Laoghaire dockers followed suit, before the embargo spread to the railways. By the end of 1920 much of the Irish railway network was paralysed and thousands of workers had been dismissed (Clarkson 1970, 340-342). The Great Northern Railway line was mostly unaffected because it was handled by predominantly Belfast crews.

[11] Bell (2016, 94) argues the Carpenters' Union and the Catholic working class was symptomatically failed by a TUC who "look[ed] the other way" and sided with "the sectarians", though this was always tempered by a British labour movement who "conditioned their acceptance of Irish self-determination on protection for minorities in Ireland", i.e. Unionists.

of the Great Northern Railway adopted a resolution that it would be necessary for workmen to sign a "declaration of loyalty to their King and Constitution" before returning to work (*Belfast Newsletter*, 27 July 1920; Clarkson 1970, 370). Some historians have argued that employers who "tacitly consented" to sectarian violence in 1920 were driven by "pragmatic responses" to the dominant ethnic consensus. The capitalistic impulse frankly ensured that an all-Protestant workforce would give employers in shipbuilding or engineering "less trouble" (Hepburn 1996, 243). While one recent study terms this the "moral economy of loyalty" (Loughlin 2018, 14 and *passim*), prominent industrialists such as Edward Harland and Gustav Wolff could build political careers tapping this deferent Protestant working class base who they allowed to monopolise workplaces through the "path of least resistance" (Hepburn 1996, 38, 244; Simpson 2012, 32).

Though "Rotten Prod" prototype Lord Pirrie refused to segregate Catholic employees in a part of the Harland and Wolff plant under military guard, he also threatened – as he had in 1912 – to lay off the entire 17,000 workforce unless Catholic workers were reinstated (Patterson 2019, 4)[12]. The month after the violence of July 1920, Pirrie clarified that he thought Catholic refusal to sign the "loyalty" declaration was holding things up, and that drastic action was on hold because "the Ulster temperament is always uncertain at this time of year" (*Belfast Newsletter,* 17 August 1920). Dublin Castle's deployment of troops led to casualties (including, in a grimly ironic twist, veterans of the Great War)[13], but eventually did restore order in the Yards. Pirrie's influence here should also not be underestimated. However, in October 1920 Carson eulogized his shipyard "friends" in the House of Commons, the same month James Craig told Loyalist shipyardmen responsible for the expulsions: "Do I approve of the action you boys have taken in the past? I say yes" (Clarkson 1970, 271; Nelson 1984, 35). It was retrospectively noted that this set the tone for what kind of action would be tolerated by Unionist leaders at Stormont thereafter. The expulsions removed a layer of shop stewards from the factory floors and yards, with trade union officials literally being replaced by loyalist vigilante committee members (Bell 2016, 87; Parkinson 2020, 300). Less scrutiny of rights for workers resulted, along with the accordant fall in wages that broke across the rest of Ireland and the United Kingdom in the economic downturn.

4. The Tradition Established – James Baird

The Labour movement always faced difficulty in navigating questions of national identity in Ulster, and this persevered during and after the events of 1920. In one of the memorable dedications of Irish history, Austen Morgan dedicated his book *Labour and Partition* (1991) to "the 'rotten Prods' of Belfast, victims of unionist violence and nationalist myopia". The essence of "Rotten Prods" is that they received animosity from *both* sides, reflecting the position of the Labour movement throughout Ireland in being "handicapped by the need to develop an attitude to the ever-present national question" (Hepburn, Rumpf 1977, 155). In July 1920, "Rotten Prods" included relatively high-profile figures such as John Hanna, an ex-master of an Orange Lodge (who had worked alongside James Larkin in the 1907 dock strike), and James Baird, a Labour councillor and member of the Boilermakers' Society who was prominent in

[12] This contrasted with Workman Clark's, which permitted "loyal" Protestant employees to hold meetings in their yards, just as they had allowed the Ulster Volunteer Force to use their property as a drill ground (Clarkson 1970, 368-369).

[13] Joseph Giles (19) was an ex-soldier only recently demobilised, residing at Kashmir Street, who was killed in Bombay Street having apparently been shot in the head with a machine gun (*Belfast Newsletter*, 23 July 1920; O'Halpin, Ó Corráin 2020, 153).

the engineering strike the previous year (Farrell 1976, 28, 336)[14]. Though Parkinson (2020, 31) downplays physical attacks on Protestant trade unionists, Baird recalled being amongst those assaulted, "flung into the river and, while struggling for life, [being] pelted with rivets and washers" (Devlin 1981, 47). In many ways the first radical "Rotten Prod" leader, Baird experienced loyalist intolerance in the summer of 1920, and then faced coercive anti-trade union sentiment in the Irish Free State three years later.

Baird was aware of how the War had altered the game in terms of the struggle between capital and labour. He thought strategically about the "44" hour strike of 1919, observing that it would be wise to stockpile three months' worth of food to blunt the "hunger weapon" and "the haunting fear of starvation" that had been used to undermine previous stoppages (*Belfast Newsletter*, 16 January 1919; Baird 1919). The strike's leaders, including Baird and the "Islandmen", unsuccessfully sought a "shorter working week" (44 rather than a 54 hours), but were venerated for being "pioneers in a revolutionary direction" – defying "the United Belfast Press, both Orange and Green" in their unanimous call for strike action (Baird, quoted in *The Voice of Labour*, 31 August 1918; Anon., "Belfast Strikes First Blow", *The Voice of Labour*, 25 January 1919). Though Baird was clearly influenced by James Connolly's Marxist emphasis on "militant industrial trade unionism", it was also observed that as rank and file trade unionists had arranged mass meetings of shipyard and engineering workers in August 1919, this was predominantly a movement "from below" (Patterson 1980, 96). In the January 1920 municipal elections, he was elected as a counsellor for Ormeau ward.

After the shipyard expulsions, Baird was a signatory of the Belfast Expelled Workers' Fund, though his requests for help from British trade unionists at the September 1921 Trades Union Congress in Cardiff fell on deaf ears. Baird compared the rioting and expulsions with those of previous decades, and was reported to have said in his speech:

> It was not a question of Protestants expelling Catholics, but of expelling every worker who openly opposed the ascendancy gang led by Sir Edward Carson. The "boss" class becoming alarmed resurrected old spites to divide Irishmen, and labour men whether they were trade unionists, whether they were Sinn Feiners or not, were expelled from the shipyards. The real objects of the capitalists in the North of Ireland in fostering religious differences was to break trade unionism and to represent Irishmen to the British people as unable to manage their own affairs. (*The Irish Times*, 8 September 1921)

That same month Baird was part of a delegation that met with Éamon de Valera to protest against partition. In another impassioned speech, Baird claimed that it would divide the workers, avert the "one big union" of Ireland (a reference to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union), ruin industry and drive workers to emigration. Baird factually asserted that partition would also place power in the hands of those responsible for the violence of 1920 (*The Irish Times*, 29 September 1921; see also *Young Ireland*, 8 October 1921). Earlier that year he was the only councillor on the Corporation to oppose a motion backed by James Craig and the Lord Mayor Belfast calling for Belfast City Hall to hold the opening proceedings of the new parliament of Northern Ireland (*The Irish Times*, 31 May 1921).

As with later northern figures, Baird took refuge in Irish trade unionism as an organizer for the ITGWU. He was active in the East Waterford farm strike of 1923 (*Irish Times*, 23 June 1923), which became a stubborn dispute at a time of considerable sabotage in the region. He

[14] Baird was an unsuccessful Labour candidate for South Belfast in the first elections to the Northern Ireland parliament in 1921. As with the other two Labour candidacies, he ran on an anti-partitionist line (Patterson 1980, 149).

also stood as an Irish Labour candidate at the August 1923 Dáil election, polling quite strongly in Waterford, though relinquishing a seat on transfers to his running mate John Butler, a farmer and trade unionist (*The Nationalist*, 1 September 1923). A "Special Correspondent" for the *Irish Times* printed in its preamble to polling day that Baird had "made himself conspicuous by the extreme bitterness of his speeches during the past few months" (*The Irish Times*, 25 August 1923), speeches it claimed might win him votes from East Waterford agricultural workers, but not the trade unionists of the city nor West Waterford workers. There is little evidence of this "bitterness", though the following month Baird was arrested and imprisoned without charge in Kilkenny Prison under the Public Safety (Emergency Powers) Act (*The Irish Times*, 14 September 1923; *The Irish Worker*, 6 October 1923). Poems and articles appeared in his honour in *The Workers' Republic* journal, and it also called for workers to submit resolutions to their unions across Ireland for a general stoppage to secure his release (*The Workers' Republic*, 29 September 1923; Anon., "You, Mr. Union Man", *The Workers' Republic*, 6 October 1923). All evidence of Baird's activities show a man increasingly out of step with the nascent Free State. After a hunger strike, undertaken at the same moment as republican prisoners, he was released from prison (*Nenagh News*, 15 September 1923; *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 October 1923). Baird emigrated the following year to Australia, where little is known of his life. He died in Brisbane in 1948 (*Munster Express*, 7 January 1949).

5. Awkward and Rotten

Within a decade of Baird's departure to Australia, a series of protests became one of the rare points in the history of Belfast where Catholic and Protestant workers rioted together, on economic issues, against the miserly dispensations of Belfast's "Poor Law Guardians" (Devlin 1981; Mitchell 2017). In September 1932, a month prior to what became known as the Outdoor Relief protests, Jack Beattie, member for Pottinger, tried to raise a motion on unemployment. The government did not want to hear this, with James Craig preferring to use the occasion to thank the Belfast Corporation for using City Hall for meetings of the Northern Ireland parliament, and so ruled it out of order. This led to a protest from Tommy Henderson, Independent Unionist representative for the Protestant working-class Shankill constituency, who rowed in behind Beattie. Though Henderson always declared he was more a "friend of the worker" than a socialist (Bell 1976, 70), he tended to be close to the NILP on bread-and-butter issues and thus something of an "Awkward Prod". With Stormont refusing to hear the motion on unemployment, Beattie bellowed at the speaker, "I absolutely refuse to sit in this House of hypocrisy and indulge in hypocrisy with thousands starving around me". It was then that he charged forward and seized the Mace, hurling it along the carpeted floor where it smashed: "Out of the road with this; it is only the emblem of hypocrisy!" Pandemonium followed, with Beattie thrown out of the House to cries of "God Save the King". In response, Henderson shouted back: "God save the people!" Before leaving with Beattie that day, Henderson asked those in the House "what the unemployed were going to do for the next two months" while Parliament was adjourned (Mitchell 2017, 67-68). The answer came in the form of the Outdoor Relief riots of the following month.

In such political situations and moments, "Awkward Prods" of the Northern Ireland Labour Party – and Independent Unionists (including Henderson) – could collaborate with "Rotten Prods", but at other times there was a clear differentiation between the "Christian socialism" overwhelmingly practiced by the NILP and the more radical Marxist analysis of the "Rotten Prods". The NILP's Protestant working-class base tended to firmly back the pro-union posi-

tion the party adopted in 1949[15], when it declared in favour of partition and expelled certain branches such as West Belfast, though the specific Christian socialist vs. radical Marxist divide was a longstanding divergence reaching back to earlier debates in the Labour movement, also replicated in Scotland (Greer, Walker 2019). The NILP's deputy leader David Bleakley articulated best "Christian socialism" in Northern Ireland, which also manifested in the form of distinct local neighbourhood activism rooted in a UK ethos and drawn from British thinkers like R. H. Tawney. This was an ideological world away from talk of international solidarity and radicalism espoused by "Rotten Prods". In 1961, Bleakley confirmed the NILP's desire to "work within the framework of the existing constitution to achieve a prosperous and unified community in Ulster" (quoted in Edwards 2009, 55, 83) cemented by the Cold War era when centre-Left parties in Western European liberal democracies differentiated themselves from any vestige of Communism.

6. Betty Sinclair

Conscription during the First World War ensured that female labour had been introduced into Belfast's shipbuilding and engineering industry. By July 1916 there were 151 women working in the yard (1.7% of the workforce) and four years later around 1,800 of those ultimately forced from their jobs (especially in the linen industry) across the city were women, including the last workers to be evicted: four waitresses in the staff dining room of Harland and Wolff (Lynch 1997, 55). One who exemplified the female component of the "Rotten Prods", who came into her own during the aforementioned Outdoor Relief protests of 1932, was Elizabeth (Betty) Sinclair[16]. Leading the agitation in the north of the city, she described herself as one of those "men and women who had never spoken on a platform in their lives [who] became orators overnight, through sheer desperation" (quoted in Morrissey 1983, 123), speaking to as many as 90,000 people on one occasion. Though Sinclair is rare as one of the few men or women within Irish Communism to receive scholarly and biographical treatment (Morrissey 1983; Smylie 2016), she has not been well-served by researchers, and a proper full-length study of her life is in order.

Sinclair was born into a Protestant working-class family in Hooker Street, in the Ardoyne district of North Belfast (then a mixed area). The particular span of Sinclair's life (1910–1981) takes in key episodes in Ireland: both World Wars, partition, the Belfast Troubles, the Outdoor Relief riots of 1932, and the outbreak of the Troubles in 1968. There were innate Protestant values in her background, deriving from her Church of Ireland upbringing and Sunday school attendance. She went to St. Mary's Church of Ireland school on the Crumlin Road and was the by-product of her liberal father Joseph, a sawyer in Harland and Wolf, and her more church-oriented mother Margaret, who was a reeler at Ewart's Linen Mill and held the tenancy on their house (Morrissey 1983, 121-122). While working at Jennymount Linen Mills,

[15] Internal divisions on constitutional matters often shook the NILP, but it could still include within its ranks individual Protestant radicals (and anti-partitionists), some of whom came to the fore during the civil rights movement in the late-1960s.

[16] This may appear an ironic segue-way, as Sinclair tended to see class politics and not feminism as the principal struggle. Nevertheless, Sinclair's rejection of feminism has probably been overstated by political opponents of the later civil rights struggle. Her views on social issues were inherently connected to economic inequality, which meant she was unmoved by constitutional prospects in the Republic of Ireland: "Money was the key, if that was available then so were abortion and contraception, it is the poor who suffer at the hands of such legislation" (*Irish Press*, 30 December 1981).

Sinclair attended meetings of the West Belfast Labour Party and the Revolutionary Workers' Groups – the first Communist movement in Belfast, with a class-based analysis ("class against class") that Sinclair retained for the rest of her life. In 1932 she joined the Irish-based Flax and Other Textile Workers' Union, before breaking into public consciousness, especially in the eyes of unemployed workers, during the Outdoor Relief protests (Smylie 2016, 123). In 1933 Sinclair left for Moscow, having received an invitation to study at the International Lenin School through the recently-reconstituted Irish Communist Party (CPI). The Marxist training she received over 18 months reinforced her class analysis.

Following the sectarian riots of 1935, shattering the working-class unity of the Outdoor Relief protests three years previously, Sinclair helped Catholics settle in to the Glenard estate, Ardoyne, and for this was reproached by another Protestant woman active with a local Mission Hall. The pious lady told her "we had to stop helping these Catholics", and that if Sinclair persisted her own house would be burned down. Sinclair replied:

> 'Well, you can go ahead and burn the house down. It doesn't belong to us and we don't have much in the way of furniture or that. But, I don't think that Ewart's mill directors would be very pleased with its workers burning down its property and it might be worse for you than for us in the end.' Nobody ever came back again but for two years none of the Protestant people in Hooker Street spoke to me. (Munck and Rolston 1987, 54-55)

The mid-1930s, which saw refugees arrive in North Belfast from all over the city, was also a trying time for the Left. The CPI struggled in its own "Rotten Prod" predicament where "meetings that it held at the Custom House steps were subject to constant heckling and abuse from Catholic Action on one side and the Ulster Protestant League on the other" (Morrissey 1983, 125). Along with Billy McCullough, Sinclair was detained under the Special Powers Act in October 1940 and jailed after two Communist publications carried an article by Jack Brady of the IRA, a proscribed organization. After a successful appeal, she served just two months in the archaic Armagh Jail. Following her release she was placed under official surveillance, with her correspondence perused and copied (Goss 2018, 513).

The end of the Second World War, however, represented a high watermark for Communism in Northern Ireland. Sinclair played a key role as District Organizer and Treasurer in the campaigns and debates during the War, when the Communist Party took a broadly pro-Union stance similar to "Awkward Prods" in the Northern Ireland Labour Party. It emphasised anti-fascism in the 1945 general election, when Sinclair was one of three Communist Party candidates who polled surprisingly well (she received 4,130 votes in Cromac, in the South Belfast area) (Milotte 1984, 212; Smylie 2016, 125). After a brief hiatus in Bristol managing the Communist Party bookshop, Sinclair was made Secretary of the Belfast District and Trades Council from 1947 until her retirement in 1975 and was later credited by Irish Communist leaders for bringing the diverging north/south traditions together and making them stick (Devine 2020, 264). Well-read and fond of classical music – she had attended opera and ballet in Russia – Sinclair was a friend of the playwright Sam Thompson (1916-1965), who provided the archetypal cultural portrayal of a "Rotten Prod" with Davy Mitchell in his 1960 play *Over the Bridge* (*The Irish Times*, 25 December 1981).

In line with Communist Party operations in Ireland, Sinclair was prone to involve herself in "Popular front"-style campaigns with the aim of radicalisation, though when it comes to Civil Rights she had been involved as far back as the 1940s with the National Council of Civil Liberties. She was thus well-placed to act as chairperson of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) Executive and serve as one of its original 13-strong Committee. While

a Left-wing radical in economic terms, Sinclair's desire to maintain broad-based support for civil rights, built in part on her memories of the original "Belfast Troubles", ensured that she was cautious about the marches developing too militant a character. As she wrote in her diary: "What is wanted is a cool appraisal of the situation and, above all, that civil rights must be won for the whole working class of NI – Catholic and Protestant. If we fail to make that clear – we will be sectarian in our approach" (quoted in Smylie 2016, 128). Here she was to encounter what Austen Morgan called in his *Labour and Partition* dedication, "nationalist myopia". For urging restraint during this time, Sinclair was undermined and described as "one great reactionary bitch who is holding up the revolution" by Frank Gogarty (PRONI, D/3253), an Irish nationalist who ran a dental practice in Fortwilliam (north Belfast) and represented the Wolfe Tone Society within NICRA. This dovetailed with old internal battles between Communists and the Ultra-Leftists of People's Democracy: "It was a fight over Stalin and Trotsky all over again. The hatred that [Michael] Farrell and the others had for Betty and Edwina [Stewart] came from their indoctrination as Trostskyites, and indeed they saw this Right wing (in socialist terms) Stalinist Betty Sinclair who had to be opposed and brought down" (Interview with Erskine Holmes, Belfast, 23 July 2020).

Sinclair found fighting both "Republicans" (see Johnston 2003, 252, 255-256) and the Ultra-Left too much. By March 1969, she had resigned from the Executive with the promotion of two People's Democracy candidates and was replaced as chairperson with Gogarty, who sided with Farrell and others against the "Right-wing Stalinist Communist"[17]. Having lived through the strife of 1920, Sinclair lived to hear of equivalent shipyard expulsions and violence in 1970. Retrospectively, her resignation from the NICRA Executive meant "the labour movement lost its capacity to influence the organisation and as a result the Republicans grew in authority and influence", though Sinclair's predictions of a confrontational approach ghettoising the movement and divesting it of liberal Protestant elements proved incredibly well-founded (Morrissey 1983, 129-130). After serving on the Supplementary Benefits Commission, enacted by the Sunningdale Executive of 1974, she moved to Prague in 1976 to act as Irish representative on the editorial board of the *World Marxist Review* and lived between there and Belfast until 1979, when she returned home for good. By this time Sinclair was lonely and painfully reliant on alcohol. She died of smoke inhalation following a fire at her flat in the Cregagh area of Belfast on Christmas Day 1981.

Sinclair's "thrawn" political instincts and campaigns against unemployment brought her from beyond the usual casing of the Communist Party to a broader public consciousness, both in Ireland and internationally. This was reflected by her funeral at Carnmoney Cemetery where representatives from the USSR, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia rubbed shoulders with doyens of the Irish Labour movement (*Irish Press*, 31 December 1981)[18]. The Belfast Trades Council's association with causes such as Anti-Apartheid, the citizenship rights of Paul Robeson, and nuclear opposition stem from her time in charge (Morrissey 1983, 128). In what was claimed as her last interview, the *Irish Press* sent former Provisional IRA volunteer Dolours Price to talk with Sinclair about her life. Price's surprisingly affectionate portrait – published posthumously – captures the contradictions of Sinclair's life. The public speaking qualities

[17] NICRA's Treasurer recalled that despite her resignation from the Executive, Sinclair remained a member of the association and "continued to fight within" (Heatley 1974, 14).

[18] The latter included Irish trade union leaders Donal Nevin, Brendan Harkin, and Sam Nolan, along with Lord Billy Blease, independent socialist Belfast councillor Paddy Devlin, the Workers' Party's Tomás Mac Giolla, and historian C. Desmond Greaves.

she was known for emerged not from the Party but from being a keen listener at Sunday school, where she learned "the art of modulation, expression and word use". Classically, it was observed that "Protestant workers saw her as 'Fenian lover' and Catholics regarded her as a communist and therefore 'anti-God'". Sinclair reiterated the story of the woman who threatened her with being "burned out" of Hooker Street for helping Catholics in 1935, and Price seemed oddly sympathetic to her position in the Civil Rights movement (she had heard Sinclair speak as a schoolgirl and been impressed). Price approvingly quoted Sinclair's advice to former Chief of Staff of the IRA Cathal Goulding, that the IRA should take the guns out of his volunteers' hands and "put something in their heads" instead (Price 1981), and Sinclair wanted it to be known that she had been a Bible scholar and carried off prizes for her knowledge of it in her youth. "Having put your hand to the plough never turn back", she said.

7. Joe Law

The final profile considered in this Irish political tradition is Joe Law (1946-2016), who, like other "Rotten Prods" understood that Loyalism to the state was built into his DNA. His mother Susie thought mainly of the basic need to provide food and clothing, while his father George, a clerk in William Ewart's Linen Mill, preceded his own trajectory in starting out as a man of God, Queen, and Ulster: an Orangeman, who in his later years "fell out with them and never went back" (Law, in Hyndman 1996, 158). His father was also widely-read and enjoyed writing, which led – as so often – to the independent-thinking of "Rotten" Protestantism. Born in Bradford Street off the Shankill, Law was, like Betty Sinclair, a working-class intellectual, a committed trade unionist, and later a member of the Communist Party of Ireland. His family were immersed in a Protestant culture of trade unionism, meaning he was aware of the "Christian socialist" strain in Belfast Labour politics, with one of his uncles an election agent for the NILP's Billy Boyd. By the 1980s Law was attending meetings of groupings such as the Labour Party of Northern Ireland, but – emphasising his "Rotten Prod" credentials (a term he embraced) – he believed that the Communist Party was a better fit for him politically (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast, 26 June 2013).

Law left school at fifteen to take a job at Mackie's foundry on the Springfield Road. He realized that "I got my job because I was a Prod. But I didn't know that at the time as a young man. You just knew you were getting a start. That's what we used to call it: 'Did you get a start?'" (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast, 26 June 2013). Law went to England to work and experienced the longstanding Unionist condition where he was "just another Paddy", shocked to discover they would not play "God Save the Queen" before cinema screenings (Byers and Edwards 2016; Hyndman 1996, 160). His work experience continued to read like a roll-call of Protestant workers' history in Northern Ireland: the merchant navy and then Rolls Royce, a riveter in Shorts, and a shop steward with the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers' Union. But Law's "traumatic" trip to South Africa in the 1960s, where he witnessed the dehumanising system of Apartheid "changed my world. Being called 'Master' on board a ship, black people called me 'Master', and I was going 'What are you talking about?' Seeing a cook kicking a black fella for taking a bit of bread and having a row with him, thinking 'That's fucking not right' ". For Law, the problem was the acceptance of such practices, as in "That's the way it was. Whereas, whatever was in my thought processes, I couldn't" (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast, 26 June 2013).

Despite his travelling, "I knew that this was always where I was going to end up. Worked in England, worked in the south [of Ireland], went to sea – always knew I was coming back

here. This is me, my place – Belfast particularly" (*ibidem*). He returned home to see his place tear up at first hand, standing at the corner of Agnes Street in August 1969 watching as the west of the city burned. After a further interlude in England, he was back home again in May 1974 when the Ulster Workers' Council Strike ground Northern Ireland to a halt and collapsed the Sunningdale power-sharing Executive. He connected this with a story of meeting a Loyalist friend who served time in jail and asked him if he would fight for Ulster. At this point Law told him a story from his childhood about a kid who was waiting to march with the Orange Order bands, who fell in a pile of muck. No-one in the community had a spare jacket or pair of trousers, despite the best efforts of the mothers. A jumble of clothes was set on the unfortunate lad leading him to looking "like a liquorice all-sorts when he came back". Law told his old friend: "That's your Ulster…I was trying to explain that if we were all going to fight for something, let's fight for something better. The UWC Strike had just ended and what did the Loyalist workers do? They gave everything back to the unionist politicians!" (Law, in Hyndman 1996, 162-163). He credited its trade union impetus but noted the problem with the UWC stoppage was its class-conscious edge was offset by the desire to "maintain" the state. In Law's abiding view, "the state has to get better" – simply voicing this aim ensured "that's where I got into trouble" (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast 26 June 2013).

Despite his admission that he had once been "the bigot", Law came to challenge, as per the instinct of the "Rotten Prod" lineage, sectarianism, intimidation, and harassment (Parr, Edwards 2017). He was upset by the mistreatment of Catholics on the shop floor, who went for tea and returned to Union Jacks draped on their machines. In one case Loyalist workers held a series of wildcat strikes protesting the removal of flags and emblems from the shop floor, leading to death threats and abuse, but Law held firm in the face of it (Byers, Edwards 2016). He became an executive committee member of Belfast Trades Council and did some of his most impactful work for Counteract and then with Trademark (Robinson and Nolan 1999), the latter of which he brought into being in 2001 as a trade union-based anti-sectarian training organization. In an observation he was fond of retelling, he noted how "I got a living talking about sectarianism, but I've never met anyone who's sectarian. Nobody was bigoted. Everybody can tell me exactly who *is* sectarian though" (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast 26 June 2013). Law's straight-talking led him to the heart of the society.

Speaking at the Trademark offices off Northumberland Street in the summer of 2013, Law remained concerned by the "benign apartheid" of Northern Irish society:

> I think we're stuck. I think people actually don't know what to do here. How can we move this on? Our view, as it's always been in this organization, is education. Particularly education that tells people how they've ended up like this. Because we don't know. I left school in '61 or '62 and if you'd have said to me 'Well what do you think of partition?', I thought you meant something my Ma put in front of the scullery door. Knew about King Billy. Most Loyalists, 1690. Before that, not really sure. After it: Northern Ireland, Orange Order, marching, bands, that's us, boop, brilliant, and watch them [Catholic] fuckers. (*Ibidem*)

Law then explained how after a two-day History training course, Trademark would move people onto "Anti-sectarianism/Anti-racism" courses: "Underneath that is our function of raising class issues. The idea of class, of trade unions, and the right to be in a trade union, the right to strike" (*ibidem*). Though energised by his work and colleagues, Law found ongoing cases of sectarianism and racism in Belfast, where eventually the only recourse was for employees to leave their workplace for other jobs, a depressing challenge. This was a two-way process not

limited to intolerance from his own original community. He disdained the sectarian dimension to Provisional IRA violence and believed present-day political promotion of its "just campaign" represented a demonisation of those crushed by it. He predicted following the 1998 Belfast Agreement that Sinn Féin would embrace "neo-liberal" attitudes and be "Unionists in a green cloak" (Interview with Brenda Callaghan, Belfast, 20 August 2020).

When the "Flag Protests" blew up in Belfast in December 2012, spurred by the democratic vote of Belfast City Council to fly the Union Jack on seventeen designated days rather than all-year round, some on the Left in Scotland and Ireland denounced the "Fascist" elements within Loyalism. Law confronted this attitude:

> I says 'Listen these people aren't fascists. Don't get that into your ideas and write this whole community off as Fascist – it's not'. The Fascists never took a hold here, the National Front never really took a hold here. There's people in that community have a very strong nationalist British identity, but it's just not as simple as that. Yes these people can be won to Far-Right ideology and super-nationalism; but they also can be won back in class politics as well. We've seen that in the past now. All right it didn't survive, but that's what you have to think about. We can't wipe a whole community out here and think it doesn't exist, or is not of worth. If you put people down as a group with no culture, what worth are they? (*Ibidem*)

Law in turn spoke about organizing events with the leaders of the Flag protests to engage them. Little was reciprocated, but as a point of principle he wanted to reach them, despite the fact they were his opposite.

Law married beyond the tribe, meeting fellow trade unionist Brenda Callaghan at an Anti-Apartheid event in Belfast. They wed in 1987 and would host South African activists in their home, and he would often mention to her his old journey to work at Mackie's, passing through both the Shankill and Catholic working-class areas: "He said you were walking through Protestant houses and then Catholic houses, and he said they were the same two-up, two-downs with the water running down the walls and failing schools." His aspiration was to "get people to stop worrying about their identity and worry about how they lived" (Interview with Brenda Callaghan, Belfast, 20 August 2020). Law was also passionate about preserving the memory of those who joined the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War and defined his own Republican aspirations not in terms of sectarian armed struggle but after the example of the United Irishmen, who he read widely on (Hyndman 1996, 166). Joe Law passed away, quite suddenly, in September 2016 (*The Irish Times*, 26 November 2016). "See when I go I want banner flags, the works, the whole fucking lot. No fucking messing about", he had said, and this he received with the barrage of large Red flags amid the black cortege at his funeral at Roselawn's Cemetery on 4 October 2016. The funeral notice read: "Family flowers only please. Donations if desired to Cuba Solidarity".

8. Conclusion

Though this article has explained the violence of 1920 and profiled the "Rotten Prods" of subsequent years, there are others. Andy Barr (1913-2004), who was active in multiple large trade unions and the Communist Party (Devine 2004), and Madge Davison (1949-1991) were similarly in this mould. Davison grew up in Pittsburg Street off the Shore Road, but became assistant organiser for the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, where she knew and looked up to Betty Sinclair. As with other "Rotten Prods", she was forced to move homes from the Loyalist north Belfast area of her upbringing to Lenadoon, west Belfast, because of her personal and political associations (as a Communist civil rights supporter who married a Dublin

trade unionist). Despite this, Davison was "very proud of her Presbyterian background", seeing "no clash between that and the ideals of universal Civil Rights and Equality for which she so strongly stood" (Bradley 2011). Like Joe Law, far from renouncing her Protestant background, she drew attention to the United Irishmen heritage.

Though not prevalent in organizations that represented the political "majority" of Protestant opinion, Rotten Prods are a notable tradition in their own dissenting capacity. Henry Patterson's ultimate argument relating to 1920 – that the shipyard workforce was, against stereotypes of a sectarian bloc, actually "diverse in both economic and political terms" (Patterson 2019, 1) is illustrated by the Rotten Prods themselves. The case of James Baird remains instructive. After leaving Belfast for Waterford and finding himself involved in the Farm strike and unrest of 1923, his experience of being thrown in the river by Belfast Loyalists transitioned to being thrown in gaol by the Free State government:

> Baird is regarded by the Free State Government in the same way as he was regarded by the Six-County government: they know that all Governments are much the same. But even our Government might have had the wit to realise that an already bitter dispute between farmers and farm labourers can only be still more embittered by the arbitrary arrest of the labourers' representative. (Anonymous 1923, 6)

Baird was one of three anti-partitionist Labour candidates in the 1921 election to the first Northern Ireland parliament. As all were Protestants, this made them "all the more reprehensible in the eyes of those Loyalists to whom they were the archetypal 'Lundies'" (Walker 1984, 19)[19]. They faced attacks and intimidation on the campaign, with one Ulster Hall meeting charged by a crowd. Having predicted that partition would lead to emigration of workers, Baird went to Australia the year after his release from prison and never returned to Ireland.

Betty Sinclair lived the latter part of her life in melancholia, her scabrous diary providing evidence of her distinction from the working-class Loyalist area where she lived. In hindsight some might find her private barbs amusing (especially at the expense of celebrated personalities in People's Democracy), but this could not hide the fact that she was politically and personally isolated (Smylie 2016, 129). Imprisoned along the way by the Stormont government, she then found herself out of step with the Civil Rights movement through her "broad based" anti-sectarian approach, which was formed by her actual memories of the 1920s and 1930s. In August 1969 her childhood home in Hooker Street was burned, the fire of the start of the Troubles triggering a memory of her father putting her and her siblings to bed "with blankets over the windows to stop bullets that were being spat out around the area". She estimated that "we all lived to know something of the history of ourselves and our country (we left the unionist fold – we were never committed)" (quoted in Smylie 2016, 121). Joe Law confirmed that during the Troubles, unless you were willing to "live your life quietly" as he did before he got married and moved out, the situation would be dangerous. Law identified that even in "post-conflict" Northern Ireland, "The problem within Loyalist communities is if you criticise the state, then you're seen as an enemy of the state. That's what happened to me in the early-1970s. It's harder, a hundred times harder being radical, moving to the Left within Loyalist communities, because you have to leave it all behind. It's easy in Nationalist communities." By the end of his life, Law "couldn't go on the Shankill for a pint, no I wouldn't feel happy at all" (Interview with Joe Law, Belfast 26 June 2013).

[19] "Lundy" is a Loyalist term of abuse meaning "traitor". The other two candidates were John Hanna and Harry Midgley.

It is therefore clear that, unlike "Awkward Prods" and the moderate leaders of the NILP, the more radical lineage explored in this article could not exist comfortably within a pro-Union, reformist environment for very long. Harry Midgley exemplified how one could respond to similar experiences to Baird by adopting a pro-unionist Labour posture that still made the Unionist Party uncomfortable. Initially prominent in the NILP, before founding his own Commonwealth Labour Party, Midgley's awkwardness ultimately dissolved into Unionist ministerialship (Walker 2004, 114-115). Unionism could absorb such personas and welcome them into the fold in a way they never could the Rotten Prods. Despite being one of the minorities to lose out post-1921, the latter profile is an ongoing project. To some it represents a badge of honour, though its derogatory epithet enrages literalists of Northern Ireland politics to this day; especially those conventionally glum in the largest parties of Unionism. There were those who, facing the threat of expulsion and intimidation, persevered as Rotten Prods and continue today its historical vein.

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Irish Nationalism as an Inspiration for American Zionists in the Early Twentieth Century: As Exemplified by Boston Lawyer Louis D. Brandeis's Speeches and Writings

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Abstract:

At the turn of the twentieth century, in light of increasing antisemitism and assimilationism, a growing number of American Jews discovered Zionism as a tool of resistance. Boston lawyer and later Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis was one of the first prominent supporters of Zionism in the US. While Brandeis's approach to Zionism was influenced by European Zionist thinkers, he drew inspiration from non-Jewish independence movements too. Brandeis repeatedly referred to the Irish nationalist movement and offered the Irish experience as a model for Jews to realize their dream of an independent Jewish nation in Palestine. This paper will analyze speeches and writings by Brandeis written in the second half of the 1910s. An article on this particular aspect of the intersection of Irish and Jewish history might be especially helpful since today the Irish independence movement is usually compared to the Palestinian resistance movement rather than to early Zionism.

Keywords: Antisemitism, Assimilation, Irish Nationalism, United States, Zionism

1. Introduction: Jewish Immigrants Facing the Melting Pot

The second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century were "in a way the most

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important decades in American Jewish history", to quote historian Jacob Marcus (1996, 203). In this time frame, over two million Jewish immigrants arrived in the US. Most of them came from the Russian territories in eastern Europe, fleeing from pogroms and seeking a less oppressive society. New Jewish institutions were established, and pre-existing ones were extended; the number of congregations increased rapidly. By the 1920s, Jewish individuals had occupied virtually all political offices except for the presidency. At the time, there was probably no other country more hospitable to Jews than the US. Eastern European Jewish immigrants celebrated New York as the "promised city" (Sarna 2004, 151-154).

Despite this promise, Jewish immigrants faced several challenges. They experienced discrimination in the job market, as historian Deborah Dwork has shown in her examination of migrant Jews on the Lower East Side of New York (1986). But they also had to face challenges in the realm of integration. The American political and intellectual elite endorsed a model of ethnic integration known as the "melting pot", which aimed at "melting together" the different elements of a heterogenous society into a common, more homogenous culture. At first sight, this model might seem different than assimilationist policies, where the non-dominant group is expected to give up its original traits and adapt the dominant group's traits. Such assimilationism was practiced most notably in central European countries like the German states and the Austrian Empire (Giddens 2009, 643-644; Langer 2020). Many Americans believed that their melting pot model was more progressive than that (Gordon 1964, 121-122).

However, in reality, the melting pot model did not change the majority's cultural and political hegemony. In particular, those immigrants who wanted to keep their traditional expressions of cultural and religious identity, like many Jews, found it difficult to "melt" into the Anglo-Protestant hegemonic culture. Though the United States was juridically speaking non-Christian, the overwhelming majority of the population was affiliated with various Christian, mostly Protestant, churches. Christianity, especially in its Protestant forms, set the norm. Jews, too, were expected to conform to the Christian-Protestant way of life (Marcus 1996, 203; Diner 2004, 166). For this reason, contemporary sociologists claim that the melting pot model was a form of assimilationism (Joppke 1999, 147; Healey 2010 [2004], 49; Zerubavel 2012, 108; Langer 2021). While some Jews were willing to follow the path of the melting pot, others were looking for strategies of resistance (Wiener Cohen 2003, 23). At the turn of the twentieth century, an increasing number of American Jews chose a cultural and political strategy to resist the melting pot assimilationism: Zionism (Bornstein 2011, 16).

2. Resisting Assimilation in the US: Jewish and Irish Nationalism

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Zionist movement had become a relevant factor in the Jewish communities of Europe, especially those of eastern Europe (Stanislawski 2017, 34). Nonetheless, the movement did not have an easy start in the US. For decades, the American Jewish establishment was overtly non-Zionist, if not anti-Zionist. They frowned upon the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine: their Zion and "promised land" was America. For the Reform Jewish organizations, "the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect" (Medoff 2002, 22) was the realization of the messianic dreams, not "the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state" (Dollinger 2018, 152-153). The influential American Jewish Committee (AJC) observed with worry the growth of Zionism, especially among the Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe arriving in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century (Medoff, Waxman 2012, 14; Kibler 2015, 44).

Zionism became more significant in American Jewish life only on the eve of the First World War, just as the antisemitism facing Europe's Jews became more visible and the US introduced immigration restrictions limiting the number of eastern European Jews who could enter the country (Gurock 2013, xiii-xiv). In order to gain more credibility within the Jewish community, and equally the wider American society, these early American Zionists often compared their agenda with those of other American immigrant groups' nationalist movements. This was especially true for the Irish independence movement. It was not just the similar memory of persecution and oppression in Europe, living in diaspora and the comparable experiences of struggling with anti-Irish/anti-Catholic and with antisemitic sentiments in the US that made Zionists take note of Irish nationalists (Bernstein 2017, 9); in their eyes, the Irish movement was the first prominent form of nationalism that set an example for other anticolonial efforts throughout the British Empire. This interest in the other was also true for Irish nationalists, who were themselves inspired by Zionism. For instance, in 1903, after returning from a journey through eastern European Jewish settlements, Irish republican activist Michael Davitt said that he was "a convinced believer in the remedy of Zionism" (Kibler 2015, 41-42; Bernstein 2017, 12).

From a Jewish point of view, "the Irish represented the ideal type of a small, oppressed, stateless nation", historian Judah Bernstein explains (2017, 8). Although antisemitism did indeed influence republican politics in Ireland, as historian Brian Hanley notes, it played a smaller role in the Irish nationalist movement in the US (2020). This was especially true in comparison to the independence movements of other immigrant communities, such as that of Polish Americans, for which antisemitism seemed to be more significant. Besides, "the American Irish had established a strong and visible nationalist movement in America" (Bernstein 2017, 8). Irish Americans were greatly interested in the struggles for statehood in Ireland. In fact, Irish nationalism may have been stronger in America than in Ireland itself, as a national consciousness increased among these immigrant groups after arriving in the multiethnic US. For example, Oscar Wilde was perceived as an Englishman in England but as Irish on his 1882 lecture tour in Canada and the US; it was in North America that Wilde rediscovered his Irishness (Mendelsohn 1993, 132-133).

Despite the similarities between the Irish and Jewish nationalist movements, there was a key difference: Jewish immigrants to the US did not come from Palestine like the Irish did from Ireland. Most American Jews had never even been to the Middle East, nor had their ancestors going several generations back. Nevertheless, patterns of Jewish support for the creation of a Jewish society in Palestine were comparable to Irish Americans' campaigning for an independent Irish state. The representatives of these national movements were aware of their similarities and they repeatedly pointed to each other as a source of legitimation (133). Some major Zionist leaders in the first decades of the twentieth century expressed their sympathies with the Irish cause. In the United States, there was one Zionist leader who was especially noted for repeatedly referring to the Irish experience and its struggles in his speeches and articles and for connecting the Jewish and Zionist narrative to that of Irish nationalism. This person was Louis D. Brandeis (Kibler 2015, 42).

There is considerable literature available on Brandeis's life and work that I made use of while developing this paper, such as the Brandeis biographies written by Jeffrey Rosen (2016), Philippa Strum (1994) and Melvin I. Urofsky (2009). However, none of these monographs detail Brandeis's approach to Irish nationalism. Works by Jonathan D. Sarna (2004), Melvin I. Urofsky (1995) and Naomi Wiener Cohen (2003) formed the basis for this paper's depiction of American Jewish history and the history of Zionism in the US. I also made use of the 2018 volume *Irish Questions and Jewish Questions: Crossovers in Culture*, edited by Aidan Beatty and

Dan O'Brien, who gathered a wide range of contributions dealing with the intersection of Irish and Jewish history, mostly from the perspective of Irish historiography. While these and other historians addressed the relationship between Irish nationalism and Zionism, this area "remains a desideratum", to quote Judah Bernstein (2017, 27), whose research article provides an initial overview of this field. My paper's intention is to contribute to this under-researched subject and situate it within American Jewish historiography. First, I will present Brandeis's approach to Zionism within a framework of ethnic integration. Then, I will analyze a selection of his speeches and articles from the years 1914-1916 where he made comparisons between Jewish and Irish nationalism.

3. The People's Lawyer

Louis D. Brandeis was born in 1856, in Louisville, Kentucky. His parents, Adolph Brandeis and Frederika Dembitz, immigrated to the United States from Prague, Austrian Empire, today in Czechia. They were part of the migration wave of the so-called Forty-Eighters, who left their homes in central Europe after the failed revolutions of 1848. Adolph and Frederika were both assimilated German-speaking middle-class Jews who celebrated the major Christian holidays, treating them as secular events (Strum 1994, 5). They were committed liberals and abolitionists who raised their children to be idealists based on high German culture. Louis read and appreciated the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller; his favorite composers were Ludwig van Beethoven and Robert Schumann (Klebanow, Jonas 2003, 55-57). However, there were also more traditional Jews in Louis's extended family, such as his uncle Lewis Naphtali Dembitz, who practiced law in Louisville. Unlike other members of the extended Brandeis family, Dembitz was religiously observant and involved in Zionist activities. Brandeis later changed his middle name from David to Dembitz in honor of his uncle (Urofsky 2009, 18).

After a short stay in Europe, where Brandeis spent three years at a secondary school, Annen-Realschule, in Dresden, Saxony, he went on to study at Harvard Law School, from which he graduated at the age of 20 (Strum 1994, 12, 23-24). Following his graduation, Brandeis settled in Boston, where he founded a law firm and eventually became a nationally recognized lawyer through his work on progressive social causes. He fought against powerful corporations, monopolies and corruption, all of which he felt were detrimental to American values and culture. He devised the Massachusetts plan to protect small wage-earners through savings bank life insurance after a disclosure of insurance fraud in 1906. In 1907, he launched a campaign to prevent the banker J.P. Morgan from monopolizing New England's railroads (Urofsky 2009, 281). In 1910, Brandeis emerged as the chief figure in the Pinchot-Ballinger investigation that helped define the US conservation movement (Rosen 2016, 51-60). When his family's finances became secure, he began devoting most of his time to public causes and was later dubbed the "People's Attorney" or the "People's Lawyer" (Strum 1994, 63; Rosen 2016, 42). This was also the time when he began publishing opinion articles in magazines and giving public speeches. Brandeis stood at the front line of reform politics. In 1910, he joined the Progressive movement that sought to oust the conservative Republicans, and two years later he served as adviser to the Democratic presidential nominee, Woodrow Wilson, who eventually defeated incumbent Republican President William Howard Taft (Wiener Cohen 2003, 60).

Brandeis was an agnostic secularist and did not observe Jewish religious law (Sarna 2004, 204). Yet, he maintained personal ties with other Jews in Boston. His close ties with other Boston Jews might have also been caused by social exclusion in the city. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most Boston Jews were excluded by the Protestant elite of the city, who

were referred to as the "Brahmin Caste of New England" (Farrell 1993, 1). These "Brahmins" were upper-class Protestant Bostonians who retained their Puritan settler-colonial ancestors' emphasis on the individual and self-reliance. Many Brahmins were alarmed by the influx of Jewish and Catholic immigrants and advocated restrictions on immigration from eastern and southern Europe (Strum 1994, 16, 29)[1]. Brandeis, too, experienced social exclusion tinged with antisemitism and therefore did not have much choice but to socialize with other socially excluded people (Gal 1989, 67, 69; Pearce, Winer, Jenab 2017, 341). However, Boston was home not only to Brahmins and Jews but also to other groups, such as Irish immigrants.

From the second half of the nineteenth century through the first two decades of the twentieth century, around 3.5 million Irish immigrants arrived in the US (Dolan 1985). The Irish immigrant population rose especially after agricultural distress in Ireland in the 1880s. The Irish, too, faced severe discrimination in the United States in the form of "political Anglo-Saxonism" (Jacobson 1995, 188). Woodrow Wilson, himself a Scottish American Presbyterian, shared anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiments (Shelley 2006, 585). Irish immigration disproportionately affected Boston, a city that had laid claim to a considerable Irish immigrant community even before the Irish mass migration at the turn of the twentieth century. By this time, the Irish represented a quarter of all of Boston's inhabitants, making the city's Irish population the largest in the US; indeed, the Irish played a more significant role in Boston than in any other major US city (Johnson 2015, 14-15)[2].

In Boston, both Jewish and Catholic immigrants faced severe discrimination. As historian Marlynn S. Johnson notes, "Boston was often at the fore-front of nativist political organizing, as well as being an intellectual center for those advocating immigration restriction" (2015, 27). Conflicts erupted not only between "established" Protestant Bostonians and non-Protestant immigrants but also among the various immigrant communities, especially those who belonged to the working class (31). Jonathan D. Sarna has written on the tensions and hostility between Irish and Jewish immigrants in Boston (2005 [1995]). But despite ongoing conflicts, there were also attempts to foster an alliance between the Jewish and Irish communities. When Harvard University's leadership instructed the admissions committee "to segregate Jews, and to some extent Irishmen, in certain dormitories", the few locations with concentrations of Jewish students received antisemitic nicknames like "Kike's Peak" (Bornstein 2011, 178). It was Boston's Irish Catholic mayor James Michael Curley – a politician known for challenging Boston's ward bosses and the Democratic party's Anglo-Saxon Protestant leadership – who spoke out against Harvard's antisemitic barriers in admission and residency:

> These people seek to bar men because of an accident of birth. This is the most intolerable thing that could be done by any educational institution. […] God gave them their parents and their race as He has given me mine. All of us under the constitution are guaranteed equality, without regard to race, creed or color. […] If the Jew is barred to-day, the Italian will be to-morrow. Then the Spaniard and Pole, and at some future date the Irish. ("Intolerable, Says Mayor", 1922, 6)

Similarly, Irish journalist Harry Craig advocated for Irish-Jewish solidarity by suggesting that the wave of Jewish immigrants had come to the US "as the Irish had come" and called attention to their common experience of exclusion and bigotry, as in the signs "No Irish or Jews

[1] For a further discussion on the relationship between the Brahmins and immigrants, see the classic study by Barbara Miller Solomon (2013 [1956]).

[2] On the history of the Boston Irish, I recommend Handlin (1991 [1941]).

here" and their oppression by the KKK. "The problem of the American Jews and the American Irish were intimately woven into each other—the K.K.K. made it so—and as such it should have led to some mutual sympathy and some understanding", argued Craig (Bornstein 2011, 198). Jewish-Irish alliances were not only a matter of political debate, as Jews and Irish would sometimes find themselves in the same social spaces as well. This was also true for Brandeis, whose daughter befriended Mary Switzer, a second-generation Irish American. Switzer spent "considerable time" (Verville 2009, 15) with the Brandeis family and was affected by the views of Brandeis. Brandeis might have influenced her to pursue a career in government in Washington, D.C. upon graduation. In time, Switzer became a public administrator and social reformer best remembered for her work on expanding vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities (*ibidem*).

The large Irish presence in Boston and the local Irish community's support for Irish Home Rule might have contributed to Boston becoming a center of early American Zionist activities. The local Jewish newspaper, *The Jewish Advocate*, was established in 1902 as a Zionist paper and was edited by British Jewish journalist Jacob de Haas. The paper compared Jewish and Irish nationalism on several occasions. De Haas himself published a series of articles entitled "Evidences of Jewish Nationalism", in which he suggested American Zionists could learn from "the cause of the Irish-American dreaming of a free Ireland and the Irish desire for home rule or State rights" (1907a, 1). De Haas also asserted that the English "could not absorb […] the Irish" (1907b, 1), just as the Romans and the Spanish could not absorb the Jews. The interest was mutual. At a 1915 mass gathering of American Zionists at Mechanics Hall in Boston, Irish American local politician E.J. Slattery, Mayor Curley's representative, said in an address to the crowd that "he was a better American for having fought for Irish Home Rule, and the Jew who strives for Jewish 'home rule' is a better American and is more respected by the world", as *The Jewish Advocate* reported ("Mass Meeting Unique Demonstration by Twenty Thousand" 1915, 11).

After the 1907 death of Lewis Dembitz, Brandeis learned from de Haas that his uncle was involved in American Zionist organizing (Strum 1994, 231). With this new information on Dembitz – and his personal experience with social exclusion in Boston – Brandeis's Jewish identity became more relevant to him. He was already 50 years old at this point (Urofsky 2009, 407). There was another key experience that contributed to Brandeis's increasing interest in his Jewishness: in 1910, Brandeis was involved in a legal case surrounding the strike by New York's garment workers, who were largely eastern European Jewish immigrants. Brandeis was impressed by the idealism of these Jewish workers and their commitment to democracy and social justice. He arrived at the conclusion that the ideals he had believed to be American were in fact "age-old ideals of the Jews" (Wiener Cohen 2003, 60). In the same year, he announced publicly his sympathy for the Zionist movement. He saw the establishment of an independent Jewish state as a way of solving "the Jewish problem" (68-69) he had experienced in Boston and as a tool to realize the New York Jewish laborer's high morals. Brandeis imagined a Jewish Palestine that would serve as a laboratory for testing new principles of economic and social organization that could be applied also in the United States (59-60).

Over the following years, Brandeis devoted time and money to the Zionist cause. The outbreak of the First World War provided the impetus for even more commitment from his side: the war divided European Zionists who supported different sides in the conflict and this disunion rendered the World Zionist Organization, a group rooted in Europe, impotent (Ettinger 1976, 989). Filling the gap left by the WZO, Brandeis and the American Zionists assumed a larger responsibility independent of their European counterparts. In 1914, they established

the Provisional Executive Committee for Zionist Affairs (PEC) in New York to run Zionist affairs on behalf of the WZO (Urofsky 2009, 405). The new committee elected Brandeis as its chairman, making Brandeis the leading figure in American Zionism. "The conversion of the nationally famous 'People's Lawyer' Louis Brandeis to Zionism and his subsequent promotion to the chairmanship of the Provisional Committee for General Zionist Affairs in 1914 served as a prime catalyst for Zionism's growth", observes historian Jonathan D. Sarna (2004, 203-204). "The fact that a person of his stature stamped Zionism with his seal of approval," argues Sarna, "gave the movement instant legitimacy" (204). Brandeis's "conversion" set off a chain reaction, bringing to Zionism other well-established American Jews who were likewise not religiously observant. They all found in Zionism a way of synthesizing their Progressive ideals with their latent Jewish attachments (*ibidem*). By 1917, Brandeis's leadership had increased American Zionist membership tenfold, to 200,000 members. American Jews became the largest financial supporters of the global Zionist movement, surpassing its European partners (Urofsky 2005, 120).

4. Zionism as an Answer to Assimilationism and Antisemitism

As head of the PEC, Brandeis laid out his vision for American Zionism in a 1915 speech, entitled "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It", delivered to the Conference of Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis in New York City. This speech has been regarded as Brandeis's "most comprehensive statement on Zionism" (Brandeis 1942, 12; Rosen 2016, 160). It is especially remarkable that he delivered this speech to an audience of Reform rabbis, since the Reform Jewish movement was officially anti-/non-Zionistic until the movement's 1937 Columbus Platform, and only a few Reform rabbis were sympathetic to Zionism (Medoff, Waxman 2012, 49-50). At the beginning of his statement, Brandeis identified the so-called Jewish problem in an assimilationist society. Brandeis recalled that "[w]hen religious toleration was proclaimed, the solution of the Jewish Problem seemed in sight. When the so-called rights of man became widely recognized, and the equal right of all citizens to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness began to be enacted into positive law, the complete emancipation of the Jews seemed at hand" (1919, 5-6). Unfortunately, Brandeis observed, post-Enlightenment Western societies recognized only the rights of individuals and failed to acknowledge collective rights: "Enlightened countries grant to the individual equality before the law; but they fail still to recognize the equality of whole peoples or nationalities. We seek to protect as individuals those constituting a minority; but we fail to realize that protection cannot be complete unless group equality also is recognized" (7). To put it in other words: Jews in "Western" societies were welcome only if they left behind their Jewishness and became "Western". Belonging to a distinct ethnic or religious group was against these societies' self-understanding.

The observation that post-Enlightenment Western societies did not treat collective rights in the same way as individual ones was not new. German-Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn had warned already in 1783 that the political liberalism emerging from the Enlightenment would not solve the "Jewish problem" (1844, 676-677). Mendelssohn, to whose ideas the Haskalah, the "Jewish Enlightenment" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is indebted, wrote that the new doctrine of tolerance would in reality include Jews only if they assimilate. Mendelssohn's warnings were neglected by most central European Jews, who believed the Enlightenment's promises and chose the path of assimilation – but it became obvious a century later that Mendelssohn had been right, resulting at the end of the nineteenth century in a politicization of European Jewry. We can illustrate this process of politicization through the

example of the "father of modern political Zionism", writer and activist Theodor Herzl.

At the beginning of his career Herzl embraced the complete desertion of Jewish identity, thus the program of Jewish assimilation. He came from an acculturated Hungarian-Jewish family, grew up in Vienna and wanted to be a fully recognized member of Austro-Hungarian society. As a student, Herzl was a member of a pan-German nationalist fraternity that promoted the disappearance of Jewry into Germandom (Kornberg 1993, 51). He gave his son, whom he did not circumcise, the typical Germanic name of Hans; they celebrated Christmas at home (Penslar 2020, 97). However, as Herzl became gradually aware of mounting antisemitism in Europe, he came to realize that Jews, no matter how assimilated they were, would always be perceived by antisemites as "the others". Herzl came to reject his early ideas regarding Jewish assimilation and began to believe instead that Jews must physically remove themselves from Europe. Thus, he came up with the idea of the *Judenstaat*, a state for Jews, where Jews can live the way they want to live (Kornberg 1993, 20). In developing the agenda of Jewish nationalism – that is, political Zionism – Herzl himself was inspired by the Irish nationalist movement. Herzl applauded the Irish nationalist politician Charles Stewart Parnell and viewed himself as "the Parnell of the Jews" (Kibler 2015, 42).

