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Introduction

This issue marks the centenary of Bloomsday with essays by John Banville, Aíla de Oliveira Gomes, Colin MacCabe and Maria Tymozcko. The front cover illustration depicts one of the landmarks of Dublin on that famous day of 16th June, 1904.

The highlight of the Journal is the text of Sebastian Barry's new play, *Whistling Psyche*, kindly presented by the playwright himself, who obtained permission from Faber and Faber for us to publish the script. The play may be seen in London from May 2004 at the Almeida Theatre, starring Claire Bloom and Kathryn Hunter.

Our section *The Critic and the Author* presents a dialogue between Laura Izarra and Derek Hand on his *John Banville: Exploring Fictions*. Articles on fiction, history and the Irish in South America are followed by two interviews, one with John Banville and the other with Christina Reid, and reviews of recent publications on Irish studies.

The debates generated by the material presented in this issue are complemented by President McAleese's lecture, "EU enlargement and Ireland's experience in the EU focusing on the implications for political culture and sense of national identity", given on the occasion of her visit to the University of São Paulo in March this year.

A relevant feature of the journal is the focus on the encounter of cultures in the section *Voices from Brazil*, in which Sandra Vasconcelos writes about the importance of Guimarães Rosa as a modernist writer. "Remembering" pays homage to the Brazilian poet Haroldo de Campos, who died last year. Co-founder of the Brazilian Concrete Poetry Movement and widely translated into many languages, his *transcreations* of Irish writers, such as Joyce and Beckett, have helped make Irish literature known in our country. His fascination with the genius of Joyce's linguistic pyrotechnics made him the soul of our Bloomsday celebrations in São Paulo for fifteen years. He will be sadly missed.

"O pulsar azul do Jaraguá", óleo S/Tela, 100x130cm de Sandra Semeghini.
View of Pico do Jaraguá in São Paulo which celebrates its 450th anniversary this year.

Bloomsday Centenary

Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake
by Carol Loeb Shloss

John Banville*

The life of Lucia Joyce, so Carol Loeb Shloss tells us, "is a story that was not supposed to be told." (p. 11) In her attempts to recount the tale of James Joyce's troubled daughter, Shloss met many obstacles, chief among them, she implies, the remaining members of the immediate Joyce family, and particularly Joyce's grandson, Stephen, "the very person who ... decided that [Lucia's] story should remain buried in the dark cellars of 'family privacy'." (p. 455) It was Stephen Joyce who in 1992 persuaded the National Library of Ireland to allow him to remove from the James Joyce-Paul Léon papers, which were about to be opened to the public, a substantial number of letters relating to his aunt. Already Stephen Joyce had destroyed Lucia's letters to him, and had persuaded Samuel Beckett to do likewise. Most importantly, in the early 1980s he had taken possession of a trunkful of Joyce papers, including many letters from Joyce to his daughter, which have never come to light – and never will, it would seem, given Stephen Joyce's fierce determination to safeguard the privacy of his grandparents and of his father, and to suppress, as Shloss would have it, the sad history of his Aunt Lucia. No wonder that Shloss when she took on the task of writing Lucia's biography should have felt "as if I had walked into a small disaster zone." (p. 28)

It is ironic that the long introduction, "What Happened to Lucia Joyce?", relating the author's travails in researching her subject, should be the most absorbing chapter in the book. Shloss presents herself as a cross between a private detective engaged in a search for a missing person, and the foster parent whom, had she been available and had he been wise enough, Joyce would have appointed to look after his daughter and preserve her memory. She has been inventive and resourceful, not to say cunning, in her investigations: though muffled in academic tones, there is a note of triumphal glee in her account of how she outwitted the Joyce family censors by tracing Lucia's years of treatment in various European mental institutions through the medical bills which Paul Léon[1] had saved. As she admits, however, the paucity of primary sources meant that she "had to construct the context of Lucia's experiences and then put her into them," so that "the Lucia who is presented here is almost totally refracted through the eyes of others." (p. 32) All the same, despite what she describes as "generations of censorship", she has managed to paint a remarkably detailed portrait of Joyce's unfortunate "Lucylight", as he dubs her in *Finnegans Wake*, and in the process has produced a

sharply perceptive and disturbing meditation on the terrible price that great art often levies not only on the artist but on those closest to him.

The question remains, and it is a difficult one, as to whether Lucia Joyce merits such a lavish portrayal. Lucia liked to tease her father that her fame as a dancer would one day set her in the newspaper headlines above him – the notion was encouraged by an interviewer for a Paris newspaper in 1928 who declared: "When she reaches her full capacity for rhythmic dancing, James Joyce may yet be known as his daughter's father" (p. 152) – and throughout the years of her early adulthood she saw herself in spirited though loving competition with the world-famous author of *Ulysses*. There are many moments in Shloss's book when she seems to believe that the Parisian interviewer's prophecy would have come true were it not for the machinations of Joyce's family and protectors. But despite Shloss's insistence on Lucia's artistic gifts, the evidence she so earnestly adduces only serves to indicate that had she not been the daughter of a great literary figure, poor Lucia would by now be forgotten, along with so many other "rhythmic dancers" of the period.

The other part of Shloss's argument, that "Joyce's daughter may have had problems, but she was no lunatic," (p. 31) and that she was, in effect, sacrificed for the sake of a book, is hard to refute, although that is not to say it is incapable of refutation. Referring to an account of a visit to Lucia by a friend of her childhood, Dominique Maroger, in 1980, two years before Lucia's death, Shloss sets out her own case:

> [Maroger's] explanatory scheme was a simple one: "Joyce was lacking the calm needed to finish *Finnegans Wake*. The constant scandals that his daughter fomented within the house rendered that task impossible. The novelist installed her straightaway in London," in the homes of numerous friends, with [his long-time patron] Harriet Weaver, and finally with his family in Ireland. When she left the beaten path, becoming a fugitive, "in Paris the idea blossomed that she could be arrested and officially interned." (p. 419)

And this, with the collusion, according to Shloss, of Lucia's mother and brother, and Joyce intimates such as Maria Jolas, is exactly what happened. As Shloss remarks of Jolas, one of her more egregious villains, she "looked over the Joyces' emotional shoulders and decided that a book was more important than a girl's life." (p. 255)

From the outset the auguries for Lucia were not good. When she was born, in a pauper's ward of the Ospidale Civico in Trieste, in July 1907, her parents were living the rackety life of penurious expatriates; her mother told one of her Triestine friends that the child had been born "almost in the street." (p. 38) The name that her father chose for her was associated not only with light and vision but was also, as Shloss wryly notes, the name of the mad heroine of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, as the opera-loving Joyce would have been well aware.

It had been a hard pregnancy. Nora Joyce, a country girl from County Galway, had still not reconciled herself to exile after nearly three years in Europe. At the best of times she was no homemaker, and these were not the best of times. The couple, who already had a two-year-old son, were existing largely on the charity of James's long-suffering brother Stanislaus, also exiled in Trieste; James was out of work, scraping a few schillings from odd bits of journalism and private language lessons. Nora's health was poor: as Joyce wrote to Stanislaus, in unwittingly prophetic mode, the child she was carrying was "an unforgettable part of the problem." (p. 41) The wet heat of the Triestine summer was a torment for a young woman about to come to term. To make matters worse, Joyce himself was ill with rheumatic fever, and indeed when Nora went into labour, her husband was a patient in the same hospital.

All was not misery, however. At her birth, Shloss reminds us,

> Lucia entered into a life that was rich in counterpoint, woven from the strands of rebellion, optimism, volatile high spirits, and sheer, brazen talent that had brought her parents from Ireland to Europe. It was a loquacious, opinionated life that was filled with music, books, potatoes, cabbages, Irish bacon, polenta, colorful conversation, and a lackadaisical attention to custom. Poverty competed with extravagance in the household of her parents, sober realities with lavish drink, and father and mother both called upon luck to soften the blows of fate. (p. 39-40)

The early years in Trieste drew Lucia into what Shloss calls "the erotic dimension of her parents' lives." (p. 59) Like many bohemian young couples with no money and too many babies, the Joyces developed roving eyes. Joyce flirted, harmlessly, it would seem, with his private language students, while Nora "got embroiled", as Shloss puts it, with a young, and married, Venetian aristocrat named Prezioso, whose "visits with Nora in the Joyces' flat were initially clouded with ambiguity." (p. 60) Joyce seems to have been complaisant, or more than complaisant, in the matter; as his letters and his fictions show, he had a streak of masochism in his nature, and liked to play with the darkly exciting prospect of sexual betrayal – consider Leopold Bloom's ambiguous attitude to Molly's affair with Blazes Boylan, and the sticky humiliations he suffers in the Nighttown chapter.

Shloss raises the temperature significantly by glossing Joyce's sensual reveries on nameless young women in his secret journal, posthumously published as *Giacomo Joyce*, with his burgeoning absorption in his young daughter, noting that he recycled images from the journal of flower, lover and child as the basis for the poem "A Flower Given to My Daughter" in *Pomes Penyeach* (1927). This is the first glimpse of a shy, dark beastie which will poke its proboscis repeatedly out of the hot undergrowth of Shloss's book – *Finnegans Wake* has much punning fun with insect/incest, and both words prefigure some of the deeper themes of the book – and which we suspect might

have been freed to scuttle all over the pages had the Joycean censors allowed. In the summer of 1917, when Nora had gone with the children to London to recover from what seems to have been a minor nervous breakdown, we read her reporting to Joyce in her idiosyncratic, Molly Bloomesque fashion how twelve-year-old Giorgio and ten-year-old Lucia spend their mornings wrestling in bed: "I havent any trouble with them except in the morning before they get up its a regular game with them they have a boxing match in the bed and of course I have to pull the two of them out on the floor Georgie is very shy he is afraid of his life I might see his prick so that he rolls himself up in the quilt." (p. 69) Hmm.

There is no doubt that James Joyce's immediate family had, like every family, its secrets, its silences. Shloss, although she never says so directly, seems to believe, or at least to suspect strongly, that there was an early incestuous link, emotional if not physical, between Lucia and Giorgio and, in a broader sense, between Lucia and her father. She quotes one of Lucia's friends, Hélène Vanel, writing in the 1980s that Lucia "lived through many strange adventures, which she would tell us about, and I believe that they were often with her brother." (p. 149-50) Joyce himself knew that she "loved her brother in an extraordinary way. When he fell in love ... and finally married ... she went through many hardships."[2] (p. 171) On the other hand, Cary Baynes, the psychiatric assistant whom Carl Jung appointed to be Lucia's companion during his – unsuccessful – treatment of her in the early 1930s, was convinced that Lucia's father was the cause of all her emotional troubles: Baynes wrote, in jumbled syntax: "Lucia had the negative thought brought into the very midst of her life, not once-removed in books, but in her own father, that fact coupled with the whole incest situation and her lack of any orientation about living anyway ... was more than she could deal with." (p. 291) What is meant exactly by "the whole incest situation" is not made clear, as is so often the case in matters Jungian.

Although Kay Boyle, who befriended Lucia in Paris in the 1920s, later wrote that "Giorgio and Lucia were bitter about their father, and agreed on the question of the crippling effect his fame had on their lives," (p. 6) all the evidence suggests that Lucia was deeply infatuated with her father, or at least with the image of him which she spent so many years and so much emotional energy building in her head. While she was undergoing therapy with Jung, she wrote to Joyce: "If ever I take a fancy to anybody I swear to you on the head of Jesus that it will not be because I am not fond of you. Do not forget that." He was everywhere in her life, even after his death. In 1945, immured in a French asylum, she assured a visitor that although he was under the ground he was not gone: "*Cet imbécile, qu'est ce quil fait sous la terre? Quand est ce qu'il se décide à sortir? Il vous regarde tout le temps*."[3] (p. 410)

What are we to make of these humid familial inter-obsessions? Shloss makes much of them, but for all her passionate advocacy of the case for Lucia's lucidity, which is wholly to her credit, she is not as convincing as she thinks she is. The institution of the family, supposedly the framework upon which civilisation rests, is

in fact one of the strangest of the ad hoc bastions that humankind has erected against the incoherent reality into which it finds itself thrown.[4] Were the Joyces any more dysfunctional than any other set of intimate strangers forced to spend their lives together under the one roof?

The "whole incest situation", between brother and sister and daughter and father, is a theme that recurs throughout *Finnegans Wake*, and even Leopold Bloom's fond reveries on *les jeaunes filles en fleur* including his teenage daughter Milly would be enough to set the snouts of our latter-day thought police twitching. Shloss's close reading of the *Wake* in search of what she considers Lucia's pervasive presence in it – the chapter devoted to this work of decryption is entitled "A Father's Scrutiny" – is ingenious, and in itself a not insignificant contribution to Wakean studies.[5] She has no doubt that "Lucia's influence upon the life of her father and upon both the form and substance of *Finnegans Wake* was profound." (p. 424) Many of those who knew Joyce in the 1930s, which Lucia largely spent confined to asylums for the insane, support her conviction. Louis Gillet spoke of the "Passion of the Father" and said of Joyce that he "did not write this passion; he lived it." (p. 424) Joyce himself recognised the connection between Lucia and the nightbook that he was writing. Shloss quotes a moving testimony by Jacques Mercanton, who knew Joyce in Lausanne in 1938:

> In that night wherein his spirit struggled, that "bewildering of the nicht," lay hidden the poignant reality of a face dearly loved. He gave me details about the mental disorder from which his daughter suffered, recounted a painful episode without pathos, in that sober and reserved manner he maintained even in moments of the most intimate sorrow. After a long silence, in a deep, low voice, beyond hope, his hand on a page of his manuscript: "Sometimes I tell myself that when I leave this dark night, she too will be cured." (p. 425)

One asks again Shloss's central question: what happened to Lucia Joyce, that she was driven into that "dark night"? How important to her was her desire to be a dancer, and how destructive of her emotional equilibrium was her failure to achieve her ambition? Shloss devotes much space and energy to her account of Lucia's aspirations and training as a dancer. The 1920s, like the 1960s, were a time of restless questing after self-fulfilment and what had not yet come to be called "alternative lifestyles," which of course brought all manner of frauds and mountebanks scrambling out of the woodwork. Everywhere, it seemed, hordes of buxom young women in scanty tunics were leaping eagerly to the commands of this or that half-demented instructor. One of Lucia's teachers, the most colourful if not the most inspiring of them, was Raymond Duncan, brother of the more famous Isadora, "a man of extraordinary, even ludicrous eccentricity," Shloss remarks, (p. 99) who went about in toga and sandals and "looked like an unbearded Ulysses" – how, Shloss asks, could the daughter of James Joyce have failed to recognise the appropriateness of her choice of teacher?

It is not hard to imagine the effect of all this exuberance and ferment on the precariously balanced mind of the young Lucia Joyce. She had the luck initially to fall in with a group of dancers who along with Lucia formed themselves into "Les Six de rythme et couleur." They danced to the music of everyone from Scarlatti to Stravinsky, in a programme combining modern dance, mime and parody – as a girl Lucia had been a brilliant impersonator of Charlie Chaplin – and received some favourable notices, including one from André Levinson, the leading Parisian dance critic. The group was important to Lucia not only artistically but in that, as Shloss writes, "[I]t gave her a life apart from her family." (p. 137) On stage, she was transformed; Hélène Vanel, a member of the troupe, felt that for Lucia the dance "gave her a taste of life and a beautiful way to express her dreams with all her being, both body and soul." Joyce too admired his daughter's dancing, and even seems to have picked up some steps from her that he adapted to the capers he would often cut when in his cups. But there was a deeper resonance as well. "Watching the silent eloquence of his daughter's moving body, he begins to describe the meaning of his own language experiment in *Work in Progress* [that is, *Finnegans Wake*] in analogous terms." (p. 152)

Lucia could not dance out of the troubles that increasingly beset her. In some respects a typical 1920s "flapper", she was sexually precocious, disastrously so. As Shloss remarks, by 1930, when she was still in her early twenties, she had been abandoned by three lovers in rapid succession: Samuel Beckett, famously, but also Alexander Calder and the minor American artist and playboy Waldo Peirce. The following year she took up with a friend of her brother's, Alec Ponisovsky, a young Russian who was in love with Peggy Guggenheim's sister Hazel but who nevertheless was persuaded by Joyce's friends the Léons to propose to Lucia, though on what grounds is unclear. It is possible the wedding might have gone ahead, but as Lucia remarked with awful simplicity many years later, "I had a breakdown and had to give up the idea." (p. 219) It was the first of a succession of emotional collapses, varying between bouts of catatonia and outbursts of uncontrollable rage that led her on one occasion to set fire to her bedroom and on another to throw a chair at her mother.

Shloss's main villains are Giorgio, who on the evidence seems from early on to have been eager to have his sister shut away for good in an institution, and Nora, who according to Joyce himself was jealous of her daughter. Nora's antipathy was energetically returned by Lucia. When in 1931 Joyce and Nora decided that they should regularise their union and be married, Lucia, and her brother, were profoundly shocked at the discovery that they were illegitimate. On the eve of the family's temporary move to London, where the ceremony was to take place, Lucia flew into one of her tantrums, to which Nora responded by calling her a bastard. "If I am a bastard," Lucia shouted back, "who made me one?" (p. 208)

If Shloss points an unwavering finger of accusation for Lucia's subsequent life of incarceration at Giorgio – he "turned her over to the psychiatrists" (p. 227) – and at Nora, she exonerates Joyce entirely. This is somewhat puzzling. Although certainly he

loved his daughter and was tormented by her illness, whatever it may have been[6] – Joyce said it was "one of the most elusive diseases known to men and unknown to medicine" – there is no getting away from the fact that he acquiesced tacitly in her removal from the household in which her clamorous presence was a disruption of the peace and quiet that everyone, including himself, insisted was vital for his work. Is it naïve to wonder why he could not simply have told those who were eager for her to be put away that Lucia was a genius, as he had always insisted, that her apparent madness was no more and no less than the sign of misdirected creativity, and that she must not be abandoned to an institution? For abandoned she was. After the fall of France in 1940 she was in a clinic at La Baule on the Brittany coast, and Joyce made increasingly frantic efforts to have her transferred to a hospital in Switzerland, where he and Nora were living. He was still trying to rescue her when he died unexpectedly, of a perforated ulcer, in January 1941. Her greatest defender gone, Lucia was on her own. Nora and Giorgio left her to the mercies of the clinic's director, the kindly Dr Delmas, one of the few heroes of this sad tale. Delmas, his fees unpaid, kept Lucia under his wing through and after the war. For ten years her mother and brother ignored her. In 1949 Giorgio visited her for an hour, and decided his mother should not see her at all. Maria Jolas agreed: "It is so many years since [Nora] saw her that it hardly seems necessary now." (p. 410) Eventually Lucia was given into the care of Joyce's patron, Harriet Weaver, who moved her to a hospital at Northampton, where she remained until her death in 1982.

Lucia Joyce's story, which Shloss tells so movingly, not only wrings the heart but stirs one's anger. Whether it was intentional or not, Lucia does seem to have been, as one of Shloss's section headings has it, "a sacrifice for a book." (p. 416) This was a great and unforgivable injustice. Lucia had no illusions as to what had happened to her and why. Taking for herself the name of Stephen Dedalus's sad little sister, whom in *Ulysses* Stephen comes upon in her rags wistfully buying a French primer from a Dublin bookstall, she told her friend Dominique Maroger: "Dilly didn't have a chance. Me neither. I never had a chance! I was cumbersome, in the way."

Notes

* Published in *The New York Review of Books*, v. 51, n. 6, April 8, 2004. Special Thanks to John Banville for his permission to republish this article.

1 Paul Léon deserves a monument all of his own. When in late 1939 the Joyces left Paris, Léon, a Russian Jew, and his wife Lucie, went with them to Saint-Gérand-le-Puy in the south. In September 1940, however, the Léons returned to German-occupied Paris and set about rescuing and preserving the papers Joyce had left behind. The owner of the Joyces' apartment in Passy had decided to auction off their belongings, but Léon got there first and, having bribed the concierge, piled all the papers that would fit into a pushcart and trundled them away. When the auction took place, he borrowed money from one of Lucia's former lovers and managed to purchase more documents,

which he and his wife diligently catalogued and preserved. Later, when Léon sided with Giorgio Joyce's wife in a dispute with her husband, the family severed all connection with him. Shortly afterwards Léon was interned at Drancy, and died at the hands of the Nazis sometime in April 1942.

2 Witnessing the eagerness with which Shloss pounces upon these wisps of rumour one cannot but have a certain sympathy with Stephen Joyce in his determination to thwart the would-be grubbers in his family's linen basket. Having failed to prevent Richard Ellmann from publishing the young Joyce's sexually explicit letters to Nora, he obviously vowed to prevent anything similar happening in the case of his aunt and his father. "Where do you draw the line?" he demanded of an interviewer in the *New York Times* in 1988 [Shloss, p. 29]; obviously for him it was not a rhetorical question, since he had already decided that the line would be drawn as tightly as it could be around the documentation of his family's history insofar as it was within his control. To Shloss's insistence that no book, even *Finnegans Wake*, is worth the sacrifice of a girl's life, Stephen Joyce might counter that no book, not even *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake*, is worth the sacrifice of his father's good name.

3 "That imbecile. What is he doing under the earth? When will he decide to leave? He's watching you all the time." In Lucia's frantic understanding her father had become an amalgam of Blake's Nobodaddy and Joyce's own "erse solid man" Finnegan, the giant sleeping under the Hill of Howth.

4 Few critics have remarked on the frightening ordinariness of the Samsa family in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

5 Although there are occasions when one catches a faint but definite echo of Nobokov's poor Kinbote maniacally reading references to himself into every other line of John Shade's poem *Pale Fire*. And indeed, when one hears of such things as Joyce's "blindness to the nature of the very real young and modern female existence unfolding before him," (p. 77) there flashes before the mind's eye an image of the thoroughly modern headmistress of Dolores Haze's Beardsley school lecturing poor Humbert on his girleen's growing needs.

6 Shloss dismisses the old rumour that Lucia suffered from hereditary syphilis contracted from her father. In the mid-1930s Lucia was diagnosed as having too many white blood cells, indicating a lingering infection, though it could not be found. At about the same time, when Joyce visited her in a Swiss mental institution, Lucia confided to him that she thought she had syphilis; Shloss tells us this was dismissed by the Jungian Cary Baynes as an attempt to seduce her father "by a young woman whose illness was caused by her illicit desire for a man who refused to understand its importance." (p. 288)

Thinking about Brazil and Bloomsday

Colin McCabe

Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. All over the world there will be celebrations. A secular feast where people of almost all languages and certainly all literatures will be linked together to commemorate a day. But what does the day commemorate? Not the death of a god, nor the delivery of a people from an avenging angel, nor even the establishment of the rule of the just. I think it is generally agreed by Joyce scholars that this marks James Joyce's first date with Nora Barnacle. It was not the date on which they met,not the moment when Dante saw Beatrice. Nor is it the date on which they consummated their love after fleeing to Europe, a date which Joyce ungentlemanly marked with a postcard to his brother. But it is the date of their first kiss. Or so we have good reason to think. In settling on a polymorphously perverse kiss rather than a more conventional moment of masculine triumph, Joyce undermines, as he does throughout his text, notions of masculine heroism.(1)

There are large number of cultures which have produced heroic epics,accounts, often written down in the passage from orality to literacy, of worlds in which the basic economic unit is the clan or household gathered round an individual warrior. In European history much the most important of these epics have been Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It is impossible to think that Joyce, growing up in the Dublin of the Gaelic revival did not consider the Gaelic epics which Yeats and Lady Gregory had done so much to promote - and in particular the story of Cuchulain greatest of the Red Branch Knights. It is fashionable to pretend that the cultural heritage of Europe is part of political processes of domination which render it suspect and that its hit parade is at best the product of the chance of battle, at worst a deadly weapon in a longer war. But anyone who has dipped into the various epic traditions can easily recognise that the Greek stories have a power, of both description and narration, which easily explains their greater prestige. One need look no further than the opening chapter of Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* to find a justification of the Homeric world of intense plastic description. But if Joyce is just as intent on conveying the sensuous reality of Dublin on that June day of l904, his methods are not Homeric but are drawn from the full resources of the nineteenth century European novel.

T. S. Eliot in a famous review published in The Dial in l923 hailed *Ulysses* as the greatest of modern texts and likened Joyce to Einstein as the discoverer of a revolutionary method. For Eliot, Joyce's use of the Homeric text was a way of organising contemporary experience according to a pattern which guaranteed order and meaning.

It is just such a pattern that the Grail myth gives to The Waste Land - the inchoate material of which Eliot had been turning over in his mind for six years but which only found form as he read *Ulysses*. But it is interesting that Eliot's poem really does use the structure of the Grail myth and that it ends with a conventional moment of masculine domination:

> The boat responded
> Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
> To controlling hands

Thus the *Waste Land* draws to its conclusion but it is doubtful if Molly Bloom can be counted as one who waited for an invitation still less beat obedient to controlling hands. When Joyce met Nora he had already chosen his great model in Ibsen and Ibsen's great theme of the changed relations between the sexes. Dramatic theory became domestic practice as Nora accepted Joyce's belief that relations between the sexes should not be ruled by institutions and then proved her own belief that she should not be ruled by Joyce. Their relationship came to its most productive crisis when Joyce was staying at 7,Eccles Street in August 1909 and was convinced that he had been cuckolded five summers earlier . He reacted in the conventional forms of the European male but in the process gave up the last of his attachments to conventional ideals of masculinity.

There is no doubt that Joyce was all the more ready to refuse these dominant forms because of his position as a colonial subject. Eliot might still wish to identify with the heroes, both martial and artistic, of his culture. For Joyce, it was not his culture. And if Pearse and Yeats could only offer him Cuchulain, the disadvantage was that Cuchulain, as almost all epic heroes, is more or less exhausted by his martial abilities. The *Odyssey* becomes the tutor text for Joyce not because of the vividness of the descriptions, still less because of the order or significance of the episodes but because, as Joyce had recognised very early, his exploits were not simply those of a warrior. Indeed even his most famous military coup, the wooden horse at Troy, was not an epic feat of arms but an example of low cunning. Joyce emphasised this by making his hero Ulysses, Virgil's schemer, rather than Homer's much more heroic Odysseus.

It is too often forgotten, at least by me, that Joyce's text was written in the period 1915-22. It is not a text of 1904, of that last moment of European and English supremacy but of the Great War that destroyed Europe and the Easter Rising and its aftermath which drove the English from most of Ireland. If the text is devoted to one thing it is devoted to the deconstruction of the hero in all his forms from the narrative to the sexual. This is nowhere more evident than in the refusal of all forms of violence which for the text are equivalent.

The Citizen's nationalism and Privates Carr and Compton's patriotism are two sides of the sames unappealing coin. Of course the *Odyssey* itself is not a text which

eschews violence. Odysseus is king of Ithaca because of his martial prowess and the text is punctuated by his feats of strength and ends with his bending of the bow and his slaughter of the suitors. But Joyce found these the most difficult pieces of the *Odyssey* to translate into Ulysses. He told Budgen that he had been unable to see where the slaughter of the suitors went until he finally realised that it went in Penelope where Molly dismisses all those with phallic pretentions in favour of a kiss with her husband, the kiss which we have every reason to think both Bloom and his wife remember in the course of their day.

When I first started studying Joyce in l971, it was at the service of a revolutionary creed which saw in his texts the key with which to unlock bourgeois ideology and all its repressions. When I came to Brazil for the first time in January l982 on the occasion of the centenary of Joyce's birth, I had abandoned much of that creed. But it was in Brazil and with Brazilians, I remember particularly Nora Thielen , that I understood that any notion of a key was linked to those fatal forms of European thought which have linked knowledge to mastery. It was in Brazil that I felt that vitality of spirit and the instinctive recognition of the human which European society had all but buried by 1914. Ulysses is nothing less than the effort by a European, who could identify with European culture only in the Dark Ages, to unwrite that equation between knowledge and mastery, an equation written in the symbols of masculine dominance and economic inequality. And that unwriting is never finished, the keys are given but every reader has to remake them for their own locks . From Kosovo to Iraq, the First World War comes back now to haunt us. If my understanding of *Ulysses* has changed in thirty years of teaching, it is because Joyce's "blue book of Eccles" as he called it in Finnegans Wake now seems ever more relevant in a world where the renunciation of violence seems both more difficult and more necessary than in l922.

Note

1 The most reputable Joyce scholars of my acquaintance are of the opinion that the 16th of June also marks Joyce's first orgasm with Nora, almost certainly procured by her hand. When he writes to her in August l909 to accuse her of infidelity – it is the hand that he mentions: "At the time when I used to meet you at the corner of Merrion Square and walk out with you and feel your hand touch me in the dark and hear your voice." (Letter of 6 August l909) The kiss in its perfect mixture of activity and passivity, in its bisexual equality, serves Joyce's purposes much more effectively than a hand job.

Joyce's Ulysses*: The Music of Chapter 11*

Aila de Oliveira Gomes

Sweet coupled airs we sing –
No lonely seafarer
Holds clear of entertaining
Our green mirror.

Pleased by each purling note
Like honey twining
From her throat and my throat
Who lies a-pining?

Abstract: *This paper considers in what ways chapter eleven of Joyce's* Ulysses *can be read as essentially musical. Joyce himself said of his eleventh chapter that it is technically like a* fuga per canonem*. Yet, the traditional fugue is by no means the sole model possibly guiding Joyce's composition of the text. The descriptions of musical performances, allusions to and mentions of a variety of musical pieces such as songs, operas, operettas, nursery rhymes, religious pieces and symphonic music as well as the repeated employment of musical terminology, the competent variations of tempo through verbal means and the exploration of phonological devices, significantly connected and interwoven with Bloom's inner monologues produce a sort of symbiosis of language and music and render the text its peculiar rhythm and the chapter its musical essentiality.*

For several reasons the eleventh chapter is the essentially musical part of *Ulysses*: its pages are largely occupied by the description of two musical performances; the chapter is all sprinkled with allusions from the sphere of music; Joyce makes use of multifarious phonological devices, besides trying to emulate musical ornaments and variations of tempo through verbal means; he himself has attributed to the chapter the technique of the fugue; the Wagnerian leitmotif is structurally employed; some approximations to modern music are also possible.

The two principal musical performances in the chapter are significantly connected with Bloom's inner monologues, since they strike the main notes haunting his mind and disturbing his emotions on that bright June day.

Even before the entrance of Bloom, one of the barmaids is singing a line from the light opera *Floradora*, when the passionate hero, sings to his faithless South Sea mistress, as they part pledging love: "0 my Dolores, queen of the eastern seas" (in the barmaid's mistaken version, "0 I dolores [...]"). Precisely on that day Bloom somehow feels he is in danger of having to part from his equally loving, loveable and flirtatious Molly. She is to him a kind of Eastern rarity, for she had been born and brought up in Gibraltar, and was daughter of a Spanish Jewess.

When early in the chapter Simon Dedalus remembers a famous past performance of *Love and War* (a duet for tenor and bass), Dollard sings a climatic passage in it:

"When love absorbs my ardent soul
I care not for the tomorrow [...]" (p. 270)

"War! War!" Father Cowley chimes in. At that moment Bloom is just hearing the fateful jingling of Boylan's carriage, as he departs for his date with Molly. He mutters to himself, "Love and war someone is".

Simon is then urged to sing an air from the opera *Martha,* "M'appari tutt amor". While he demurs ("My dancing days are over, Ben"), Richie Goulding, alone in the restaurant with Bloom, proclaims the *Sonnanbula* to be in his opinion, the most beautiful opera; he whistles a passage from an air in it. "What air is that?", Bloom asks. The reply does not help him to divert his mind from his obsessions: the air is "All is lost now", Richie informs. "A beautiful air", Bloom comments resignedly. "I know it well". (p. 272-3).

Finally Dedalus deigns to sing, in English, Lionel's aria in Martha, and begins:

"When first I saw that form endearing
Sorrow from me seemed to depart" [...] (p. 273)

Both Bloom and Richie are entranced: "braintipped, cheek touched with flame, [...] flow over skin limbs, human heart, soul, spine". (p. 273).

To Bloom it seems that "love itself is singing", "love's old sweet song". (It is when he nervously begins to play with the elastic band in his hands). Simon goes on singing:

"Full of hope and all delighted" [...]

And then:

"But alas, It was idle dreaming [...] "ray of hope" [...] (p. 274)

Bloom, looping and unlooping the elastic band, his nerves overstrung, thinks of the coincidence of names: Martha, the heroine in the opera, is also the name of his pen-

friend, whose letter he had received in the morning. Nevertheless it is Molly that will insistently come to the forefront of his mind. Bloom revives the first night he saw her, singing, smelling of lilac trees:

> Waiting, she sang. I turned her music. [...] She thanked me. Why did she me? Fate. Spanishy eyes. Under a peartree alone patio this hour in old Madrid one side in shadow. Dolores shedotores. At me. Luring. Ah, alluring. (p. 275)

At the close of the aria Simon displays the best of his privileged vocal gifts in a last crescendo:

> "Martha! Ah, Martha!"

And "in cry of passion dominant":

> "Co-me, thou lost one!
> Co-me thou dear one!
> Come!" (p. 275)

The chapter reaches a lyric climax with the description of Simon's superb tenor voice:

> I soared a bird, it held its flight, a swift soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long breath long life, soaring high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high, in the effulgence symbolistic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessnessness ... (p. 275-6)

The total fusion of Bloom's emotion with the singer's is expressed by the telescoped word, "Siopold!", after Simon sings the last notes of the air:

> "– To me!" (p. 276)

There is a general emotional involvement. That voice to Bloom is "a lamentation". All songs turn upon love and loss. He begins and ends his letter to Martha under the emotion of the aria. He hums to himself, "La, la, la ree" [...] "La, la, la ree" [...] "La ree" [...] "Why minor is sad?", he ponders. (p. 280).

Parenthetically, Anthony Burgess suggests that there may be a reference to the Lydian scale (F major with B natural, not flat) in the name of one of the barmaids – Lydia, and to the minor scale in Mina's[2]. Mina is in fact quieter, less lively, more pensive than her companion.

When Simon stops and the enthusiastic clapping is appeased there is a sort of interval with transitional passages, as if from one to another episode in a fugue.

Miss Douce offers the shell she has brought from her holiday for people to listen to the distant roaring of the sea (one of the recurrences of the sea theme). Lidman tries to catch the hardly audible "voice of the waves", in *pianissimo*. Bob Cow1ey is discreetly playing the Minuet of *Don Giovanni* (Boylan's correlative?), when in the opera the hero dances with Zerlinda as a first step to his attempt at seduction.

For the first time, in this kind of transitional interval, we hear the "tap" of the approaching blind stripling. It sounds three times.

A sort of new part, or a new episode in the composition, seems to open with the execution of *The Croppy Boy*, – which in a sense prepares us for the theme of national politics in the next chapter, *The Cyclops*. But what matters in the circumstances of the moment are the notes of betrayal and defeat. (In the meantime Boylan has got very near Eccles Street).

The song, which deals with an episode of the 1798 Irish rebellion against England, tells of a boy who goes out in search of a priest to tell his sins and to confess that he will join the rebels in order to revenge the death of all the male members of his fami1y. Being the victim of some treason, the boy finds that the supposed priest is in fact a captain of the king, who orders him to be executed.

Stephen is somehow represented by the rebellious boy, who, like him, had cursed, had refused to attend Mass, had not prayed for the rest of his mother's soul. Bloom is utterly depressed:

> Chords dark. Lugugugubrious. Low in a cave of the dark earth. Embedded ore. Lump music. The voice of the dark age, of unlove, earth's fatigue made grave approach, and painful, come from afar, from hoary mountains [...] (p. 283)

Gifford finds that those words recall a scene in Wagner's *The Rhynegold*, when Wotan descends into the cavern of the dwarfish Nibelungs[3].

If the "croppy" boy seems to bring in Stephen on the scene, he has also affinities with Bloom. That boy's death fuses in Bloom mind with the death of his son Ruddy, when only eleven years old (an event that started some strangement of Molly from Bloom). "All gone. All fallen", Bloom ruminates. "Last of his name and of his race", like himself. "No son. Ruddy. Too late now. Or if not?" Like the "croppy" boy of the song, Bloom can also avow that "he bears no hate". "Hate, love", he muses. "Those are names". (p. 285). The final "pray for him" in the song applies to both the unfortunate boy and to Bloom, then departing from the Hotel.

From this point onwards noises, in onomatopoeias or in recol1ections in Bloom's mind ([...] "a whistle"; "locks and keys" [...] "towncrier" [...] (p. 289), begin to replace musical sounds, with which they had only occasiona1ly synchronized before. Burgess remarks that Joyce "finally reduces his fugue structure to mere noises"[4] – dull or strident, prosaic, offensive.

A Shakespearean epigraph might have suited almost all the chapter excepting the end. ([...] "the isle is full of noises/ Sounds are sweet airs that give delight and hurt

not/ Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments/ Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices" [...]). But at the end the enchanting world of music is over, and the increasing noises may already represent Joyce's modulation to the next chapter, *The Cyclops*, which is among the most noisy ones in the book. The ship sails on, leaving behind the rock of the singing sirens.

* * *

Another factor making the eleventh chapter of *Ulysses* essentially musical is the large number of interspersed mentions of, or short passages from, several musical pieces, as well as the repeated employment of musical terminology.

People in the Ormond Hotel never cease to allude to songs (about twenty of them), passages from operas (five at least are mentioned), operettas, nursery rhymes, religious pieces, chamber or symphonic music; etc., – the allusions on the level of the narrative being often counterpointed by similar material appearing in the streams of Bloom's inner monologue.

In accordance with the middle-class nature of the people and the life focalized in the book, Joyce reveals an obvious preference for popular music, or at least for pieces that were more widely known in the Dublin of his time, outside the circle of refined experts.

Several personages in the chapter keep extolling the great exponents of the *bel canto,* secondarily of known composers. Gilbert tells us that the Dubliners of Joyce's days were unusually fond of vocal and operatic music, – both kinds being largely cultivated there. A great "*divo"*, he says, especially if he was a tenor, awakened in people a fascination only comparable to that roused by great patriotic leaders and rebels.[5]

On the other hand, when Joyce was writing the Sirens episode, in Zürich, the musical season there is reported to have been particularly intense, refined, varied[6]. There were at the time first-rate performances of Wagner's operas.

Returning to our hero, next to his capacity to appreciate the qualities and peculiarities of male and female voices, Bloom could also enjoy orchestral music, and was especially curious about timbres; in his mind there emerge sometimes catalogues of stringed, wind, percussion or keyboard instruments, – and their impact on his sensibility is often characterized: "scraping fiddles" [...] "sawing the cello reminds you of toothache" [...] "trombone, under blowing like a grampus" [...] "other brass chaps" [...] the harp, "loosely gold glowing light" (p. 271), the hurdy-gurdy Molly delighted in, etc.); nor does he forget improvised instruments ("even comb and tissue paper you can knock a tune out of", p. 289). It is his conviction that "there is music everywhere" (p. 281) and in many things, – "blade of grass", "the shell of her hands", etc.

More than once Bloom is puzzled by the power of music, and its mystery: "sounds and number", he ponders, "musemathematics". "And you think you are hearing to the ethereal!" (p. 278).

Both Bloom and the other customers in the Ormond are familiar with a good deal of the terminology of musical technique. One has just to turn over the pages of

the chapter and underline dozens of examples: words like "solfa", "treble", "demisemi-quaver"; allusions to major and minor keys; or to Italian terms for different tempo in music, for different degrees of intensity, for changes in intensity or in expressiveness. To Dollard, singing a verse of *War and Peace* with excessive ardour, Cowley advices, in a parody of the Italian directions, "amoroso ma non troppo" (p. 270).

In the case of such directions, however, Joycean imitations are easier to find than the mention of the technical terms. One can easily discern the "allegro" of the barmaids, when they are watching the passage of the viceregal procession and hope to be seen and admired; the "andantino" of Pat, the waiter, going to and fro; the "adaggio" of Bloom's inner response to Dollard's low-pitched, ominous voice interpreting *The Croppy Boy*. Or else Joyce may be consciously varying the intensity: "crescendo"; "sforzando", "decrescendo", especially when he describes the two performances of Simon and Dollard. Variations in mood and expressiveness, as in music, are also obvious: "¨con grazia", "dolce, con brio", "cantabile", and so forth.

The "staccatto", for instance, which in music is a way of playing by detaching notes from the musical phrase, becomes a prominent trait of the style of *Ulysses*, – particularly noticeable in the Sirens chapter.

* * *

Joyce seems to have hesitated between being a singer or a writer: he would have to devote wholly to one of the two vocations. His father had been renowned for his beautiful tenor voice, and Joyce had inherited the gift. They say the Irish of his generation were surprised when they saw him acquire fame in literature, not in the *bel canto*[7].

In the Sirens chapter he not only tried to present a literary equivalent to a fugue, according to his own characterization of the technique, but he was, it seems, infinitely more interested in forcing a sort of symbiosis of language and music (in which he was excelled only by himself in *Finnegan's Wake*). How far composing a literary piece like music is a really praiseworthy attempt is a question open to discussion.

For his purposes Joyce worked miracles through his competent and hypersensitive exploration and manipulation of verbal sounds in most varied ways.

On the phonemic level he availed himself of every feature of vowels, – front, central back, corresponding to acute, grave, neuter; he explored their intensifying chromatism from high to low; he caused long and short, stressed and unstressed vowels, in artistic syllabic positions and distribution to create most varied rhythms; he linked vowels in falling or rising diphthongs of appealing sensuous effects. Likewise Joyce played with all the potentialities of consonant sounds to produce impressions of implosion, explosion, friction, harsh hissing or soft rustling, of swishing, of whispering, of smooth flowing or sweet murmur, etc. The immensely rich sensuousness of *Ulysses* is attained by verbal texture as well as by actual allusion.

Through juxtaposition, alternation and elaborate arrangements of phonemes Joyce attains heights of verbal orchestration and can make his words twang, ring, clang, hush, hum, tremble, yell, roar, or, at his will excite senses other than hearing. Nor does he neglect the rational elements of speech sounds handled in a manner to diversify rhythm and tempo creatively.

Though some critics are averse to what they call "phonological microanalysis", since, they argue, it was seldom in the poet's intention to descend to the phonemic level in order to express what they wanted to say, when we come to Joyce we have to recognize that he did pay great attention to his phonemic networks and embroidery. He intended, not only his words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, but also syllables, phonemes, even punctuation (or lack of it) to be part of the message by suggesting them in a myriad of different ways.

In Joyce's case it is difficult to separate what might be merely intuitive, instinctive, from deliberate, meticulous, deft art and craft. And at the end he might perhaps be much more conscious of all his phonological tricks – from the plane of the phoneme to that of the sentence and beyond – than his most minute exegets. (Confidentially, this continuous awareness may be the reason why he sometimes tires us, irritates us, – though he never causes our admiration of his talents to diminish).

If we take any page at random we will find lots of cases of verbal elements echoing sense and what is more – emitting a whole spectrum of suggestions and associations.

Apart from his innovations of truncated, fused or telescoped words, his simpler onomatopoeias, verbal suggestions, repetitions of specific kinds (often highly suggestive too), ellipses, etc. already contribute to a great extent to create the musicality of the chapter.

As for the onomatopoeias, they abound from the first to the last page, and are too obvious to require illustration ("jingle", giggle, tschink-tschunk, kram-kram, etc., etc.). The fact deserving notice in connection with them is that they are responsible for the part of noises in the chapter. A few of them are not so purely imitative, as, for instance, when Simon is seen blowing in to his pipe:

> He blew through the flue two husky fife notes. (p. 261)

Or when Miss Kennedy has a fit of laughter while drinking her tea:

> Again Kenny giggles [...] spluttered out of her mouth her tea, choking in tea and laughter, coughing with choking, crying [...] (p. 260)

Regarding what is belong called here "verbal suggestion", it is important to remark that in Joyce it is not meant, or not only meant, to express personal, lyrical experiences of the author (none of Keats's "Forlorn! the very word is like a bell/ To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"). In Joyce's case, verbal sounds are more often used to grasp what Hopkins has called the "inscape" of things or situations; yet, the principal

intention of Joyce's suggestive orchestration of speech sounds is undoubtedly to bring poetry nearer to music, – the sister arts and his two vocations.

Much more consciously, with a keener sense of opening new ways for poetic language, with more gusto than many poets before him, or even in his time, he has used speech sounds, not only, onomatopoeically, to represent what in nature is sound or noise, but also, synesthetically, to appeal to other senses – of sight, touch, taste, smell, thermic, kinetic senses; and, magically, to awaken distant emotions, vague dreams, buried memories, moods, indefinite, unthought-of associations.

Being essential1y poetic, Joyce's language never ceases to transmit pre-conceptual messages; but he attempts to do it as far as possible as music does. It is here above all, it seems, that Joyce fully succeeds, i.e., when he makes his words, phrases, sentences *work like* (not *be like)* music. This is a point to be kept in mind and underlined.

A few instances of able employment of verbal suggestions, among a very extensive number of such throughout the chapter, will perhaps be enough to illustrate our point, although they will certainly lose in significance when taken out of the context.

It is chiefly the arrangement of the verbal sounds, rather than the descriptive terms (with no mention of song) that leads us here, as elsewhere, to listen to what may stand for the enticing songs of the Sirens:

> In a giggling peal young goldbronze voices blended [...]. They threw young heads back, bronzegigglegold, to let freely their laughter, screaming, your other, signals to each other, high piercing notes.
> Ah, panting, sighing. Sighing, ah, fordone, their mirth died down.
> [...]
> Douce gave full vent to a splendid yell, a full yell of full woman, delight, joy, indignation.
> [...]
> Shrill, with deep laughter, after bronze in gold, they urged each other to peal after peal, ringing in changes, bronzegold and goldbronze, shrilldeep, to laughter after laughter. And then laughed more. [...] All flushed (O!), panting, sweating (0!), all breathless. (p. 260)

In the repetitions and combinations of the words "gold" and "bronze" there is a predominantly visual suggestion, even a faint sense of texture, while the denotative reference to the metals vanish; what remains is a sense of rich, warm brilliance, of the shining thick hair of the barmaids, with undertones of sensuality.

Through liquids and sibilants and sipping-like /i/ sounds Joyce causes us to feel on our lips and palate the sloe-gin that Miss Douce pours for Boylan:

> Shebronze, dealing from her jar thick syrupy liquor for his lips, looked as it flowed [...]. Neatly she poured slowsyrupy sloe.(p. 265)

Concerning repetition, which is the very essence of music, still more obviously than of poetry, it had necessarily to be a constant, deftly managed figure, employed, not so much for emphasis, as usual, or even for incantatory effects, but first of all to emulate musical patterns.

The more elaborate cases of repetitions in the Sirens chapter deal with phonemes or syllables. Iterations of words, phrases, short sentences have patterns of their own, but at once involve, besides mental, also acoustic form and appeal.

In the following example, in which the repeated words entail repetitions of rhyming vowels, one has a vague impression of iterations of a tonic note (the long vowel in *ate*) and of some of its harmonic sounds:

> [...] Richie Goulding, Collis, Ward ate steak and kidney, steak then kidney, bite by bite of pie he ate, Bloom ate Bloom ate they ate. (p. 269)

We may find repetitions of the structure of short sentences, like musical phrases repeated with slight variations:

> Lionel Simon, singer, laughed. Father Bob Cowley played. Mina Kennedy served. Second gentleman paid. Tom Kerman strutted in; Lydia admired, admired. But Bloom sang dumb. (p. 276)

The little chain of sentences ends with "a dying fall".

There are intricate patterns of repetitions, such as the following, with a curious design of all alliterating sounds (/ai/, /e/, voiced and unvoiced plosives and unvoiced fricatives, remindful of sounds in a xilophone, since there is something woodenish in them):

> Bald deaf Pat brought quite flat pad ink. Pat set with ink pen quite flat pad. Pat took plate dish knife fork. Pat went. (p. 278)

Bloom thinks of Molly's agitation at Boylan's knock at the door, her hurried last touches to make herself more attractive: "Last tip to titivate". (p. 284)

Ellipses, often combined with clipped words, affect rhythm creating lively staccato effects; they may be also combined with repetition: "Bloo mur: dear sir. Dear Henry wrote: dear Mady". (p. 279)

Not satisfied with suggestive orchestration of speech sounds, in peculiar rhythmical arrangements, Joyce borrowed still more directly from music as he tried to adorn his chapter with what he intended to be the equivalents to musical ornaments, or flourishes. His fancy knew no limits.

Such attempts have been briefly noticed, among Joyce's critics, by Burgess and Stuart Gilbert, both offering a few examples. However, a careful research concerning this aspect of Joyce's language is yet to be carried out.

Let us add a few instances of what somehow reminds us of different musical flourishes:

The *Appogiatura* is "a melodic ornament in which the principal note is delayed by a grace note introduced before it"[8]. It is indicated thus:

Bloom looped, unlooped, noded, disnoded. (p. 274)

Also:

Or if not? If not? Is still? (p. 285)

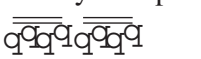
In the *Mordente* we have two grace notes, the former being an anticipation of the principal note and the latter the note above it. A special sign over a note indicates it:

[...] on her humming, bust ahumming [...] (p. 266)

The *Grupeto* is a group of brief notes turning upon one (above and below it), represented thus –  [9]

Of course the literary imitations are only approximations:

Roll of Bensoulbenjamin rolled to the quivery loveshivery roof-panes. (p. 270)

The *Trill* or *shake* consists of the rapid alternation of the main note with the one above it. It is indicated by "tr " placed over or under the note; if prolongued, the notation will be, tr. mm = 

There are possible slight variations. The example below was pointed out by both Burgess and Gilbert:

Her wayyavyeavyheavyeavyevyevy hair uncomb:'d. (p. 277)

Gilbert also explains that the final word (un comb:' d) "is written exactly as a singer might have to enounce it at the close of a cadence".[10]

The *Tremolo* may be single – a very rapid repetition of one note – or "with turn"; in this case, in wind instruments, it is a rapid alternation of up and down movements of the bow; in drums, the so-called "drum roll" is strictly a *tremolo* it is indicated thus: 

Single *tremolo* in the chapter:

He, hee hee hee hee (p. 280)

Tremolo "with turn":

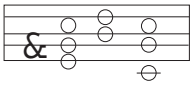
Fro, to: to, fro: (p. 286)

When we slide the back of our thumb over the white notes of the piano we produce the ornament called *Glissando* Joyce seems to emulate it in

Drops. Rain. Diddle iddle addle addle oodle oodle. (p. 282)

In his effort towards effects of simultaneity, Joyce also occasionally tries to give us the impression of musical chords, i.e., the combination of three or more notes harmoniously sounding together; Burgess regards the following as a chord with missing notes (*hollow fifths*):

Well, I must be. Are you off?
Yrfmstbues. Blmstup. (p. 286)

– which the critic represents in musical notation, thus: 

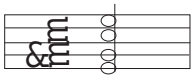
Burgess confesses that he finds a minimal musical significance in it; "it is the eye that is primarily intrigued".[11]

We have already mentioned *Siopold* (p. 276) as a sort of chord, or at least as a musical third. Another example would be, on p. 278, *Lidlydiawell,* from Lydia and Lidwell in very harmonious relationship.

Of more musical effect are the imitations of *Spread chords* or *Arpeggios,* as, for instance, in the playful arrangements with the name of a stout character, Ben Dollard:

Big Benaden Dollard, Big Benben. Big Benben.

Anyhow, the feeling of a spread chord here may be subjective: perhaps a better example occurs when, further on (p. 290), Joyce successively reduces the names of five male characters in a "spreading" of their first syllables:

[...] Li, Cow, Ker, Doll [...] 

Without a special denomination, but also a typical musical device, is the repetition of a note, each time followed by successive ones in the scale, which Joyce seems to do, for instance, when referring to the blindness of the piano tuner:

Nor Ben nor Bob nor Tom nor Si nor George nor tanks nor Richie nor Pat. Hee hee hee hee. He dit not see. (p. 290-1)

Outside the field of musical ornaments we can point out attempts to imitate other resources, like the *Fermata,* i.e., the delay in the duration of a note, which is prolongued at will and emphasized. The *Fermata* (represented thus, 𝄐) often immediately follows an *Affretando* (a passage hurrying on). Joyce's critics do not fail to register the *fermata* effect in the sensational ending of a paragraph already quoted here: "[...] the endlessnessnessness [...]" (p. 276)

Another interesting example is "Waaaaaaalk" (p. 186).

The more one reads the chapter the more one discovers various kinds of musical tricks marking the style: abrupt changes in key, chromatic modulations, effects of rests, of octaves, thirds, fifths, whose discussion would lead us too far from what is no more than a general appraisal of the musical aspect of the Sirens episode.

No doubt such extreme experiments involving strictly musical elements (like many others, of different kinds, in other chapters) are of relative, if not, sometimes, of small value from the literary point of view. Nevertheless, they are not to be neglected as elements marking the characteristic nature and themes of a given chapter: taken together they enhance its physiognomy.

* * *

Since Joyce himself said of his eleventh chapter that it is technically like a *fuga per canonem*, we cannot help examining some essential notions about the fuguet though in extremely simplified and second-hand terms.[12]

It is known that the fugue is a procedure, or a kind of texture, rather than a set musical form, in spite of the fact that a large number of particular compositions are labelled as fugues as others are called sonatas or preludes.

The fugue varies so much that it is vain to describe it in a single way. One can only more confidently say that it is the supreme manifestation of contrapuntal music. It is typical of the baroque as distinct from the so-called classical music though it has attracted great classical composers: in his last period Beethoven often tried to wave the fugue into the sonata pattern.

More emphatically than any other kind of composition, in a fugue the interwining of melodic strands becomes its very process. Texture is made of such strands. (So far it accords, to some extent, with the texture of the Sirens chapter). The number of strands ("voices", or "parts") in a fugue is fixed beforehand.

The main "structural" parts of a fugue are the Exposition and the Episodes (or *divertimenti*).

The Exposition in the eleventh chapter would start after the word "Begin!", thus excluding the introductory pages with the lingtiistic fragments. The Exposition would then cover a not neatly marked first part, centred on the barmaids – their talk, their fuss, their coquetry – and the entrance of Bloom and Boylan. It is not possible to fix exact limits to it in the text.

In the Exposition of a fugue the voices enter one after the other with scraps of melody. The first voice is the Subject (or "dux", or "canon"); the second voice is called Answer. The former at first appears in the tonic key; the latter reproduces the Subject in the dominant key. It needs not be a perfect reproduction in the dominant, but there are rules according to which it can vary. The third voice, if any, is a repetition of the subject in a higher or lower octave; "when we have Subject, Answer, Subject and again Answer, we speak of a four-part fugue";[13] consequent1y, Subject and Answer keep alternating. When all the voices have entered, i.e., when the "entries" are over, the Exposition is over too.

Both Tyndall and Gilbert agree that the barmaids, Bloom and Boylan are the three "voices" of the supposed literary fugue that is the Sirens episode.[14] To Gi1bert – a great authority, since he was writing under Joyce's supervision – the Subject is represented by the barmaids, which is the same as saying that the Subject is the figurative Siren's song. The Answer, Gilbert affirms, is represented by "Bloom's entry and his subsequent monologue."[15]

Gilbert gives no further explanations, but, since the technical term seems to retain its ordinary meaning, one might say that Bloom, as Answer, responds to the suggested songs of Lydia and Mina, to the actual music in the concert-room, to the torturing "jingle" of Boylan's car. Moreover, he sustains the level of the inner monologue in counterpoint with the level, not only of the narrative, but of all such songs or sounds.

The Episodes are parts of connective tissue and usually develop what has appeared in the Exposition. One of its functions is to effect modulations to various related keys, so that the repeated entries may henceforward vary. The entries after the Exposition are much more freely handled.

In Chapter eleven the Episodes may be said to consist in the two main musical executions *(Martha's* aria and *The Croppy Boy).* It is then interesting to notice the more occasional interference of the barmaids, after their much more conspicuous position and their focalization in close up, in the Exposition.

Apart from the Episodes, there are flourishes in a fugue, technically called *codetta,* which work as minor transition passages. It is possible to detect some of such passages in our text; when we are reading the whole chapter the following passage, for instance, seems to have the nature of the codetta in the fugue:

> A duodene of birdnotes chirruped bright treble answer under sensitive hands. Brightly the keys, all twinking, linked, all harpsichording, called to a voice to sing the strain of dewy morn, of youth, of love's leavetaking, life's, love's morn. (p. 263)

After the first voice has stated the Subject it often continues in a different way, with the so-called Counter-Subject, which is a sort of counterpoint accompaniment to the Subject, or to the Answer. The term may also be applied to a Subject appearing later in the fugue.

Without any sufficient justification Gi1bert appoints Boylan as Counter-Subject. Is he so classed, if we are not oversimplifying, because he is linked – in counterpoint – to the Sirens by the power of seduction, and to Bloom by his attraction to Molly?

Other parts of the fugue seem irrelevant in the present parallel. The really important fact, as Gilbert recognizes, is that Subject, Answer, Counter-Subject and Episodes are often bound contrapuntally in the narrative and in the texture of Bloom's monologue.

* * *

After all, one feels that the traditional fugue is by no means the sole model possibly guiding Joyce's composition of the chapter.

William Blisset, for instance, will emphatically assert:

> In spite of the claim to fugal form, and in spite of the fact that what is actually presented as heard in the Episodes is a blur of Irish ballads, operatic arias, miscellaneous sounds, the musicality of Joyce in this the musical heart of the book is largely a Wagnerian musicality.[16]

For confirmation of what he says, he mentions a thematic prelude, the recurrence of motifs linked to symbols and to myth, the several attempts at chord-building (Wagner being the supreme harmonist and chord-builder). In short, along all his essay, Blisset will insist upon Wagner's influence on Joyce.[17]

Another argument that might be added to Blisset's is the occasional sensation, in the reader, of a prevalent "chromatism", we mean to say, of a composition at certain moments based on something like a chromatic scale, although it is not easy to point out definite examples in the text. Tentatively, let us take a sentence of questionable sense that seems to advance by semitones:

> Sparkling bronze azure eyed Blazure's skyblue bow and eyes. (p. 266)

On the other hand a distinction has to be made clear: Joyce certainly rejected the Wagnerian solemn mood and atmosphere. So, as he did with Homer, he substituted middle class matter-of-fact, irreverence and irony for the sublime, the heroic, the tragic in the German composer *(The. Meistersinger,* with its exceptional acceptance of the jocose, pleased Joyce better than the other operas).

That Joyce greatly admired Wagner, without ever granting it, and that he thought of emulating him, seems certain. While he was once attending a performance of *The Walkure,* Blisset tells us, he asked a friend, "Don't you find the musical effects of my Sirens better than Wagner's?" "No", the friend replied. And Joyce left the theatre on the spot, before the end of the spectacle.[18]

Whereas Wagner, in a more radical way than any previous opera composers, tended to make music work like dramatic poetry (cf., for instance, *Tristan and Isolde),* Joyce endeavoured to make poetic language achieve effects of sheer music. Both have come only midway, – but both have brought the two arts nearer.

* * *

Anyhow – though the idea seems quite arguable, and any assertion of the kind will require sufficent knowledge of modern music (which is not the present case) – we would venture the opinion that, in the Sirens chapter, Joyce came closer to atonal music (and even to later experiments in music) than to any musical form or style belonging to ages previous to his own.

While Joyce was working at *Ulysses* Schoenberg was also in labour to give birth to what he considered to be the natural consequence of innovations of Wagner and his followers.

Would Joyce know the atonal, but not yet strictly dodecaphonic, music that Schoenberg had already composed? Even if he did, the Sirens episode may still be said to have something prophetic regarding Shoenberg's later accomplishments. One feels, for instance, that Joyce did not tend to cultivate the melody in the senseful sentence: verbal sounds work rather individually, as if each of them was self-sufficient. Now an equivalent procedure has been pointed out as the central characteristic of the music of Webern, the most famous and influential follower of Schoemberg's musical technique.[19]

Satie and Varèse are other composers that deserve mention in connection with the way Joyce tried to imitate or suggest both noise and music in his verbal composition. Both Satie and Varèse have incorporated noise into music[20]. And though both were Joyce's contemporaries, again one may think of Joyce's foresight regarding "noise music", – since this innovation began to develop only by composers such as John Cage[21] – and only at least a decade after Joyce's death, in 1941.

In conclusion, if the Sirens episode contains something fugue-like, or Wagnerian – and it cannot be denied – it also incorporates into the world of literature a good deal of the extreme avant-garde movement in music.

U1timately certain passages in the Sirens episode leave in us the impression of serial music played on the *glockenspiel*. The following example, among many other possible ones, seems significant:

> Pat is a waiter hard of his hearing. Pat is a waiter who waits while you wait. Hee hee hee hee. He waits while you wait. Hee hee. A waiter is he. Hee hee hee hee. He waits while you wait. While you wait if you wait he will wait while you wait. Hee hee hee hee. Hoh. Wait while you wait. (p. 280)

Notes

* First published in Estudos Anglo-Americanos n. 6/6, 1981-1982, p. 3-35. (with permission from the editor and author) Thanks to Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação for typing this text.

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Cú Chulainn, Finn, and the Mythic Strands in Ulysses

Maria Tymoczko

Abstract: *Transculturating Irish materials in* Ulysses*, James Joyce focused primarily on realistic representations of contemporary culture, formal features of Irish literature, and the use of architectonic structures from Irish myth, particularly* The Book of Invasions*, interwoven with structures from world literature, most obviously the Ulysses theme. Joyce's mythic syncretism in* Ulysses *comprises other layers of Irish legend as well, including elements from the Cú Chulainn cycle and the Finn cycle, thus anticipating aspects of* Finnegans Wake*. This essay offers a preliminary identification of Joyce's invocation of those mythic strands in* Ulysses*, as well as an assessment of their implications for an understanding of his mythic methods. In its mythic syncretism,* Ulysses *celebrates the vitality and resilience of Irish myth and adds resonance to the characters of Stephen, Molly, and Bloom.*

At the centenary of Bloomsday, it's hard to feel convinced of the need for any justification of Irish culture: a century of Irish literary preeminence, marked by three Nobel prizes to Irish writers, as well as Joyce's own prominence in English letters in the twentieth century, has dampened the need for Irish apologia. But such diffidence lingered on well after World War I, indeed continued even after World War II. It was felt acutely in 1904 when *Ulysses* takes place – a period when the Irish Revival still had not reached its apogee – as well as in 1914 when Joyce began writing *Ulysses*. This Irish impetus to self promotion and cultural justification at the turn of the twentieth century was not trivial: it was a response to English domination, a form of postcolonial resistance that has analogues in later twentieth-century cultural movements aimed at decolonization.