It was Jacob de Haas, Herzl's emissary to the US, who introduced Brandeis to the ideas of Herzl and political Zionism (Rosen 2016, 149). For Herzl, European antisemitism was the most important argument for the creation of a Jewish national home outside of Europe. Brandeis also justified his support for an independent state for Jews with the rise of antisemitism in Europe:

> The anti-Semitic movement arose in Germany a year after the granting of universal suffrage. It broke out violently in France, and culminated in the Dreyfus case, a century after the French Revolution had brought 'emancipation.' It expressed itself in England through the Aliens Act, within a few years after the last of Jewish disabilities had been there removed by law. (1919, 6)

> The "Dreyfus case" was an 1894 event in which the French artillery officer Alfred Dreyfus was falsely convicted of treason. Dreyfus was an assimilated Jew, and his trial was surrounded by a virulent antisemitic campaign. (Stanislawski 2017, 23)

Even though Brandeis justified his Zionism most of all with antisemitism in Europe, antisemitism in the US might have also played a role in his "conversion" to Zionism. Antisemitism was not only a European phenomenon. Jews might have enjoyed the privileges and duties of citizenship in the US long before they did in most European states; notable American leaders might have welcomed Jews since Washington and might have repeatedly condemned antisemitic violence in the US and worldwide (Marcus 1996, 185, 202-203) – nevertheless, especially toward the end of the nineteenth century, the discourse on Jews in America took an antisemitic turn and began to imply that Jews would never be able to become fully American and lose their "racial identity". Racial theory was widespread in both Europe and the US at that time and antisemitic conspiracy theories were disseminated in the public, culminating in the 1915 lynching of young Jewish businessman Leo Frank. Antisemitic hate became even more challenging in the 1920s with the publication of Henry Ford's antisemitic pamphlets, the resurgence of the KKK and immigration restrictions aimed at – among others – Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe (Dinnerstein 1991, 214; Diner 2004, 169-171).

Brandeis himself had to face antisemitic biases when he was nominated for the US Supreme Court in 1916. According to the legal historian Lucas Powe, much of the opposition to Brandeis's appointment stemmed from blatant antisemitism (2009). Former US President

William Howard Taft accused Brandeis of using his Judaism to curry political favor, and Taft's Attorney General George W. Wickersham referred to Brandeis's supporters as "a bunch of Hebrew uplifters", suggesting a joint Jewish agenda to gain influence on the Supreme Court (Carchman 2005, 157-158). Though Brandeis focused on antisemitism in Europe, he reflected on antisemitism in the US as well. In his above-mentioned 1915 speech, Brandeis explicitly addressed the "Saratoga incident", when a hotel in Saratoga, New York, refused accommodation to the Jewish banker Joseph Seligman and his family in 1877 (1919, 6). The hotel management argued that Christians did not want to stay in the same place as Jews (Pak 2013, 86-87). Brandeis reminded his audience that "we [Americans] too have a Jewish question" (1919, 6). On the other hand, Brandeis might have benefited from the emerging debate on antisemitism too: Brandeis biographer Melvin I. Urofsky has suggested that some senators might have supported Brandeis's nomination to the high court only because they feared being labeled antisemitic (2009, 440).

Even if antisemitism in the US did not play a key role in Brandeis's Zionist argumentation, the melting pot assimilationism certainly did. Brandeis warned against assimilation, for example, in his 1915 article "A Call to the Educated Jew", which was published in the first issue of the Jewish periodical *The Menorah Journal*. Brandeis was a consulting editor of the journal, which sought to advance a line of creative solutions to the dilemmas of the time. The *Menorah Journal*'s contributing authors were among the most important thinkers of the period, including Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, Rabbi Judah Magnes – who was involved in the Irish Relief funds during 1921 (Hanley 2020, 69) – Rabbi Solomon Schechter and Zionist leaders Henrietta Szold and Rabbi Stephen Wise (Kaufman 2012, 61-62; Langer 2021). In his article, Brandeis argued that:

> We are bound not only to use worthily our great inheritance, but to preserve, and if possible, augment it; and then transmit it to coming generations. The fruit of three thousand years of civilization and a hundred generations of suffering may not be sacrificed by us. It will be sacrificed if dissipated. Assimilation is national suicide. And assimilation can be prevented only by preserving national characteristics and life as other peoples, large and small, are preserving and developing their national life. Shall we with our inheritance do less than the Irish […]? And must we not, like them, have a land where the Jewish life may be naturally led, the Jewish language spoken, and the Jewish spirit prevail? Surely we must, and that land is our fathers' land; it is Palestine. (1915, 17-18)

This *Menorah Journal* article by Brandeis was not the only time that the Boston lawyer referred to the Irish experience as parallel to the Jewish one. Throughout his years as a Zionist leader and public intellectual, Brandeis made comparisons between the Jewish and Irish national movements. He saw in the Irish case a model of respectable ethnic nationalism, "one that easily blended philanthropic support for the homeland from afar with patriotism to America, and one practiced by an established minority" (Bernstein 2017, 17). He emphasized the similarities between the two peoples, including the distinct culture and language, the thousands of years of history, the experience of oppression and the yearning for self-governance. Besides, both Ireland and Mandatory Palestine were occupied by the British. In what follows, this paper will present some aspects of the comparison to be made between Jewish and Irish nationalists, as perceived by Brandeis. I want to note in advance that there was a difference between the "Home Rule" campaign and the more radical forms of Irish nationalism that became dominant following the 1916 Easter Rising. Brandeis was mainly engaging with supporters of "constitutional" Irish nationalism rather than separatists.

5. A Zionist in the Diaspora

Herzl's thinking certainly had a great impact on Brandeis, but there was a significant difference between these two men in their approach to Zionism. Brandeis did not wish to physically remove himself from the US and to move to this new Jewish society in Palestine. This was true for most American Zionists, in fact. The American Jewish nationalists' unwillingness to move to Palestine can be compared to most Irish American nationalists' behavior regarding Ireland: most of them did not wish to move (back) to their country of origin and to physically be there to fight for independence. They did not return to the independent Irish state once it was established either, however actively they had supported its creation. The great majority of them regarded the US as their home and had no desire to leave it. Historian Ezra Mendelssohn has called the nationalism of Irish and Jewish Americans "platonic" (1993, 133). Brandeis felt that, instead of encouraging American Jews to move to Palestine, the re-creation of a Jewish national homeland could be the solution to the "Jewish Problem" in their American home – that is, to assimilation and antisemitism:

> The Zionists seek to establish this home in Palestine because they are convinced that the undying longing of Jews for Palestine is a fact of deepest significance; that it is a manifestation in the struggle for existence by an ancient people which has established its right to live, a people whose three thousand years of civilization has produced a faith, culture and individuality which enable it to contribute largely in the future, as it has in the past, to the advance of civilization; and that it is not a right merely but a duty of the Jewish nationality to survive and develop. They believe that only in Palestine can Jewish life be fully protected from the forces of disintegration; that there alone can the Jewish spirit reach its full and natural development; and that by securing for those Jews who wish to settle there the opportunity to do so, not only those Jews, but all other Jews will be benefited, and that the long perplexing Jewish Problem will, at last, find solution. (1919, 15)

For Brandeis, the creation of a Jewish state was the best way to revive "the Jewish spirit" that was threatened by forces of assimilation. This claim was especially popular among adherents of cultural Zionism, who imagined a Jewish spiritual center in Israel would form an exemplary model for the dispersed world of Jewry in exile to imitate (Stanislawski 2017, 20-21; Langer 2021). Cultural Zionists in America repeatedly emphasized that Judaism was a distinct "nationality" that must be embraced. This aspect provided the basis for Brandeis's argumentation. In the 1915 speech "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It", Brandeis referred to Trinity College's Walter Alison Phillips, who was a specialist in the history of Europe in the nineteenth century. Brandeis (1919, 11) quoted from Phillips's article "Europe and the Problem of Nationality", which was published in *The Edinburgh Review* in 1915. Here, Phillips explains that it is "race, language, religion, common habitat, common conditions, mode of life and manners, political association" that make up distinct nationalities – but these elements are not always all present at the same time. "A common habitat and common conditions are doubtless powerful influences at times in determining nationality", Philipps argues, "but what part do they play in that of the Jews or the Greeks, or the Irish in dispersion?" (1915, 28).

Phillips was a committed Unionist who opposed Irish Home Rule (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1923). Yet, his acknowledgment of a distinct Jewish national identity that was in line with other, more "established" (1919, 6) nationalities like that of the Irish seems to have uplifted Brandeis: "See how this high authority [Phillips] assumes without question that the Jews are, despite their dispersion, a distinct nationality; and he groups us with the Greeks or the Irish, two other peoples of marked individuality" (11). There can be no doubt, Brandeis asserted, that Jews, who amounted at the time of his speech to about 14,000,000 people, are

"an extensive aggregate of persons" and "conscious of a community of sentiments, experiences and qualities which make us *feel* ourselves a distinct people" (*ibidem*). Brandeis asserted that Jews were a nationality within nations – and to justify his assertion he drew parallels once again with the Irish case:

> The difference between a nation and a nationality is clear; but it is not always observed. Likeness between members is the essence of nationality; but the members of a nation may be very different. A nation may be composed of many nationalities, as some of the most successful nations are. An instance of this is the British nation, with its division into English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish at home; with the French in Canada; and, throughout the Empire, scores of other nationalities. Other examples are furnished by the Swiss nation with its German, French and Italian sections; by the Belgian nation composed of Flemings and Walloons; and by the American nation which comprises nearly all the white nationalities. The unity of a nationality is a fact of nature. The unifying of a nation is largely the work of man. (1919, 10)

Trying to "melt" together "nation" and "nationality" might have serious consequences. Brandeis warned that "[t]he false doctrine that nation and nationality must be made co-extensive is the cause of some of our greatest tragedies" (11). In fact, Brandeis saw in the lack of differentiation between nation and nationality in Europe the cause of the First World War. This gap "has led, on the one hand, to cruel, futile attempts at enforced assimilation, like the Russianizing of Finland and Poland, and the Prussianizing of Posen, Schleswig-Holstein, and Alsace-Lorraine. It has led, on the other hand, to those Panistic movements which are a cloak for territorial ambitions" (*ibidem*). While nationalist movements certainly played a role in the outbreak of the First World War, I want to note that more modern schools of thought place economics to the center of their explanation of the outbreak of the war. At the dawn of the war, foreign policy was mostly determined "by an explosive mixture of rapid industrial growth", argues historian Mark Hewitson (2004, 21).

Once Brandeis had established that Jews, just like the Irish, are a distinct nationality within the American nation, it was time to fight for an acceptance of these minorities as collective groups in their own right. This approach to ethnic integration is known as cultural pluralism. In this model, diversity is the norm, and ethnic cultures are given the liberty to exist separately yet still participate in the larger society's economic and political life (Giddens 2009, 644). The phrase "cultural pluralism" was coined by Horace M. Kallen, a German-born American Jewish philosopher who advanced the ideal that cultural diversity and national pride were compatible with each other and that ethnic and racial diversity strengthened America. Kallen not only influenced Brandeis but also enjoyed prominence among American Zionists and within other nationalist circles (Ratner 1984).

Both Irish and Jewish nationalists campaigned for cultural pluralism in the US. They repudiated the melting pot model and Anglo-Protestant cultural hegemony. The Gaelic League, an international organization that promoted the Irish language in Ireland and the Irish diaspora, challenged Anglo-Saxon supremacy in the US by emphasizing the Celtic contributions to the country. The League encouraged Celtic folk dances and songs in amateur entertainments, along with the use of the Gaelic language. Some Irish nationalists claimed that the US anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner", was of Irish origin (Kibler 2015, 43). Brandeis , too, championed the idea of cultural pluralism and proclaimed in another 1915 speech, entitled "True Americanism", which he delivered in Boston, "that each race or people, like each individual, has the right and duty to develop, and only through such differentiated development will high civilization be attained" (1942, 11).

A core aspect of the development of these "nationalities" was the development of "national" languages. As chairman of the PEC, Brandeis traveled to several American cities in 1914

and 1915 to convince their Jewish communities of the Zionist agenda. During these trips, Brandeis spoke also about Eliezer Ben Yehudah, the Lithuanian-born Hebrew lexicographer and newspaper editor who was the driving force behind the revival of the Hebrew language in the modern era (Stanislawski 2017, 16). In one of his speeches on Ben Yehudah, Brandeis once more compared the Jewish and Irish national struggles:

> It was no ordinary sense of piety that made Ben Yehudah seek to introduce the Hebrew language. He recognized what the leaders of other peoples seeking rebirth and independence have recognized, that it is through the national language, expressing the people's soul that the national spirit is aroused, and the national power restored. Despite the prevalence of the English tongue in Ireland, the revival of Gaelic became one of the most important factors in the movement which has just resulted in securing for the Irish their long-coveted home rule. (1942, 52)

Brandeis was right to compare the Jewish efforts to revive Hebrew to the Irish process of deanglicization and embracing of Gaelic. For centuries, Hebrew had been considered a language of the liturgy and was not spoken by most European or American Jews. Gaelic was discouraged by the Anglo-British administrations and the Irish Catholic Church and was vanishing among the Irish immigrants in North America as well. References to the revival of Hebrew were presented in discourses on the restoration of Irish too (Ó Laoire 2018, 186). Both Jewish and Irish nationalists felt that they would not be whole without a national language; both movements complained about the indifference of the broader community toward this language, whether that be the general Irish population's attitude toward Gaelic or the Jewish one toward Hebrew (Bornstein 2011, 15, 92). Early attempts to revive these national languages often bordered "on the absurd", as historian Ezra Mendelssohn notes (1993, 129). For instance, when Douglas Hyde, the founder of the Gaelic League, tried to deliver an address in Gaelic to a 1905 gathering of Irish nationalists in Boston, he quickly shifted to English after the audience responded with laughter. Similarly, at Zionist congresses Hebrew was often replaced by German or English. Even in Mandatory Palestine, among the Zionist settlers themselves, language was an issue. Austrian philosopher Martin Buber famously resisted teaching in Hebrew and wanted to deliver a 1927 lecture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in German, despite the university's policy of Hebrew-language education (Segev 2000, 264).

Brandeis referred to the Irish case in other addresses too, such as in the one he delivered before the Collegiate Zionist Society of Columbia University in 1915: "Is England less glorious because all of the little nations that went to make up England were permitted to develop naturally and constitute units within the greater unit? Is England wronged because the Scotch are different from the Welsh and the Irish are different from the English?" (1942, 70). The Irish were, of course, not only present in Ireland but also in the US. Brandeis set the Irish Americans' involvement in the Irish Home Rule campaign as an example for Jews. In another speech, entitled "The Responsibilities of American Jews", which he gave on his 1914-1915 tour, Brandeis praised the Irish American contribution to Ireland's struggle:

> When we consider how large and generous has been the contribution of the Irish of America for the cause of home rule, the present demand upon the Jews for Zionist purposes seems small indeed. The Jews in America can be relied upon to perform fully their obligation. And indeed there are special reasons why we should be eager to do so. Palestine gives promise of doing for us far more than we can ever be called upon to do for Palestine. For the Jewish renaissance in Palestine will enable us to perform our plain duty to America. It will help us to make toward the attainment of the American ideals of democracy and social justice that large contribution for which religion and life have peculiarly fitted the Jew. (54)

Brandeis made this exact claim about the American Irish contribution to the Irish independence movement in other speeches too, such as in "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It" (1919, 18). Historian Dan Lainer-Vos has shown how the struggles in the homeland were used to justify demands for financial generosity from Irish Americans and Jewish Americans (2018). For American Jews like Brandeis, emphasizing the Irish American contribution to their nationalist movement in Ireland was relevant because it dismantled accusations of "dual loyalty" that American Jews also faced (Wiener Cohen 2003, 7; Sarna 2004, 203). This was a message not only to the wider society but also to non-Zionist Jews, who were hesitant to support Zionism because of potential accusations of dual loyalty but at the same time were inspired by the Irish efforts (Bernstein 2017, 10-11). Brandeis turned the argument upside down and asserted that being a Jewish American who is involved in matters of Palestine is just as ideal as being an Irish American who helps the Irish cause in Ireland. To support his argument, Brandeis referred not only to Irish American activism but also to British historian Robert William Seton-Watson who claimed that "America is full of nationalities which, while accepting with enthusiasm their new American citizenship, nevertheless look to some centre in the old world as the source and inspiration of their national culture and traditions" (1915, 290). Seton-Watson named "the feeling of the American Jew for Palestine" (*ibidem*) the most typical instance of this phenomenon.

For many American immigrant communities, supporting separationist agendas in their countries of origin while at the same time embracing integration into their new American home was not seen as contradictory. Aforementioned Irish leader Davitt explained the nexus between these two aspects during a lecture to an Irish audience while on a tour of the US in 1880: "Aid us in Ireland to remove the stain of degradation from your birth ... and [you] will get the respect you deserve [here in America]" (Mendelsohn 1993, 133). The success of the national movement abroad was connected to success in Americanization at home (133-134). For Brandeis too, Zionism was not inconsistent with his American patriotism. Brandeis reassured everyone who was worried of accusations of dual loyalty that Zionism is not inconsistent with Americanism:

> Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for being also a loyal citizen of his state, and of his city; for being loyal to his family, and to his profession or trade; for being loyal to his college or his lodge. (1919, 18)

6. Discussion: Ireland, Israel and Palestine

Brandeis ended his talk "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It" with the words "Organize, Organize, Organize" (24). He urged American Zionists to organize despite their differences, "until every Jew in America must stand up and be counted–counted with us" (*ibidem*). According to Jewish studies scholar Frances Malino, it was nineteenth-century Irish leader Daniel O'Connell – who campaigned for the Catholic's right to representation in the British parliament – who inspired Brandeis for this motto with his saying, "agitate, agitate, agitate!" (Russell 2019, 7). Indeed, Brandeis continued to "organize" even after he resigned from his position as chairman of the PEC in 1916. Though he was officially the leader of the American Zionist movement only for two years, his influence was remarkable (Gal 1989, 69).

In 1916, after being nominated by President Wilson, Brandeis became the first Jewish Supreme Court justice and one of the most influential figures ever to serve on the high court (Strum 1994; Klebanow, Jonas 2003, 54, 58). As a Supreme Court justice, Brandeis was a leading figure of the Progressive Era in using the law as an instrument for social change. Despite

his new office, Brandeis did not withdraw from his engagement in the Zionist agenda. Brandeis was involved in pushing for the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which would announce that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the settlement in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object". The Balfour Declaration "put the seal of legitimacy on political Zionism" (Wiener Cohen 2003, 37). In the late 1930s, Brandeis became involved in immigration to Palestine and in the effort to help European Jews escape genocide when Britain denied entry to more Jews (Urofsky 2005, 120).

Brandeis continued to support the Irish cause after his withdrawal from the PEC. He met with Irish leader Robert Briscoe, who later became Lord Mayor of Dublin and served in the Irish parliament from 1927 to 1965 (Heilweil 2019, 27). Briscoe was an Irish Jew, and a Zionist too. Although many Irish nationalists embraced Zionism and admired the Jewish struggle for the ancient Jewish homeland, some of them expressed antisemitic views too. Arthur Griffith, writer and founder of the Irish republican party Sinn Féin ("We Ourselves"), accused Jews of corrupt business practices and backed an openly antisemitic priest in Limerick (Bender 2018, 27). Nonetheless, most Irish nationalist leaders and their adherents in the early twentieth century supported the Zionist cause (Kibler 2015, 41). However, the closer the establishment of a Zionist state came to being realized, the more voices emerged that compared the Irish not to the Jewish nationalists but rather to the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist settlements.

Brandeis retired from the Supreme Court in 1939 and died in 1941, following a heart attack (Rosen 2016, 186). He did not get to see the State of Israel's creation in 1948 and the shift in Irish-Zionist relations. By the time of the establishment of the Zionist state, the Irish had begun to see themselves in the Palestinians rather than in the Zionists. During the 1947 United Nations debate on the partition of Mandatory Palestine, influential Irish author Seán Ó Faoláin wrote that "if we could imagine that Ireland was being transformed by Britain into a national home for the Jews, I can hardly doubt which side you would be found" (Miller 2010a, 174). In the late 1940s, Irish Foreign Minister Seán MacBride said about the partition of Ireland that "it would create a situation in Northern Ireland comparable to that of Palestine in 1946-1948" (Cockburn 1989, 10). As scholar of governance Rory Miller describes it: the Jewish state now looked less like "a besieged religious-national community struggling valiantly for its natural rights and more and more as a form of plantation illegitimately established by British force of arms and intent on imposing itself on an indigenous population" (2010a, 174). There were other factors too: by the late 1940s, the British authorities had begun to view the future Zionist state as a "little loyal Jewish Ulster" (*ibidem*), referring to the Protestant Northern Irish province of Ulster, which was seen as a bulwark against Irish nationalism. Likewise, this "little loyal Jewish Ulster" was perceived by the British as a bulwark against rising Arab nationalism. Another factor contributing to the shift in Irish interest might have been Pope Pius XII's 1948 encyclical, *In Multiplicibus Curis*, which endorsed Jerusalem's "international character" and called for international control over the city (Miller 2010b).

Ireland today is one of the least "pro-Israel" countries in the European Union. In 2018, Dublin became the first European capital to vote in favor of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which calls for a boycott of Israeli products. The City Council also requested the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland. A year later, the Dáil Éireann ("Assembly of Ireland"), the Irish lower house, passed the pro-BDS "Occupied Territories Bill" that restricted the import of goods from any of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories (MEMO 2019). This "pro-Palestinian" sentiment is not only visible in politics, but also at universities: "Irish, both North and South, have traditionally been pro-Palestine because of the relationship between republicanism and international anti-imperialism. In this sense, Irish

republicanism sees the fight for the liberation of Palestine and the reunification of Ireland as one and the same", University College Dublin student leader Darryl Horan has explained (Jouda 2020). Israelis, too, are interested in the Ireland/Israel/Palestine analogy: using the example of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, Aidan Beatty has shown how the Israeli press discussed the events in Northern Ireland in terms of their own local realities (2017).

For Brandeis and the early American Zionists, Zionism was liberation from assimilation and antisemitism. However, Brandeis's ideas of a model Jewish state in Palestine were never realized. His utopian vision, combining American Progressive ideals with the moral teachings of the Jewish prophets, remains in the realm of utopic beliefs. Yet, Brandeis's ideas of cultural pluralism in the US gained many followers and are still influential today. Brandeis's attempt to bring together his Americanness and Zionism became known as the "Brandeisian synthesis" (Urofsky 1995, 164). Brandeis's belief in what biographer Jeffrey Rosen has called "the value of group differences for preserving American ideals" (2016, 162) benefited not only Irish Americans who backed Ireland's independence but also other ethnicities in the US. Black nationalist movements in the US in the 1920s were inspired by the postwar settlement that led to the establishment of new nation states in Europe and the Middle East. They pointed to the Great Powers who "gave to the Jew Palestine", and independence to the Irish, while Black Americans had received nothing (Mendelsohn 1993, 135-136). Brandeis and the early twentieth-century American Zionists made an often-overlooked contribution to cultural pluralism in the US. They made it possible for the following generations of immigrants and their descendants to identify as "hyphenated" Americans and celebrate the distinct national culture of their ancestors.

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Yeats's Dreaming Back, *Purgatory*, and Trauma

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Abstract:

As few plays can compare with Yeats's late play *Purgatory* with its probe into the tormented human psyche, this play can be viewed as a precursor to trauma plays we see later in modern Irish theatre. Yeats's *Purgatory* not only deals with a subject of generational trauma accompanied by grinding guilt, shame, anger, and despair but also establishes many of the defining features of later trauma plays through its hybrid form of realism, symbolism, Japanese Noh, minimalist setting, linear-cyclical structure, etc. Yeats's interest in spiritualism and occultism also allows him a few profound glimpses into psychological studies: Yeats's *A Vision*, though viewed by many as his philosophical writings on mystic spirituality, contains some pioneering insights into trauma. By placing *Purgatory* in dialogue with *A Vison*, I want to acknowledge *A Vision* as the theoretical framework for the play, which, however, does not reduce the play to a mere illustration of the theory Yeats outlines in his *A Vision*, but rather, enables us to understand the complicated process of working through trauma.

Keywords: A Vision, Dreaming Back, *Purgatory*, Trauma, Yeats

Yeats's late play *Purgatory* (1938) has always been a controversial play. When it was first produced at the Abbey Theatre on 10 August 1938, it "scored a major public success with audience and critics alike" (Miller 1977, 305). Despite its successful production, the play perplexes the audience and the critics in its ways to present the ghosts on stage. Schmitt summarizes the issue well: "Three interpretations of the figures of the dead present themselves: that the dead do, in fact, return; that they are images of the old man's misery; that they are manifestations of the remorse of the mother, dead and 'dreaming back' through her passion" (1973-1974, 318). The ambiguous nature of the ghosts enables critics to interpret the play in multiple ways. Many have noticed the influence of the Japanese Noh plays on Yeats: "in *Purgatory*, the Old Man, who would play the role of a priest if *Purgatory* were a Noh play, fails to appease the suffering of his mother's ghost, and prays for God in despair at the end of the play" (Sato 2011, 79). While the general consensus is that "the

dead are not released from their torment and are destined to relive the impassioned moment over and over" (Ohno 1991, 42) because "the living cannot expiate the sins of the dead, nor can they escape the results of those sins" (Leamon 1977, 179), other critics see the ghosts as a reflection of the Old Man himself though for different reasons. Pocock reads the play in the Irish bardic tradition:

> The Old Man in *Purgatory* is a wandering repository of cultural memory [...] He is fundamentally confused about the important spiritual reality of the play – that it is not his mother's soul trapped in purgatory, but his own [...] because even his tenuous grasp of a spiritual realm sounds like insanity to an objective generation. (Pocock 2008, 109, 113)

In contrast, McCormack casts a more autobiographic light on the play and views it as Yeats's "late admission of [...] the problematic nature of Modernism" by abandoning "such assumptions of integrity and self-completeness" since "it is not the mother and grandmother who are in Purgatory so much as Man and Boy. The stratagem of bringing pollution to an end by killing the boy is pathetic self-deception [...] 'Purgatory', far from serving to make accessible some 'radical innocence', actually reveals ineradicable guilt" (McCormack 1979, 33, 39). Unlike other critics, Genet dives into the psychological realm and claims that:

> If *Purgatory* is in the beyond, it is also in this world and in the soul of the old man who suffers for his past crimes [...] the old man is directed by a secret motive, an inner fatality: the fixation on the mother [...] Parricide and infanticide are two identical sacrifices on the altar of motherly love. (Genet 1991, 240, 242)

While her psychoanalytical exploration is valuable, Janet wrongly attributes all the old man's aberrant behaviors to the Oedipus complex. The fatal flaw of her reading lies in a simple fact – the old man never gets to know his mother: she dies in childbirth. It is thus preposterous to assume that the old man could be attached to a stranger mother who he never sees, hears, or knows to such an extent that he is willing to kill twice for her. In this article, I will continue the work Janet has started by pursuing further into the psychological depth of the old man but I'm taking a different route. As few plays can compare with Yeats's *Purgatory* with its probe into the dark, deep, tormented human psyche, I will argue that *Purgatory* is a precursor to trauma plays we see later in modern Irish theatre. By trauma plays, I mean plays that either directly depict a traumatic event as seen in Frank McGuiness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme* (1985), Tom Murphy's *Famine* (1977), and etc., or addresses the shattering psychological impacts of certain events on people as seen in Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), Jennifer Johnston's *Moonlight and Music* (2000), and so on. Yeats's *Purgatory* not only deals with a subject of generational trauma accompanied by grinding guilt, shame, anger, and despair but also establishes many of the defining features of later trauma plays through its hybrid form of realism, symbolism, Japanese Noh, minimalist setting, linear-cyclical structure, etc. What is more, Yeats's interest in spiritualism and occultism, which has long been an embarrassment to his critics, actually allows him a few profound glimpses into psychological studies. More specifically, I will argue that Yeats's *A Vision* (1925; 1937), though viewed by many as his philosophical writings on mystic spirituality, contains some pioneering insights into trauma since trauma was not officially acknowledged until 1980 when the American Psychiatric Association included Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a new category in its official manual of mental disorders. By placing *Purgatory* in dialogue with *A Vison*, I want to acknowledge *A Vision* as the theoretical framework for the play, which, however, does not reduce the play to a mere illustration of the theory Yeats outlines in his *A Vision*, but rather,

enables us to understand the complicated process of working through trauma that involves dire real-world consequences and hard-to-achieve recovery.It is thus fair to say that Yeats's *A Vison* and *Purgatory* have paved the way for Ireland's future trauma plays.

Yeats wrote *A Vision* in 1925 but revised it in 1937, a year before he wrote the play *Purgatory* in 1938. So close to his death in 1939, Yeats had been in a bitter, dark state of mind, which may be partly due to his poor health: "By 1937 Yeats's health was failing. Suffering from kidney problem, angina and breathing difficulties" (Edwards 2016, 16) but more importantly, may result from his disillusion over the defeat of the aristocratic tradition as shown in his 1939 essay *On the Boiler*:

> Our representative system has given Ireland to the incompetent [...] the better stocks have not been replacing their numbers, while the stupider and less healthy have been more than replacing theirs. Unless there is a change in the public mind every rank above the lowest must degenerate, and as inferior men push up into its gaps, degenerate more and more quickly. (Yeats 1939, 11, 18)

His concerns about the degeneration of the bloodlines in aristocratic culture led him to write about hereditary sufferings in his play and inevitably, put too much of his own voice in it: not only is *Purgatory* based on Yeats's recollection of a ghost story in his childhood (McCormack 1979, 34-36) but many critics also fault the play for its autobiographical elements: Bloom's claim that "Yeats is not separate enough from the old man's rage to render the play's conclusion coherent" (qtd. in McCormack 1979, 37) is echoed by Vendler: "I find *Purgatory* thin and unsatisfying. I do not doubt that it is an exact representation of Yeats's state of mind in 1939; one has only to glance at *On the Boiler* (in which *Purgatory* was first printed) to understand how greatly Yeats's imagination was imbued with rage and hatred" (1969, 201). Even Holloway who attended the first performance of *Purgatory* in 1938 and saw Yeats was called to the stage for recognition concluded that "W.B. Yeats seemed to me a 'broken man.' His upright bearing gone – a wreck of his former self [...] It is a pity in his old age that sordidness of thought should have captured him [...] Now the old poet's thoughts are turned to woe and desolation and the ugliness of life" (qtd. Miller 1977, 305). Admittedly, nothing speaks louder of Yeats's state of mind in 1938 than his own poem "Man and the Echo":

> All that I have said and done,
> Now that I am old and ill,
> Turns into a question till
> I lie awake night after night
> And never get the answers right.
> Did that play of mine send out
> Certain men the English shot?
> Did words of mine put too great strain
> On that woman's reeling brain?
> Could my spoken words have checked
> That whereby a house lay wrecked?
> And all seems evil until I
> Sleepless would lie down and die. (Yeats 1989, 345)

Yeats's own restless soul reliving the words and actions he said and did in the past seems to mirror both the "dreaming back" in *A Vision* and the haunting ghost of the old man's mother in *Purgatory*. It is clear that Yeats's own bitter disillusion, regret, and self-doubt in his last a few years lead him to focus on the darker side of human psyche in his works.

Although Yeats's *A Vision* is always considered as a philosophical writing, it is possible to

make a psychological reading of it. To start, his discussion of dreams strikes a familiar note of Freudianism regarding dreams as wish-fulfillment: "In dreams we finish what we began awake or what the waking suggests" (1937, 227) or regarding the distortion in dreams: "Much of a dream's confusion comes from the fact that the image belongs to some unknown person, whereas emotion, names, language, belong to us alone" (234). While Yeats seems to talk about mystical, ethereal elements such as spirits and soul, he nevertheless ties them to human psyche from time to time: "All spirits inhabit our unconsciousness or, as Swedenborg said, are the Dramatis Personae of our dream" (232). Acknowledging the connection between our dreams and our unconsciousness, Yeats's *A Vision* seems to contain some inchoate truth about human mind. For the sake of this article, I will focus on "Book III: The Soul in Judgement" in which Yeats describes the six states the soul travels from death to rebirth: the vision of the blood kindred, dreaming back/return, shifting, marriage/beatitude, purification, and foreknowledge. According to Yeats, if the first state still bounds the Spirit to Husk and Passionate Body at the moment of death, in the second state Passionate Body will disappear so the Spirit will find the Celestial Body. However, "If the Passionate Body does not disappear, the Spirit finds the Celestial Body, only after long and perhaps painful dreams of the past, and it is because of such dreams that the second state is sometimes called the Dreaming Back" (1937, 229). "Dreaming Back" happens only when the second state goes awry: the Spirit clings to Passionate Body and cannot let go. While Dreaming Back is a symptom of a problematic second state, it also functions as a solution: "The true name of the second state […] is the Return and it has for its object that Spirit's separation from the Passionate body, considered as nature, and from the Husk considered as pleasure and pain" (1937, 225-226, 230-231). To separate the Spirit from Passionate Body and Husk, Dreaming Back must happen to ensure a return to equilibrium.

Although in *A Vision* Yeats is describing the Spirit's journey after death, this journey uncannily parallels how our mind processes and stores the external events psychologically. If it is a natural death, the Spirit moves from the first state to the second state gradually by letting go Husk and Passionate Body, but "If death has been violent or tragic the Spirit may cling to the Passionate Body for generations" (1937, 224-225) which gives rise to Dreaming Back. Likewise, ordinary events are processed and stored routinely in our minds: when we are amid a happening event, it gives us strong stimulus of pleasure or pain, but such sensations and emotions (Husk and Passionate Body) will gradually disappear over time when our mind changes the event from a living experience to an impression and finally to a memory. However, liminal events that are too "violent or tragic" will not be absorbed or disposed readily by our minds but linger on for a long time and keep coming back. What traps the Spirit in Passionate Body in Yeats's *A Vision* is not unlike our modern concept of trauma which traps its victims in nightmares and living hells: "an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations, flashbacks and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 1993, 24). What Yeats calls "long and perhaps painful dreams of the past" can then be understood as "uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations, flashbacks and other intrusive phenomena" trauma victims are subject to because the traumatic event has overwhelmed their normal coping mechanism. Yeats emphasizes the compulsive repetition in his Dreaming Back: "In the Dreaming Back, the Spirit is compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it; there can be nothing new, but the old events stand forth in a light which is dim or bright according to the intensity of the passion that accompanied them" (1937, 226). Yeats's early insight of the compelled repetition of the original events is confirmed by modern psychology and it speaks to the puzzling nature of trauma: "purely and inexplicably, the literal return of the event against

the will of the one it inhabits" (Caruth 1993, 24). By identifying the cause (a violent or tragic death) and the symptom (dreams of the past/compelled repetition), Yeats's Dreaming Back conceptualizes what we now call trauma.

Such a conceptualization cannot be complete without a solution. It is thus no wonder that Yeats offers a possible closure:

> In the Return, upon the other hand, the Spirit must live through past events in the order of their occurrence, because it is compelled by the Celestial Body to trace every passionate event to its cause until all are related and understood, turned into knowledge, made a part of itself. All that keeps the Spirit from its freedom may be compared to a knot that has to be untied or to an oscillation or a violence that must end in a return to equilibrium. (Yeats 1937, 226)

The idea of "a knot that has to be untied" so that "all are related and understood, turned into knowledge, made a part of itself" hits the nail on the head about how trauma should be treated for recovery. As Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart put it, "Traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language. It appears that, in order for this to occur successfully, the traumatized person has to return to the memory often in order to complete it" (Van der Kolk, Van der Hart 1995, 176). Yeats's Dreaming Back, in this sense, is not only a symptom but also a treatment of trauma: it allows the traumatized to return to their traumatic memories, to sort out their causes and effects, to understand the original events, to put them back in time or sequences, to transform them into meaningful narratives, and to incorporate them into their existing memories. All of these are the foundations of their recovery. Besides, Yeats also correctly points out that recovery means "a return to equilibrium" which is corroborated by Freud's concept of trauma as "a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli" (Freud 1961, 23): recovery is to restore what has been broken through and to reestablish balance and order in our mental apparatus. Interestingly enough, while Yeats emphasizes the importance of "Dreaming Back": "The more complete the Dreaming Back the more complete the return" (Yeats 1937, 228), he does not view it as an absolute closure: "But knowledge of the past is not sufficient. The second stage contains in addition to the Dreaming Back and the Return what is called the Phantasmagoria, which exists to exhaust, not nature, not pain and pleasure, but emotion" (231). Yeats insightfully sees that emotional sufferings will still linger on even after the original event is understood intellectually. Such a lack of closure exists in many trauma scholars' writings too, though for varied reasons. For Caruth, complete recovery is unlikely because traumatic event cannot be fully known in spite of victims' compulsive, repetitive attempts to understand it:

> The ability to recover the past is thus closely and paradoxically tied up, in trauma, with the inability to have access to it […] The history that a flashback tells […] is, therefore, a history that literally has no place, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood. (Caruth 1995, 152-153)

For LaCapra, acting-out and working-through are interwoven in one's recovery, which makes it a slow, inconclusive process:

> […] with respect to traumatic losses, acting-out may well be a necessary condition of working-through, at least for victims. Possession by the past may never be fully overcome or transcended, and working-through may at best enable some distance or critical perspective that is acquired with extreme difficulty and not achieved once and for all. (LaCapra 1999, 716-717)

It is no small wonder to see Yeats's Dreaming Back resonates so much with modern trauma theories in terms of trauma's cause, symptom, and recovery. We may not know how much Yeats has been influenced by his contemporaries such as Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud, but his formulation of Dreaming Back is surely a forerunner of the modern concept of trauma, and what is speculated in *A Vision* eventually fleshes out in his play *Purgatory*.

Regarding *Purgatory*, Yeats has admitted in his letter to Dorothy Wellesley that "I have put there my own conviction about this world and the next" (1955, 913), which causes his play to be viewed as a literary child born from his philosophical and mystical writing *A Vision*. While Dreaming Back constitutes an important part of the play with the repeated haunting of the remorseful soul of the old man's dead mother, I will read it as a definitive symptom of the old man's traumatization. It is the old man who is possessed by the past that keeps having flashbacks with "the power of a diseased imagination to make its own truth and the extremes to which such a mind will go to authenticate a private fantasy" (Cave 1982, 312). Cave makes it clear that the ghosts are nothing but products of the old man's psychologically stressed mind – "a projecting of his private guilts on to the older generation" (1982, 318) which Schmitt agrees: "the unspeaking ghosts […] [are] manifestation of his severe conflicts" (Schmitt 1973, 320). The original and foremost trauma for the old man is the death of his mother when he is born. By stating "she died in giving birth to me" (Yeats 1938, 25), the old man is locked in a knot that death and life are so intertwined that not only he loses his mother from day one, but it is his life that costs his mother's life. His loss of mother can fuel a feeling of abandonment, as we see from the play: "And here's a bit of an egg-shell thrown out of a jackdaw's nest" (24). Like the broken eggshell dropped from its nest, the old man is "an old crow thrown out of a no longer existent nest" (Schmitt 1973, 316) who is orphaned and severed from his mother the moment he is born: he will never get to know his mother or be cared for, and the knowledge that he is the reason his mother dies only adds more guilt to his loss. Born into a guilt-ridden trauma, the old man has to witness how the trauma of his mother's death unfolds and begets more traumas.

To a considerable extent, the death of his mother has shaped the old man's life. As a fundamental source of his identity and personal history, his mother, however, can never be approached by him. Her inaccessibility dooms the old man to defining his own existence around a permanent void, an emptiness, which can only be filled through association – his mother's house: "Study that house. I think about its jokes and stories; I try to remember what the butler said to a drunken gamekeeper in mid-October, but I cannot. If I cannot, none living can" (Yeats 1938, 23). The old man is keenly aware that the history of the house is the history of his mother and thus the history of his own. As the only heir to such a history, he alone attempts to preserve his mother's memories represented by the house. His love for the house is an extension of his love for his mother: "Had loved the house, had loved all the intricate passages of the house, but he killed the house; to kill a house, where great men grew up, married, died, I here declare a capital offence" (1938, 25-26). The "intricate passages of the house" connect him to his deceased mother like the umbilical cord. The "capital offense" his father commits is not against the house but against people who "grew up, married, died" in the house, or more specifically, his mother. The house has become the embodiment of his dead mother, and in the light of Freudian symbols, the missing womb itself. Therefore, to the old man, his drunken father's burning down the house comes as a second, repeated trauma: it feels like he loses his mother over and again. Many critics have noticed the equivalence between the house and the mother: "To kill the house becomes the equivalent of killing a family, a nation, or even a person – a woman such as the old man's mother who died bearing him to the groom. It is like killing her and the future generations with her" (Clark 1965, 90). By accusing his father of "[killing]

the house" as if the house were a living human being, the old man acutely expresses his agony and rage of being robbed of his mother again.

The second trauma has profound impacts on the old man. If it were not for the complete destruction of his mother's house: "everything was burnt; Books, library, all were burnt" (Yeats 1938, 26), the old man might have a half chance of growing up as his mother's son: "A game-keeper's wife taught me to read, a Catholic curate taught me Latin" (*ibidem*). However, with everything turning into ashes, the old man is stripped of all the family heritages, histories, and memories his mother could have passed on to him, which leaves him no other ways to hold onto his mother but to turn his whole life into a remembrance. By identifying with his mother, the old man continues her ghostly existence at the cost of his own life: he lives not at the present but in the repeated past. In Cave's words, the old man "is so obsessed by the past that it is no longer simply a matter for imaginative recall, rather he inhabits it as a living reality" (Cave 1982, 317-318). By killing his father, the old man expresses his internal rage and guilt in an external revenge against his mother. It is important for his fratricide to take place in the burning house where his father, the old man believes, has killed his mother the second time. Revenge – against his mother and against himself for his ruined heritage – is clearly the direct cause of his murder of his father, but the way he describes his murder is quite puzzling: "I stuck him with a knife, that knife that cuts my dinner now, and after that I left him in the fire" (Yeats 1938, 27). To leave his dying father in the fire is not only to cover his murder but also to indicate the root cause for his death – the fire: what "killed the house" will also burn him "black and charred" (*ibidem*). While fire may conceal his murder and the true cause behind it, the knife reveals it all. It is curious how life and death are intertwined here again: the knife he kills his father with is used to cut his dinner, which uncannily echoes the first trauma he suffers when he is born – his life and his mother's death are one and the same, although here it is his life and his father's death that become one and the same. The knife that kills and feeds at the same time seems a haunting knot that the old man is doomed to grapple with for the rest of his life. What is more, the eerie correlation between his mother's death and his father's murder suggests a deeper psychological need for his killing: he needs to use his father's death to replace his mother's death so that he can transform his crippling guilt to a justifiable outrage. By scapegoating his father, the old man relieves the double guilts of killing both his mother and father on the ground that his father deserves his own death because he destroys his mother and her legacy through marriage and fire. If the knife feeds the old man with the wishful food to clear his conscience and to fortify himself psychologically, the un-erasable blood stain on his dinner knife also indicates a lurking guilt that cannot be easily repressed.

Throughout the play, we see what Yeats terms as "The souls in Purgatory that come back to habitations and familiar spots" (Yeats 1938, 24) are indeed the mental figurations of the old man haunted by the past. It is in his own mind that he hears "the hoof beats" and sees the ghosts "re-live their transgressions, and that not once but many times" (27, 24). Given the fact that "the recurring event in the play is the mother's coupling with the groom to engender her son, now the old man" (Vlasopolos 1981, 70), it is clear that what cannot rest in peace are not his parents' souls but his own soul which is troubled ceaselessly by the impossibility of his own life: "this night is the anniversary of my mother's wedding night, or of the night wherein I was begotten" (Yeats 1938, 27). The old man is compulsively reliving his parents' wedding night because they are begetting a life that ends all lives: "Do not let him touch you! It is not true that drunken men cannot beget, and if he touch he must beget and you must bear his murderer" (28). Such a dread towards the begetting moment seems to indicate his soul's predicament rather than his mother's, as if he wishes to "recreate the soul differently, control

the nature of one's conception, and mold destiny anew" (Cave 1982, 317). While the hidden guilt of killing his father resurfaces here through his owning up the murder and through "the hoof beats" he suddenly hears moments ago as if he is chased by his father's horse-riding ghost, a much deeper guilt towards his mother's death displays itself inexplicitly as a death drive – a longing to deny his own life, or in this case, his own birth. Trying to awaken his "deaf" parents retrospectively (Yeats 1938, 28), the old man traces the origin of his trauma down to his own birth: only through a complete self-annihilation can the trauma be averted. Such an impossibility of life gives rise to his deep-rooted guilt, self-hatred, and self-denial which then lead to a life of self-punishment: "I ran away, worked here and there, till I became a pedlar on the roads, no good trade, but good enough because I am my father's son, because of what I did or may do" (27). There must be some masochistic pleasure he obtains by degrading himself to be "my father's son" and by paying the price for "what I did or may do," the same gratifying abuse he subjects himself and his son to by begetting "a bastard that a pedlar got upon a tinker's daughter in a ditch" (26). His self-condemnation does not stop at himself but passes down to his son, the bastard. Unwittingly or not, the old man passes the traumas he inherits since his birth down to his son, who also loses his mother and lives with a hateful father who gives no education or shared rights to him (26, 29).

Such a transgenerational trauma is more clearly seen when the boy becomes an uncanny mirror image of the old man at some point: he is not only sixteen years old, the same age as the old man was when he killed his father (26), but considers killing his father as well: "What if I killed you? You killed my grand-dad because you were young and he was old. Now I am young and you are old" (29). The boy's threat to kill his father, however, prompts the old man to point to the suddenly lit-up window to show the boy his granddad's reappearing ghost. For the first time in the play, the boy sees the ghost that used to be visible only to his father in the past, which, to many critics, signals the initiation of the boy from his objective world into his father's subjective world "to achieve a perverse sort of clarity" (Pocock 2008, 115). To me, however, it is a pivotal moment that seals the identification between the boy and the old man, because it gives away the possible guilt of patricide the boy shares with his father. In this sense, the horrible apparition of the murdered man the boy sees in his mind is more likely his father's dead body than his grandfather's if not an overlapped image of the murdered fathers. Therefore, what the boy actually sees is the guilt-ridden horror of patricide: "A dead, living, murdered man! […] A body that was a bundle of old bones before I was born. Horrible! Horrible! (*He covers his eyes*)" (Yeats 1938, 30). The real horror the boy cannot face is the guilt of killing one's father: "A dead, living, murdered man" – seeing both the past and the future in the present, the boy sees his father as both living and dead, old bones and murdered man. He has witnessed with his own eyes how such a guilt has possessed and wrecked his father for years and now it is ready to consume him if he carries out the same patricide. While the boy covers his eyes to avoid looking into the dire consequences of killing one's father, he also inadvertently turns blind to his own imminent death. Like his granddad, he fails to see the death coming and dies as an ignorant beast who "would know nothing, being nothing" (*ibidem*). The lack of knowledge of death threat costs their lives but also bonds them together: the old man's murder of his son is a clear reenactment of his murder of his father. "My father and my son on the same jack-knife! That finishes–there–there–there– (*He stabs again and again. The window grows dark)*" (*ibidem*). The old man kills his son with the same knife at the same spot of his mother's burnt-down house: he is literally repeating what he did sixteen years ago, which brings the present to the past and turns now into then. Such a compulsive repetition of the traumatic event at another time or place is common to many traumatized people as it is their attempt to retrospectively know

or understand the disturbing event, but in the old man's case, there is a noticeable difference. Although he repeats the same act of killing, he reverses the relationship between the murderer and the murdered: instead of the father being killed by the son, now it is the son being killed by the father. It becomes more interesting when we see the son as the mirror image of the old man's younger self, who is of the same age, expressing the same desire to kill his father, and susceptible to ensuing guilt. It is arguable that the old man's killing of his son is indeed a substitute killing of himself or at least killing of his young, bloody-handed, guilty self. Although Genet may see different reason behind the old man's murder of his son (Oedipus Complex), she nevertheless recognizes this murder as another form of his suicide:

> This suicide through an interposed person takes up, in another mode, his first attempt at suicide when, in a paroxysm of despair, he cries to his parents not to conceive him, in a fantastic attempt to blot out the past and blot out himself. That time, he besought others to make him disappear. This time, he acts and chooses to eliminate a part of himself, destroying in himself the man guilty of murder and the man guilty of a vile sexuality. (Genet 1991, 242)

While Genet sees "Patricide and infanticide are two identical sacrifices on the altar of motherly love" (*ibidem*), I view them as the casualties of his trauma of losing his mother. In this sense, the old man's murder of his son assumes double meanings: on the one hand, he reenacts his killing acts sixteen years ago out of compulsive repetition, but on the other hand, he also tries to redeem himself by revenging his father against a murderous son by killing his young, criminal self through his son. His repeated murder is thus both a symptom of and an attempted closure to his trauma, which accounts for the temporary disappearance of the haunting ghost as "The window grows dark": his psychological peace returns when the life light goes out in his son. Although many critics have commented on the cleansing nature of the old man's murder of his son: "the whole movement of the play has been a carefully prepared act, a ritual of expiation to purge…the burden of guilt that harrows his mother's soul" (Cave 1982, 316), not many realize that this ritual of purgation is performed not for his mother but for himself, because "it is not his mother's soul trapped in Purgatory, but his own" (Pocock 2008, 113). That, to some extent, explains the puzzling, disproportionate emotions the old man shows towards his mother and his son: "That he should sacrifice a son for the happiness of a mother he never knew" (Leamon 1977, 179). Leamon fails to see that just because "he never knew her, he loves the promise she held out to him of love, culture, wealth, and a heritage" while the son is only "an expression of his own self-hate" (Schmitt 1973-74, 319-320). By identifying with his mother as his unfulfilled potential and projecting his dark, base self to his son, the old man turns his son into "a scapegoat" (1973-74, 317) and attempts to remake himself through murder. However, such a self-remaking is not only ironic: "In trying to regain the purity of his mother's line […] he resorts to an act which could only have come from his corrupted half – his father's line" (Pocock 2008, 116) but also self-sabotaging: it will only plunge the old man deeper into trauma.

The lullaby the old man sings after his second murder seems to suggest a restored equilibrium in his mind, if only temporarily: "Hush-a-by baby, thy father's a knight, / Thy mother a lady, lovely and bright" (Yeats 1938, 30). With the gnawing guilt towards his dead parents hushed, the old man now could honor them properly as "knight" and "lady" and could express "the fervent hope that he himself has been reborn pure" (Schmitt 1973-74, 317). He is quite articulate about how he appeases his mother's ghost: "Dear mother, the window is dark again, But you are in the light because I finished all that consequence. I killed that lad because had he grown up He would have struck a woman's fancy, Begot, and passed pollution on" (Yeats

1938, 31). By murdering his son, the old man strives to stop the cycle of traumatic repetition and put an end to this generational trauma. For a trauma that originates in birth, death seems to be the only natural end. By killing his son, the old man appeases both his father's ghost through a filicide that symbolically vindicates the murdered father and his mother's ghost by completing a psychologically driven self-elimination that his earlier attempt to be unborn fails to achieve. All the drastic actions he takes to deflect the pains of his trauma, however, only inflict more wounds on his psyche and perpetuate the trauma he tries to close. As the old man cleans his knife as if to clean his conscience to part with his past and get ready for a new future: "When I have stuck This old jack-knife into a sod And pulled it out all bright again […] I'll to a distant place, and there Tell my old jokes among new men," the haunting ghosts from the past surely return, for his second murder cannot cancel out his first murder but drags him further down to a bottomless hole of guilt and anguish: "Hoof beats! Dear God, How quickly it returns–beat–beat–!" (*ibidem*). Exasperated by the futility to stop the recurring nightmare, the old man finally realizes that his double murders only double his entrapment in trauma: "Twice a murderer and all for nothing, And she must animate that dead night Not once but many times!" (*ibidem*). What the old man does not realize is that as long as he evades his psychological core issues, no hope of recovery will be in sight. By displacing what has been haunting him all the time – deep-seated guilt, shame, self-hatred, regret, and sorrow – onto his dead mother, the old man fails repeatedly to confront his own trauma and acknowledge that he, himself, is the one compelled to repeat the nightmare. After two murders, the old man is still incapable of reaching a true understanding of himself. His lack of self-knowledge makes him unable to come to terms with himself. Therefore, the old man's Dreaming Back, unlike what Yeats lays out in *A Vision*, does not lead him to any understanding or knowledge of his life tragedy. As a result, his psychological knot cannot be untied nor can his disturbed psyche return to equilibrium.

The old man's doomed fate is presented visibly through a silent prop. The tree has been "a bare tree" from the very beginning of the play, but it has "Green leaves, ripe leaves, leaves thick as butter, Fat, greasy life" "fifty years ago Before the thunderbolt had riven it" (Yeats 1938, 23). Like the tree promised of a full, rich life yet ruined by the thunderbolt, the old man experiences a similar disaster – the fire his drunken father sets to the house cuts short his potential future: "I saw it a year ago stripped bare as now, So I chose a better trade" (*ibidem*). What he sees in the bare tree is a mirror reflection of his own life which has since deteriorated towards annihilation, which compels him to choose "a better trade" as if to grasp a last chance to save himself from a literal or metaphorical death. Although scholars interpret the tree differently, they do recognize that the wretched state of the tree motivates the old man into action: "It is the sight of this stripped tree which makes the old man turn from peddling wares in the here and now to attending to the suffering of his mother's soul in the hereafter" (Clark 1965, 91). However, it is not his mother's soul but his own that he is trying to save, for by the end of the day, "it is his own peace of mind the old man extols in his moment of jubilation: 'I'll to a distant place, and there/Tell my old jokes among new men'" (Cave 1982, 316). After the old man murders his son, the tree is suddenly in a different light: "*The stage has grown dark except where the tree stands in white light.* Study that tree. It stands there like a purified soul, All cold, sweet, glistening light" (Yeats 1938, 31). Clearly, the "better trade" the old man picks up is to kill his son to purify his own soul. By reversing the first murder, slaying his guilty self, and wiping off all the lingering consequences of his original trauma, the old man sheds a wishful white light on the tree. Such a self-salvation is illusionary as the tree remains stripped bare in the end just as in the beginning: it is an eternal, unredeemable, nightmarish life that is waiting for him. The peaceful mind he longs to have is equally shattered by the returning hoofs from

the past: there is no distant, new place to go – he is as immobile as the bare tree, forever trapped in there and then.

Yeats's *Purgatory* is a precursor to modern trauma plays in Ireland not only because it deals with trauma and its psychological impacts on people but also because it sets a precedence for future trauma plays by using a hybrid form and establishing some of their defining features. As a poet-playwright, Yeats is never content with the existing conventions of mimicking realism but constantly seeking new dramatic forms of representation which not only "get[s] rid of irrelevant movement" to focus on "vivid words" but "permits an actor […]to throw up an arm calling down the thunderbolts of Heaven, instead of seeming to pick up pins from the floor" (Yeats 1961, 527, 529). Yeats's interest in words, images, emotions, and imaginations rather than plots and actions characterizes all his plays. This distinctive feature is seen in *Purgatory* through a hybrid form of realism and symbolism: "The realism of *Purgatory* is simplified, stylized, reduced to barest essentials, so that the play becomes symbolical, yet is not […] cut off from the recognizable world" (Clark 1965, 85). Take the old man's killing his son for example, we witness an act of murder on stage, which is far more powerful as it is produced in crude realism without any trappings of myth or folklore, but at the same time, we also sense its symbolic, ritualistic gesture towards a rebirth sacrifice through the character's words, the images, the stage lighting, etc. Such a balance between realism and symbolism, though a signature of Yeats's plays, is often used in later trauma plays too such as Carr's *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) and McGuiness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme* (1985) in which many objects (the caravan, the swan, the drum, etc.) assume a symbolic significance while rooted in a realistic situation (mid-land bog, WWI, etc.). Realism matters to trauma plays because invested in truth claims, these plays aim to restore the reality of the traumatic events and validate victims' experiences. The reenactment of trauma on the stage is to literally show what has truly happened. However, whatever realistic effect such a reproduction may render to the audience, it cannot compare with the psychological havoc and shattering experience trauma gives to people in real life. Therefore, the depth of the traumatic impacts on human psyche cannot be simulated through realistic reproduction of the event but rather, be suggested, implied, and gestured towards infinitely through stylized, symbolic representations. By embedding symbolism in reality, trauma plays can transcend the limitations of factual representations of extreme events to tap into the audience's powerful imagination and to probe the unthinkable without losing grasp on its actuality. Given the potential of Yeats's hybrid form of realism and symbolism to represent trauma, there is little wonder that it has since become a defining feature of trauma plays, adopted by many future Irish playwrights.

Yeats's *Purgatory* not only mingles realism and symbolism but also draws on the Japanese Noh plays, especially "the visionary scene of the ghost lovers in *Nishikigi* and the theme of purgatorial suffering of lovers in *Motomezuka*" (Sato 2011, 80). Thematically, Yeats's *Purgatory* is more akin to *Motomezuka* as it also dwells on trauma – not only Unai's drowning traumatizes her two rival lovers and leads to their suicides but Unai is destined to suffer eternally beyond redemption – which strikingly parallels the old man's condemnation after trauma begets more traumas in his life. Leamon, on the other hand, notes how Yeats's adoption of the Noh form in his drama reflects his concerns with the balance between symbolism and realism:

> though he created what he himself called drawing-room drama, we should not imagine that he abandoned his efforts to make his ideas intelligible to his audience, that he simply wrote for those who know and ceased to worry about any realistic embodiment of his symbols. Though he chose to make symbolism the center of the plays, he still aimed at a dramatic rather than a purely lyric representation. He placed more faith in the imagination of his audience, it is true, but he was still left with the problem

of how to move his audience emotionally. For though he had an audience which he believed was imaginative or knowledgeable enough to comprehend his symbolism, he obviously intended the final effect to be other than intellectual. In order to achieve this effect he had to connect this symbolism in some way, however vague, with the world of his audience. (Leamon 1977, 170)

Purgatory is a case in point where Yeats modifies the Noh form to craft a space between drama and poetry, symbolism and realism, intellectual understanding and emotional touch. Unlike typical Noh plays, Yeats uses no masks, music, or dance to further ritualize his play and distance it from the everyday reality, but "the play's setting, the ghost element, and the reduction of action to a single event derive from his experiments with the Noh form" (Leamon 1977, 178). The minimalistic setting of the play is "[in] the manner of the Noh drama, scenery and scenic devices are extremely reduced, and remain simple and symbolical. There is nothing but the house in ruins and the bare tree, the equivalent of the Japanese pine" (Genet 1991, 230). According to Yeats's daughter Anne, who designed the setting for the play's first production, there was not even a house:

It really could not have been simpler. It was just a bare whitish tree in the middle of the stage and a backcloth with a window cut out of it [...] the backcloth, I remember, was black and the window was dark blue – exceptionally dark. The tree was sort of 'whitey,' it was very simple. As for the figures at the window, there was probably gauze in the window and they were probably very vague behind. (qtd. in Sato 2011, 76-77)

Stripped of any elaborate set and enhanced by the sharp contrast between black and white, the stage becomes tense, stark, and abstract: it minimalizes visual distraction and heightens the tragic atmosphere. Although everything on the stage can be taken as symbolic (the bare tree, the burnt house, the knife, the old man, the boy, etc.), the play is still immersed in real life situation and daily speech, dramatizes a family's tragic history, and sensationalizes events such as murder to evoke strong emotions from the audience. If, like Leamon puts it, the audience is disturbed by the "pain and death" in melodrama and by the unrestored order and the "irreconcilable clash" in realism (Leamon 1977, 171), Yeats's audience is disturbed by both in *Purgatory*. To elicit empathy for an old man inexorably haunted by his parents' ghosts, Yeats needs to create lifelike, realistic characters and deploy the audience's imagination so that they not only relate to the characters but also feel for their sufferings.

Admittedly, *Purgatory* benefits from a cross-fertilization of realism, symbolism, melodrama, the Noh plays, and the verse drama. As Clark noticed, Yeats's language in this play has its special feature: "Although the style does not abound in figurative language, it is rich in images" (Clark 1965, 89). The prosaic rather than poetic language in this verse play stands out clearly, but the plain, bare-bone language is by no means bland; instead, it instills a stark, crude or even harsh flavor into the play which matches its brutal subject. Likewise, the minimalized setting is not dull but quite suggestive: the "ruined house" and the "bare tree" are the predominant images in the play (Yeats 1938, 23). While critics may debate what they stand for specifically, there is no denial of their rich, symbolic connotations. The elimination of all the other props makes the decayed house and the bare tree the focal point of the play, which intensifies the trauma: "The play, like house or tree, is stripped bare of any irrelevant furniture or *foliage*, and nothing is left but the tragedy of vision" (Clark 1965, 92). Such a riddance of extra details also depersonalizes the characters who are only known as the old man, the boy, the mother, and the father. Suess argues that:

the lack of character names provides another instance of the use of archetypes [...] Rather than furnish them with specific historical identities, Yeats presents them *as* their relationships, as the funda-

mental father and son, mother and son. This type of characterization discourages the audience/reader from sympathizing with any individual character as an historical being […] Rather, it obliges one to reflect on the significance of the relationships as archetypal. (Suess 1998, 64)

While the play may evoke archetypal relationship, use of archetypes does not necessarily alienate the audience; it may deepen rather than diminish the sympathy from the audience towards the human tribulations: the audience can look beyond the flawed individuals such as the ignoble old man to sympathize with his sufferings as universal human experiences.

For a play that straddles between different styles and genres, its structure is bound to be ambivalent: linear narrative is laced with cyclical repetitions. Although *Purgatory* is constructed in a linear order in which the old man narrates his life story to his son, the recurring flashbacks and the repetitive nature of the events throw the linear order into disarray. To Suess, "De-accentuating the linear-narrative structure of the dramas re-directs the readers' and spectators' plot-driven response to the plays toward a focus on how and why events occur" (1998, 63), which is especially true in *Purgatory* as the linear order of the events is almost completely buried in the seemingly static, ongoing conversations between the old man and the boy, and furthermore, constantly disrupted by the reappearance of the ghosts from the past. As Schmitt puts it, "The return of the dead to their families signifies the hope that going back in time is possible; it implies that one is no longer living in chronological time but in the primordial time" (Schmitt 1973, 317). What the audience experiences in the play is indeed psychological time rather than chronological time. By reducing the characters' actions to the minimum (i.e. they struggle for the bag, the old man stabs the boy, etc.), Yeats not only foregrounds their speeches but also further reduces the sense of time elapse, creating a semi-eternal stillness which suspends the physical, linear time and evokes what Suess calls "mythic time": "The old man's obsessive and continual recollection of his past, and our knowledge at the end of the play that the cycle is about to begin again distance us from recognizing the characters as individuals and instead relocate the narrative into a mythologized metanarrative" (Suess 1998, 64). Suess's "mythic time" actually reflects the time experienced by the traumatized who live in a cyclical rather than a linear time frame due to their compulsive repetitions of the past. As the old man's narrative integrates the past, the present, and the future all together in a repetitive cycle, it transforms fleeting linear time into enduring traumatic time. In this sense, the play is both linear and cyclical, timed and timeless. While these cyclical repetitions may speak to the ritualistic feature of the play as Cave claims "performance was to be akin to ceremony" (Cave 1982, 301) or as Schmitt argues "*Purgatory* is a religious drama, a ritual of rebirth – which fails" (Yeats 1973, 311), they are also primary, defining features of trauma, which characterize many trauma plays to come.

When Yeats wrote to Edith Shackleton Heald, he laid out clearly what *Purgatory* would be about: "I have a one-act play in my head, a scene of tragic intensity […] My recent work has greater strangeness and I think greater intensity than anything I have done" (1954, 907). The tragic intensity and the greater strangeness in *Purgatory* mark its kinship to later trauma plays: it addresses not only the tragedy of traumatic events but also the intensified human psychological and emotional reactions; his effective use of a hybrid form of realism, symbolism, Japanese Noh, minimalist setting, linear-cyclical structure, etc. inspires future playwrights to break traditional boundaries to create a hybrid platform to represent trauma. Yeats's germinal contribution to the development of Irish trauma plays is unquestionable as he has theorized trauma in *A Vision*, explored such a theory in *Purgatory*, and established some of the conventions in later trauma plays. With this article as a stepping stone, I hope more people will start to pay attention to and acknowledge Yeats's admirable work in this field.

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Divided by National Belonging and Joint Territory: Northern Ireland's National Identities

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Abstract:

This paper explores two contradicting sets of political identities, Protestant unionist and pro-British on the one side, and Catholic Irish nationalist and republican on the other, which shape the social and political sphere of Ireland. The aim is to describe the manifestations and transformations of these two identities in Northern Ireland. The concepts of contested identities, religion as an identity boundary and elements of nationalism provide the theoretical background. The conclusion indicates that Irish Catholic identity has gained in confidence, because it improved its political and social position in Northern Ireland. On the contrary, the Protestant unionist community perceives a loss in their status, which generates frustration and leads to disputes on cultural issues.

Keywords: Identities, Nationalism, Northern Ireland

1. Introduction

Two contradicting sets of political identities have shaped the social and political landscape of Ireland. These two identities, one labelled Protestant unionist and pro-British, with the other broadly described as Catholic Irish nationalist and republican, relate to either the devolved province of Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic in the South, respectively. Religion is a defining marker of the respective identities, hence Irish nationalism is occasionally used synonymously with Irish Catholicism, and unionism with Protestantism, but as this paper will show, such an approach simplifies complex realities. The conflict between the so-called Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists in Northern Ireland is rooted in a long history of disputes, mistrust and discrimination, which was the result of political power struggles on the island throughout centuries. The independence

of the Irish Free State and the creation of the new statelet of Northern Ireland in 1922 shifted the problem to the north of the island. However, it did not solve the conflictual relationship between the Irish people and the British state, which negatively affected Anglo-Irish relations and worsened when the conflict ignited in Northern Ireland in the 1960s. The narrative of the history of this problematic relationship and the experiences by generations of people who suffered under the violence committed by one side or the other maintained the conflict, which was occasionally defined as a protracted, intractable and deep-rooted conflict. The aim of the paper is to explore the national identities of the two distinctive communities in Northern Ireland, their political and cultural manifestations and transformation. History and the legacies of political violence applied by both sides, either to maintain political power or to overcome the political *status quo*, can only be understood by exploring the dynamics of inter-group conflict and the mobilisation of communities along the cleavages of national identity. Once violence ended and the demands of equal political representation and anti-discrimination policies for all citizens were accommodated the conflictual relationship between the two communities shifted onto the level of cultural issues. This can be explained due to the perceived threat of the loss of a distinctive identity among the Protestant community and the strong push of the Irish community to further promote the Irish identity, especial the Irish language, in Northern Ireland. Identity issues are non-negotiable needs for individuals and for communities, but if these identities are antagonistic a foundation for a non-resolvable conflict exists. These divisions might aggravate due to the decision of the UK to leave the EU (Brexit), pushing Northern Ireland into contested space over its territorial sovereignty and reopening the discussion of a respectful accommodation of identities in a post-Brexit Northern Ireland.

Firstly, the paper provides an introduction into the historical context of the Northern Ireland conflict, i.e. *The Troubles*, and the peace process. Secondly, concepts and definitions are introduced to discuss the national identity, cultural and community affiliation, the dynamics of identity formation and the main "markers" of the Northern Irish identities. Divided societies, such as in Northern Ireland, are characterised by political parties and other organisations aligned alongside the societal divide. The article discusses the political, cultural and paramilitary organisations claiming to represent the respective communities, which reinforce the division of society due to their mere existence. Finally, the paper addresses the post-conflict developments since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement (GFA/BA) in 1998 and gives an overview of the identity transformation since the implementation of the agreement. The GFA/BA was able to address some of the structural issues of the Northern Ireland conflict since the GFA/BA shifted onto cultural issues. Although Brexit opened up the constitutional discussion of Northern Ireland, the paper mainly addresses the manifestations and transformation of identity pre-Brexit.

2. Historical Overview

2.1 Origins of the Divisions (1171-1916)

The division of Ireland into two main identities dates back to even before the founding of the Irish Free State and the partition of the island in 1922 (Garvin 1988, 95). The British Empire's policy to subjugate Ireland under its reign was pursued more vigorously in some periods than in others. Officially, Ireland came under the control of the British crown after the Anglo-Norman Invasion (1169) and the establishment of a Lordship of Ireland by Henry II in 1171 (English

2006, 37-45). The first settlers from the British islands adapted to the local customs, spoke Gaelic and merged with the Irish population. These settlers later referred to as *Old English* also remained Catholic, even when British Kings and Queens took on the Protestant faith (Canny 1989, 99-103). Resistance by the Irish population and later the *Old English* against British rule was met with military force, and the land of participating clans and families was confiscated and allocated to loyal Protestant settlers. The policy of *Plantation*[1] was implemented during the sixteenth century, with the more decisive Ulster Plantation from 1606 onwards. These newly arriving settlers did not integrate into the local majority society, but stayed within their own groups, maintained their customs and religion, and – most important of all – were loyal to the British crown (English 2006, 59). The religious affiliation overlapped with political loyalty, while the role of the Protestant settlers was to protect British interests and secure the occupied territory. This became a "poisonous mix of sectarian and political division that was to shape and deform Irish politics for centuries" (Moloney 2002, 39). Religious affiliation became a label to distinguish the pro-British from the pro-Irish communities. The political and economic dominance of the Protestants was underpinned by the "penal laws", which legally discriminated Catholics and Presbyterians and favoured the Protestant state religion. As consequence a symbiotic relationship developed between the Catholic Church and different Irish movements, which fought to improve the situation of the Catholic people. At the time, when the "Home Rule" movement mobilised in Ireland to gain self-governance within the British Union at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the unionists defamed these advances as "Rome Rule", alleging that the Vatican would meddle indirectly in Irish affairs. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the ambitions of independence for Ireland overlapped with the interests of the Catholic Church. Due to the regional concentration of Protestants in the north-eastern part of Ireland, in the province of Ulster, the Protestant political identity was strong there and supported their demand to remain part of Britain.

The ideas of the American War of Independence (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789-1799) influenced the Irish revolutionary groups, such as the United Irishmen, which attempted to rise up against British rule in 1798 under the lead of the Protestant Theobald Wolfe Tone[2] (English 2006, 86-102). The United Irishmen rebellion of 1798, the 1803 rebellion led by Robert Emmet and the uprising initiated by the Young Ireland movement in 1848 all failed, and the leaders were executed. During World War I another attempt was made in 1916, which also ended in the execution of the rebel leaders but triggered a shift in public opinion turning against British rule.

2.2 War and Settlement in Ireland (1916-1922)

The difference in the 1916 rebellion, the so-called Easter Rising, compared to the other failed insurrections, was that the leaders declared an Irish Republic. It became a mysterious symbolic event for the Irish state because it is considered to be the first step towards an Irish Republic. The Irish political movement Sinn Féin won an overall majority in the elections of 1919 but did not take the seats in the UK parliament in London, choosing instead to establish an independent parliament in Dublin. The setting up of parallel political structures undermined the legitimacy of British rule and unavoidably led to an escalation of the conflict, which ended in a war.

[1] The early Plantation took place from 1556 until 1576, then the Munster Plantation started in 1586 and finally the Ulster Plantation from 1606 onwards, which was enforced by James I, who intended to "pacify" and "civilise" the rebellious Irish.

[2] Theobald Wolfe Tone is considered to be the father of Irish republicanism.

The declaration of the Irish Free State was the result of the brutally led War of Independence (1919-1921) between the British troops based in Ireland and the self-declared Irish Republican Army (IRA). The war was ended by the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 and the partition of the island of Ireland.

From 1922 onwards, during the years of state formation, the Irish elite cultivated a Catholic anti-imperialistic republican ideology in the Free State, whereas Northern Ireland was set up as a Protestant state, loyal to the crown, but a devolved entity within the United Kingdom. At the time, the logic behind establishing these two separate political entities – a state and a devolved province – was that the dispute would ease due to the physical separation of the two national identities by creating a territory where each of them have a majority. However, this territorial segregation ignored the newly created minorities within both states, who were meant to adapt to the majority culture, or leave. For a Europe emerging from the ruins of World War I, this was not an exceptional case, but rather a common occurrence on the continent at the time. However, the partition of the island accelerated the process of shaping these contradicting identities, as these were legitimised by the existence of the Irish Free State and the Northern Irish province, and vice versa.

In the province of Northern Ireland, the original division between the Protestant ruling class and the Catholic subjects[3], such as the political and economic dominance of the Protestant community, continued, and intensified after the partition. From the Protestant perspective, Catholics were disloyal to Northern Ireland and should leave and settle in the predominately Catholic Free State, whereas the Catholics still believed in the amendment of the borders in their favour, or even a unification with the Irish Free State. However, this did not happen.

During the 1930s, social and sectarian tensions led to violent clashes between the Protestant police and Catholics in Northern Ireland (Patterson 1996, 8). During World War II, Belfast became an important harbour for the British war effort, but also a victim of German bombardments, and in the 1950s a certain level of resignation among Catholics linked to their inferior societal status started to take hold of the Catholic population.

2.3 Escalation of Conflict in Northern Ireland (1960s-1980s)

The 1960s became a defining decade for change, not only in Northern Ireland but the entire world over. The political and social situation to the detriment of Catholics in the Northern Irish province created an atmosphere where social movements emerged to demand equal living conditions and political rights for Catholics in Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA) acted as a mouthpiece for the discontented parts of the mainly Catholic population, and organised protests to put pressure onto unionist politicians to relent and grant these demands. Instead, these demonstrations were met with brutality from the Northern Ireland security forces. One explanation for this reaction is that the Protestant community and the political elite at the time feared losing control over "their state", and therefore dismissed the demands as unjustified and delegitimised the claims by depicting all Catholics as disloyal citizens. The consequence of the Protestants' perception that they themselves are a minority on the island of Ireland, creating a feeling of being "besieged" by an all encircled "enemy", triggered the rather violent reaction to defend Northern Ireland against the NICRA's

[3] Catholics, who after the partition of Ireland remained in Northern Ireland with British citizenship but considered themselves culturally Irish and in favour of an all-island Irish Republic.

demands. As the political attempts to initiate change in Northern Ireland failed, parts of the Civil Rights Organisation turned to violence. Due to the escalation of the situation, especially during August 1969 in London-/Derry, at the so-called "Battle of the Bogside" and in Belfast, the British government deployed troops on Irish soil in the same year. The war between the revitalised Irish Republican Army and the British Army started only after a short "honeymoon period", when Catholics hoped that the troops would protect and assist them in obtaining fair treatment. However, as it turned out, and as the Irish republicans argued, the troops secured the *status quo* of a discriminatory state. At the end of the 1960s, the conflict turned into "an intensely violent struggle in the name of conflicting nationalisms" (Todd 2011, 76). *The Troubles*, which prompted many Catholic men (and a few women[4]) to join the paramilitary organisations during the summer of 1969, intensified in the 1970s, and involved the British forces as the main target of the republican paramilitary groups. In 1971 in particular, when *Internment* was introduced, detaining mainly Catholics without a trail and clear indication of a release date, the relationship between the Catholic community and the British forces deteriorated. This created a situation where the predominately Catholic areas were closed off by their inhabitants and became a secure base for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to operate from. To end this situation, *Operation Motorman* was initiated to remove the barricades which blocked the entrances to the Catholic enclaves, making them accessible again for the army and police to search for terror subjects. These activities were mainly directed against the Irish republican paramilitary groups, although Protestant paramilitaries started to become militarily active around the same time but were not perceived as a threat by the state authorities.

The following two decades (1970s and 1980s) were characterised by a war between the radical Irish republican groups, believing in the unification of the island, the radical Protestant loyalist groups, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the British army, in defending the union with Great Britain.

2.4 Repositioning in Northern Ireland (1980s until 1998)

The situation changed at the end of the 1980s, when it became apparent that the conflict could not be solved militarily, and informal communication channels were opened to find a way out of the circle of violence. Two main events in the 1980s changed the course of history: The *Hunger Strikes* in 1980 -1981, which politicised the more radical spectrum of the Irish Republican Movement, and the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985[5], which indicated that the British Government was ready to give the Irish Government a say in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. Additionally, the continued brutality and senseless violence made the Irish population turn away from their paramilitary organisations, and in some circumstances even challenged them. In 1994 a ceasefire was called by the IRA, which was followed by a declaration of ceasefire and apology for the victims of the conflict by the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC), an umbrella group of loyalist paramilitary groups. However, the real opportunity for peace seemed to come after the British general elections in May 1997 when a Labour government under Tony Blair took office, and in the same year Bertie Ahern became Irish Prime Minister (*Taoiseach*). The success of getting the parties of Northern Ireland to sign the GFA/

[4] For further information on the role of women in the Republican Movement see Reinisch 2016; 2019.

[5] Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd claim that the Anglo-Irish Agreement had a "radical effect" on the conflict situation in Northern Ireland, as the British state in a "process of repositioning" worked jointly with the Irish government to find a solution to the conflict, even opposing the Unionists (Ruane, Todd 2007).

BA can be attributed to the excellent relations between the British and Irish prime ministers at the time, and their common goal to bring peace to the region. Moreover, then US President Bill Clinton, who had a personal interest in the Northern Ireland peace process, supported the political negotiations by appointing US Senator George Mitchell to assist in the peace process by advising the two governments and mediating the GFA/BF in April 1998.

2.5 From GFA/BA until Brexit (from 1998)

The difficulties in setting up the cross-community executive to govern Northern Ireland, which was part of the GFA/BA, became a challenge, and the executive was suspended several times. The assembly election of 2003 changed the political situation, when the more radical Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin became the strongest parties in the assembly, were asked to form a government. However, this became only feasible after the St. Andrews Agreement[6] with the DUP was signed in 2006, because the DUP had not supported the GFA/BA. Still, the devolution of powers to Northern Ireland was only completed in 2010, when the agenda for justice and policing was transferred to Belfast, and David Ford from the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) was appointed Northern Ireland Minister of Justice. The assembly was suspended again due to conflicts within the executive from January 2017 until January 2020. Brexit, finally happening after a two-year transition period, and with the implementation of the negotiated deal accepting Northern Ireland special status within the EU's single market for goods, started a completely new discussion on a border poll, a referendum on the unification of Ireland. The GFA/BA sets out the rule that British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is in the position to call such a poll, when he/she believes that the majority of the people in Northern Ireland do not longer want to be part of the UK (Duffy 2021).

3. National Identities in Northern Ireland: Unionism vs. Republicanism

This overview of national identity in the Irish context starts by exploring the elements that constitute the identities of unionism and nationalism in the Irish context[7].

A study by John Coakley from 2007 listed a number of characteristics, which impact or shape identities in Northern Ireland and grouped them into three main sets of categories: "quasi"-objective background factors (religious denomination, community background, citizenship), more subjective characteristics (ethnic group memberships, national identity and communal affiliation) and finally more subjective markers (constitutional preference, political preference party support)[8] (Coakley 2007, 575-576). This part of the paper, in line with Coakley's categorisation, focuses firstly on the role of religion in the Northern Ireland context and its setting of

[6] The DUP refused to sign the GFA/BA in 1998, therefore additional negotiations were necessary for the DUP to finally accept the terms of the GFA/BA and the obligatory cross-community cooperation in the executive. The successful negotiations between the Irish and British governments and all political parties of Northern Ireland were held in St. Andrews in Scotland in October 2006. In the St. Andrews Agreement, the DUP accepted the GFA/BA on the basis that Sinn Féin officially participates in the Policing Boards, thereby officially recognising the legitimacy of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to serve both communities.

[7] The use of the terminology is problematic, as concepts are simplified and suggest that every Protestant in Northern Ireland is pro-British and wishes to remain in the Union with the UK. On the other hand, it suggests that all Irish Catholics are Irish nationalists and supportive of an all-Ireland Irish Republic or republicans.

[8] The categories were deduced from a number of surveys, which have been conducted in Northern Ireland since 1968, when researchers tried to identify various aspects of the conflict, such as ethno-national identity (Coakley 2007).

community boundaries due to people's religious denomination, which at the same time implies affiliation to a national identity group and even – in some cases – choice of citizenship. Secondly, the reinforcement of group boundaries and dynamics of group self-identification are touched upon before thirdly exploring the constituent elements of the respective national identities of unionism and nationalism. Finally, an overview of paramilitary and political organisations and communal affiliation with their respective constitutional preferences is given to demonstrate the link of cultural organisations to the national identity groups.

3.1 The Role of Religion in Shaping Northern Irish Identities

According to Coakley, the significance of religion can be elaborated by three concepts, the institution of the Catholic Church, a broader cultural understanding of religion, and religion as a "social label" (Coakley 2011a, 96).

Although the importance of the Church as an institution is diminishing, its impact on the denominational communities prevails in the Northern Ireland context. In connection with the Churches, their liturgy and their customs, the maintenance of own distinct culture was fostered over generations. Socialisation under the banner of the respective churches led to different ways of interpreting the world, it even developed a different worldview (McAllister 2000). The Churches, due to their organisational structure and because of their resources, have the capacity to provide various services for their respective communities, including education, social welfare and cultural events. Although these services and facilities are hugely important for the community, they build further on the divisions within the society. The Churches as institutions have an intrinsic interest in maintaining their power, their status and their authority within society, so Mitchell argues that the Churches, while speaking out against violence and even mediating between the different groups, are not to be considered neutral actors in Northern Ireland (Mitchell 2005, 6).

Religious denominations act as identity groups, defining communal affiliation by creating boundaries to other faiths. Furthermore, solidarity within one's own group is favoured (Coakley 2011a, 96). Linked to religion are social values (McAllister 2000, 853-855), a specific culture, and an understanding or interpretation of contemporary realities and historical narratives, which define national identity. Generally speaking, historical developments mean religious denomination overlaps with national identity. In the Northern Irish context, religion sets these boundaries of group identity, which are constructed and reconstructed by interaction with the other. According to Jenkins, group boundaries exist because people have "*individual knowledge*" of them, they experience these through *"practice and interaction"* and are embodied in institutions (Jenkins 2015, 14). The interaction between the groups reinforces the similarities of membership of one's own group and highlights differences to the other group (18). Identification with a specific group means that members are aware of their membership, assign value to it, and emotionally invest in this membership and their group (Tajfel 1982, 2). According to the Social Identity Theory, people voluntarily affiliate themselves to social groups and categorise other people into groups. This way, group-members creating the "we-group" (in-group) can distinguish themselves from the "the others" (out-group). Social categorisation, which means assigning people to a certain social group or institution, is a mechanism to simplify the complex social environment. Group affiliations are not only a "universal feature of human social life" but also "basic determinants of our social relations with others", which affect our attitudes, values, social norms, our societal roles and our behaviour (Turner 1984, 518). Polarisation is a consequence of competition between identity groups, which similar to intergroup conflict

evokes an increased identification with one's own group and emphasises its positive features (Tajfel, Turner 1979, 33), whereby group members assign negative attributions to the "other group". In conflict situations, where the antagonism is based on asymmetric or opposition of identities, the "respect of one identity involves disrespect for another", constituting a situation where "there will be no gradual incremental improvement through equal interaction" (Todd 2021, 56). Todd argues that in the light of Brexit mutual respect and recognition for both traditions has to be established through autonomous change within each identity, incited by an inclusive dialogue on the constitutional issues of Northern Ireland (77).

Due to the fact that the relationship between Protestants and Catholics was perceived problematic even before the outbreak of the conflict in Northern Ireland in 1969, people withdrew into their own "in-group", their respective religious community. The process of segregation, when socialising within one's own group and when relations to the "other" group are minimised, has characterised the political landscape of Northern Ireland and still has an enduring effect. In Northern Ireland, people live in separated areas and are therefore physically divided, sometimes even reinforced by so-called "peace walls". This separation applied not so much to the middle class, which even at the times of the conflict lived in mixed areas, but at the outbreak of the conflict, working-class people were even forced to move into their respective areas. Boundaries of the identity groups became manifest by painting street kerbs in the colours of the national flags the community affiliated with, or having murals on house walls evoking special events of the groups' history, or established places with references to their distinct identity (e.g. cultural centres, places of commemoration, museums). The separate communities developed and fostered their own distinct culture, which was linked to a set of values, traditions, religion and cultural elements, which also constitute national identity. Additionally, remembering history, respective historical experiences and narratives about the past contributed to preserving the group's own worldview. Religion, being "the central marker of ethnic origin" (Coakley 2011a, 98) and a social "label" in Northern Ireland became "intertwined" with ethno-nationalism (Brubaker 2012, 9). Other markers of ethnic groups such as language and ethnicity were not dominant. The Irish language was not able to fulfil the function as a decisive marker of national identity because of its decline and the spread of the English language among the Catholic community (Coakley 2011a, 97). Throughout history, which itself has left a legacy on the conflict, religion defined both groups and helped to distinguish them from one another (95). Religion therefore is one important element in constructing national identity in the Irish context. Moreover, cultural differences, economic disparities, political exclusion, different national alliances and historical narratives have assisted in maintaining and reinforcing the divide between the two identities.

In relation to the Northern Ireland conflict, McGarry and O'Leary reject the idea that religion is the main reason of the conflict, and claim that: "Conflict is indeed waged between two communities whose members are religiously differentiated, but they are also divided by broader cultural differences, national allegiances, a history of antagonistic encounters, and marked differences in economic and political power" (1995, 172).

In trying to resolve the antagonism of the relationship between the two identities the former Irish politician John Hume proposed a "Two Tradition Paradigm", propagating a pluralistic and equalitarian accommodation of the two existing national identities, which was adopted by the nationalist parties at the "New Ireland Forum" in 1984. Todd suggests however, that once equality was achieved this approach is difficult to maintain and therefore suggests a "New Ireland Paradigm", which "retains the values of accommodation, respect and recognition butssees them as values to be attained and sustained through iterative change in the meaning and values around identity" (Todd 2021, 56). The national identities need to show flexibility and

have to identify converging ideas to be able to maintain a peaceful existence, without the fear of losing out towards the "other" group.

4. Identification with a National Identity

The roots of today's differentiation between the Catholic Irish republican and Protestant British unionist can be found in Irish history, as it is the common history and related narratives which have bolstered these two identities until today. The partition of Ireland (1920-1922) reinforced the two sets of identities and broadened the divide between them, as both new "states" encouraged the formation of these national identities to legitimise their existence. "Dispute of identity and over aims and the very nature of the conflict becomes endemic to the actors of the conflict: the very range of interests, identities, and repertoires of conflict provides a rational for almost all the population to take sides" (Todd 2011, 77). These two identities are not homogeneous either but can be further distinguished into a more militant and a constitutional strand, with a number of increments between these two poles.

4.1 Protestant, British Unionist and Loyalists

Within the Protestant unionist community – similar to the Irish nationalist/republican community – there is an internal division between militant and constitutional orientations. Loyalists represent the more militant version, and British unionists the constitutional strand of the Protestants' unionist identity. Todd (1987) distinguishes between an Ulster loyalist and Ulster British tradition within the Protestant community of Northern Ireland, while within the British tradition – similarly to McGarry and O'Leary (1995, 93-96) – she identifies a devolutionalist and an integrationalist political attitude (Todd 1987, 11). The loyalist tradition is shaped by the belief that the unionists have to dominate Northern Ireland, as otherwise unionism would be defeated and dead (3). Loyalist's belief presumed that the political accommodation of the two diverging ideas in Northern Ireland was not possible and had to fail. The loyalist tradition is rooted in a feeling of threat and insecurity, which derives its values from an evangelical fundamentalist religious tradition and is kept alive in the cultural organisation of the Orange Order and Orangeism (3-10). The British tradition, on the other hand, is less focused on the local situation of Northern Ireland; members identify themselves with Britain and the British way of life. The intellectual professional middle class, which believe in British values and have adopted a British lifestyle, belong to this tradition of Northern Irish unionism (11-12). Both strands experienced different developments as threats: The Ulster British tradition had closely watched the loss of the sovereignty of the empire, whereas the Ulster loyalist were more concerned with the increase of the Irish population in Northern Ireland (Coakley 2020, 369). The question of how to deal with the political situation in Northern Ireland, as some wanted to return to devolution with a majority rule or power sharing with Catholic constitutional parties and others preferred a deeper integration into the UK, divided the Protestant community (Todd 2011, 85).

Loyalism is still confined to the Protestant working-class communities, where paramilitary organisations are also rooted. In general, the paramilitary groups did not receive much support from mainstream unionism and were even held in poor esteem (Coulter, Murray 2008, 7). However, the role of the paramilitary organisations was crucial for the peace process because they developed political ideas for working-class loyalism, which favoured co-operation with Catholics to solve the conflict. The existing cooperation between ex-prisoners from paramilitary organisations on both sides of the societal division, to avert violent clashes between youngsters

at flashpoints in the bigger cities, shows that despite their ideological differences, there is a common understanding of their responsibility to their respective communities.

The two main strands within unionism are not on good terms. During the conflict loyalists were militarily active, as according to their understanding this was necessary to defend the union, as expressed by the middle-class unionist parties. However, when attacks were committed by loyalists instigated by the political rhetoric of the unionist politicians, these parties would turn their back on them. Since the implementation of the GFA/BA, the loyalist community feels the unionist parties do not represent their interests. This distaste of middle-class unionists by loyalism, according to Hearty, is based on two narratives: the "exploitation narrative" and the "abandoning narrative" (Hearty 2015, 163-168). Loyalists feel very much the losers of the peace process, as there are no political representatives to advance their demands and because republicans seem to be more successful in pursuing their interests. Coulter and Murray (2008) on the working-class unionists' dissatisfaction with the peace process:

> In the period since the cease-fires[9] were called it has become painfully apparent that working-class unionists have derived little benefit from the supposedly historic political developments unfolding around them. While rates of poverty in nationalist areas appear to be slowly declining, those of loyalist neighbourhoods are in fact on the rise. (Coulter, Murray 2008, 17)

What could be shown is that the Protestant community is not a static homogeneous group, but one which is internally divided on the constitutional and other policy issues. However, this diversity of opinions and political attitudes is also reflected in the Catholic community.

4.2 Irish Republicanism and Irish Constitutional Nationalism

On the Irish/Catholic side, we find two major manifestations of Irish nationalism: Irish republicanism and Irish constitutional nationalism. The republican strand has traditionally covered the more militant position, but as former Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams remarked: "There have always been three tendencies within the republican movement: a militaristic and a fairly unpolitical tendency, a revolutionary tendency, and a constitutional tendency" (Adams 1995, 16).

Irish republicans in general consider the use of violence a legitimate tool to achieve political objectives, such as the withdrawal of the British troops and the reunification of Ireland. However, the mainstream of Irish republicans, particularly the Sinn Féin party and its former military wing, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), declared to remove violence from the political sphere in 2005 and avail of political means to achieve their political objectives. Nevertheless, there are still some dissident republican groups which would consider the use of violence as legitimate. On the other hand, nationalists remained constitutionalists and tried to participate actively in the state's politics to improve the situation of Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland, thereby rejecting violence as a political strategy. The escalation of violence during *The Troubles* led to a situation when the nationalists had to temporarily cease political cooperation with unionists. Republicans stigmatised the nationalists as traitors of the Irish people, which in some cases led to attacks on constitutional politicians by the militant elements of Catholic society. During

[9] The first cease-fire was called by the IRA in August 1994, which was followed by a cease-fire by the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) in October 1994. The IRA 1994 cease-fire broke down in February 1996, but was re-instated in July 1997.

the peace process[10] and finally with the establishment of the cross-community executive at Stormont in 1999, the more militant republican parties shifted towards constitutional politics.

McGarry and O'Leary further distinguish the Catholic/Irish/nationalist tradition into a number of subcategories: civic constitutionalists, civic militants, ethnic constitutionalists, ethnic militants, neo-nationalists and revisionists (1995, 17). The main features categorising these groups are the concepts of ethnic vs. civic and constitutionalist vs. militant, whereas the neo-nationalist and revisionists cannot be easily assigned along these categories.

The civic constitutionalist's assumption of what the Irish nation constitutes relates to values of civic nationalism, secularism, territory and an importance of cultural (non-religious) elements, especially the Gaelic language (*ibidem*). The aim of constitutional republicans is to unify the territory of Ireland, which has to be achieved through diplomatic negotiations. Constitutionalists reject means of violence to achieve political aims. Civic militants demand the self-determination of Ireland over the entire territory of the island, and violence is a legitimate tool to reach this objective (18). Ethnic constitutionalists more or less strictly follow Catholic teachings and believe in law and order. The majority of ethnic constitutionalists reject the use of violence to achieve a united Ireland, although they would blame the British state for creating the conflict by culturally suppressing the Irish and by dividing the island. The ethnic militants on the other side want to "liberate" Northern Ireland by force. They are driven by the belief that democracy cannot be implemented as long as the Irish people, the sovereign of the nation, is divided. Neo-nationalists claim that they are the real republicans, demanding an Irish Republic to include all people of Ireland regardless of their identities. According to the neo-nationalists, the unification of Ireland depends on the consent of both identities in Northern Ireland (18-20). The Irish state moved to a neo-nationalistic position by signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement with Britain in 1985 and by changing the Irish constitution in 1998 to drop the territorial claim over Northern Ireland. Civic constitutionalists/nationalists have a similar outlook on the political elements of what constitute the Irish nation. The neo-nationalists, however, diverge on the cultural aspects as a prerequisite to be considered an Irish national. Finally, the revisionists reject the previous interpretations of Irish nationalism as misinterpretations of Ireland's past, and are even inclined to accept the partition of Ireland (20). These sub-categories are rather fluent and not strict or rigid types of Irish nationalism, and are based on the ethnic vs. civic and constitutional vs. militant dichotomy.

5. Communal Affiliation: Political Parties, Paramilitary Groups and Cultural Institutions

At the local level of the divided society, in the closely-knit communities, community affiliation is a rather strongly developed feature on each side of the divide in Northern Ireland. The Protestant community throughout history has lived with the threat of being "overrun" and "outbreed" by the Irish majority on the island, and developed a kind of "siege mentality". The Irish nationalists, a minority in Northern Ireland since 1922, grew up with the idea of the "unfinished business", meaning that the aim of a united Ireland free of British influence, as declared at the Easter Rising in 1916,[11] still has to be achieved. For the communities these ideas and fears became a defining element of their history, narratives, hence their identity.

[10] Sinn Féin signed the so-called Mitchell Principles in 1997, which obliged the party to renounce violence and disassociate themselves from applying any form of organised violence to achieve its political aims; hence it agreed to convince the IRA to "put arms beyond use".

[11] The Easter Rising was staged at Easter 1916 by republicans, who occupied a number of buildings in Dublin and declared an independent Irish Republic. The British army crushed the uprising and executed the leaders of the rising, who subsequently became the heroes of the Irish struggle for independence.

The unionist political forces supporting the *status quo* in Northern Ireland possessed an almost unlimited political power for a long time and had an interest in bolstering the superiority of the Protestant community. The constitutional Irish nationalists tried to represent the Irish population in the British institutions of Northern Ireland and in the Westminster Parliament; however, with the outbreak of violence, the republicans became the dominant force with the objective of destroying the political structures of the Northern Irish province. To assist the respective objectives and to strengthen the community affiliations on both sides, political and cultural institutions were established to promote the ideas and interests of the communities.

In divided societies such as Northern Ireland, political parties and other civil and cultural organisations are organised along dominant segmented cleavages (Guelke 2012, 3-4). Therefore, the Northern Irish party system is defined by the division between nationalists and unionists. One exception is the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), which strives not to be affiliated to any of the communities.

5.1 Unionist/Loyalist Paramilitary Organisations

Loyalism, the militant strand of unionism, established paramilitary groups to defend their community from Irish republican attacks and to fill the perceived security vacuum which seemed to have emerged at the outbreak of violence at the end of the 1960s. These paramilitary groups claimed they were defending the existence of the Northern Irish state, but its members were imprisoned by the very same state for their "crimes". The relationship between the loyalist paramilitary groups and the unionist political parties is still one of mistrust. The paramilitary groups thought that they were acting in accordance with the politicians' wishes, but in the end, the political elite did not want to have any dealings with the militants (McAuley, Tonge Shirlow, 2009, 26-27).

The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), named after the organisation established in 1912, re-emerged in the wake of the first violent clashes during the election campaign in 1964, and the marking of the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1966, commemorated by the Catholic population in Northern Ireland. The Red Hand Commando (RHC), which was associated with the UVF, was founded in the 1970s. Around the same time, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), which actually constituted one organisation, established themselves as new loyalist organisations. These organisations were results of divisions within groups in the 1990s. The Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) split from the UVF in 1996 because of their criticism of declaring an end to the military campaign. However, in 1998 the LVF followed suit and called a ceasefire (Steenkamp 2008, 161). In the wake of the IRA's declaration of a ceasefire in August 1994, the UDA, UVF and RHC, jointly as the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC), announced the cessation of their military campaign and issued an apology to the victims of the conflict. The CLMC's ceasefire was maintained even though the IRA returned to violence in 1996.

5.2 Unionist Political Parties

Some smaller loyalist political parties are affiliated with paramilitary organisations. The Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), founded in 1979, became the political arm of the UVF, while the UVF's Commanding Officer Gusty Spence played an important role in the politicisation of the movement and the founding of the party. The PUP had the advantage of having a number of important figures like Billy Hutchinson and David Ervin in the movement, who together

with Gusty Spence helped to build up a political structure and basis to actively engage politically in the peace process. The UDA faced a number of internal challenges in relation to organising politically and its decision to abandon military activities in 2007 (Moriarty 2015). In 1981 the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party (ULDP) – renamed in 1989 as the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) – was formed, which dissolved in 2001 and merged with the Ulster Political Research Group (UPRG). Even before the advent of the peace process, paramilitary ex-prisoners played a key role in transforming aspects of the conflict. However, according to the study by McAuley et al. (2009) on loyalist ex-prisoners the key ideological goals, the interpretations of the conflict and the perception of the "other group" have not changed in their main aspects (McAuley, Tonge, Shirlow, 2009, 23-24; 35). Loyalist ex-prisoners would still perceive the conflict to be unsolvable as it centres around irreconcilable constitutional preferences. However, for the time being, a consensus was agreed that only a majority of people in Northern Ireland would be able to change the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, if they so desire (McAuley, Tonge, Shirlow, 2009, 30).

For a long time, the main political party in Northern Ireland was the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which ruled the province from 1921/1922 until 1972 when indirect rule was introduced from London. Even after the local Stormont parliament was suspended, the UUP remained the most influential party in Northern Ireland. It represented the Protestant middle class and at times was even willing to engage in power-sharing arrangements with moderate nationalists, e.g. the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 under the leadership of Brian Faulkner. However, when UUP-leader David Trimble convinced his party members to endorse the GFA/BA in 1998, voters withdrew their support and turned to the Democratic Ulster Party (DUP). Once the executive was set up in 1999, the implementation of the political settlement faced a number of obstacles and came to a standstill in 2002. A complete deadlock in relation to the re-installation of the executive was created by the assembly elections in 2003, where the moderate parties on both sides of the political divide, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), were replaced by the more radical parties, DUP and Sinn Féin, as the strongest parties. The regulations of the GFA require that the strongest parties from both communities have to form a coalition government. In 2003 this seemed impossible. However, the DUP changed its position of non-cooperation with the republican Sinn Féin party, signed the St. Andrews Agreement in 2006, and formed the Northern Irish Executive in 2007. In 2010 the UUP nearly disappeared from the political scene in Northern Ireland, when it lost all its seats in the Westminster Parliament at the UK general elections the same year. In 2015 it regained two seats in South Antrim and in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and received a ministry in the Northern Ireland executive. In 2017 the UUP again lost all its Westminster seats in the general election and was not able to regain any in the 2019-election (BBC 2019). In the early local elections in 2017 for the Northern Ireland Assembly the UUP won only 10 seats out of 90 (Assembly Election Results 2017).

The DUP, which became the main opponent for the UUP, was known for its infamous leader Reverend Ian Paisley, a moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster and strictly anti-Catholic in his personal and political views. Paisley became prominent in the mid-1960s, when the then unionist prime minister O'Neill attempted to reform Northern Irish politics by improving relations with the Irish Republic and by addressing Catholic grievances. This was publicly denounced by Paisley, who mobilised against O'Neill, ending in his resignation in 1969. The DUP was founded in 1970 by Paisley, who remained its president until 2008. Whilst rejecting the violent campaigns of the loyalist groups, Paisley's DUP provided the legitimacy for their activities by asking for the defence of the union and established itself as the

mouthpiece of the loyalist groups (Shirlow, Tonge, McAuley, *et al.* 2010, 74). Despite Paisley's anti-Catholic stance throughout his political career and the rejection of the GFA/BA in 1998, he endorsed the St. Andrews Agreement in 2006 and consequently formed an executive with his archenemy Sinn Féin in 2007. In the 2017 assembly election the DUP barely remained the strongest party in the Northern Irish parliament with 28 out of 90 seats (Assembly Election Results 2017). In the general election of 2019 the DUP won 8 seats (BBC 2019), being the strongest party in Northern Ireland in relation to taking Westminster seats.

5.3 Irish Nationalist Paramilitary Organisations

Various political parties and paramilitary groups originated within Irish nationalism. The radical groups linked to paramilitaries either adopted a left-wing ideology, thereby proclaiming to be secular, or referred to traditional national aspects of their respective ethnic group. Although the IRA and its political arm Sinn Féin (SF) defined themselves as left-wing movements, their members were more nationalist than socialist. This became apparent during the split between the Official Sinn Féin (OSF) and the Provisional Sinn Féin (PSF)[12] in 1969/70, whereas the Official Sinn Féin seemed to move ideologically towards Marxism, the Provisional Sinn Féin remained more conservative on political issues. The same happened to their respective armies, which split on ideological and tactical grounds. The Provisional IRA (PIRA) developed into the dominant force within the Irish Republican sphere, as it attracted more supporters and managed to keep the movement together. However, policy changes brought further disagreement and new groups surfaced. The Continuity IRA (CIRA) was founded in 1986, when Provisional Sinn Féin decided to actively participate in politics and drop the strategy of "absenteeism", which meant that the elected representatives participating in elections would start taking their seats in the parliaments and local councils. Republican Sinn Féin (RSF) was established as the CIRA's political wing. The next split occurred in 1997 at the time when the PIRA considered renewing the ceasefire of 1994, which broke down in 1996. A group of hard-core members decided to reject a new ceasefire and declared themselves as the Real IRA (RIRA), and the 32-County Sovereignty Movement (32CSM) later became its political arm. After the 1969 split, the Official IRA/SF-Movement was faced with similar frictions and disagreements. The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) split in 1974 from the OIRA because of their military inactivity in the conflict. The Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) became its political wing. A number of other groups and factions, mainly centred around personalities, emerged throughout the years and even attacked each other, e.g., the Irish People's Liberation Organisation (IPLO), which split away from the INLA (Hanley, Millar 2010, 512), or the Official Republican Movement (ORM) (594-595), the Republican Left and the Irish Socialist Network.

Due to the moderation of the former radical organisations and their engagement in mainstream politics, a number of political and militant radical parties split from their parent groups. The Real IRA split into two factions, and one adopted the name "Óglaigh na hÉreann" (ONH) (Independent Monitoring Commission, IMC 2010, 6). The Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD) is a paramilitary group, whose sphere of activity is located around Derry and Strabane; it is involved in criminal activities (IMC 2010, 9) and seemed to have merged with the Real IRA in 2012 (McDonald 2012). A number of various republican dissident groups and the Real IRA, as well as the CIRA, are militarily active.

[12] The Provisional IRA and Provisional Sinn Féin became the mainstream republican movement after the 1969/70-split, therefore the prefix "Provisional" is often dropped and these organisations are simply referred to as IRA or Sinn Féin.

5.4 Irish Nationalist Political Parties

One of the oldest and politically most important all-Ireland party is Sinn Féin, which was founded in 1905 (Rafter 2005) and became prominent after the Easter Rising of 1916, despite not being the most active organisation in the insurrection. It was successful in the elections in 1919 and set up a separate parliament in Dublin, but refused to send its elected representatives to London to take up their seats in Westminster. After the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1919, two factions within Sinn Fein emerged, one would accept the treaty and the other – due to the partition of Ireland – rejected it. The Civil War was decided by the pro-treaty faction. Sinn Féin as a party was marginalised in the new Irish Free State and in Northern Ireland. During *The Troubles* it gained some relevance as the political arm of the much more predominant IRA. However, internal ideological differences led to the split of the IRA and consequently of Sinn Féin. In the early 1980s a political strategy was developed in the wake of the *Hunger Strikes,* because the Irish republican movement[13] realised that a military campaign had to be accompanied by a political movement. Sinn Féin gained further importance under the leadership of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, who at the end of the 1980s wanted to find a way out of the spiral of violence by political means. Sinn Féin managed to convince the IRA to abandon its fight, dump their arms and "assist the development of purely political and democratic programmes through exclusively peaceful means" (Sinn Féin 2005). For a long time, Sinn Féin was the second strongest Irish nationalist party in Northern Ireland, until 2003 when it overtook the SDLP. At the last local election Sinn Féin became the second strongest party in the Northern Ireland Parliament with 27 seats, just one behind the DUP (Assembly Elections Results 2017). In the 2019 Westminster elections Sinn Féin won 7 seats (BBC 2019), traditionally the elected representatives do not take their seats in London.

The Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) is a representative for constitutional republicanism in Northern Ireland. The party, which was founded in 1970 by members of the NICRA, was the dominant political party for Northern Irish Catholics and nationalists until 2003. One of the most prominent and influential politicians of the SDLP, was John Hume, who was essential in bringing the conflict to an end; when in the late 1980s he started talks with the leader of Sinn Féin Gerry Adams to work on a political solution. Hume was politically active for years as a member of the Northern Ireland Parliament, the UK Parliament and the European Parliament. During that time he was able to establish good contacts with personalities and politicians in the United States who supported the peace process. The SDLP won 12 out of 90 in the local elections in 2017 (Assembly elections 2017). In the 2017 general election the SDLP lost all Westminster seats, but regained two of them in 2019 (BBC 2017, BBC 2019).

Beside the main parties, a number of smaller newly founded parties, mainly rejecting the GFA/BA, have been established during recent years. On the republican side, the Republican Network for Unity (RNU), an active political network of republicans, which opposes the implementation of the GFA/BA and the St. Andrews Agreement. In 2006 Éirígí was founded as a socialist Irish revolutionary anti-imperialistic political party, which contested the local elections but failed to win any seats in either the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland and 2016 also Saoradh – The Irish Revolutionary Republican Socialist Party was founded (Saoradh 2020).

[13] From the mid-1970s onwards the Provisional Movement constituted the most relevant element of the Irish Republican Movement, hence the "Provisional" designation – used at the time of the 1969/70 split of the movement into the Official and Provisional factions – was dropped and the affiliated organisations were only termed as Sinn Féin or IRA.

5.5 Cultural Organisations

There are several cultural organisations on both sides of the communal divide, but here only some the more relevant and older organisations are introduced as examples representing the Irish/Catholic/nationalist and unionist/British/loyalist cultural expressions.

The Orange Order, a Protestant cultural organisation, is closely linked with the political leaders of the UUP and other unionist political parties. The objective of the Orange Order is to maintain and celebrate the cultural heritage of the unionist community in Northern Ireland, providing and maintaining an important element of the unionist identity. However, as the cultural manifestations of the Orange Order are sometimes perceived by the Catholic population as provocative, and a display of political dominance towards the Catholics, tensions emerge, especially during the parade seasons, when the Orange Order parades pass through streets mainly inhabited by Catholics. The Northern Ireland Parades Commission established in 1998 is charged with reviewing, recommending or approving routes of the parades to minimise the violent clashes connected with these parades, or in cases of dispute, with mediating a solution acceptable for both sides (Parade Commission 2017).

The Apprentice Boys of Derry define themselves as a "historical and cultural organisation committed to maintaining the spirit of courage and liberty displayed by the Defenders of Londonderry in 1688-1689" (Apprentice Boys of Derry 2017). This quote referred to the historical event of the "Siege of Derry" in 1688/1689, when Protestant Apprentices prevented the opening of the city gates and the surrender to the Catholic forces, which besieged the city. The Apprentice Boys are organised in several clubs, arrange parades and the annual celebration of the events of 1689 in August, and run a museum, where objects of the organisation are collected, recovered and maintained to keep the tradition of the organisation alive.

For the Irish population in Northern Ireland the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) acts as a community organisation supporting traditional Irish sports hurling and Gaelic football. Recently, attempts were made to open up the organisation to the Protestant community as well. The learning of the Irish language, Irish dancing and Irish music are associated with the Irish way of life. Children are encouraged to take up courses to learn the language, Irish dancing or play the tin whistle or the Irish Bodhrán.[14] Cultural centres, such as the An Chultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich in West Belfast or the Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin in Derry are institutions providing space for Irish culture and for people to meet (Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich 2017; Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin 2017).

Although, the GFA/BA managed to build the foundations for a peaceful co-existence of the two communities, which ended the physical conflict, the disputes over identity issues have moved to the cultural sphere (Tonge, Gomez 2015, 277). More conflicts over the parades of the Orange Order, the removal of British flags from public buildings in Northern Ireland, as seen in Belfast in December 2012, and the use of other national symbols will erupt as long as the division in society persists and no attempt is made to agree on joint symbols of shared identity, as suggested by Tonge and Gomez.

6. Identities in the Post-Conflict Situation in Northern Ireland

The political and cultural context shapes identities, therefore the post-conflict situation and the political integration of the Irish Catholic community in Northern Ireland consequent-

[14] Bodhrán is a hand drum played by hand with tippers.

ly impact on both identities. Unfortunately, the societal divisions remain, they just manifest themselves differently.

The main achievement of the GFA/BA signed in 1998 was that violence as a political tool was removed from politics in Northern Ireland. This was accepted by Sinn Féin when they accepted the "Mitchell Principles" in 1997[15], though it was not possible to engage all political parties and paramilitary groups in the peace process at the time. The main problem was that the groups which shifted and moved to a more moderate position had to cope with dissidents and – in worst-case scenarios – with splits within their ranks. The more radical new splinter groups in particular continued to commit attacks, which increased the number of victims even after the GFA/BA was signed and endorsed by the population of Ireland in an all-island referendum in May 1998.

The transformation of the political context and the shift in actors accepting political realities started to take place during the 1980s, when the Provisional IRA and Provisional Sinn Féin realised that a political strategy is needed beside the military campaign to address the issues of the conflict and to mobilise the Catholic community. During the 1980s and early 1990s the paramilitary groups lacked the legitimacy to speak for their people, but some members became politicised during their imprisonment, who after their release established political parties to represent their interests within the respective communities. As a consequence of the Sinn Féin's political success and the continuing paramilitary violence, the British and Irish government agreed to closer cooperated on security issues. The Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed between the Irish *Taoiseach* Garret Fitzgerald and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1985 was implemented by the British government even against the opposition of the unionist population. It further acknowledged the "Irish dimension" in Northern Ireland and thereby "repositioned" the British state in relation to the unionists (Ruane, Todd 2007, 450). Another reason for a transformation of the political actors was that the paramilitary groups and the British Army had come to the conclusion that the "war" could not be won by military means. It could be argued that the conflict ended for both sides in a "mutually hurting stalemate" (Zartman 1991, 16), which made the actors look for alternatives in bringing the conflict to an end. There is also the counterargument that not only the "mutual military stalemate" led to the shift in actors' mindsets, but the asymmetric perception of the military success by the loyalists too – believing that their activities kept Northern Ireland within the Union – and the overestimation of transformative changes achieved on the republican side (Shirlow, Tonge, McAuley, *et al.* 2010, 22). Politicisation of loyalist and republican prisoners, learning about their own history and analysing the perspective of the "others" introduced a change in the thinking of these groups, resulting in political strategies and finally in engaging with each other to end the conflict in Northern Ireland (62).

Once the republicans announced their ceasefire, the loyalists followed, as the original reason for defending the Protestant community from republican attacks no longer existed. Moreover, the population would not support the political wing of the military organisations if they had continued their military activities. Sinn Féin had to reconsider its combined strategy of "Armalite and ballot box", which was propagated at the start of the 1980s and combined the military campaign with politics. Since more and more civilians had become victims of their military campaign, the population forced the movement to end it.

[15] The Mitchell Principles obliged the parties to renounce violence and disassociate themselves from using any form of organised violence to achieve their political aims. When Sinn Féin signed the Mitchell Principles, which was preceded by intense discussions within the Irish Republican Movement, it agreed to convince the IRA to "put arms beyond use".

While unionist politicians resisted British pressure to accommodate the needs of the Catholic population for some time, the loyalists were more inclined to accept the fact that the conflict could only be settled by working with the Irish nationalist parties. The improvement of Anglo-Irish relations between the British and Irish states from 1997 onwards changed the context of politics in Northern Ireland. Due to the close cooperation and personal appreciation of the two prime ministers at the time, Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair, it was no longer possible for the unionists to avert an agreement. The unionist parties, especially the UUP, had to accept the new realities of these positive Anglo-Irish relations.