Joyce participated in the validation of Irish culture, most famously by setting all his works in Ireland, creating resistant texts larded with Irish history, cultural allusion, and minutely detailed geographical reference.[1] But he also engaged in cultural translation

and transculturation, using Irish literary techniques and Irish mythos in his own writing. One important Joycean means of asserting the value of Irish culture is also a signature feature of his mythic method, namely literary syncretism. *Ulysses*, for example, is marked by intertwined architectonic elements from diverse textual sources – including the *Odyssey*, the *Divine Comedy*, and *Hamlet* – to which Joyce added structures from Irish mythic materials, most notably from *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*The Book of Invasions*), Sovereignty mythos, and otherworld literature.[2] By placing Irish myth on a par with great canonical works of Western literature, Joyce implicitly asserted the importance of Ireland's own literary and mythic tradition, he affirmed his affiliation with Ireland's literary heritage, and he claimed a central position for Irish texts in world literature.

What bears further investigation in *Ulysses* is Joyce's complex interweaving of Irish mythic and historical materials themselves, a syncretism that anticipates textual features of *Finnegans Wake*. As early as 1941 Stanislaus Joyce wrote of *Ulysses*, "whoever studies it in detail will find that a number of generations of Irish history have been superimposed one on another..." (1941, p. 19). This statement certainly can be taken as pointing to the palimpsest of references to significant events and figures in the history of Ireland: Brian Boruma and the Vikings, the Battle of Clontarf, the Norman invasion, Cromwell and the dispossession, the heroes of 1798, Daniel O'Connell, Young Ireland, the Fenian movement, Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish Revival, and many more. Joyce stuffed *Ulysses* with such references, assiduously drawn from a variety of historical materials, including the annals appended to *Thom's Directory*, the *Dublin Penny Journal*, and works by P. W. Joyce, as well as assorted general histories of Ireland.

Curiously enough, despite its grounding in this historical matrix (and despite its referential and realist surface), *Ulysses* is more Joyce's pseudohistory of Ireland than his history of Ireland, while *Finnegans Wake*, the dreamlike surface notwithstanding, functions as Joyce's exploration of Irish history (and world history), projected through Viconian cycles. As we have seen, in *Ulysses* Joyce depends primarily on the pseudohistorical *The Book of Invasions*, the Sovereignty myth, and on mythic patterns associated with the *síd*, the Irish otherworld, to give *Ulysses* an Irish architectonics that parallels his structural frameworks from world literature (including the architectonics of the Ulysses theme). In *Finnegans Wake*, by contrast, Joyce depends more on hero tales and legends (conspicuously, legends from the Finn cycle) that were taken in Joyce's day as historical rather than mythic. Yet this contrast of legend and myth, history and pseudohistory, is not so absolute as first appears, for in *Ulysses* there are layers of allusions to heroic and legendary materials that anticipate the appearance of similar material in *Finnegans Wake*.[3]

Moreover, more than a century ago, Standish O'Grady observed that Irish history and pseudohistory form a seamless web, with Irish pseudohistory passing itself off as history by means of a mimetic surface of details, clarity, and precision:

> There is not perhaps in existence a product of the human mind so extraordinary as the Irish annals. From a time dating for more than three thousand years before the birth of Christ, the stream of Hibernian history flows down uninterrupted, copious and abounding, between accurately defined banks ... As the centuries wend their way, king succeeds king with a regularity most gratifying, and fights no battle, marries no wife, begets not children, does no doughty deed of which a contemporaneous note was not taken, and which has not been incorporated in the annals of his country. To think that this mighty fabric of recorded events, so stupendous in its dimensions, so clean and accurate in its details, so symmetrical and elegant, should be after all a mirage and delusion ...
>
> Doubtless the legendary blends at some point with the historic narrative. The cloud and mist somewhere condense into the clear stream of indubitable fact. But how to discern under the rich and teeming mythus of the bards, the course of that slender and doubtful rivulet ... In this minute, circumstantial, and most imposing body of history, where the certain legend exhibits the form of plain and probable narrative, and the certain fact displays itself with a mythical fourish, how there to fix upon any one point and say here is the first truth. It is a task perilous and perplexing. (n.d., Oi Grady, pp. 23-4)

These characteristics, comparable in certain ways to the texture of magic realism, make it difficult to know precisely where history and pseudohistory join, where history leaves off and myth begins. This is doubly the case because Irish history has a tendency toward the fabulous, with its larger-than-life posings, its incredible gestures and sequences, and its preposterous coincidences.

The historical patina of Irish myths, hero tales, and pseudohistory is partly a result of the techniques of the *filid* (sg. *fili*), the sacred poets and guardians of Irish lore, who embedded their narratives in a matrix of genealogy, temporal synchronisms, precise indicators of time and space, and other structures which we associated with veridical speech acts. It is also partly the result of the early development and adoption of *The Book of Invasions*, which organized Irish myth and legend along a chronological time line, thus presenting the three major narrative cycles of Irish narrative (the mythological cycle, the Ulster cycle, and the Finn cycle), as well as stories of the traditional Irish kings, within a precise historicized framework.[4]

Dogsbodies All: "Ulysses" and the Ulster Cycle

Of the early Irish narratives, the stories of the Ulster cycle – particularly its tales about the exploits of Cú Chulainn – were probably those taken as most historical by Joyce's contemporaries. The Ulster cycle was the favorite narrative cycle of the Irish Revival, and its stories are showcased in translations and rewritings of the movement (Tymoczko 1999). Yeats' dramatic rewritings of the Cú Chulainn tales hold a central

position in his literary canon and in some ways in his life, for Cú Chulainn was a Yeatsian alter ego. Augusta Gregory produced an entire volume of translations drawn from the Ulster cycle, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. Patrick Pearse celebrated Cú Chulainn in his educational mission and promoted the hero as a model for his students.[5] It is generally agreed that Joyce had little taste for such "Cuchulanoid" fare, and many Joyce critics would follow Declan Kiberd (1992) in stating categorically that Joyce rejected the Ulster cycle as a scaffold for his work, that he "was reacting against the cult of Cúchulainn" and the glorification of ancient heroism. We might, thus, expect the Ulster cycle to be conspicuously absent from *Ulysses*.

Kiberd's point seems to be sustained by the episode early in *Ulysses* where Stephen encounters a dead dog on Sandymount Strand (p. 3.286), a dead dog whose carcass is sniffed by a cur wandering the beach with its owners (3.l318, 3.345-55).[6] Because Cú Chulainn's name means "the dog of Culann" – usually translated by the Revival as the "hound of Culann", a more elevated locution – Joyce's emphasis on low bred and dead dogs at the opening of *Ulysses* might be taken as an oblique rejection of the use of Cú Chulainn stories for the purposes of cultural nationalism. The episode seems to embody Joyce's view that Ireland's traditional heroes are dead, that the living who are fixated on those heroes are not unlike dogs sniffing other dead dogs. Like the Old Milkwoman in the opening episode of *Ulysses* – marked by her dry withered breasts and ignorance of her country's native language – the leitmotif of the dogs in episode three can be read as Joyce's suggestion that the myths of Irish cultural nationalism are dying or dead. Such an absolutist conclusion might be premature, however, for there is in fact a set of allusions in *Ulysses* to the Ulster cycle that has not been adequately explored. Evidence for a discourse about dogs in *Ulysses* provides an entry way into a subliminal connection between Joyce's narrative and the Ulster cycle.

Celtic culture gives a positive value to canines – dogs and wolves – that is at variance with Indo-European tradition as a whole; where in English, for example, dogs generally have negative or pejorative associations (e.g. "he's a dirty dog"), in Celtic tradition heroes are named after dogs and wolves, heroes have dogs or wolves as companions and quasi-totemic counterparts, and canines have a positive emblematic value. There is even some evidence of cultic associations with canines.[7] A sign of this positive valuation is found in the many names in Irish heroic literature and history which are formed from *cú*, the root for "dog" and "wolf". Such names are not simply literary conceits, but pepper the historical record as well, as a brief inspection of the annals and genealogies indicates, where many historic kings, chieftains, and heroes bear names made from the root *cú*.

The Ulster cycle is notable for its characters who have "doggy" names and identities. Thus, Ulster's chief heroes are Cú Chulainn and Conall Cernach, whose names mean respectively "the dog of Culann", as we have seen, and "victorious mighty dog". The king of Ulster is Conchobor, whose name means "dog-lover". Cú Chulainn, the hero whose canine associations are most prominent, acts like a dog as well, taking the

place of a great hound he kills and behaving as a sort of watch dog in guarding the borders of Ulster's territory. It is also taboo for Cú Chulainn to eat the flesh of dogs, suggesting a totemic relationship. Moreover, his battle-distortion (*ríastrad*) has certain features in common with those of enraged dogs: his hair rises, his gullet opens, and so forth. Other Ulster heroes have fierce dogs as companions, including Celtchair and Culann, and the dog of Leinster's king Mac Datho begins to fight on the side of Ulster when he is loosed and given a chance to demonstrate his preferences.[8]

It is perhaps natural, therefore, that there should be dog associations for the character of *Ulysses* most identified with cultural nationalism – the Citizen, for example – for such figures, like the historical Pearse, might be seen as consciously modeling themselves after Cú Chulainn and the Ulster heroes. The Citizen is described in terms that lightly evoke the description of the gigantic Mac Cecht, the chief hero of another legendary "doggy" king, Conaire Mór of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (*The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*), whose name means "great dog-lord".[9] This Conaire Mór was historicized as a contemporary of the Ulster heroes, and the Citizen can be seen as himself a sort of dog lord, owner as he is of the storied Garryowen. Garryowen is figured at the end of episode twelve as an *archú* or "slaughter hound", the sort of dog used by Celtic warriors in historical battles as part of their means of waging war. Joyce's irony in all this is apparent, of course, for the hyperbolic description of the Citizen simultaneously serves to identify him with Homer's Cyclops and with a whole line of medieval beast-people,[10] while his dog is clearly labeled not as a noble beast but as a "bloody mangy mongrel" by the narrative voice of the chapter (12.119-20).

Episode twelve brings still other Ulster cycle associations into the text. References in the episode to feasting and vats of ale and the passing of cups suggest the plenty found in the hostels in early Irish literature, where welcome and refreshment are available to all comers – as they are by definition in Barney Kiernan's pub, of course (12.280-99). Joyce knew stories about the hostels, and he alludes specifically to a description found in *Scéla Mucce Meic Datho* (*The Story of Mac Datho's Pig*) of the great cauldron in Mac Datho's hostel where those passing along the road can use a "flesh-fork" to stab a portion of meat:

> Secht ndoruis isin bruidin ocus secht sligeda trethe ocus secht tellaige indi ocus secht cori. Dam ocus tinne in cach coiri. In fer no-theged iarsint sligi do-bered in n-ael isin coire ocus a-taibred din chetgabail, iss ed no-ithed. Mani-tucad immurgu ní din chéttadall ni-bered a n-aill. (Adapted from Thurneysen 1935, p. 1-2)
>
> There were seven doors in the hostel and seven roads through it and seven hearths in it and seven cauldrons. An ox and flitch were in each cauldron. A man going along a road would thrust a flesh-fork into a cauldron, and what he would get with the first try is what he would eat. If he didn't get anything with the first stab, however, he wouldn't get another chance. (My translation)

This is the textual background to Bloom's musing about communal kitchens, relieving the hunger of children, and soup pots:

> Suppose that communal kitchen years to come ... Children fighting for the scrapings of the pot. Want a soup pot as big as the Phoenix Park. Harpooing flitches and hindquarters out of it. (8.704-16)

Rather than being a positive and Utopian image of plenty, Joyce stresses the negative valences of the hostels in both episodes eight and twelve. In episode eight the allusions are associated with the Homeric Lestrygonians, thus with sub-human behavior, including violence, cannibalism, and gluttony. In episode twelve the negative parallels with *The Story of Mac Datho's Pig* are continued, for the episode highlights drunkenness, boasting, intemperate behavior, hatred and prejudice, and violence. When Garryowen sets out to chase Bloom and his friends as they drive away from Barney Kiernan's pub, the narrative takes a twist reminiscent of the end of the early Irish tale, in which Mac Datho's great dog pursues the kings and warriors who have beset the hostel and his master.

Joyce's evocation of the Ulster cycle with reference to cultural nationalists is to some extent predictable, in line with his sentiments about violence and rabid nationalism. What is more surprising is that – like many of the Ulster heroes – the major characters in *Ulysses* are also given "canine" identities or names. Thus, in the very first pages of *Ulysses*, Stephen is called by Mulligan a "dogsbody" (1.112, 15.4178) and Stephen thinks of himself in the same words as well (1.137). Stephen feels a kinship to both the live and dead dogs he sees on Sandymount Strand, and he names the dead dog, like himself, a "dogsbody" (3.351). Bloom, too, has doggy attributes, in his youth getting drunk as a dog (15.266) and behaving in a "hangdog" manner (15.829). Called "pigeonlivered cur" (15.1082), "pigdog and always was ever since he was pupped" (15.1114-5), and "you dirty dog! (15.1890) by his accusers in Nighttown, Bloom is crowned "Hound of dishonour" by Bello (15.2835). In episode fifteen Bloom has as companion and alter ego the shapechanging everydog of Nighttown, who metamorphoses at need from spaniel to retriever to terrier to wolfdog to mastiff to boarhound to beagle to dachshund, and back again: it is worth noting that Bloom's companion is purebred, where the Citizen's dog is a mongrel. Even Molly has canine attributes. As a girl Molly's pet name was Doggerina (18.613, 18.622) and she had doggy friends (18.615 ff.); she herself admits as well that she is a little like a "dirty bitch" (18.1256). These doggy epithets for the main characters are clearly not always derogatory; both English and Irish semantic elements associated with dogs are conspicuous in the canine connotations Joyce establishes for Stephen, Bloom, and Molly. Like most things in *Ulysses*, they defy any single or pure interpretation. The doggy identities do, however, set Joyce's characters in the company of the heroes of Ireland's heroic literature and history.

Of these various appelations, the most interesting is the use of *dogsbody* for Stephen. It is an unusual English word, not found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, yet repeated in *Ulysses* five times (1.112, 1.137, 3.351-52, 15.4178). The sense seems clear

enough, if it is read as a nonce word formed of two ordinary English words in close composition, and it is clear enough that when Mulligan uses it of Stephen, he has a patronizing, deprecating intent. Nonetheless, the reason Joyce emphasizes *dogsbody* by using it at the outset of *Ulysses* and then repeating it so many times is probably a function of the associations of the Irish words that give a literal translation of the English compound. Joyce chose the English term *dogsbody* because of the supplement in meaning suggested by the sound of the Irish words with the same semantic range as the formators in English, namely *cú* (for *dog*) and *colainn* (for *body*). In close composition – *cúcholainn* – they would translate "dogbody" or "dogsbody" and also provide a pun – albeit a false or folk etymology – on *CúChulainn*, the name of Ireland's chief hero. By calling Stephen *dogsbody*, Joyce can have it all ways in *Ulysses*: Stephen can stand in for CúChulainn and still be a rather bedraggled and pathetic canine figure, with Mulligan – ignorant of Irish – all unwittingly addressing Stephen as Ireland's chief hero, even while Joyce on the surface eschews the maudlin and militaristic rhetoric of nationalist Cuchulanoid texts. An insider's ironic joke, this word play across two languages is a notable example of Joyce's bilingual double writing based on conventional translation equivalents. (Cf. Tymoczko 2000.)

The light and ironic evocations of Ireland's main cycle of heroic narratives are given a more precise shape by parallels with specific sagas of the Ulster cycle, including *The Story of Mac Dath's Pig* in episode twelve. I have elsewhere discussed at length the relationship between the principal characters of *Ulysses* and the figures of Ailill and Medb, particularly as they are configured in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cúailnge*). In that tale Medb insists that she must have a spouse who is without meanness, jealousy, or fear (cf. Kinsella 1970, p. 53), and I have argued that this relationship is in many ways reproduced in the marriage of Molly and Bloom, conditioning our assessment of Bloom's character in particular (Tymoczko 1994, p. 107-29). Shadows of still other sagas can be traced in Joyce's work, particularly *Mesca Ulad* (*The Intoxication of the Ulstermen*), which Joyce invokes in episode fourteen of *Ulysses*. The blind and drunken rush of the medicals and Stephen across Dublin in the middle of the night is reminiscent of the drunken midnight journey of the Ulster heroes across Ireland in *The Intoxication of the Ulstermen* (cf. Cross and Slover 1969, p. 221-23). Through such elements Joyce maintains a thread linking *Ulysses* to the Ulster cycle, without doing a traditional retelling of the stories or making his work "Cuchulanoid".

Waking Finn: Ulysses *and the Finn Cycle*

Much more suggestive than the wisps hinting at the Ulster cycle in *Ulysses* is the narrative strand that links Joyce's principal work to the Finn cycle. The Finn cycle is somewhat difficult to grasp critically if only because of the size of the cycle: Finn tales have been told in Ireland for more than a millenium, dominating the narrative tradition for hundreds of years since the late Middle Ages. Tales are found continuously in the manuscript tradition from the Old Irish period to the nineteenth century, and the cycle is

well represented in twentieth-century Irish oral folklore, constituting in fact the most prestigious storytelling tradition in the modern period. Thus, there are innumerable tales in the cycle to be considered and innumerable multiforms of the tales as well; they are found in virtually every form of Irish narrative, from heroic tale and ballad to romance and folktale, so the stories vary by technique as well as content. The tenor of the stories is also very diverse: some clearly descend from primary Celtic myth,[11] others fit in the heroic tradition, and still others are humorous folktales, bordering on elaborate jokes. Thus, the stories range in tone from tragic and heroic to comic and parodic. In part because of the long sweep of time that Finn and his heroes remained popular, their characters are complex, not confined to simple and consistent outlines. Moreover, tales of Finn are told about every stage of his life: his conception and childhood, his manhood in which he establishes himself as hero and demonstrates his heroic status, and his old age in which his prowess and primacy are eclipsed by younger heroes, including his son and grandson.

Because the development and outline of the cycle have been well canvassed for Joyceans by James MacKillop in *Fionn Mac Cumhaill: Celtic Myth in English Literature* (1986), only a brief summary need be provided here. The principal events of the Finn cycle include Finn's conception by the leader of Ireland's *fíanna*[12] and the daughter of the king of Ireland. Finn is born posthumously after the premature death of his father at the hands of his enemies, and in some versions the boy is raised in the wilderness by somewhat mysterious female figures. Finn acquires second sight, which he can then access by chewing or sucking his "thumb of knowledge", or by other means.

Many stories tell of the implaccable opposition to Finn on the part of his enemy Goll, or Aed, a one-eyed burner, often but not always conceptualized as the leader of an opposing fían. Usually Finn and his warriors are on foot, roaming the wilderness with their dogs, hunting and living off the land; they are associated with the Hill of Allen, but they wander everywhere in the Gaelic culture area. Not only do they have geographical mobility, Finn and his men frequently have contact with the otherworld and even enter otherworldly spaces, notably the mounds and hostels of the otherworld. They have been characterized as heroes outside the tribe. In Finn's old age, his young bride Gráinne and one of his chief heroes, Diarmait, elope; Finn pursues the pair, eventually making peace with them, but after a time he reneges and becomes responsible for Diarmait's death. The cycle also includes stories about Finn's death and the destruction of his fíanna in a final battle. After the death of Finn and his men, a survivor, Oisín, the son of Finn, returns from the otherworld and relates to St. Patrick stories about Finn and the fíanna.

Before turning to the specifics of how Joyce integrates the Finn cycle into *Ulysses*, it will be useful to review some aspects of Joyce's mythic method. Although Joyce uses mythic parallels extensively in his works, the myths represented are rarely complete, instead being used in partial and fragmentary ways. Moreover, myth does not usually appear on the surface of Joyce's texts, as in a mythic retelling; instead he uses the outlines or fabulas of myths structurally, as a sort of armature, beneath the surface of his texts. Joyce's mythic method reflects the developments of comparative approaches

to mythology in his time, represented in such works as James Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Typically Joyce also uses a single myth in multiple ways in his narratives. For example, he might use a standard version of a myth and simultaneously a revisionist version of the same myth: thus, in *Ulysses* Stephen is both Telemachus looking for his father and also a son resolutely trying to stay clear of fathers (Kenner 1980, p. 17). In Joyce's mythic structures, characters are also often double cast; thus, Molly plays both Calypso and Penelope in the Homeric parallels in *Ulysses*. These aspects of Joyce's mythic method inform his manipulation of the Finn cycle in *Ulysses* as well.[13]

Given Joyce's positioning of Bloom as the central figure of the other myths forming the architectonic framework of *Ulysses*, we might expect Bloom to double for Finn in the elements of the Finn cycle that are used in *Ulysses*. And indeed this is the case: Bloom can be seen as playing out various roles of Finn in the Finn cycle, albeit in ways similar to the partial evocations of other myths utilized in *Ulysses*.

In earlier studies I have suggested that Joyce used the pattern of the *bruiden* ("hostel, large banqueting hall, house") tale – a tale type paradigmatically associated with the Finn cycle – in shaping the Nighttown episode of *Ulysses* (Tymoczko 1994, pp. 177-220). The bruiden tale typically recounts an adventure to a fairy mound where the inhabitants are generally hostile to the human invaders who have come unbidden and may wrest from their encounter with the otherworld important powers or knowledge. As in the case of Finn and his fíanna, in *Ulysses* Bloom and his companions (chiefly Stephen) have an adventure and almost get trapped in Mrs. Cohen's palace of entertainments, a sort of bruiden in Nighttown. Straying across the boundaries of the normal, respectable world into the underworld, Bloom escapes the peril of the brothel and Nighttown, having accessed insight but only after some conflict and loss. In this adventure Joyce presents his protagonist Bloom in the most humorous and least dignified light, and it is perhaps relevant that in the bruiden tales Finn also often becomes a humorous figure stripped of his dignity. Featuring metamorphosis and strange unearthly figures, the Fenian bruiden tales have ruptures, dislocations, and fantasy similar to those in Joyce's Nighttown episode.[14] But these linkages between Ulysses and the Finn cycle are generic more than specific to stories about Finn as a character.

In MacKillop's analysis of the use of the Finn cycle in *Finnegans Wake*, he indicates that the tale about Finn most utilized in Joyce's final work is *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* (*The Pursuit of Diarmait and Gráinne*), the story in which Finn's bride Gráinne elopes with Finn's champion Diarmait (cf. 1986, p. 174). This is a tale that was enormously popular in Irish tradition for hundreds of years and that was very well known in Joyce's day, as at present.[15] The story is localized throughout the Gaelic culture area, with place names commemorating it widely in Scotland and Ireland. In view of the general popularity of *Diarmait and Gráinne* and Joyce's reliance on the tale in his final work, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the story of Diarmait and Gráinne is evoked in *Ulysses* as well. Clearly, the motif of an older man whose wife is being led astray by a younger man – played out by Bloom, Molly, and Boylan in *Ulysses*

– fits the narrative pattern of *Diarmait and Gráinne* and suggests a general identification between Finn and Bloom.

Things are not so simple as they seem, however: at times Bloom seems to take on the role of other characters in the Finn cycle as well. There is a celebrated episode of *The Pursuit of Diarmait and Gráinne* that problematizes the straightforward identification of Bloom and Finn. The episode is not included in most manuscripts of *Diarmait and Gráinne* but rather occurs as an independent tale, generally called *Uath Beinne Étair* (*The Hiding of the Hill of Howth*). In this tale Diarmait and Gráinne live secretly on Howth Head and narrowly avoid capture by Finn after their hiding place is betrayed by their own servant. The earliest surviving version of this anecdote dates probably from the eleventh century and is found in a fifteenth-century manuscript; it includes one of the loveliest early Irish "nature" poems;[16] because the story is still remembered as part of local legend related to Howth, however, knowledge of the episode does not rest solely on the textual tradition. This famous Fenian tale suggests that the dalliance of Bloom and Molly on Howth Head and their union in a lush outdoor setting is not simple naturalism: it is intertextually related to stories about Howth's most famous pair of lovers. But the implication of this intertextuality is that – surprisingly enough – Bloom does not only play the role of Finn, the wronged husband, but also the role of Diarmait to Molly's Gráinne.

In some texts Diarmait is given the by-name Donn, meaning "the Dark-Haired". There is also a tradition that Diarmait Donn (Diarmait the Dark-Haired) is irresistible to Gráinne and other women; the earliest full manuscript of the story describes Diarmait as a prosperous "sweet-spoken man" with "curling jetblack hair" and "crimson red cheeks", a man who is "white-toothed" and "the best beloved of women and maidens in the whole of Ireland" (Ní Shéaghdha 1967, p. 9). In some versions of the story this attraction to women is attributed to the power of a somewhat mysterious (perhaps magical) "love spot" (cf. Mac Cana, pp. 106, 113). These various characteristics of Diarmait have their counterparts in Joyce's delineation of Bloom. Bloom's suitability for the role of Diarmait is guaranteed by his good looks, which Joyce is at pains to establish, and Bloom like Diarmait is dark haired. Even in 1904 Leopold has the power to attract young women, including Gertie and Martha on Bloomsday, and he is still the image of a "matinée idol" (13.417), with dark eyes, "wonderful" and "superbly expressive" (13.414-15), handsome lips (13.718), and "pale intellectual face" (13.415-16). In her final monologue, Molly remembers that Bloom "was very handsome" in his youth (18.208-9) and she refers to Bloom's fine complexion (18.296) and his "splendid set of teeth" (18.307). She sees him still as a "husband ... thats fit to be looked at" (18.828). In the text there are magical associations for Bloom as well: in Nighttown Bloom imagines himself conjuring in "Svengali's fur overcoat" (15.2721-25), and in his youth Bloom wore "Zingari colours" (18.296), with the invocations of Svengali and gypsies both testifying perhaps to Bloom's hypnotic and mesmerizing appeal, a modern "dynamic-equivalent" to the magical power of Diarmait's "love spot".[17]

A way to unpack this hint of Bloom-cum-Diarmait in Joyce's manipulation of *Diarmait and Gráinne* is to suggest that Bloom – like Molly in her Homeric roles – is being double cast in the roles of the Finn cycle for thematic and psychological reasons. At one and the same time, Bloom plays the role of Diarmait and also paradoxically the role of Finn. Thus, in 1904 as a mature man, Bloom must assert his husbandly claims not just against the seductive attractions of the likes of Blazes Boylan but also against the memory of his own fair and youthful self. In sorting out these multiple roles for Bloom, it is relevant that Diarmait is not the only man marked as attractive in the Finn cycle: Finn's own name means "white" or "fair", the latter in its extended as well as literal senses. Finn, like Diarmait, is, therefore, notably handsome, and a central story of the cycle relates how he acquired his name *Finn* in consequence of his handsome appearance.[18] Thus, we might conclude that Bloom is fair – *finn* – his dark good looks notwithstanding. This play on *finn* may also explain Joyce's emphasis on Bloom's pale skin. In building this complex multivalent relationship to the Finn cycle, Joyce suggests an irony of marriage and long term relationships: the sweetness of memories about a couple's youth is, paradoxically, potentially able to tarnish the loyalties of their maturity.

These similarities between Bloom and Finn related to *The Pursuit of Diarmait and Gráinne* are significant, but the intertextuality in Joyce's work is indicated much more persuasively by other textual features of *Ulysses*. More important than parallels to *Diarmait and Gráinne* are the qualities of Bloom's enemies. In Irish literature arch-enemies are paradigmatically both one-eyed and gigantic. In *Cath Maige Tuired* (*The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*), for example, the champion of the Túatha Dé Danann, Lug, has as his principal enemy the one-eyed Balor, a chaotic figure whose gaze brings death.[19] Finn's principal adversary fits this pattern: Goll mac Morna, like Balor, is also a chaotic figure, a powerful agent of destruction in many stories, and one of the main sources of trouble and unpredictability in Finn's world. The name *Goll* is actually a sobriquet meaning "blind of one eye", a common by-name in Irish literature. Thus, the Citizen, Bloom's antagonist in what is usually called the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*, must be seen as a signifier simultaneously pointing to several mythic levels: the one-eyed Cyclopean enemy of Homer's *Odyssey*; the enemy of Lug, Balor the Fomorian of the mythological cycle; and Goll mac Morna, Finn's arch-rival. The polyvalent and archetypal quality of Bloom's one-eyed enemy in episode twelve demonstrates that even as he was writing *Ulysses*, Joyce was fully engaged in the type of mythic syncretism that dominates *Finnegans Wake*.

The connection between Bloom and Finn emerges even more definitively with respect to the mythic resonances of Bloom's most important rival in *Ulysses*, namely Blazes Boylan. Here we must return to the name of Goll, Finn's rival and enemy in the fíanna. Goll's name is a sobriquet as we have seen; his original name is actually *Aed*, a common Irish name meaning "fire".[20] Popular throughout Irish history, the name *Aed* has been traditionally translated into English as *Hugh*. By designating Bloom's antagonist as Hugh E. (Blazes) Boylan (17.2141), therefore, Joyce triply marks Bloom's rival as connected with fire. In mythic terms Boylan becomes a dublet of Finn's enemy: like

Finn's enemy Aed, Bloom's opponent is connected with fire by his nickname *Blazes*, by his surname which suggests boiling heat and fiery anger, and by his given name which is the English translation equivalent of the Irish name *Aed*, "fire'. Finn is the only hero in Irish tradition whose prime enemy has such marked connections to fire and whose principal enemy is named Aed; by underscoring the connection between Boylan and Finn's enemy through their names, Joyce ensures correspondence between Boylan and Aed, and, hence, between Bloom and Finn.