The actors on both sides changed their mindsets insofar as the republicans accepted the existence of a unionist identity and their right of self-determination, while the unionists acknowledged that the Irish political parties needed to be integrated into the running of Northern Ireland. In the GFA/BA it is stated: "We acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations. However, we will endeavour to strive in every practical way towards reconciliation and rapprochement within the framework of democratic and agreed arrangements" (GFA 1998, paragraph 5) The reality of the two distinct identities in Northern Ireland was recognised and institutionalised in the GFA/BA, creating a situation where democratic institutions and procedures are built upon the divisions of society, and reinforcing them for the foreseeable future. The GFA/BA requires cross-community cooperation at the level of the executive to be functional. Although the implementation of the GFA/BA and the devolution of powers to the Northern Irish executive could not be considered very successful at the outset[16], it functioned without any major interruptions from 2007 until 2015. A new crisis emerged in August 2015 though when the UUP left the executive, as evidence emerged that members of the former Provisional IRA were involved in the killing of ex-IRA-volunteer Kevin McGuiganin the same month. The DUP attempted to solve the dispute over the issue of the paramilitary activities of republican groups once linked to the Provisional Sinn Féin, but failed, and therefore DUP leader Peter Robinson stepped down as First Minister of Northern Ireland (McDonald, Watt 2015). This example showed how the legacies of the violent past still impact on the politics of Northern Ireland today. The murder of Kevin McGuigan kicked off a discussion about whether the Provisional IRA still exists or not (Kelly 2015, 2; Moloney 2015). The executive survived this episode, but the newly appointed interim leader of the DUP, Arlene Foster, was allegedly involved in the mismanagement of public funds. Sinn Féin therefore demanded her resignation as First Minister, but because of her refusal, Martin McGuinness stepped down as First Deputy Minister in January 2017, the executive dissolved and new elections had to be called. The election outcome reduced the gap between the DUP and Sinn Féin to a one-seat difference, which meant that both parties are required to form a coalition government. The executive was re-installed with DUP's Arlene Foster and Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill in January 2020.

A positive development of the GFA/BA is the accommodation of Irish identity into the political and constitutional structure of Northern Ireland; therefore, the Irish-Catholic population feels more comfortable declaring themselves Irish (Tonge, Gomez 2015, 294-295). On the other side, young Protestants are more likely to accept a regional Northern Irish identity,

[16] The first NI Executive was established with the SDLP and UUP as the main parties, which appointed the First Minister and the First Deputy Minister in 1999. Conflict arose between the UUP and Sinn Féin due to the perceived lack of decommissioning activities by the IRA and the accusation that Sinn Féin does not sincerely support a non-violent political path. During 2000, 2001 and from 2002 the powers of the executive were revoked several times and London introduced direct rule. From 2002 until 2007 the executive was not active at all. Only from 2007 was it possible to establish a stable executive. The crisis in autumn 2015 showed once again the lack of cross-community trust at the level of the political parties.

then older Protestants, who lived through *The Troubles* (284). In the post-GFA/BA phase the Irish community no longer appeared attached to the idea of Irish unity. However, Brexit has led to calls from Sinn Féin to hold a border poll and initiated discussion on a unified Ireland. The Unionist parties have been advocating Brexit (Coakley 2020, 361-365), although this political stance has consequently even weakening the Union with Britain. The DUP after the 2017 general election entered into a confidence and supply agreement with the British government, assuming that it will be to the benefit of the Union. But again, the British government had "sold out" the Unionists and agreed to the Northern Ireland protocol with the EU, which makes is necessary to check some food products coming from the UK to Northern Ireland (Edgington, Morris 2021). Brexit has opened up the discussion on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, with the re-alignment of positions between the two respective identities at its core.

As showed in this paper the divisions of society trace back over centuries and are entering now into a new phase, which requires some new approaches to overcome the antagonism of the two traditions and a respectful inclusion of the Protestant traditions into a prospect unified Irish Republic (Todd 2021). To overcome the origins of the conflict, rooting in the competing national-identities and the contest over control of the territory, a common identity should be constructed (Tonge, Gomez 2015), jointly developed and accepted by both communities. However, this requires a change by the two main political parties in Northern Ireland, the DUP and Sinn Féin, which are interested in maintaining the two different identities, as their electoral success depends on being able to mobilise their respective communities (290). The political parties have for now no interest in fostering a common identity with common symbols in Northern Ireland. For example, the use of symbols in the socio-political context, especially flags, can lead to conflict. The decision by the majority in the Belfast Council in December 2012 not to fly the Union Jack all-year around, but only on 15 designated days, was met by angry demonstrations from the unionist and loyalist communities. The rather aggressive reaction against Belfast Council's political decision has to be seen against the backdrop of continuing dissatisfaction with the peace process within the Protestant community and its fears of marginalisation of British identity in Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin especially is accused of removing aspects of Protestant culture and heritage from Northern Ireland's public sphere and even waging a war against unionist identity (Hearty 2015, 160).

There is a sense among Protestants that the peace process did not benefit the unionist/loyalist population in the same way as the Catholic community, consequently, this perception of the political and societal situation creates frustration. The first indication of some dissatisfaction with the peace process on the Protestant side was the result of the referendum on the GFA. The referendum on the GFA/BA, although overwhelmingly supported by the Irish-Catholic population in the north and south, received only a small majority from the Protestants, which left a bad taste with the overall success of the peace settlement (Doyle 1998, 11; Coulter, Murray 2008, 4). Now the outcome of the Brexit negotiations addressing the special case of Northern Ireland must have reaffirmed the feeling that the Protestant community is on its own and losing out, triggering a type of "siege mentality". As the physical war was replaced with a cultural war, issues related to identity became very sensitive as their preservation is seen as a symbol of cultural survival. Apart from the subjective fear of cultural dominance by the Irish Catholic population, the Protestant community observed a decline of numbers in terms of religious affiliation. In the 2011 census, 42 percent labelled themselves as Protestants, whereas 41 percent of the population declared themselves Catholic, 17 percent designated themselves as non-religious and 8 percent professed other religions. Since 2001 the Protestant community has decreased by about 4 percentage points. (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2011a).

In relation to national identity, a different picture emerged, as 40 percent described their identity as only British, 25 percent as only Irish, 21 percent as only Northern Irish, and 14 percent as other identities and combinations of British and Northern Irish. By contrast, 58 percent of Catholics and 36 percent of Protestants use the Northern Irish identity category (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2011b). With regard to national identity the figures seem to indicate that people might shift away from their British or Irish identity to a Northern Irish one, but at the moment, the majority of Protestants, 42 percent of the population, associate with a British nationality (40 percent), which is perceived to be under threat. In recent years the Protestant community has "seen their size reduced, their once-unassailable position of cultural dominance eroded, and their traditional position of economic dominance being reversed" (Coakley 2011b, 15). Now the question of territorial sovereignty and personal belonging, a question apparently successfully addressed in the GFA/BA, re-surfaced and is challenging a very much divided Protestant community. These developments create uneasiness with the current political situation and frustration within the Protestant community.

7. Conclusions

When the new "state(s)" were established at the beginning of the 1920s, the intensification of "national" differences between the respective identities was seen to be a necessity at the time as clear, distinct borders – not only territorial – had to be established. Though this led to polarisation around two identity concepts, a worsening of relationships between the related states, and finally ended in a violent conflict. While the GFA/BA managed to bring the political representatives of the main paramilitary groups to the table to agree on a political solution to the violent conflict, it was not able to overcome the societal divisions between the two contesting identities, on the contrary, it reinforces them. The structures laid down in the GFA/BA "froze" these societal divisions, as the political system is based on the two designated national identities. Moreover, the political parties compete for votes within their community, but not across the communal divide, so there is no interest from the parties to adapt a more "neutral" position. Despite the cross-community cooperation prescribed in the assembly, the executive and other political institutions, there has been no transformation of the key ideological objectives of the parties. The strategies were adapted to the political realities, but not the ultimate objectives. The positive outcomes of the GFA/BA were that Sinn Féin accepted that a majority of people in Northern Ireland must decide on the constitutional positioning of the state and the unionist parties approved the right of the nationalist community to be integrated in political participation and in the administration of the provinces.

For the Catholic community, the GFA/BA seems to have contributed positively to their daily lives as the Irish identity was upgraded to an official recognised political identity with rights and obligations within the Northern Irish political system. The Protestant community, however, is mainly disaffected with the peace process and fears about being outbid by the republican parties in politics and in cultural areas are prevalent. Additionally, the intra-communal division between working-class and middle-class Protestants seems to have widened, which can be interpreted as a consequence of the prevailing disadvantages of working-class loyalists in Northern Ireland. With Brexit these tendencies might intensify, however time will tell, what impact this new situation has on the Protestant identity and how the Irish society will react to these changes.

Political violence to achieve political aims was largely removed from Northern Ireland, but violence on a smaller scale within society to vent frustration and as a reaction to the transfor-

mation processes still exists. The conflict between the two identities manifests itself nowadays in the area of cultural issues, such as parades of the Orange Order, flags and other symbols. In future the success of the Northern Ireland peace process will no longer be assessed on the issue of equal integration of the nationalist/republican community into the Northern Irish state, but on whether the agreement can be as beneficial for the unionist communities as for the Catholic community. Further discussion will have to deal with the question, if and how a prospect united Ireland is able to provide the same rights to the Protestant community, as the GFA/BA did for the Catholics in Northern Ireland.

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"Resistance art is nourishment when we are in dark times. And we are in dark times" Interview with Irish writer Emer Martin*

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Emer Martin is an Irish author, artist and teacher who lives between the depths of Silicon Valley, California, and the jungles of Co. Meath, Ireland. She has produced a strikingly diverse range of work: novels, poems, literary journalism, paintings, and short films. She is also an active writer for newspapers and on social media. Her first novel, *Breakfast in Babylon* (1995), won Book of the Year 1996 at the prestigious Listowel Writers' Week in her native Ireland. This novel and her next, *More Bread Or I'll Appear* (1999), were published internationally and widely acclaimed. A year later, she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Her third novel, *Baby Zero* (2014a), was published in the UK and Ireland in March 2007 by Dingle, and released in the US in 2014 by Rawmeash, an artist-led publishing cooperative run by artists for artists and based between California, New York and Ireland. Rawmeash was founded by Emer Martin in 2012 and through it she has published three children's books (2014b, 2016, 2017), completed her third short film (2006) and produced Irvine Welsh's directorial début (Welsh 2007).

Emer Martin is an extremely political and expressive artist. What makes her multi-faceted work unique is that she likes taking control of her own ideas, breaking down an old-established array of barriers, tearing up traditional structures and flipping the hierarchies. In this interview, she discusses an array of social, political, economic and cultural issues from the past and the present as they occur in Europe, the Middle East and in a variety of places in the United States. She shares her views on such cultural matters as Ireland's former insularity and the idea of art as resistance; or contemporary concerns, such as the politics of capitalism, Brexit, the COVID-19 crisis, Donald Trump's administration and how George Floyd's killing has inflamed people worldwide. There is an extensive discussion of her latest, and arguably most important novel, *The Cruelty Men* (2018), which in 2019 was nominated for the Kerry Group

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Irish Novel and shortlisted for best Irish novel the same year. The following interview started in March 2020, immediately after the COVID-19 crisis broke out, and was continued via e-mail.

Fig. 1 – *Martin's portrait*. Courtesy of Emer Martin

MT: Emer, thank you for agreeing to this interview. I would like to start with a few general questions based on your website[1]*. Here, you claim that you "fled Ireland at age 17, finding it to be insular and oppressive, and began to wander through Europe." Did your upbringing become a specific reference point within your work?*

EM: *Breakfast in Babylon* was my most autobiographical work, which is probably typical for a first novel. It really was a composite of fact and fiction. So many of the characters are straight out of my experience in Paris and London. I was desperately trying to shed off Ireland when I was young. Growing up in the 1980s, I saw Ireland as very uncool and uninteresting. I felt like I was trapped indoors. It was a poor undeveloped country that was dominated by the Catholic Church and I stomped around as a teenager punk rocker full of resentment and longing, dreaming of cultural centres like Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, all fantasy places in my head that were vibrant and full of art and experimentation.

MT: When and how did your literary and artistic adventure start? Did any writer or artist play a part?

EM: I wanted to be a writer all my life, from when I was about 8 and so I pored over Ellmann's biography of Joyce and looked to people who self-created and experimented, like Genet, Jarry, Artaud, Burroughs, Kerouac, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Hemingway – all male writers who lived their work and sacrificed their lives for art. It was a romantic notion and I did not

[1] See <www.emermartin.com> (03/2021).

have the sophistication to understand that they were all men and anointed as the greats, and there were many others, struggling people who were broke, or female, or ignored and slipped away into poverty and obscurity. I thought I would go to Paris and find the cafés full of writers and dreamers and artists. In fact, I ended up in squats with refugees from empire and capitalism, burning themselves up with drugs and alcohol, and survival was not even guaranteed. I left Paris to explore London. My glamorous ideas of creating myself as a writer living on the fringes of the world with like-minded creative thinkers and adventurers soon ended up being a twilight shelf-filler in Sainsbury's on East Street in London. The way I was treated as a poor, Irish immigrant and a young girl was a shock. The Irish were the poor of Europe at that point, and we were in London as cleaners and bricklayers and English people were very surprised if we had read a book or had an opinion. We were also viewed as dangerous terrorists.

The London of punk rock and experimentation was what I was dreaming of: The Clash, The Sex Pistols. I went immediately to Carnaby Street and all I saw were generic high street shops and drab capitalism. I felt I was too late for the *zeitgeist* or the revolution. Without realizing it or understanding it, I had also internalized the romantic view of the anarchist artist as a young male from the Surrealists, to the Beats, to the punk rock movement. It was hard to find women role models who were not just muses or mad, or killed themselves. I was in thrall to the notion of the rebel genius young man, and there were a few of those about but they would not have listened to a word I said. Years later, when I read more widely and encountered works by feminist and anticolonial thinkers, and watched how they rummaged through the rubbish heap of history in order to fish out the few women or people of colour, and allowed them to have a voice and dust them off, only then did I realize how capitalism, racism, and patriarchy work hand in hand to silence the majority. At the time, I floundered and lost confidence in myself, internalizing all the hate, yet something in me still burned to add my voice to the chorus.

MT: You are a multifaceted artist: you write poems, novels, flash-fiction or short works of journalism, you direct and produce short films, and you are a painter and a very active intellectual in newspapers and social media. Which is the best genre for you to produce portraits and why?

EM: I am a visual thinker and so I am attracted to film and painting in a visceral immediate way. I envy musicians for how they can twist the core of your gut and reach that depth wordlessly. Last night I re-watched Kurosawa's *Ran* for the fourth time in my life just to show it to my teenage daughter. It is based on *King Lear* and speaks to power, and ego, and the violence of men and the destruction of war driven by the male ego. The film's ultimate depiction of evil is a woman, of course, and she is controlling them all in order to destroy everyone around her in vengeance for her family. But it is the last image that is seared in my brain. The blind man on the edge of the cliff utterly alone, helpless and unable to see the great abyss opened up in front of him. He fumbles with his cane and realizes there is an edge and danger, but he cannot grasp the enormity of what humans have wrought and the unthinking hostility of the empty plains that gape in front of him. The camera pulls out and leaves him there as the last statement. It takes my breath away every time. That image could not be written. I would have loved to do more film but it was so hard to raise money and I did a Master's and made a few shorts but had two small children that I was raising as a single parent at the time, so I had to use painting as my visual outlet. For that which is ineffable. But then writing is probably what I'm best at, as I have been writing obsessively since I was a child, so my books are my attempts to touch the centre of the mystery. And all great art is mysterious and can't be fully explained.

MT: What are you trying to achieve with your art?

EM: The mystery. Getting close to it. If we try to chase it any other way, through materialism, or even spirituality, we keep just creating more illusions. That is what organized religion keeps failing to do. It is always looking for the whole story but instead all the human flaws are magnified and it creates vicious power structures and meaningless rules and regulations and relies on casting out non-believers. But through art we can come close to some kind of truth that can never be linear or logical, can only be felt, not fully understood. In contrast to religion, there is no whole story. That is why we need a multitude of voices.

I used to buy the notion of the lone genius, but that is nonsense. That is empty ego and only gets in the way of creating. The reader is as important to the book as the writer, just as the audience is to the theater. The painter needs other eyes or the painting is dead. We are a collective species and we create as a group. Art is communal. The artist is not a sacred beast; their individual works are but threads in a fantastic web. Capitalism has distorted creativity. Every ancient or indigenous artist who worked and works to honour the world and never signs his or her name has known this. We need artists because we need art. But we are just vessels through whom the art comes, the spider is the *numen*, the mystery, the holy generator, the big bang that's still expanding the universe by every work of art, every word written, every poem, essay, book, every stroke of paint, every scene shot, every note played.

I just want to be part of this dance as an artist, but also as a reader, as a listener, as a witness, as analyser, as thinker and as dreamer. I learned that much at least.

MT: Regarding your poetry, what subject matter do you mostly focus on?

EM: Recently I am watching the human world being cannibalized by a very fraudulent economic system that has created mass displacement and destruction. Much of my poetry is my attempt at understanding that. I have written about refugees as the ultimate twenty-first century exemplar of what it is to be cast out by nature and economy and vicious politics and war. The Irish spent so long fleeing their own land as a result of colonialism and its impact that I identify strongly with those displaced. We are lulled into a false sense of security in the industrialized world, but as climate change alters everything we will all be on the move again as a species in order to survive. If we cannot have compassion for those who are our future then who will have compassion for our children when they have to pack up and leave?

I often envy poets who can write about leaves on the trees and actually be writing about leaves on the trees. They see the world in a much purer way. But I can only use those leaves as metaphors because it is the human beings that have my attention.

MT: In your poem "Resistance", you talk about rage, resistance and a rejection of resignation. What effects were you seeking with this poem when you first wrote it, and what effects were you aiming at when you posted it on Facebook a few months ago?

EM: I wrote that poem when Trump got into power and he was the personification of the demon ruler, he was King Ubu: his strutting, grunting, he was the ego devouring the world. I had been used to more slick versions of the patriarchal capitalistic ruler, where elite colleges spawn these patrician men to look obscenely plausible as leaders while they looted the world. However, here was Trump. It was stunning. The gloves were off. I wrote it as his first act in power was to bring in a Muslim ban into law in the U.S. He was stopping people from nine

different Muslim countries from even visiting the country or coming through the airports. My husband is Iranian and so my own family were affected. I went with my neighbour Valerie, who is a black American and highly aware of the racist nature of power in the U.S. and she actually recorded me in the airport performing that poem as a protest. It was a moment. And the poem is a practical thing, a form of resistance. When I feel exhausted I read Brecht's "To Those Who Follow in Our Wake". In a way, I wanted to put it all together like that. Resistance art is nourishment when we are in dark times. And we are in dark times.

MT: Regarding the racist nature of power in the U.S., you wrote an insightful article on this issue for The Irish Times *recently (Martin 2020b). Could you expand on how you are experiencing the current unrest after George Floyd's death as an American citizen? What impact do massive protests against black people and Floyd murals from Syria to Belfast have on you as an Irish writer living in America?*

EM: There is a global plague and a national uprising. This has been quite a few weeks. When COVID-19 hit everyone was doing Zoom cocktail hour, and then sharing sourdough starters and, all of a sudden, people are rising up against an intolerably racist society and demanding to abolish the police. All this in 10 weeks. No wonder they would prefer us exhausted by working all the time.

Racism is a constant in the U.S. In my article, I was pointing out that the country is not broken, it was built this way. The United States began as a capitalist enterprise when the Virginia Company set up the first English colony on the land of the Paspahegh people in 1610. This correlates with a similar group of venture companies known as The Irish Society that was set up to colonize Ulster at the very same time. In these parallels, we see the raw beginnings of capitalism and how it was interwoven with violent colonialism. These companies were investing in ethnic cleansing of the native people in both Ulster and the Americas, and demanding profit in return.

I am an Irish writer living in California which was until very recently part of Mexico and before that the home of multiple indigenous people. I am on Ohlone land where I live and always conscious of this. As a white immigrant, I am aware of my privilege. We were raised in Ireland to cluelessly boast that we were the "blacks of Europe". Admittedly, we share a colonial history of oppression and proud struggle. Although poor Irish immigrants were reviled when they first came to America, their descendants were able to integrate into mainstream society due to their whiteness. Predictably, we took full advantage and established ourselves in police forces, and took part in stealing land from the native people. Ideally, we should have used our privilege to recognize the struggle of our fellow victims of colonialism, but we rarely did. Most shamefully, in 1863, Irish people rioted through New York, lynching 120 black people to protest being drafted into the army during the civil war. Impoverished Europeans were eager to climb up the ladder of whiteness and become part of the establishment.

I do not know what this means for me as a writer, but I know what it means for me as a human. A new generation is finally seeing the repercussions of this web of white supremacy, violence, and capitalism that has been entrenched for 500 years. Black people have always been made to suffer, as their "otherness" is the basis for the entire spurious notion of whiteness. Without their pain, whiteness has no meaning. We are in an endgame here: there is a plague, the Amazon is burning, and the oceans are rising. Humans are on the brink of losing our habitat, as white billionaires talk of colonizing Mars. The revolution is not going to help us be forgiven. It will untangle our guts and pull us inside out. It will peel the thin layer of tissue

from our eyes. If any of us are to survive the next 500 years, we must now realize that all of us, as a multiracial international coalition, have to follow through with this pivotal moment. Just because the revolution is necessary, does not mean it is inevitable.

MT: Emer, you are Irish and so you are labelled as a writer of Irish literature, but your characters, I quote, "are part of an array of losers trapped in capitalism's sticky global web" (Martin 2020a, 247). Do you think that today there are other Irish writers whose work goes against a monolithic globalized corporate consumer society? If so, which ones? How about American writers?

EM: For many years, Irish women were just meant to write chick lit. When *Baby Zero* came out, every single review talked about how it was not chick lit as if that was all we could produce. I see writers like Mary O'Donnell get deserved recognition now. In my day, Jennifer Johnston was overlooked and undervalued. I hate doing this on the fly as I will leave out so many, but look at the whole wonderful gallery of writers writing about capitalism's dark side and the empty dread of consumer culture. Helena Mulkearns wrote a book about foreign aid workers in a postcolonial world called Ferenji that had some treasures that really struck me. But Irish writing slaps right now: June Caldwell, Wendy Erskine, Elaine Feeney, Alan McMonagle, Anna Burns, Oisín Fagan, Melatu Uche Okorie, Kevin Barry, of course. There is way more and they will come to me later, but the Rock of Doom, as my friends and I affectionately call it, is popping right now with talent that addresses these issues and have scope way beyond place and time.

And as for poets writing on this theme of the empty neoliberal globalized mess we've found ourselves in there is the extraordinary Michael O'Loughlin who in my view is one of the most talented poets in the English language at the moment, just revel in these few lines that sum up gentrification of cities. His book written from the point of view of a Latvian poet who finds himself as a migrant worker in Dublin is devastatingly and imaginatively accurate:

"A Latvian Poet Climbs Killiney Hill"

This city has dyed her hair blonde
And had her breasts remodelled
To look like the whore
In the hotel foyer
Anywhere in the world. (O'Loughlin 2010, 38)

That would have taken me a whole chapter to do what he did in five lines. Wow, just wow. As usual, the novelist kisses the poet's feet.

MT: Your first novel, Breakfast in Babylon*, "explores addiction and the use of drugs to both alleviate poverty and to have fun in an otherwise drab environment" (Martin 2020a, 247). The main character is the young Irish immigrant Isolt who lives in Paris, where she meets many drug addicts, alcoholics, refugees, immigrants, and exiles – modern society's losers. You show sympathy for all these figures relegated to the category of "the Other" and their desperate desire to belong. Could you tell me about that?*

EM: The world of history may belong to the lions, but it is the lowly scavengers and scraggy hyenas that move me to write outside of history and memory. The forgotten whom I

want to place in a protective pocket of history by chronicling what it was like to be always at the arse end of the economy. To be relegated as a nothing, as fringe, marginal, to be left out. Nietzsche, I think, said, fear is the feeling of absence of power, and I was drawn to that, how to live without power in a monolithic materialistic world not of your making. People like me do not make history and we barely survive in its grinding machinery but we are alive and often we can see more clearly how the machine works when it is not operating for our benefit. To me, the poor and the powerless – and I am that – are always the ones that know what is going on.

Outwardly, I am a published author and have got a profession as a teacher but the reality is that I live one pay check away from homelessness in the most unfettered capitalist country on the planet. I am in perpetual debt for daring to pursue an education; I am getting in more debt for the audacity of trying to educate my daughters. I work to cover rent, health care and pay back student loans. I am told I live in the greatest democracy on earth but they never give me a candidate that will work in my interests; so I vote for the sake of it but my vote is empty. I live in the richest country that has ever existed in history, we are told our leader is the leader of the free world, but the prisons are privatized and full, and there are for-profit detention camps that have incarcerated innocent migrants and separated them from their children. These prisons and detention camps are acceptable because racism is normalized. I am fully aware of how the system works because I have lost. Myself and my friends and those people in prisons and camps in the free world will be conveniently written out. I am trying to write them back in. That is resistance. As Isolt said in the book: "Which one of us will be so brave as to fight the world with cardboard limbs?" I am not brave, but I am cunning enough to try.

MT: At the end of Breakfast in Babylon*, Isolt seems to escape from drug addiction and recover from trauma. Bearing in mind the situation of many homeless in Ireland today, whose substance consumption is so pervasive, do you think that, 23 years after the novel's publication, they still suffer collectively from trauma?*

EM: I think Ireland is rife with trauma and its consequences. In many ways, modern Ireland is a very liveable place and people are connected in ways that they are not in most of the industrial world. Yet we have a very high addiction and suicide rate that does not come from nowhere. The history of colonialism is one of cultural and bodily annihilation and no country that has experienced that has survived unscathed. Ireland had the advantage of being brought into Europe and thus gaining some advantages from Europe's previous violent imperial supremacy, but we have been battling decimating imperialism for centuries and the only way to recover is to face that. White privilege softened the blow for Irish people who were able to emigrate and merge into the dominant culture, and after a few generations reap the benefits; however, those are unearned privileges and they do not sit well with me. Being from a white postcolonial culture only makes me more aware of my responsibility to dismantle the racist systems that are in place throughout the Western world that created these divisions in order to justify exploitation. I find myself often as the only white person in the room in my classroom and spend much of my time not only talking about literature but also using it as a lens to unpack the racism and disadvantage I see at work in my new community. As always awareness of how it works is the first step to finding out if there is an off switch to this machine.

MT: In More Bread or I'll Appear*, you use dark comedy and examine the idea that the links between relatives can be greater than the frontiers between countries. Do you think dark laughter can facilitate new truths in your work by going against the status quo?*

EM: *More Bread or I'll Appear* was a book set in so many regions and continents that some people complained it was too much. Maybe it was, but it was a family drama removed from the kitchen and sent out into the globe. It reflected my life at the time, where I was incessantly travelling and learning and discovering. Yet still again my characters were not part of the status quo and were struggling like the dirt birds trying to find a steady log to land on in a stormy polluted ocean.

MT: On your personal website, you claim that "Rawmeash is an idea that I have longed to make into reality. A nonsense fiction". Literary nonsense aims at subverting language conventions or logical reasoning. The excess of meaning and the humour that appear in your fiction are derived from its nonsensical nature. Many years ago, The Sunday Tribune chose you as a cult writer and your books were said to be so different that you could not be pigeonholed. What are the effects of such methods and devices in your work?

EM: Honestly, Derek O'Connor was the journalist who wrote that and he hit the nail on the head. I had been knocking at the door trying to get into the literary world for so long but he opened my eyes that you have to keep writing the same book because that is what people want and feel safe with. I could not do that. My books are how my brain works or does not work. Sometimes I long to write a clear clean narrative with one main character but it is not how I move within the world. My books are funny, messy and full of characters that interact to sustain each other or tear each other down. That is like my life.

MT: In your third novel, Baby Zero*, to help her carry on, a young woman tells the story of her family to her unborn child. The novel deals with refugees, it is an example of the absurd, with witty and playful dialogue, and represents its characters' behaviour and relationships in a distorted manner. What is it in the satirical mode that fits into your view of the world and its aesthetic representation?*

EM: The absurd is the truth, life is absurd, and it is short and shocking, as we try to grasp for meaning as the years whizz by and we are subjected to the tyranny of the quotidian. This is a very strange time to be alive as our whole human habitat is in rapid decline. I watch current politics unfold and it's hard to tell what is satire and parody, as everything has merged.

MT: Let us talk about your latest novel, The Cruelty Men*. This is the first in a trilogy on migration and feelings of separation within the island of Ireland seen through multiple narrators, all of them members of two interconnected families across three generations. Storytelling helps them to connect not only to each other, but also with their ancestors and Irish identity. This world of fantasy and myth is closely intertwined with another one, that of the "Cruelty Men", which is haunting and very real because it conditions their daily lives and future in tragic ways. Why* The Cruelty Men *and not "The Cruel Men"?*

EM: "The Cruelty Men" were men, often retired police, who were tasked with finding children in impoverished circumstances and ostensibly putting them in industrial schools for their own protection. However, we know now that those schools were notorious and the children were put to work and abused physically, sexually and emotionally. When I was interviewed by Pat Kenny he said: "I've never heard of this term" (see Kenny 2018). And I encountered that a lot from middle class people. That was because the state would never take the children of the middle class and exploit and abuse them in this manner. The poor knew exactly who they were.

Many people told me that they would have a child keep a look out in the fields and notify the family if the Cruelty Men came around. There are two parallel Irelands and the two families in the book, the Ó Conaills and the Lyons, represent this. In a way, they represent my mother's family and my father's family.

MT: In this novel, your poor characters' lack of resources, love and education from an early age, and their experience of abuse of power, violence, psychological manipulation, extreme poverty and discrimination due to ethnicity, class and gender provoke an ongoing sense of inferiority in the youngest, whose self-loathing affects their ability to love and be beloved in very tragic ways. Here, you show sympathy for Irish children and for outsiders. Did you feel that you needed to talk about this again because so little has changed in other countries after a century?

EM: We have not eradicated poverty, we do not even try. We pretend we offer equal access to health and education and housing, but we do not. The world is moving in a very sinister way as the need for a working class is disappearing, as we will have automation doing many jobs. So now there are huge populations who were once factory workers and now are spare and relegated to a life of perpetual unemployment, and they are considered surplus. Yes, we all have a desire to belong, but in this new economy, many do not. If the wealthy think they can run off to gated communities on Mars and ignore everyone else I don't think they've read the history books very closely. The huge wealth disparities that exist now are creating very unstable societies.

MT: Today, more and more people are talking about women suffering from machismo, the phallocracy, sexual aggression and feminicide. The Cruelty Men *illustrates, in detail, the roots of trauma and reflects the incredible resilience of women at home, as servants of other families and in institutional centres. What were you seeking to say by addressing these issues in your fiction? Having been raised in a rigidly Catholic society, that you left behind, has your view on gender changed over the years?*

EM: I was raised as a feminist by a feminist mother and father. My mother was an activist and started an organization to get rid of discrimination for women in sports clubs. Women weren't even allowed to be members of any golf club, and many tennis clubs in Ireland, until she campaigned and organized and got the laws changed. Even my father would sit in front of the TV and point out sexism in advertisements. I know this was not the norm. We have made many advances but there is still huge sexism and misogyny in our culture. I know on a gut level that if I had been a male writer my career would have had a different trajectory. Nobody knew what to do with a woman writing in the way I did. They just could not fathom it. When I first published *Breakfast in Babylon*, a very well-known radio host asked me, what my parents thought? I was 26 years old. Can you imagine asking a male writer that? I was also told recently, after submitting *The Cruelty Men* to many places and having it rejected, that they were already publishing a big literary book by a woman writer that year. As if there is always only room for one. Many men have just told me outright that they do not read female writers. I asked one why, and he said, I just know they will be too self-absorbed. Could you imagine if (Karl Ove) Knausgård had been a woman writing such a detailed brilliant narrative focusing on the minutiae of ordinary life like that? He would have been dismissed. Ultimately, people just do not think women are as important or quite as human as men are. Hopefully, now that men have run the world into the ground with their wars and their profits above all else the younger generations will see that all voices need to be heard in a culture.

MT: Some of your most significant female narrators like Maeve, or male narrators like Ignatius, not only describe their sexual likes and impulses openly, but also have a gift for discerning homosexual and repressed desires in other characters, like Patsey and Seán. On many occasions, you use the rhetoric of inquiry to question sexuality as a reproductive measure or as a source of priests' lack of self-realization, frustrations and cruel attitudes. What is your intention with this discussion of sexuality in the novel?

EM: That is spot on and all were considerations when I was writing. I was looking on Amazon reviews and one person said, "great book but I am only giving it four stars because of the gratuitous sex scenes". I never lost a star for sex before. I think I should put that on the back of the next edition. Also, I was struck when a class by Professor Barry Devine in Heidelberg University were reading *The Cruelty Men* and one of the male students objected to the sex scenes. They made him very uncomfortable and he asked me were they necessary. Is sex necessary? Do they ask male writers why their characters have sex? I have no answers to that one.

MT: Your book shows a superb literary treatment of the characters' psychology and personal growth. The Cruelty Men *reveals an encyclopaedic knowledge of Irish history, culture and folklore, yet it is also a very powerful indictment of the dynamics of power in social constructions based on gender, race and class issues under patriarchal systems of thought and Irish Catholic institutions. Do you believe that the writer has a mediating role in society? If so, could you tell me about the critique that you carry out in* The Cruelty Men *and how this might relate to such a mediating role?*

EM: The writer and all artists have a mediating role. If we open history books we just get a litany of dates and battles and kings and rulers and treaties. But the people who had to live through the history are missing. Books give a voice to those people. The stories bring the history alive.

MT: The idea of Mother Ireland pervades all your female characters, but also the chapters where the poor characters of your novel die, something that you figure as going underground. After so many traumatic life episodes provoked by unfair, wrong or absurd decisions made by selfish parents like Seamus and despotic religious representatives in the name of taming the so-called illiterate, poor, savage or sinful Irish race, these people are swallowed by the Irish land. Are you just talking about Ireland or are you referring to the coloniser and the colonised in the world today?

EM: The book is set in Ireland, yet I was hoping it has resonance elsewhere as all people have been on the downside of power and the poor have been exploited and thrown away in every part of the world. The underground is universal. Regarding the coloniser and the colonised, you are right, as a character in *Baby Zero* pointed out that for hundreds of years we are dealing with the same cowboy and Indian story over and over again. Different places, same narrative. Just ask people in various parts of Spain that have independence movements and resent being controlled by a centralized power in Madrid.

MT: This is a book about personal and cultural trauma and a tribute to the Mother Ireland/ Virgin Mary figure personified in the character of the same name. Here this figure is praised over Jesus, who is "always very busy", like most men in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Mary makes some of the most basic rural activities, which have traditionally been associated with Irish women, and mothering into important things to share with others so that they grow into good

people. The Cruelty Men *does not end with the character of Mary, but with her "Baby", as she helps her old friend Ignatius, now a beggar in Dublin and a scapegoat for capitalist society's lack of empathy. Does Mary represent your idealised view of the Mother Ireland figure of the past? Does Baby personify your idealised view of Mother Ireland in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, with all its current problems of homelessness, migration, social exclusion and excessive consumerism?*

EM: I go down to Mexico once a year and it always strikes me that it feels very much like home; I once heard Ireland described as a "sunless Mexico". One thing that always strikes me is the devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe and that resonates with Irish Catholicism. I think it was an attempt to reinstall the femininity in the Godhead. A return to Isis, the impulse to honour the feminine. This is not present in Protestant cultures though they have been more accepting of the notion of women ministers of the faith. That is an interesting point about Mary and Baby. Yes, Mary could be the ideal. She is based on my dad's housekeeper Pattie, who very much embodied all that Mary is in the book. She had one of the "old minds" in which everything was sacred. She knew the land and talked about the fairies as if she could see them right in front of her. Hers was the old indigenous Ireland that had just about escaped the very heavy hand of colonialization by the English and by the Roman Catholic church. She was a devoted Catholic but her faith was more pagan. Mary is one of the last links to the knowledge of the ancient world. She instinctively knows that the land is alive and sentient and that awareness will be necessary if we are to survive what is about to come with climate change. We need to start listening again. Baby has been raised by her; and if you notice, the story runs through the generations not by blood lines, but by story lines. Those who can carry the stories and pass them down are the narrators.

MT: Your novel ends with Ignatius's answer to Baby's enquiry about why he never looked for his relatives after he left school. His answer is: "When have the well fed ever understood the hungry?" Is this happening with European and American governments today? If so, why do you think that is so?

EM: When have the well fed ever understood the hungry? – That could be the mantra for all of human history. When you have power and privilege, you are blind to it and you will not give it up easily. We have a system globally that has put wealth and resources into very few hands. This creates injustice and instability and we are subject to the paranoia of the very rich that this system will change. The world is run by people with money, for people with money, in order for them to make more money. They will not allow us to vote to change the system that benefits them. Democracy is the best system we have but with the wealth disparity so extreme then we can see that we do not have anyone to vote for who will really shift the wealth. We need to tax the wealthy so they cannot accumulate so much at our expense. No one needs to be a billionaire. If you have billionaires then your economic system is not working.

MT: We are now living through COVID-19 and observing its worst effects on the poor. You are an extremely involved citizen and teacher, and your school feeds these children twice a day because they might not eat otherwise. Emer, have we learned nothing in almost 50 years?

EM: My school feeds the kids twice a day. They are on a school lunch program. The poverty here in the richest country on earth is stunning. When the kids are on break, they often do not get to eat. School is their food source and their stability. Many are suffering terribly now that the schools are closed. We have had teachers set up a fund for families in dire need and we

contributed and they distributed cash. Some of our families are facing homelessness because of this crisis and they were unstable to begin with, as rents keep rising. I have students whose parents have been deported to Mexico and they are living in homeless shelters, trying to take care of younger siblings, working from 4-10pm in fast food places after school. Meanwhile our leaders are saying, "build a wall, shove migrants and refugees in detention centres, separate families". They are being told that they are thieves, rapists, spongers, and *bad hombres*; in reality they are the backbone of the country. They pick all our food, they work hard in low paying jobs. They are kept undocumented on purpose so they are always vulnerable and cannot vote. They still have to pay tax though. And this tax is funnelled to the uber-wealthy corporations who get massive Government pay-outs. This is socialism for the rich and vampire capitalism for the rest of us. It is one of the biggest scams since the Russian Tzars had the serfs enslaved in the fields. How can this system be sustainable? We are losing our planet for short-term profits for the uber-wealthy.

MT: A few months ago, one of Spain's most renowned film directors, Fernando Trueba, described a hypothetical or dystopic scenario: most Europeans are infected with COVID-19 and people have to migrate to Africa to escape death and misery. The Trump administration and its support for private medical companies will show us the worst effects of COVID-19 in the following months, because many Americans have very low or no income, and no healthcare, and many Latin American migrants will not be able to pay for medical treatment. What do these two very real dystopic scenarios inspire in you?

EM: They do not inspire me, they terrify me. The powerful are looking at this crisis to use it to further their own agenda. They will claim more power as a result, we have seen this happen in Turkey and Hungary and I am sure Trump is concocting a plan for the next election to ensure he keeps power. Naomi Klein has laid all of this out in her Shock Doctrine theory, where capitalism uses recurring crisis to erode democracy. We are living in very dangerous times. We must stay aware and united to counter their fascism.

The misery of the animals in the wet markets has just changed our world. And it is proof that you cannot keep inflicting pain and consuming pain without becoming a wretched beast yourself. Covid-19 has put us all in lockdown. There was a sense of terror that gripped everyone in the first couple of weeks. Going outside felt like stepping into the middle of the plague. Existence was stripped to a basic form. Now people are adjusting and forgetting what they have learned from it.

So-called normalcy is a thinly veiled form of random chaos. Accepted by conventions and agreements. When things like the lockdown and pandemic happened, all that was thrown out and the bare essence of things and life became apparent, especially in the first few weeks. The people we loved and food and a home was all we could focus on. Our fragile bodies as part of a system that viruses could penetrate. The entire human race was interconnected in fear and hope and concern. It was amazing.

We could see things such as the stock market, which plummeted at first as it was subjected to reality. Is the stock market a real thing? It is just a totally imaginary concept but we pretend it's a solid logical thing directing the efforts of most people and the economy. The fact that the stock market is going back up to where it was before shows it is totally becoming detached from anything but gambling. If it is supposed to predict the future earning potential of companies, how could it be at the same place as before the pandemic? Unemployment is at 30% in the U.S. alone yet the stock market casino has returned to insane normalcy and illogical reason. At first in Covid, people were terrified and humble and listening to scientists. Within a month, there is

a fog of nonsense about the virus being fake, new drugs that could cure it which are just special interests for big pharma, politicising a virus that does not know politics, ignoring experts. The nonsense fog has filled in those spaces of truth that we had at the beginning. Maybe it will take an asteroid hurtling towards us to focus us and centre us again. We have climate change which will probably shake us off the earth finally, but that is too incremental and abstract for us to understand in these terms.

I would like to see a world where people work and pay taxes and those taxes are used to fund free day care, free health care, free education through college, secure housing, food security – and to take care of the planet first and foremost. The earth will be fine without us, that much is clear. But, if we want to stay, we need to start listening.

MT: What is it about short film as a genre that allows you to achieve your creative goals?

EM: I love short films because they are like poems. Everything has to count. I would like to do a feature but the money-raising is hell. I wrote the script for *Baby Zero* and we got close but it fell apart at the last minute. The money makes film agonizing.

MT: In one of these short films, Unaccompanied *(2006; featuring Irvine Welsh, author of* Trainspotting*), a social worker finds a traumatized young boy from Africa on the streets of Dublin. You show the suffering of others. Through constructing personal trauma in this short film, viewers might recognize human pain and its sources and become receptive to the idea of taking significant and responsible measures to remedy it. Was this your intention with this short film?*

EM: Yes it was. When I returned to Ireland during the boom times of the Celtic Tiger, I found a country that was vastly unequal. For the first time we had new immigrants. Before it was always Irish people leaving, such as myself. That fascinated me as it has changed Ireland forever and I wanted to investigate that. I was struck by the most vulnerable among us, the unaccompanied minors. My father Eamonn Martin was working with the homeless in Sophia Housing, the organization he co-founded to help alleviate some of the suffering. There were many old convents that were no longer in use and this transition from the old monolithic religious structures into places for the most vulnerable was very interesting. Especially as Ireland had a notorious past with industrial schools and laundries. I am not sure what art can do to help but I feel telling the story gives a voice to those who do not have a voice. What struck me when all the stories of abuse in institutions came out was that the people kept saying, "It wasn't the abuse that was the most damaging, it was the fact no one believed us or even cared". I heard that over and over again from survivors. It moved me to write *The Cruelty Men*.

MT: You also produced Irvine Welsh's directorial debut Nuts *in 2007, together with Niall McKay. Here, Welsh tackles "the issue of testicular cancer, and the closeted racism among Ireland's middle-class professionals" (Welsh 2007).In the dark humour applied to the character's psyche and troubled inner life, were you holding a mirror up to politics?*

EM: Irvine Welsh and I became very close friends during that time and I was delighted to produce his first film. He was also struck by the liberal middle-class attitude to the new immigrants and their blatant hypocrisy. His work, like mine, uses humour to expose the real horror that would otherwise be unpalatable.

MT: Regarding your paintings, how do you navigate the art world? Which current art trends are you following?

EM: I do not even attempt to navigate the art world, I am not very good at networking and schmoozing which is a luxury for the well-funded. I spent years as a single parent raising two daughters and soon realized that the arts networking took place at night in cities and I was putting my kids to bed when everyone was out drinking free wine and eating brie and crackers and making contacts. I paint because I love it. I was very lucky to connect with The Origin Gallery in Dublin and Noelle Campbell Sharpe. She sent me to Cill Rialaig to paint the folktales of Seán Ó Conaill and a bomb went off in my head. That shifted everything for me. *The Cruelty Men* came out of there and all my paintings.

MT: Emer, you are a very active user of your Facebook fan page and Twitter, but you keep saying that Facebook "is a vile racist white supremacist site masquerading as a news outlet". Quite recently, you quoted Sacha Baron Cohen's keynote address at the Anti-Defamation League as "best speech of the year calling out Facebook, Twitter, and Google for allowing fascism to rise again under the spurious guise of free speech". Do you feel that your stance on Facebook is shared by other Irish intellectuals and artists today?

EM: I think we are all uncomfortable with the way social media is used to gather our data. Our desire to communicate manipulates us into giving out information so we can be targeted by advertising. Social media had such a utopian potential for us all. I love it, great discussions, political arguments, meeting new people, free flow of ideas, keeping in contact with so many people. However, now we see the dark underbelly of our mania for communicating with each other. We have become data. Nothing was free. And we are so easily manipulated by bots and trolls who control our so-called intellectual discourse. It is disappointing but maybe just indicative of the human quagmire.

MT: One of your most recent posts on Facebook was about Brexit. In your view, "England has chosen to screw over the majority of its people and the environment and keep that bozo Boris at its helm to dismantle their healthcare and educational system US style". For you, this is profoundly depressing and you support an independence referendum. What role do you think Facebook played in encouraging Brexit?

EM: I think it is pretty clear now that Facebook profited off targeting people with propaganda ads, especially ones tapping into Islamophobia, the idea that Turkey will be part of the E.U. and Sharia law will be in England before they knew it. Truth is that England became a rich country though imperialism and exploitation of other countries. They were happy enough to go change other cultures forever, but less happy when immigrants from those former colonies show up. My English friends are a sophisticated, worldly, multi-cultural bunch and they were caught by surprise with Brexit. They definitely did not vote for it, nor did they expect it to pass. Now they find themselves looking at their passports and realizing how much they lose out on being part of the European network. I feel for them.

MT: How do you see the future of Ireland and Northern Ireland after Brexit?

EM: I am hoping it will eventually lead to a united Ireland. However, that has to come peacefully and democratically with respect for all communities. When I was growing up and

the Unionists were saying that Ireland was an oppressive country controlled by Rome, they were not wrong. But this is a very different Ireland now from the one I grew up in. Are they really going to build a wall through Ireland? The last thing the world needs is more walls, more fences, more borders.

MT: You have compared the Trump Republican administration to a feudal system, described Michael Bloomberg as a polite authoritarian, Bernie Sanders as the Democratic establishment, Nancy Pelosi as a purveyor of contrived PR stunts that do not resist Trump, but block and undermine any progressive anti-capitalist candidate in her own party. Has your brave stance caused you any trouble in the past? What are your hopes for the future of America?

EM: I am a naturally political person, was raised talking politics. Bernie Sanders was my hope for this election as he was the only one talking about substantial change that the system needed. But the Democratic establishment were more afraid of Bernie than they are of Trump. They are a big money organization who protect the interests of the uber-wealthy . There is no left party in America, there is no party that represents the rights of workers or even the middle class. It is a bleak landscape politically. They expect people like me to vote for whatever candidate they give us. Biden is a corporate Wall St. candidate with a neoliberal agenda. I live in California, which will vote Democrat anyway so I can vote for whom I want. The Democratic party can do without my vote. Though Trump is a robber baron, looting everything is sight and stuffing the courts with ultra-right wing judges. He needs to go. Frankly, I am once again stuck politically and that is what they count on. Clever system for the rich. They have me trapped.

MT: Responding to an article by Lynn Steger Strong in the Guardian *titled "A dirty secret: you can only be a writer if you can afford it", you posted the following on Facebook: "Over the years I have been engaged in a massive struggle between trying to keep writing and creating while paying the rent and raising a family. To survive I need a full-time job". I know you are loved by your students. Is teaching just a job that pays the bills or is there something more to it?*

EM: I am very lucky that I get to wake up in the morning and go teach literature. It is a job that pays the bills, but it is the best job in the world so I am not complaining. Schools are their own planets; baffling in their complexity to those outside their gates. Teachers, students, admin, counsellors, cafeteria staff and custodians. We are a tribe, and we thrive on our interactions. Nothing can replace the classroom, in a way that nothing has ever replaced theatre. To be gathered together at a singular moment, to learn, to dream, to struggle – and that magic when something is understood as a class in that very room, just among ourselves, in real time. It does not happen every day but when it does you can feel that moment, it is visceral and irreplaceable and profound.

MT: Many of your posts on social matters are fierce critiques of capitalism, which you define as a "pernicious economic system that is unsustainable in the long run". You frequently talk about the devastating effects of Western capitalism and imperialism at the hands of corrupt leaders like Trump, Netanyahu and to places like Saudi Arabia. You care about human rights and today people from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine and Syria, many of whom are refugees now, the latter even in Europe, are going through the terror of metamorphosis, as you show in the story and paintings of your latest short film We Build Fences. *You are against war and say that we need to focus on the climate. In other words, you touch on the notion of "the bigger picture", among other themes, in your art. To what effect do you tackle this issue? Are you looking for a way to solve the world's bigger societal issues?*

EM: Art can bring awareness and deepen understanding but it does not solve anything. The solving is done by people far more dedicated to activism than I am. However, I think all activism is linked to art movements in some way. They are inextricable. I went to see [*Soul of a Nation:*] *Art in the Age of Black Power* in both the Tate London, and when the show came to San Francisco. Activists need imagination as a tool and they use it very well.

MT: Regarding all the cruelty and abuse that is being carried out in the Mexican border, you have donated to charities helping migrants. You have also asked people to vote for candidates who will stop this madness – children in camps for example. Your concern for the future of children is related to your concern for climate change, fuelled by another child, Greta Thunberg, whose views you support fully. What advice would you give these youngsters campaigning for climate justice? And your younger self?

EM: Greta is the tiny prophet of the new generation. As she said, we love our children but we stole their future. They need to take it back. As long as there is activism there is hope. Hopefully, this new generation is much more aware and conscious than we were at their age. So many are questioning all systems. How they eat, how they travel, how they interact with each other, the ridiculousness of gender binaries. All of these things were standards of the hippie movement but got lost in the heavy drug culture that wreaked havoc. This generation seem to be starting ahead of the last few. They will need all they can get. The struggle will be gargantuan. But they have no choice if we have any interest in the species making it through the next century.

MT: Could you say something about your next book, Headwreck*? How does it relate to the previous ones? When will it be out? What are you going to do next?*

EM: *Headwreck* will be released in the summer of 2021. It is a kind of sequel to *The Cruelty Men*, yet I want both to stand alone. It takes the next generation through to the present moment. Again, my books reflect how I see the world. They have multiple interacting characters weaving their lives around each other in a big mysterious tapestry that you have to back away from to see patterns. After this, I will write a short book. That is my goal.

MT: Thank you for this interview, Emer. I wish you all the best for your future work.

EM: Many thanks, Melania.

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Navigating Digital Literacy, Literature and Humanities in Irish Society A first Conversation with James O'Sullivan

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According to French historian Roger Chartier (1993), it is possible to understand the accomplishment of the figure of the author only though a holistic interpretation of the space-time context in which authorship develops. Each self-declared, and therefore real materialization of authorship is intimately related to its political, social, economic, and cultural context (Foucault 1969). This is the reason why, for Chartier (1995, 2), any given work cannot be separated from the moment when it was produced, the conditions that brought it into being, the style which shaped it, and the forms through which it became intelligible.

When a work is created within what can be defined as an "analogic" environment, as opposed to a digital one (with its different forms of representation, production, dissemination, and sharing of information), it can be considered or associated to a product of physical, singular, linear, and "rectangular" authorship, and therefore, viewed as analogic itself to a certain extent. Conversely, any literary work created within a digital environment can be imagined as the product of a somewhat shapeless, unfinished and indefinite, fluid, plural, and often collective form of authorship.

As the very idea of authorship is undergoing a radical transformation within the digital environment, so is the role of authors, their practices and centrality inside and outside the text. *Analogic authors* see their works operating in a traditional, typically "Gutenberg-like" environment. By contrast, *digital authors*, namely creators of born-digital literary artifacts, exploit information technology for diverse purposes, ranging from the well-known exploration of "networked authorship[s]" (Poster 2002, 490) – that could be defined as a sort of scattered authorship (Landow 1992, 130) which introduces a cooperative notion of writing (Greif 1988) –, to the illusion of giving the reader the possibility to choose among many reading paths; from the adoption of digital authorship tools – which have contributed to deconstructing the

very idea of "one strong authorial voice" –, to the liberation of the compressed and rectangular space of paper-based, analogue communication.

Influenced by the same revolutionary transformation, scholarly communication lies on the opposite side of the same stage where authorship is enacted, since its creation, organization, publication and preservation processes have been deeply reconsidered according to digital models and formats. Not only are digital technologies coming as a breath of fresh air as far as former machine- and software-based interpretation and analyses are concerned; they have also transformed the modalities and forms of scholarly communication, from doing research and writing, through publishing and conservation, to reading. Scholars exploit computational methods, such as machine learning for distant reading or topic modeling, data mining and management, mapping, graphical displaying or information visualization, thus leading to new critical insights. Digital humanities are also implementing publishing tools and developing traditional means of sharing scholarly publications, opening to non traditional forms of scholarly publishing as well.

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The assumptions above inform the empirical investigation developed in the interview that follows with Irish writer, publisher and lecturer in Digital Arts and Humanities James O'Sullivan. "A born-and-raised native of Cork city", as he writes on his webpage (at University College Cork)[1], Dr. James O'Sullivan holds an M.A. in Modernity, Literature and Culture at University College Dublin and a PhD in Digital Arts and Humanities at University College Cork, where he currently works as a lecturer. Long engaged in the depths of digital humanities, mostly dedicating his entire attention to its multifaceted forms and modalities, he edited and authored volumes, essays, and poetic collections. His 2019 volume, *Towards a Digital Poetics: Electronic Literature & Literary Games* (Palgrave Macmillan), explored foregrounding issues in the digital field, such as authorship and reading in the digital environment, as well as the concept of interactivity and the apparent illusion of choice it provides to the reader.

In the field of digital technologies, O'Sullivan published several essays in interdisciplinary scholarly journals such as *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *Literary Studies in a Digital Age*, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, *Digital Studies/Le Champ Numérique*, and the *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing*. He has also edited scholarly collections, namely *Reading Modernism with Machines* (with Shawna Ross; Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *Electronic Literature as Digital Humanities: Contexts, Forms, and Practices* (with Dene Grigar; Bloomsbury Academic, 2021b), *Digital Art in Ireland: New Media and Irish Artistic Practice* (Anthem Press, 2021a).

As a creative writer, he authored three collections of poetry: *Kneeling on the Redwood Floor* (2011), *Groundwork* (2014), and *Courting Katie* (2017a). He won third place in the Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Prize 2016 with "Different Kinds of Life", published in the April 2016 issue of *Southword Journal*. He is also the founding editor of the independent publishing house New Binary Press and the Director, from its creation in 2019, of DHSI Atlantic, a summer school devoted to Digital Humanities.

[1] <http://research.ucc.ie/profiles/A003/jamesosullivan> (03/2021).

Courtesy of Tomás Tyner (University College Cork)

The aim of the following interview started in April 2021 via e-mail is to be a celebration of neither electronic literature, nor digital humanities but possibly an examination of them both. Beyond the standardized pattern of questions and answers, a number of issues has been explored and widened through quotations (within black boxes) taken from the interviewee's works.

AA: Thank you, James, for this interview. The first question I would like to ask you is about your personal experience in the digital environment. When and why did you first come to enter the "digital" field?

JO'S: Well, that's a tricky question. If you mean digital as in discipline, then my current professional trajectory probably started when I first met Dr Órla Murphy[2]. I took a seminar Dr Murphy was teaching, which introduced me to the idea of "digital humanities". I came into her classroom as a graduate of computing who was studying literature, really not sure what to do next, and left having felt like I had found my tribe. But if you're talking about my experience with the digital in general, and we're not talking in the philosophical "we're all digital now" sense, then I guess it started back when I was much younger, when one day, out of the blue, my dad came home with a computer. I've no idea where it came from, and I had no idea how it worked, but I started tinkering in DOS, and I suppose my interests developed from there.

[2] Dr Órla Murphy is head of the Department of Digital Humanities at the School of English and Digital Humanities (University College Cork).

Since then, I have always been tinkering with computers and tech in some shape or form. I think I was lucky to have that experience, because I feel like my generation might be the last to really experience computers as systems as opposed to interfaces, and the former offers a lot more understanding.

AA: You have authored many poems and three collections of poetry – Kneeling on the Redwood Floor*, 2011;* Groundwork*, 2014;* Courting Katie*, 2017a –, questioned new forms of digital literatures and literary video games in* Towards a Digital Poetics *(2019), and edited several scholarly collections, such as* Reading Modernism with Machines *(2016). How would you describe the role that the digital plays in your work as a creative writer? Have you ever tried to combine – or figure out you will – your engagement as a digital humanities lecturer and scholar with your creative side, opening your poetry to its digital possibilities?*

JO'S: Honestly, not really. I compartmentalize these things: I am a professional academic, I teach, and I research. That's my job. Electronic literature and digital forms of expression are part of what I research. My poetry is different, that's really just something I do for me, for enjoyment. Of course, my creative writing has bled into my work in education, giving me an appreciation of practices and contexts, which are relevant to my research and teaching, but I have never really considered merging the two. Maybe I'll create my own works of digital literature someday, but it's not something I'm thinking about at the moment. There's enough bad art in the world without me adding more!

AA: "Whatever the future of electronic literature, there is a past and there is a present, and there can be no treatment of our past or consideration of our present without acknowledging the works of the […] many pioneers whose stories undoubtedly exist" (O'Sullivan 2018). If you were chosen to be a member of a national literary committee to evaluate three pioneering projects in e-lit since the 2000s, which ones would you award the first three prizes in the Irish environment?

JO'S: Well, I have to say Graham Allen's one-line-a-day digital poem, *Holes*[3], because I've been involved with that as its publisher. *Holes* is a great example of how basic tech can be used to bring literature beyond the constraints of print. Justin Tonra's *Eververse*[4] is a very intriguing concept and quite foundational. I think in the years to come we'll see a lot of other artists follow his lead and explore biometric forms of writing and expression. Jeneen Naji's *River Poem*[5] is

[3] Graham Allen is Professor of Literature at University College Cork. His poems were firstly published in journals like *Southword*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Revival*, the *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Cyphers*, *The SHOp*, and *The Rialto*. In 2014 and 2016 they were collected in two volumes respectively entitled *The One That Got Away* and *The Madhouse System* and published by the New Binary Press. "Holes" is a "ten syllable one line per day" (<http://newbinarypress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Holes-by-Graham-Allen-1.png>, 03/2021) digital poem thanks to which Allen attempts a new approach of writing the self. He started its composition on December 23rd, 2006.

[4] Justin Tonra is Lecturer in English (Digital Humanities) at the National University of Ireland in Galway. Together with Brian Davis, David Kelly, Waqa Khawaja, he created *Eververse*, an innovative project which focuses on the generation of poetry automatically and in real time by using biometric data (NLG techniques) from a fitness tracking device which correlates to the poet's different physical states.

[5] "The River Poem" is a digital poem created by Jeneen Naji, Pauric Freeman and Mark Linnane, in collaboration with Maynooth University's Building City Dashboards research project. The poem shows extracts of text produced by the Generative Pretrained Transformer 2 (GPT2) machine learning algorithm (that was trained on

technically interesting in that it uses GPT-2, but it's also materially beautiful and a wonderful example of how the digital is not just about screens. It's a gorgeous work. Anything that has been published by Fallow Media is worth checking out, or of course, anything by my old friend John Pat McNamara, one of the Ireland's first high profile e-lit authors.

> If the sublime does not exist on the surface level, then it emanates from beneath, from the technical surfaces which the user cannot always penetrate, an essential part of the aesthetic that produces the interactivity, but is hidden from the reader. In electronic literature, the sublime is intrinsically subsumed: this is particularly so in narratives set within 'open' worlds, expansive virtual spaces designed to intrigue users through the illusion of choice and the allure of exploration. (O'Sullivan 2019, 83)

AA: As writing "is going digital", so is reading. In Towards a Digital Poetics*, you explore this relationship between word and computer, focusing on how the screen itself transforms the ways we read and write. Could you tell us something about this transformation?*

JO'S: There are a lot of different ideas teased out in the book, but I suppose I am essentially trying to get at the essence of what it means for literature to be digital. Just popping stuff online or recording your work for a YouTube video doesn't make writing digital, it makes it digitized, and there is a world of difference between these two states. The book is an exploration of what it means for writing and literature to truly be digital. When something is truly digital, a lot is transformed: the multimodality of expression, the perceived agency of readers, the way that immersion and interactivity are deployed in the service of narrative.

> What do we mean by 'digital art'? Much art, as one would expect with any type of cultural production in the twenty-first century, is framed by the digital. But art which is digitally remediated only so that it can be stored or shared via computers is not necessarily digital art. Acts of digitization can change aspects of a work and influence reception, but if we are to see digital art as a distinct formal category, then we must recognise the distinction in works which draw upon new media as an essential part of the creative process. (O'Sullivan 2021a, Ch. 1)

AA: The fragmented nature of digital literary works, which resemble hypertextual links, moves close to Barthes's "lexias" which, with their "galaxie[s] de signifiants" (1984, 11), establish intra- and inter-textual connections able to dismantle the unity of text. Quoting Barthes – "a text's unity lies not in its destination but origin" (Barthes trans. by Heath 1977) – Benkler argues (2007) that also the unity of a digital text cannot be found in its origin but in its destination. Do you agree with his vision?

James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*) onto a 3D model of Dublin City: "Snippets of phrases were removed from the algorithm's output by the human authors and then placed in a spreadsheet. Python code in TouchDesigner software then randomly selects a new quote from the spreadsheet at specific intervals and places it into a queue. This queue forms a long string of text which is animated along a path that follows the route of Dublin's River Liffey. When a quote reaches the end of the path, it is automatically swapped out for a new random quote" (<http://jeneeninteractive.com/?p=373>, 03/2021).

JO'S: I don't think that vision really serves us, because whether a hypertext is digital or otherwise, focusing on the underlying mathematical structures is just so academic. It tells us nothing of the experience, it tells us nothing of the story, and I think it is a slightly tired way of thinking about the structure of narrative.

> Those who can read can see information for what it is, they can see what words pretend to say, sunken ideas that were never intended to be exposed. And this condition of knowing has always been present, such that we can say that text is unchanged. Text remains what text has always been; what has changed is what we do with text. What has changed are those waveforms through which text is now likely to pass. The potential in words is in their arrangement, how they are brought together to form signage systems. Part of the act of arrangement is the waveform selection, the choosing of those apparatuses through which reception will be facilitated. Words on the page can act in certain ways while words on the screen might act in others, and there are different kinds of pages and different types of screens. But no matter how an arrangement is presented, no matter the waveform selected, text is text. When the first words were committed to paper, nobody envisioned the emergence of interactive fiction or generative writing, nobody would have predicted the communities of practice and aesthetic movements that have emerged around the great many of forms of digital fiction and electronic literature. Text has persisted throughout much cultural fermentation, and whatever waveforms have existed, do exist, and are yet to exist, we can be almost certain that text will continue as long as humanity. (O'Sullivan 2020a, 206)

*AA: E-literature works can be envisaged as "open works" in which readers play or think to play a fundamental part of the work itself. In "Interactivity and the Illusion of Choice" (*Towards a Digital Poetics, *77-93) you argue that literary virtual spaces are planned to capture the reader through "the illusion of choice", leveraging on those cognitive biases that can affect his belief of autonomy and independence from the author. Yet, several studies try to demonstrate how hyper-literature and -links have a counter-effect in hypertext readers, leading them to confusion and cognitive overload (Pope 2006; Mangen*, *van der Weel 2015). Do you think that such an illusion of co-authorship or "wreadership" may cause a cognitive loss, urging Dante to look for his Virgil once again?*

JO'S: No, I don't think so. Read *Ulysses* and tell me that cognitive overload is unique to digital literature. I appreciate the point being made, and cognition is way outside my wheelhouse, but every form of expressive practice has the potential to produce works which confuse. When I reference the illusion of choice, I'm getting at an aesthetic construct, the idea that mathematically rigid narrative structures can seem without constraint, and that's a powerful thing for storytellers and their audiences. And it's an interesting thing for literary and cultural critics to consider. If there are cognitive consequences, well, that's a price worth paying for a good, immersive story, I would think.

> Both linearity and choice are a myth, equal parts of the illusion of interactivity. If there is any rhetoric being deployed in this space, it is the rhetoric of interaction, the idea that there is something to be automatically gained from presenting what we read in particular structures. There is always something to be gained from structure, but the gain is never automatic. Electronic literature is not merely the epitome of the Barthesian writerly text, what is occurring is quite the opposite, it is a relationship between author and reader, coder and user, that is entirely based on platform-enabled illusions. Where the author was once master of narrative, they must now also be master of medium; where readers once relied on authors for the content of story, they must now, in effect, rely on authors for the entire textual construction. Any choice that a reader may make in an electronic system is indeed a selection, but it is not a product of some technological freedom; they select from those choices presented to them by the author, all of which are devised with a finite story in mind. If anything, the role of the author has only been enhanced, but it is tempered by the realities of media specifics, of human–computer interaction, and the limitations of each given device. (O'Sullivan 2019, 78)

AA: I have often wondered when and how electronic literature could be treated from the perspective of the digital humanities until I came across your Electronic Literature as Digital Humanities: Contexts, Forms & Practices *(2021b). Your volume and the wide variety of essays it includes says that the time has arrived to properly integrate electronic literature into the Digital Humanities, though e-lit culture still appears to be marginal and produced by a limited number of writers.*

JO'S: Dene Grigar[6] is the person to speak to about this: she's really been driving e-lit as a branch of DH, taking a leading role in the e-lit offerings at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute, for example. I'm not as convinced as she that electronic literature and digital humanities do make for entirely natural bedfellows, but if DH is really about interdisciplinary approaches to writing, making, reading, and so on, then surely e-lit should be a larger part of it than is currently the case? I appreciate that analytics will always be a larger part of DH than close reading, but close reading of born digital literature seems closer to DH than it does other fields. But I'm straying into arbitrary disciplinary arguments now; it doesn't really matter what discipline digital literature belongs to, as long as people continue to make it and an increasing number of critics study and teach it.

[6] Dene Grigar is Director of the Electronic Literature Lab. and of the Creative Media & Digital Technology Program at Washington State University in Vancouver. Author of several media works, such as *Curlew* (2014), "A Villager's Tale" (2011), and "24-Hour Micro-Elit Project" (2009), she researches on electronic literature workflow, from its creation to preservation.

AA: *On your webpage you highlight that what you teach is "digital literary and cultural studies". Do you think of your work as part of the digital humanities or is it something much larger?*

JO'S: I see myself very much as digital humanities scholar. I appreciate that DH means different things to different people, but have a very strong sense of what I believe it is, which is the use of sophisticated computational methods to analyse cultural materials, or the application of critical thinking to computation. I appreciate that is quite broad, but I feel that you just know good DH when you see it, because the relationship between the digital part and the humanities part is essential and meaningful.

AA: The 2009 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education *claimed that digital humanities was not just "the next big thing", but "the Thing". As you know many different types of digital humanities projects have spread since then all over and in many ways, from archives and databases to maps and timelines. You dedicated at least two essays to the issue and history of digital humanities in Ireland*, The Emergence of the Digital Humanities in Ireland *(2015), and* The Digital Humanities in Ireland *(2020), focusing on the projects and institutions that have contributed to the appearance and development of the discipline. I would like to ask you if you feel the necessity to devote a new project to the Irish digital framework and situation and which new issues would you take into consideration which you hadn't in the aforementioned publications.*

JO'S: I don't think I have much left to say on the subject of DH in Ireland, and honestly, I don't think it would be fitting for me to say anything further, as too much of the one voice makes for a very limited history.

AA: In The Digital Humanities in Ireland *you wrote: "If the digital humanities are to thrive they must be allowed to remain culturally dissonant". Could you explain us the meaning and implications of this assumption? Is it simply about geography?*

JO'S: Geography is certainly part of it: you cannot separate local cultures and contexts from how any discipline is constructed in a certain place. As an academic and educator, you need to think about what your discipline achieves for your community, and the answer to that question will vary greatly depending on who is asking it and where they are. I've worked at a big, wealthy American institution, and I can tell you that DH over there looked very different to DH at other places I have worked, because they have different possibilities, different social dynamics. The resources at your disposal, the cultural legacies in which you are immersed and the political challenges you face, these all influence how disciplines are constructed in any one place. And that's good, because if everyone everywhere was doing the same thing, well, the world would be a very boring place.

> […] if we are to appreciate DH in Ireland, we must consider DH as Irish. […] Irish DH is its own DH, made so by the peculiarities of an Irish academy which is in many respects considerably different to its international counterparts, and so we should problematise it in its own right. This is doubly important at a time when, far beyond DH, the Irish academy continues to re-brand and essentially Americanise itself for the purposes of attracting a higher volume of international students required to redress a sustained lack of state funding. […]
> Irish DH has long suffered from a quiet parochialism. Everyone wants to be 'the first' to do something, even us educators, who should be far more concerned with charting courses for others than we should be planting flags. The realities of the increasingly neoliberal marketplace—conditions from which education has not been immune—are causing institutes of higher education to promote their offerings with grand statements that tend to diminish the value of that which might not be perceived in the public gaze as the 'new, big thing.' We need to resist allowing DH to be dragged further into that process. It is natural when uncharted space appears—and much of DH remains uncharted—that everyone is eager to claim it as their own because it can be used in the desperate justification for survival that is destroying state-funded higher education. But the DH arms race in Ireland needs to come to an end, and in its place should come the revival of the inter-institutional, national cohorts and research agendas. (O'Sullivan 2020b)

AA: Could you explain what you mean by the "machinic episteme" you and Shawna Ross announce in Reading Modernism with Machines. Digital Humanities and Modernist Literature*?*

JO'S: Put very simply, it's the knowledge we gain from machines. Shawna's work is worth exploring further: she is one of the stars of my generation of DH.

> Digital humanists doing research in modernism are thus truly reading modernism with machines: more than simply means to an end, our machines underwrite the reality of our scholarship. Their processes and outputs influence what emerges as knowable and what counts as proof, bending modernist texts and modernism itself toward our contemporary machinic episteme. Of course, it is no more willfully anachronistic than any school of literary criticism—so long as we do not silently attribute to modernism itself our own contemporary revolutionary digital rhetorics of the new. (O'Sullivan, Ross 2016, 1-2)

AA: The greatest part of your research and teaching is devoted to digital humanities and digital culture, with a particular focus on digital literary and cultural studies, and computer-assisted criticism. Do you think a full commitment with the digital humanities entails programming skills, and if so, should programming become a requisite for Arts and Humanities Universities as well?

JO'S: That is a complicated question, and I don't think I have the scope to answer it here. I will say this: I don't think that coding is essential, but depending on the kind of DH work you do, it certainly helps. If you are doing cultural analytics of any sort, you really should understand the methods and techniques you're applying. If you don't understand what a particular method is doing, why are you using it? That seems intellectually dishonest to me, but of course, understanding a method and being able to program aren't the same thing.

AA: In 2012 you launched your publishing house, the New Binary Press[7]*. Despite your role and engagement as a digital scholar and teacher, you have admitted that print publications have far greater "material and cultural importance" than their digital counterparts (Horgan 2017, 20). Are you still convinced of that?*

JO'S: I think I am still convinced, because I have read a lot of great print works in the intervening years, but encountered only a few remarkable digital pieces. But give it time: print had a handy head start. I should add that I have recently shutdown New Binary Press, but that's a different story and one I address in a recent essay, "Publishing Electronic Literature", which is in *Electronic Literature as Digital Humanities*.

> A manuscript is proposed and submitted, given form and sold—that is the usual order of things. The publishing process doesn't end with that first act of dissemination, publishers must always retain something of a stake in the works they have taken charge of, but the relationship does change once a manuscript is a book. There are many activities post-production—promotion, interaction with booksellers, the realisation of subsequent editions—but a publisher's intervention usually declines over time. Once a publisher has made a book of a manuscript, they release it to the wild—books live and die in public, far from the guarded confines of their press. Even with born-digital literature, aside from the odd bit of file and server maintenance, the publisher will fade to the periphery as their ability to contribute to a title's critical and commercial success slowly starts to diminish. (O'Sullivan 2017, 109)

AA: In line with the open-source ethos of the digital humanities, this article will be published in the open-access scholarly journal, Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies *of the University of Firenze, which is much committed to sharing scholarly communication in this way. What do you think of open access or better of open science?*

JO'S: That's another complicated question. When it comes to open access, I am quite conflicted. I obviously believe that access to knowledge can improve society, but I do think that open access advocates overstate its potential to radically alter the conditions of the underprivileged, or

[7] "Founded in 2012, New Binary Press publishes literature across a variety of media, including born-digital electronic literature. In fact, the press has been built on e-lit, with one of its first titles, Graham Allen's one-line-a-day *Holes* (Allen and O'Sullivan 2016; Karhio 2017; O'Sullivan, 'Publishing *Holes*'), remaining one of the imprint's flagship projects, and the publishing house includes leading figures such as Nick Montfort, Stephanie Strickland, John Barber, and Jason Nelson among its authors. New Binary Press is reflective of the culture of assemblage that one encounters in the space occupied by new media artists and writers; its catalog is somewhat dissonant, functioning as something of a laboratory designed to facilitate literary experiments, a sandbox for wilder things without a home. While I have not really fulfilled what I set out to accomplish with my press, its founding purpose remains clear in that it is an experiment in the production and publication of all kinds of literature, print, electronic, and whatever else might seem interesting" (O'Sullivan 2021, 259).

fail to recognise the privileged position that one must themselves be in to wholly embrace the open agenda. Being able to take a position against intellectual property is a socioeconomic luxury: certainly, the little bit of money that I make from my publications makes the difference in my life, and I'd be slow to give it up. I can't afford, and my institution can't afford, the open access fees for many of the prestigious journals, and as a first generation academic I refuse to give up professional capital because others are more comfortable doing so. Income and promotion are directly tied to how and where one publishes, and not all academics have the luxury of ignoring these things. Again, I do see the value in open access, I'm just saying it's more complicated than we are often led to believe: it's complicated in terms of class dynamics, its complicated in terms of publishing models and institutional resources, and its complicated in terms of personal circumstances, intellectual property and ownership.

AA: James, if you were asked to contribute to a new monographic research on Digital Humanities and electronic literature in Ireland, which will be the topic of SiJIS 2020 issue, would you accept?

JO'S: I would be happy to discuss how I could help with your future special issue.

AA: Thank you very much for your time, James. I'll be looking forward to collaborating with you!

To be continued...

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Writings

Studi Irlandesi
A Journal of Irish Studies

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Speculations on A Dead Man's Body
A Living Woman's Pills*

Mary O'Donnell

She might or might not alert the police. The dog had halted, sniffed, then ripped through the underbrush. She thought he might have found a hedgehog or dead squirrel. But it was a body, male, with a fractured skull. They were near the riverbank on the far side of the bridge where the current flowed smoothly.

Laura had made her way all summer along the broken track on the quiet side of the bridge to have breakfast. At that point, the ground flattened, held firm by soft grit at the water's edge. She would perch on a collapsible stool and unwrap her yellow neck-scarf, slugging coffee poured flask to red tin mug, pulling at hunks of buttered sourdough as she stared out at the river. Afterwards, she would unpeel two small oranges.

She'd often wondered who came at night. Some mornings the evidence lay scattered – crisp bags, chocolate wrappers, empty beer cans, a condom – but she'd never felt afraid of coming alone and would pass by the detritus and move towards the water's edge. A woman can decide to be afraid and curtail her movement. Or she can carry on as if she owns the space of the world.

Already, clusters of flies and preoccupied ants feasted on the stilled and darkened cranial outpouring. She observed a large Damselfly hovering over the head, before it passed on about its business towards the shallows. She was relieved not to see actual brain matter, remembering an unsettling image from the movie *Pulp Fiction* involving a clotty eruption of meninges in the interior of a car.

She leaned over and examined the open-eyed face. Middle-aged. Pale skin with few lines, beardless, the eyebrows a mouse-fur colour. He wore cream corduroy jeans, now grass stained and muddy on both knees, and above that, a jacket of

*This short story is about the way one woman deflects anxiety. As a reflective person pushed to her limits her decisions show her desperation as well as her unwillingness to be influenced by conventional attitude towards the elderly.

tan and white stripped seersucker. In the course of the attack, one shoulder had been ripped loose and the fabric and some padded filler hung forlornly in the grass. Beneath the jacket a white t-shirt carried spatters of blood. It could have been a fancy art pattern, she thought, except it wasn't. Out of instinct, she said a prayer for him. Her boot toed the left leg, which lay spread-eagled from the groin. The body wasn't far from the water, in fact the right hand fondled the river, which trickled and curled through remarkably clean fingers. Not flat-topped digits, but long and tapered, with clean, trimmed nails. He lay in *rigor mortis*, which meant death had occurred recently. After twelve hours, the body would move to its next phase and soften.

There was nothing to be done. Not for her the flight up the river path to the road, screaming for the police, creating a melodrama for them to feast on in the village like the flies already soaking up the man's coagulating blood. *Shocking really . . . in this quiet place,* she imagined someone telling a news reporter, or *. . . we won the Tidy Towns last year . . . we all know one another here . . .*

She hitched her belongings further along the bank, away from the body, and set down the stool. Already, the dog had lost interest in the man and would now stick close, awaiting his daily crust of sourdough as well as the drop of coffee after she'd drained her mug. Although the vet scolded her about stained teeth, the dog loved his coffee.

Mornings were usually sunny, and the usual summer deluge rarely poured before eleven o'clock. It suited her not to go to her mother Grace's house until after eleven, gave her time to build herself up. Preparation was essential. Breakfast in the peace and quiet. Difficult to get Grace to leave her bed. If she insisted on remaining there so much, Laura would sometimes rant, they'd have to get a hoist, and how would she like *that*?

But it all went over Grace's head. The big press off the kitchen which used to hold her partner Lukas's giant containers of oatmeal, dried pulses, and raisins, was now stacked with tight bundles of incontinence wear, with special ties and adhesive tapes. Nobody ever considered the hazard to the environment presented by elder care, Laura sometimes reflected. All those plastic aprons, gloves and never-ending nappies? It wasn't solely the genuinely infantile whose needs created excess, but the senile infantile, liquids and emanations comparatively vast and all with a right to life until they decided to let go of it. Unlike the poor sod she'd just discovered. *He* didn't have any choice in the matter, she mused.

Occasionally, while counting out her mother's morning tablets, Laura considered the medical armaments prescribed by the hospital doctor after Grace had fallen down the stairs and had to be hospitalised. But none of these tablets would ever help her to walk again, to wash herself, dress herself, hold a knife and fork, and none would restore her memory. So a few weeks earlier, Laura had stopped dispensing the night-time blood thinning tablet. She felt certain that there were other caring daughters and sons throughout the land who attempted to accelerate a natural process, whether from kindness or self-preservation.

Just as the sequence of time in terms of actual hours and minutes regarding the reporting of a dead body seemed to her not urgent, so too she considered the sequence of memory. In dementia, past, present and future were moveable feasts to enter at will and in any order. Her mother remembered all far past events in exact detail, and songs she had learned in Irish and

English as a young woman. She could even call up some school German and would sometimes greet Laura by chanting out the days of the week, except that she had been taught to say *Sonnabend* and not *Samstag* as Laura had later been taught in the same school.

Upbeat weekly emails landed from Laura's brother in Australia and her sister in France. Travel was now difficult even if they wanted to come. They were all soft talk and horse-shite as far as she was concerned, waving and laughing on Skype calls to Grace, displaying the latest celebrated grandchild from a patio in Perth or a geranium-packed atelier outside Lyons. Blind in one eye, her mother could hardly see them on the laptop screen, and although she smiled and nodded as old people were supposed to, grandchildren no longer interested her. At such moments, Laura's sadness deepened, mostly because of their assumptions about what might interest Grace. Laura had often imagined her mother's thoughts of the past like a stream of crossing currents and oppositional pulses of memory. Such busy traffic left little room for the present.

But she, Laura, regarded herself as a tough old bird now. She rarely gave way to tears. She didn't grumble. There was no point in trying to discuss the matter of her mother with her brother and sister, or with the cheery cousins who occasionally dropped in to see Grace, cream buns or a box of chocolates in hand. Breakfast by the river was one way of lightening everything. She would leave her bed and head off.

It had taken her and Lukas four years to build the eco-wood and glass home, with a few high, airy rooms, finally completing two guest bedrooms the previous year. Now all that remained was to make a garden, with rainbow pots, creamy gravel and no mowing. Lukas wasn't the most energetic of men, but neither was she the most energetic of women, except where caring for Grace was concerned. And Lukas often helped because she could not physically lift her mother. *Easy, my darling,* he would say, slipping his strong arm beneath Grace's shoulders, nodding at her protestations, joking kindly with her. He would get the old woman up, changed, dressed, and down to the table for her dinner in the evening, before helping her into the sitting-room where she would stare at the television for a few hours, channel-hopping to find the noisier game shows.

She poured herself a second mug of coffee, now settled comfortably on her stool. Here by the river, something happened even when nothing happened. Her life melded into something utterly contained and safe, yet extraordinary. In recent years she'd wondered if she was experiencing synaesthesia. Sometimes she imagined she could perceive every invisible but active cell around her as a physical pulse within her brain. Here, all edges and anxiety vanished, were part of some process that was almost acceptable. Her mother's decline was inevitable and because she, Laura, wanted to get on with grief, and the rest of her life, she urged on the future.

How often had she tiptoed into the still morning bedroom, hoping – yearning – that her mother would have died in her sleep? But no. The broad chest rose and fell gently as she dozed.

"Enjoy her, she won't always be there," someone once remarked. Ever since, if anyone asked after Grace she told them nothing beyond a basic *she's-doing-very-well-thanks* and promptly changed the subject. None of *them* had had to lie awake in a fret about the women who came in twice daily from the care provider, who sometimes forgot to do basic things such as empty

the bins which were crammed with her mother's used personal care items, or run the dishwasher, or encourage her mother to get up. The caring organisations really amused her, with their sanctimonious advertisements on television portraying a facially erased old person nodding gratefully, and some young one with eyebrows like a character from Peking Opera peering down into their face. It fucking sickened her.

So, a little tweak here or there. In time, the lack of a blood thinner would do its work. She was relying on that, she told Lukas.

She watched the dog for a few moments as he entered the river shallows, paused, then lapped at the water. Above, clouds were gathering. It wouldn't be long before it rained. She gathered up her mug, flask and plate, shoved them into a canvas shoulder-bag, folded the stool and clicked her tongue to call the dog to heel.

There was one more thing to do before the village began its speculations. The discovery would make national news. How wonderful it would be, if delusional also, to live in a place where murder was never really reported. She heard a forensic scientist on a podcast speculate that Irish people excelled at disposing of dead bodies. And although she questioned this information, apparently they worked hard to delay and conceal. They burned the body, or dismembered it, or buried it first, buying time for escape. Or, as in her case now, they failed to report. She did not intend to report the dead man's body. Or they withheld pills and hoped for the best.

She closed in on the body again and watched. He had probably been a sweet child, who went to school with other boys, came home, enjoyed his dinner and told his Mammy what had happened that day and what the teacher had said. She prodded the torso with the edge of her boot. Still in rigor mortis. She searched the pocket of her jacket, found the spare coins she always kept for when she visited the city, to give to homeless people on the streets. She withdrew a two Euro coin and a fifty cent piece, turned them over thoughtfully between thumb and forefinger. Quickly, she spat on each coin and rubbed it clean with her yellow linen scarf. Then having second thoughts, she turned to the river and rinsed the metal pieces again, feeling water flow like a balm through her fingertips. How fresh it was, how sweet and free, she thought, suddenly wanting to remove her clothing and jump in for a swim. Again, she dried each coin carefully.

It was surely enough for a crossing, she thought, then chided herself momentarily for such a fanciful notion. She approached the body and squatted. Flies rose in a fizz. The natural process was well underway. But the ferryman that leads the dead would be content. Even with the head turned to one side, both coins remained in position, making black skull-holes of the face, closing off the poor, shocked eyes from the light.

She stood again, then walked away, the dog trotting ahead of her. When all the fuss died down, she would return, but with Lukas, to swim nakedly in the morning light.

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Still Life
In Memoriam Ciaran Carson (9 ottobre 1948-6 ottobre 2019) traduttore e poeta

Carla de Petris
Università degli Studi di Roma Tre (<depetrisc@hotmail.com>)

"Canaletto, The Stonemason's Yard, c. 1725"[1]

Here we are again at the waste ground of 1 Hopefield Avenue, and behind
The chain-link fencing is a big yellow JCB emblazoned McNABNEY BROS
That wasn't there yesterday; where we saw the goldfinch two years ago,
Perched feeding on a thistle-head. Weeds have been culled, rubble levelled,
Trenches dug in preparation for whatever. An apartment block? If so, for how much
Longer will the gable wall of No. 3 be visible? It had passages of inexplicable brickwork
We liked to try to make something of, to say nothing of the ghost of the chimney flue of No. 1—

The kind of thing that had I been a painter I'd have liked to put into a painting—
I can see a landscape by Tony Swain, where mountains, chairs, windows, meadows,
Lighthouses, graffiti, trees, sand dunes, power stations intermingle, offering
The viewer many potential routes through a sometimes considerable length
Of scenery. Take for instance the boats, the jetty, the sweeping path to the volcano.

[1] "Canaletto, *The Stonemason's Yard*, c. 1725" by Ciaran Carson from *Still Life* (2019) is reproduced by kind permission of the author's Estate c/o The Gallery Press. www.gallerypress.com.

The chapel on the hill. Sometimes some words of the print of
the newspaper support
Are left visible, though more often than not they are veiled or
totally obscured.

Typically, his day starts with a read of the newspaper.
The Guardian, specifically.
He scans for things he might use between reading and
looking until
Something, whether photograph or text, engages him—
an area of brickwork, say, or of
Repeated prepositions. So he pulls out the page, thinks, and
paints something on
The something on the page; thinks again, paints again. He
likes the way newspaper
Gets wrinkled and puckered when painted on, and gives
what's been obliterated
Incidental texture. Thing after thing he follows what he thinks
they want to become.

Seeing I take *The Guardian*, I think I'll try that too. See where
it takes me.
So this morning—the 11th of May 2019—I open the paper at
random at a feature
On the Venice Biennale, where 1 read about Julie Mehretu,
'whose paintings
Often use newspaper images as their source, but overpainted…
so that
Their original material becomes obscured' I take this as a
favourable omen to write
Toward Venice, in the form of Canaletto's *The Stonemason's Yard*,
a picture
I'd been always taken by. From now on I can take it as a
palimpsest to write upon.

And what a different take on Venice is *The Stonemason's Yard*
from the standard
Canaletto Grand Tourist view, those magnificent regattas on
the Grand Canal—
Golden pageantry, the gorgeous barges and the glittering
palazzi—no, this is
Almost Dutch, attentive to the everyday, the seemingly
authoritative title a misnomer:
The view is of the Campo San Vidal, the 'yard' a temporary
set-up for the repair of
The nearby church (not seen in the picture) of San Vidal,
though on Google Maps it lies immediately

Behind the viewer. The church across the canal—it is indeed
the Grand Canal!—

Is that of Santa Maria della Carità, whose campanile collapsed
on 17th March 1744
And was never rebuilt. I'm thinking what a clatter the bells
must have made
As they fell, when suddenly, the *ting-ting of* your incoming
Fonacab 'taxi dispatched' text!
I close the laptop. Twenty minutes later we're in the waiting
room. It takes an hour
Before we're seen, but now I'm seated in the La-Z-Boy recliner,
hooked up
To the drip: a 1115ml infusion over 60 minutes. I've brought
along a little Thames
And Hudson Canaletto pocket book by Antonio Paolucci to
pass the time.

I look at it from time to time. There's an LED display with a
digital countdown on
The trolley but I have to look over my shoulder for it. In any
event it issues
An almost inaudible murmur I imagine measuring the chemo
trickling down...
Dozing a little, I hear it entering my ear canal... *cannula*,
cannula, *Canaletto*, *Canaletto* …
I open my eyes and there you are, looking at me. I say, Can you
get the Muji pen
And notebook from my jacket pocket? And write this down?
You do. *My writing hand*
*Is out of action due to the cannula in the wrist through which the
chemio flows*.

The LED begins to flash and beep. Chemo's nearly over, just
00.05 on the clock, then
We're out. But first I have to pee! The chemo fairly makes you
go. Now much relieved
And in the taxi home. I'm looking at the picture in the pocket
book. Barely three
Inches by four, but what a world of characters and things
implying time—the gondoliers
Who ply their measured pole from quay to quay; the time it
takes for the distaff woman
On the balcony to spin a length of yam; or for the stooping
woman to draw
Water from the well. As for the workmen chipping away amid
the rubble at the marble

Bit by bit—see how the white stone is reflected by the high,
dazzling bell tower
In the background to the right—are they paid by piece or by
time? From the shadows
Cast it looks like mid-morning. How long is it since the cock
first crew—there.
Perched resplendent on that window sill, looking east from
the left of the frame?
The two lines of washing on the far bank, will they be dry by
noon? The pot plants
On an upper balcony, in what sequence planted? Over
everything and everyone
The bell-strokes of the campanile of Santa Maria della Carità
proclaim the proper rime.

Then there is the deep time of the City of Venice, floating on
sleech on a city of stilts.
The stone, how long did it take to quarry and ship from
Istria to here.
To say nothing of its archaeology? Paint layers at another end
of the temporal spectrum:
Now I'm looking on the internet at this magnified 400x
cross-section sample
Of a microscopic flake of terracotta building: lead white, red
and orange ochres,
Naples yellow, red lake, and some black. A scintilla of Venetian
sky: lead white,
Vermilion, Prussian blue and yellow earth. The Prussian blue
has faded over time—

Everything infused by time and marble dust! But look at
the toddler in the foreground who,
Fallen backwards on his bottom, has just released this elegant,
sparkling arc of pee
His mother commiserates; he'd been doing so well at the
staggering toward her
Open arms. He'll learn in time how many steps to take before
whatever end
He had in mind; and I, however long it takes to write this
poem, whatever it might be.
For here we are again in Hopefield, looking through the green
chain-link fencing
At the big yellow JCB. And as for what they're going to build
there, we can't wait to see.

"Canaletto, *Il cortile dello scalpellino*, c.1725"[2]

Siamo di nuovo qui allo sterrato del civico 1 di Hopefield Avenue,
e oltre
Il recinto di filo metallico c'è una grossa scavatrice gialla[3] decorata
McNABNEY BROS
Che non c'era ieri; proprio lì dove vedemmo il cardellino
due anni fa,
Appollaiato a beccare in cima al cardo. Le erbacce sono state tagliate,
i detriti spianati,
Scavi fatti in preparazione di chissà che. Un condominio?
Se così fosse, quanto
Rimarrà visibile della parete del timpano del civico 3? Aveva passi
di inspiegabile mattonatura
Che a noi piaceva interpretare, per non parlare della
canna fumaria del numero 1—

Il genere di cosa che se fossi stato un pittore mi sarebbe piaciuto mettere
in un quadro—
Riesco a immaginare un paesaggio alla maniera di Tony Swain[4], dove montagne, sedie,
finestre, prati,
Fari, graffiti, alberi, dune di sabbia, distributori di benzina
si mescolano, offrendo
All'osservatore molti percorsi potenziali attraverso lunghezze
a volte considerevoli
Di paesaggio. Prendi ad esempio le barche, il molo, l'ampia
salita verso il vulcano,
La cappella sulla collina, Qualche volta qualche parola della pagina a stampa
del giornale che fa da supporto
È ancora visibile, benché più spesso essa sia velata o
totalmente nascosta.

Di solito la sua giornata comincia con la lettura del giornale.
The Guardian, in particolare.
Scorre le pagine in cerca di cose da usare tra il leggere e
il vedere finché
Qualcosa, vuoi una fotografia o un testo, lo cattura—
un tratto di mattonatura, che dire, o

[2] Il dipinto è custodito presso la National Gallery di Londra. Si consiglia di seguire la lettura della poesia sul sito <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/45/Canaletto_The_Stonemason's Yard_ Google_Art_Project.jpg> e – come era solito fare Carson – vedere i dettagli del dipinto con un clic.

[3] Nel testo JCB. La J.C. Bamford Excavator Limited è una multinazionale britannica con sede nello Staffordshire. Produce attrezzature per l'edilizia e l'agricoltura.

[4] Tony Swain, nato nel 1967 a Lisburn, Irlanda del Nord, attualmente vive a Glasgow e ha rappresentato la Scozia alla Biennale di Venezia del 2007. Usa immagini e grafica prese dai giornali come punto di partenza per quadri e collages in cui questi elementi sono incorporati, adattati e addirittura nascosti in paesaggi frammentari e immaginari o astratti.

Alcune preposizioni ripetute. Allora strappa la pagina, ci pensa e
dipinge qualcosa
Su quel qualcosa della pagina; ci ripensa e ci dipinge ancora. Gli
piace il modo in cui la carta di giornale
Si arriccia e si drappeggia con la pittura, e restituisce
quella soggiacente tessitura
Dimenticata. Segue una dopo l'altra cose come pensa
che esse vogliano diventare.

Vedere—prendo *The Guardian*, ci voglio provare anch'io. Vedere dove
mi porta.
Così questa mattina—l'11 maggio 2019—apro il giornale a
caso su un servizio
Dalla Biennale di Venezia, dove leggo di Julie Mehretu[5],
"i cui dipinti
Spesso usano immagini di giornale come ispirazione, ma dipinti sopra…
in modo che
Il materiale originario sia oscurato." Considero questo un
buon auspicio per scrivere
Su Venezia, sul tema de *Il cortile dello scalpellino* di Canaletto,
un quadro
Che mi ha sempre affascinato. D'ora in poi lo userò come
palinsesto su cui scrivere.

E che prospettiva differente su Venezia ne *Il cortile dello scalpellino*
dalle vedute standard
Di Canaletto per il viaggiatore del Grand Tour: quelle regate magnifiche
sul Canal Grande—
I cortei d'oro, le meravigliose imbarcazioni, e gli splendidi
palazzi—no, questo è
Quasi fiammingo, attento al quotidiano, l'apparente
accurato titolo è invece sbagliato:
Si tratta del Campo San Vidal, il "cortile" è una sistemazione
temporanea per il restauro della
Vicina chiesa di San Vidal (non visibile nel quadro),
benché su Google Maps sia immediatamente
Dietro l'osservatore. La chiesa oltre il canale—che è nientemeno che
il Canal Grande!—

È Santa Maria della Carità, il cui campanile venne giù
il 17 marzo 1744
E non fu mai ricostruito. Penso al clamore che le campane
debbono aver fatto

[5] Julie Mehretu (1970 -) è un'artista americana di origine etiope, nota per i suoi dipinti a più strati di paesaggi astratti su larga scala che rappresentano gli effetti cumulativi dei cambiamenti socio-politici sul contesto urbano, usando progetti di edilizia, mappe metereologiche, giornali ecc.

Cadendo, quando improvvisamente, il tin-tin del messaggio
del tuo taxi in arrivo dalla Fonocab!
Chiudo il laptop. Venti minuti dopo siamo nella sala
d'aspetto. Ci vorrà un'ora
Prima di essere visti, ma per ora sono steso sulla poltrona reclinabile,
allacciato
Alla flebo: 1115 ml. di liquido per 60 minuti. Mi sono portato
dietro un tascabile
Su Canaletto di Antonio Paolucci[6] da Thames & Hudson per
passare il tempo.

Lo sfoglio di tanto in tanto. C'è uno schermo al LED con
un contaminuti digitale sul
Carrello ma dovrei voltarmi dietro. In ogni
caso emette
Un mormorio quasi impercettibile che credo serva per misurare il flusso
della chemio…
Mentre mi assopisco, lo sento entrarmi nel canale uditivo…*cannula*,
cannula, *Canaletto*, *Canaletto*…
Apro gli occhi, e eccoti là, che mi guardi. Ti dico, Puoi prendermi
la penna Muji
E il blocco notes nella tasca della giacca e scrivere questo?
lo fai. *La mano per scrivere*
È fuori uso per la cannula nel polso da cui
fluisce la chemio.

Lo schermo a LED comincia a lampeggiare e a trillare. La chemio è quasi finita, proprio
00,05 minuti d'orologio, e poi
Siamo fuori. Ma devo urinare! La chemio ti fa
andare. Ora sono più sollevato
E sul taxi verso casa, guardo il quadro nel
tascabile. Appena 8 centimetri
Per 10, ma che mondo di personaggi e di cose
incluso il tempo—i gondolieri
Che maneggiano il remo cadenzato da riva a riva, lo stesso tempo
che ci mette la donna
Sul balcone a filare un palmo di tela; o la donna
china a tirar su
L'acqua dal pozzo. E poi gli operai a scalpellare il marmo
in mezzo ai detriti

Pezzo per pezzo—guarda come la pietra bianca brilla di riflesso con l'alto,
abbagliante campanile

[6] Si tratta di *Canaletto* di Antonio Paolucci (1971). Paolucci, nato a Rimini il 29 settembre 1939 è uno storico dell'arte italiano. È stato Ministro per i beni culturali e ambientali, soprintendente per il Polo Museale Fiorentino e dal 2007 al 2017 direttore dei Musei Vaticani.

Sullo sfondo a destra—sono pagati a cottimo o
a giornata? Dalle ombre
Sembra che sia metà mattino. Quanto tempo sarà passato dal primo canto
del gallo—lì,
Splendidamente appollaiato sul davanzale rivolto a est a
sinistra della cornice?
Le due fila di bucato stese lontano saranno asciutte
per mezzodì? E le piante nei vasi
Del balcone in alto, in quale ordine saranno state piantate? Su
ogni cosa e ogni persona
I rintocchi del campanile di Santa Maria della Carità
scandiscono il tempo corretto.
Poi c'è il tempo profondo della Città di Venezia, che fluttua sulla
melma su una città di trampoli.
La pietra, quanto c'è voluto a scavarla e a farla arrivare per mare
dall'Istria a qui?
Per non parlare della sua archeologia! Strati di colore all'altro estremo
dello spettro temporale:
Guardo su internet questa sezione trasversale ingrandita 400 volte
del campione
Di un microscopico edificio di terracotta: bianco piombo, ocre
rosse e arancio,
Giallo Napoli, lago rosso e un tocco di nero. Una scintilla di cielo
veneziano: bianco piombo,
Vermiglio, blu di Prussia e Terra gialla. Il blu di Prussia
è scolorito col tempo—

Tutto infuso di tempo e di polvere di marmo! Ma guarda
quel bimbetto in primo piano che,
Caduto di schiena, si è lasciato andare a quell'elegante,
splendente arco di pipì!
La madre si rammarica; era stato così bravo a
barcollare verso le braccia aperte
Di lei. Imparerà col tempo quanti passi fare prima
di raggiungere qualunque meta
Avrà in mente, e anche io, quanto tempo mi ci vorrà a scrivere questa
poesia, comunque essa sia.
Perché eccoci qui di nuovo a Hopefield, a sbirciare oltre la recinzione
di filo di metallo
La grossa scavatrice gialla. E su quanto intendano costruire
lì, proprio non vediamo l'ora di vederlo.

"Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion*, 1648"[7]

Let me begin by writing about the instrument I'm writing
with: a 'Lady Patricia'
Mechanical—'retractable' or 'clutch'—pencil made in the USA
by Waterman in 19 31,
In a translucent 'onyx' celluloid, somewhat dimmed with age,
but still beautiful to look at.
White peach marble with feint hints of amber and terracotta
veins. Feminine, slighter counterpart
To the heftier, senatorial 'Patrician', it suits my hand fine as
I write, or scribble, rather,
Standing at the bedside dressing-table; and it's still strange
to me that I do so.
Before the diagnosis I'd written nothing publishable for four
years, but when I took
The pencil up it seemed to set me free. Before that, I'd drafted
poems with a Muji pen.
And still do on occasion; years before that, vintage fountain
pens, of which the pencil
Is a spin-off, one half of a pen and pencil set I picked up
for a song on eBay.

8th June. It's two a.m. the morning after my last chemo of
the cycle. Can't sleep. Steroids
They give you to get you through, they make me sketch and jot.
Flickers to be
Amplified tomorrow into more coherent form, not
Reproduction — much on my mind
Regarding paintings. For all the painter draws, the viewer
draws conclusions, repro after
Reproduction of the *Ashes*, seeing things in them perhaps not
there at all, perhaps not
Seeing what there is, not ever having seen the thing itself.
I might easily have glimpsed it
In the Walker Gallery Liverpool, where I was once, and had
gone to look at it, but I knew nothing
Then of Poussin, and had I come to it, it likely would have been
invisible to me.

Yet the view is an imaginary one, of an Ancient Greek city state,
the city of Megara:
Poussin's illustration to a story. But more of that anon. Let us
look at the city as it

[7] "Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion*, 1648" by Ciaran Carson from *Still Life* (2019) is reproduced by kind permission of the author's Estate c/o The Gallery Press. www.gallerypress.com.

Appears, as described by Tom Lubbock: 'A row of massive oaks, heavy with foliage,
Runs right across the foreground. It's a high natural wall planted alongside the actual
Low wall, a great shady barricade. But it has an opening. These guardian trees
Frame the city like a pair of curtains or wings. A road runs between them, coming
From outside. Bracketed by the dark trees the luminous city appears beyond, a composition
Of arches, pillars, squares, rectangles, diagonals—buildings that suggest a set
Of toy bricks… Megara has a structure. It's ruled by a centre and a hierarchy.
The facade of the classical temple looks out at us, pretty well from the middle.

'It is the face of the city, the focal point of the whole scene. But this temple is not the culmination.
Standing behind, there is a great wooded rock, its two jagged molar stumps emerging from
The vegetation covering its base.' The kind of writing you need to copy out
To properly infuse its cadences of assonance into your system: 'row, oaks, foliage,
Foreground, low, opening'—O what lovely open O's! And then The E's: 'these, trees,
Between, trees, appears'. Musically enthused, you read the piece aloud as if
The words were truly yours in all their salient particularity. Or should we, given
Poussin's words—'*Moi, qui fait profession des choses muettes*'—thereof remain silent?

Or Wittgenstein's, 'What can be shown, cannot be said.' No, we scribble and gabble. And yet.
As our eye is drawn into the sunlit arena in from of the temple, we imagine an acoustic.
Here are dotted Poussin's trademark miniature figures, walking, talking, playing music.
Archers going *whoosh*! and *thwock*! to hit the target. Bathers laugh and splash.
Listen then to what you see, you hear it as a great orchestral pit. And only now
Do I spot the tiny white streak of a far-off shirt being taken Off—it strikes the ear
Like the lightning *ting*! of a triangle, the chime of an antique clock, or a music box,

The movement of Subbuteo figures synchronized upon a table
top. Meanwhile, temple.
Rock and cloud compose a pyramid from ground to sky to loom
above and overlook
The open field. I take a closer look, and take my pencil up to jot
a note when *drat*! The lead

Just broke. I shake it and the stub drops out. The little packet
of replacement leads is
Somewhere I forget. I rummage in the dressing-table
knick-knack drawer for a Biro
Pen I know is there from God-knows-when. It's actually a Bic.
I start to write and find
It won't. I scribble nix until the vein gives ink. Where was I?
'Temple, rock and cloud,—
Yes! I'd meant to look it up in Richard Verdi's book, and there
it is—I'm typing this
In daylight now—'Even to the naked eye it is apparent that
these rocks were painted
Over a layer of cloud and were added at a later stage,' he said
in Carolyn Beamish's
Translation from the French. I take a magnifying glass to it
to see if it is true.

It is. And still appears so, even to my naked eye, now I know
it is, the brain translating
Eye to brain. I'm looking deep into the conjugated rock and
cloud. But is the iffy overpainting
Deliberate? You never know with Poussin's sleight of hand.
Look over to the left, below,
Behind, and there's a dome you didn't see before, and then,
beyond, upon the distant
Skyline—it must be miles away!—a twin-towered structure
looms enormously, although
From this far off it looks so small. And over to the right, there's
more: turrets, palaces,
Magnificent establishments, the city going on in back much
further, higher, deeper, greater than
You thought. Mindboggling prospect! What then lies
immediately before our eyes?
'If this is our introduction to the city of Megara,' a tourist
might enquire, 'where is
The monumental gate, the battlemented wall? We seem
to have arrived at the periphery.'

Thinking architecture, wondering where to go next, I go for
a walk to see what's

Going on in Hopefield. Significant progress. A white articulated
Lorry—LARSEN PILING—
Is parked at the site. They've replaced the chain-link with
shuttered fencing and a gate.
I peep through a chink to see nine great big tall steel piles
embedded in the excavation.
I think New York, the Chrysler and the Empire State, the
bedrock layers of Manhattan schist,
Zigzag terrazzo on the lobby floor, marble fitments in
the mezzanine, the terracotta veins
In my contemporaneous almost ninety-year-old onyx pencil.
Look at it beside me
On the desk, and think, who might have picked it up in 1931
to write some words, as I do now.

At last I'm on the threshold. Here lies what remains of Phocion,
falsely condemned
By the Athenians, sentenced to drink the hemlock, his
unburied body subsequently to be banished
To Megara, and burned at the border: the foreground, where
his widow kneels to touch
The shadows of his ashes, not yet having gathered them.
Her servant keeps lookout. Look
Again at the sunlit campus, people walking, talking,
swimming, playing music, shooting,
Hitting the target again and again. They seem to cast no
shadow. They are indifferent
To the exiles in the shadow of the oaks. As for you, you are
beyond the pale
Of the picture, immaterial to them who thrive in this Elysium.
Below the rock that veils
The cloud, it seems the city goes on living for the moment, or
for ever. I go on writing.

"Nicolas Poussin, *Paesaggio con le ceneri di Focione*, 1648"[8]

Fatemi cominciare a scrivere dello strumento con cui
scrivo: una matita "Lady Patricia"
Meccanica—'ritraibile' o 'portamina'—fatta negli Stati Uniti
da Waterman nel 1931,
Di celluloide 'onice' lucida, un po' consunta dal tempo,
ma ancora bella a vedersi,

[8] Il dipinto è esposto alla Walker Gallery di Liverpool. Si consiglia di seguire la lettura della poesia sul sito <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/60/Nicolas_Poussin_Landscape_with_the-Ashes_of-Phocion-Google_Art_Project.jpg> e – come era solito fare Carson – vedere i dettagli del dipinto con un clic.

Marmo bianco perlaceo, con tocchi di finta ambra e venature
    di terracotta. Femminile, contrappunto più sottile
Della più pesante, senatoriale “Patrician”, mi si adatta bene alla mano quando
    scrivo, o piuttosto scarabocchio
In piedi sulla toletta vicino al letto; è ancora strano
    che io lo stia facendo.
Prima della diagnosi non avevo scritto nulla di pubblicabile per quattro
    anni, ma quando ho preso in mano
Questa matita, sembrò che mi avesse liberato. Prima di allora, avevo abbozzato
    poesie con una penna Muji,
e ancora lo faccio a volte; negli anni precedenti, penne stilografiche
    vintage, di cui la matita
è solo una parte, metà del set matita e penna, che avevo pescato
    per poco su eBay.

8 giugno. Sono le due del mattino dopo l’ultima chemio
    del ciclo. Non riesco a dormire. Gli steroidi
Che ti danno per aiutarti a farcela, mi fanno buttar giù abbozzi e note.
    guizzi che saranno
Amplificati domani in una forma più coerente, non
    riproduzioni—tutto nella mente
A proposito di quadri. Perché su tutto quello che dipinge un pittore, l’osservatore
    trae conclusioni, riproduzione
Dopo riproduzione delle *Ceneri*, vedendoci cose che forse non
    ci sono neppure, forse non
Vedendo ciò che c’è, e non avendo neppure visto il quadro stesso.
    può darsi che gli abbia dato un’occhiata
Nella Walker Art Gallery di Liverpool, dove sono stato una volta, c’ero
    andato per vederlo, ma allora
Non sapevo niente di Poussin, e se pure ci fossi arrivato davanti, è probabile
    che per me sarebbe stato invisibile.

Eppure il soggetto è immaginario, quello di una città-stato nella Grecia antica,
    la città di Megara:
Poussin illustra una storia. Ma c’è molto di più. Consideriamo
    la città come
Appare, come l’ha descritta Tom Lubbock[9]: “una fila di grosse querce[10]
    dal folto fogliame

[9] Tom Lubbok (1957-2011) autore di *Great Works: 50 Paintings Explored* (2011), è stato scrittore e illustratore, critico d’arte per l’*Independent* dal 1997 alla morte. La rubrica *Great Works* incentrata ogni volta su un’unica opera d’arte, è apparsa sul suo giornale tra il 2005 e il 2010. Le sue opere di grafica a collage che uscivano sull’*Independent* del sabato, sono state esposte alla Vittoria Miro Gallery nel 2010. Fu anche autore di commedie. Ammirato per il suo stile erudito ed esuberante, divenne famoso tra il grande pubblico quando l’*Observer* pubblicò estratti dal diario degli ultimi suoi due anni nei quali per un tumore al cervello aveva perduto la facoltà di scrivere e di parlare. Il critico Kevin Jackson lo ha definito “un poema in prosa sul linguaggio e sulla mortalità” (<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/jan/10/tom-lubbock-obituary> (03/2021).

[10] Riportiamo il testo originale in inglese cui faranno riferimento versi successivi: “a row of massive oaks, heavy with foliage, Runs right across the foreground … Low wall, ... it has an opening. These guardian trees … between them…trees … appears”.

Corre in primo piano. È un alto muro naturale
 piantato lungo l'effettivo
muro basso, una grande barricata in ombra. Ma c'è un varco.
 questi alberi guardiani
Incorniciano la città come un paio di sipari o di quinte. Una strada
 in mezzo, che viene
Da fuori. Incorniciata dagli alberi scuri la città luminosa
 appare subito dietro, una composizione
Di archi, pilastri, piazze, rettangoli e diagonali—edifici
 che suggeriscono una serie
Di mattoncini Lego… Megara ha una sua struttura. È regolata da un centro,
 da una gerarchia.
La facciata di un tempio classico ci appare, proprio
 in mezzo.

"È il volto della città, il punto focale dell'intera scena.
 ma questo tempio non è il culmine.
Dietro si alza una grande roccia boscosa, Due picchi frastagliati
 nella forma di molari emergono
Dalla vegetazione che ne copre la base." Il genere di scrittura che bisognerebbe
 copiare
Per infondere le sue cadenze di assonanze al sistema:
 "*row, oaks, foliage,*
Foreground, low,opening"—che meraviglia di O aperte! E poi
 le I: "*these, trees,*
Between, trees, appears". Musicalmente entusiasta, leggi il pezzo
 ad alta voce come se
Le parole fossero tue nella loro notevole particolarità.
 oppure dovremmo, secondo
Le parole di Poussin—"*moi, qui fait profession des choses muettes*"—
 rimanercene in silenzio?

Oppure quelle di Wittgenstein: "Ciò che si può mostrare non si può dire." No,
 noi scribacchiamo e farfugliamo. Eppure
Quando l'occhio ci va sull'arena assolata davanti al tempio,
 immaginiamo un'acustica.
Qui sono schizzate quelle figurine marchio di fabbrica di Poussin,
 che passeggiano, chiacchierano, fanno musica.
Arcieri fanno *uusch*! E *tuock*! per colpire il bersaglio. Bagnanti
 ridono e sguazzano.
Ascolta ciò che vedi, senti come dalla buca di una grande orchestra.
 e solo ora
Individuo in lontananza la striscia bianca di una camiciola
 tolta—colpisce l'orecchio
Come il balenio del *ting*! di un triangolo, il rintocco di un antico
 orologio, o di un carillon,
Il movimento delle figurine del Subbuteo sincronizzate sul piano
 di un tavolo. Intanto, il tempio,

La roccia e la nuvola compongono una piramide dalla terra al cielo che
incombe e controlla
Il campo aperto. Osservo più da vicino, e prendo la matita per buttar giù
un appunto quando ecco *dret*! La mina

Si è appena rotta. La scrollo e cade la punta. Il pacchetto
delle mine di ricambio sta da
Qualche parte che non ricordo. Rovisto nel cassetto di cianfrusaglie
della toletta in cerca di una Biro
Che so che sta lì Dio sa da quando. In effetti è una Bic.
cerco di scrivere ma scopro
Che non funziona. Scarabocchio finché esce l'inchiostro. Dove ero rimasto?
"Tempio, roccia e nuvola"—
Sì! Volevo controllare nel libro di Richard Verdi[11], e eccolo
qui—ora scrivo a macchina
Di giorno—"Anche ad occhio nudo è chiaro che
queste rocce sono state dipinte
Sullo strato di nuvole e aggiunte in un secondo momento." Dice
nella traduzione dal francese
Di Carolyn Beamish. Prendo la lente di ingrandimento per
vedere se è vero.