Note the mechanisms of Joyce's mythic method with respect to the Finn cycle. In the treatment of the story of Diarmait and Gráinne, Joyce splits the role of Diarmait between two of his characters, having both Boylan and Bloom play different aspects of the role. This splitting is the inverse of his technique whereby one character plays two mythic roles, a technique also found in Joyce's manipulations of the Finn cycle, where Bloom in general plays Finn, but doubles as the youthful Diarmait with respect to the past. Also of interest is his ability to inscribe Irish myth in *Ulysses* by writing simultaneously in two languages: Joyce evokes the Irish name Aed, hence signalling the Irish word for "fire', by naming his character Hugh E. Boylan. By using the conventional translation equivalent in English for *Aed*, paradoxically he achieves a kind of double writing, invoking signifiers in two languages simultaneously. Boylan's name is a symbolic node drawing together meanings in both English and Irish. This form of double writing can be traced in Joyce's work as early as *Dubliners* (Tymoczko 2000) and continues through *Finnegans Wake*, where, for example, the method behind his identification of H. C. Earwicker with Persse O'Reilly – the latter being the Englished pronunciation of the French word meaning *earwig*, identity being established through a multi-layered conflation of both semantic and phonic translation – is similar to the means of identification between Boylan and Finn's enemy.[21]

In working out the configuration of Bloom, Molly, and Stephen, the Finn cycle would have appealed to Joyce for important reasons. We have seen that the Fenian heroes[22] have been called "heroes outside the tribe". The Finn material in *Ulysses* is positioned to mark out and in a sense normalize the nature of Joyce's principal figures, in particular the marginalized and polarized position of the protagonist Bloom in his environment. Thus, the ancient tales ground the modernist alienation of Joyce's main character. At the same time the Finn cycle provides mythic depth to Bloom's physical peregrinations and wanderings. Critics have noted that Bloom is a compulsive walker and have even called attention to his kinship to the turn-of-the-century figure of the flaneur (Duffy 1994). Like Finn, Bloom is afoot in most of his adventures, and he wanders freely through space. The Finn cycle gives a mythic analogue to Bloom's ability to move freely between many spheres and, in a sense, to be protean. We know that Joyce found the figure of Ulysses appealing because he was "all-round ... a complete man ... a good man": "son to Laertes ... father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy, and King of Ithaca" (Ellmann 1982, p. 435-36). These are characteristics

of Finn as well, an all-round and complete character who plays many roles in the extensive cycle bearing his name: son, child, lover, husband, father, grandfather, warrior, poet, raider, fool, and more. As such, Finn is archetypal, evoking deep and broad currents of human life that help to add substance to the figure of Bloom. Finally, the love triangle at the heart of the most popular story of the Finn cycle provides mythic grounding for the events on Bloomsday dominating the conscious and unconscious life of Bloom and Molly. The Finn cycle offered Joyce a framework for integrating and expatiating on all these elements.

Mythic Strands in Ulysses*: Conclusions*

The book opens with a dead dog and curs, rather than a triumphal representation of Cú Chulainn, the great hound that can't be checked.[23] Bloom is at first sight not promising as a Fenian figure: the somewhat uxorious keeper of literature's most well known cat, he has no dogs, no horses, no fían. Yet, as I have argued, there are strands connecting *Ulysses* with both the Ulster cycle and the Finn cycle, as well as mythic continua from *The Book of Invasions* and other Irish mythic complexes. Part of the burden of *Ulysses* – the basso continuo so to speak – is the vitality of Irish mythic traditions, even when they seem to have definitively passed away. The ability of Irish tradition to revive, to be resurrected, to resucitate, to be reborn, is a note that comes to the surface in *Finnegans Wake*, but it is implicitly present in *Ulysses* as well. What do we learn from the presence of these mythic strands in *Ulysses* beyond their sheer existence and beyond the resilience of Irish myths? What is their import?

Although the elements in *Ulysses* derived from the Ulster cycle and the Finn cycle are clearly ancillary to the armature from *The Book of Invasions* and the Sovereignty mythos, as well as Irish otherworld literature, these mythic strands contribute subliminally to establishing Bloom as an Irish Everyman, to constituting Stephen and Bloom as spiritual heirs to all of Ireland's legendary past, to making them universal mythic representatives of Ireland's heritage. The Irish mythic elements seem to be an aspect of a specifically Irish configuration of metempsychosis in *Ulysses*, in which the great figures of the past reappear in other incarnations (Tymocko 1994, pp. 43-9).

Not incidentally, Joyce's manipulations of canine associations in *Ulysses*, as well as his other echoes of the Ulster cycle, also contribute to the playful and ironic treatment of mythos in Joyce's work, thus helping to establish the double-textured tone of the text. In this regard it is significant that the intertextuality between *Ulysses* and the Ulster cycle singles out the humorous sagas in the cycle. These are the stories that the Irish Revival was most troubled by and least inclined to translate or to retell; the humorous tales undercut the heroic image being constructed by Irish cultural nationalism and also came dangerously close to confirming some of the denigrating colonialist stereotypes of the Irish (Tymoczko 1999, esp. pp. 191-221). In marked contrast to his contemporaries, Joyce seems to have sought out the early humour for inclusion in his work. This must be

related to Joyce's preference for comedy over tragedy, his view that the comic most perfectly "excites in us the feeling of joy".[24]

The humorous nature of the Finn cycle contributed to Joyce's double-textured tone as well.[25] The Finn cycle is far from the dominant in *Ulysses* as it is in *Finnegans Wake*: there are only teasing hints, partial and contradictory parallels to the Fenian prototypes behind the central characters of *Ulysses*. Nonetheless, used even as it is in *Ulysses*, the Finn cycle sets a template for a protagonist who enjoys the freedom of space, who is afoot observing and interacting with the great city that is so much a character of *Ulysses*. As a hero outside the tribe, Bloom-as-Finn escapes the nets of religion, the colonial powers, and the orthodoxies of nationalism. He is not the servant of two masters. The Finn cycle makes archetypal Bloom's freedom to interrogate the pieties and conformities of his age. At the same time, the irreverent figure of Finn links Bloom through space to the entire Gaelic culture area and through time to Irish tradition from its inception to the modern period.

Like Ulysses, Finn also is a model of an "all round man": son and father, child and hero, mature leader and old man, fighter and poet, wise seer and stupid giant. The versatility and variability of Finn, as well as the contradictory humanity of the character, are elements in Finn's having become the most popular figure of nineteenth –and twentieth-century Irish folklore, and these are characteristics that Joyce draws upon to give Bloom resonance as well. A significant aspect of the versatility of the Finn stories is also formal variation, and it may be that the variation Joyce observed in this central cycle of Irish literature was one impetus behind Joyce's experimentation with form in the second half of *Ulysses*. Finally, there are hints of verbal realism and paronomy in Joyce's evocation of the Finn cycle in *Ulysses*, aspects that are intrinsic to early Irish texts. All these qualities in *Ulysses* have an intertextual relationship to the Finn cycle; they were also deployed by Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*. Thus, Joyce's literary strategy in his final work is illumined by analyzing the Fenian elements in *Ulysses*.

The idea of mythic return in modern dress underlies all of Joyce's major works, and the mythic strands explored here reveal aspects of Joyce's working methods and processes. We see, for example, the extent to which he recycles materials from work to work, bringing readers back to the same stories, legends, and myths by a commodius vicus of recirculation. John Kelleher (1965) has argued that *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel* provided Joyce with the armature of "The Dead", and it is interesting to find traces of the same tale again in *Ulysses*. *The Book of Invasions* provides a contrast between Davin the Fomorian and Stephen the Milesian in *Portrait of the Artist* (180); it is central to the mythic configuration of *Ulysses* and elements appear in *Finnegans Wake* as well. Similarly, it is evident that Joyce was experimenting with the Finn cycle before *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce had Finn on his mind as a model for his literary protagonist as he was writing *Ulysses*, and he was working with the very tales in the Finn cycle that he later used in *Finnegans Wake*.[26] In crafting his works, not only did Joyce rework literary and mythic materials from Irish tradition, he reworked the materials he himself

had reworked before. His play with the Finn cycle is part of Joyce's impulse to return to the same wells again and again.

The extent to which Joyce had a tendency to throw everything into the literary soup is also illustrated by the Irish mythic elements in *Ulysses*. It is an approach to writing that reminds one of the manners and culinary methods in the Duchess's house in *Alice in Wonderland*. The cook takes the view that the cauldron of soup never has enough pepper and that anything can be thrown at the audience. The result is, of course, literary sneezes, shattered glass, and toppling masonry. Where do we stop in analyzing the subtexts and intertextualities of *Ulysses*?

Phillip Herring (1987) has discussed the openness of Joyce's texts and "Joyce's uncertainty principle", a principle implicitly announced in "The Sisters" where Joyce draws attention to the figure of the gnomon in the first story of *Dubliners*: a gnomon is both the geometrical figure of the parallelogram with a smaller similar parallelogram missing from one corner, and also the indicator on a sundial that tells time by casting a shadow. Herring suggests that Joyce created "absences that readers must make speak if they are to gain insight into character, structure, and narrative technique" (1987, p. 4). Through ellipses, hiatuses in meaning, significant silences, emptiness, and incompletion, Joyce works on his readers to complete the gnomon (ibid), particularly in his complex, full-length narratives.

It is important to note in this regard the paucity of exiguous and explicit references to the Irish legends and myths woven into *Ulysses*. The thinness of the surface references to the materials explored above might suggest that the connections I have outlined are tenuous. But it is easy to forget how thin are the references within *Ulysses* itself to the Homeric parallels. Much of our ability to perceive the Greek elements has to do with the mental categories we bring to *Ulysses*, the grid within which we customarily situate the text (based to a large extent on the critical tradition), and the framework we use to read it (provided in part by Joyce directly in the Linati scheme, in part by the scheme and exegesis in Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's "Ulysses"*). It is easy to forget that before publishing *Ulysses* Joyce deliberately eliminated the episode titles that critics so blithely use in their discussions of *Ulysses*: Nestor, Calypso, Hades, Cyclops, Circe, Penelope ... We supply all these and supplement the text of *Ulysses* with classical framing devices, despite the fact that Joyce himself purged the text of all such exiguous references to the Greek mythos, leaving only the title of the book as his key to this mythic reading.

Joyce distributed no schemas for his Irish architectonics, perhaps because he judged that they would have been counterproductive to his being read in the modernist tradition, because they would have harmed his reception as an avant-garde writer rather than have helped further his reputation, and because they would have increased the mystification of his avant-garde audience more than they could have elucidated his work. So we must perceive the Irish frameworks ourselves, keyed by the few explicit allusions and intertextual references provided. Fortunately, comparative patternings and Joyce's double writing remain to guide us in our Irish readings.

There are always different possible ways to close any open structure. The complexity of mythic strands, allusions, and intertextualities is one aspect of the openness of Joyce's texts. His method produces texts that are both underdetermined in their meanings and overdetermined by their plenitude and copiousness. Here I have traced some of the Irish textualities I use to make Joyce's absences speak, producing readings based on Irish contexts. What do such readings mean to those who know nothing about Irish literature? Is it possible to perceive radically different architectonic structures, to extend the lines of the gnomon so as to close the figure in radically different ways? If so, what are the implications for the critical concept of intertextuality itself?

Notes

1 Sommer 1992 outlines the characteristics and purposes of resistant texts.

2 This argument is presented in full in Tymoczko 1994.

3 Joyce's knowledge of the stories discussed below is discussed at length in Tymoczko 1994, pp. 221-326.

4 Background on *The Book of Invasions* is found in Tymoczko 1994:ch. 2 and sources cited; see also Scowcroft 1987, 1988.

5 See Tymoczko 1999, p. 80 and sources cited.

6 Citations of *Ulysses* refer to episode and line number from the edition by Gabler et al. 1986.

7 Ross 1974, pp. 423-27 discusses the role of dogs and wolves in Celtic culture and myth. See also MacKillop 1986, pp. 49-50 on the role of dogs in the Finn cycle, as well as Nagy 1985, p. 44, who suggests that various members of the fíanna also have a canine nature.

8 Relevant Ulster cycle tales include *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*, *The Story of Mac Datho's Pig*, and *The Death of Celtchar mac Uithecair*, in Cross and Slover 1969; *The Cattle Raid of Cúailnge*, trans. Kinsella 1970, pp. 51-253, particularly 77-78, 82-84, 150-55; and *The Death of Cú Chulainn*, trans. Tymoczko 1981, pp. 49-50.

9 A translation of the parodic description of Mac Cecht is found in Cross and Slover 1969, pp. 114-15.

10 The guardian of the bulls in Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (1993, pp. 284-85) offers a convenient example of this medieval topos.

11 Murphy 1953:lxxvi-lxxxv; cf. Mac Cana 1970, p. 110. It is possible that Finn's name represents a propitiary name for the Celtic god Lug. The root *wind – (which gives Irish *finn*) also underlies the names of many important (cultic) Continental Celtic sites seemingly named after a deity, including the modern Vienna.

12 Sg. *fían*, "warrior-band'. In the tales the fíanna are bands of warriors who live outdoors on the margins of Irish society, hunting, traveling at will, and serving at times as professional fighters. For a scholarly assessment, see Nagy 1985.

13 Tymoczko 1994 offers a more detailed consideration of Joyce mythic method; see chs. 2 and 9.

14 Cf. MacKillop 1986, pp. 28, 168 on humor in the bruiden tales and on Finn as a humorous figure. Joyce's interest in bruiden tales is also reflected in the traces of *The Story of Mac Datho's Pig* discussed above and in his use of *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel* discussed below.

15 The earliest full version of the tale is found in a seventeenth-century manuscript; it is edited and translated in Ní Shéaghdha 1967. The story derives from a tale documented as early as the tenth century, but recast in the modern form perhaps in the thirteenth century (Ní Shéaghdha 1967, pp. x-xiv).

16 Edited and translated in Meyer 1890. Meyer points out that the title of the tale is mentioned in a tenth-century tale list and the poem itself is contained in two twelfth-century manuscripts with a different frame story. For the dating of the text see Ní Shéaghdha 1967, p. xii.

17 On dynamic equivalence see Nida 1964, pp. 159-67.

18 A translation of the tale is found in Cross and Slover 1969, pp. 360-69.

19 A translation is found in Cross and Slover 1969, pp. 28-48.

20 Other enemies of Finn are also connected with flames and burning. See Murphy lii-iv, lxiii-xxiv.

21 Verbal realism is an essential strategy in the construction of *Ulysses*, discussed at greater length in Tymoczko 1994, pp. 120-24, 160-66, 349-50. Cf. also Tymoczko 2004.

22 Let's not ignore the subliminal political valence of *Fenian* here.

23 Cf. Kinsella 1970, p. 121.

24 A fuller discussion of *Ulysses*, the Irish comic tradition, and Joyce's theory of comedy is found in Tymoczko 1994, pp. 79-91.

25 As the most significant aspects of the Finn cycle for *Finnegans Wake*, MacKillop (1986, pp. 163-93) suggests that Joyce turned to the cycle for its ability to supply a humorous framework and to provide an Irish incarnation of the monomyth.

26 In fact Joyce's interest in the Finn cycle can be traced through all his major works: in work yet to be published, Cóilín Owens argues that elements of the Finn cycle supply dominant discourses of *A Portrait of the Artist* as well (see Owens 2003 for a summary of his forthcoming work).

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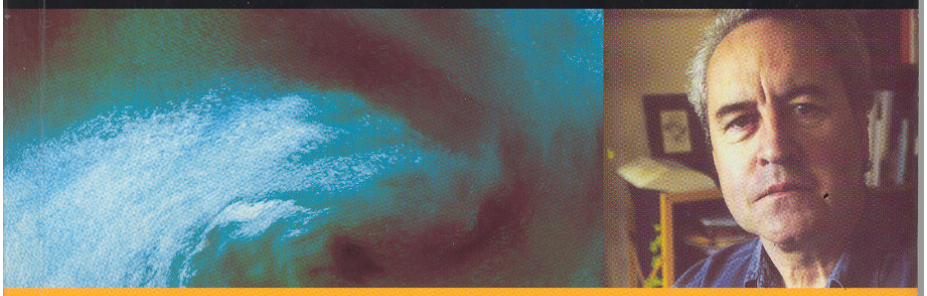
The Critic and Author

contemporary Irish writers

John Banville

Exploring Fictions



Derek Hand

"Endless Beginnings" in the Criticism of Banville's Writings

Laura P. Zuntini de Izarra

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

As few books, though by foremost writers, have been published on John Banville's fiction, Derek Hand's work is very much welcome as it adds another beam of light to the spectrum of literary critique on the work of this contemporary Irish writer.

Advocating that "it is better and more suitable to consider his art as oscillating between a modernist and postmodernist perspective", Hand embarks on another "endless beginning" in the interpretation of Banville's novels, bringing into action the last words of his conclusion.

In his introduction Hand claims that Banville's work can be fully grasped only when read within an Irish context. So, he borrows Richard Kearney's concept of postmodernism "as mediational modernism" to both support this argument and contest Rüdiger Imhof's belief that Banville's novels have to be read within a European/ international setting.

Such a claim might be disputed if considering Banville's own public assertion that he refuses to be reduced to only an Irish writer – "I am not going to do the Irish thing"– as Hand himself acknowledges quoting from Hedwig Schawall's interview (p. 5). On the other hand, Imhof's belief is also supported by Banville's recent declaration stating that he sees himself in "some kind of international way" (Mutran & Izarra 2003, p. 229). However, in order to back his claim, Hand goes beyond these statements and dives heroically into a sound argument that focuses on traces of Irish historical events and literary tradition present in some of the writer's books.

As he is determined to prove Banville's Irishness – something that Joseph McMinn has already done though acknowledging the novelist's work in the intersection of the tradition of the Irish novel and the wider tradition of European fiction – Hand places Banville in-between Joyce and Beckett and makes comparisons with the writings of William Butler Yeats and Elizabeth Bowen among other Irish writers. He adopts a thematic approach to analyze Banville's fiction dividing his book in three main chapters where he deals first with "Irish matters" (*Birchwood* and *The Newton Letter*), then with

the nature of art and the artistic imagination (*Doctor Copernicus* and *Kepler*), and finally with an investigation of the self (*Mefisto*, *The Book of Evidence*, *Ghosts*, *The Untouchable* and *Eclipse*). His conclusion points out the writer's radical openness stressing that his work is "still in process, evolving and mutating with each subsequent addition to it" (p. 176).

Banvillean critics, including myself, have generally been unable to avoid praising the author's self-reflexive narrative technique. His concern with the novel's state of the art and the interrogative quality of his narratives put such a strain on the theory of this genre that we get entangled in the postmodern web of metafictional critique though not denying the historical element of his work and even attempting postcolonial readings of it. Banville himself has many times expressed his concern with the genre saying that he is "trying to think fiction because [he is] always interested in ideas." Thus, "infected with the virus of ideas, which is probably the worst possible thing for a novelist" (Mutran & Izarra 2003, p. 229), he paradoxically brings his critics to the border of the abyss as he leads them to question but, at the same time, to admire and celebrate the novel form, which he defines as the youngest art form that "seems to have been used up very, very quickly" (*op. cit.*). In this way, Banville challenges novelists and critics to rethink fiction from a formal perspective while he goes on looking for a new form through the renewal of old ones or the exploration of other ways of representations that incessantly carry him over "from the dream world into the world of fiction". He insists that his way of doing fiction can be compared to writing "a life-changing dream" so much so that when you read it "you will actually have the dream." (*op. cit.* 230). Therefore, Derek Hand's reading of Banville's work can be considered as another instance of an "endless beginning', as "actually having the dream' while standing at the crossroads of metafiction with both the literary and the historical context of Ireland.

Many of Hand's critical insights are worth mentioning like his close analysis of *Birchwood* and *The Newton Letter* in which he brings up the formal aspects of these novels in a contrapuntal relationship with the historical facts presented in the background, or his explanation in the third chapter of how form enters in a critical dialogue with the content of the novel focusing on the first two books of the tetralogy; and finally, the way he shows how Banville's fiction moves "progressively away from his concerns with the "big game of the intellect' and the issue of Irish history – another grand narrative – toward a more intimate arena for his artistic contemplation" (p. 117) focusing on the individual and the personal, on the (anti)hero out of place. But, in so doing, he also distances himself from his main aim and instead of continuing at the crossroads, he succumbs to the temptation of taking the road of metafictional critique and gets entrapped into deciphering the mechanisms of the imaginary and the processes of construction of the narrators' identities in the dark realm of the novelist's mind.

The second chapter clearly proves the relationship between history and fiction as well as how Banville's two novels – *Birchwood* and *The Newton Letter* – are a metaphorical awakening from the nightmare of history. Nevertheless, I would like to

point out a sophism that is implied *en passant* in one of the theoretical statements. When it is affirmed that history is a "fiction", it is, of course, a reference to historical narratives rather than to historical events, as it is declared that this is not to say "the past loses value when thought of as fiction or that "things/events' did not happen" (p. 26). However, these assertions turn out to be double-edged because are also assumed as possible and true by the reader. They have the same effect of the historian's statement in *The Newton Letter* when he refers to "this Popovian Newton-as-the-greatest-scientist-the-world-has-known": "Not that I think of it untrue, in the sense that it is fact" (*TNL* pp. 29-30). To avoid this risk a wider theoretical support should be provided to prove that history or historical facts are interpretations. Moreover, when in Banville's novel the fictional historian refers to the historian Popov as an "embalmer", he is against the descriptive function of facts because it reveals the stagnation and dissection of science and, in the process, he also comes to perceive that, in his own personal story, the current facts reveal lying truths. Thus, considering these oxymoronic "fictitious truths" and the impossibility of reconstructing the historian's present as well as the past I reaffirm that "it is at this crossroad that Banville places his interlude to question the "objectivity" of a purely descriptive "historicizing history", and of the dynamic historicism which, according to Adam Schaff in *Fiction and Truth*, implies capturing nature, society and human beings in motion. Historicism leads to the denial of the absolute principles because the historian must relate ideas to historical conditions." (Izarra 1999, pp. 102-103). I fully agree with Hand that Banville is interested in how the past is mediated to us in the present through writing and in the dismantling of "the rigid hierarchical divide between history writing and creative/artistic writing." (p. 26). But, the risk of postmodernism is that it leads us to support blindly Baudrillard's project which, according to Christopher Norris (1990, p. 196), defends that it is no longer possible "to maintain the old economy of truth and representation in a world where "reality" is entirely constructed through forms of mass-media feedback where values are determined by consumer demand (itself brought about by the endless circulation of meanings, images and advertising codes), and where nothing could serve as a means of distinguishing true from merely true-seeming (or ideological) habits of belief." This is a "true" argument, but it is also a sophism because historical "things/events" did happen: while people are being killed at wars, facts are being constructed through mass-media forms that turn them into spectacles of hyper reality accepting the latter as "the real" instead of a product of mediation. The French historian Lucien Febvre says that history is a choice, not an arbitrary but a pre-conceived one, and a historian cannot submit to the facts as though they had not been constructed and selected by him. I cannot help wondering whether this concept or any other dealing with the epistemological aspects of history as science help to reinforce and expand Hand's argument finding out more hidden clues that show how Irish history is mediated in Banville's later novels. Why did Banville choose to write about the scientists' creative processes of discovery in relation to creative writing and the house of supreme fictions, and then move on to "a more intimate arena for his artistic

contemplation"? What present historical facts or cultural debates are "hidden" in his agenda?

A second point that I would like to raise is Hand's reading of *Doctor Copernicus* and *Kepler* as science fiction resorting to Mc Hale's definition of the genre and claiming that it is "the postmodern genre *par excellence*." Hand concludes after a few considerations that the two novels "could be said to share many characteristics with the science fiction genre" (p. 68). Echoing McHale, he says that the juxtaposition of different worlds (the here and now and the projected world of the future) "brings ontological concerns to the fore. [...] Science fiction comments upon the present through a process of estrangement and defamiliarisation. [...] Thus, science fiction becomes a means to both look forward and backward simultaneously". Analogically, Banville "moves into the historical past in order to comment upon the present" (pp. 67-68). Let us say that science fiction is a mode of modern fantasy rooted in ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairy tale and romance. Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973) was the first serious critical work about a form of literature, which had been dismissed as frivolous. Todorov represents diagrammatically the changing forms of the fantastic, from the marvelous (with its belief in the supernatural and the magic in genres such as the fairy tale and science fiction) through the purely fantastic (in which no explanation is offered on the facts presented) to the uncanny (which explains all strangeness as generated by unconscious forces). Moreover, in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson says that in the nineteenth-century the fantastic began to hollow out the "real" world, making it strange, without providing any explanation for its strangeness (1981, p. 25) and adding that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) could be considered as the starting point for this literary trend. There is no doubt that science fiction like postmodernist fiction could be considered as the ontological genre *per excellence* due to its subversive and interrogative function. It is subversive because, as it projects the world into the future based on present reality, it produces a sense of estrangement. But McHale quotes Robert Scholes who says, "speculative fabulation [i.e. science fiction] is defined by the presence of at least one clear *representational* discontinuity with life as we know it" (McHale 1987, p. 59). Considering this theoretical background, Banville's tetralogy does not juxtapose the present with the projection of a "brave new world" different from our own. He does not introduce any *novum* either – character, world structure or event – to confront the present or highlight disparities and *representational* discontinuities.

I agree with Hand's statement that Banville rewrites stories of the lives of the scientists to "set up a correspondence between the past and the present" (p. 68) and to show that these books "do deal with history and how it is perceived in the present" (p. 26). Precisely because of this, I believe that the tetralogy should be read as a dialogic encounter between Science and Literature because both fields of knowledge try to validate a "reality" (an experience). Banville deconstructs the illusory antagonism that presents Science and Literature as opposite discursive practices in order to show through narrative

and form that the discourses of science and fiction meet in the field of concepts, in the primacy of imagination and intuition during the process of creation, in the power of persuasion, in the presence of the subjective constituent, in self-referentiality, in the power of metaphor, in the tensions provoked by the social, economic and ideological context, in the formation of knowledge and in its publication. For all these reasons, I cannot agree either with Hand's consideration of *Doctor Copernicus* and *Kepler* as science fiction because "quite simply, they are fictions about science" (p. 69). Banville's tetralogy is not about science nor is it a fictional rewriting of the scientists' lives. Banville explores imaginarily the nature of the scientists' creative processes of discovery and the implications of their discoveries in their ordinary life in order to comprehend his own creative process in the field of fiction. If we accept the idea that history and fiction are human constructions, as already suggested when discussing historical and fictional narratives, and to it we add Banville's own discovery that scientific narratives are also "fictitious truths", the way I defined the tetralogy in the past is still valid. It is, then, "a *trans(ap)parent historiographic metabiofiction* where the past is seen from the present and the limits of biography and fiction are blurred, provoking a tension in the narrative: the biography is articulated as a self-conscious and reflective fiction, transforming the pseudo-historical novel into a *metabiofiction*, and the *transparent*, true facts into *apparent* reality due to the relativity of perception" (Izarra 1999, p. 57).

Just to conclude this essay in a circular way as expressed in its title, let's go back to the beginning. In the introduction, Hand affirms that though Banville has been telling the same story for many years, his artistic achievement is such that he has been able to portray, question and interrogate reality in a fresh and original way. However, he also affirms that though there are variations on the basic tale, "it is the same story nonetheless"; and he ends by saying "Banville's abilities mean that his major concerns are returned to in each of his novels and what can be said of one could, in truth, be said of all" (p. 21). This statement conditions Banville's readers and critics to feel trapped in endless repetitions. Throughout the analyses of the novels, Hand explains in different ways how each end points to another beginning, another attempt at understanding reality and though the result might be a failure there is sometimes "a note of hope". I think that though I can hear the dark strains of Banville's "melody" and atmosphere in the background I would like to recall also Banville's sense of humour and ironic twists in representing "the glorious incoherence of reality" and in writing "the same bloody book again in a different form" although the cliché that we are all actors and wear masks is repeated (Mutran & Izarra 2003, pp. 242, 245). Thus, I challenge "this sense of failure" pointed out by Hand in Banville's work counterpoising his view to the enlightening effect of a derridean *aporia* present in Banville's mythopoetic open endings. Like the fenix being reborn out of the ashes, a repeated story brings about a renewed performance of actors and context. It is the perception of those changes that brings the reader into a state of *aporia* when flashes of partial truths reveal endless understandings of other complex manifestations of the self. Banville believes in the inauthenticity of the self.

According to him, there is no self, no being in the Nietzschean way, there is only becoming (*op. cit.,* p. 244). When referring to *Mefisto*, Banville advocates art as the combination produced by letting darkness mix with light to which he adds: "for artists, letting in the light is probably more problematic. I mean, Felix is a character perhaps of darkness, but he is also, you know, quite skittish and he's quite funny … He's not all evil; he's not all wickedness … He's a lot of fun …" (*op. cit.*). This spiraling quality of the interrogative endings of his novels, where implied answers reverberate, marks the "progression" of Banville's art – "it's a kind of progression from the past to the following one. [...] [B]efore I finish the book, the next book is started in my head" (*op. cit.,* p. 235). This takes us to another level of understanding his fictions as ironic *simulacra* of life. We are not lost in the funhouse, are we?

Derek Hand's *John Banville. Exploring Fictions* is an important contribution to Irish literary studies as it allows readers to perceive this "logical progression". It also challenges us to find the Ariadne's thread that brings us triumphantly out of the labyrinth of Banville's fictions because the novelist has let the light penetrate darkness.

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Reply to "Endless Beginnings"

Derek Hand

"Endless beginnings" is an appropriate phrase to apply to John Banville's work. It is appropriate too, perhaps, to all those who come to that work and evaluate it critically. After many years reading and studying Banville, and reading and studying the criticism that surrounds Banville's work, it seems to me that any one attempt to "say" or to "know" that work necessarily leads on to other attempts to say and to know: and so it goes on, endlessly. Truth – or a final end – is not, I think, the aim of any reader of Banville's work, nor is it mine. This "reply", then, is testament to that fact which Banville and his characters are so very much aware of, that one text leads inexorably onto other texts.

In general the critical reaction to my intervention into Banvillean studies has been positive. Most reviewers recognise what it was I was attempting to say and do with my book. Some reviewers have disagreed with my approach and this, of course, is to be expected and, indeed, hoped for. Entering into any dialogue necessarily means that not everyone will agree with your point of view. It is right and proper that this is so: the world of ideas would be a very bleak and uninteresting place if we all thought and said the same things.

One particular area that some reviewers, though not Laura Izarra, have had some difficulty with is my positioning of Banville and his work in an Irish context. In doing so I never intended to disallow readings of his work in a European or international context. Quite simply, as a reader and a critic writing from within Ireland, I thought it would be worthwhile and interesting to consider what this writer – who also writes from within the geographic space of Ireland – might have to say about local issues and local concerns. Or, to put it another way, I thought it might be interesting to consider how his ideas might have any local resonance or relevance. I believe that there are many points and ideas within his work that speak directly to the matter of Ireland and, in many ways, illuminate the Irish condition, as his writing illuminates the human condition.

It is quite remarkable that it is still necessary to argue for a postmodern "both/and" approach to Irish writing and culture, rather than the debilitating "either/or" model that sets up an oppositional paradigm between Ireland and the world, tradition and modernity, backwardness and progressiveness. Such thinking is anachronistic at this juncture, despite its long shelf life and its continued existence among certain critics. To read Banville's work as simply confirming the stereotypical view of Ireland as anti-modern and anti-intellectual is to miss the point about the uncertainty at the heart of his

writing. His is a writing that hovers between worlds, between spaces and oppositions. It seems to me to that Banville's characters' struggle toward articulacy and his foregrounding of epistemological and ontological concerns in his work, mirrors the Irish struggle for a voice and an identity in the last 200 years.

History, as Laura Izarra points out, is central to my understanding of Banville's work, especially that work which is set in or deals overtly with Irish concerns. Certainly I agree with her argument that the playful postmodern concept of history as fiction needs to be reimagined in the present moment. In the seemingly more innocent days of High Theory it was possible, perhaps, in Yeatsian terms to simply imagine the world of action and events away: to make them disappear. While this kind of intellectual manoeuvring might not be so acceptable in today's post-September 11th world, it is still pertinent that we continue to probe our understanding of how facts and historical narrative are manipulated. Such understanding is more crucial now than it has ever been.