Lo è. E ancora si vede, anche ad occhio nudo, ora so
che è così, il cervello traduce
Dall'occhio al cervello. Guardo attentamente la roccia e
la nuvola congiunte. Ma quella incerta ripittura
Fu una scelta deliberata! Non si sa mai con la perizia di mano di Poussin.
guarda qui sotto, a sinistra,
Sul retro, c'è una cupola che non avevi visto prima, e poi
oltre, lontano
All'orizzonte—saranno miglia!—Una struttura di torri gemelle
incombe enorme, benché
Così da lontano sembra piccola. E lì a destra, c'è
altro: torri, palazzi,
Meravigliose dimore, la città prosegue molto oltre, più
imponente, più profonda e più grande di
Quanto pensassi. Una vista sbalorditiva! Ma cosa abbiamo qui
proprio davanti agli occhi?
"È forse questo l'ingresso alla città di Megara," chiederebbe
un turista, "Ma dov'è
La porta monumentale, la cinta con gli spalti? Sembra
che siamo arrivati in periferia."

[11] Richard Verdi, (New York, 1941-) critico d'arte americano e direttore di musei. Tra le sue pubblicazioni da ricordare *Nicolas Poussin, 1594-1665*, catalogo della mostra alla National Gallery di Londra del 1995 (Verdi 1995), cui fa qui riferimento Carson. Nel 2020 è stato pubblicato un suo studio originale dal titolo *Poussin A Painter from Classicism to Abstraction* (Verdi 2020).

Pensando all'architettura, chiedendomi dove andare ora, esco
a passeggiare per vedere cosa
Succede a Hopefield. Un passo avanti significativo. Un autocarro bianco
articolato—LARSEN PILING—
È parcheggiato sul posto. Hanno sostituito la catena di metallo con
un recinto di palanche e una porta.
Sbircio da una fessura e vedo nove lunghi piloni d'acciaio, grandi e grossi
piantati negli scavi.
Penso a New York, al Chrysler e all'Empire State Building, gli strati
delle fondamenta dello scisto di Manhattan,
Il terrazzo a zig-zag dell'atrio, rifiniture di marmo nel mezzanino,
le venature terracotta
Della mia matita d'onice contemporanea ad essi, vecchia di novanta anni.
guardala qui vicino a me
Sullo scrittoio, e pensa a chi potrebbe averla presa in mano nel 1931
per scrivere qualcosa, come faccio io ora.

Infine eccomi sulla soglia. Qui giace ciò che resta di Focione,
ingiustamente condannato
Dagli Ateniesi, con la sentenza di bere la cicuta, e in seguito
il suo cadavere bandito
A Megara, e arso al limite della città: in primo piano dove
la vedova in ginocchio tocca
L'ombra delle sue ceneri, non essendo ancora riuscita a raccoglierle.
il servo di guardia. Guarda
Di nuovo il campo assolato, la gente che passeggia, chiacchiera,
nuota, fa musica, tira d'arco,
Colpendo il bersaglio mille volte. Sembra che non facciano
ombra. Sono indifferenti
Verso gli esuli all'ombra delle querce. Per quanto riguarda te,
sei fuori dal
Quadro, immateriale per coloro che prosperano in questo Elisio
sotto la roccia che nasconde
La nuvola, sembra che la città continui a vivere l'attimo, o
per sempre. Io continuo a scrivere.

Su Carson

Ciaran Carson, nato a Belfast nel 1948, figlio di un postino e di un'operaia della locale filanda di lino, entrambi di lingua madre gaelica e di religione cattolica, è morto in quella città il 6 ottobre del 2019 per un tumore al polmone.

Per ricordare Ciaran Carson, che alla sua vasta e poliedrica produzione in poesia e prosa, ha intrecciato con grande maestria la pratica della traduzione come strumento di esaltazione del linguaggio nelle forme polimorfiche delle varie lingue tradotte – antico gaelico, latino,

francese, rumeno fino all'italiano di Dante – è sembrato appropriato esordire con la traduzione in italiano di due poesie tratte dall'ultima sua raccolta, *Still Life* (Carson 2019). Le poesie di *Still Life*, incentrate su altrettante opere di pittori dal classicismo alla contemporaneità, sono state scritte e dedicate alla moglie Deirdre Shannon e ai figli, nei sei mesi di chemioterapia che purtroppo si è rivelata inutile.

Il 16 ottobre, a dieci giorni dalla scomparsa del poeta, Gail McConnell[12] nel lancio del volume tenutosi nella Great Hall della Queen's University Belfast, ricorda che quel giorno sarebbe stato l'anniversario delle nozze con la moglie, l'amore di una vita e anche la sua interlocutrice prediletta secondo un'affermazione più volte ripetuta dal poeta stesso[13].

Proprio misurandoci con la traduzione sarà bene soffermarci sul titolo, incrocio semantico che purtroppo va perduto in italiano. Infatti "still life", alludendo a diciassette opere pittoriche su cui si snodano altrettante poesie, dovrebbe tradursi in italiano con il termine tecnico un poco funerario di "natura morta", mentre l'inglese rimanda alla "vita immobile", eppure trattando gli ultimi sei mesi di vita trascorsi in chemioterapia in un dialogo costante proprio con la compagna Deirdre intorno a opere d'arte che a vario titolo emergono dalla memoria condivisa dei due protagonisti, si potrebbe anche avvertire nel titolo l'augurio che oltre la morte ci sarà "ancora vita" nell'arte che, come i suoi strumenti per scrivere, matite d'epoca e penne Muji o Bic, spesso ironicamente evocate nella raccolta in questione, sopravviveranno al poeta.

Con la traduzione di queste due poesie – della cui scelta si dirà in seguito –, si intende presentare al lettore italiano l'opera ancora poco conosciuta in Italia[14] di Ciaran Carson, un poeta della generazione immediatamente successiva a quella di Seamus Heaney, premio Nobel per la Poesia nel 1995. Il valore dell'opera intera di Carson è stato riconosciuto dai vari premi assegnati ai suoi lavori e la cui popolarità porterà, dopo la morte, alla proposta di intitolargli il Waterworks Park di Belfast più volte ricordato nelle sue poesie.

Carson ha condiviso con Heaney l'origine geografica nordirlandese, ma a differenza di lui originario dell'Irlanda rurale e poi "esule volontario" a Dublino, le fonti di ispirazione di Carson sia familiari che culturali sono state profondamente radicate nel contesto urbano della natia città di Belfast. Nonostante una giovanile stroncatura, in qualche misura accettata dal destinatario, della raccolta *North* di Seamus Heaney (Carson 1975) in cui accusava il connazionale di essersi guadagnato la "laureateship of violence" – il titolo di poeta laureato della violenza, con una impropria e improvvida mitizzazione della violenza in Irlanda del Nord, quasi nobilitandola col paragone ai crudeli riti tribali degli antichi Celti dello Jutland, in seguito Carson disse che "Heaney was a big force, naturally, and we felt his presence, and

[12] Cfr. McConnell 2019.

[13] Negli "Aknowledgements" per la sua traduzione di *The Táin* ancora una volta Carson scrive: "My wife Deirdre read the work in progress, as she has done with all my work since we met some thirty years ago; as always, her response and her suggestions were invaluable" (Carson 2007, ix).

[14] Nel 1998 Roberto Bertoni, docente del Dipartimento di Italiano del Trinity College Dublin, pubblica una prima raccolta antologica di poesie di Ciaran Carson, tradotte in italiano con testo a fronte col titolo *Il tempo è conversazione* (Carson 1998). Nel 2003 lo stesso Bertoni pubblica col titolo *Squarci di notizie* (Carson 2003b) la versione italiana con testo a fronte di *Breaking News*, appena uscito per i tipi di Gallery Press (Carson 2003a). Facendo seguito al rinnovato interesse per la *Commedia* dantesca da parte di Seamus Heaney e dello stesso Carson ancora Roberto Bertoni contribuisce a una raccolta di saggi intitolata *Echi danteschi/Dantean Echoes*, (AA.VV. 2003) in cui compaiono due poesie rispettivamente di Carson e di Heaney e un saggio di Gianni Pillonca sulla lettura di Heaney del *Purgatorio* (Pillonca 2003). Nel 2011 l'editore Del Vecchio affida per la sua "Collana di Poesia" la cura e la traduzione di *First Language* (Carson 1993) col titolo *Prima lingua* a Marco Federici Solari e Lorenzo Flabbi (Carson 2011).

[…] all Ulster poets of my generation must have been influenced by his example. Because before Heaney, there was […] certainly nothing like a poetry which had some tie-up with our own vernacular, with ordinary Ulster speech" (Brandes 1990, 79).

Non deve stupire che dal 2003 al 2016, anno del suo ritiro anche dalla cattedra di Poesia presso la Queen's University Belfast, Carson abbia diretto lo *Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry* presso la stessa università.

Del tradurre

Cresciuto in ambito familiare di lingua gaelica e di religione cattolica, poi completata la formazione universitaria nella locale Queen's University, istituzione profondamente anglo-irlandese, Carson rivela costantemente nella sua opera una dicotomia linguistica e culturale, dolorosamente enfatizzata durante il trentennio dei *Troubles*, una perenne sfasatura/ inadeguatezza all'inglese fino a formulare contro se stesso l'infamante definizione di essere "a turncoat interpreter", un "interprete voltagabbana" dell'antica Irlanda, l'iconica Hibernia[15].

Oltre a essere un valido musicista e interprete di musica irlandese Carson è stato dal 1975 *Traditional Arts Officer* dell' *Arts Council* dell'Irlanda del Nord. Come etnomusicologo ha pubblicato una *Pocket Guide to Irish Traditional Music* (Carson 1986), ha curato una colonna bimestrale su quella tradizione musicale per *The Journal of Music* e nel 1996 ha pubblicato il saggio *Last Night's Fun: About Time, Food and Music* (Carson 1996).

Dopo la prima raccolta di poesia *The New Estate* del 1976 da lui stesso definita "well-done, but too reserved" (Brandes 1990, 80). Carson si è dedicato per una decina di anni all'attività musicale di cui si è detto, girando il paese alla ricerca delle tracce della nativa cultura folk e si è confrontato con le conseguenze di uno dei segni più profondi lasciati dal dominio inglese in Irlanda: l'abbandono forzato della lingua gaelica. Il doversi esprimere in un idioma che Joyce ha definito, usando un efficace ossimoro, "familiar and foreign", ha causato un'inevitabile sensazione di perdita, di allontanamento dalle proprie radici. Ciò accomuna l'Irlanda agli altri Paesi sottoposti al dominio coloniale straniero.

L'iberno-inglese, imposto in età elisabettiana e innestato su un ceppo indoeuropeo occidentale che non aveva nulla a che vedere con le lingue germaniche, è di conseguenza molto sofisticato, ricco di "beautiful, antique redundancies" (Corcoran 1999, 183) (nella poesia "The Guttural Muse" dalla raccolta *Field Work* Seamus Heaney affianca alla parlata irlandese l'aggettivo "soft-mouthed", Heaney 1979, 20).

La traduzione può essere considerata quindi come metafora dell'Irlanda, di una cultura che fino al 1690, data in cui ebbe luogo il completo smantellamento della società originaria gaelica e la proibizione della lingua, era stata rappresentata in gaelico. Allo stesso tempo, come osserva acutamente Seamus Deane, le traduzioni del XIX e del XX secolo consentono di fruire di un patrimonio letterario che, passando attraverso gli eventi drammatici che hanno sconvolto il Paese, continua a rappresentare immutato e immutabile lo "spirito gaelico", che viene così descritto: "In all Irish writing we find poetry and fact, dreams and realities, exact details and wild imagination, linked closely hand in hand. This is the Gael as revealed in his literature." (Hull in Deane 1997, 114). La traduzione risponde quindi all'interrogativo della rappresentazione della psiche irlandese per un pubblico ampio, il che, pur essendo

[15] "The Display Case", in Carson 1998, 74. "Since you've abandoned it for lisping English, /Scribbling poems in it exclusively, or so I'm told".

non paragonabile a una fruizione in lingua originale, è pur sempre preferibile all'oblio: "to translate Ireland was but another way of bringing it into being" (Kiberd 1996, 51). Il ruolo del traduttore nell'ambito della letteratura irlandese è quindi centrale in quanto ha il compito di riordinare il corpus letterario in un insieme di opere inscritte in una tradizione, in cui la storia sembra essere distinta dalla linearità temporale e non facilmente distinguibile dalla leggenda (anche in questo caso riaffiora l'eredità culturale dei celti, che avevano una nozione di tempo soprattutto ciclico, non lineare come quello dei romani, e inteso come viaggio, in cui preponderanti sono concetti quali l'eterno ritorno, raffigurato simbolicamente con l'immagine della spirale). Benchè Deane difenda l'opera divulgatrice della traduzione, rimane incontrovertibile l'associazione del termine "tradurre" con "tradire/conquistare": così come i romani oltre a conquistare Paesi si appropriano del loro passato, allo stesso modo la potenza coloniale inglese si appropria tra Ottocento e Novecento del glorioso passato celtico, rendendolo funzionale all'accettazione dell'imperialismo britannico.

Durante un'intervista concessa a chi scrive a una domanda sul perchè nella seconda metà del ventesimo secolo una gran parte di poeti e drammaturghi irlandesi hanno tradotto da lingue antiche e moderne Ciaran Carson rispose: "Maybe it's got something to do with the fact that English is not wholly native to us. At least it isn't to me, since Irish was my first language. So everything is translation" (de Petris 2006, 303).

Della fascinazione per la Parola, polimorfismo del linguaggio e della sua valenza proteiforme è testimonianza la costante pratica della traduzione di Carson, ma in chiave del tutto diversa da quella dei traduttori anglo-irlandesi di cui scrive Deane. Nella pratica del tradurre non c'è nel poeta contemporaneo nessuna intenzione elitaria e neppure filologica per così dire di "appropriazione", bensì solo il desiderio di ritrovare il ritmo dell'antica lingua, suono/senso e di ampliare il proprio orizzonte culturale, quindi Carson cercherà testi non solo irlandesi; tradurrà i francesi, Rimbaud, Mallarmé e Baudelaire, Ovidio, fino alla straordinaria e affascinante versione integrale dell'*Inferno* di Dante, una riscrittura nell'iberno-inglese di Belfast, intriso di termini della quotidianità contemporanea che gli danno un sorprendente gusto *pop*. Non sarà una versione filologicamente accurata, ma è certamente spiazzante trovare nella traduzione di Carson questa versione dell'originale:

> and from the belly-bottom, they're stuck
> in this deep pit, as in some Irish bog,
> collectively immobilized by muck. (Dante Alighieri 2004, 216)

Per il dantesco

> sappi che non son torri, ma giganti,
> e son nel pozzo intorno dalla ripa
> dall'umbilico in giuso tutti quanti. (Canto XXXI, 31-33)

Solo dopo la prova dantesca, agli esordi del nuovo secolo, Carson si misurerà con la traduzione di due grandi classici dell'antica cultura e lingua irlandese, il poema epico-satirico di Brian Merriman *The Midnight Court* (Carson 2005) e di *The Táin. Translated from the Old Irish Epic* (Carson 2007), un significativo ritorno/recupero delle proprie radici.

Ancora l'esperienza musicale condizionerà nel 1985 il suo ritorno alla poesia, con la convinzione che "the way the line moves is not unlike the movement of a reel. The basic 8-bar unit of the reel – which can be further divided into smaller units 2 or 4 whatever – corresponds roughly to the length of, and stresses within, the poetry line" (Brandes 1990, 82).

La cosiddetta *long line*, circa diciassette sillabe cadenzata in strofe di otto/nove versi, ispirata anche dall'esempio del poeta americano C.K. Williams, diviene il metro prediletto di Carson, il ritmo con il quale può svolgersi con agio la sua narrazione poetica, fatta di divagazioni, aneddoti, etimologie e infine improvvisi ritorni alla realtà più violenta e emblematica, come in "Dresden" in cui solo tra la nona e la decima stanza si vede la rovina del bombardamento, "Of all the missions, Dresden broke his heart. It reminded him of china. // As he remembered it, long afterwards, he could hear, or almost hear / Between the rapid desultory thunderclaps, a thousand tinkling echoes- / All across the map of Dresden, store-rooms full of china shivered, teetered / And collapsed, an avalanche of porcelain […]" (Carson 1987, 11).

Dalla *long line* degli anni '80 ai versi brevissimi delle collezioni successive, dalle strofe quasi in libertà al sonetto e all'haiku, in tutta la sua lunga e variegata produzione letteraria Carson ha sempre sperimentato nuovi metri, nuove cadenze del linguaggio che si adattassero di volta in volta alla sua esplorazione dell'esistenza, ossessionato dalla potenza del dettaglio e del particolare[16].

Intorno a Still Life

Still Life è una raccolta veramente preziosa, compendio di una vita artistica nel momento in cui si sperimenta l'imminente mortalità, sottoposta al reagente chimico dell'ironia che ne scioglie la retorica funerea.

Anche il ritorno alla *long line* è così ironicamente motivato :

> Ding-dong! That was the doorbell. I'd been writing away at this, and momentarily
> It put me in mind of the carriage return bell of my old Imperial typewriter, how
> Back in the 80s I measured my verse by the width of an A4 page. For whatever reason
> I've gone back to that arbitrary rule that turns your thinking unexpectedly. Though
> Necessarily it turns out differently when printed in a book. (Carson 2019, 33-34).

La raccolta si chiude con il ricordo di una casa in cui si è vissuto tanti anni prima, che il quadro di James Allen *The House with the Palm Trees*, gli ricorda. Gli ultimi versi sono pieni d'attenzione alla vita, per i dettagli solo apparentemente insignificanti per chi non ha orecchio per accorgersene: il vibrare dello scaldabagno al passaggio di un autobus nella via, o il tintinnio dei vetri delle finestre "to the sound of the world beyond" (Carson 2019, 84). Al suono del mondo al di là del vetro della finestra, metafora della soglia ultima – la finestra come cornice della vita fuori è un tema ricorrente di tutta la raccolta – fa eco all'inizio il ticchettio della valvola aortica artificiale che gli riporta alla mente i colori esaltanti dell' "Artist's Garden at Vétheuil" di Claude Monet:

[16] Oltre alle numerose raccolte di poesie, Carson ha pubblicato un volume autobiografico (Carson 1997), una silloge di sonetti tradotti da Rimbaud, Baudelaire e Mallarmé (Carson 1998a), un volume di divagazioni fantastiche intorno a una messe di letture (Carson 2000), un romanzo incentrato sul ritratto degli Arnolfini di Van Eyck (Carson 2001), nonché le citate traduzioni da Dante (Dante Alighieri 2002), Brian Merriman, (Carson 2005) e dell'antico poema epico irlandese *The Táin* (Carson 2007). Per una bibliografia completa delle opere di Carson si vedano la bibliografia in calce a questo contributo nonché Alexander 2010, 216-217.

> Today I thought I'd just take a lie-down, and drift. So here I am
> Listening to the tick of my mechanical aortic valve – overhearing, rather, the way
>
> It flits in and out of consciousness. It's a wonder what goes on below the threshold.
> It's quiet up here, just the muted swoosh of the cars on the Antrim Road. (Carson 2019, 9)

Il tema della fine prossima chiude la stessa poesia con il riferimento al giorno del passaggio all'ora legale quando le giornate si allungano e la brevità del tempo rimasto è ironicamente contrapposta alla durata della matita con cui si sta scrivendo:

> It's beautiful weather, the 30th of March, and tomorrow the clocks go forward.
> How strange it is to be lying here listening to whatever it is going on.
> The days are getting longer now, however many of them I have left.
> And the pencil I am writing with, old as it is, will easily outlast their end. (Carson 2019, 34)

Queste brevi citazioni sono un compendio sufficiente per apprezzare la qualità della raccolta: importanza del suono, essenziale per un musicista come Carson, ironia che capovolge l'ovvietà del mondo e senso del valore assoluto dell'istante.

Mai come in questo caso il lettore è contemporaneamente pubblico e testimone dell'atto fisico della scrittura, soggetto accanto al poeta e non oggetto destinatario immobile e passivo. Quello di cui Carson si è spesso lamentato è la qualità fredda, accademica della poesia scritta sulla pagina, cui ha contrapposto la poesia della tradizione gaelica che era orale e perciò nasceva come atto performativo giustificato dalla presenza di una *audience* reattiva.

In questo caso l'Io poetante è in costante rapporto con un Tu di eguale importanza e questa ascoltatrice dialogante è l'amata Deirdre che lo accompagna nel percorso quotidiano verso lo Antrim Medical Centre e al ritorno lungo il Waterworks Park verso la loro casa di Glandore Avenue. Senza dubbio questa raccolta è un manuale d'amore, di come l'amore sia condivisione di attimi quotidiani, di comuni ricordi e di emozioni condivise in un insostituibile "ora", "which you are viewing now, which I have written only now." (Carson 2019, 34).

La scelta di comporre una serie di poesie ecfrastiche cioè basate sulla descrizione/ interpretazione di opere d'arte visiva nasce in Carson da una indubbia ammirazione per Keats e per la sua *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, ma anche da un interesse che lo ha accompagnato negli anni per la pittura come nel romanzo *Shamrock Tea* che ruota intorno al ritratto dei coniugi Arnolfini di Jan van Eyck nella National Gallery di Londra.

Della sua insaziabile curiosità per qualsiasi storia/aneddoto/fantasia/divagazione è testimonianza un'opera difficilmente catalogabile come *Fishing for Amber*, un *pastiche* in cui le storie più diverse sono elencate secondo le lettere dell'alfabeto come in una Wunderkammer mentale, "It was long ago, and long ago it was; and if I'd been there, I wouldn't be here now; and then was now, I'd be an old storyteller, whose story might have been improved by time, could he remember it" (Carson 200, 1).

Anche in *Still Life* il poeta mette insieme una virtuale galleria mentale in cui sono raccolti quadri visti nei musei, ma più spesso spiati in ingrandimenti sullo schermo del computer nei tour virtuali proposti, oppure acquistati come regalo per il compleanno della moglie e che per anni sono stati appesi nella loro camera da letto (Angela Hackett, *Lemons on a Moorish Plate*) o opere di amici pittori a cui chiedere notizia delle tecniche adottate (Jeffrey Morgan, *Hare Bowl*). Gli antichi maestri – Velasquez, Patinir, Canaletto, Constable e l'amatissimo Poussin – sono giustapposti a Monet, Cezanne, Caillebotte fino ai contemporanei Basil Blackshaw e

Yves Klein. Ci sono riferimenti ad altri pittori le cui tecniche lo hanno incuriosito o a critici più o meno illustri.

Nella prima poesia qui proposta in traduzione la coppia si avvia verso il centro medico e si accorge che è stato aperto un cantiere edile dove due anni prima avevano visto un cardellino su un cardo. Al ritorno si chiederanno cosa sarà costruito in quel luogo, un edificio che uno dei due non potrà vedere. Il trascorrere del tempo e il suo ineluttabile procedere è il tema centrale, metamorfosi e scomparsa di cose come la mattonatura che verrà nascosta dal nuovo edificio o le pagine di giornale su cui dipingono direttamente artisti come Tony Swain e Julie Mehretu esposti entrambi alla Biennale, fino a raggiungere ciò che quelle pagine a stampa raggrinzite "vogliono diventare". Dalla Venezia della Biennale alla Venezia rappresentata da Canaletto nel "Cortile dello scalpellino", un'opera che gli ricorda gli amati Fiamminghi, i pittori del dettaglio, dello spazio della vita quotidiana. E infatti è un dettaglio che lo affascina: nel quadro troneggia il campanile di Santa Maria della Carità come doveva essere nel 1725 e che però era caduto il 17 marzo di vent'anni dopo, nel 1744, e mai più ricostruito. È il suono di quel campanile che "proclama il tempo giusto" per tutti coloro che abitano lo spazio del quadro, che dunque è ancora "still life", quando la vita e il suono di quelle campane sono scomparsi da un ventennio .

La seduta di chemioterapia si collega al pittore italiano attraverso l'associazione mentale suggerita da una sorta di etimologia/assonanza – "*cannula*, *Canaletto*". La materia di cui è fatto il quadro, i colori coi loro nomi tecnici producono l'effetto finale in cui si fondono il transeunte e l'eterno: "Tutto infuso di tempo e di polvere di marmo!"

Il pittore classicista francese Nicolas Poussin, maestro di paesaggi in cui le rocce si arricchiscono di templi sotto cieli di cirri, il tutto abitato da una folla di minuscole creature, è senza dubbio molto apprezzato da Carson. Il dettaglio, il particolare attrae la sua attenzione. Il nome del francese ritorna più volte nella raccolta.

La ragione principale della scelta della seconda poesia proposta, "Paesaggio con le ceneri di Focione", è nell'avvio: una matita d'epoca, una Waterman del 1931 con cui Carson finalmente torna a scrivere, dopo il blocco creativo di quattro anni che – nonostante o a causa della diagnosi del male inesorabile – quella piccola cosa, "ancora bella a vedersi [...] femminile [che] si adatta bene alla mano", è riuscita a sciogliere. Le due poesie scelte sono collegate anche dall'itinerario seguito dalla coppia nel ritorno a casa dall'ambulatorio dove viene somministrata la chemio lungo la Hopefield Avenue e il Waterworks Park.

Tutta la poesia ricorda una tecnica pseudo-cinematografica, dallo zoom sul dettaglio al campo lungo del paesaggio e ritorno. Infatti il quadro rappresenta un paesaggio con le ceneri di Focione, cioè dell'onesto ateniese ingiustamente condannato a bere la cicuta e il cui cadavere è stato destinato ad essere bruciato fuori le mura della città. Dal micro della matita al macro della fila di querce, del tempio, del monte e del vasto cielo e di nuovo lo zoom sugli abitanti della città intenti alle loro occupazioni e poi, divagando, il commento del turista (!) che si rammarica di essere in periferia, fuori le mura, finché l'occhio della camera si concentra sulla piccola figura della vedova china a raccogliere le ceneri dell'amato sposo. Questa poesia si chiude con una considerazione etica – gli abitanti di Megara rimangono indifferenti all'ingiustizia compiuta e al dolore da essa causato, felici nei loro Campi Elisi, immateriali e cioè senza ombra – forse una involontaria eco dantesca. Deidre, la compagna di questo viaggio, nell'immutabile immobilità della vita fissata nell'opera d'arte – "still life" – è fuori dal quadro e da quel Paradiso, calata nel tempo presente come il poeta che "continua a scrivere".

Commiato con Dante

13 ottobre 2005 - Ciaran Carson alla conferenza-*performance* sul tradurre in inglese l'*Inferno* di Dante presso l'Università di Verona. © Davide Benini

Nell'ottobre 2005, in occasione della donazione alla biblioteca dell'Università di Verona di un fondo librario di letteratura e cultura irlandese da parte dell'Ambasciata d'Irlanda in Italia, chi scrive ebbe l'opportunità di invitare Ciaran Carson a tenere una conferenza sulla sua traduzione dell'*Inferno* dantesco per i dottorandi e per i colleghi e gli studenti di anglistica e italianistica. Tra lo stupore dei presenti l'ospite, dopo aver esordito con le prime terzine del poema in italiano, dimostrò suonando il flauto quello che aveva affermato nell'introduzione al suo volume, che cioè c'era una forte affinità tra il genere della *Commedia* e lo *aisling* irlandese, visione oltre la vita, e il ritmo della terza rima e quello della musica tradizionale irlandese. Concetto su cui si soffermò con più precisione nell'intervista concessa a chi scrive, durante quel soggiorno italiano: "When I began translating the *Inferno* I looked at most of the available English translations, and most of them seemed to my ear to be conspicuously lacking in musicality. And, though my Italian wasn't great, it seemed to me that it demanded some kind of music. I'd pace up and down my room reciting Dante's lines aloud, trying to make them scan and sing. And after a while I could hear an Irish tune that seemed to accompany the rhythms of Dante. And it's true that Dante can be sung to an Irish air. It was just a way of making the process of translation more interesting, and more alive to me. Boccaccio mentions that Dante spent a lot of his time with musicians, so the whole thing made some kind of sense" (de Petris 2006, 304).

Si è già detto che l'immaginario dell'antica civiltà gaelica ha trovato la sua rappresentazione iconica più efficace nel segno della spirale, la *gyre* tanto cara a Yeats, tipico esempio della

"appropriazione indebita" compiuta dalla cultura anglo-irlandese. Ma di certo il cammino, lo spostamento di andata e ritorno nello spazio come ricerca e mutamento del sé è uno dei temi ricorrenti di tutta l'opera di Ciaran Carson, che torna con forza in questa ultima collezione. Anche nel descrivere il modo con cui si misurava col verso dantesco egli ricorda: "The deeper I got into the Inferno, the more I walked. Hunting for a rhyme, trying to construe a turn of phrase, I'd leave the desk and take to the road, lines ravelling and unravelling in my mind. Usually, I'd head for the old Belfast Waterworks, a few hundred yards away from where I live. The north end of the Waterworks happens to lie on one of the Belfast's sectarian fault lines" (Carson 2002, xi).

A questo punto nel prendere commiato da Carson, ricordandone sempre la sincerità priva di retorica su qualunque argomento si trovasse ad affrontare, non possiamo non riportare le sue parole sull'intuizione che lo aveva spinto a misurarsi con Dante, la somiglianza tra la cruenta Firenze dei Guelfi e Ghibellini e la sua Belfast dei *Troubles*:

> Situated on a rise above the embankment is the Westland housing estate, a Loyalist enclave which, by a squint of the imagination, you can see as an Italian hill-town. Flags proclaim its allegiance […] Often, a British Army helicopter eye-in-the-sky is stationed overhead.
>
> As I write, I can hear its ratchety interference in the distance; and, not for the first time, I imagine being airborne in the helicopter, like Dante riding on the flying monster Geryon, looking down into the darkness of that place in Hell called Malebolge. (Carson 2002, xi)

Still Life è la raccolta che celebra il ritorno attraverso la memoria: ritorno al long line, necessario a narrare i percorsi labirintici della sua vita nella Belfast degli anni '70 e '80. Il blu luminoso di *IKB79* di Yves Klein, ispirato dal cielo di Hiroshima il 6 Agosto 1945 lo riporta al cielo di Belfast:

> … the buried memory comes back
> Out of the blue as it were. I never know the date, I must look
> for it online. Bloody Friday, 21st July 1972.
> Grainy black-and-white, flickering dismembered shapes
> and shades of things
> […]
> Body count was twice revised, from thirteen to eleven, down to nine.
> The people who had set the bombs apologised in empty language.
> Firemen shovelled into body bags the unspeakable remains of the day. (Carson 2019, 79)

Gli ultimi tre versi più brevi dei precedenti e il cambio di registro in cui il dato di fatto cancella l'emozione sottolineano la rapidità e la brutalità dell'evento.

Carson nell'intervista già ricordata descrive in questo modo la Belfast dei *Troubles* e la confronta con la città dopo il *Good Friday Agreement* del 1998: "There was a lot of smoke about then: Belfast was still a largely industrial city, and I remember especially the smogs which would come every October or so, fogs so thick that you could get pleasurably lost on your way to school. The district I grew up in, the Falls Road, was a labyrinth of terrace houses and ships and pubs and mills and factories: that landscape has now largely been wiped off the map – not only through the Troubles, but as a result of 'redevelopment'. The Falls Road – a mainly Catholic area - runs parallel to the mainly Protestant Shankill Road, and both were connected by many side streets. […] That has all changed now: instead of those connected streets, there is now a "Peace Wall" keeping the two communities apart" (de Petris 2006, 299).

Purtroppo a due anni dalla morte del poeta e al completamento della Brexit con le deleterie conseguenze per l'Irlanda del Nord del controverso accordo tra Regno Unito e Unione Europea, proprio su quel "Peace Wall" sono apparsi in questi giorni i bellicosi graffiti dei Lealisti contro il controllo del flusso commerciale dall'Unione Europea nel Mar d'Irlanda che dovrebbe risparmiare l'istallazione sull'isola di una dogana e dei relativi posti di blocco tra il nord e la Repubblica come sancito nel 1998.

Carson profeticamente aveva così intuito la fragilità di quell'accordo: "If there is peace, it is a very fractious one, and it will take a long time for the communities of Northern Ireland to come to terms with what is meant by peace. There is a great dissatisfaction on the Unionist/ Loyalist side, who feel that their privileges have been taken away from them as a result of the long negotiations of recent years. Whether they are right in thinking so is to some extent immaterial, since real peace will only come about when they come to think that everyone is entitled to equal privilege. Apart from that, life is certainly better than it was, say, in the 1980s. and there is cautious optimism" (de Petris 2006, 298).

Quell'ottimismo si è rivelato di breve respiro e forse già senza futuro.

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Ireland of the Minds

edited by
by Sven Kretzschmar

Studi Irlandesi
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Ireland of the Minds. A Somewhat Personal Introduction

Sven Kretzschmar

Ireland of the Minds started the way any anthology should start: on a train in Italy, from where Fiorenzo Fantaccini contacted me to ask would I be interested to contribute a few poems of mine for the next issue of *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*. The idea quickly developed into a mini anthology which I was supposed to edit – and I happily agreed. As we were already short in time when all of this happened, a decision was made against an open call and I reached out to poets I know personally. An open call for submissions might have been the preferrable option, not least as it would have opened up the possibility of catching a greater diversity and wider range of literary voices writing about the island of Ireland, yet under the given circumstances such an approach would have come with the risk of receiving hundreds of poetry submissions. Given the timely constraints, I eventually decided against it to be able to treat the incoming contributions from my fellow poets with the respect and attention they deserve.

None of the contributors is originally from Ireland; some have made the island their permanent home, some others, like myself, have only lived there for a while and have since moved on to other countries. What unites us is that we all write about Ireland in one way or another – and that is what the poems gathered in here serve to show. Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe starts us off with her fine adaptation of the old Ulster myth of Mess Búachalla, a poem that almost dances with alliterative sounds and sheds a new light on a familiar story. Sound is what keeps us company in the second poem, by Niki Stammwitz, although scene and content change completely, bringing us from ancient tale to the contemporary wildness of Connemara landscapes where images of the bodies of human and land are merged. From there, we leap down to Cork where Adam Wyeth introduces us to what may or may not be military happenings and to "machine gun fire […] charging in every direction". With "The Sea Around Us", Dominic Behan devoted an entire song to underline that Ireland is surrounded by water; it is thus no surprise that one

of the poems in here is set at a beach, namely Evgeny Shtorn's "Cat-Cloud", which brilliantly features the subtle (and, at times, not so subtle) humour Irish writers are often cherished for. It is heartening to see this tradition, if one may call it that, carried on by ever new writers, and that Irish humour, if there is something as genuine as that, is understandable beyond the watery borders of the Emerald Isle and can so easily and elegantly be picked up by writers from elsewhere who have come to make a new life for themselves in Ireland. The next poem we are to take delight in is Kara Knickerbocker's ode to the Black Pool – or Duibhlinn, as the Celts called Dublin. It is a romantic poem, not a romanticising one, capturing perfectly what both Dubliners and guests of all kinds will experience every now and again when they take a gander at the city centre, possibly while going to one of the places there that sell certain beverages many a Dublin street song has been written about.

Make no mistake, however, the Irish capital is not only brimming with joy and pleasure. It has unpleasant and uneasy sides too as Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi reminds us in her imminent and timely prose poem on the terrible death of George Nkencho on 30 December 2020. It is a poem on the "epidemic called Racism" many migrants in Ireland are familiar with. Tourists, particularly white or white-passing ones, might often be greeted with a warm *céad míle fáilte*, yet those who come to live in Ireland permanently, regularly see themselves faced with the same overt and covert prejudices and ill will as in other countries subsumable under the socio-geographical term "Western culture". For both people working in academia and in the arts it should be of great interest to not only continuously remind ourselves of the severe threats and problems posed by racism and, for that matter, misogynism, antisemitism and other forms of misanthropy. We are well-advised to teach our students about all of the above as it will help to make a difference already in the near future when they go to study or work abroad for their credit points, or even seek permanent jobs outside their home countries – whether their destination will be Ireland or not.

Our poetic journey continues with a poem by Brazilian-born poet and translator Rafael Mendes. He has us stay in Dublin for a little longer, which allows us a short glimpse at the "intimate puzzles" the poet finds on public transport. This poem reminds us that one does not need to have been raised in a certain place to be able to become a chronicler of it, if only for the length of a morning's tram ride. The poem following Rafael's is my own contribution taking us to Belfield. It has a double Irish background, so to say: for one thing, it was written in a workshop facilitated by Galway poet Kevin Higgins, one of Ireland's sharpest satirists. What is more, it tries to capture the manifold of impressions I made as post-graduate student in University College Dublin's School of Philosophy. In a condensed way, I have tried to capture some of the challenges young academics and junior researchers in Ireland have to face, namely being "slaves / of external funds and short-term contracts". It is much to my regret to hear and read over and again that situation, at least at UCD, has not significantly improved since the time I left.

In "Two Worlds", Polina Cosgrave relates what is going on outside her door to the outside of other places. A significant change happens "In another world" – a line that might bring to memory Derek Mahon's renowned "Elsewhere" switch in *The Snow Party*. What Mahon achieves with one word Cosgrave achieves with three. Do not let this lead you to believe that her turning point is any weaker; it is, at least in my opinion, of comparable strength as it transports readers not only to a different geographical setting, but decidedly and explicitly to a different world – maybe to the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States or to crowds taking to Belarussian streets to demand democracy and the end of police brutality. But see for yourself what you will find in Polina's poem and, of course, in the poems of the other contributors.

The second to last poem comes from Susan Millar DuMars, a US-born poet and short story writer. In it she catches excellently the lonesomeness many migrants have experienced and are experiencing, if only between whiles, in the land of the one hundred thousand welcomes. The closing point of this mini anthology is marked quite suitably by Eva Michely's "When I Leave Northern Ireland", a piece taking inspiration from Colette Bryce's trademark poem "When I Land in Northern Ireland". Eva's is as personal and, being aware of the literary connectedness with the UK part of the island, I delight in seeing her call Northern Ireland, "here"; for me, personally, it is a wonderful reminder of Glenn Patterson's *Here's Me Here* – and the inscription he wrote into my copy of that book when he was visiting Saarland University in Saarbrücken during his Irish Itinerary reading tour of Germany. Maybe it is anecdotes like this one which remind us that Ireland is known as a place of emigration; it is good to see it has broadened its portfolio to be a place of immigration too – be it through people arriving there in search of a permanent home or people who, like myself and, quite likely, many others, come to live there only for a while, and, upon leaving, make Ireland a home of the minds.

In 2019, I had the good fortune of being included in the *Writing Home: The 'New Irish' Poets* anthology by Dedalus Press. Two years on, it is a great delight to be able to include some of my fellow "writing homers" in *Ireland of the Minds* – and to even be able to reach out, to go beyond that scope by working with further poets, some of them long since established, some others at the very beginning of their literary development. I hesitate to use the word career as it sounds so very business-like, and we all know, for most of us there is not enough money in literature, particularly in poetry, to call it a business. Be that as it may, it is my firm hope that the readers of this mini anthology will enjoy the poems as much as I did, and as much as I enjoyed working with those wonderful humans I am proud to call fellow poets. Maybe in time we will see them being added to the canon of Irish literature, which, by extension, would then include literature *from* Ireland and literature *about* Ireland. And that is what I take *Ireland of the Minds* to mean: a perception of a place shaped by the people living there as well as by people not living there, people from the past who, through whatever historical effects, influence the contemporary perception of the place, as well as people of the present, who can connect a place's histories and stories with the ways that place reveals itself to them in the here and now. In that regard, *Ireland of the Minds* might serve as a steppingstone to discover further poems (and prose texts) by the authors gathered together below, and as an incentive to get immersed in even more contemporary writing from and about the island of Ireland to participate in more perspectives and thus, maybe – hopefully – to get a fuller picture of the many meanings the word *Ireland* might be loaded with.

6 April 2021
Schwalbach, Germany

"Morning"
after Mess Búachalla

Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe

to say the boy was born of forbidden
tryst given to desire to spill the story
of the clandestine would be blasphemy
so she keeps this to herself for what
could be greater than being believed?

to recall how the dark creature glided
through the skylight, monstrous, bloody
changeling, to confide she was repulsed
yet secretly slain by the serene speckled
eyes to tell of how it consumed her then

to divulge how it held her down, heavy
rough claw spidered slant boned blades
sharp billed starling, cutting into flesh,
to smile as the piercing mouth drew red
near the trapped birds of her collarbones

to admit how she adored the bestial avian
body, feathers dry and thrashing inside her
throat, to shout! for pleasure, to sing this
rapture of arousal: how she fashioned life
from a singular rib — hollow, light as air.

"Where I Am at Home"

Niki Stammwitz

The soil's songs muted by concrete; dandelions breathe
Heavily through dusty cracks in the pavement,
Their lungs laden with the burden of convenience.

Running uphill inside a ribcage clothed in bark, I pray
Falling leaves, dry rasping rustle do not predict
A burst of yellow-brown pulmonary alveoli.

I chase my breath to the top, then stop.
On the plain, a gust of memory swirls me back in time:

Soft melodies rise from soggy patches of wind-combed,
Sea-seasoned grass like the firm air of a flutist;
Grey clouds and white spray join in to tap-dance me closer to the cliff;
Eyes, ears fiddled into paralysis; solely
My lungs fill with salty swathes of boundless blue.

Feverish violins push me to the ground, make me smell the jig, taste
Portach móna; lichens weave me into the garland skirting sheep pastures
As a crystal voice of a woman caresses my hair and that of
My grass sisters, bursts forward its unabashed Celtic syllables,
Each one ploughing over the land, the cliffs, enlarging its realm
Like the first breath of a newborn.

I fill my lungs with a gasp of Connemara symphony,
Prepared to hold it for a while.

"A Million Tanks in Cork"

Adam Wyeth

When I first heard it, collecting
my change, I imagined an army
of truculent, armoured vehicles
elbowing down Carey's lane,

flattening passers-by like an end-
is-nigh, apocalyptic movie. The image
blew up like a city fire in my mind.
Perhaps it was an Irish curse,

an innate aversion to my right angled
accent buffeting against the soft curves
of their rain-washed burrs.
Till I noticed everyone shooting

the breeze with it for the smallest
exchange: a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine,
each one passing it on like the Eucharist
or a virus that had got out of hand;

then saw it for what it was: a fusillade
of gratitude, an inquisition of appreciation,
the machine gun fire of obligation
charging in every direction.

"Cat-Cloud"

Evgeny Shtorn

I was sitting
on the beach
the other day,
the sky was almost totally clear,
but a small cloud hid the sun.

I thought that this cloud
should be called 'cat-cloud',
as it sits
precisely
in the only spot
where it is in the way,
and, being so small,
it is able to hide the sun.

"How I Knew You, Dublin"

Kara Knickerbocker

before you wore the slit high dress,
showed the length of your curved streets,
grit of your teeth in the east.

When you worked into dawn
until the Liffey flowed out your mouth
like breath in peaceful sleep.

I knew you steady as pulsed music
from Grafton's strong heart
lifting into the loud night,

after these soles stuck
like spilled pints of Guinness
to beer-soaked wooden floorboards.

I knew you at once,
like St. Patrick's spire face
through the afternoon clouds,

or when I saw Stephen's
Green in your eyes,
and I can't, could never
unknow you now—

"Exile"

Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi

After a year-long exile to the nooks and crannies of our homes, we find ourselves still stranded in the island of our abodes, condemned to more days of glitchy video calls, an unhealthy pick-and-mix of our social media feeds and news-cycle pills – a daily dose of COVID death-updates. What we do know is we are living with an invisible virus in our midst, capable of wiping out our entire species. Nonetheless, we are grateful for loved ones being safe and sound, just a phone call away, for being able to transform our bedrooms into workshops at the touch of a button. Thankful for open fields and cold air, for well-tended gardens and wildflowers sprouting by the seaside.

While we ached for brighter days, an old foe came calling in May. Another epidemic called Racism had grown wings and taken flight across the Western world, migrating from Minneapolis to a Dublin suburb. In outrage, we took to the streets to protest, leaving our doors unguarded as an animal called grief wandered into our homes reeking of decades of systemic oppression. Anyone who saw us must have thought we were dancing[1]. Our flailing arms and upturned faces, the way we wield our voices like weapons and swing our Black Lives Matter banners, sweat-drenched, teeth gritted with determination, and our eyes gleaming with hope for a better future. Were we not almost buried alive – as we burrowed deeper into the dirt – desperate to unearth a miracle, to make wine from the bitter fruits of a near-barren year?

Grief is a ravenous animal, rabid and roaming around a parched wasteland; the poet is a fly perched on the tail of that wild, wounded thing. How could they understand our dilemma? Why we hesitated, misty-eyed as the flames clawed at our curved backs, curious to glimpse once more the red glow of many days past and passing swiftly. We waited, hovering over the world as we've known it, and watched as it was levelled by fire and brimstone. And standing there, with the old world burning to our rear, we clutch each other's calloused hands and point our eyes at the glorious gloaming of a new dawn. The verdant valleys glistening with morning dew, the wind kissing our cheek, welcoming us with a familiar song sweet as a nursery rhyme, or perhaps an ancient battle cry.

[1] Line adapted from Wisława Szymborska-Włodek's (1923-2012) poem, "Lot's Wife".

"Luas Return Ticket"

Rafael Mendes

Neither sign of sun nor cold.
Seagulls clocking the roster,
berries tapping the neighbour's wall,
news of yet another hopeful day.

"Mom is cold", "What a little nice
dog you have", "Radio nova one hundred",
sounds of the maturing day still finding
its bellybutton, forming the syllabus
of its twenty-four hours life.

Then rain and cold,
spots of dirt marking our boots,
cold hands holding cups of tea
as if it was a prayer for a dead goddess.

Now the clean sky's floor birthing
a shy sun not spreading its arms,
dank coats hanging in our chairs,
crippled umbrellas packed in the bin.

A return ticket wasted at the journey's end,
pilled over other schedules, blood tests,
half chocolate bar, orange powered by Lucozade,
ultimately — pieces of intimate puzzles.

“Philosophy of Instead”
after Charles Baudelaire

Sven Kretzschmar

Read Philosophy, relentlessly.
There is no point, except: everything’s matter
in flux. Panta rhei is possible
only in time. If you would not feel

the past speed of A- and B-Series crush you
between clock-face, present and hand –
philosophise, recklessly.
The ethics

of prospective responsibility, phenomenology
of jet lags. A Philosophy of Instead.
And if sometimes, on the shelves of a library,
or in a seminar room overlooking the campus

green, or in the self-chosen solitude
of a high-profile symposium, you awaken
and find terminology-packed language
half or entirely cryptic, ask of entities,

universals, of a coffee break, of tenure-tracks,
or at least concluding drinks,
or of a Hegelian synthesis of any of the former,
ask of all the flies, of all that is

yet unspoken. Ask what happiness is.
And entities and language and drinks
and G.W.F. will answer you:
“Happiness is to read philosophy. Read Philosophy,

if you would not be the martyred slaves
of external funds and short-term contracts;
Philosophise regardless. With Epicurus,
with Marquard or Förster, as you please.”

"Two Worlds"

Polina Cosgrave

Deserted town
outside my door –
a quiet afternoon.
Phantom whispers
in the playground,
sun shining for no one but me.
A frozen bag of dog shit
but no dogs
outside my door.
They only howl at night,
that's how I know they live around.
No kids on bicycles,
no teenage girls
smoking in the lane,
chirping like little birds.
No seagulls arguing
outside my door
looking for some treats,
always ready to take off.
Light is eating my eyes out
with the big spoon of its omnipresence
outside my door.
Wind sucking on my breath.
In another world
people are marching
shoulder to shoulder in a pandemic.
I know some faces:
I was married to that man,
and all these wrinkles on his forehead are new;
that woman's lips used to move in such a way
I almost believed she loved me back.
Her features distorted now.
I watch thousands being synchronized,
they keep up with each other's grief.
The air full of lies
outside their doors.
This weather
turns their faces inside out, or maybe
the batons of police do.
They march because there is no peace
outside their doors,
inside their doors.
Detuned music of the future
calls them to the streets
to break the bones of yesterday.
For everything is stolen
including
their doors.
So they go out to kiss each other
and play soccer
with policemen's helmets.
Meanwhile,
my life is lying on the crossroads
with its skirt hiked up.

"Six O'clock in Galway"

Susan Millar DuMars

An old woman, picked clean,
whispers in the washroom
of Ceannt Station.
A man at the bus stop asks if
I am lonely.
His red t-shirt strains against
his saggy belly.
We are far from home, he says.
I'm Pakistani.
You're from the US, yes? From this
he thinks he knows me.

We're on the lip of Eyre Square, face
into its mouth.
Its beery breath, its twilight sighs.
The Angelus.
My family has disowned me,
the Pakistani says.

The houses on Prospect Hill
kneel like penitents,
picked clean.

"When I Leave Northern Ireland"
after Colette Bryce

Eva Michely

When I leave Northern Ireland I want heavy rain,
the damp in cars and clothes seeping into bones, coming out at bedtime in shivers
through the belly. Want bedsheets and knee socks pulled up high; the high drama of water
hitting window hard.
Great drying and brave skies are for another day. I wish the weather would oblige me
when leaving here behind.

What is it brings you here some ask and I go on (and on) about writing, books and friends.
(Ever harder, the full truth.) I don't mention glacial wedges and puddles of bog water nor
hills rising above street level and heavy tarmac kissed by rain. I do not say here
strikes a chord with me that is not touched upon elsewhere. I do not say I
bring my love, my loneliness,
no less.

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Three Poems

Elaine Gaston

As a student, in the very early 1980s, I lived in Buenos Aires in order to immerse myself in Spanish or 'Castellano' as it was called at the time in Argentina. I was studying French and Spanish and one of my special subjects was Latin American literature of the twentieth century. This was an optional year where I could live and work in a relevant country. While I lived in Buenos Aires I taught English and drama. I was studying Borges and someone told me that sometimes, if you were a student and rang on his apartment, he might invite you up. They told me where the apartment was. I was fascinated.

I was also studying Neruda along with many other authors from throughout Latin America. The course was still fairly new and I don't recall one single woman on the bibliography of that particular reading list for us to choose from.

In Ireland, still, when people say "I went to America" they invariably mean USA. This lazy shorthand, which swallows Central and South America's claim to the word "America", is explored in the poem "After Muldoon" within the wider context of the last US president's term when the culture of fake news became prevalent.

I also include the poem "Search" referencing the Irish placenames and townlands where I grew up. While local people often continue to use townland names, the names themselves were replaced by numbered post-codes in the 1970s for official purposes. Hence the references to BT53 in the poem. In addition to replacing the townland names with numbers, much of the actual physical landscape of the townlands was physically lost recently when replaced by roads and construction.

"Search"

Say it again.
Carrowreagh.

The townland of Carrowreagh
In the parish of Drumtullagh
In the union of Ballycastle
In the Barony of Cary
In the County of Antrim
In the Province of Ulster
In the country of Ireland.

Look again.
Carrowreagh.

Ballinlea, *search,*
Carrowreagh, *search,*
Croshan, *search,*
Drumtullagh, *search,*
Kilmoyle, *search,*
Drumnaheigh, *search,*
Drumtullagh, *search,*
Lisnagunogue, *search,*
Lisnagat, *search,*
Islands of Carnmoon, *search*,
Islandmacallion, *search*,
Islandboy, *search,*
Templeplastra, *search,*
Templeogue, *search,*
Cullyrammer, *search,*
Killyrammer, *search,*
Kilmahammogue, *search,*
Lisbelnagroagh Mór, *search,*
Lisbelnagroagh Beg, *search,*
Croagh Mór, *search,*
Croagh Beg, *search.*

The results cannot be found.
For all of these
try BT53.
For more,
try BT54.

The back field, *search*
The top field, *search*
The meadow field, *search*

The water meadows, *search*
The hay field, *search*
The potato field, *search*
The barley field, *search*
The rushy field, *search*
The stony field, *search*
The green field, *search*
The yellow field, *search*
The tilled field, *search*

The hilly field, *search*
The river field, *search*
The sheugh field, *search*
The white field, *search*
The mill field, *search*
The pasture field, *search*
The fallow field, *search*
The ploughed field, *search*
The corner field, *search*
The lower field, *search.*

The results cannot be found.
Did you mean the motorway?

Uncle Andy's field.
Sayers's Barn.
That lovely bit of bog at the Frosses.
Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh.

If the page cannot be found
please check the deletion log
and click on the link:
www.why was the page deleted?

Say it again:
Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh.

"After Muldoon"

"América no invoco tu nombre en vano"
Pablo Neruda

For Ulster read Ulcer
For father read feather
For ladder read leather
For islands of Carnmoon read islands in the moon

For appointment read disappointment
For discretion read discrepancy
For tidy read redd
For disorganised read throughother
For mess read hames
For stubborn read thran
For sly read sleekit

For preserve read perverse
For reserved read reverse
For conserve read converse
For Wexford read Loch Garman
For field read filed
For Uncle Andy's field read roundabout
For Sayers's barn read motorway
For bend in the river read culvert
For culvert read concrete
For eels read_
For corncrake read_
For curlew read_
For bluebell read_

For 1984 read 2017
For upright read upside down
For test-case read text-book
For American read North American
For tweet read twit
For 2 + 2 read 5
For fact read fiction
for read read read
for América read Neruda.

"Meeting Borges"

Feels like a dream
in the labyrinths of my mind
as I walk the grid
of streets in the centre
of Buenos Aires. *Porteña.*
The flat above the bookshop.
The doorbell. *Sube.*

Venetian blinds in the half-light,
books, a wooden desk,
leather armchair. *Estoy estudiante.*
Reading Shakespeare. His signature
on the Complete Works and *La Cifra*.
The magic code.

Years later I wake up
in the centre of Belfast
at a door, a code, an old library.
Subo.

Stacks of books,
narrow corridors,
a journal.
I open it at the predicted page
his poems in translation,
the deciphered code.

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Poems

John Ennis and Giovanni Mangiante

John Ennis

"Boy Among Sparrows"

He recalls Tony's hay benchknife that
carved halfmoons and a white-beamed
sun over wintry boughs on a hurley Sunday
cousin Michael did not come.

They were the days of family and grain
farms, of oats tall in the stem lodged by
a rogue shower, the end of August when
the first gale blew, when crows and pigeons
glided down in flocks.

We children were dispersed to scatter them.
Each midland house with its own tilled ripe
cornfields, grain scattered freely in yards of
rhode-island red and sparrow; grain fed to
pigs and calves and ground

in barns where the new electric grinder
spread a fine white flour dust even out the
door. Contesting the troughs with turkeys,
ducks and geese, untameable, domestic, close
and yet distant,

the sparrows held assemblage over him,
as a child in the yard, up in the great elm.
Sparrows battling with white wyandottes
for the evening victuals. Their cheeky skulls
are long fallen into nettles,
mosses of the dyke, covered in the ground

like uncles, fathers, mothers, freckled cousins
let loose in the back meadows where sparrows
of the air rose up for us in flocks. Sparrows
no strangers then in blue changeable skies.

. . . and the young calf dying

I do not recall what malady left him prostrate
kicking, made him bawl so. It happened all the
time. Half a century before, children fell down
in swathes from diphtheria. Staring at us, through
us, we cradled his head with an armful of fresh straw.

Whether fattened animal or old man, Westmeath
was a county where death called like the postman . . .

. . . After supper we buried you, sorrowing one to
the other, for you never bothered sheep.

All the sunlit afternoon you lay, my brothers'
collie, by the garden hedge, but out in the south
-facing river field, your white teeth bared in little
ivories for your tongue, glossy bluebottles tinkling

one open almond eye; late August, round then,
for sweet pippins amid magpies up in the tall
apple trees ripened red and unseen,
the orchard side of the hedge with the bitter crab,
your bushy tail rigid, your thin legs too. Corn was
on the noisy mind of reaper and binder gold barley
bearding me like an older brother. And I who loved
to raise up my two arms cross them

round your ruff neck, rub your slender nose that
tapered, touch the black-tipped ears that looked
forward hurried past you in the hot sun. Bluebottles
lit all over me. Magpies in the apples cackled for your
other eye and I was so afraid in my heart, of the dead . . .

. . . Always on the dusty summer roads, after
dinnertime when the men had left, they'd
call at the kitchen door. Males in flight, they
knew the short-cuts parish to parish. Said little.
Sometimes word travelled

(de-frocked and priest, another lost his farm
in poker). Sussed out haysheds for a doss, they

sat at the table for a bite of bread. Once sawed
a whole pan loaf for one till our eyes met over
first names.

Something wrapped for them, a little pep then
in their step, their stained windy greatcoats filling
out like Suibhne's wings, they tramped the roads
to put down some other house miles away where
they might expect the same no questions asked.
. . . that whirr-whirr-whirr of wing . . .
that high-pitched honking in the sky passing over,
mostly sideways wild geese like a correct tic on a
copy at school from the northwest south south-east
across November trees gone bare.

In their long necks a virility of ice-ridden times, a
promise of snow for us in their grown-up plaints.
Their wings like the wings of ballet dancers grown
dancers' wings in the now music-less heavens, but
we heard them on their November skies

to the green sloblands, no nuisance to cattle or sheep
-intense acres to peck and peck long intervals within
ease of flight and the sea. At school, History caned our
arms and legs in short pants with dates old finger-gnarled
Mammy Burke said were important

and she breathless in her chair by the fire.

Neighbour met neighbour stopped on the road,
their legs crooked over the bars of bikes looking
up too late to the empty heavens. As kids we wished
them like foreign cousins back till they were specks
lost on the sun's horizon:
Look at them, look at them, we cried . . .

. . . You, high up, stretching to each fruited twig,

a rising October moon east of our damson tree
a nip, then, in the freshening east wind from
Murtagh's, you, shirt-sleeved, up the branches
after the tartiest

your fingers nimble as talons closing on the
velvet harvest, gathering the last of the damsons
the indigo sky at your back. Balanced on a hook
from a trusty bough the galvanized pail filled, or
nearly so, with tangy fruit

goodly-sized and wild; you reached out to whet
your tongue, Tony, spit out the stone. A pale and
placid midland moon rose higher with a blackbird
cry. With ease of limb you lay horizontal on the
boughs you loved,

on branches you could depend on to gather your
knees round; lowered a full bucket to a boy in corduroy.

"Hussein Salem"

the ice-cream man, shot in the spine, hundreds of metres from the Gazan boundary fence
14 May 2018

If you need flowers go search the Burrens of the Dead.
Here there's only hot rocky acre after acre and a wall
and the dead and profligate dying who will never scale
it. As to what flavours he had, we have no word.
Probably white, lots of it, plain's your only man.
And as to your delicate posies of remembrance
admire them elsewhere sprung from dry turds

of verse. But *he* had a name this middle-aged ice cream man falling—
Hussein Salem Abu Uwaida —amid an enormous sadness in the eyes of kids
at his side, lowering their silly sling-shots a minute for a lick.
Remember Hussein Salem, you killers of the ice-cream man,
for across the endless aeons to come we might need him
calling, reaching over for just one lick. But Hussein Salem's
too far.
Way too far off.
No reaching him.
We're too late.

“On Meeting John Ennis”

Giovanni Mangiante

I met Professor John Ennis, native of Westmeath (1944), through social media, and we quickly began a pleasant correspondence by e-mail. Being the solitary man that I am, I always find myself looking forward to receiving a new message from John. There is great value in the experience and wisdom John has been imparting with me throughout our time talking.

“When editing, edit in empathy with the self that first wrote the piece” says John, “Keep the creative, intuitive artist a few steps in front of the self-critical poet” (private correspondence with John Ennis 2021).

With 21 poetry collections (1976-2020) to date, a former board member and editor of *Poetry Ireland*, John earns a place as a powerhouse of Irish literature. If you don’t think so just ask 1995 Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney. An Honorary Doctorate and Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award awardee, Professor Ennis, I hope, forgives all of the run-on sentences and absentee/misplaced commas in my work.

On the matter of rejection letters, John writes: “… at worst they can say ‘Sorry’, then write your next poem on the rejection slip” (private correspondence with John Ennis 2021). Which brings to my mind how Stephen King impaled his rejection letters through a nail in the wall, and once the nail no longer supported the weight from the slips, he got a bigger nail. “If you don’t succeed, get a bigger nail”.

John’s poem “Boy Among Sparrows” (2020), a series of fragments edited from larger sequences, takes us through a journey of sorrowful, nostalgic, and hard-hitting imagery – a testament to the passing of time and the fragility of life. The first encounters with death. The first tears for what is never coming back, and a reminder in-between of how unforgiving the times before us were:

> […] Half a century before, children fell down
> in swathes from diphtheria. Staring at us, through
> us, we cradled his head with an armful of fresh straw.
>
> Whether fattened animal or old man, Westmeath
> was a county where death called like the postman . . . (“Boy Among Sparrows”)

In “Hussein Salem” we are met with the tragedy of humankind and its senseless armed conflicts. The piece emanates undertones of anger towards the inability to make those who pull triggers, understand. If we stood in front of the collective-tombstone of the unrightfully fallen, the epitaph would read:

“If you need flowers go search the Burrens of the Dead”.

***

Giovanni Mangiante

“Juxtaposition”

Rum-induced mouth sores plague my mouth
as I throw myself
face down
an abandoned Peruvian avenue.
I still haven’t found where Vallejo
left his footsteps,
but I found out I could leave them too.
So, if askew prints meet your eye on the dusty pavement:
Don’t follow—emptiness awaits at the finish line.
Go break your face on sidewalks in Chiavari instead.
Go looking for an eight-leaf clover
at the bottom
of a sunken Irish ship,
supercharge your coffee with gasoline
and bathe in nitric acid.
But don’t follow—you won’t find me there.
I punched down towards Tartarus
to build a casino at the center of it.

“Childhood Fragment #3”

“Ahí viene El Loco Pancho” would say my father
trying to scare me because I refused to get some shut-eye.
I must have been 4 years old, tucked in bed but restless,
and already showing signs of the 25-year old night-owl
typing this poem at 3:21 in the morning.
“Ahí viene El Loco Pancho, rápido, duérmete para que no entre”.
“El Loco nunca viene” I would say.
My mother then pounded on the front door,
and wide-eyed I wished
I had the power to bury myself down the mattress.
“Te dije que ahí venía El Loco Pancho” said my father.

El Loco wiped out the varnish off the door from knocking.
In Lima, Peru, every child slept on time but me.

Their clever idea fell apart one night (as my father told me)
when El Loco announced himself with his
go-to-sleep knocks,
and after my father cried the so feared, so fatal:
“Ahí viene El Loco Pancho”
I shrugged, and said “El Loco Pancho es mi amigo”.
We all stayed up that night.
There are worms for night-owls to feast on
as well.

"On Looking into Giovanni Mangiante"

John Ennis

> the danger and the beauty of a city
> fire-swallowed in absolute riot:
> the hair-pulling hammering inside your chest
> cracking your ribcage.
> That is poetry. That is writing. That is what it is:
> wanting the world from an empty room.
> (Fragment from "it runs like blood", 2021)

Born in Perú on Patrick's Day 1996 to a Peruvian mother and Italian father, poet Giovanni Mangiante has had his own epic struggles with BPD and Poland Syndrome. Like the *puer aeternus* in Jung's "The Invincibility of the Child" (1990), he has fought and humanised each hand-to-hand, in his poems, like the parental night-time ogre of his childhood, the vagrant *el pobre loco Pancho* killed crossing a busy street.

Already there are fans who steer by Mangiante's star as evidenced by the responses to his poetry. His coping mechanisms in life have also had a knock-on effect on his work as a poet. He has (since 2019) been published in or had his work accepted by some 40 journals. Amazing! Must be some kind of record for discipline and diligence. Prolific Mangiante is, but still his own *il miglior fabbro.* He says he writes best sleep-deprived and edits well rested. Lesser poets do the opposite.

The journals where Mangiante has cut his teeth read like a *Who's Who* of an online publishing world where motley is worn on a subversive, alternative planet, each one a must-read like *Rat's Ass Review*. Humour glints in Mangiante's Dantean eye as he negotiates a youthful Tartarus; he's been down there and back, thankfully for him, and for us, with the "rum-induced mouth sores" to show for it. These days he is in search of a publisher for his first book of poetry.

What first grabbed my attention in Giovanni Mangiante were his poems entitled "Fragments". Fragments like the broken mosaics of Italian antiquity, but utterly, rawly, contemporary:

> scrapping stains
> off of bathroom tiles
> we ripped apart
> the remaining potential
> we had,
> and then we drank
> all night
> to cauterize
> the wound ("incognito youth", 2021)

In *The Waste Land* Eliot writes of shoring his fragments "[…] against his ruins" (1971). Eliot wrote some three pages for the section "Death by Water", but it was Pound, *il miglior fabbro*, who salvaged from them the gleaming pearl of Phlebas the Phoenician. Fragments inform the medieval Spanish *romance*. For Giovanni, his fragments are his building blocks.

Giovanni Mangiante believes writing should never be censored no matter how dark it is "as long as it doesn't aim to harm others"; and this poet's world can be very dark as in "on the brink of madness" (*Death by Punk*, 2021 and *Voices from the Fire*, 2021), "the final glass of whiskey" (*Voices from the Fire*, 2021), "among the debris" (*Open Skies Quarterly*, 2021)[1], yet he can write with exquisite tenderness of his dog Lucy, a rescue from the 2017 El Niño Costero natural disaster in Peru, or of his father in "Just hold on a while longer". One of his favourite movies is Roberto Benigni's *La vita* è *bella.*

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[1] The anthologies *Death by Punk* e *Voices from the Fire* are ebooks published by Dumpster Fire Press; the poem "among the debris" was included in *Open Skies Quarterly*, vol. IV, 2021.

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Recensioni / Reviews

Melania Terrazas Gallego, *Trauma and Identity in Contemporary Irish Culture*, Oxford-Bern-Berlin *et al.*, Peter Lang, 2020, pp. 302. GBP 40. ISBN: 978-1-78997-559-8.

Nowadays, the publication of a new book on Irish Studies seems almost as common as a pint of Guinness served in an Irish pub. Nonetheless, Melania Terrazas's volume *Trauma and Identity in Contemporary Irish Culture* is a fresh draught, a new and indispensable work within the field of Irish Studies where memory, silence and trauma are recreated through the examination of their echoes in historical records, and in cinematographic, literary, and musical production. Of course, the book does share its aims with some others from the Reimagining Ireland series, a collection of critical studies on Ireland's past and present realities, reinterpretations of the territory, Irishness and the Irish people through contemporary lenses. All these volumes are interdisciplinary exercises in the recovery of facts and realities, and their distillation from myths and imagination, through new readings of old events and people that become so necessary in times of the sometimes controversial commemorations of such events. They are deconstructions of the past, reconstructions of the present, and reimagining(s) of the future.

Limits and contrasts are made clear even before opening the current book. The front cover captures the reader's attention with the haunting painting "Crossing Borders" by Emer Martin, a work described by Martin herself as being part of a story of "a metamorphosis and a drama of a metamorphosis into our lives" (n.d.). The staring eyes of a genderless character are emerald-green with shades of reddish orange on a white background, and thus might recall Ireland's flag. The lips are scarlet red and cracked, as if they have been subjected to great ordeals. The sad, petrified face is crossed by three wires; two of these intersect and one runs parallel. This latter wire can be read both figuratively and literary as representing either a turbulent past that witnessed the dismemberment of Ireland into two, or as standing for a troubled present. There is no sign of a time frame, but the blue light colour that completes the portrait might signify a variety of things: to conjure up images of sky and sea, and with this, physical or metaphorical journeys into the depths of the human psyche; the blue colour also conveys serenity, stability, wisdom,

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constancy, but also sadness, stasis, and depression. All these interpretations of the colour symbolism of the painting suit Ireland, and indeed are recollected in one way or another throughout the pages of *Trauma and Identity in Contemporary Irish Culture.*

The volume opens with a preface by Linda Connolly and an introduction by the editor of the compilation, Melania Terrazas Gallego, which together present the thematic structure of the 12 chapters, these divided into five parts. Essays on different cultural manifestations and unpublished, creative pieces of writing, plus an interview about trauma, memory and identity, are symbiotically intermingled. Among other aspects, the chapters present a great array of themes, such as minorities' stories and voices, Irish female emigration, the Great Hunger, the Troubles, the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War, problematic Anglo-Irish relationships, racism, gender inequality, institutional and religious abuse, and domestic violence.

The first part of the volume explores literature and film. In the opening chapter, "From Undoing: Silence and the Challenge of Individual Trauma in John Boyen's *The Heart's Invisible Furies*", Asier Altuna-García de Salazar analyses the complicated dyad of individual-society. The novel provides an account of the life of its main character Cyril Avery, from the moment of his birth out of wedlock in the year 1945, to the 22 May 2015, when same-sex marriage was legalised after a popular vote in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Tangentially, the literary piece tackles undesired pregnancies, the stigmatisation and difficulties of single motherhood, illegal adoptions, and the overburdening power of the Catholic Church. In contrast to accounts of major traumatic events such as the Nazi regime and the Second World War – reminiscences of which appear frequently in the historical tapestry of the novel – Altuna-García de Salazar observes how Boyne here focuses on the individual traumas of both major and minor characters by dissecting identity, masculinity, heterosexuality, and homosexuality. Boyne plays with time and space, and offers a diachronous evolution of traumas alongside economic, social, and political metamorphoses occurring at the turn of the twentieth century, not only in Ireland, but also in Holland and the United States. The novel, then, captures the precarious reality of the homosexual community by illustrating how oppressive power structures impact on the rights of this minority, whose behaviour was considered for centuries to be deviant. Within the framework of a strong patriarchal society, the persecution carried out by the religious authorities, the punishment and criminalisation by the Irish law of homosexuals, as well as the ostracism and vilification they faced in associated issues of child abuse, pornography, and the spread of AIDS, are ubiquitous menaces for men, as the character of Avery recalls. He is constantly in danger throughout his youth and adulthood, and only seems to find some relief and peace at the end of his life. This bildungsroman process is well reflected in the structure and the titles of the book's three parts: "Shame", "Exile" and "Peace", plus the epilogue, "Beyond the harbour on the high seas". In the words of the author of this chapter, the scars of tumultuous episodes and the traumatic individual silence that they occasion seem to heal at a certain moment in Avery's odyssey, "but this does not mean that the violence they bespeak can be easily resolved or erased" (16), since the harm caused by his former experiences is woven into the fabric of his very being and memory. Nonetheless, although painful, remembrance becomes significant in Avery's narration at both the individual and collective levels, because his voice comes to represent other oppressed minorities. This is how memory is transformed into a source for healing and renegotiation of alternative discourses, spaces, identities, and sexualities in contemporary and globalised Ireland.

In the second contribution of the volume, "Trauma and Irish Female Migration through Literature and Ethnography", María Amor Barros-del Río complements current studies on Irish female migration (Nolan 1989; O'Sullivan 1997; Walter 2002; Gray 2004; MacPherson

and Hickman 2014) by addressing the works of Edna O'Brien, Mary Costello, Sebastian Barry, and Colm Tóibín in light of official ethnographic records, this as a means of exploring memories of trauma before, during and after the departure of those involved in such processes. Barros-del Río mentions here one of the most tragic, calamitous, and grievous experiences of Ireland's history, the Famine (1845-1852). The haemorrhaging of the population, with widespread emigration to the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and Canada is just one of the direct consequences of the Great Famine. The demographic changes experienced by Ireland during the nineteenth century, as the author explains, were not limited to this outflow of its population; the impact also led to a domino effect at home, one that had strong repercussions in the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres. Covering a variety of issues, this chapter illustrates how the post-Famine period constituted a backlash in the position of Irish women (Horgan 2001), in the sense that the decades that followed the Famine saw the consolidation of the power of the Catholic Church, a further erosion of Irish women's rights, with women increasingly equated to both Mother Ireland and their biological functions, a rigid stereotyping that further limited women's life experiences to the private sphere. According to Barros-del Río, between the Act of Union of 1800 and the independence of the Republic, 4 million women, most of them young and unmarried, left the island (38). Despite these large numbers, emigration is one of those issues where the historical erasure of Irish women persists, and where "[their] experiences are peripheral or completely ignored in many general accounts of migration and the Irish diaspora" (Redmond 2018, 2-3). Although the title, the abstract, and the first part of this contribution refer to a general framework of Irish female emigration, and to different destinations where Irish women worked and settled, the study is then limited to one of the receiving countries: The United States. Nonetheless, the analysis of many points here sheds light on the complex reasons that for centuries had motivated women's incessant exodus from Irish shores to America, and does so by interweaving fortunate and unfortunate stories. Through the reading of these fictional works and historical records, the author offers a more nuanced picture of Irish female emigration that goes beyond the conceptualisations of those women who left the Irish shores as vulnerable, ignorant, poor, pregnant, or sexually deviant, while the phenomenon of immigration itself is understood in relation to variables such as class, age, education, nationality, and religion. By setting these stories back on the page, and thus returning them to the collective memory, women are rendered visible, they are offered a voice to explore their traumas, and they are located in the frames of modern Irish history by valuing their socioeconomic, cultural, and emotional contributions to the construction of Ireland or that of their host societies (Armie 2020, 190).

"Avenging the Famine: Lance Daly's *Black' 47*, Genre and History", by Ruth Barton, explores the ties between Lance Daly's film *Black' 47* – taking the form of a classic Western but set in Gaelic-speaking Western Ireland – the Great Famine, historical veracity, the much-questioned colonial relationship between England-Ireland, and trauma. *Black' 47* premiered in 2018 and its historical context transports the viewer to 1847, to be introduced to Martin Feeney, a singular white male and fictional hero. He is a deserter from the British Army who returns to Connemara after receiving bad news from home: his mother has died of fever and his brother has been hung for resisting eviction. Back at home, Feeney has brutal encounters with the authorities, and the remaining members of his family are either killed or suffer other tragic deaths. An insatiable desire for revenge and a violent interpretation of justice brings Feeney together with Hannah, an old comrade from his regiment in Afghanistan and a member of the British forces in Ireland. From the very moment of its release, this visual representation of the Famine has enjoyed a very positive reception, whereas responses in different countries have had

different outcomes. According to Barton, while in the United Kingdom and Ireland the movie has enjoyed success, international audience figures were very modest, and this study examines some of the reasons underlying such a varied reception by looking at the symbolism of the plot in the wider context of Ireland's past and present history, memory, and the complicated Anglo-Irish relations. Here notions such as victimhood, cultural and nationalist manifestos like the Irish language, Irish womanhood, patriarchy, the figure of the male breadwinner, and what the author calls the heroic remasculinization of the historical figures (61) are all addressed. Likewise, Barton emphasises the lack of cinematographic precedents depicting the Famine, an almost taboo theme, despite being one of the "most significant moments in Irish history" (63). The chapter emphasises the importance of knowledge of potential spectators seeing a depiction of the Famine, in the sense that the film leaves unexplored many of the factors laying at the very heart of those years, for example, the Poor Tax and the consequent evictions and executions of Irish peasants. Nonetheless, *Black' 47* tackles, through the use of characters such as the symbolic named landlord Kilmichael, Capitan Pope, and a journalist, the different readings of the catastrophe, by grading the involvement and guilt of both Ireland and Britain for the disaster. Also discussed is the dilemma about the many different denominations of the event: The Great Famine, The Hunger, or *An Drochshaol*. Names are here an echo of the debate between revisionists and nationalists, since what the revisionists termed "famine" was, for a significant number of nationalists, a "hunger" or "starvation", while the most radical among them referred to it as a "holocaust" or "ethnic cleansing". Considering the premises of colonialism, then, Barton turns to Ireland's experience, whose readings range from victimhood to agency, to explain trauma and silence, and arrives at the conclusion that *Black' 47* "disidentifies with the existing historical narrative of Irish victimhood" (71) by creating two major characters who express an insatiable thirst for revenge and by making all these discourses collide. This is how the film becomes "a project of devictimizing the Famine" (72). Barton ends the paper by presenting the true identity and origins of the two main actors as a means of explaining their selection for their respective roles. Although it might seem that the discussion here somehow diverges from its main purposes by drawing some parallels between Australians and Irish people, the writer proceeds in this way in order to explore the contradictory and conflictive sides of whiteness, power, and disempowerment in different territories.

Part II is dedicated to media and digital archives. In "Reflection of Trauma in the Prisons Memory Archive: How Information Literacy, Human Experience and Place are Impacted by Conflict", the historian Lorraine Dennis explores the Anglo-Irish Troubles (1968-1998) through visual materials obtained at the prisons of Armagh Gaol and the Maze/Long Kesh. The 175 records were filmed during 2006 and 2007 in these two prisons, which were already empty at the time. The unheard and unseen material (Dennis 2020, 86) constitutes an inclusivist approach that reconstructs truth and history from extensive site footage, photographs, films, historical records and the recorded stories of prison staff, prisoners, teachers, family visitors, chaplains, and probation officers about the virulent conflicts where "over 3,500 people were killed and hundreds of others maimed with life-changing injuries" (83). First to be examined here are the origins of the conflict, back in 1921, when Partition of the territory occurred. Without going into much detail, but in relation to the year 1921, Dennis speaks about the two *new* predominant identities in Northern Ireland and describes how the hostilities between both communities were to escalate over the twentieth century, to burst violently during the Troubles, a period known also as "the War" or "the Conflict". In this context the reader is given an exploration of "the fragility of peace" in a society where, despite the improvements brought about by the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, "trauma sits uncomfortably with the

new vision of prosperity" (84) in cities like Belfast, where a legacy of hurt and suffering impedes the healing of wounds. According to the author, despite the provisions brought about by the Agreement and various attempts at bringing the community together, the distance between the two factions has in fact widened, this due to an ill-advised approach based principally on an ethnocentric nationalism that constructs the *other* in opposition of the professed values and beliefs of the comparative concept of the equation, and which therefore openly places both sides in confrontation by emphasising difference. For Dennis, the key for cooperation between both Northern Catholics and Protestants is to be found in common ground and sharing elements, such as history, living in the same neighbours, and studying at the same colleges. In relation to this belief, this initiative was carried out at these two prisons and encapsulates the idea that due to the individual storytelling of those victims of this sectarian conflict, the limits between past and present are blurred, and hence healing might occur. Initiatives like this would help to construct a shared history in Northern Ireland and promote empathy, inclusivity, collaboration, and interaction between the two affected communities, not only in the territory, but also serving as a model for peace worldwide.

Patrick J. Mahoney's "From the Maze to Social Media: Articulating the Trauma of 'The Blanket Protest' in the Digital Space" is thematically related to the former chapter, since it discusses the "Blanket" and the "No Wash" Protests which took place in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Prison between 1976 and 1981. The author values here the marginalisation of this group of ex-convicts, and analyses "the lingering mental and physical implications of incarceration, and by continued government denial of the correlating institutional abuses which occurred" (2020, 104). As a way to combat the lasting trauma and to explore the history of the events, Mahoney considers the role of social media, forums, and other platforms with the same characteristics in today's contemporary framework, in how these provide a sense of cohesiveness for the participants and offer updated freely-available information. The study is conceptualised around the importance of these "emotional communities", or "safe spaces" (110), zones of encounter where physical boundaries and limitations of all kinds disappear, and where the recovery and renegotiation of individual traumas and healing can take place through the sharing of memories, the manifestation of support, and communal collaboration. Apart from their cathartic and therapeutic effects, these individual fragments of history become part of a collective and contrasted memory archive. This type of social media therapy, as it is popularly known, is put into practice by the author with the creation and description of the functioning of one of these blogs, where politics is left aside. Since the historical contextualisation of this chapter is very important for readers, Mahoney, in a concise but in a very informative way, manages to examine the genesis of these protests and other related events. In relation to these episodes, he explores the great success of the first ten months of the site's existence, from 2016 to July 2017. The page includes the participation of former blanket men, families, and supporters who are revisiting the past. Through these stories, anyone can access the hitherto unknown and probably unrecorded information that can usefully complement official historical sources, thus offering harsh insights into the Troubles.

Part III of this volume is dedicated to the study of history through historical records. "'The Women Who Had Been Straining Every Nerve': Gender-Specific Medical Management of Trauma in the Irish Revolution (1916–1923)", by Síobhra Aiken, explores female trauma and silence in the various forms that these took during the tumultuous period between 1916 to 1923, doing so by considering the Military Service Pensions Collection, the personal memories of those involved in the events, plus literary texts. Taking as a framework the strong, patriarchal, and newly-born Irish Free State, Aiken dissects these topics by paying attention to two signifi-

cant variables: gender and class. The chapter, therefore, address the discrimination suffered by many female republican revolutionaries during this period through the analysis of the different medical and non-medical treatments administrated to those women with "exhausted nerves" (133). To this end, the study is based on the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a term that alludes to psychological phenomena such as stress, anxiety and depression caused by violent, life-threatening episodes suffered by women like Siobhán Lankford and Lily Mernin, who fought side by side with their male counterparts. According to the same source, despite the normalisation of the use of the concept of PTSD today, "the highly competitive commemorative culture which emerged in post-independence Ireland offered little scope for the articulation of personal traumas" (135), and when this did occur, the conceptualisation never departed far from that of "the heroic male guerrilla fighter" (*ibidem*). The participation of women in the fight for national independence, and in the related discourse, was to be valued differently, since gradually a parallelism between the Irish woman and the national spirit was drawn and later enforced with the 1937 Constitution and subsequent legislation. This, together with a combination of the inherited forms of Victorian norms and customs, led to a further "gender-isation"of the public and private spheres. In the words of Aiken "women – both civilians and activists – were key agents during Ireland's revolutionary period, as borders between private and military zones were systematically broken down" (*ibidem*); nevertheless, unease permeated the national discourse in recognising male combatant's reliance on female comrades (136). Considering all these premises, Aiken examines how ideas of stoicism and Victorian social conventions of concealing distress and repressing emotions, particularly in public, obscured the harsh realities and trauma derived from war and experiences not only of those who actively engaged in the fight, but of those civilian women accidentally trapped within the conflicts. This is how violent psychological responses to these episodes were met with mild diagnoses or were treated with incorrect medication which most of the time aimed at a "refeminization and domestication of female combatants" (140), while often those studying the phenomena related "mental instability with somatic, biological explanations […] rather than consider their psychological or social causes" (137-138). Mental institutions and emigration were other viable options to drug and electrical treatments. Aiken's chapter is a captivating yet harsh view of the past. It constitutes a further piece in a larger puzzle and helps not only to reconstruct her-story and legitimise Irish women's contributions in both the private and public spheres, but also addresses their suffering, traumas, silence, shaming and marginalisation over decades.

"Personal Loss and the 'Trauma of Internal War': The Cases of W. T. Cosgrave and Seán Lemass", by Eunan O'Halpin, considers the personal stories of two of the founding politicians of independent Ireland, W.T. Cosgrave and Seán Lemass. O'Halpin observes here how the violent political climate, personal and collective loss, trauma, and memory experienced by both figures during the Irish Revolution were manifested soundly and paradoxically through the silence and reluctance of these two men, to discuss those tumultuous years. The author draws on new historical sources, such as those of the Bureau of Military History records (BMH) and the Military Service Pensions and Medals Collections. In first instance, the chapter establishes a parallelism between Cosgrave and Lemass by comparing their inner-city Dublin origins, their participation in the 1916 rebellion, the loss of family members, close friends and colleagues, the fact that they suffered incarceration, and that despite the experienced horrors, "neither Cosgrave nor Lemass claimed compensation for any physical or psychological damage" (O'Halpin 2020, 171). O'Halpin also looks at what made them different, considering aspects such as their political views and their views on and practice of Catholicism. The author follows here some of the premises presented in Chapter 6, in that he uses the prism of PTSD to measure

the impact of trauma, memory, and silence in the articulation of emotions in a society where "male reticence about personal loss was the norm in public life" (166), and where the contrary would have been considered unmanly behaviour. O'Halpin explores many details about Cosgrave and Lemass's political and personal lives, although the most intimate aspects that might explain the reasons for their behaviour in this sense are not disclosed but rather supposed, and associated with the too-personal, painful past of each man (179). Their elusiveness, therefore, leaves plenty of room for speculation and confirms Cosgrave and Lemass's paradoxical postures: they never denied their hardships and trauma, although they did not cite them in public, "and when in government, neither shirked from the use of extreme force against former comrades in defence of the state" (166).

Part IV is dedicated to music. In chapter 8, Fintan Vallely's "Dim-rum-ditherum-dan-dee: Trauma and Prejudice. Conflict and Change as Reflections of Societal Transformation in the Modern-Day Consolidation of Irish Traditional Music" sets out to consider music, trauma, colonial relations, identity and gender representation. The chapter is thus rather ambitious, and the numerous themes dealt with, and the shifts from past to present in the different parts of the chapter may provoke in the reader a certain confusion. Furthermore, trauma is tackled here tangentially and superficially, especially in the last part of the contribution, while more emphasis is put on gender inequality in the artistic field than on the effects of this unbalanced situation on women. He talks about the success achieved by Irish music in the 1980s thanks to musicians such as Rory Gallagher, Van Morrison, The Pogues, U2, Sinéad O'Connor, The Cranberries, The Chieftains, Enya, The Bothy Band, etc. Through post-colonialist and nationalist lenses, Vallely explores the origins of what is nowadays referred to as traditional music by alluding to the Gaelic music performed largely on the harp, but also to how it was subsumed into the folk music. It is in this context, where folk music is considered the music of the poorer and unpropertied Irish, that Vallely places the concept of trauma, and links it both to music generally, and to the harp and the uilleann pipes in particular. The harp, for example, was transformed into a national symbol, played with pride as early as the thirteenth century and politically associated "with resistance to – if not contempt for – the British crown" (188) as a consequence of the frequent bans on its use. The beginning of the twentieth century consolidated the role of music in Ireland as "metaphor for Irish independence from colonial hegemony and tastes (189). Nonetheless, according to the author (*ibidem*) the historical suppression to which indigenous Irish music was submitted across the centuries led to an inferiority complex about it (188), and would only be transformed into confidence during the rise of the Celtic Tiger. Apart from identity, power and nationality, the author considers in the last part of the chapter gender and its relation to music through the recompilation of information from historical sources as writings and paintings. The author reconstructs the role of women in the evolution of music, and by extension dance, in Ireland, and concludes that nowadays there are "significant changes in traditional music practices" (196) positively affecting the involvement of women in these artistic forms. Nonetheless, Vallely also discusses the other side of the coin, that of inequality and non-representation for awards and what he terms "arbitrary gender prejudice" (200), where the percentages speak by themselves and illustrate the enormous differences between the numbers of men and women musicians receiving traditional Irish music awards at events such as *TG4 Gradam Ceoil.* Movements like FairPlé that seek to bring about the reconsideration and recognition of women's contribution to the artistic field are also mentioned.

As the title of David Clare's chapter "Traumatic Childhood Memories and the Adult Political Visions of Sinéad O'Connor, Bono and Phil Lynott" indicates, this study looks into the traumatic life-events of these Irish famous rock musicians. The author's approach to trauma

here is multifarious, and it is observed how experiences and memories were channelled in songs that explore personal and social, political, cultural, economic, and religious issues in the Irish Republic. Sinéad O'Connor's life is recalled through the account of sexual and physical abuse inflicted on her by her mother at a young age, and the repetition of these experiences in one of the Magdalen asylums run by the Sisters of Charity, when she was a teenager. Considering this, it is not surprising, as Clare (2020) observes, that O'Connor's songs "repeatedly returned to images of abused or endangered children […] not simply with an eye towards exorcising her own personal demons but also as part of her attempts to make strident political statements related to Ireland [, English colonialism and…] the wider world" (214), her position serving as model for similar protests and denunciations elsewhere (217). The experience of trauma by Paul "Bono" Hewson, member of the group U2, is here discussed in relation to the Troubles and the onset of the sectarian conflict in Dublin and Monaghan following the detonation of several car bombs in 1974. This section explores Bono's childhood in an uncertain terrain, where a religious war was to mark the singer's life forever. Andy Rowen, the eleven-year-old brother of Bono's best friend since childhood, witnessed the effects of these bombs, and Bono in turn would witness Andy's subsequent struggle with heroin abuse as a consequence of the trauma of that day. Inspired by the drama and trauma of Andy's life, and acknowledging the heroin epidemic affecting Dublin in the late 1970s and 1980s, Bono discussed these themes in his songs and attracted the attention of the Southern and Northern Irish societies alike in his exploration of hopelessness, unemployment, and the lack of prospects for the young in the economic and stagnant atmosphere of those decades of turmoil (223), his songs bringing "a message of hope in the dark times of the Troubles" (228). The story of Phil Paris Lynott's connections with trauma and its artistic depiction in music occupy the final part of the chapter. Phil Lynott's dark skin, inherited from his Guyanese father and his outbringing in Dublin with his maternal grandparents in the 1950s and 1960s, would mark his life through the marginalisation and stigmatisation he suffered. In a post-colonial context in which the Irish frequently identified themselves with oppressed black communities, Lynott problematised and questioned rigid notions on Irishness and blackness from a position suffused with hybridity that successfully forged an artistic blend of both elements of his identity; "when the visibly black Lynott performed explicitly Irish material, he suggested the possibility of, and can be said to have brought into being, a black Irish identity" (231). Clare's chapter is very revealing in terms of how music can be transformed into a utilitarian exercise, one which, which apart from the aesthetic qualities involved, can also set a social, cultural and political agenda.

Part V of the volume complements the themes and premises offered in previous chapters by presenting one piece of reflective writing, one of creative writing, and one interview. The first of these is Emer Martin's "Hungry Ghosts: Trauma and Addiction in Irish Literature", centring around one of the most recurrent characters that pullulate her literary works, the hungry ghosts. Depicted as disturbed phantoms "with their bulging bellies and skinny necks" (Martin 2020, 245), the hungry ghosts that appear in her books are haunted by traumas of the past that are replicated in the present, and, as a consequence, the *ghosts* are tormented by addictions. In the midst of such frequent discussions and readings of history propelled by frequent commemorations in which Ireland's nationalist discourses range from passivity to agency, from woundology, victimhood to trauma and silencing, Martin considers Ireland's history from a pure post-colonial perspective. She evaluates the territory's reputation for being a "First World country but with a Third World memory" (Gibbons 1996) by reflecting on Irish people's current dependence on alcohol and drugs as self-administered *panaceas* for those who have suffered traumatic experiences that have remained unhealed. Martin's position here resembles those of other scholars

in different fields (Danieli 1998; Moane 2002; Delaney 2013, 14; Mac Síomóin 2014) who consider "transgenerational transmission" (Danieli 2010), that is, the inheritance of certain psychological features and traumatic experiences that can be transmitted from generation to generation to the point of affecting the disposition of contemporary society. In this context, therefore, addiction to alcohol or drugs is only one of the legacies of colonialism, a pathology that responds to earlier, external, and coercive episodes of domination practised by England and perpetuated later by the authoritarian Free Government of Ireland and the Irish Catholic Church, and enforced nowadays by contemporary lifestyles and globalisation.

Following this is "Fellow Travellers" by Pat Boran. This nineteen-line poem recreates an encounter between a member of the settled community and a group of Traveller women. The poem fits within the discourses of recent decades in Ireland that have witnessed a wide range of changes in the perception of human rights and diversity. It is only in this context that the Irish Traveller community has received special attention from the state, academia, and Irish society at large, as an exercise in reconciliation after centuries of discriminatory policies, negative behaviour, and racist attitudes. These measures, together with the interpretation and representation of these minorities in the arts, constitute a recognition of cultural diversity, and an open condemnation of the erroneous conceptualisation of a former homogenous, rigid national Irish identity.

The final contribution in the volume is an interview by the editor, Melania Terrazas, with Pat Boran, which tackles themes such as Ireland, gender, trauma, identity, the human being and family bonds, the state, broadcasting, poetry, and Spanish translations of Boran's works. This interview, then, is the perfect closure for this collection, since it reflects both directly and indirectly on many of the themes discussed in the volume, and does so through the vision of an artist whose work mirrors how trauma, memory and Irishness arises in so many diverse and unsuspected ways in culture.

Words can sometimes be subtle in expressing manifestations of trauma and suffering, and the analysis of representations of trauma depicted in more vivid colours or shades of grey, or represented through different textures or materials, such as visual arts like photography, sculpture and painting, might have enriched this volume. Nonetheless, the volume is definitely a kaleidoscopic reading of the past and the present, an insightful resource not only for specialists in Irish Studies, but for all those interested in Ireland's culture, society, politics, religion, and history. As has been noted here, cultural production might delight the senses, but it also has the cathartic power to close-up wounds and to heal the soul.

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Eduardo Cormick, *El lado irlandés de los argentinos: El aporte de los descendientes de irlandeses en el entramado cultural de la Argentina del siglo XX*, Buenos Aires, El Bien del Sauce, 2020, pp. 216. AR$ 900. ISBN: 978-987-86-5592-5.

One of the worst catastrophes to occur in Europe in the nineteenth century was the Great Irish Famine, caused by late blight, a disease that destroyed the potato plant. By that time, potatoes had become the staple component of the Irish diet because cereals, with Ireland still under the dominion of the United Kingdom, were mostly carried away to Great Britain. The consequences of the famine were devastating: one third of the Irish population died, and another third migrated to England, Australia, or the United States of America. However, around the 1870s a small portion of those survivors had reached the Southern Cone and settled in Argentina. Gradually, they came to be used to the ways of the land and its people, and some of them became eminent Argentines. It is with this group that *El lado irlandés de los argentinos* is primarily concerned since the volume invites its readers to explore the contributions of the Irish to the social and cultural framework of the Latin American nation on its way to modernization throughout the twentieth century. So far available only in Spanish, the book offers a wide but comprehensive panorama of that process with a particular focus on the individual lives of those *émigrés* of Irish ancestry who sparkled in Argentine science, politics, arts, and sports.

El lado irlandés de los argentinos contains a prologue written by the renowned Argentine historian Hilda Sabato in which the eclecticism and freshness of the stories in the volume are highlighted. Then, Eduardo Cormick himself tries to place his work in the poststructuralist tradition by wondering about the invention of Ireland and the Irish. Nevertheless, from the first story onwards, Cormick seems to abandon that stance, and he decidedly takes his readers to the deeper, more intimate, spheres of personal histories in a random, not essentially chronological, fashion. Those histories are presented as brief accounts of the lives of men and women of Irish descent who were able to move beyond the confinements of workplace or domestic concerns

into the realm of public affairs. The lives of Cecilia Grierson, Patricio Garrahan, or Santiago Fitz Simon, were dedicated to the advancement of Argentine science and education. Therefore, they deserved to be written as biographies of a relatively institutional quality. Other lives shone in the arts, such as those of Guillermo and Horacio Butler, Sylvia Molloy, or Patricio Mc Gough, and in those stories Cormick displays his abilities as an arts critic and a conscientious reader of fiction. There are also some sections that are not strictly biographical but rather anecdotal, mere moments in the lives of their protagonists whose significance remains deeply private, but which eventually became public. Climaxes among those are the disclosure of Juan José Cerati's suffering from cancer during an almost ritualistic tea presided by Lilian Clarke or the return of Susana Dillon's granddaughter, born to "disappeared" parents, by a paramilitary militia in the dead of a night in March 1978. The former inspired one of Gustavo Cerati's most famous pop songs; the latter stirred Dillon's involvement with Madres de Plaza de Mayo and her life-long fight for human rights. Thus, as the life of a person of Irish ancestry juxtaposes that of another, readers are reminded that all life is heroic in itself and that it is necessarily made up of both comedy and tragedy.

From that magma that is life, in *El lado irlandés de los argentinos* readers can hear the voices of the Irish turned Argentine emerge. This is one of the hallmarks of the publication. Cormick is highly knowledgeable of Argentine culture, and he is in command of an incommensurable reservoir of sources. The quotations that flood the pages of the book include excerpts from *zambas* by Buenaventura Luna, *chamamés* by Santiago "Bocha" Sheridan, tangos by Carlos Sanders and Miguel Treacey, and poems by Maria Elena Walsh, Eduardo Carroll, and José Sebastián Tallon. In all of them, Cormick seems to suggest, you can trace the flicker of Irish genius. Not less relevant are the historical and journalistic documents quoted throughout the volume. There are passages of the *Carta Abierta* and other texts by Rodolfo Walsh and a transcription of the brief but brave note that Miguel Fitzgerald sent to the British governor of the Malvinas/ Falklands islands when he arrived in the archipelago on 8 September 1964, demanding the end of British rule over the islands claimed by Argentina. In a similar vein, the inclusion of the fearless narrative poem "A Margaret Thatcher", by Luis Alberto Murray, decidedly reveals a strong authorial position, which never eludes difficult yet unavoidable issues such as British colonialism, the Irish question, or the last Argentine dictatorship (1976-1983) and the pain and grief that they caused to their victims.

> Yo vine a ser arriero, viniendo de los mares
> Tirado en una vela de aquellas irlandesas. (73)

These lines by Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti, Buenaventura Luna, cited by Cormick, brilliantly encapsulate the idea behind *El lado irlandés de los argentinos*: from beyond the seas and brought by foreign sails, the Irish reached Argentina to become horsemen. Many of them, though, became the prosperous men and women whose achievements in almost every area of Argentine life are succinctly described by Cormick in his book. Unsurprisingly, also the Cormicks belong to that genealogy, and it is to his family that the author devotes the last section of the long list of Irish personalities contributing to the formation of Argentine culture in the twentieth century. The Cormicks travelled to Argentina in order to work the land, to become *chacareros*, and they spent most of their lives in the rural areas of Buenos Aires province. This also shows throughout the publication. Not everything in it happens, as is tradition, in Buenos Aires, the capital and largest city of Argentina. The narrative deftly takes its readers to the tough outback of the South American country, as they get to know about the Irish who settled in San Juan, Chubut, Cór-

doba, Corrientes, or Entre Rios. Besides, Eduardo Cormick is a skillful storyteller, and he tells stories the Argentine way. This is perhaps one of the most significant traits of *El lado irlandés de los argentinos*. The volume may not be catalogued as a history book in the exact sense of the term, but it tells a story with the serenity, the colour, and the time available for detail and precision with which tales are told in the pampas. That does not necessarily mean, however, that there was lack of reading or research in the making of the text. Throughout its pages, it perspires that Cormick is in possession of a strong, thorough knowledge not only of his Irish past but also of Argentine culture, both aspects which he dexterously integrates with one another in the book under consideration. The stories in it are also packed with romance, adventure, and epic, all elements common to both fact and fiction. Each person whose remarkable deeds are narrated in *El lado irlandés de los argentinos* most probably lived life to the full, and they made outstanding contributions to Argentine-ness in a land where life has not always been easy. Above all, they added to the blend that we Argentines are, the immense depth of the Irish spirit.

Enrique Alejandro Basabe

James E. Kelly, *English Convents in Catholic Europe, c.1600-1800*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2020, pp. 232. GBP 75. ISBN: 9781108479967.

This new book represents a welcome contribution to the field of early-modern English Catholicism, and more broadly to the history of the English Catholics in exile. Based on an impressive and extended archival research in different English and European repositories, the author examines the complex process which brought to the establishment and development of the English female convents in the Spanish Flanders and in France between the early seventeenth century and the early nineteenth century.

One of the many merits of Kelly's book is to have literally opened a new pathway on a topic which, up until now, has remained in the shadow of mainstream historiography. Indeed, in the last twenty years an impressive array of articles, books, and essays have assessed the phenomenon of the development of the Irish collegial network, and to a lesser extent of their English and Scots counterparts. Yet the female foundations – commonly called convents – have been excluded from all this mass of studies. This book finally fills this gap by demonstrating how and to which extent the communities of English nuns gathered and developed an extended network of structures which acted not only as structures of clerical formation but also as points of contact between the English Catholics in exile and their fellow countrymen at home.

The book is structured in six chapters which – thematically arranged – brings the reader into the multifaceted world of the English nuns. The first chapter examines the recruitment's process by illustrating all the steps which brought a lay woman to make the crucial choice and how she entered a world in which the concept of national identity needed to be preserved at all costs. The chapter investigates a series of seminal points like the network which was developed between the entrant's family and the convent in which she decided to enter or the organization of the trip to mainland Europe. The chapter also vividly reconstructs the milieu of each English convent, demonstrating how each of them recruited women from specific areas of England.

The second chapter focuses on the thorny matter of how and to which extent the English convents sought to keep and implement the full closure which was their key aim. Yet this section of the book reveals how – though their strict rules – the convents interacted with the local community as well as with the English Catholics in exile. The third chapter explores how the communities of English nuns embarked on the major remodelling programs – both from

the artistic and architectural point of view – dictated by the Council of Trent. The author demonstrates that the English nuns were equally successful in keeping their national identity, and, at the same, to adhere to the universal salvific message of global Catholicism. The fourth chapter considers the context in which the convents were founded and how they reacted to the political upheavals both in England and at local level. The book clearly highlights how the English convents strove to find a precarious balance between their national exilic identity and as being part of the broader women's Catholic community. In chapter fifth the author analyses the daily liturgical and spiritual life by focusing on the devotional practices of the nuns towards the relics and the cult of the martyrs. The author well displays how the relics were used as a motivating means for the nuns to return home to fight against the spread of Anglicanism.

The last chapter fits the English convents within the broader context of the English Catholic mission and within the framework of the colleges founded by the Catholic clergy of the British Isles. By doing so, Kelly illustrates that the communities of English nuns were not isolated groups, but they were actively engaged in the missionary networks developed by the English Catholics in exile.

In conclusion, Kelly's book is an outstanding and well-researched analysis which has finally shed light on a world which has not been properly understood and examined. One of the many merits of this book is to have described the rich array of details on the entrant nuns, their family background, the organization of the journey to mainland Europe, and their life inside the convent. All this will whet the appetite of anyone – professional scholar or simple amateur – who wants to know more of a world which was apparently closed but which interacted with the complex and shifting European society of the early modern period. The fact that the book has been published by Cambridge UP is a further demonstration of the high scholarly achievements reached by this young scholar.

Matteo Binasco

Ondˇrej Pilný, Ruud van den Beuken, Ian R. Walsh (eds), *Cultural Convergence: The Dublin Gate Theatre, 1928-1960*, Basingstoke-Cham, Palgrave Macmillan-Springer Nature, 2021, pp. xviii+244. GBP 45.40. ISBN: 978-030-57561-8. ISBN 978-030-57562-5 (e-Book).

Audrey McNamara, Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel (eds), *Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland*, Basingstoke-Cham, Palgrave Macmillan-Springer Nature, 2020, pp. xxvi+274. GBP 89.99. ISBN: 978-3-030-42112-0. ISBN: 978-3-030-42113-7 (e-Book).

Historians of twentieth-century Irish theatre owe a considerable debt to Palgrave Macmillan, particularly for the special nature of their publications in the field; and this is certainly true of their two latest offerings: studies on the *Dublin Gate Theatre* and on *Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland*. As publishers, they seem of late to be less interested in single-authored studies than collections of essays from a variety of hands, which in the context of theatre makes a great deal of sense. Theatre is a multi-disciplined art-form that benefits from a range of approaches and points of focus that keep readers alert to the complex intricacies, effects and challenges of a given production or single performance. The title of the Gate volume is indicative of where this strength lies: *Cultural Convergence* (though one might, on finishing a reading of its contents, be forgiven for wishing to adapt the phrasing to "Cultural Convergences"). The editors of this collection of essays take care to define "convergence" in this context as referring to a bringing together, not into uniformity (a dull sameness), but into interaction and dialogue in which the deliberate exploration of difference(s) is privileged.

How welcome and refreshing this approach is, after decades where Irish theatre history pursued a colonial/neo-colonial bias, which robbed theatrical experience of its multi-valency. Important though this perspective is, as these two volumes show, it is limited in its terms of reference to a mode of interpretation that hones in on text, thematic preoccupations and ideological underpinning. For some time, this approach to the Gate Theatre has been challenged in terms of the highly innovative staging methods of Hilton Edwards and the design practice of Micheál mac Liammóir, where the emphasis was decidedly on those aspects of performance; but there are limitations to this mode of approach too in that appreciation might appear confined wholly to aesthetic matters. It has taken many years to establish that there is a vast divergence between text and performance, between the experience of reading and that of being a spectator, which invites responses from all the senses to shape and fuel both emotional and intellectual insight. In the context of this revised approach to the study of Irish theatre history, the very format of each of these volumes is in line with that fundamental aim: an anthology of minds and voices from widely divergent, trained backgrounds and from equally divergent cultural traditions. The volume on the Gate brings together scholars from Ireland, America, Canada, England, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia. The editors admire the directors of the Gate Theatre for consciously developing what they term an "outward gaze" (2): that daring is now justified by an international co-authorship centring their several gazes back on a shared stimulus, but in a way that allows us to appreciate how richly nuanced and excitingly omnivorous the directors' quest for a "theatre theatrical" (Hilton Edwards's term) was in theory and practice.

The anthology of essays begins with an investigation of the directors' manifestos as they changed in time and through experience, and it is good to be reminded that they wrote more than *A Mantle for Harlequin* (Edwards) and *All for Hecuba* (mac Liammóir). Next to be discussed are the personnel of the Dublin Gate, many of whom were lost sight of over the years (like Gearóid Ó Lochlainn, vital for his Irish language input and his political shrewdness, and Velona Pilcher, a watchful presence and valued inspiration behind the repertoire in the various Gate theatres established in London, Dublin and Hollywood), who helped shape the "Gate" experience along with those more familiar names of Peter Godfrey, Hilton Edwards and Micheál mac Liammóir. Precise and detailed family histories of major figures at the Dublin Gate (Edwards, mac Liammóir, Coralie Carmichael and Nancy Beckh) are rehearsed to demonstrate the transnational roots of all their biographies, quickly putting paid to the inaccurate classification, tirelessly exploited by adversarial critics of their enterprise, of Edwards and mac Liammóir as English. This essay shows how the Dublin Gate was international in far more than its creative ambitions. The success that has promoted the long-running presence of the Dublin Gate in European and American theatre history and criticism (despite its being patterned to some degree on Peter Godfrey's initiative of the same name in London) is explored to tease out provable facts from the many fictions evolved over time through reminiscence. In the process of doing this with careful scholarly scruple, Charlotte Purkis makes some neat discriminations between terms such as inspiration, influence, association, referencing, or affiliation (all used over time in interviews and promotional literature by the three different Gate Theatres, English, Irish and American). Always, however, the very name of "the Gate" was understood to refer qualitatively to the very best in *avant-garde* theatre of its time.

While these first four essays deal with what in the broadest definition may be seen as history, the remaining four in the volume attend to Gate practice in the staging of work by four dramatists: two Irish, two European. Here again four different approaches are adopted: issues of translation, verbal and cultural; the role of design in staging; queer politics during

the repressions of the Emergency; and the proactive role of women in determining crucial historical outcomes, traditionally believed to be defined by men. It is with Ondˇrej Pilný's essay on Edwards's staging of *RUR* and *The Insect Play* by the Brothers Čapek that the theme of convergence aligns with the many issues involved with translation. Edwards relied on English versions of both plays which were created for London productions that might be better described as heavily cut adaptations rather than direct translations. *RUR* had in the original production been politically alert to the rise of Nazism in Germany so that the robots carried the same kind of pervasive symbolism as Camus' plague; but this quality and tension had been toned down in the London staging. Remarkably Edwards seems to have intuited the urgency and topicality of the original and found directorial means especially through sound effects to restore an ominous urgency to performances. *The Insect Play* had been translated and staged by Playfair as a kind of extravaganza that again largely ignored the political implications of the contrasting sequences; but working on the play in 1943 allowed Edwards and his adaptor, the Dublin satirist Myles na gCopaleen, to bring a much needed rigour to their version by making the text an overt exposure of divergent class attitudes at the time of the Emergency, showing how necessary it was to adopt an "outward gaze" and an international perspective to achieve political maturity. "Convergence" here became a kind of empathy, allowing a transcendence of the limitations that easily accompany translations not in tune with the cultural complexities permeating the original text and its accompanying vision and ideology.

A similar sensitivity and scruple (on Yvonne Ivory's showing) informed Edwards' production of Christa Winsloe's *Children in Uniform* (1934). In this instance it was possible that Edwards and mac Liammóir saw the original film and were influenced more by this than their knowledge of the London production, where the central theme of lesbian attraction was downplayed in favour of a critique of Prussian militarism. (Laughably, the Lord Chamberlain advised director and cast to ensure that the emotionalism in the play came over to audiences as "strictly German"). Confidently Edwards enhanced the lesbian themes by evolving a second lesbian relationship as a counter-interest in the play to that of the student, Manuela, and her teacher, von Bernburg; and by stressing how much the women's suffering came from their situation as outsiders in a repressive regime. The Gate production amongst the many German and English language versions of Winsloe's play was by far the strongest in terms of queer politics in placing sexual dissidence centre-stage rather than rendering it all-but invisible.

Padraic Colum's *Mogu of the Desert* (1931) did not fare so well as the works by Čapek and Winsloe: it followed in the wake of the highly successful play and film of Edward Knoblock's *Kismet*, which many in Ireland saw as plagiarising Colum's original invention. Elaine Sisson shows how the Gate's staging marks an interesting case of the directorate misjudging audience response to what is at base an Orientalist fantasy, (*Kismet* on film was subjected to the full Hollywood treatment) which for all his richness of invention mac Liammóir as designer could not match, given his highly limited resources. The production was not a success, because it could not match the lavishness of what Dublin audiences had already seen in the cinema and expected to see reproduced in the theatre. The only significant impact of the designs was to pander to upper-class and bohemian tastes for exotica and partygoing costumes "that allowed white women to perform a sexually liberating identity" (183). What clearly was wanted was a critical dimension (but "Orientalist" became pejorative and critically suspect in more recent decades) to counteract the flagrant escapism: the production never reached beyond camp indulgence. Here was an instance of cultural convergence from a variety of sources that did not unite to achieve a nuanced social insight of any complexity for spectators, rather it played into the hands of those critics keen to confine the Gate's achievements to the aesthetic.

The kind of subtle critical subversion that the staging of *Mogu* cried out for was powerfully present in the several productions of Christina Longford's historical tragedies, as admirably demonstrated in Erin Grogan's essay which closes the volume. Longford took a scrupulous approach to events in the historical past where heroism had previously been defined in plays and poems as the province of men and showed how (if viewed from a woman's perspective) women might be seen to be the true creative shapers of political situations. Longford's plays were daring in being highly critical of war and the motives for its promulgation, considering they were mostly written during the Emergency and its aftermath. This was a time when Irish playwrights and theatre personnel worked within a climate of repression especially where women's self-realisation was concerned, a recurring theme of Longford's drama. What seems remarkable in retrospect, given the forceful political dynamic of productions and the repertory at the Gate, is that the theatre and the directorate never faced censorship or closure. At some level in consciousness the value of the "outward gaze" asserted its primacy and healthfulness. The Gate's signal achievement lay in its policy of "cultural convergence", its unquestioning exploration of international experience and values as necessary. The Dublin Gate Theatre celebrated difference, but it takes the sum of these essays to define the exact meaning of the term with all its layers of significance and application.

In the editors' introduction to *Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland* reference is made to Shaw's self-determination and interestingly in the final chapter the idea is somewhat recapitulated when Shaw is described as possessing a "carefully crafted persona" (252). The many essays that intervene between these two observations about Shaw's character incline one to question whether these terms are quite fair to the mercurially tempered Shaw: too easily they might be interpreted as implying a *fixed* personality when in his life, his social, moral, and aesthetic thinking, and in his playwriting, he continually manifests a *flexible* identity. This is not the same as Yeats's conscious re-making of the self; Shaw is more enigmatic, often deliberately so, a constant shape-shifting which it is difficult at any stage to pinpoint with any degree of confidence because of the disturbing element of Shaw's laughter, which continually renders his stance and his opinions ambiguous. It is that flexibility, in Anthony Roche's view that impressed the young Kate O'Brien, influencing her advocacy (in her novels as in her private and public selves) of resistance to social pressures to conform in the interests of safe-guarding one's private identity. She too celebrated flexibility as life-affirming in ways that impacted forcefully on her women readers particularly. David Clare shows by contrast how it was Shaw's troubling laughter that impacted on Elizabeth Bowen through its ability to elude dogmatism (especially in the authorial voice). Laughter of this kind is subversive but also an awakening to the value of questioning, a refusing to accept without first exploring possibilities. These were the most beneficial qualities to cultivate in the post-Independence Ireland of de Valera, if a woman wished to embrace her personal independence. (Both novelists are at their best writing about women's experience: what they learned from Shaw and passed on to subsequent generations of Irish women novelists was a real gift.)