Without doubt John Banville's difficulties with history are born out of Irish concerns. Certainly, his meditations on history in the novels *Birchwood* and *The Newton Letter* have clear reverberations for Irish culture. Conor McCarthy in his *Modernisation: Crisis and Culture in Ireland 1969-1990* very succinctly makes a claim for Banville's work in relation to the struggles for Irish historical narrative.[1] McCarthy's thesis is that Banville's "history" novels are very much caught up in the debates surrounding the nature of Irish history and the methodologies of Irish history as a subject. That Banville represents characters – and indeed knowledge itself – in crisis is also apposite to the Irish situation, recognising as it does the state of a society and culture in transition. Of course Banville has himself, in numerous interviews and critical statements, denied the Irish element in his work. However, I think it is vital that we keep in mind, as Joseph McMinn argues, how Banville has increasingly created a persona or mask in interviews and critical writings.[2] We should, therefore, be open to "reading" and "interpreting" his comments as we do his fiction. But, on a more mundane note, it is obvious that despite the meticulous control exerted by an author like Banville over his work, there is always room for the unintentional and the unconsciousness on his or her part. And that is the gap that allows for critical engagement.

Laura Izarra asks what might be the reasons for Banville beginning to look at science and scientists, and then abandoning this "big game of the intellect" for more intimate meditations in his later novels. With the perspective of hindsight it could be argued that the kind of "chaos" enacted in *Birchwood* and, as I argue, the loss of authorial control within that novel, perhaps prompted Banville to move away from overtly Irish concerns. It must be remembered that during the 1970's Banville was a copy editor for the Irish Press newspapers. He was witness night after night to the reports of atrocity after atrocity coming out of the North of Ireland. No wonder, then, that he moved away from the all-too-real violence of the present moment, to the relative safety of the distant past. And yet, *Doctor Copernicus* has many relevant passages concerned with the issues of the day: sectarian identity and national violence underpin Nicholas's journeys

throughout Europe. The same could be said of *Kepler*. We might ask whether the past is reflected in the present moment, or whether the present is being reread into the past?

Perhaps it is his Irishness that explains, somewhat, his movement from the "Grande Histoire" of science and history toward the "Petite Histoire" of the intimate and the individual.[3] Just as W.B. Yeats in his great late play *Purgatory*, or in his poem "Politics", declares the end of, and the impossibility of, the continuance of the grand narrative, Banville also realises the need to reconsider the individual human world as against the national world and collective identity that governed so much Irish literature and culture in the past two centuries. Indeed, it might be argued, that it is precisely this tension between ideas of community and the idea of the individual that underpins much of Banville's writing. His characters, to be sure, are isolated and alienated individuals yet all yearn for some kind of connection with others or the other beyond the self. If the word "we" does not reverberate throughout Banville's fictional world, it is a world – even in its absence – which possesses resonance in his writing.

Izarra challenges my remarks concerning Banville's *Doctor Copernicus* and *Kepler* being "science fiction". I agree that Banville's fictional worlds – in the past and the present – do not possess the strict criterion necessary for Brian McHale or Robert Schole's definition of "science fiction". Nevertheless, it does seem to me that in those novels Banville wants to make strange the present by reconfiguring it through the lens of the past, in the same way that science fiction makes the present strange by imagining possible futures.

It is true, too, that a reader will not discover much hard "science" in Banville's tetralogy and, yet, readers will come away with an understanding of both Kepler and Copernicus's theories of the heavens. I have always felt somewhat like Rheticus who can declare that, despite the advent of the Copernican Revolution, "the sky is blue, and shall be forever blue, and the earth shall blossom forever in spring, and this planet shall forever be centre of all we know."[4] What Banville achieves is a humanisation of science: a recognition that from the limited perspective of humankind, science and its conclusions remain, at a certain level, incomprehensible and distant.

Izarra's final call for all of us readers of Banville to keep in mind his own declared sense of irony and humour is fitting. The absurdity of our world and the absurdity of the human sense of authority and importance in the world have long being a central element of Banville's fiction. There is, though, a serious aspect to his constant comic puncturing of our human foibles and affectations. In a world, as we know, increasingly divided between rigid positions – stark yes and no situations and choices; in a world increasingly dominated by people who appear fixedly certain and sure of the moral rightness of their beliefs; in a world increasingly accustomed to using and hearing a language of conviction, belief and faith; in such a world, a writer like John Banville questioning those "certainties" – of moral universalities, of language itself – is not just a luxury but a necessity.

So, the "end" does indeed open up the possibility of many new beginnings. It is that sense of openness, I think, which binds us students of John Banville's work together, forcing us to continue to read and continue to interpret a work that offers "endless beginnings".

Notes

1 See Conor McCarthy. *Modernisation: Crisis and Culture in Ireland 1969-1990.* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000, pp. 80-134.

2 Joseph McMinn, "Versions of Banville: Versions of Modernism" in Liam Harte and Michael Parker (Editors. *Contemporary Irish Fiction: Themes, Tropes, Theories*. ondon: Macmillan Press, 2000, pp. 79-99.

3 See Ihab Hassan. The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature. (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, p. 259ff.

4 John Banville. *Doctor Copernicus.* London: Paladin, 1987, p. 232.

Drama

Whistling Psyche

Sebastian Barry*

Characters

Dr Barry

Miss Nightingale

WHISTLING PSYCHE

The waiting-room of a Victorian train-station, fine cast-iron struts and medallions, a row of red-plush seats against the panelled wall, framed prints set into it, travellers' scenes of Egypt, England, Ireland, Africa, Queen Victoria, a long mirror, etcetera, but the edges of the room fraying into the evocative decrepitude of a graveyard monument, wax flowers, twisted lead, long-dried bunches of withered flowers. There is quietness as ill-befits a train-station, and music runs along like confident rats.

A fine clock shows ten minutes after two.

There enters a figure, old, very small for a man, in a fine, dark uniform. There is a helpful moonlight on the features, and on his plumed three-cornered hat. The face is anxious enough in this privacy. Barking of dog off. The voice is sharp and high. The uniform is that of an Inspector General of Army Hospitals, in the mid nineteenth century. But if this place has a time, it is around 1910. The figure pauses at the doorway and whistles back out into the dark, waits a moment.

DR BARRY: You will not need to be told, I am sure, of the beauties and exactitudes of the poodle. For no animal, nor hardly human either, exists on such a plane of delicacy. (*A moment)* I have spent my whole life travelling, and I am not surprised to find myself here. It is familiar. A pleasant waiting-room, undoubtedly in England, by the sheen and the exactitude of it. *(A moment*) My poodles have all been Psyches. I named the first Psyche, and could think of no reason not to give the same ticket to the second, and the

* Special thanks to Sebastian Barry for his generosity in sending his manuscript to Munira Mutran and thanks to Catherine John, Dinah Wood and the publisher Faber and Faber Ltd. for their kind permission to reprint *Whisting Psyche*.

third, for truly that ethereal animal is an image of my own human soul. *(Looks about at the room, steers towards a chair)* I have an odd sense of having been here before. Not just once, but many times. Perhaps indeed it is not so pleasant. Is Nathaniel to hand? Sitting patiently in the third class waiting-room? And where is poor Psyche? (*A moment*) It lessens the misery of a small death, to take up with a new creature at least of the same name. So that I might go out into the walled garden at night in the clean filth of the darks and call that same important name, *Psyche, Psyche,* whistling my eternal dog through the boles of the orange trees. Of course I speak of my old home in Cape Town. And be at the cake shop to buy the same little cakes that I might lay some small offering of delight at the altar of her nature, which is all delight. (*Takes off the hat, and sits, the chair emphasising how small the person is.)* No poodle ever drew breath that was not an entrancement of thankfulness. There have not been many humans who on their passing have aroused in me a desire to replicate their presence by giving their names to another, even if that were possible, even if humans were to be purchased as handily as dogs, as indeed in those southern parts of Africa in my time was still more than possible, being in truth a staunch trade of the Cape and carried on by good British men, though under new names. But it was all the same thing. In fact a new human was easier got now I think of it, for I never received a poodle that had not aged three months already by the time she reached my arms, trembling and sweating with love on the Cape Town shore, as the ship bearing that bundle of fur and veritable twigs for legs, and the heart of a lion produced by nature in miniature, hove into view from its eternity of a voyage from old England. Thus bringing to me again Psyche, renewed and familiar. Two Psyches long I was in Cape Town, and I am sure there were many that wished heartily I had only lasted myself but half a dog.

(A moment)

A waiting-room, a fragment of a house, where no one lives, set down upon a platform… I think of that strange orange light under the orange trees, in that high-walled garden, near the mysterious African sea. The period of my life I can with justice call happy. Myself in the big wooden house, the linens on my bed as stiff as sails, my little dog Psyche making a frolic of the heat. And my servant Nathaniel arranging all things with his domestical genius, buffing both house and master till we shone. I think of the bewildered natives, the sick and the mad, and the bewildered people of the colony, also sick and mad, in different ways and manners. There was only myself to stand between, to raise the black madman and drive back the white, the one rattling in his given chains, the other in the chains of his own invention, the horror of the climate, the shortness of a English creature's life there, the elemental emergency of the continuous sun. But that I am that other sort of creature, neither white nor black, nor brown nor even green, but the strange original that is an Irish person, I might have had more kin with those suffering whites. But my heart, my white heart blackening secretly with age, was with the soiled

lunatics that cried out like large owls in the bright asylums, as if the endless sunlight was hurting their eyes, their souls. And the stumped lepers, and the heathen with livers boiled in makeshift drink, all the delirium tremens of the outcast and the forsaken, were in the upshot my purpose and my marvels. For in them only could I see the weaving of God, if God, that poor shaky character, there might be – in them only the origin of philosophy and the destinations of medicine. And I was a young army doctor, in the great muddled wool-basket of Empire. *(A moment)* Good beginnings may have bitter ends. And I am of a mind that all I did, all I accomplished against the odds that clerks and administrations and their officials like to throw in the way of the tentative walk of progress, is as nothing now, no memorial to my days exists, no record of my intense and sometimes loving labours. Because I did not so much serve the civilized man and woman in their starchy trappings, but mostly applied myself to the despised and lonesome of the world, and there is no medal, preferment or honour to be got from such. It is a painful curiosity to me that a life of some seventy years can register so lightly in the annals of humankind. To the degree that such a life might blow off the page of the historian's manuscript like a shard of feather from his quill, before ever his ink recorded my efforts and monuments, even if such monuments are merely the prayers of destitute men recording that one time in their existence a single person in good clothes thought their welfare was worth more than a cavalry horse. *(Takes out a thin black cheroot)* And more curious to me still that a person of the light character of Florence Nightingale, (*strikes a lucifer*) the heroine of the Crimean war, (*lights cheroot*) might now be remembered as if she were a royal personage, when I, that took the same interest as she in drains and cleanliness, and that twenty and thirty years before her, am consigned to a footnote of Imperial oddities.

Now there enters a woman in her eighties, tall, serene like a monarch of shadows. She wears a long blue skirt and starched blouse, with a rich Turkish-looking jacket, all swirls of dark blue and dark red. She has a strong, clear face, her hair pulled back tight, with a richness in it, a confident brushstroke. She carries a few little books in a ribbon, and a small wooden box. She is as confident as a child in its own room. She looks at the clock, checks it against her own watch.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: To the second. Perfectly in accord. (*To Dr Barry)* Good evening. *(She finds a seat and sits pragmatically. Dr Barry pays no heed to her. Looking at Dr Barry*) He is very small. He does not wish to see me. I do not think I know him, resplendent as that uniform is. He does not like a woman to be travelling alone, to be sharing something with his masculine nature, even if it is just a room – this elegant little room. (*She tries again)* Good evening. Do you think it will rain again? It has been raining all July, and it is a very terrible business. (*Dr Barry studiously smoking.)* No, he will not speak. He would rather pollute his surroundings. *(Looking about.*) An anteroom? A waiting-room? It is apt.

(A moment)

DR BARRY: I hear something low and mean, like a broken music, like a nagging voice. But I cannot see where it comes from. *(Getting up and pacing up and down, smoking viciously)*

Is it to my shame that I was born in the county of Cork in Ireland, in the year – many dark years ago? I am a creature of shadowed origin, in that my place of birth is insecure, dark, and better so. Cork constitutes itself in part of the best lands of Ireland, fat cows graze there, with fattening udders swinging gently, cows that are crazy in the afternoons to be driven back down the gradual hills, for to be relieved of that milk. They are musical cows, those cows of lower Munster, lowing with increasing panic as the sun fires down sumptuous and golden to the earth, like a religious queen, and comical, in that their panic is characteristic and easily allayed, so they are not tragic souls. That was the bucolic choral singing of my early babyhood, and in my heart at two or three was drawn the country maps, country places and country sounds and doings, when we would throw ourselves on the pleasant and easily-given mercy of relations, who at the time ate with the plenty of princes and the disregard of millionaires. Because the land threw her bounty in their laps. And so things went on, plain and ordinary enough, until that hunger and pestilence leaped forth upon the same green fields with fang of wolf and embrace of bear, somewhere around 1810 or 12, when famine became the urgent lamenting of our history, and changed all things. The landed people turned their gaze inward because outward upon the white roads of Ireland and in the mudded huts so like unto those later that I found in the rural plethoras of Africa, limbs withered to sticks and stenches of misery and terminality amassed themselves so that any possible scales of landlord and labourer were quite broken, and a bleak nightmare beyond words took the place in the book of life where once these old colonists and native rich had tried by the grace of their Gods and the wilful toil of their minds and limbs to make a rural idyll in their inherited fields. These means and ambitions were routed utterly by calamity, and hearts and souls of those with plenty withered just as surely if more invisibly as the real and true limbs of the destitute and poor. And in that change I think I trace the beginnings of my true story. For necessary then to all Irish persons was subterfuge and subtle guiles, things not unknown to me now and long since, things ever carried before the spectacle of my private story like obliterating lights. But wherever in the world I have found a version of Ireland, a palimpsest of that once-easy kingdom, I have striven again to create that old balance and medium among destroyed and enmired peoples, as if by my qualities and doctoring abilities I might restore to the earth a true translation of the ancient text of Ireland's happiness, however forlorn in the attempt, even however foolish and by civilized people reviled for my instincts and dreams. For nothing is more discommoding to the general stability and luxuries of accommodated folk than the spectre of change and the sword of reform, that cuts through not only the noisome horrors of what happens in the dank margins of things, but also inevitably the sweet-scented calicoes and poetries and philosophical affectations and religious contentments of the officers and high servants of a long-established and increasingly encushioned empire. (*A long moment*) Perdition is my due, for I am – I do not know, I do not know. Oh that I might have some sudden confidante, but that is not likely now.

Barking of dog. Turns head and looks towards the door expectantly. Nothing. Crushes out the cheroot underfoot, sits again.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: He seems anxious about that dog. Perhaps it is his darling. An animal, though not destined for God's heaven, may yet seem sometimes greater than a mere person. I myself once loved a little owl, Athena. She was like a tiny god, a tiny idol I suppose, as neat and square as a soap-stone statue, and she would have fitted in the palm of my hand, had I ever subjected her to that indignity. It is not easy to itemise the attractions of a little owl. She was the size of a clerical partridge – if you will allow me the metaphor, for she was so like a small, squat parson in a sort of dancing suit – but sometimes I fancied the intertwining notions of the universe itself passed through her mysterious skull. One morning watching her I thought of the hill of the skull, Golgotha itself, in Jerusalem, and had the oddest inner vision of three tiny crosses, with Christ between flanked by his famous criminals. It is not healthy to see Christ crucified on the head of an owl. And Athena was older than that, as old as the goddess she was named for, goddess of the state, of the city, of the power, goddess of doing and artifice, even yes of war, a goddess of many uses, immortal in her day but finite, finished now. My little beastie, as creatures go so silent, unasking, sufficient unto herself, elegant but plump, pretty but grotesque, one in number but numberless, an image, an idea representing the million Platonic owls of the earth, sounding over the marshes and stirring the dreams of poets and farmers. Little Athena, that required nothing but a feed of mice and a thimble of water. When I was called to go to the Crimea, in that great excitement and sudden preparation, Athena was put in an attic to be safe out of the way, and when all the baggage left, she was forgotten for a few days, and died there of hunger and silence. My sister brought her to me and put her in my hand, like a tuppenny bag of salt, that the kitchen air has got into and made hard and damp. My poor little beastie. For her I cried. I do not for a moment imagine you think me a person that has cried often.

A moment, then in growing vexation.

Unless it was from sheer misery – the vexation of being denied the arena of my calling. And it was denied me because of course it was a strange calling. A nurse in my good mamma's day was a poor fallen type, heavy with fat and evil intent, consuming jars of noisome beer, neglecting her charges – women who themselves were abandoned to the sanitary horrors and terminal, dark corridors of the hospital itself, a place where visions became black and the depravity and the hopelessness of a sort of end of earth took hold on everyone. A nurse was the creature of that place, taking colour, cloth, and manners from it, her soul, like the walls, running with sweaty moulds. So I, the daughter of wealthy people, with our five houses, our acres of carpets and lawns, our peacocks and our pride, could only fling the howling demons of fear and outrage into those cushioned domains. And they strove to hold me, to wrap me in the same dailysome rictus that held them, they would rather me stretched upon a third couch, like my sister and mother,

prostrated by good fortune and rich food in those soundless mansions when Victoria was but a girl like me. So that they turned me into a wraith, a revenant unto myself, a coiling, crazed version of who I was, a bad likeness, an hysteric, a weeper, a fool, a philosopher of idleness, who could not eat, who could not speak except in dreams, where I raged against fine dresses, and cursed myself roundly like a soldier. And I bore those wounds gracelessly, and would not have balms put on them, because cure there was none. Ravenous, strangely, wandering the house ravenous, and not able to eat as I say because, it was not food I needed, but something widening, something seething and guiding, like a Bethlehem star, to bring me back into the world of birth and death, not that horrible stifle of a life, that smothering, mothering place where I mouldered, all loved and admired and understood and as good as dead. (She has been almost shouting. Glances at Dr Barry, who pays her no heed.)

A moment.

DR BARRY: Lonesome. (*A moment*) Ever thus. It might well be asked what conditionality of being kept me at a distance from my fellows. For why I was forever watching the passing show of life as if from a platform of my own, alone like a grandee without equal. There were times when I have come close to my fellow man, as close as a person can get in fact without entering one of the portals of the body. For I rescued in childbirth the wife of an important nabob, with spread of orchards and levees of working men, and a fear in his heart as he watched indifferent nature storm against the frame of his wife, as she strove to bring her baby into the darkened world. Swift as a swift itself, as it enters its little nest of clay, my hand with its blade as sharp as sea-grass, cut into that grand wife, lifted her astonishing child from her belly, where it lay in the first gifts of water and peace, gave the hollering creature to my starchy nurses, sliced the amazing chord that binds the two musics of mother and offspring, and placed back the ruptured folds of skin, and stitched that important lady together again, quickly, quickly, because infection rushes in like invisible water. She kept her privileged life, and the baby throve, and was given my name for a name, the sweetest reward I ever got for my labours. And at the christening in the opposite of such haste, I held the little lamb, thinking on its plight inside the womb, some unknown warnings sounding there, with the urgency of threatening death. I held it in my official arms, not betraying by my face for a moment my intense pleasure, feeling in my own innards an answering joy, as if I had brought this girl myself out into the tricky light. With immense frowns I felt that soft sparrow in her blankets rimmed with gold, beating like a bird, vibrating like a drum. Its mother gazed at me with open gratitude, the father in his mighty clothes talked to me as if I were a sort of God, who though queer and small to look at, was in a true guise as expansive and important as the sun. Otherwise and in more usual times I was forced by lonesome facts too sore to set out, to keep my distance from my fellow Christians like a dog dubious of the teeth of its own kind.

A turn of light, music. Goes to the door, whistles. Stares *out gloomily. Miss Nightingale gives up on engaging Dr Barry, gets up, looks at the pictures, and examines in particular a portrait of Victoria on the wall.*

MISS NIGHTINGALE: She touched on everything but remained untouched. Victoria. She saw the passing greatness of poets and painters, ministers prime and minor, chancellors and neurotic dukes, and everything was done for her, through her, and of her, as if her true offspring were liberties and progress, like the children of a Virgin queen. My, my. In Scotland where I talked with her, she was both everything ordinary and magical, there was an absolutely silent music that attended her, of great courses and profound decisions, a sense of ordering everything not by sleight of hand, but by some impossible reach of insight and empathy. If she was surrounded by those gossiping courtiers, ninnies and nonentities, ever the expanse of her mind was filled with the important urgencies of the day, and I noticed the strangeness of that, even how she fretted, and seemed to worry herself that she might not do the right thing, how it overwhelmed her for moments in sequence, so that she became silent, and had the look of a panicking animal. As though the effort of empire were like a terrible illness that smote the mind. And it seemed to me the mere things on her table, the knick-knacks and objects, of a curious domestic or imperial cast, were heavy, chosen for their heaviness, because she wished them to anchor her down, keep her table from floating away on her, born aloft by the gasses of doubt and danger, flying her out across the Thames, across the Irish Sea, down to Africa and Asia and the Arab worlds, all her subjects below labouring, suffering, dancing, singing, imploring her to keep her mind on the eternal question that reduces us all, what to do, what to do. (*Dr Barry looks back as if catching a trace of these words.*) So that because of that essential grace in her nature she listened to me when I brought her my account of Scutari, and my understanding of the failure of the medical systems then destroying her armies. She listened with the eyes of a queen and the heart of a common woman. She didn't tell me what to think, or resist in any way, or defend her high officers in the manner they tended to do themselves. So therefore, because she believed me, she elected to think as I did, and transferred my own thoughts to her vigorous mind and made them her own, and acted out of them thereafter as if her name in that respect was Nightingale.

DR BARRY: Did I hear the detestable word Nightingale?

MISS NIGHTINGALE: I wonder all the same what is the story of this old creature, talking to himself in his bitter little tones? Like the sharpest of lemonjuice in a sweet dish. Mr Witherchops. Why is he here with his eyes as black as liquorice, muttering viciously to himself? He may be grotesquely injured in the mind, by scenes of ferocious carnage too dark and drenched with blood to have kept his sanity. I should feel perhaps something for this old wretch. Or interrogate him professionally? Soothing music is a great balm to the mad. I know what I will do. (*She raises the little box she brought in*

with her). I will calm the poor fellow with this. Yes. *(She opens the box and it begins to play a tune. She holds it up towards Dr Barry helpfully.)*

A moment. The moonlight toiling. Tin music.

DR BARRY: In the machineries of empire there may well reside compassion hidden like a gem in mud, but I have not seen much evidence of that glitter. The urgent histories of our times tell us again and again of the great mission of Christendom, expressly and momently to go to the plight of the heathen sunken in his philosophical slime. They speak elegantly of the spiritual horrors of little naked nations that have had the arrogance and rudeness to run their own paltry affairs inside the barriers of mountains and deserts, without the gentle and civilizing guidance of that remarkable creature near kin to an angel, the European person willing to risk health and life to go out upon a colony and draw his pay so often merely for the dereliction of duty – to lend his healthful influence, should he happen to be a doctor, by confining himself to his handsome house, as if his expertise were an artful wind that might drift out over his orchards and his roses, and heal the sick and the lame by a magic far more unlikely than a heathen dance.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: True, true, and doubly true, but are you not, little sir, one of those very doctors, to judge by your mighty garb, and your extraordinary hat?

DR BARRY: The officers of empire sit in their houses and then when they can do no better, visit each other's gold and resplendent houses by polite, if sometimes ironic, rota. It is those other lowly beings, the merest servants within empire, our soldiers, our canal diggers, our labourers sent out to infect the native with this burdensome activity of labouring, that perform the true work and meet the actual dangers. So you will conclude immediately that it is these noble souls, so selfless and so inconsiderate of their own health – who if they take refuge in cheap alcohols yet suffer the murderous delirium tremens for their pains, or end up in the madhouse crying out for their hurt heads to be healed – you will say that it is these lovely souls that empire strives to honour and nurture. By this fashion we effect it: soldiers in barracks without clean air or linen, with the foulest slop for food without vegetable or fruit, who die in their thousands of diseases rather than of wars, who come out to dark places with their bright English and Irish and Scottish faces, and endarken there and die without help or hindrance or pity from any powerful man.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Halleluya, sir. I echo you.

DR BARRY: I saw in Jamaica whole companies of men depart this earth, from lack of an open window in a barracks, a decent drain, or a single apple. It is little it would seem for a governor to suffer the awful death tolls of the solders in his districts, who writhe

and cry out in agony, despair and die, and though this may trouble the human dreams of him that steers such worthless hearts, what a brave, gay face the governor shows in the evenings at parties and levees, wearing the golden uniform and the plumed hat with an admirable show of courage and endurance.But that is the wisdom of authority, to remove itself from pestilence and work. For work, especially the work of an empire, is deadly and done to a short song. Yet it is oddly true that a suffering man shows oftentimes grace. You may tend a tormented lunatic that in some sudden instance exhibits a redeeming gentleness of soul. For shining out of ruined people are the remnant parts that ill luck and short rations and indifference cannot destroy. Even the direst madman in his last extremes may for a moment calm and look at you with the fiercest love, as if in your face he sees for that moment an amalgam of the people he has loved, undoubtedly in better times, and in the broken mirror of your features spies his lost lovers, his father, his mother and his kin, if it should so happen they were gentle to him and looked on him with the especial notice of those that could describe his characteristics like vivid poets, like the very Shakespeares of his individual life. And in that glance is the purpose of this earth's journey, if any purpose there is, and when priests and ministers blithely invoke the soul, perhaps they have oftentimes forgotten that the greatest soul ever seen upon the earth belonged to a wandering vagabond half-mad with memory and mission that preached what seemed a ludicrous fallacy of a religion, and thought his own low-born body, the mere thrown-together limbs of the son of a provincial carpenter, would be the saving of mankind if expressed in biscuit form and taken once a week at a gathering of like-minded fools.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Oh, this is dark. There is scandal here. There is creeping changes, and apostasy unchecked, and a crossing over. And I admire it.

DR BARRY: For these views I may add I was distrusted, diminished, and at last dismissed.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: You do not surprise me.

DR BARRY: I attempted to cross over those immense barriers, those mountains of obscurating philosophies and one-sided histories, that separate the likes of myself from such souls without acknowledged stories or importances. What assisted me in this flight from position and all the usual structures, mental and actual, of grandeur, was I should think the strange mixture of scenes observed throughout my babyhood in Ireland, where the dividing line between opulence and cold cries of hunger was sometimes only a meagre hedge, or that ironical construct known as a ha-ha, where a falling ditch invites an illusion of connection between a genteel lawn and a plethora of struggling fields. Those visions of childhood were more deeply poetical to me than the satirizing of one even so great as Alexander Pope, who loved nothing better than an antithesis to point up the horror of difference in society, though mine was a poeticality without the usual

recourses of that trade, since it lacked pastoral easiness and was utterly devoid of harmony. Rather it was a jangling of destructed metres, the cries and the worse silences of those that hunkered in weeping cabins, and the laughter and polite, useless talk that passed the strange Irish time for the grandees of Cork, though some of them it is true were loveable and astute.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: This is horribly familiar and unfamiliar in the same breath. These are thoughts that afflicted me too, mutatis mutandis. But to think them is one thing – to speak them out, even in this strange place, is an epilepsy of misdemeanour! And yet, and yet…

DR BARRY: This is the haziest part of my recollection, in that I have been driven in my mind to befog and becurtain such early days that lacked an ambiguity proper to my status now, yet out of that dampening mist and forceful if cloudy horror rose my proper character, with eyes so open they wept in the sunlight, and heart so sered it could do no other than prompt a lifetime of resistance and revolution. Whether I effected anything, or turned any system over that was irredeemably hostile to the happiness of the madman and the sick, or the entire lack of happiness I should say, is a question that would haunt me if I did not acknowledge to myself, though it is written in no history and brought me nothing but an absence of advancement and eventually a dark old age, that according to my lights, cold and frightening Irish lights though they may have been, I raised a cry for the helpless; and when my cry went unheeded, largely, I set to to put a poultice on the sores of the leper by my own hands, and tried to manufacture a balm of circumstance for those souls like blasted gardens that were in residence in the foul imperial residences of the mad.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Evil opinions, but I must confess, they have a dark undertow of truth in them, and I cannot entirely refute them. Alas, poor Victoria. This is a suspect, singular, and weirdly irreducible person, and I should… But let me wind the box again. (*She holds up the box).*

DR BARRY: My poor mother was a woman called Mrs Bulkley and you will feel a secret surprise when I call her so and cannot retrieve her familiar name, nor that more dear and secret name by which a child calls for its mother. My father is a dark blank, and if my mother spoke of him, the news and chronicle of his existence lodged nowhere in my childish head. I think I believed as a child that I had sprung wholesale from my mother without interference from any other agent, like a bleak little angel or an accident, like food drops from the mouth of an ancient, because he has neither teeth nor strength to keep it in. I fell I thought from my mother's mouth like a mumbled crumb, and grew at her side in some solemn and inexplicable manner, until the day I found my legs, and could trot beside her as we moved in increasing panic from kin to kin. As it was in once-

resplendent houses that we found brief havens, such places as groan with the weight of rain in their old walls, and whose costly trappings feed the secret night-time rats, there was always a room of shelves with the ingredients of a magnificent education never looked at and never opened on its walls, for my people were a people that would nod towards learning as a fine mystery, but not stain their natural minds with reading, and it was the dashes across the countryside on huge muscled hunters that intoxicated them, and the eating of great meals when there was the money to invent them, and the zealous marrying of fortune to fortune no matter the ugliness of the bride or the horrible stricken features of the bridegroom. Nevertheless it was in those mildewed and mouldering rooms that I stole my education, so that at the age of eleven I was preposterously over-read, and knew the long history of the world better than aught else. Humanisticly roaming in the old woods of Tacitus, in the courts of Cicero, and the happy miseries of Catullus, I became a freakish child that no Irish drawing-room certainly could understand, for I would not speak of geldings and mares and stallions, but metres, empires, and Horation irony, so that my every word was contemplated as a horror and a sort of devilish manifestation. Indeed and I do believe at this distance those poor simple Irish squires and their wives must have thought I was speaking in the tongues of Babel, or the drivel of the mad. (*Miss Nightingale attentive.*) My mother Mrs Bulkley kept me by her so I suppose I can assume she bore some feeling for me, although I do not remember her expressing it in particular, in the manner of, *I do love you, my dear*, or the like, that people depend on in their memories as the foundations of their fortitude in the long watches of adulthood with all its attendant hopelessness and diminishment. For how soon it is we lose the wings of childhood and begin to stand shriven and cold in the alleyways of the earth with wingless backs.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Plato based his philosophy on the soul, my mother on the sofa. Indeed she based herself on it. She wished my sister Parthenope and myself to do likewise. The three of us on three rafts amid the enervating flotsam and jetsam of our great riches. She wished to be allowed to lie, and to be inserted at length into the maw of death, horizontally, like a letter into a letterbox.