Shaw was fond of announcing how little of his life he had actually spent in Ireland, even though he described himself as fundamentally an Irish man, and yet a wealth of evidence emerges from these essays that shows how much of his life was actually spent there, supporting causes, speaking publicly in defence of and championing innovative figures decried in the Irish Press, and generally immersing himself (especially between 1910 and 1925) in cultural, social and political circles seeking to shape a new Ireland for the future. This aspect of Shaw's life is particularly well served by Peter Gahan's impressive essay, "Bernard Shaw in Two Great Irish Houses: Kilteragh and Coole", which shows how his visits to either home with his wife, Charlotte, immersed

him instantly amongst the finest minds working to better Ireland's condition, politically and internationally. At Sir Horace Plunkett's residence, Kilteragh, he met social reformers, not least AE, actively engaged in transforming the social and working experience of impoverished men and women, while in Lady Gregory's domain he discussed with her range of visitors how art and theatre might be deployed to critique old ways, while cultivating and promoting new habits of mind and expressions of identity. Flexibility means pursuing an openness to potential, a keenness to examine the new and challenging: the popularity of Shaw's plays when staged at the Abbey ensured that his philosophy reached wide audiences beyond the intelligentsia. What impresses, as one reads through these chapters, is the sheer number of major figures actively encouraging change in the circumstances of Irish life whom Shaw met, befriended, consulted, advised, wrote about, and promoted, which quite justifies the choice of him in the international press as the personification of an emerging Ireland (see particularly Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín's essay, "Shaw's Ireland (and the Irish Shaw) in the International Press (1914-1925)". That closing date of 1925 might suggest that Shaw's appeal and impact came to a decided conclusion in that year, but the virtue of this whole volume is that it enhances one's awareness of how Shaw's engagement with Ireland directly or subtly extended into a future beyond the cultural amnesia and political stagnation of the de Valera years. As Aisling Smith persuasively argues, when exploring the long-term impact of *O'Flaherty V.C.*, Taoiseach Seán Lemass from 1966 embraced an agenda not majorly distinct from Shaw's (though without Shaw's expressly Socialist thinking). Arguably the richest aspect of this anthology in terms of the far-reaching effects of Shaw's plays are the essays which from various standpoints address his presentation of women in his plays and how he shows them finding agency, intellectual independence from men, financial security, and inner consciousness of their own wellbeing. Highly illuminating in this context are the essays that explore how such demonstrable processes of inner growth are to be discerned in the wider canon of Shaw's plays and not just the two specifically set in Ireland. The ultimate reward for readers of *Bernard Shaw and the Making of Modern Ireland* is that it not only broadens one's knowledge of the involvement that gives the book its title, but in the process enhances one's appreciation of Shaw's creativity in all its manifestations.

Richard Allen Cave

Gabriela Mc Evoy, *La experiencia invisible. Inmigrantes irlandeses en el Perú.* Lima, Fondo Editorial de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2018, pp. 256. USD 15. ISBN: 978-9972-46-632-8.

The result of deep and compromised research, *La experiencia invisible. Inmigrantes irlandeses en el Perú* by Gabriela Mc Evoy (2018) is the final stage of a study that resulted in a number of presentations in International Conferences, as well as articles that attracted the attention of specialists in Irish Studies. The most important and influential of these articles were "Irish Immigrants in Peru during the Nineteenth Century" (2011), published in *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* (*IMSLA),* and "El valor de los archivos en los *invisibles* irlandeses" which appeared in the same journal in 2014. Concerning its formal structure, the book has an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion, followed by an iconographic appendix and a documentary one, which add to the academic relevance of the publication. According to the assessment of its author:

> This book creates, on the one hand, a bridge between past and present, and, on the other hand, it reincorporates the Irish Immigrant into the national Peruvian imaginary. When attempting to recover the

voices of these people, it writes part of the history of men and women who, with their decisions and actions, imprinted their culture in the Peruvian soil. (25)

Gabriela Mc Evoy characterizes her research as interdisciplinary, its aim being the study of the Irish characters and their personal narratives in the Peruvian space and the Peruvian history. This sociological approach and the resulting ethnographic information make it possible to explore the mechanisms of integration of the Irish Immigrant into the Peruvian society and, at the same time, their different life styles.

The first chapter is devoted to the study of the Irish presence in the most important periods of Peruvian history: under the Spanish power, during the movements leading to the Independence of the country and in the process of the construction of the Republic. In this chapter the author reviews, on the basis of twentieth and twenty-first century theory, the relationship between diaspora, transnationalism and identity. The second chapter concentrates on the study of all sorts of archives (traditional and non-traditional) in order to recover the lives of the anonymous Irish immigrants. The contents of this chapter consequently center on the lives of the immigrants belonging to the middle and lower classes. The third chapter is devoted to the study of the Irish working class, the Irish that arrived in Perú, broadly speaking, between 1849 and 1853: the proletarian diaspora, integrated both by adventurous people as well as those forced to leave Ireland as a consequence of the Great Famine.

The fourth chapter explores the lives of two figures that – though in very different fields – played important roles in the history of nineteenth century Perú: John Patrick Gallagher O'Connor (1801-1871) and William Russell Grace (1832-1904). Gallagher O'Connor was an Irish doctor with a notorious activity both in the medical field and in the field of business, whereas Grace's fame was based mainly on commerce and finance. Given the importance of letter writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the last chapter centers its analysis on epistolary discourse. Letters are, no doubt, key means to study the lives of Irishmen and women in the new society. And, at the same time, they are an invaluable way to preserve family connections. The study centers on the letters exchanged between John Dowling, his brother Patrick and his son, James Edward. The letters show not only the strong family ties, but the socioeconomic conditions of the immigrants. They confirm the importance of business for the first generation and the beginnings of professionalization already evident in the second one.

Gabriela Mc Evoy's research aims at an understanding both of the lives of the Peruvian rising working class and of those that made money and placed themselves at the top of the social ladder. Its interest lies not only in the study of Irish immigration but in its impact on the foundations of modern Perú. The migratory experience can thus be seen – according to the author – as a life-changing experience both at a personal and national level. Though the nineteenth century is mainly marked by the processes of assimilation, the documentary sources show an early development of transnationalism, however restricted to those that were able to consolidate their economic position.

As the author of the book states:

The Irish immigrants survived in the new environment, they got accustomed to living in cities with climates very different from those of Ireland and new ways to contemplate life; even more, they learned a language unrecognizable to them at the beginning. At the same time, a transformation between old and new affections occurs, which, in a certain way, will be the clue for the definite establishment of the Irish in their new environment. (53)

Mc Evoy's book is written in a lively style, and its up-to-date sources – both concerning the theories the author resorts to and the specific data on the Irish migration in Latin America – turn it into an essential reading for those interested in the topic, both as amateur readers or academic experts.

Concerning the specific sources on the Irish in Latin America I want to stress two: the famous *Libro azul británico. Informes de Roger Casement y otras cartas sobre las atrocidades en el Putumayo* by Roger Casement (2011 [1912]), and the study of one of our pioneers in Irish Studies in Latin America: Laura Izarra's "Don't Cry for me Ireland – Irish Women's Voice from Argentina", *Ilha do Desterro: A Journal of English Language* 59, 2010, 133-146.

As a final remark, I would like to stress that the book *La experiencia invisible. Inmigrantes irlandeses en el Perú* by Gabriela Mc Evoy is a major contribution to the development of Irish Studies in Latin America, especially those focused on the Irish presence in our continent.

Cristina Elgue

Menna Elfyn, *Bondo/Gronde*, a cura di Giuseppe Serpillo, trad. di Giuseppe Serpillo e Luca Paci, Sassari, Lùdo Edizioni, 2020, pp. 125. € 10. IBSN: 978-88-31918-32-9

The word 'Welsh' derives from a Saxon word meaning 'foreign'; the vernacular word for the language, *Cymraeg*, derives from a compound meaning 'language of kingsmen'
(R.B. Jones (1979), "A Brief History of the Welsh Language",
in Meic Stephens (ed.), *The Welsh Language Today*, Llandysul, Gomer Press, 18)

R.S. Thomas once said to Menna Elfyn that poetry in translation is like a kiss through a handkerchief. Elfyn very aptly replied that a kiss whatever is better than nothing. She has a poem on this statement by R.S. Thomas. I cannot say that I have even a superficial knowledge of Welsh, therefore my assessment of this Italian translation of *Bondo* by Menna Elfyn is that of a reader of a text in translation only, expecting a kiss of sorts. What I know is that the received awareness of a translated text (its words and world) may be, potentially, very much removed from what was portrayed in the source language. And, though this is a fact, it must not be. Or rather it is permitted for it to be so only to some extent. Are there ways to fight against the thickness of the handkerchief? Has this book been worked out in that direction? I am unfortunately unable to say for sure not only how much but even if this is somehow so. I therefore ask the reader to be lenient with what I am going to write in the following lines.

I will, first of all, set the background against which I will make my comments and shape my appreciation.

In an introductory note to the twofold translation of one of the poems ("Y Glwyd", "Il cancello") the translators write: "Il traduttore è in primo luogo un interprete che accogliendo la natura […] dei segni li fa propri e li elabora secondo direttive che pertengono alla propria cultura e alla propria sensibilità". I must say straightaway that I have little sympathy for this belief. If this were the correct approach to translation then translation should be labelled with a different name: imitation, re-writing, re-creation, adaptation, and so on and so forth. My opinion is that translation is only well defined as follows: it is a rendering of a construction such that the construction is re-made by means of different construction materials. This implies that the matter of the construction will, by necessity, be somewhat different from the original but the aim of the re-rendering must be that the *thing* remains very much the same in terms of what it was in the original shape and context. I trust translation is most often done according

to this assumption, though that may happen unawares. I mean that most often when *translation* is done, the act of translating imposes its own status independent of the translator's will. Giuseppe Serpillo's quotation from Paul Ricoeur, that a good translation can only hope to achieve assumed equivalence, is closer to my point.

As I said I have very little knowledge of the Welsh language and I trust these poems by Menna Elfyn to have had the upper hand of the translators at least to some degree. I think I can say that this somehow happened. In particular the language theme and the Aberfan disaster stand up poetically for the size of their import. What I would have liked the translators to make evident, the *nature of the poetry* of it all, is unfortunately not embedded only in the "story" but in the language carrying the story, in the manner of Elfyn's writing. Although my request may appear heretical, only a somewhat detailed commentary would have been able to convey it: footnotes for example (but footnotes are generally ruled out), or an introduction of some sort, to initiate the reader to the nature of the original poetical *manner.* Even only some hints at the original manner of the writing would have been very welcome help. What constitutes the literary value of Menna Elfyn's art must be part and parcel with the thing rendered in translation too.

A bilingual book assumes that the reader is likely to know not only the language into which the translation has been made but also – never mind the degree of knowledge – the language from which the text has been translated. As I do not think Welsh can be assumed to enjoy the status of a known language in Italy, some illustration of Welsh prosody would have been very welcome, to provide a measure of awareness of the original flavour. I trust the authors will agree with me.

As for Menna Elfyn's complaint for the weakness of the Welsh language (a main theme in the book, whose tragedy it is not for me to dispute) I cannot refrain from putting forward the following considerations. Languages, like anything human, undergo birth, growth and death. Life may be very long but that's all. Greek, Latin, Sanskrit have all died: to a degree only, though. Languages have a sort of never-ending biological life, they are never out of business. I do not mean that endless documents are still being made in these languages of course; I mean that they remain alive and kicking in the languages that succeed them, in their words, in their sounds, however laterally, in their articulations. An important book, *Surfaces and Essences* (2013), by Douglas Hofstadter and Emmanuel Sander, provides support and confidence, to counter pessimism. To remain within the scope of the Welsh language, it is very comforting to think of how much not only of the culture but of the very language use the metaphysical poets, G.M. Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, David Jones, to mention only some of the most outstanding actors, have transferred from the Welsh environment on to the English one, and from this to the rest of the world.

This book however has the merit of presenting to the Italian reader a well-established Welsh writer writing in Welsh and tackling universal topics. It is a fact that Welsh writers writing in Welsh do not often succeed in making their messages universal because of an excessive focus on the survival of the local culture. Cultures survive only when they can prove themselves outward-focussed rather than inward-centred. The small issue must be shown to be a universal issue, which is very often the case though unfortunately this truth may not be made obvious enough to strike the eye. The two main themes of this book, concerning linguistic minorities and the Aberfan drama, are very much shareable facts of human life. They are aptly presented as such by Menna Elfyn. The language issue for example is not confined to the survival of Welsh but covers the same risk of disappearing that many languages are faced with all over the global planet. The Aberfan disaster declares its universal applicability through its local identity: its implied pathos is the more smartingly perceived because of its being experienced on one's own doorstep. Other poems, to mention only a couple "Cloig Serch" ("Nodo d'amore") and

"Y fodrwy ar fys" ("L'anello al dito"), are among those deserving a special mention in terms of universal concern, being about the feeble grasp humans have on life.

While the book hosts two sets of translations, one by Serpillo and one by Paci, the poem I mentioned, "Y Glywid" ("Il cancello"), is tackled in parallel by both. The poem is about a mining disaster which occurred in the year 2011; the disaster triggered Menna Elfyn's memory of a previous one in which her grandfather had died. This experiment with parallel translated texts is very challenging and appears to me to be a stimulating proposal for further future work. The experiment reveals that each translator has worked out a text in accordance with a philosophy or theory of his own, independent of controlled statement. Practice inevitably assumes theory. Some illustration of these respective philosophies or theories on the basis of a translated text would have been very valuable towards assessment of the original and of its translations.

Valerio Fissore

Deaglán Ó Donghaile, *Oscar Wilde and the Radical Politics of the Fin de Siècle*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 2020, pp. 264. GBP 80. ISBN: 978-1-4744-5943-3.

Besides testifying to an ongoing surge of international academic interest in Oscar Wilde's personality and writings, Deaglán Ó Donghaile's well-researched monograph deftly tackles a field that lends itself to illuminating investigation. As suggested by its title, *Oscar Wilde and the Radical Politics of the Fin de Siècle* intends to place Wilde's output, standpoints and connections against a contextual backdrop that cuts loose from such widely known paths as, say, poststructuralist theory, postmodern readings, or the lens of Gender and Queer Studies.

Ó Donghaile's analysis focuses on a precise historical phase – the last decades of the nineteenth century – and on the relationship between Wilde and various currents of political radicalism from those days. Although Wilde's dialogue with political realities and issues is no uncharted ground, the topic remains a challenging subject, one capable of opening up a space for a general reassessment of the Irish author's aesthetic tenets, dandiacal attitudes and notoriously flamboyant postures. Indeed, one might well wonder how Wilde's alleged radicalism could be possibly reconciled with his fashionable figure, flaunted egotism and, needless to say, a whole series of pronouncements in tune with the proverbial statement "All art is quite useless", from the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Yet, at a closer look, as several authors and critics have pointed out, Wilde's use of masks and "terror of not being misunderstood" should not be taken to mean that he systematically recoiled from intellectual or moral engagement. Shallowness and depth, surface and symbol are to him inextricably intertwined, in much the same way as paradoxical reasoning can be effective in pursuing and unravelling truth(s) and the clever, idiosyncratic remark might prove a winning strategy to unsettle bourgeois complacency and undermine accepted beliefs. In fact, Wilde's protean traits, ambivalence and dandiacal performance sit quite easily with a stunning potential to reverse stereotypes and pointedly complicate received notions. In other words, the line between disengagement and agency is ultimately hard to draw. While resisting categorization, Wilde's rhetoric and sparkling wit are often historically inflected and animated by cultural forces that set about eroding a matrix of social conventions.

Along these lines, *Oscar Wilde and the Radical Politics of the Fin de Siècle* appears to enhance an interpretative paradigm shift and convey a poignant appraisal of Wilde's subversive discourse. Ó Donghaile brings to centre stage a field of enquiry that encompasses Wilde's libertarian and individualist creed, his socialist and anarchistic thrust, his anticolonial views of bourgeois-imperial Britain and alliances with Irish republicanism, together with a sympathetic

closeness to the subjugated and dispossessed. Divided into seven chapters supplemented by an introductory and a concluding section, the book ranges widely over aspects concerning Wilde's radical stances in matters of codified social hierarchies and the pressure to conform to "philistine" rules, as well as the drawbacks and dark sides of capitalism, colonialist practices and the ascendance of consumer culture. Another distinguishing trait of Ó Donghaile's approach is its twinned emphasis on the "personal" and the "political" and, importantly, its systematic drawing on the author's *oeuvre*, from the literary works to interviews, speeches, correspondence, and even excerpts of unpublished material.

Taking the closing chapter as our starting point may help to better attune readers to the spirit of Ó Donghaile's research. In "Conclusion: Oscar Wilde – The Lost Revolutionary?", we are compellingly reminded of Wilde's "compassion for the dispossessed and the politically subjugated, along with his belief in the divinity of the oppressed", and of the extent to which "the broad spectrum of his literary writing underlines the consistency of his radicalism" (227). Some relevant contributions casting Wilde as the gifted and politically-aware Irishman who looked askance at centralization, state authority and British mainstream culture – such as Terry Eagleton's play *Saint Oscar* (1989) – are also cited in order to keep in sharp focus the socially charged logic of an oppositional and "liberating" Aestheticism:

> Aligning Wilde with the key Marxist literary theorists of the twentieth century, Mikhail Bakhtin and Bertolt Brecht, Terry Eagleton has shown how his exploration of the relationship between art, cultural theory and political reality was expressed through his fusion and expression of a radical style that elaborates advanced and progressive ideas about commitment and identity. These questions came to the fore as Wilde was accused by his critics of being politically suspect, insincere, lazy or downright mad […]. Wilde's engagement with this criticism emphasised the connections that bound art to subjective and social liberation by connecting the personal to the political. His radical Aestheticism was committed, as one contemporary reviewer put it, 'to the development of a taste for all that is beautiful on earth'. (231)

Otherwise stated, Wilde's aesthetic consciousness is never seen as severing ties with political awareness and the conviction that "the histories of power and resistance that were masked by beauty and distorted by violence could be made visible and discernible by art" (227). Therefore, a key theoretical point rests on the assumption that the "tension between the state and those it has dispossessed can be demystified through the medium of art" (229).

Retracing our steps to the beginning of Ó Donghaile's book, we observe how the opening "Introduction: Wilde and Politics" soon gets into the issue by inviting readers to ponder the ways Wilde's beliefs were variously mediated and eventually distorted by conservative factions. A framework is progressively set that, starting from the infamous portrait of the "conceited megalomaniac" drawn by Max Nordau in *Degeneration* (1895) and a vitriolic article appearing in the British periodical *Truth* in 1883, yields insights into the ideologically biased figure of Wilde as the Celtic intruder, effete/effeminate man, and harbinger of social decay. The high priest of an anti-Tory subculture, he was perceived as at once "queer, alternative and politically suspect" (1). A menace to British traditional values who would sneakily insinuate himself among the influent and affluent, Wilde came to be stigmatized as the infiltrating Irishman who resorted to the armoury of a charming personality and hypnotically fluent talk in an attempt to fuel anti-establishment sentiments by means of hollow mental tricks and verbal acrobatics.

Ó Donghaile compares this belittling attitude to a sort of reassuring obliteration of Wilde's words and agency, which tended to be dismissed as the utterances of an entertaining but basically inconsequential representative of a curious, marginal counterculture. If, on the other hand, the "Irish Oscar" did strive to secure mentors and outstanding connections, one

would always catch there, so to speak, a tantalizing glimpse of the artist playing "court jester to the English", to quote James Joyce's famous words from "Oscar Wilde: The Poet of *Salome*" (1909). Indeed, having reached the heart of the British metropolis, Wilde was to pave the way for a critique of imperialist violence and repressive legislation in Ireland, especially through his speeches, reviews and public lectures. This would of course prolifically intersect with the author's overall censorious views of the ethos of capitalism and imperial hegemony as opposed to the aesthetic ideals of self-development and self-culture. In a nutshell, Wilde "argued for unrestricted artistic expression during a time when culture was being rigorously policed" and allegedly conceived Aestheticism as "a social project that had explicitly political objectives as well as artistic ambitions" (7-8). By envisaging a transnational network of relations and affinities and promoting trends of literary internationalism, he encouraged solidarity across borders and class divides. In so doing, he located himself at a junction that allowed him to unmask the coercive apparatus of the English state and destabilize bourgeois culture and normative codes from within. The link between avant-garde art and a radical impetus was also forged via Wilde's interest in a cosmopolitan anarchist movement, as confirmed by his contacts with Sergius Kravchinsky ("Stepniak"), John Barlas and Adolphe Retté, among others.

Ó Donghaile's excursion into Wilde's "rebellious resilience", social criticism and anti-authoritarian protest is carried forward in Chapter 1, "Anticolonial Wilde", where he further keys us into the author's statements and lectures dating from the 1882 tour of the United States. Heed is paid to how the young Apostle of Aestheticism – or, rather, the "Bard of Erin" and worthy son of Jane Francesca Elgee, aka patriotic "Speranza" – did not hesitate to tell audiences of "the violence done by British imperialism to Irish people and their culture" through an injurious "programme of historical erasure" and a persevering attempt at "inhibiting the imagination of an entire people" (29). This chapter offers a sound rationale for Wilde's self-identification as an Irish republican who called for a decolonization of the mind and creative potential of a persecuted community. It presents a nuanced picture that takes due cognizance of the hostile reactions of the American press's conservative fringes; it also marks the boundaries between Wilde's sanguine Irish feelings, including his moral sympathizing with the Fenian movement, and the tame, sentimentalized construction of Celticism that underpinned instead Matthew Arnold's "On the Study of Celtic Literature" (1867), let alone John Ruskin's curt pigeonholing of China, India and Ireland as a bunch of "inferior races" to be modernized and civilized.

In a daring assertion, Ó Donghaile concludes that while critics and biographers have generally depicted the American tour as "an extended exercise in self-branding", Wilde turned it into "a radical political platform from which he repeatedly criticised British domination in Ireland" (37). By debunking patronizing descriptions of Irish culture as the expression of a primitive or degenerate society on the verge of disintegration, Wilde simultaneously brought under scrutiny the Anglo-Saxon episteme of scientific and rational progress.

The following chapters deal more directly with Wilde's literary output, from *Vera; or, The Nihilists* to "The Ballad of Reading Gaol". Never losing its grip on the overlapping areas between aesthetic components, political connotations and ineluctable historical contingencies, the analysis continues to tease out clues and speak vividly to the richly-textured levels of Wilde's "doublespeak". Chapter 2, "Coercion and Resistance: *Vera* … or the Land War", foregrounds the subversive edge of Wilde's largely neglected, unsuccessful first play by illustrating how the distraught setting of Csarist Russia stood in dialectical relation to British imperial policies and the corresponding crisis in Ireland (namely, the Irish Land War). The revolutionary Russian context and its fight against tyranny is read as an allegory for an occupied, starved, and insurrecting Ireland, which yearned to regain its sovereignty in contrast with the draconian measures and

supremacist drives hidden behind the liberal façade of Victorian Britain. In this play, Wilde is supposed to have paralleled nihilism with Irish insurgency and prompted audiences to reflect on a kind of terrorism that was not "the mindless work of apolitical criminals, but the result of political despair" and unrelenting coercion (57).

It is no wonder that Wilde's ideological proximity to socialist thinking should elicit a significant response in Chapter 3, "Class, Criticism and Culture: 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism'". Here, Ó Donghaile sheds light on the interconnections between Wilde's anti-capitalist critique of authority in his 1891 essay and the ciphers of progressive thought of that period at large, from George Bernard Shaw and the Fabian Society to Peter Kropotkin's ideas of instinctive solidarity and natural cooperation. These echoes are strengthened by other cultural references, such as Chinese philosophy, mainly thanks to Herbert A. Giles's English translation *Chuang Tzŭ: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*, which Wilde reviewed for *The Speaker* in 1890 ("A Chinese Sage"). A multilayered counterview is thus brought into being where the marriage between beauty and genius, the abolition of private property and a "healthy" individualism, is set against the dehumanizing vulgarities of industrial capitalism and the wasteful, hard-hitting competition of the "bourgeois crowd".

The proposition that art should blend individual expression and political agency, with the corollary of the artist as a dissident figure looking forward to social innovation, serves as an apt *trait d'union* with the following couple of chapters, where Ó Donghaile applies his critical lens to Wilde's fiction. In Chapter 4, "Fairy Tales for Revolutionaries", he builds on the premise that Wilde "used the folk tradition, the gothic and political satire to criticise late Victorian imperialism, property relations and authority" (122). A further referential landmark is to be found in Kropotkin's anarchist theory of art and literature, especially in connection with the Russian revolutionary's championing of solidarity, voluntary association and mutual aid as opposed to the compartmentalized atomism of capitalist ideology. At the same time, in Wilde's stories the notions of mutualism, compassion and cooperative responses to suffering would be given full play through a radical interpretation of Christianity and a wider palimpsest that hinges on the principles of justice, equality and social harmony. An indictment of imperial rapacity and capitalism's structural violence is seen as underlying fairy tales such as "The Happy Prince", "The Selfish Giant", and "The Young King", from their moving depictions of grief-stricken children and the bleak reality of exploited labour to the protagonists' final embracing a Franciscan faith of unconditional love.

Chapter 5, "The Politics of Art and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*", posits the critique of capital as no less than central to Wilde's novel, where Dorian is marked out as "corrupted by his addiction to commodities" and propelled by a "destructive craving for things" (150). Drawing on the aphorisms of the Preface and a number of critical contributions – most prominently, "Oscar Wilde: A Study" (1892), a politicized contemporary review by the poet and militant anarchist John Evelyn Barlas – Ó Donghaile penetrates beneath the surface of the gothic-romance conventions and addresses the issue of Wilde's invalidation of late Victorian commonplaces about art, society and the individual. He gears our perception to the theoretical and political discussions involving Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton and, eventually, Dorian himself, whose compulsive, sterile collection of objects constitutes a powerful trope for the self-devouring circuit of consumption. The acute, if somewhat far-fetched and hyperbolic conclusion of this chapter, assesses *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a text capable of encapsulating the topic of revolutionary politics. By showcasing "the destructive consequences of capital which prove to be personally and morally disastrous for Dorian" (159), the novel was to give voice and shape to a programme of revisionist Aestheticism.

In Chapter 6, "Civil Disobedience and *The Importance of Being Earnest*", the reader is faced with another hermeneutic challenge, this time regarding a masterpiece of Wilde's artistic maturity. Intriguingly, his 1895 social comedy is said to interrogate the establishment's political denial of rebellion and its attempts to contain memories linked to revolutionary outbreaks and class warfare. As better evidenced by its original four-act draft, *The Importance of Being Earnest* mordantly anatomized bourgeois regulative standards as an outcome of impositions that had been legitimized through a history of repression. In all probability, Wilde allusively appealed to collective memory by juxtaposing Jack Worthing's status as a foundling discovered in a suspiciously anonymous hand-bag, with the bombing of Victoria Station by the Fenian dynamiters in February 1884, when a device hidden in luggage had been used to destroy the checkroom. As a result, Wilde's play acquires climactic intensity in unison with the "confusion surrounding this profound void in Jack's personal record", given that, like

> the infant Jack, Fenian bombs were deposited in sites of public circulation in inconspicuous hand-bags and suitcases, and despite his profession of unionist sympathies he is unable to extricate himself from the 'worst excesses' of revolutionary republicanism. […] His indeterminacy is based not just on the coincidence of his discovery by a gentleman on his way to Worthing but also upon the contradictions that reside in his unionist self-identification with the British Empire. As Lady Bracknell complains, his strange origin story, like the issue of education, brings to the surface questions about civil disobedience and revolution. (190)

Chapter 7, "'De Profundis', 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' and the Politics of Imprisonment", fittingly completes the circle by giving a fair amount of space to the author's prison writings, whether penned during his incarceration or soon after his release. It meditates on how prison experience rendered Wilde more sensitive to suffering, hardship, marginalization and, above all, the endorsement of routinized violence by the British state apparatus, with its brutalizing penal system and strategies of corporate control. Ó Donghaile corroborates the thesis that the reasons for Wilde's internment were not confined to sexual practices, being also very much grounded in the latter's anarchist sympathies and opposition to the British ruling class.

This final chapter brings home to us the political nature of Wilde's prosecution and consequent detention, whereby the Irish artist would painfully find out for himself "the physical, psychological and material cost of his resistance to late Victorian authority", with both "De Profundis" and "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" emerging as "anarchic texts centred on Wilde's rejection of social and penal authority" (205). Alongside the letter to the *Daily Chronicle*'s editor, in which Wilde forcibly denounced the inhuman treatment of child prisoners, these memorable works rub salt in the wounds of a body politic whose methods of punishment and surveillance seemed to be designed to completely alienate and crush the subjectivity of the inmate. And this is certainly conducive to enriching the argumentative trajectory of *Oscar Wilde and the Radical Politics of the Fin de Siècle*, whose cogent exploration of a stratified discursive terrain makes it hard for anyone to still flirt with the idea that Wilde's aesthetic and individualist tenets might be just synonymous with social detachment or political escapism.

Laura Giovannelli

Donnacha Ó Beacháin, *From Partition to Brexit. The Irish Government and Northern Ireland*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2018, pp. 352. GBP 22.99. ISBN: 978-1-5261-3295-6.

One of the most striking features of Ó Beacháin's timely overview is his assured tone on a particularly contentious topic. This reflects his experience in researching and writing on the

complex, multi-faceted problem of the partition of Ireland that has afflicted the country, as well as its abettor, Britain, for 100 years. This is a work of mature assessment and often unexpected nuance. His preface and introduction contain very useful guidance on terminology, political parties and key themes for anyone reading themselves into the subject. Given the extraordinary breadth of the topic, it is to be expected that a volume of this nature would have something of the character of a synthesis. *From Partition to Brexit* does indeed comprise an amalgam of sources and its fresh take is rooted in the careful selection of items for the author's skilful assessment.

In a dangerous precedent of rejecting democracy, Britain did not accept the result of its own December 1918 General Election which in Ireland overwhelmingly backed Sinn Fein's manifesto for an independent republic. The War of Independence ensued in January 1919 and was waged with sufficient vigour by the Irish Republican Army and electoral success of Sinn Fein to force London to concede an uneasy "Truce" in July 1920. By then, the British Government had manoeuvred to partition Ireland and detach six of its hitherto natural and historic thirty-two counties. Holding on to valuable heavy industry and appeasing violent "Empire Loyalists" amid the onset of post-World War One economic decline were not immaterial factors.

What was sold after the fact to the undefeated IRA and Sinn Fein negotiators in London as a temporary compromise and stepping-stone to imminent reunification, along with independence, proved instead to be the durable, highly repressive "Orange" statelet run by Stormont under Westminster. When Stormont could not or would not do the bidding of Westminster, "Direct Rule" by British Civil Servants was imposed. As late as 1969 London permitted the pro-British "Unionist" regime in Stormont to reduce the franchise of "Nationalists" within the gerrymandered jurisdiction. This patent injustice, in conjunction with systematic discrimination *vis-à-vis* housing, employment and cultural activities, had the desired effect of disproportionate Nationalist emigration.

Beset by a ruinous Civil War in 1922-1923, which London did much to foster by pressurizing backers of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the fledgling Government of a truncated Ireland struggled to manage the crisis in the North from Dublin. Few would deny that the travesty of the Boundary Commission was anything other than an unmitigated disaster that doomed the elected powers on both sides of the Irish Sea to endless friction. The often crass cynicism of many of the key British participants in the Boundary Commission is laid bare by Ó Beacháin in one of the strongest early segments of his study. The grim outworking of such attitudes has been witnessed in every decade to the present and all major episodes are mentioned in this volume.

By accessing and presenting information from private correspondence, memoirs, state papers and "on the record" interviews, Ó Beacháin manages the feat of making numerous "original" contributions to an already massive bibliography of the wider subject. Wisely, the temptation to delve into the fascinating minutiae of the many campaigns of the IRA is passed over. Other specialised texts may be accessed for such detail. Sufficient notice, however, is taken of the major IRA offensives of 1939-1945, 1956-1962 and, of course, 1969-1997. Vital context on the armed dimension is covered to explain the travails of many Irish Governments of differing degrees of ideological commitment and capacity regarding the National Question.

Since the imposition of partition in 1921, Ireland had veered between phases of negotiation, both public and very private, and some of the most concerted violence experienced in Western Europe after 1945. The armed campaign the IRA had not planned to wage in 1969 split the Republican Movement into three major elements by 1974 and pushed the very militant Provisional tendency into the forefront of a war that Britain was content to fight. The conflict was drawing in its third generation of IRA Volunteers prior to the historic August 1994 ceasefire which opened the door to meaningful progress built on the hard lessons of flawed political

initiatives in the 1970s and early 1980s. The fascinating circumstances of how separate strands of mainstream politics in Dublin, London and Washington DC merged to achieve the 1994 breakthrough are outlined in their essence in Chapter Seven.

Unanticipated factors of domestic politics in the UK and Ireland led to the collapse of the accord in February 1996. The IRA had reason to believe that acts of bad faith in London, partially endorsed by the calamitous endorsement of the so-called "Washington Three test" by a leading Irish politician, deviated from what had been agreed when it called a de facto cessation. Reviving conditions necessary to re-instate the permanent ceasefire in July 1997 was no easy task for any of the key protagonists; not least the IRA which underwent a further damaging schism in November 1997. London, for its part, counted the financial and reputational cost of losing two additional stock exchanges. Ultimately, the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 paved the way for an interim settlement with a constitutional pathway for reunification.

The intricacies of such matters cannot be set down or discussed in just one book of 328 pages. However, the major positions, most important personalities and seminal events are addressed in a manner that anyone unfamiliar with the general dynamics of the subject can readily grasp. Useful appendices and a focussed up to date bibliography will guide a keen reader to deeper levels of analysis across the spectrum of a hundred years of Irish political history. A well-written and compelling narrative.

Ruan O'Donnell

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, *Little Red and Other Stories*, Belfast, The Blackstaff Press, 2020, pp. 178. GBP 12.99. ISBN: 978-1-78073-263-3.

Little Red and Other Stories is Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's eighth collection of short stories, a genre she has favoured along a writing career of over thirty years. It is in the realm of the short story that her voice finds a most suitable and effective expression, taking into account love and loss, past and present, tradition and modernity, and wandering in space and time, from small villages in Ireland to the elsewhere of foreign countries, from the past to the present of traditional and contemporary Ireland.

Ní Dhuibhne's academic background in folklore has always had a strong impact on her short story writing, as she makes a very personal and original use of folklore in her fiction, intertextually juxtaposing a traditional story and its modern counterpart. Her experimental technique with old legends recurs in a variety of short stories, from "Midwife to the Fairies" to "The Mermaid Legend", to the structural organization of her 1997 collection *The Inland Ice*.

This new collection of eleven stories is a welcome return after the publication of *The Shelter of Neighbours* in 2012 and her *Selected Stories* in 2017. In between Ní Dhuibhne published her remarkable memoir, *Twelve Thousand Days. A Memoir of Love and Loss*, in 2018, a moving account of her life spent with her late husband, Professor Bo Almquist, and of the short illness that led him to death.

A historian of the lives of women for decades, in *Little Red and Other Stories* Ní Dhuibhne follows two clearly identifiable lines of investigation that show continuity with her past and most recent writing but also new ways of elaborating her intertextual technique of storytelling.

Indeed, the themes of ageing, loss and the sorrow of separation from one's beloved, as well as survival, dominate this new collection and are interspersed in several stories. The stories mostly focus on survivors of dramatic and traumatic changes in their lives, trauma taking different forms and generating different reactions. In the title story, "Little Red", Fiona tries

online dating after her divorce, following the advice of a stranger on a plane. A streak of humour underlies the story as she realizes that what she assumes to be complex algorithmic calculations are actually based on religious persuasions. In "Baltic Amber" the missing amber earrings Linda treasures as her late husband David's gift bring back the memories of his sudden death and the bereavement that followed. In her typical use of simile, Ní Dhuibhne exploits animal imagery to convey the sense of loss: "For a long time after David's death, Linda felt like a small animal, a small starved cat, or a mouse. A spider" (118-119). The repetition of the adjective "small" gradually disappears as the animals chosen become smaller and smaller, which is emphasised by the isolation of the one-word sentence "A spider". "Odd" is a word that accompanies Linda's life: she "has lost a hundred-odd earrings", "Odd is the right word" (114), even her socks are odd and mismatched (117), occasionally she wears "two odd earrings", but they "make her feel, and probably look odd. In the sense of eccentric, possibly forgetful, possibly crazy" (114-115). The range of meanings of the adjective, mismatched, uneven, weird, is an indirect description for the feeling of disorder, insecurity and loneliness in her life as a widow, to which she reacts with "restlessness", and "life became a series of stepping stones, a frog-hop from one to the next" (119). David returns in her dreams as if he were alive, something that occurs also in the story "New Zealand Flax", in which Frieda visits the cottage in Kerry on the pretext of cutting the grass, but mostly to feel the presence of her husband. With a touch of magic realism, Elk comes back to share the evening meal and the wine, "he comes out of the study and sits in his own place at the table" (161). The world of the living and the dead overlap, "He looks like himself" (161), "His voice is his voice" (162). Ní Dhuibhne's use of simile provides the closeness between the real world and the underworld. Elk's voice is "like a mellow burgundy" and "Like a purple orchid", a coreferent to the Chablis on the table and the orchids Frieda has been looking after in the garden. Both David and Elk are scholars; reference is made to their books filling the bookshelves and boxes in an ideal link with Ní Dhuibhne's memoir *Twelve Thousand Days* and her husband's books.

Death and storytelling are interspersed in some stories. In "Visby" the first-person narrator's stay in Sweden and her day of cycling are interrupted by a phone call announcing the sudden drowning of an acquaintance and his family. The suspicion that the man deliberately murdered his wife and children comes to her mind: "Was Maurice one of those men who seem normal and kind at work, but at home metamorphose into a monstrous bully? Street angel, house devil" (79). Meeting Hulda, the lady with whom she practices her Swedish, the protagonist becomes the audience for a storyteller: "And she told me the story of the Eriksons" (81) who lived and died on the island of Gotland. Opening the sentence with the conjunction "and" provides a sense of continuity between the death of Maurice and the tragic circumstances of Olaf and Karen's death, as Olaf's smothering his demented wife and then killing himself is an act of love.

If the language of loss looms large in several stories, the language of storytelling and the presence of traditional stories are also clear. Some of them are stories arising from Ní Dhuibhne's own background as a folklorist, and direct references alternate with forms of rewriting. For example, in "New Zealand Flax" a missing article about "The Dead Lover's Return" is mentioned, while in "Berlin" the context of the fall of the Berlin Wall provides the opportunity for checking fiction against reality, so that real life mirrors an ancient story. Lolly's visit to the Humboldt Library in East Berlin in 1979 as a PhD student allows her to continue her research on the history of a story she has been working on. "The story was a fairy tale about an abandoned child, a bit like Hansel and Gretel, a scary story that ended well being a fairy tale, but that contained metaphorical references to infanticide, child exposure and such unspeakable customs […]" (127). On this occasion she meets the librarian Gerhardt, and they briefly keep in touch by letter for a while,

before long years of silence. Lolly has a family of her own when he writes again mentioning a brief visit to Dublin, but at the airport only the little girl Gisela arrives, Gerhardt's daughter. Lolly witnesses the old story she had worked on translated into part of her own and her family's life, and keeping the child is a way to protect her from her father's abandonment.

From this point of view, Ní Dhuibhne provides a sort of continuity and a variation of her intertextual narrative technique based on the juxtaposition of a traditional story and its modern counterpart, giving prominence to the modern part, so to speak. This is what happens for example in "Lemon Curd", a story that has appeared elsewhere with different titles and with slight differences. Here, Ní Dhuibhne plays with the traditional nursery rhyme "Little Miss Muffet", which exists in many different versions and so resembles the various versions of an old legend. The lyrics refer to an incident in which a girl is frightened by a spider, and "An enormous spider" (58) frightens the unmarried retired teacher Miss Moffat, an open reference to Little Miss Muffet, at the end of a day marked by small traumatic incidents. Variations of spider figures frighten her in her encounters with men dressed in black she assumes to be criminals, people she either meets on the bus or sees from the bus she is travelling on, a one-legged man all dressed in black – "black hoodie, black jogging pants, one black shoe" (47) – aggressively threatens to "cut the bollocks off your mother" (46); and a "short man with black hair and a bird face, with a black moustache. A black t-shirt" (51) grabs a young girl cycling on the footpath. These men in black provide a layer of potential violence anticipating the end of the story when the radio news of the arrest of a man "suspected of murdering a twenty-seven-year-old woman" (57) not far from Miss Moffat's house attracts her attention. A "long ring. Long. And loud. An aggressive ring" late at night (*ibidem*) is the epitome of her fears and defencelessness, pushing her to take shelter in the bathroom, where a further enemy in the form of a spider awaits her.

"Lemon Curd" is a multi-layered story that can be read at different levels, as a focus on female loneliness, as an insight into the social pattern of the city of Dublin with its attention to the language divide between North and South Dublin. However, it can also be read as an implicit variation of "Little Red Riding Hood", with the violent men in black as alter egos of the big black wolf and the violent behaviour and language they use based on "fucking" or "bollocks" recall the wolf's threatening words "All the better to eat you with!"

"Little Red Riding Hood" is intertextually present in the title story, "Little Red", though it openly appears at the end of the story, when Fiona thinks of the way her little grand-daughter Ellie wants the story to be told, "the version that is not scary" (18). In Fiona's life there is a version that instead is scary. Having started online dating after her divorce, she finds it entertaining for a while, until one Sunday afternoon a man arrives at her house: "A figure appears outside the patio door" (10), "He is tall, with a long pointy face, a crest of grey hair springing back from his forehead, a sunburnt complexion. Neat clothes – jeans and a pale grey shirt, a grey anorak" (11). He introduces himself as Declan, "Is that Declan the plumber or Declan the electrician or Declan the serial killer?" (10), and manages to get into the house uninvited expecting something to eat. A sense of threat and fear dominates the paradoxical situation, which might, or might not, turn out to be quite innocent after all with the suggestion of a walk. As a matter of fact, Declan too seems to be a wolf in disguise, which is textually highlighted only at the end of the story when the scary episode is replaced by the recollection of Ellie's wish to hear the version that is not scary.

"Little Red Riding Hood" also appears in the final story, "As I Lay Dying", whose title recalls William Faulkner's novel of 1930. Faulkner chronicles the death of Addie Brunden; the first-person narrator in Ní Dhuibhne's story imagines her own death and the look she might have on her death bed, "I look different – like some old schoolteachers I had […]. Or like the granny in 'Little Red Riding Hood'" (166).

An interesting experiment with the transformation of traditional fairy tales is "Nadia's Cake", set somewhere in the little village of Helansi in Eastern Europe. This establishes a link to "Lemon Curd", in which Miss Moffat's bus ride in Dublin revolves around the course in Russian she has been attending since her retirement and the difficulties the new language presents. "Nadia's Cake" is mostly told in the present tense and concerns Jen's desire to learn a new and unusual language spending some time in a remote Balkan village in the house of a woman named Nevena. She needs "a new country, a new language, new food. New people, new stories" (112) as a form of rebirth. Her curiosity about the new environment and the unfamiliar customs, and her interest in a language she does not speak and understand very well, intertwine with her inquiring mind which leads her to record local stories for the sake of anthropology. "Some of the stories are about ghosts and some are about vampires and some are about the Ottomans and some are about stepmothers and bears and wolves and the gypsies" (97). She considers the prejudice against the Gypsies: "The prejudice against travellers in Ireland is as nothing compared to this" (97-98). Though warned not to venture into the forbidden part of the nearby town, the Gypsy settlement, she does anyway. What she finds exotic turns into danger, as she is abducted by Gypsies, taken to a house and robbed of her belongings, including her camera and credit card.

The house is a negative mirror of the gingerbread house of "Hansel and Gretel": far from attractive, dark and dim, the two men that captured her are father and son, they have in their eyes "an expression that is a mixture of ferocity and hopelessness", and one of them "has enormous teeth" (102) just like the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood". The woman of the house, Nadia, looks after Jen providing her with food and taking care of her basic necessities; she is constantly cooking, using mostly the produce of her garden. She shares some features with the witch in "Hansel and Gretel", who feeds her two prisoners in order to eat them. Besides there being realistic details in Nadia's kitchen, the oven recalls the one into which Gretel manages to lock the witch and help her brother escape. Yet Nadia is not a witch and the cake she starts baking early one morning – "There's sugar, a slab of butter, eggs [...] A jug of something that looks like cream" (109-110) – offers Jen a chance to get free. By and large "Nadia's Cake" reworks motifs in fairy tales of children lost in a wood, an unknown country in this case, villains – the two Ivans, father and son – recall the ogre in "Tom Thumb", and Nadia is in a way a fairy godmother. Her cake remains in Jen's mind when she comes back to Nevena's house, and dominates the final part of the story: "She wonders what happened to Nadia's cake. Who ate it? What did it taste like?" (112). It is a metaphor of her adventure among the Gypsies but also a cross reference to Hansel and Gretel's gingerbread house.

Some stories in the collection deal with family issues and childhood memories, leaving space to broader concerns. The old lady's independence in blocking her daughter's telephone number in "Blocked" changes into vulnerability and dependence when she falls and breaks her leg. The first-person narrator recalls her life as a child and how Bronwyn, her mother, made a life for herself and her children after her husband's death and in her old age she favours the company of a neighbour who will turn out to steal all her money from her bank account. In a similar way, "White Skirt" focuses on the first-person narrator's memories of a favourite aunt coming for visits from England when on holiday, in order to shed light on expected behaviour and religious differences in Ireland in the 1950s.

"The Kingfisher Faith" opens on Ciara's return from Australia and on the letters from the Breast Check Clinic she finds upon her arrival: "There were three envelopes and three letters [...] They had written three times" (142). The choice of a subsequent one-word single paragraph, "So", is a stylistic strategy that expresses whatever remains unspoken because it is unspeakable,

the amount of fear that accompanies the narrative core of the story revolving around Ciara's second step of investigation, a common experience for a lot of women facing the same situation. The story's title introduces the bird imagery that underlies the text and appears already in the first paragraph. In Australia Ciara felt "weightless", "she had imagined herself a bird, a migratory bird, a swallow, sailing swiftly above her own life" (140). The use of alliteration sheds light on the bird's flight as well as the sense of freedom embedded in flying. Bird images are evoked later on when at the hospital she tries to pass the time learning a poem, "Swallow, swallow, swallow, the poem starts" (147). Only in the final part does the kingfisher of the title become prominent, when by mere chance walking along the river she sees "the flash of blue", and once again Ní Dhuibhne resorts to a one-word paragraph, "Kingfisher", to convey Ciara's excitement. The lack of the definite or indefinite article personifies the bird and makes the encounter even more special ("She had never seen one before", 151), an almost magical event leaving the end of the story open on a feeling of extraordinary joy that surprises Ciara with faith in the future: "It was, she thought, a good omen" (152), as a kingfisher is generally considered a symbol of peace, prosperity, abundance, grace, it is all in all a very positive sign of life and continuity.

The textual organization of the stories in this collection is often based on Ní Dhuibhne's usual alternation of past and present, which highlights the obsessive presence of the past. "Little Red" opens in the present tense as a narrative tense, "A thing Fiona does is online dating" (1), a stylistic choice that is prevalent in the story, leaving the past tense for flashbacks and past events. In "Lemon Curd" Miss Moffat's bus journey in the space of the city is also a journey in time and memory, recollecting a meeting with an old boyfriend at the local supermarket. The episode brings back memories of the social ambition marking the group of law students he belonged too, people who were going to be successful and whose language was a matter of distinction. "They spoke in the accents of the best south Dublin suburbs, as Miss Moffat did herself" (54). Attention to language and the sociological implications in the language divide between North and South Dublin overlap with the protagonist's attempt to learn Russian. She has not managed to make the North side her new home yet, which is clear in her reaction to the words that surround her, words that both fascinate and repel her. "The language of this part of the city is still foreign" to her (47-48), like the Russian she is trying to learn. However, she occasionally appropriates the local language, "Get off the fucking bus. (See. She's picking up the local dialect, without even trying)" (48).

Notably, Ní Dhuibhne's typical use of expressions or phrases in brackets recurs as a way to enter the mind of her character, a technique she frequently exploits in several stories as a form of continuity and a distinctive mark of her writing. A few examples may be taken from "Little Red": "Cushy told her about a friend of hers, who was a widow. (That's not the same thing, Fiona thought. Being divorced is worse)" (5), "Blocked": "She had my aunt for company (she didn't like her much)" (29), "Visby": "They both loved doing crossword puzzles. (The neighbours knew all this apparently. How they knew, if they never got inside the apartment, wasn't clear to me. I let that go)" (83), "Nadia's Cake": "The look she calls 'communist'. (Everything you cannot quite understand is called 'communist' – shrug – in this country, especially everything negative)" (106).

Little Red and Other Stories marks a significant step in Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's career as a writer of short stories. This latest collection displays a form of continuity and development in her writing, as well as the flexibility of changing and expanding her established patterns succeeding in avoiding repetitions in plots, characters and characters' presentations or textual organization. Her voice always has something new to say for the attentive listener.

Giovanna Tallone

Rosalie Rahal Haddad, *Shaw, Crítico,* Santa Rosa, Universidad Nacional de la Pampa Publishing House, 2019, pp. 381. NPG. ISBN: 978-950-863-371-2 (e-Book).

If something characterizes George Bernard Shaw's theater, it is its breaking of each of the conservative perspectives of nineteenth century drama. His need to denounce the traditional works that lulled the audience, his deep critical character, his goal of educating the people instead of just amusing them and his attack on stereotypes are some of his most notable characteristics, those that make him persist with so much validity even in the present. It was a theater that was born at the end of the nineteenth century to establish itself as antagonistic to conventional theater: it roundly rejected the idea of entertaining its audience and opted for a transformation of its viewers, ripping them out of that passive nature and turning them into a critical audience. At a time when the theater was ruled by conventions without innovations, Shaw tried to show the hypocrisy and responsibility of the ruling-classes, defended social rights, and fought hard against censorship. Few playwrights stand out for accounting for the aforementioned values in their works. However, Oscar Wilde is another of the great critics of his time in the theater, who is referenced also in this book.

In this framework, Rosalie Rahal Haddad's book, entitled *Shaw, Crítico* and published in 2019, contains selected essays by Shaw present in *Our Theaters in the Nineties*, *Shaw on Theater* and *Prefaces*, writings that reflect how Shaw defined theater. The original version of the book reviewed is in Portuguese, and it was the first in the collection *Da Irlanda para o Brasil*, which compiles texts of literary criticism and valuable research by specialized scholars. Its translation into Spanish was the result of the joint work of the research team coordinated by Prof. Laura P. Z. Izarra, of the Department of Modern Letters, Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil, and of the teams of research of the Faculty of Human Sciences of Universidad Nacional de La Pampa, Argentina, among which is the Contemporary Literatures in Dialogue Research Program, directed by Prof. María G. Eliggi. Such exchanges constitute an important incentive to different critical points of view by expanding the reception of books such as *Shaw, Crítico* to a Spanish-speaking public, promoting the studies of English-speaking authors in Latin America. The translation of the Introduction from Portuguese to Spanish was carried out by María G. Eliggi and Shaw's essays were translated from English to Spanish by María Elena Pérez Bustillo. The translated texts were also carefully revised by María G. Eliggi and Graciela Obert.

The book reviewed is made up of a few preliminary words by María G. Eliggi, a preface by Laura P. Z. Izarra, an introduction by Rosalie Rahal Haddad and a selection of thirteen critical texts by Shaw. Each of the texts has a brief summary by Haddad, where the main idea developed by Shaw is pointed out. The selected critical texts allow the reader to enter Shaw's theater based on his own essays and evaluations of plays, theater critics, actors and playwrights of his time.

Haddad's introduction highlights the importance of Shaw's theater for the nineteenth century and how revolutionary his writings were as they were framed in a Victorian environment governed by extremely rigid moral values. In addition, the author states that theatrical performances were controlled at that time by a small group of conservatives whose sole interest was to please the public, an idea against which Shaw rebelled. The selection of Shaw's critical texts that follows the Introduction, made by this specialist in Anglo-Irish studies, provides an account of how the concept of theater is built for the playwright.

In the first place, the text "Las disculpas del autor", in which Shaw alludes to the conservative works that are successful among the bourgeoisie is presented with the aim of criticizing them for their lack of didactic content. The three texts that follow are reviews of theatrical performances

of his time. The first is "Dos Nuevas Obras", where Shaw focuses on *An Ideal Husband* by Oscar Wilde, a work that the playwright praises and applauds because comedy exerts a powerful criticism of London society. The second is "Una Nueva Obra Vieja y Una Vieja Obra Nueva", directed at two performances: *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* by Arthur Wing Pinero. Wilde's comedy, in this case, did not generate the same satisfaction as the previous one: for Shaw it was an empty comedy, without any critical teaching. On the other hand, the playwright makes a harsh criticism of Pinero's work for treating a subject such as "the woman with a past" in a highly melodramatic way, adhering to the perspective of conventional theater. The third of this group of texts is "La Vieja Actuación y La Nueva", a review of an 1895 performance of William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, where, although he alludes to it as being a satisfactory play, his comments about the parliaments are really harsh.

The following three texts are appreciations made of specific members of the theatrical field of the nineteenth century. The first is "GBS Respecto de Clement Scott" a text addressed to a well-known critic of the time whom Shaw points out for being complacent and speaking with fervor of feelings, a manifestation that, for him, should not be found in a critical opinion. The second is "William Morris como Actor y Dramaturgo", where it is possible to appreciate the admiration that Shaw had for Morris, despite, his few visits to the theater. The third is "El Teatro del Nuevo Siglo", dedicated to an association of enthusiasts who sought to regenerate the theater in England. Shaw then makes a critique of the works *The Yashmak* by Cecil Raleigh and Seymour Hicks and *Skipped by the Light of the Moon* by G. R. Sims.

The next two critiques of Shaw reflect the conditions of the theater at the time: "No vale la pena leerlo" shows how little an actor earns and compares it to the critic's work. On the other hand, in "Prefacio de El 'Mundo' Teatral de 1894, de William Archer" he wonders why people do not frequent the theaters, unless it is to go to a renowned theater to see a work that has already reached recognition, and such lack of attendance is linked to the conditions of the theaters themselves: the transport combinations to reach them, the costs and the comforts of the cheapest seats, which, according to Shaw, are below the level required in a third-class train.

Shaw's last four critical writings reflect explicitly his vision of the theater. The first is entitled "Una Obra a mi Manera", where he talks about the art of telling stories and alludes to the stories that are recurrent in his works. In the next text, "Reglas para los Directores", Shaw exposes what is the role that the director must assume to "provide a guide for beginners", as he calls it. Then follows the text "Principalmente acerca de mí mismo", a writing in which Shaw reflects on his profession as a playwright. Finally, the book ends with "Prefacio de *Mrs. Warren Profession*", the preface to one of his plays, where the topic of prostitution is central and the prostitute is seen as a victim of a society that does not take care of her or give her opportunities.

The work of compiling each of these critical writings by Shaw, adding a brief summary, giving an account of the trajectory of this theater and its influence today, and translating them into Spanish attributes to this book a great value for any Spanish-speaking student and researcher of modern theater. Shaw's theater broke with the structures of his time: his revolutionary visions conveyed a new theater with more didactic objectives that have influenced many works from the twentieth century to the present, demonstrating that his ideas continue to be valid even a century and two decades later.

Particularly in the Spanish-speaking world, having this Spanish translation of *Shaw, Crítico* is of great interest to the academic community dedicated to Shaw's work and late nineteenth century drama.

Manuela Shocron Vietri

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