A moment.

DR BARRY: When my mother could no longer ignore the growing fact that the kinspeople upon whom we descended with all the grandeur of field mice were persisting in increasing desolation of spirit and destitution of purse, her panic proportionately increased. She resolved at last to bring us to London where her brother, at least in her own mind, existed in some state of abundance and fame. Certainly even I knew the splendour of his reputation, in that he was held by the nations in general to be an adornment to English painting, the fact of his origin in Cork perhaps not purposefully underlined. Be that as it may, this strange person was grievously loved by many of the great minds of those days, the foolish Goldsmiths and the monumental Johnsons, all

those men that in my childhood gave lustre and meaning to being alive in this world, giving worth to the celestial candle of the soul guttering in the decrepitudes of evident things by their powers of poetry, painting, and posturing.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: This remnant person may not deign to speak to me, but he is a philosopher.

DR BARRY: Be that as it may, my uncle James was identifiable as a sort of visionary of both women and Catholics, in that he had inserted both in his monumental paintings without the usual attendant ironies and idealisations or reductions. What we did not know then was that he had impoverished himself in the process, ironically principally in the creation of that vasty series before which mortals wondered and quailed, the Progress of Culture in the rooms of the Royal Society of the Arts. As for the progress of my mother and myself, we made a cruel crossing, she in her tattered silks and cloak, me in my whittled outfit like a miniature or a smudge of hers, so that I must have appeared to those living people of England, in those lost days, as her shadow, her double, traipsing onto the bleak barren ship that plied between the islands. The heart is changed by the journey across England, and although on a map there does not seem too great a distance between Southampton and London, yet the visions and practicalities of that country alter many things in the clock of an Irish soul. The part that is familiar dismays, the poverty of the under-people and all their ways, and the new things, the grandeur of the things that are rich, strangely appal, as if there is something unnatural and uncanny about such raging wealth. In Ireland the people may consider themselves ill-served by their masters. But England is far worse, for the tremendous arrogance of the ruling lords is visited upon their own kin and kind, in essence, and nowhere is this more unseemly and bizarre than that revelatory journey though the bitter edges of London, the great ribbons and ropes of her streets, the toothless Leviathan of poverty that lies across everything, like a very whale itself issuing forth no discernible cry, yet producing the semblance of a terrible music. But how clean the cloths of the rich, how costly, how rinsed and scrubbed their houses, to such a degree that even at twelve I could sense the cowering in my mother's spirit as she advanced upon her brother's house, where I am sure she expected to be deluged by the force of his possessions. Yet in the upshot we came on a strange skeletal dwelling, a sort of provisional place, with many stories and rooms certainly, but every one empty and cold.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: This is quite a lengthy history and I am afraid I must sit down again if I am to hear you out. Please do not think it disinterest on my part. I am after all close to ninety years of age. (*She retreats to her place, sits gratefully. Dr Barry seemingly unaware.)*

DR BARRY: My uncle stood in a kind of admirable rage at the top of his steps, as if the coming of his sister were yet another in his catalogue of daily catastrophes, the horror

of this Tuesday. He cried out to us in his addled voice, like a creature caught in an iron tooth, that he had not one bite of cheese to feed himself, and slept on his bare floors. He looked or rather glanced hysterically at myself, as if I were the bloom of leprosy or the carbuncle of the plague, or a sprite of doom and misery from the stories of his Irish childhood. He did not kiss his sister, he recoiled from her in a windy grandeur of dismay. My mother, as was her habit in these habitual humiliations, wept at my side, but silent as a stone, her tears nearly forced inward behind her cheeks by her horror and self-shame. To stand in a London street being repulsed by her own brother was to her the highest point of our ruin. And we were as surely driven back as if his hatred were an army, and all that evening wandered those streets, feeling like ghosts of ourselves. In the fresh limits of the small hours we found the strange solace of a district of the Thames, and sat there in a little genteel park, where there were seats for the nursemaids and nannies in the English daytimes, and for the first and last time in my life my mother clutched me to her and stroked my hair, whether as comfort to me or to herself, or both, I could not tell, and in that sudden anguish of ironical delight, did not ask, for fear of disturbing that unexpected bird of mothering.

A moment. The little music.

I do not know how it happened, but patrons of my uncle, hearing the story perhaps even from his own lips, were horrified on his behalf. If he did not have an affrighted soul, they posited one on his behalf. Small boys were sent over London to find us, and perhaps never would, except that a deluge fell on London that day, and my mother sat on beside the river without moving us to shelter, a woman of some smartness with a young consort, in the silver lines of rain, a conspicuous enough sight to arouse the suspicions of a running boy inspired by the promise of two shillings for his pains. And so we were rescued and brought to the house of a General Miranda, whose middle name I still carry in remembrance of that remarkable gentleman. With that miraculous Irishman Edmund Burke and the strange Lord Buchan, he comprised a trinity of patronage for my eccentric uncle. Comfortable of stature, he was one of those beings contented only with a certain epicality of life. The domestic engulfed him and made him fearful. He was a kind of hero of freedom in his native South America, and indeed in later years died there splendidly for that cause. As my mother made no progress of any sort in the following months, eventually the poor soul was placed in an asylum, as it was thought in those days for her own good and safety. I lay in my bed in the General's house and hoped it was so, that my mother might have found refuge from her hopeless distresses in such a dark and blackened place. I never saw her again.

A moment. Miss Nightingale closes the lid of the music-box with a snap. She is drifting asleep.

The general was left then with the puzzle of what to do with me. By a curiosity of history it so happened that he was greatly interested in the freedom not only of South America, but that other country so long in chains of habitude and contempt, the lost fields of womanhood. If he had incarcerated my mother Mrs Bulkley, he would it seems liberate me like the serf of a terrible empire, or a slave of received understanding. He knew of course that I had a head of some unusual brightness, thanks to those dilapidated libraries of Ireland. My hands were thin-fingered and strong, and perhaps better for his plan, I was rather unusual and angular in face, with sharp features that could translate easily enough into the realm of another sex. And so adding everything up, and being a military man himself, he arranged to send me in young man's clothing to Edinburgh, to read to be an army doctor. I was only just thirteen. He can be regarded therefore as the author of myself. He gave me my names, James for my uncle, Miranda his own addition, and my poor mother's maiden name to round the invention off. As I say these things it suddenly strikes me as remarkable enough that I do not remember now my original name, so complete was the General's authorship. As that male jacket closed over my chest, and those trousers engulfed my thin legs, some other hidden blanket suffocated the fire of a conventional future, where it might be I would have enjoyed the love of another human person and the boon of children born in the shelter of that love. The garb of a girl was taken from me, item by item, and my wardrobe of dresses, stockings and privy garments, scant though it was, discarded forever. And another far stranger future began, where I was a creature in disguise among the open landscapes of the empire.

A moment. The music-box is loosened from Miss Nightingale's sleeping fingers. It starts to fall, she wakes to catch it.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Oh! Forgive me, I slept. An old woman sleeps everywhere. It is grotesque. And by God's good heart, I was listening, listening. Oh, the frustration of it. This man has suffered. He finds himself alone. But no more than myself. I suppose he would take no interest in my story, as being the history of a privileged and wealthy person, and English into the bargain. Mothers and babies were his topic. When my kindly Sir Harry Verney wished to marry me, I thought I could not complete my moral character in such circumstances. Though I loved him well enough, and more. And that was a kind of death. Motherhood I know nothing of. All my will was bent on – fame? Forgive me do if I speak of the filth of fame but there is nothing in it that can improve the heart or appease the general derelictions of being alive. And that is all I will say for the fame that my peculiar life has brought me. Fame is proper to the dead, let them warm themselves with it in the frigid graves. Let it be something to ease the waits of eternity, till the last trumpet sounds out across the bleak and blackening stars, rousing the buried souls of all the diminished shires. Let the grounds open with a harvest of the forgotten great, their skulls like Irish potatoes, wreaked by the famines of fame. (*She*

laughs to herself) Some months back they came with a medal in a box and laid it on my lap. I could not speak to the matter. They looked down at me kindly, and explained in slow phrases what it was, the Order of Merit bestowed on me by our king. Pityingly they stared, they knew I was befuddled in my mind and by senility sentenced. They smiled at me as if I were a child, the more to be valued now because my wits were gone. But the words were hiding in my tongue, my room became a bell-jar of infinitely deep design, the ocean of ordinary life seemed dim and vast, I could not swim up to them in their vigour and certainty, but faintly signalled, faintly drifted, like a tiny mollusc without eyes or soul.

A moment.

But in my days of vigour, before age put her hand upon me, satirising my former self, I had the gallop and reach of a giraffe. (*To Dr Barry's back.*) You may think that a ludicrous comparison, and that I intend to mock myself by it. But I urge you when next you can to gaze on that wonderful creature. She can do no other but reach higher than her fellow creatures, she is strangely comely and slender, maidenlike, but large as a dream, an animal stretched out and altered in the most fantastical manner. So you see I intend to give myself a compliment by conferring on myself the emblem of that beast. The troops advanced on Alma, covering those Crimean slopes with the harvest of the dead. They cried out in anguish, their fellows prosecuted the advance, and all England wondered that such men, with such low repute, could manifest such courage. The Light Brigade made its historied charge, those gallant men calling out to the enemy like veritable lovers, their swords held high, six hundred horses beneath them, trying to cross the sere terrain. And the greater fragment of that company was destroyed, right onto the enemies' guns they threw themselves, and bullets removed their exigencies and their dreams of life. In the aftermath it is said even the opposing Russian gunners stood amazed, and did not know whether to weep or wonder, and did both. Scores upon scores of horses without their riders now grazed the bloodied swards in a vision of agricultural hell. And it was not this extraordinary instance of the courage of British men that was my salvation, but the thing that happened next. Better to be a Frenchman in that murderous time, with their excellent hospital in Constantinople, but our own establishment in Scutari was the dark fate of our wounded men. And because the terrible news of that place of wrenching death reached England, by mercy of the correspondent of the Times, there was an outcry among the normally inert people, and it so happened that I was asked with the urgency of despair to go out there with a troop of nurses. My moment was arriving with the strange fanfare of a thing long desired and I reached out to meet it. The trenches were now dug under Sebastopol, the releases and dramas of conventional battle was over, the troops filled the trenches, and something disgraceful and dismaying began its reign. No provision had been made for supplies to feed the men, winter clothes to protect them were unprovided, and it was as if no one on this dear earth existed to rectify the matter. There were no battles now and the generals were paralysed and annulled. Quartermasters

wrote their forms and the forms were countersigned and nothing happened except a typhoon endlessly turning of paperwork, and that could not feed the troops. Because there was nothing at the end of the chain except the leaping bear of hunger and disaster. A fearsome winter froze those bleak domains. The wounded were daily embarked in ships across the bay to Scutari, where we found the hospital intended to receive them, a fine old place from the outside with four majestic towers. Inside were corridors and long rooms without ending, the men, roaring and calling, dying and rotting where they had been deposited, in rows of beds tightly pressed together. By a calculation of the hospital, its size, and the number of beds, I quickly judged that there were in effect fully four miles of them, four miles of British men, Scottish, Irish, English and Welsh, in dank rooms without air, and in every room were two great vats where the urine and the faeces of the soldiers were put, and the first thing that met us when we entered was the wild broken music of that stench, wedded to the gross heavy smell of gangrenes and other suppurations. To this sensate music was added the extraordinary music of human pain, the bellowing, the cursing, the crying. It was to this that the army had sent those soldiers that had put such wonder and pride in British hearts. Little filthy tales were circulating. Everything was rumour and fancy. But I think it was true that those very horses since so honoured by the metres of Tennyson went quite without fodder, and thinned and famished and died everyone, to the eternal disgrace of this country. Some froze where they stood, like mocking statues. For not a blade of straw or grain of oats was there for them, their wounds also were ignored in the bleak dullness of official minds. I would tell you, if you were only listening, that the reason why such disasters befell the Light Brigade was because the two commanders, an Irish grandee and his English brother-in-law, could not agree, by dint of old histories could not be friends, could not even communicate by underlings, let alone speak to one another, were both too petty in their minds to… But no, let me not adapt an Irish song to an English tune. Perhaps it is that the gift of the mind of those that rule, in England or anywhere, is to engender miseries! Often and often I think of those horses, I know not why, thinning and famishing in the dark aftermath of the most famous and revered action in the annals of that war. But at any rate – the Turkish orderlies would not empty the vats of excreta, so when they were full they overflowed, sending their writhing tides along the rooms. Rats frolicked in the corners, thinking a wonderful charnel house had been created for their enrichment, as indeed it had. Never did doctor or other officer go near the men, once a soldier was wounded he was of no account, because in those times a soldier was nigh equal a mere beast, being considered to be the refuse in the first instance of society, the dullards and the drunkards of every British town, London, Dublin, Belfast and Glasgow, and the very detritus of the countryside. In that at least we were united, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland! And I and my women could do nothing but wait till we were asked to intervene. The doctors in charge were in a black state of rage and despair. They were in fear of losing their positions and did not understand the outcry in England and what it meant for them. A terrible time ensued where we were witness to impossible pains, as peculiar choleras swept the wards, very like to that famine fever in Ireland that

took pauper and prelate alike. The doctors were like cooks boiling cabbages till they were green slime, everything was late and nothing was soon. I examined the drains as was my wont and interest and was astounded to discover that the outflow of the system had long blocked up, so that every effluent, every noisome and poisonous seeping, merely added itself to a vast core of similar discharges, and then spread out through the very stones and mortar of the hospital, rising back up through the building like a murderous rain, and its gasses and hissing vapours poured down through vents and orifices back onto the long, doomed rows of men. We were killing our men ourselves, not by the bullets of the Russians or the Turks, but we were bringing them to death by the blithe ignorances and lethal dither of those official men. It was in that waiting time, before we were allowed our way…

Breaking in.

DR BARRY: I do not know what time it is. It is dark out there among the platforms. I can hardly see them. In the distance gas burns in the lamps along some lonesome streets of Empire. I wish some happenstance could rescue me. What time is my train? Where is it bound? From whither comes it? What station of the English night is this? A person tells stories because he does not wish the wave of silence to drown him. (*A moment. Dr Barry is agitated.*) Lonesomeness is built on the shore of madness, the cure for it is the great stretching sea of dementia itself. Let me without further delay tell you the story of the fate of that delightful man, Major Barnes. Who came out to the colonies with a fervour I recognized in that he was one of those who loved the earth and her beauties, whether savage or civil, and though of a dark unhappy nature in himself, yet could feel much comfort from the grand explosions that were our Cape Town sunsets, and though he wept as I did myself to see the little dark-skinned babies washed up on the tides of the town beach, little scraps not needed by their needy mothers, girls themselves only puppies in a world of brutal dogs, though he wept did Major Barnes, yet he put himself passionately to his engineering works, raising interesting edifices all about the environs of Cape Town, bridges with little Venetian-looking towers at either end, beautiful canals of delicately trimmed stones that brought good water out to heat-parched farms. The governor, just as he was by me, was innately disturbed by the energy of this man, and yet at the same time gave way to him, and tried to supply the great sums of money that Major Barnes required and often for the turning of Cape Town into what he called a perfected paradise. Major Barnes was a small person with much fat all about himself and a red face from the quantities of Scottish beverages that he was wont by his depressive nature to find solace in, he was really an ugly little creature and wore his uniform in a way that suggested strongly that the seamstress and tailor had despaired of his unusual shape. Yet he was a hero in my eyes, and he would drive me out in his carriage to see his latest marvel, whether it might be a neat square lighthouse on some murderous point, or a section of the land made verdant and Edenic by his marvellous knowledge of water. Would he had been able to stick to water, and take refreshment in his achievements. But Major Barnes was a gentleman

running on the spot, and after some years passed his mind descended into alcoholic delirium and he was incarcerated in the town asylum. Once there all trace of position and elevation soon departed, I am sure. It so happened that it was some months before I was able to go and see him, indeed I would have thought him quite safe among the mercies of that institution, given the transformations he had effected in that far from perfected paradise of the city. But no, what I found astonished me, and brought home again to my heart what a cheat and an actor madness is, for instead of my clumsy, podgy major, I found in a filthy cell a thin dark creature without clothes or sense, raving in a corner and eating the mortar from between the ancient walls like it was sweetmeats. No one had thought to clean him, as I suppose would have been a twice-daily task, in that poor Major Barnes had no qualms now but to defecate freely like a beast of the fields and pissed like a donkey where he might at that moment stand. On his face was attached a vicious red beard, and it seemed to me also that the body hair that he may have been afflicted with in ordinary life, had also begun to grow, so that he presented himself as a human being gone almost over the verge of bestiality. What the governor, if he had ever thought of setting his shining boot inside the asylum, which he never did, would have thought of his clever major now, I do not know. More horribly still his arms were tied harshly behind him so that he might not do himself injury, and so he ate the mortar with his bare face, snatching at the stuff with his teeth, like a dog. Naturally I spoke to him, to see if in the miasmas of his mind there might not be a remnant island of sense, but there was not. (*Walking up and down in agitation*) I ordered him to be washed as often as required, his cell kept clean, his little window opened to the light outside, a loose gown to be given him and replaced as often as he tore it, and his arms freed. I gave him for three days the best-looking of the attendants, to read to him from the books I found at his quarters, in particular the adventures of *Gil Blas,* and this she did, and at the end of the three days when I visited, he no longer roamed and raved, but did his business in a pot like any other mortal, and though could not speak sense, yet whistled and sang while the girl read out to him those chapters so interesting to him. And this regime I was anxious to apply to all those inmates that might find succour in it, and asked the governor for money that might effect it, and this he supplied readily, when I described to him the horror that Major Barnes endured. So that the major, even in his diminished and ruined state, yet brought a change upon the wastes of that building, and even in madness caused to be brought in a breeze of beauty and relief, as if he might by force of the fineness of his soul, throw a tincture of paradise into the cauldron of that hell. When I left Cape Town some time after of course I was informed by my remnant spies that the asylum soon reverted to its former condition, its darkness, its filth, and its neglect. The windows were sealed up again, and its sad inmates returned to the manners and hours of horror. And the officers of that asylum were allowed to return to their murderous idleness, and all was right with the world of empire, in all its hopelessness and eternity.

A moment.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: That is very true, all of it, but as I was trying to say, it was in that waiting time, before we were allowed our way –

Breaking in again.

DR BARRY: Every medical officer may have duties to which he cannot attend. Distance, a lack of roads, catastrophes, ravines, may bar his progress out to various afflicted peoples. And these impediments become enshrined as tradition, and so things go on, in the general chronicle of neglects.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: I just wished, I simply desired, to finish what I was saying –

DR BARRY: One such was a sorry place called with some ironical flair Heaven and Earth, a leper colony sited deep within the back districts of the Cape. Long realms of high trees, plunging rivers, long snakes, seemed reasons enough to leave those lepers to their own devises, attended as they were by three permanent staff, displaced Germans of some kind in this case. But it is not in my nature to allow the story of such a place to go on unmolested by my presence, and it would be difficult to forget the abysm of sorrow and simple human pain that I saw there when first I penetrated those convenient trees. The three attendants, low slovenly people all, lived some distance from their care in a low flat wooden house, and the children of the lepers attended them there as servants, and I believe worse, and when they showed at length the signs of their parents' disease, were ejected back into the maelstrom of the colony and abandoned. The parents, with their stumpy arms and bruises, their noses rubbed off by reason of their skins being entirely insensate and indifferent to blows and knocks, as if their skin alone were blind in the blaze of day, were like the drawings of artists constantly being rubbed out by mildews and time, God's mastery of line and dignity made inept by that fearsome affliction.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: (*Plaintively)* I just wished to finish. I think I am your senior by some years. No one could be as old as I. You should listen. I am perhaps accustomed to being listened to.

DR BARRY: There were young women there of incomparable beauty and youthful grace, cast down in the deeps of sorrow by that slow erasure and extinction, and they knew that many years of horror stretched ahead.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Even in my senility, I am sure you should listen.

DR BARRY: Nothing whatever had been done for these ruined souls, their limbs were decked in rags, their wounds untended and their needs unknown.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Senility, so-called.

DR BARRY: With what heavy reluctance those three Germans put themselves to their tasks. I ordered by my unavoidable authority the entire sprucing out of that encampment, and the proper dressing of the people, and the education of the afflicted young, so that they might have a music of the imagination to help them bear their hopeless fates. And I begged the governor of the colony to allow me release the children with no signs of leprosy, that they might be placed back carefully in the town, with gentle choosing among the blacks, but this it seemed raised only thoughts of nightmare and death in such minds. I did smuggle out one lovely boy and placed him in secret in my own orange grove, in a little neat hut, and for many years he lived there, and tended the trees with great exactitude, and that was a fine person I named Jim, not so much after myself but my uncle, the painter, that was a man as I have said as neglectful of his dress as any depressed German in an African forest, but also with a mind of colour and form so magnificent that all who knew him at least allowed him their admiration and their love, if he didn't bite back that love with his tongue as bitter as aloes. For in his composure of that orchard, in the clipping and pruning back of trees and the watering of those thirsty oranges, my own Jim was a perfect artist and in league with the suspicions and intimations of God. Meanwhile I would surprise betimes my three Germans, who of course were anxious that some morass would swallow me up or a new posting obliterate me, so that they could return to their whiskies and cards in their low house and let the lepers in their care be damned.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: That is very beautiful, about the boy Jim, I will allow.

A moment. Very privately, intimately.

DR BARRY: It is not beyond my notice, the rumours that have bedevilled me all my life. I know I was called the little wife of the governor (*Miss Nightingale puzzled*) – all these dark things I know. It would insult me and insult you not to declare it. And who I am talking to, in this imperial darkness? (*A moment*.) There is something provocative of rumour about a person locked in mystery, a person that can dance and talk and amuse and yet seek no mate, with a uniform of incomparable neatness and exactitude, and small I suppose for an army man, and a voice of some troubled timbre, who is brave and can penetrate into districts of desolation like a pilgrim that knows no dimness of soul, who can carry themselves in the company of governors and paupers equally, and I suppose most tellingly, needs no one else except a poodle and a fine heart like Nathaniel at their side, that excites not only story and the mealy mouths of gossip, but also I think, and I fear to exaggerate though it strikes me as true, a kind of hidden lust. As if to possess such a person would be a kind of obscene ravishment, as if to imagine unclothing me, revealing me, opening me like a parcel hidden long underground, like a box said to

contain jewels and deeds that will make the discoverer rich as Croesus, would be in effect to be driven mad with passion and then launched to a new pitch of sanity by its wild satiety. Certainly there were women in those lost colonies of the world, in Cape Town rooms polished and golden, that seemed hardened by my presence, and stood before me, now and then even taller than myself, with a kind of obvious surrender and prayer. As if they wished me to carry them elsewhere, indeed to some mysterious Elsewhere with a capital E, where things would be as we desired them in our simpler heart that endures all the sophistications of society, where they would with due worship undo my buttons, so trim with ivory, and unlace my boots, so black and bright with Nathaniel's care, and find beneath all these fine things a body as crisp as an angel, the skin as white as last fires, the sex as fierce and gentle as a philosophy that would undo and explain the meaning of the world in one moment. The sex as rare as some tight metal from the deepest earth, that would somehow impale them and be impaled in one moment. And in that queer moment of ravishment I would destroy their social natures so that they issued forth into the imperial streets at dusk redeemed and at last elevated beyond the strictures of sin. All these matters I read in those drawn faces, women who would soon wither so cruelly in those ironical suns, and without a doubt die before their time and lie in the English bone – yards so plentifully supplied. Christ of their desires I could never be, yet in those hours where I danced and talked and regarded their cold passionate faces, there was a sort of lonely marriage, separation and death, repeated ad finitem as long as youth was mine.

A moment, dirtied stream of music. Miss Nightingale looks amazed by these confessions. She gathers herself.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Well, if you are quite finished, strange Mr Witherchops, strange, startling Mr Witherchops, I will finish *my* story – Yes, it was in that waiting time, before we were allowed our way, and I could start to spend the thirty thousand pounds of monies I had been able to raise and gather and bring with me, and send my own man into Constantinople where he, far beyond the frozen powers of the army itself, was able to find thousands of items of clothing for the men, for half of them lay in their beds quite naked to the day, and blankets, and all the necessities of mere breathing life – well, it was in that waiting time, that absurd, bizarre and unwonted time, that one day I was crossing the great inner court of the hospital, the sun teeming on my head, and I was stopped in my progress by an officer on a high black horse. Or at least it seemed high, because the man himself had fully the figure of a dwarf, or a strange reduced figure in a fairytale, a sort of miniature personage that even a circus would not scorn to advertise, not unlike (*indicating Dr Barry*), but well I will not insult you. And this was a person of obvious rank, not one of the doctors as I discovered later in charge at Scutari, but someone visiting the sites of disaster as the idle do in a time of furlough. His eyes found me with the hunger of a merciless hawk, and his high squeaking tones bid me quite brutally to halt, and he launched himself into a vile tirade of abuse, something about the nature of

my dress, the fact that my head was bare and unprotected from the sun, that I wore no jacket or coat, that I was a disgrace and a defamation to the place. Perhaps at first he thought I was one of those low nurses, but soon he was adding my name into the abuse, as if he was full of the borrowed fright and loathing of his fellow doctors, to see the vision of a meddling woman brought out to correct their horrible regimes at the behest of the British parliament, and could not but delight in discharging his hate and his distaste. Never in my life had I met such a hardened person, even in the army, and I stood in the beating sunlight and gazed up at him, truly as if he were so odd and unexpected an apparition that we did not share the same sphere on this earth. I am sure he was one of those evilly ignorant men, who by their customs and practices had brought the army of England to this awful pass. He looked like a very demon, a mere creature, and was shrivelled and shrunken in his rather gorgeous uniform, his pitiless, spite-haggard features as sharp as blades, his skin white as a peeled apple under the sharp two-sided hat. Grotesque, ill-mannered, or worse quite mannerless, low-born and bizarre, dressed up as a gentleman the way an actor of no ability might be, far too spic and evilly span, with collar cutting into his hen's neck like two white knives, as if he was committing suicide with his shirt, and those little anger-tight patent shoes, all daggerlike too and dolefully shining, and running behind his high pinched horse, a little black dog with hair seemingly growing out of its very eyeballs, barking in hysteria, and a dejected African serving man trotting after like a shadow, and a goat, which to his credit I believe he brought with him to benefit from the good qualities of its milk. I was told afterwards, when he died at length some, some sixty years ago, that this indescribable person was actually in origin a woman. What do you think of that?

A moment, a few moments. Their faces looking out.

DR BARRY: Memory turns upon small points. Of course I am as old as the Cork hills of my childhood. Two things like the two sides of a sixpence: on one side the face of Napoleon. In his last days on St Helena, I was recommended to him as a fine young doctor, and was readying myself for the voyage to him. It excited me greatly in prospect to attend such as flame of Europe's history, though time and her ironies had dampened down that fire. It moved me to think of a person so great, albeit the enemy of England so long and so grievous, might now languish in sickness and dread of death on that island where nothing, not even history, happened. But before I could set out, the dark news of his death reached me. My effects were unpacked again with a philosophical regret.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: That is very remarkable. (*A bell tolls in the distance. It strikes the hour of three. Miss Nightingale takes up her little bible and reads in it.)*

DR BARRY: On the other face of that little sixpence peers out the features of that supposed reformer, Florence Nightingale. (*Miss Nightingale glances up.)* She did no

more than I had been doing for thirty years, and that without changing out of her skirts. At the height of the Crimean War, her criticisms of the army hospitals there brought me to inspect them. I felt bound to defend things as they were, which was not my wont. I could not sing her song. Perhaps I was wrong. But something about her enraged me, what I cannot say. One day crossing the parade-ground on my black stallion, I spied a self-important woman crossing in the close midday heat, with only a scrap of a bonnet on her head. All about milled the dark soldiery. I knew that it was her. Something unpleasant and inexplicable seized me. I began to berate her, fixing her there before all those rough hearts and souls, crying down at her for risking that deluge of sun and heat, against the clear regulations. Moving about a male place as if she had the God-given right to move there, independent and austere. Maybe as she looked up at me she thought me a hardened savage, a mere puff of military stricture on a horse more sensible than its rider. I gave her the blackguarding of her life and kicked my horse onward. I do not know what possessed me, except it was rage so sore and wild and resentful, it near stopped my old throat like a collapsing mine. She had not had to change out of her skirts to be the personage she was, and she was young then still, and used her pretty face to get her way with drains and bandages.

Miss Nightingale has risen to her feet, her arm raised.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: You, you, it is you! All this time, listening to you! Rapscallion! You Irish blackguard! What horror is this that I find myself here at the edge of perdition, in this lonely room, in these realms of loneliness where great engines converge, coming up out of Gloucester and down from the Lakes, seeing from their windows quite different country, meeting at last at the station, the spread of yards and sidings like wings, like an angel fallen to the earth, that I, a notable personage, should be cloistered by this garrulous, opinionated, seditious midget! (*A moment, Dr Barry heaped in his sorrows*) And yet, and yet, I know his story now. Not just the ditch of rumour and gossip, which after all I have often decried. The strange uncle, the books, the tragic mother. Well, I wish, I demand of myself to be enraged by you, to discipline you, to bring you to heel, you Irish mongrel. But… Humanity… Truth… A solitary soul, a lonely heart. (*A moment)* But are you not dead these many, many years? And when you died, was your name not mired in a filthy story?
Dr Barry rises stiffly and goes to the door. Light there turning.

DR BARRY: I am nothing, it is true. A filth, a darkness. My own history hurts me. It is all despicable, horrible. No God could consider me, or to His heaven admit me. (*A moment)* It is true I was the lover of the governor, but it is hard for me to describe the nature and pattern of that love. The governor was one of those familied men who nevertheless have an ardent and indeed verdant impulse towards other men. He sought to possess me as a kind of miniature man, a slight thing who nevertheless showed a force and authority in that world, a contradictory person of both balsa-wood and iron.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Well, I am glad now you would not address me. You are an affront to any kind of company.

DR BARRY: He was a man of entirely noble birth, and while infected with many of the lassitudes of his class and position, pursued his other need with urgency and success. For myself I will say his face was a welcome star and his form an intoxicating suggestion of delight. You hate me now?

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Hate? If I were a magistrate, I would imprison you, like one of those lusting aesthetes, to sew mail-sacks, to break stones for your sins!

DR BARRY: It was a dark night of that far African place, when I attended him in the luxury of candlelight in his en-cushioned rooms, for some concocted complaint, that he put his arms about me, and kissed my un-kissed mouth.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Oh, please, please do not recount these foul matters, keep them to yourself. Please!

DR BARRY: All the bitterness of my life, the constraint, the secrecy and the harm, fled away, and I stood up against his greater self like a long dog, a sweet lion, and took his kiss with gratitude. He put me on his bed and fumbled his member towards me, and I naturally opened my flies and took him to me. Perhaps he was astonished to find his member sink down into some soft hot place, but he did not betray that surprise, but caressed me and pulsed his seed into me. Then I put order again on my clothes and he got back into his regal bed and I administered to his supposed ailment. We did not speak a word. Then trembling and half-entranced I walked out into the pungent darkness, walking home between the high walls of those imperial gardens, happy as I had never been nor was again. Three times more I lay with the governor, him expressing nothing but joy, always hurried and half brutal half gentle like a man seems to be. Then in the town appeared a foul notice, a sort of author-less libel, that called me the little wife of the governor, and raised a dampened down furore of gossip and scandal in the city. For weeks I went out about my official affairs with a dread of the world, yet forcing myself to keep a severe face and say nothing. Of course my connection and love was broken, and never again did we lie together, the governor and myself. And yet I will say it was a pure and absolute love, though indeed he was wed, it was a strange love without English or history, existing instead in a realm of story and dream. Of course I must relate with a hard mercilessness towards my own soul that some months later I was horrified to identify in myself a pregnancy, and saw swelling on my slim belly the unmistakable sign, and at length felt tiny elbows and knees as I thought dancing out against my skin. I took myself away on leave to a close island, with only Nathaniel and Psyche, intending to bear the child and have it somehow cared for by other persons, but

truly I had no good plan. By a ferocious irony my little one was born dead, in a terrible night of pain and muddle, my good Nathaniel as tender and strong as any midwife, labouring in the shame and mystery of his master. (*Miss Nightingale moved against her will*) I think he thought I was a demon of another earth, a creature from the stories of his childhood in the Hibernian realm of Jamaica, but because he loved me as a servant, he did what was asked of him, without question or reproach. The little chap was born dead, I listened for his heartbeat myself in the languor of that final exhaustion. I wept as a mother for the loss and Nathaniel in silence wrapped the little corpse in fresh linens, and bore him down to the margins of the sea, and assigned him to the warm African waters, in mercy, secrecy and love. The milk that came and hurt my breast seemed also to assail my very heart, and I wept in my darkness, and I wept.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: (*After a little, simply*) I nearly understand you. (*A moment)* I would not marry Sir Harry, I could not in truth, because of desolations that seemed to stretch like impassable lands before me, I could not embrace him, I could not lie, one to one, like those knights and their ladies on the ancient tombs, my feet could not go forward to that, it was as if I were an inhabitant of some Italian town all heavy with its saints and churches, and some great fall of snow had come down in the night, and now as I travelled the roads my boots could get no grip, and the lights of the candled town shone down across the gripped plain and mocked me, and I was not able to be a woman in that guise, but a soldier of medicine certainly, a woman that could climb the Matterhorn on a Sunday, but not be a visitor to the bosky hills of human love.

A moment.

Poor Harry in his grief said I should have been born a man, because I was like a man and worse than a man, in my ambitions.

Miss Nightingale rises and peers at a print of an Egyptian pyramid on the wall. She touches it.

You have stirred my head in mysterious ways, my dear Mr Witherchops, if I may still call you that. I did my great deed at Scutari, but was a person alone. Childless, without Harry, and alone. A woman should not need the confirmation, affirmation, of a mere marriage. Nor the bloody wars of childbirth. (*A moment*) And yet such hardship of soul it brought me. In all honesty, to confess that fact... The confusion almost unto madness. Apostasy! My dear Mr Witherchops, you are in the halfpenny place there. I was that wreckless woman who spent twenty years inventing her own religion! To give it to the working people of England, that was my thought. To reform the army hospitals, yes, and then to cry out to the very heavens, and invent a remedy for all English souls. What really moved me I hardly know. My body just a curtain of rotted cloth. My heart a crumbling wafer. Oh, Mr Witherchops, whoever and whatever you are, we are not so

entirely unlike. (*A moment*) And some time later I sat in the temple of Karnak and felt the dance of my life was done. I did not say it to myself, I felt it as an essence both evil and good seeping through the walls of myself. It is by far the ugliest building in the ancient world that I have seen, its huge and silly columns ponderously rising, its blunt unchristian tones. But I liked it, surprised myself by liking it. It had no purpose now but to excite fat tourists expensively suffering the pagan echoes and the dysenteries of Egypt. So it was rather apt in a roundabout way. I was alone, it was the edge of evening, when travellers return to their gilded lairs. The guides had brought them back with their smiling, mirthless faces. All noises were gone, and only the sunlight remained, dazed and ragged between the massive stones. A small bird, stripped these centuries of his sacred attribute, stabbed at the remnants of poisonous picnics. I was alone with the bird, the rearing temple, and the vanished purpose. I gathered my skirts against my skin, and a sudden feeling of worthlessness and strange disaster filled me. What was to come after what had been, after transforming that screaming hospital in Scutari in sixteen weeks into a relative haven of cleanliness and good drains? The heroic mathematics that had been gathering around my life, had twisted and turned, its numbers tumbling in the ether, and had offered an equitable result. I was grateful for that of course. But not so deep in that mathematics had been a self tormenting voice quite silenced by action, a horrible understanding of my own evil that had torn at all solace and peace of mind. Now I feared, without the obstacle of some great future effort, some other Scutari that would rescue me, I would be returned to the suffering. I was so horrified at the prospect my brow began to sweat, and then my arms and legs, my back seeped into my clothes like blood, I was drenched by terror. The bird flew up. Now standing in its place was a golden man, with brow as clear as a child's, his large hands stretched out towards me, dressed in a gown with the blue of shells. It seemed to me in my fear and sudden love that he was asking me to do his work, without that hope of reputation. He didn't speak of course, he looked at me with those unfearing eyes, the kindest eyes I ever saw, and the sickles of light in those eyes were like two ancient moons. Long drawn planes of light made his face as if perpetually moving, his beauty so keen and dry passing through me like a regiment of modest prayers. This was not like that time when I was a girl of seventeen, when I heard the voice of God, also asking me to do his work. This was a vision of clear reality. Here was the figure of all our lives, our explicator, the emperor of souls, slain by his own people, the purposeful man. I whispered to myself, he exists, he existed, it is all plain and true, there is a purpose in the world beyond the great turning and turning of the generations, the seed of man ploughed back, and man springing forth again, those circles and cycles I had stood out of, as if balanced on the rim of nothing. The book of life seemed after all to contain my pitiful name, I would look down at length at close of day and read it there before I passed for good or ill into the bleak eternity of waiting. Such peace overwhelmed me in that silly pagan place. And yet he had chosen well. Suddenly that strange temple seemed lovely too, framing his gentle limbs, transformed his holiness and perfection into an architectural prayer. I could not

move, I could not speak, it seemed like freaks of silver light were streaming from my eyes. The lights coiled and gathered around him. Something terrific and awful occurred beyond my knowledge and understanding. We were not betrothed, not wedded, but some great idea was present, so that it seemed all of Egypt echoed with its wordless meanings. The darkening monuments with their moaning ruins. The long speckled bird that now returned. The sky glistening with flung fragments of lost colour. The dying earth in the gathering night.

She comes down quite close to Dr Barry. They stand almost hand to hand.

DR BARRY: (*In pain*) This is my body now, that has caused me such an adventure of evasion and alone-ness. It was my hope that in my last days at least there would be a perfect secrecy, a silence as of death, but maybe attended by some latter ease. There was none of that. My heart fulminated against my fate, my memory brooded on the wrongs done against me, the preferment withheld, the lack of signs from my sovereign that I had served these kingdoms well in the strange gardens of the empire. It may be that I did not. My vanity seemed to tell me that by railing against the mires and boglands of things as they were, I was bringing new lustre to the story of these islands. Perhaps it was not so. For the hearts of kings and queens, if cold and queer, at least are grateful. And I was not shown gratitude. I linger because I cannot leave while my only legacy is whispered spite and scandal. I wish I were a person in an age when my achievements might be seen as mighty things, that would not reduce my remnant life to a miserable scurry of rumour and disgust. Even last night as I lay dead – or perhaps it only seems like last night, and this limbo has the timeless time of hell, perhaps it was a week, a year, or fifty years – the dirty Irish nurse from down the street came in to lay me out, stripping the nightdress from my morbid limbs, her breath no doubt if I could have smelt it inflammable with alcohol. A stray light would have sent flames issuing forth from her ancient mouth like a veritable dragon. For fifty years no one had seen me put on my clothes, much less take them off, not even a Nathaniel. Only a Psyche had seen such hard matters. Oh dull, white nightdress given to man to wear! What was I to her, only a dead doctor of no repute, a mere streak of Englishman in an austere lodging in the endless city of London. It was as if my fate decreed that it would be one of my own countrymen, or countrywomen, who would pick over my lifeless bones, and rub them down with a grubby cloth, and reach down to plug my poor orifices against the foul leaks of death. Oh how she did murmur and even delight to find me out, to finger the blue stretch-marks on my old belly, to spy out that little lonesome cleft that gave her such surprise. How smugly she informed my lovely doctor, a man of such discretion he never touched my person with finger or instrument, and who was my deepest friend in my last extremity. And she asked for money to keep my secret and he gave her some silver coins. They did not stay her mouth. And so my story is reduced to this, a drunken old woman fumbling in the parts of a helpless, dead personage, and anything I did to redress the unforgivable

imbalances of this pretty world is as nothing, swallowed up in the Leviathan of this revelation. And so though I long to go, I cannot go, for there is no approbation, no love of monarch or mortal, to release me. Here I abide as the mourner of myself, as the rememberer of my own heart, waiting in this waiting-room, even the desperate celebrator of an imprisoned soul. I would knock upon the earth and cry, like Chaucer's old pilgrim man, *Lovely mother, let me in* – but she cannot take me, she will not take me, with so much cruel history blowing round my ruined head.

Psyche barking, but her barking fading away. Hooting of the little owl now.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: Athena? Calling again in this living world? (*A moment*) No, of course not, not in this living world. Of course, I see what it is – I am dead. No matter. Well, well, I cannot mourn myself. Let the leaf blow from the great tree. Victoria herself grew old, her divinity was assailed, old Father Death folded her in his coats and drew her away. Am I not soon to follow? Of course. To creep up on your ninetieth year is a creeping only, we the old are the babies without futures, we are the tragic bairns, as the Scottish soldiers used to say, of the shadowing world. We slip away into that nameless place where science, philosophy, religion and art have never convincingly penetrated. It is the realm of spirit, I suppose, or of nothing, and if the spirit we may hope and pray some majesty of the breathing earth still maintains, some noble collaboration of verdant hills, with seams of rills sounding throughout, and the company of whoever may have passed the rigorous gates of that putative St Peter. Will Dante speak to me in tongues, Lucretius expound the rainbow and the owl, will those noble friends of my days, Herbert Spenser who nobly slaved to fulfil for me the behest of my visionary Christ, take my hand again, great Benjamin Jowett explain again Plato's chariot of the mind, the horse of reason pulling against the horse of instinct, or Sir Harry Verney trick me into being photographed a second time by the celestial camera of souls that will show our true contour and our inner worth? I pray they might. I do not know why I have been sent to this place to hear out this ruined creature, who is so lost, so mired in himself, or herself, she cannot hear me. How long must she linger? Or myself? And, it strikes me, to annotate that thought, has she been waiting all these sixty years, for someone like me, who disdained her, to hear her heart? Or is it the weight of sins that keeps us both, or was one needed to free the other? I would gladly let her go. If by my will, my understanding, my listening, I might do it. Then will the voice of my God issue forth from a divine face made visible at last? And will I wonder in the halls of God, and know some hidden things, my heart sing with the plenty of the blessed, and my memory feel only the echoing remnants of my mortality, and wonder therefore how goes it with the world of living beings, how satiate with wars, how pressing on for peace? I do not know of course. Into the fiery pit I may be thrown myself, for my petulance, my impropriety, and my faith. God may have the sanction of a father. He alone must judge. If to the fiery pit I must descend, may he grant me a moment to glimpse His face, and to think again on all that I have seen, and understand before the closing of the doors the purpose of our journeys and the meaning of our prayers.

A moment. The two. She goes back and fetches her music-box, opens it.

DR BARRY: Despite official resistance to my reforming nature, I must allow I reached high rank in my progress through that imperial army. Inspector General of Army Hospitals. How the spirit of General Miranda must smile, to witness from the halls of death the triumph of his thirteen year-old protégéé. Not just a woman, but an Irish woman, not just as Irish woman, but a Catholic to boot. How easily I entered that supposed male world of difficulty and challenge, and brought recalcitrant officialdom to heel, and played my part. But in the upshot I must confess, it seems a hollow victory. Perfection is not contained in fine careers, alas, but in the quality of love a pilgrim soul may show. And high quality of human love is rare. And indeed no matter what we say and show, no matter even if love is gained or given, all things pass away, histories, sparrows, importances and countries, empires and the knots and miniatures of families. The clocks disprove us all, and even we, immortal in our chosen clothes, will pass in a moment of gentle or violent grief from the realm of ordinary to-ing and fro-ing, to a final completeness of darkness. We will be remembered for better or ill until even our rememberers follow us into that same and utter blankness. Our shirts and socks, our umbrellas, our snuff-boxes and our combs, will scatter after us like things in an explosion. Crack of floor will take the comb, some future wind will blow out the brolly, and it will be thrown like a ruined black-bird into the welcoming midden. We will lie in the earth as snug and forgotten as the mummified mice under the hearthstone. It is God's mercy. Time will close over our passage, the little eddy we made across the pond of daily life, until it will be as if we had never lived. This is why no one creature, no emperor or pauper, has an especial importance. This is why humanity itself is but a laughable storm of leaves and ash. This is why every man's story is the whisper of God. This is why we are redeemed at last, because nothing else can be done for us. Worn out, erased, breathless and disdained by the merriments of tomorrow, we will cry out for forgiveness and be forgiven, for God takes each and every one and makes him new, returns him to the crisp clear lines of the original mould, relieves him of his heavy sins, and in His wise mercy lets him go into that strange eternity where there is no earthly story and no human song. To that mercy now my heart calls out. I pray, I pray for that.

MISS NIGHTINGALE: *(Quietly)* If I can intercede, you shall have it. I will bombard the government of heaven, assault the ministries of angels, on your behalf. It will be my task.

Leak of dawnlight from above, like a sacred painting. Light from behind binds them. The fringes of decrepitude displacing the waiting-room, framing them. A whole music, a rescuing music. There is the quality of a daguerreotype about them – a strange marriage, an unexpected couple. The owl calling softly. Their nearest hands just touching, perhaps by accident. And the dark retrieves them.

Finis

Fiction

"The Problematics of Authenticity":[1] *John Banville's* Shroud

Rüdiger Imhof

Abstract: *John Banville's Shroud makes use of certain facts in the lives of Paul de Man and Louis Althusser. The novel focuses on a character who has dissembled all his life; he has never ceased to lie and play roles in order to escape self. He says he has never believed in the self, and yet he appears to seek authenticity. Who can say, though, Alex Vander being the most unreliable of narrators? He sees himself in various guises, most notably that of Christ.* Shroud *deals with self-effacement and the death of the divine in Man. The account alternates between third-person and first-person, which seems to be one of several aspects it shares with Hypertomachia Poliphili.*

In a sense, *Shroud* is about the death of the divine in Man. The protagonist of the novel is a negative Christ-figure, one who brings not salvation and redemption, but death and destruction. Significantly, Alex Vander, whose name sounds so strikingly like Alexander, for what that may be worth, is rescued by a Mephistophelian *deus* in Antwerp during the war. The rescuer is not *deus* proper, but a *deus ex machina*. His name is Max Schaudeine. Cass Cleave is all but certain whether the name of the man who disclosed Vander's murky past to her was "Scheindiene, Schaudeine, something like that, I cannot remember" (p. 149). Recounting the events which led to his uncanny escape as a Jew from the clutches of the Nazi occupants in Belgium during the Second World War, Alex Vander quotes the man he encountered in his parents' flat as having said: "The name is Schaudeine [...] You might call me Max, if you wish" (p. 254). "Max Schaudeine" is exactly correct. For "Max Schaudeine" is an anagram of "*deus ex machina*". Many things in *Shroud* are turned into their mirror opposites: not just Alex Vander as negative, diabolical Christ-figure. Another instance, as will be shown, concerns the concept, or idea, of Arcady, most obviously the name of the town in the States where Vander resided before coming to Turin, "this arcaded city" (p. 4).

One of the most extensive discussions of *Shroud* so far is Andrew O'Hagan's in *The New York Review of Books*.[2] As O'Hagan sees it, "[i]t was only a matter of time before words themselves – writing, the memory of words used and inhabited, abandoned, dangling in history – became the central subject of a Banville novel, and so it is with *Shroud* [...]".[3] Moreover, he states:

> [...] *Shroud* becomes a very handsomely sustained piece of writing about the unsustainability of writing. It is, in any event, a novel about the uncertainty of words and their meanings, a book about the very performance of language itself, about the recording of history, the syntax of memory, and the traps of authorship.[4]

Of course, in every piece of literature, words and writing become the central subject. But *Shroud*, arguably, is not about the unsustainability of writing; it is not about the uncertainty of words and their meanings. The narrator in the novel is imperiously certain about words and their meanings. True, the book is about the performance of language, but, then, so is every other book. O'Hagan, it would appear, has given in to, quite often ill-conceived, postmodernist cant. A profound misconception leads him to bark up the wrong tree. The misconception becomes apparent in this quotation:

> But what really surprises you in *Shroud* is the novel's complete effectiveness as a love story, for Cass Cleave is a girl whom the so-called Axel Vander can love: this man who lectures on "the inexistence of the self", this multiplicity of selfhoods, this invention, comes to embrace his Cass, his fate. Cass offers him back to himself, and this true relationship with Cass may constitute the one, late, salient reality in Vander's confected world.[5]

Admittedly, at one point Vander notes: "This is the second line of evidence for my defence and the source of my embarrassment: the fact, simply, that I loved her" (p. 323). Admittedly, too, he remarks: "she was my last chance to be me" (p. 330). Furthermore, we learn: "It was to do with him, he was at the centre of it, he was that centre itself. Was it that she was meant to save him?" (pp. 195f.). And of course, being fully cognizant of his terrible past, she is his "guarantor of authenticity" (p. 400). His wife, Magda, was another guarantor, or so Vander suspects. She kept silent about it, and thus she was his "silent guarantor of authenticity". The trouble, however, is that we have only Vander's own words for all this, and I, for one, would not trust Vander as far as I could throw him.

Reviewers, such as Andrew O'Hagan and others, have noted the biographical impact of Paul de Man and Louis Althusser and certain aspects of Alex Vander's own "life" and character. This represents anything but an analytical masterstroke. For Banville himself states in his "Acknowledgements" that he has adapted a passage from Althusser's autobiography *The Future Lasts a Long Time*. He goes on to observe: "Other themes in that book have been alluded to and employed elsewhere in the text, as have themes in the life and various works of Paul de Man" (p. 407). That Paul de Man and Louis Althusser figure, as it were, in Banville's *Shroud* will be heartily welcomed by all Banville critics of a post-structuralist persuasion. Yet, *Shroud* is essentially not a novel about either de Man or Althusser, let alone both of these philosophers. The case is similar to *The Untouchable*, which essentially is not about either Louis MacNeice or Anthony

Blunt. The point is that *Shroud* only makes use of certain aspects of de Man's and Althusser's lives.

Althusser, on the very first page of his confessional text, admits to having strangled his wife, Hélène, while massaging the front of her neck.[6] The entire autobiographical account, of course, represents an attempt to explain and, by doing so, justify, his deed. Interestingly and only by the bye, he does so in terms reminiscent of the way in which Freddie Montgomery offers the *raison d'être* for his "book of evidence".[7] What is of greater relevance to the point in hand, Althusser refers to his desire to seduce his mother, as he puts it:

> [...] in seducing her I always had the impression I was not myself, that I didn't really exist, that my existence depended solely *on pretence* [italics in the text], indeed was pretence.[8]

This notion of basing a life on pretence occurs several times throughout the book. Here he is talking about seducing his teacher:

> This I came to understand [...] that I only resorted to deception, in exactly the same way as someone might "work a fiddle" to get into a sports ground [...], in order to *seduce* my teacher and get him to like me precisely by practising that deception. What do I mean by this? Having no authentic existence of my own [...]; ultimately I was an impostor.
>
> Since I did not really exist, I was simply a creature of artifice, a non-being who could only love and be loved by means of artifice and deception which mimicked those whose love I sought and whom I tried to love by seducing them.[9]

This sounds pretty much like Alex Vander and his "problematics of authenticity".

Althusser also mentions, at some length, his "entanglement with women". "Doubtless", he writes,

> I "needed" these women as erotic extras, to supply what poor Hélène herself could not give me: a youthful body which had not suffered and that profile which I endlessly dreamt of finding.[10]

One should, probably, take Althusser's references to the multitude of women with whom he had affairs with a necessary grain of salt, as Douglas Johnson, who knew Althusser quite well, suggests in his "Introduction". But be that as it may. Alex Vander equals Althusser by trying to make us believe that he copulated left, right and centre. Moreover, he, too, like Althusser, was in the habit of soon tiring of his *inamoratas*.

Alex Vander prides himself on having been able to hold forth at considerable length about books and other people's theories he practically knew next to nothing about, or at best only had a smattering of.

> Already I had made myself adept at appearing deeply learned in a range of subjects by the skilful employment of certain key concepts, gleaned from the work of others [...] I could discourse with convincing familiarity on texts I had not got round to reading, philosophers I had not yet studied, great men I had never met. (pp. 60f.)

Althusser claims as much for himself.

> I should point out that in both the written and oral exams I knew very little about most of the topics I dealt with. But I did know how to "construct" an essay and suitably disguise my ignorance by arguing *a priori* whatever the subject.[11]

Furthermore, Althusser deals with his compulsive predilection for shoplifting. "which [he] naturally found very easy".[12] This would seem to find its counterpart in Vander's propensity for stealing things, including Mama Vander's pill box. At one point, Althusser, referring to his wife and his relationship with her, argues:

> From that moment on I was filled with a powerful desire to serve her: to save her and help her live! Throughout our life together, right to the very end, I never abandoned this supreme mission which gave my life its meaning until the final moment.[13]

This idea is very reminiscent of what is said in *Shroud* about Cass's role *vis-à-vis* Vander: to save him. And might it be that Cass's illness, Mandelbaum syndrome, which Vander rightly defines as "three-quarters of the way toward the bad end of the scale between manic depression and full-blown dementia" (p. 317), owes something to the fact that Althusser was a manic depressive?

As for the passage mentioned by Banville in his "Acknowledgements", the main part of it concerns Althusser's youthful experience together with his grandfather at the time of harvest, when the wheat and oats and rye were brought in from the fields to the threshing shed. It can be found in *The Future Lasts a Long Time* on pages 79 to 81. What is remarkable about it is that at the end of his reverie Alex admits: "All this I remembered even though it had never happened [...]. It was all a dream [...]" (p. 74). Althusser, in turn, concludes his comments:

> I was not inside the great kitchen and therefore did not experience the wine drinking and the chaotic singing at first hand [...]. I dreamt it, that is to say I simply had an intense desire for it to be real [...]: a sort of hallucination of my intense desire [...] but hallucinations are also facts.[14]

This very idea, namely that hallucinations are also facts, informs much in *Shroud*, mainly as a consequence of Vander's extreme unreliability.

Of Paul de Man, there are various traces, the most notably one concerning the anti-Semitic articles which de Man wrote during the war. In 1987, it was discovered that between 1940 and 1942 de Man had written about 180 short pieces for the Brussels newspapers *Le Soir* and *Het Vlaamsche Land*, which had at that time been controlled by collaborators. One piece, headed "Les Juff dans la littérature actuelle", is straightforwardly anti-Semitic, making an argument for the continuing sanctity of European literature despite the contaminating efforts of the Jews. Another article condemns Freudianism as Jewish decadence, and yet another bemoans the influence of Jewish dealers on French painting between 1912 and 1932.[15] In Part II of *Shroud*, Vander remarks about the work that the real Alex Vander wrote for *De Vlaamsche Gazet*, run by the collaborator Hendriks and his "knuckle-duster nationalists" (p. 211), in which Vander called for "the *aestheticisation of national life*" and suggested to "*escape the plight of the self by sublimation in the totalitarian ethic*" (p. 214). When Vander notes about his own work:

> Mine is the kind of commentary in which frequently the comment will claim an equal rank with that which is supposedly its object; equal, and sometimes superior. (p. 62)

he may be characterising de Man's writing style. Furthermore, Alex mentions his first major piece of work, "that essay, 'Shelley Defaced'" (p. 290). De Man also wrote on Shelley, from whose poem "The Triumph of Life" Franco Bartoli quotes:"*A shape all light [...]*" (p. 341). The poem, like *Shroud*, is about self-knowledge. The Shelley article de Man wrote bears the near-identical title "Shelley Disfigured". It forms chapter 6 of de Man's *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*[16] and appeared first in *Deconstruction and Criticism*[17] . Vander specifies the reason for his going to America in these terms:

> I would be pure existence there, an affectless point moving through time, nihilism's silver bullet, penetrating clean through every obstacle, shooting holes in the flanks of every moth-eaten monument of so-called civilisation. Negative faith! That was to be the foundation of my new religion. (p. 289)

It may be inappropriate, even downright wrong, to assert that de Man moved to America for a similar reason. Yet, "shooting holes in the flanks of every moth-eaten monument of so-called civilisation" was part of de Man's post-structuralist religion, too.

Vander has come from Arcady in California to Turin, "this arcaded city" (p. 4). Arcady is originally, of course, a rustic paradise, but Vander's Arcady is all but that. "The place", he notes, "was always alien to me, or at least I was alien to it. The fact is, I was never there, not really. I took no part in town life, such as it was" (p. 90). Instead, he was all the time thinking of Flanders. Interestingly, in Arcady "everyone had previously been someone else, at some time, in some entirely different existence" (p. 91), just like

Vander himself. A strange place, then, where everyone is playing at being someone else – a place of deception, in which Vander's wife, Magda, felt even more displaced. No peace-loving shepherds lived in Arcady, but lean, tall types with greying curls and a bandit's drooping moustache. When he espied one of them – upon leaving his flat on his way to the airport – he wondered "if the fellow might be a Hebrew" (p. 23). Why should he be a Hebrew? One answer to this question is that half the population of Arcady and its environs seemed to be of the Chosen, "though not the kind that I was once used to; these *Luftmenschen* were altogether too sure of themselves, too pushy and uncomplaining" (p. 24). This is not what one would expect in Arcady; in fact, all points to the reverse. By comparison, the Turin Alex has come to stay in, certain he will never leave it, is the same: a place where people are dying, like Kristina Kovacs or the young woman who gets run over by a lorry (cf. p. 52), or are very nearly dying, like Alex himself, where people have gone mad, like poor old Nietzsche, an almost Dantëesque place – as we shall see later – or one reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch's paintings, where there are creatures like

> an emaciated, gape-mouthed figure, stooped and naked, running with uplifted arms through a landscape of burning red earth, bearing another figure, its own double, lashed to it tightly back to back. (p. 53)

"Who speaks?" (p. 3), thus Alex opens his account. It is quite obvious that he is responsible for all of it, in spite of the fact that some parts are rendered from an I-perspective and others from a third-person point-of-view. Vander meanders between being what post-structuralist narratologists call an extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, *i.e.* a narrator in the first degree who tells his own story, and an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, *i.e.* a narrator in the second degree who tells a story he is part of. He also oscillates between non-focalisation in the Cass or third-person sections, knowing and saying more than Cass knows or perceives, and internal focalisation in the first-person sections, where he says only what he knows. That the entire account is from Alex's pen is made clear by the remark: "One day at the card table in Franco Bartoli's garden room I was writing the opening pages of this record [...]" (p. 396). And he wrote the record after Cass's suicide. "If you had exposed me to the world [...]" (p. 237), he remarks at one point, signalling that now, since she is dead, she is no longer capable of doing so.

But why should he tell the Cass parts, those parts in which Cass figures prominently, from a third-person perspective and suggest, through a change in pronoun from "he" to "I" within the same sentence, that he is in narratorial charge after all?

> He, I, I saw again the empty bottle [...] I listened to the wind washing over the rooftops. The girl rose and came forward and knelt beside the bed and took my hand in both of hers and brought it to her lips and kissed it. I. (p. 193)

He, as it were, fictionalises Cass's sections, and he can do so, because he is in the habit of experiencing moments in which he steps outside of himself, observing what is going on from a vantage-point. Thus, quite early on, he states:

> I seem to separate from my body and float upward, and hang aloft, looking down on the spectacle of myself with disinterested attention. (p. 8f.)

Later on, he has "the sensation [...] of shifting slightly aside from myself, as if I were going out of focus and separating into two" (p. 68). The incident during which he was beaten up and maimed for life by Laura's thugs he recalls "from outside, as if I had not been part of it, but a witness, rather, a bad Samaritan hanging back in the bushes" (p. 290). Goethe, he informs us, somewhere calls this phenomenon "*der Fall nach oben*" (p. 256). It is for this reason that he can imagine what Cass might have thought, for instance, when spending part of the night in the hotel foyer, while he was sleeping in his hotel room, – for all we know without her having told him about it. Moreover, he fictionalises Cass's sections so that he is able to invest Cass's actions with motives that may not be true, but that suit his own devices.

The point, notably, is that Alex Vander, whether speaking in his own or a third-person's voice, is the most unreliable of narrators imaginable. This is a fact which should never be forgotten when dealing with the story and which makes it excruciatingly and vexingly difficult to come to terms with it. "All my life I have lied" (p. 12), he writes. So, why should he now be telling the truth? "I became a virtuoso of the lie" (p. 284), he comments,

> making my instrument sing so sweetly that none could doubt the veracity of its song. Such grace-notes I achieved, such cadenzas! I lied about everything [...] (p. 284)

There is talk about "lifelong habits of dissembling [that] die hard" (p. 401). Lastly, Vander admits: "I cannot believe a word out of my own mouth" (p. 329). If he himself cannot, how can we believe a word he utters, or writes? The whole record, then, is shrouded in a mist of uncertainty. Cass may indeed have realised that her role was to save Alex. And yet again, that may only be the fruit of Alex's imaginings, his wishful thinking, call it what you like, call it just another lie, a result of his lifelong habits of dissembling. Reading the fictionalised Cass sections, the reader should remember that all fictions are lies. Why, for example, are we not told in Cass's own words that she came to believe it was her role to save him? There's the rub.

"Who speaks? It is her voice, in my head. I fear it will not stop until I stop" (p. 3). This is a quintessentially Beckettian discourse situation, whose aim is specified thus: "I am going to explain myself, to myself, and to you, my dear [...]" (p. 5). Alex alleges he is haunted by the notion that he is "being given one last chance to redeem

something of [himself]" (p. 6). That is a rather surprising notion, since all his adult life Vander has refused to believe in the self. He has been a stalwart advocate of "the inexistence of the self" (p. 193). It may be of interest – and then, again, why should it be and in what sense? – that in a recently published interview Banville has admitted to sharing Vander's notion:

> The inauthentic self, essentially the inauthenticity of the self, the so called self. Because, you know, I find that there is no self; I don't believe there is a kind of private self that we call a soul. I don't know, you have to tell me what they call it nowadays; psychologists and psychiatrists have a name they use for it. But I don't believe that there is, that we have any single coherence. I mean, Nietzsche has, among others, but Nietzsche especially has pointed out that you know, "there is no being: there is only becoming". There is no point at which we can stop ourselves or take a cross-section of ourselves and say, "that's me". There is no point.[18]

Furthermore, he has confessed being an actor, like we all are, in our sweet, sinister ways:

> Even as I'm giving you this answer, I'm changing because I'm, in very tiny ways like one of those space aims, making tiny, tiny, tiny adjustments all the time. So, there's never a point of rest, as I say, there's never a point until the last moment arrives. I think that, you know. I often look at the books and think, God almighty, I keep hammering away at this bloody cliché. Everybody knows it's a cliché, everybody knows we're all actors. Why do we keep on with the masks?[19]

Time and time again Vander has insisted that "there is no essential singular self" (p. 286). Consequently, he could write a book entitled "*The Alias as Salient Fact: The Nominative Case in the Quest for Identity*" (p. 100) and likes to quote Nietzsche's axiom: "*There exists neither "spirit", nor reason, nor thinking, nor consciousness, nor soul, nor will, nor truth: all are fictions [...]*" (p. 6). Feeling at one moment "an overconsciousness of self", he instantly queries: "*What self*?" (p. 41). "[N]o ego, no precious individual spark breathed into each one of us by a bearded patriarch in the sky, who does not exist either" (p. 27), he comments. And yet he cannot rid himself "of the conviction of an enduring core of selfhood amid the welter of the world" (p. 27). We may believe Vander when he contends that there is no self; nonetheless he appears intensely preoccupied with the quintessential nature of people and things. Why else, for example, should he ruminate on the question at what stage of its yearly cycle a tree would say "now, *now* I am what I am, now at last I am in my treeness" (p. 51).

He may, for most of his life, have been a dissembler, he may have assumed another identity, yet after Schaudeine had helped him make his escape from Antwerp,

adrift and homeless, without family or friend, he realised – whether then or now in retrospect when penning his record – that he "could at last become that most elusive thing, namely – namely! – myself" (p. 260). Somewhat paradoxically, he continues:

> I sometimes surmise that this might be the real and only reason that I took on Axel's identity. If you think this a paradox you know nothing about the problematics of authenticity. (p. 260)

The whole constellation falls short of paradox only if the Axel's motivation was to avoid becoming himself, to shun authenticity, which would be in line with the kind of existence he has in fact led.

Banville has prefaced his novel with this quotation from Nietzsche's *Will to Power*:

> We set up a word at the point at which our ignorance begins, at which we can see no further, e.g. the word "I" the word "do", the word "suffer": – these are perhaps the horizon of our knowledge, but not "truths'.

Language marks the limits of our worlds, as Wittgenstein also knew. It is the act of naming that forces things into existence, for example the world Vander conjures up in and through his record. But that world does not constitute "truths". Truth for ever eludes our grasp. And so it is with all that Vander asserts, including his claim that Cass's real purpose was to offer him "the possibility of redemption" (p. 6). The question is whether Vander has genuinely ever been seeking redemption. The picture that he paints of himself is seriously tainted by self-pity – a feeling he experiences, for instance, when looking out of the glass wall in the building in which he has just given his lecture, and significantly Vander describes the experience thus: "*Once more* [my emphasis] I experienced a burning, bile-like rush of self-pity [...]" (p. 77). Furthermore, at one point he imagines (and that "imagines" is vital) Cass looking at him, as he is lying on his bed, and he does so in terms replete with self-pity:

> She had never seen anyone so huge, so naked and so defenceless. [...] Soon, in a very few years, a decade at most, surely, he would be gone, all that he had been and was now would be no more. (p. 190)

True enough, he maintains: "I seized on her to be my authenticity itself. [...] she was my last chance to be me" (p. 330). Well, yes, but as Hamlet has it: "words, words, words", and, again, no truth.

Vander remarks that what essentially attracted him to Cass was "the otherness of her":

> Who was she, what was she, this unknowable creature [...]? Yet it was that very she, in all the impenetrable mysteriousness of her being entirely other, that I

> suddenly desired, with an intensity that made my heart constrict. I am not speaking of the flesh, I do not mean that kind of desire. What I lusted after and longed to bury myself in up to the hilt was the fact of her being her own being, of her being, for me, unreachable beyond. (p. 335)

He seems to have met in Cass, or so at least he says, an authentic person, and one could think that this experience has made him strive to achieve his own authenticity. Yet Vander himself scotches the idea by adding: "Deep down it is all I have ever wanted really, to step out of myself and clamber bodily into someone else" (p. 335). What is truth here, is anyone's guess.

For Axel Vander has always been an inveterate role-player. He knows that "[t]o name another is somehow to unname oneself" (p. 141), and he has continuously named another, "on countless occasions [stepped] effortlessly into other selves" (p. 284). He has been adept at making himself over (cf. p. 9). The first role he assumes in the book is that of Harlequin:

> Perhaps what appeals to them [*i.e.* the people in Turin] is the suggestion of the commedia dell'arte in my appearance, the one-eyed glare and comically spavined gait, the stick and hat in place of Harlequin's club and mask. (p. 4)

Cass called him Harlequin (p. 304). The figure of Harlequin in Italian comedy is characterised by a mixture of childlike ignorance, wit and grace, always in love, always in trouble, easily despairing, easily consoled. The Italian word is possibly the same as the old French "Hellequin", or "Hennequin", denoting one of a troop of demon horsemen riding by night.

In *Shroud*, Harlequin is characterised in noteworthily different terms. Cass jots down in her notebook:

> *H. the headman, his mask and bat. Maistre, on the executioner: "who is this inexplicable being [...]?" Rip the mask from his face to find – another mask.* (p. 84)

This characterisation applies to Vander to a "t". He is an inexplicable being and if you rib the one mask from his face you will be sure to find another. But why should he be an "executioner"? There is, in *Shroud*, another description, quite a lengthy description, too lengthy in fact to quote here in full, of Harlequin (pp. 379-80). Banville notes in his "Acknowledgements" that this is a combined adaptation of passages from *The Italian Comedy*, by Pierre Louis Ducharte, and *St. Petersburg Dialogues*, by Joseph de Maistre. Again, many of the features and characteristics attributed to him fit Vander closely. He, too, is "*the most individual and the most enigmatic*" of men. He, too, is "*called by many names*". At least, in his own assessment, Vander is "*without doubt of divine essence*". As we shall see in a minute, another role he sees himself in is that of Christ. But for the

moment, Harlequin is said to be "*Mercury himself, god of twilight* [...]*, the patron of thieves and panders*". Vander is a twilight figure and his propensity for stealing things makes him something of a patron of thieves. His habit of assuming many different roles makes him into a "*Proteus*" figure. Significantly, Harlequin, in this extended passage, is called "*an executioner*" once again, and he is described in the act of executing someone. Vander is also an executioner, having poisoned his wife, Magda, and holding himself responsible for Cass's suicide. The former fact is variously alluded to in the text. Early on one learns of "Magda's going" (p. 17) and of his "widowed life" (p. 18). He cannot recall at what point exactly he realised "that her mind was decaying" (p. 92). Yet one morning she walked into the kitchen leaving behind her across the floor a trail of little turds as flat as fishes, and he knew the time had come when she must go (cf. p. 93). And so he fed her the tablets, telling her they "were a special kind of candy" (p. 111). His taking responsibility for Cass's death we shall consider in due course. Of Harlequin, the lengthy passage in question finally notes:

> *No moral praise seems appropriate for him, since this would suppose a relation with other human beings, and he has none. He has none, this Harlequin.* (p. 381)

Of course, Vander has no genuine relation with other human beings, not even (*pace* Andrew O'Hagan) with Cass. Because of this state of affairs, because his life as Axel Vander has been utterly devoid of true relationship, he is constrained to spend his present time going out and strolling the winter streets, "my daily harlequinade" (p. 405). Vander's record, so-called, is framed by references to this harlequinade (cf. pp. 4 & 405), thus encapsulating an existence based on lies, deceit and role-playing. A harlequinade is, of course, a play in which a harlequin or buffoon stars. Vander is something of a buffoon, or makes himself out as one. Did Alexander Cleave not proffer the advice: "When in difficulty, act"?[20] Moreover, Cleave remarks: "I would be anyone but myself".[21] Alex Vander is Alexander's kith and kin.

Vander comments: "[...] I was always more than myself" (p. 13). He is also more than Harlequin. Thus he sees himself as a Christ figure. He, too, had his Magdalene. Mary Magdalene is, in the New Testament, a woman from Magdala, a town near Tiberinas (now in Israel). Jesus healed her of evil spirits (Luke 8, p. 2) and, following her vigil at the foot of the cross (Mark 15, p. 40), appeared to her after his Resurrection (Matthew 28, p. 9). Mary Magdalene has been identified from the earliest times with a sinning woman described as having annointed the Lord's feet (Luke 7, p. 37-8). Vander's Magdalene is a woman with heavy braids coiled against her head like two outsized earphones, callused feet and a brooding, inexpectant gaze (p. 15), whom he derided in public for "her incongruous, ill-attired, mute presence by [his] side" (p. 19). In the end, he poisoned her. After his bath on the morning of Cass's arrival in Turin, Vander describes himself as standing on the marble floor of his hotel room and seeing his reflection "in

end-on perspective [...], like that bronzen [*sic*] portrait of the dead Christ by what's-his-name" (p. 38). On another morning, he found Magda leaning over him, touching a fingertip to the pulpy lid of his bad eye and murmuring, "*And I only am escaped alone to tell thee*" (p. 60), a quotation from *The Book of Job* (1:19) – not exactly a reference to Christ, though a Biblical one and one that is of some significance for Magda's role as a "silent guarantor of [Vander's] authenticity".

After his collapse Vander is brought back to his hotel room. Kristina and Cass stand by Vander's bed.

> Suddenly shadowed, the room took on a *devotional* [my emphasis] aspect, and Vander's form supine on the bed and the two spectral people standing by him might have been [...] the figures at the centre of an altar-piece. (p. 178)

Christ would be taking up the middle position, just as Vander does here. Cass, on another occasion, studying the curiously tranquil face of the crucified Saviour on the reproduction of the Shroud, says to Vander's back: "It looks like you [...]. Just like you" (p. 312). Alex, at one point, refers to his "shady, not to say shrouded, past" (p. 338). Lying yet again on his bed under a humid sheet with his hands folded on his chest, he finds that he was like "the dead Christ in his shroud" (p. 362). At another time, Vander finds himself in the bathroom of his room in the hotel:

> Then I returned to the basin [he remarks] and bathed my brow; lifting the towel away, I would not have been surprised to find the bloody image of my face imprinted on it. (p. 390)

This is another reference to the Shroud, but could equally well be an allusion to Veronica's cloth, with which she wiped the Lord's face on the way to Calvary. Finally, there is the curious admission on Vander's part that the young man who accompanied him to Cass's hotel was not called Mario, but "Angelo; the emissaries of Heaven take the most unlikely forms. *Adio*, Angelo" (p. 394). Why should he surround himself with emissaries of Heaven, unless he considered himself some kind of Christ figure? Moreover, why should he pen the following sentences?

> One of the unimaginably complex coils in the hollow heart of the blastula I had set swelling in her belly there had already sprung the new beginnings of my people, my lost people. It was as simple as that. My gentle mother, my melancholy father, my siblings put to summary death before they had lived, all would find their tiny share in this new life. (p. 378)

Why, indeed, should he imagine that, by impregnating Cass, he had become the saviour of his people, the Jews who were exterminated by the Nazis during the war and

whom he would have been prepared to denounce, just as the real Alex Vander did, unless of course he should consider himself equal to Christ, the Saviour?

Even so, it all sounds strange, little short of incredible, considering that in Antwerp during the war, he could have sold his people for one sustained moment of the public's attention that was showered on the real Alex Vander's articles (cf. p. 212). Of course, the fake, vainglorious Vander was an anti-Semite, entertaining "the beautiful dream of a Europe cleansed and free" (p. 162). Disclosing his "deepest, dirtiest secret", he owns up that in his heart he too "wanted to see the stage cleared, the boards swept clean, the audience cowed and aghast" (p. 223).

There are a number of parallels between Axel and Nietzsche, which make it quite likely that Vander fancies himself embodying a Nietzsche figure. Naturally enough, he too is a philosopher. Nietzsche stayed in Turin and went off his head there, thinking himself a king and the father of kings and stopping in the street to embrace a cabman's nag. Vander also comes to Turin; he does not exactly go off his head in the place, but he fears he will not be able to leave the city again. Nietzsche once lost his luggage, which was sent to Sampierdarena when he was headed in the opposite direction (p. 5). Having arrived at his hotel in Turin, Vander is told his suitcase cannot be found and must have been sent on to somewhere else (p. 33). Like Nietzsche, Vander is certain of possessing genius, though "not the kind that it has pretended all those years to be" (p. 62). In the final months before his collapse, Nietzsche scribbled crazed letters, signing them "*Dionysus, The Crucified, Nietzsche Caesar*" (p. 67). Vander may not have signed himself in this fashion, but in a way he considers himself The Crucified. The doctor whom Axel comes to befriend in Turin and who takes care of the dying Kristina is called Zoroaster, possessing an "Assyrian swarthiness" (p. 402). "Zoroaster" is the Greek form of Zarathustra, a Persian who is believed to have lived in the 6th century B.C. and the founder of the Magian system of religion. Zoroaster's, or Zarathustra's doctrine concerning the conflict of good and evil made Nietzsche call one of his most famous books *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 1883-1885). Somewhat strangely perhaps, Zoroaster, in *Shroud*, is a Jew. He has "numbers tattooed on his wrist" (p. 348), having been in a concentration camp, and he met the real Vander in a place in a forest, a sort of way station, while they and he were awaiting transportation elsewhere (pp. 403f.).

All this role-playing is couple in Alex Vander with an indomitable propensity to fabulate. "What a fabulist I was" (p. 66), he admits. Not even to his own wife did he tell "the real, the whole, the tawdry truth" (p. 66). Quite appropriate, then, that someone should say of his writing that its most striking characteristic was "moral shiftiness" (p. 102). In short, in all he has said, felt and done, he has turned his coat so often "it has grown threadbare" (p. 103). But why has he so extensively engaged in role-playing? Why has he lied so much? It is not easy to say. One main reason, though, may be contained in his explanation of why he assumed Axel Vander's identity:

> It must be, simply, that it was not so much that I wanted to be him – although I did, I did want to be him – but that I wanted so much more not to be me. (p. 285)

A flight, then, an escape from his own self, from his own authenticity. Vander goes on to say:

> [...] I desired to escape my own individuality, the hereness of my self, not the thereness of my world, the world of my lost, poor people. This seems to matter much. (p. 285)

Why he should drag in his lost people and why his desire not to escape the world of his lost people should matter much is not at all clear and is never made clear by him. The whole undertaking, possibly, represents a case of vain self-justification, another act of dissembling. For, after all, Vander would have had no qualms about denouncing his people, and he exalted at his fortunate escape from Antwerp. Ruthless characters, such as he, are seldom plagued by guilt or a bad conscience. A leopard never changes its spots, and Vander never ceased striking poses in order to escape being himself.

"Why had I come to this city?", he queries (p. 68).

> I was too old and worn to travel so far for the sake of a whim. I could have made the writer of that letter come to me in Arcady, that would have tested her resolve. (p. 68)

Yes, indeed, that would have been the obvious solution. But following Alexander Cleave's maxim, Vander, sensing that he might be in difficulty, resorted to acting. He staged the entire scene of confrontation in Turin, fully resolved that he would "lie to her, of course; mendacity [being] second, no, [...] first nature to [him]" (p. 12). He was, moreover, resolved that, if she succeeded in exposing him, it would be "at a cost, and what a cost [...], I would make sure of that" (p. 95). Meeting Cass for the first time, he does not need long to realise that she is a highly vulnerable person, "a rare and high-strung creature of the wild" (p. 95), driven, clever, cunning and helpless, "prey to secret hungers, nameless distresses" (p. 103). Not surprisingly at all, from the first he is determined not to let a "half-demented girl" (p. 103) bring his life, "this hard-won triumph of risk and daring and mendacity" (p. 103), to nothing. Quite importantly, fury and fear are the fuels that drive him, "fury at being what I am not, fear of being found out for what I am" (p. 106). Vander consumes a copious amount of alcohol. Could this, in the final analysis, possibly be an attempt to flee the world, himself and his fear? It is a distinct possibility.

Alex nicknames Cass "Cassandra" (p. 223). Cassandra was the daughter of Priam, King of Troy. She received the gift of prophecy from Apollo, who was enamoured of her. But as she slighted him, the god contrived that no trust should be placed in her predictions. After the fall of Troy she fell to the lot of Agamemnon. Cass says to Vander, if she is Cassandra then he is Agamemnon, and Vander quips: "Gagamemnon" (p. 305).

Agamemnon took Cassandra back to Greece, and she foretold the calamities that would await him. She was murdered by Clytemnestra. Cass hears voices in her head that tell her what to do (cf. p. 83). Alex asserts at one point:

> It was all so simple, so simple and so clear. She should have seen it from the start. The signs had been there all along, or rather, all along everything had been a sign [...] (p. 193)

It is not, at first, obvious why it should all have been so simple and so clear from Cass's angle. But things become clearer if one takes into account that Vander says of her: "She had an almost sanctified sense of purpose" (p. 299). And further:

> In her version of the world everything was connected; she could trace the dissolution of empires to the bending of a blade of grass, with herself at the fulcrum of the process. All things attended her. The farthest-off events had a direct effect on her, or she had an effect on them. The force of her will, and all her considerable intellect, were fixed upon the necessity of keeping reality in order. (p. 319)

Finally, this is said of her:

> It might be that what she did, every smallest action, was in fact precisely what was necessary, without her knowing it [...] Everything had a meaning, a function, a place in the pattern, and nothing was lost. (p. 195)

Order and purpose, then, are alleged to have been the principles governing her world view. This is the Cassandra side of her being, if she genuinely possessed such a side. This may also account for the idea that her purpose was to save Vander, that he "was her vocation" (p. 302).

It is a bit odd that Cass should have gone to bed with an old, decrepit and maimed man, such as Vander, and do so hours after she saw him for the first time in her life. Unless, that is, Cass did really believe that everything was connected and part of the pattern, "that all this had been preordained, the room, the bed, the sliver of burning afternoon light between the curtains" (p. 125). Vander maintains that he loved Cass (p. 323). But that, in short, is just another of his infernal lies. He rightly assumes his admission is being met with "laughter, [...] jeers and [...] catcalls" (p. 324). At any rate, "the word love, in [his] mouth, has acquired a blasphemous overtone" (p. 364). What seems to come nearer the truth is that he kept her beside him, "under surveillance", because "that was the only safe and sensible strategy to adopt" (p. 327). Moreover, it is highly likely that Vander is fuelled not only by fury and fear, but by self-love into the bargain. On a rare occasion, Alex may be speaking the truth when he admits: "The object of my true regard was not

her, the so-called loved one, but myself, the one who loved, so-called" (p. 329). If he truly loved her, why did he kick her into the narrow space between the bed and the wall, grinning horribly at her and twisting her arm past the level of her shoulder blade and threatening to break it (cf. p. 338f.)? His relationship with Cass seems to have been motivated by "the old vile beast" in him: lust (p. 354). Kristina is probably right, when she tells him after Cass has left: "Oh, Alex, [...] only someone incapable of love could love so selflessly" (p. 367) And she should know what she is talking about, having had a brief affair with him.

Alex's relationship with women holds very little, not to say nothing, to substantiate the claim that he was, or is, capable of love. "In the land of women", he asserts, "I am always a traveller lately arrived" (p. 113). If that is what he is, then he can have little knowledge of women. With regard to them, he has only ever been interested in sex and exploit. During his flight from Antwerp, the French girl was just a quick sexual adventure while they were checking the oil and the water, as it were. In England, Laura, whose name evokes Petrach's Laura, provided carnal love and had him spend himself "against the burning bud of her epiglottis" (p. 277), and, instead of leading him to praise her in a long series of love-poems, she exploited him just as he exploited her by stealing some of her belongings. "[W]here lust and its easements are concerned", he remarks, "I am and always was beyond good and evil" (p. 323). Little wonder that, when Montale manoeuvres himself and Cass through the doorway and he is afforded a fleeting sight under her dress of the undersides of her long, glimmering thighs and at the top of them a taut triangle of white cotton, the vile old beast in him stirs itself and lifts up its questing snout (cf. pp. 353f.).

There are three incidents which occur early on during Vander's sojourn in Turin and which seem especially salient. On his first walk through the city, Alex comes upon a blind flower seller. She is a young pregnant woman, but her face is the face of an old woman. When she offers him a spray of lily-of-the-valley, Vander hands her a bank note in an absurdly enormous denomination. She stores the note swiftly in an inner recess of her beaded bodice and offers no change. Vander hurries on and dodges into the first caffè that he comes to. In this caffè, he encounters a man with red hair, Carrot Head. Here is how Carrot Head is described:

> He had a large, round, high-coloured face, with a sprinkling of ginger bristles on cheeks and chin that glittered in the sunlight falling through the glass. That awful blazer was far too big for him, as were his trousers, and he wore a pair of incongruous, once-white plimsolls with soiled laces and thick rubber soles. (p. 47)

He accosts Vander; but the only word Vander is able to make out sounds like *signore*, which is repeated over and over, while Carrot Head nods vehemently and points to his own face (cf. p. 48), as if he were trying to convey the message: "Look me in the face. You ought to recognise me."

Red-headed men are mentioned on several occasions throughout the book. The next one puts in an appearance in one of those fake old-fashioned pubs near the cathedral in Antwerp in which Cass is sitting. He soon turns out to be none other than Max Schaudeine, who then uncovers Alex Vander's true identity, or rather he tells Cass: "He was not Axel Vander then" (p. 146) and offers her that newspaper photograph showing the genuine Alex Vander and his friend, who later took over his name and identity. After returning from his mysterious train journey to Brussels, Alex goes to his parents' flat, where he comes upon a thin – remarkably thin – man, with a narrow, long white face and crinkled red hair (p. 253), who introduces himself in this manner: "The name is Schaudeine. [...] You might call me Max, if you wish" (p. 254), and it is shortly later that whatever one should call him says: "My name is Axel Vander" (p. 255). On their way to see the Shroud at the Duomo, Vander and Cass see a "man with carrot-coloured hair" (p. 309) going past:

> He was wearing a blazer and a dirty yellow shirt and soiled running shoes; he looked, she thought, like an off-duty clown. Vander seemed to know him, and tried to say something to him, but the fellow hurried on, glancing back nervously over his shoulder. (p. 309)

He is, to all intents and purposes, the Carrot Head first mentioned, who said something to Vander that sounded like *signore*, and which he later comes to identify as *sindone* when Kristina asks Cass: "And have you seen the Shroud? [...] Our famous *Sindone*" (p. 156). At once, Vander's memory snaps its fingers: "*Sindone*, not *signore*". Carrot Head Schaudeine, and there can be little doubt that the red-headed man in the caffè and the one outside the Duomo are the same person, has permeated Axel Vander's life, or at any rate a sizeable part of it. It is, in fact, as if he had been "manipulating the strings from up in the flies" (pp. 242f.). Now, in the word of Banville's fiction, whenever a man with red hair appears, Mephistopheles is not far off. One need only think of the Felix figure in *Mefisto* and *Ghosts*. Our *deus ex machina* Max Schaudeine – no proper *deus*, he – is another such Mephistopheles who holds sway over a corrupt world.

The third incident concerns what Vander idiosyncratically calls "the fallen girl" (p. 53). He notices a girl on the corner opposite to where he himself is standing. When she steps forward into the street, Vander fears that she might be coming to accost him. Seconds later she is struck by a lorry. She falls back and is draped against the side of one of the parked cars with her arms flung wide. There is blood in her hair, and a glistening, innocent-looking trickle of blood coming out of her left ear. That these three events carry some saliency is made apparent by the attention Vander spends on them. "Who are all these people", he asks, "the flower seller, Carrot Head, now this girl, and what did they want with me?" (p. 52). What significance should they be allotted? Vander offers a suggestion himself:

> A half-formed image came to my mind – from Bosch, was it, or Dante? – of an emaciated, gape-mouthed figure, stooped and naked, running with uplifted arms through a landscape of burning red earth, bearing another figure, its own double, lashed to it tightly back to back. (p. 53)

It is possible that in this picture, with the gape-mouthed figure and its own double lashed to it tightly back to back, Vander sees himself in a Dantëesque hell. A hell of his own creation, where the devil has come among us having great wrath? But that would not account for the flower seller and "the fallen girl". To call the young woman involved in the accident a "fallen girl" rather than the girl who fell, would make sense, however, if she was seen by Vander in terms of a Mary Magdalene figure, a sinning woman, who haunts the Christ figure, Vander.

Shortly after this, Alex suggests that "it was not the girl [he] was thinking of, it was Magda" (p. 54). When she was alive he could hardly be said to have given her a second thought. Now, however, she is constantly on his mind. "Only in death has she begun to live fully, for me" (p. 55). Cass also reminds him of Magda. In the so-called Cass sections in the third-person, where he fictionalises what he experienced with the girl, he repeatedly returns to Magda and his life with her. Thus, after delineating how he made love to Cass for the first time, he – without any transition – comes to speak of Magda, their mutual life in the house in Cedar Street and how he fed her those fatal tablets (cf. pp. 110f.).[22] Furthermore, while having sex with Cass, he whispers "Magda" in her ear (p. 161). That he should associate Magda with Cass and vice versa is most probably a result of his conviction that Magda, like Cass, "had been privy to [his] secret" (p. 399). Both women were his guarantors of authenticity. However, so is Schaudeine, and so is Zoroaster.

Vander did not care about the living Magda, or so he says; nor did he really care about the living Cass. We learn, for instance, that she was not his type (p. 160), and yet he claims he loved her. He is convinced she is mad (p. 165), and despite the sensible advice which President Frost gave him: "But go careful, and remember: never screw a nut" (p. 316), he gets sexually entangled with the girl. Every time he mentions her ailment, he makes derisively light of the problem, referring to a visit Mr Mandelbaum has been paying her. "*Mandel*: almond" (p. 135), or offering "Doctor Vander's opinion", according to which "Mr Mandelbaum occupies a redoubt three-quarters of the way toward the bad end of the scale between manic depression and full-blown dementia" (p. 317). Nor did, or does, Vander care about Kristina Kovacs. "What was she to me", he asks at one point, "but an afternoon of mostly simulated passion in an overheated hotel room in a snowbound city [whose name he cannot recall] I would never return to?" (p. 77). However, it is Kristina, whose name is perhaps not accidentally reminiscent of Christ's, who alone cares for Cass. After Cass's major seizure, she asks Vander: "What are you doing with her?", and she goes on to say: "You can see she is sick", to which, telling, he retorts: "Sick [...], sick?" "Yes [...] sick", Kristina insists. "And she

has shown me the bruises", to which Vander reacts: "Bruises, bruises, what bruises?" (p. 358), his only fear being that Cass may have spilled the beans to her. Kristina, not Vander, stays with Cass and takes care of her. She is the only character to show compassion, but she is dying. The Christian principle, the divine is dying in Vander's world. The sinister Schaudeine has for long been in charge.

The title of the novel "Shroud" refers, obviously enough, to the Turin Shroud, the *Sindone*; but the word has other connotations. Kristina says: "[...] the Shroud: effacement, you see [...] They say it is the first self-portrait" (p. 156). There are two outstanding moments of effacement, or absent-mindedness, on Vander's part, during which he is, so to speak, there and not there, moments that mimic his adult life, moments of reverie or vision during which he ceases being himself. Kristina, talking about the Shroud, remarks: "I always think it was the Magdalene who held the cloth not Veronica. But Magdalene was hair, is that not so?" (pp. 156f.). This makes Vander recall a scene involving Magda, his Magdalene, kneeling beside the bathtub. Suddenly he is brought to the present by someone asking him something. For a moment, he had stopped being his present self (no matter that he does not believe in the self). Then he sees Cass standing before him, and he squirms his shoulder free of her touch and becomes his present self again. "All these damned women, passing me from hand to hand!" (p. 57). The second such moment involves his seeing a bloated, faceless thing with horrid head and straining shoulders and dripping chest coming up through the top of the table (p. 351). The thing he sees is as faceless as he has wished all his adult life to be and as horrid as himself: his own double.

Shroud forms a unit together with *Eclipse*, and for more reasons than one. One of the most obvious is that Cass Cleave figures in both books. To name but a few others, in *Eclipse* Cass phones her mother; in *Shroud* this telephone call is referred to (p. 183). In both novels, the eclipse of the sun is mentioned and Cass's suicide is described. More importantly, though, certain parallels between Alexander Cleave and Alex Vander are worked out. Cleave is, to do his name honour, a cloven personality, just as much of a role-player as Alex is. After the arrival of Cass's letter, Vander, notably, finds himself "cloven in two [...]. On one side there was the I I had been before the letter arrived, and now there was this new *I* [...]" (p. 13). After Magda's death, Vander, sitting on the sofa in his lounge, all of a sudden hears a loud report, sharp as a gunshot. It takes him much fruitless peering and searching before at last he discovers that the vase he had given Magda as a present has shattered, not into fragments, but into two almost equal halves, vertically and remarkably cleanly (cf. p. 173). The recollection of this occurrence makes him think of Cass Cleave: "For that is how it was with her, too, she was another tall, tense, fissile vessel waiting to be cloven in two" (p. 173). When Alex refers to Cass's work in terms such as these:

> Her enthusiasms were brief, her conclusions inconclusive. Worse, she had no detachment, could not divide herself from her subject – how should she, since she was the one true subject? (p. 320)

and mentions her investigations of Kleist's last, fraught hours on earth, he talks of her in the manner of Alexander Cleave in *Eclipse*. Then, there is the almost complete similarity in the two protagonists's names: Alexander and Alex Vander. Most tellingly of all, however, is the fact that Alex himself construes a connection between himself and Alexander Cleave, remarking: "I fear that between us we destroyed her, old Thespis and I" (p. 395), adding: "I am sure we would have many things in common, he and I. After all, I am an actor too, though only an inspired amateur" (p. 396). They destroyed Cass between them because she became the victim of two similarly eccentric, egomaniacal role-players and liars. Or *are* they really two equally inauthentic men? There is no telling. As the Cretan said, all Cretans are liars.

What about the ending of *Shroud*? Does it mean anything that at the close of the narrative Vander has taken charge of the dying Kristina in the flat which he has rented? Could that be interpreted as a redeeming feature? He says Franco, and poor Kristina, the Doctor, he himself are "a gallimaufry", a hotchpotch, a jumble, nothing that genuinely belongs together, and, after all, he is, in the end, on his "daily harlequinade" and, as we know, as Harlequin he has no relation with other human beings. By finishing his record with the question: "Why should I have life and she none? She. She" (p. 405), he could be admitting failure. His life has largely been a failure, and his attempt to set the record straight – by his record – has ended in failure too. There is no redemption for Axel Vander: last chance to be himself missed (cf. p. 330). Yet, in the end, there remain too many questions about Vander and his story, which is quite in order given his extreme unreliability as a guarantor of authenticity. There is, for example, this question: what is Vander poking at on the ground with his stick? The text makes out that it is a white plastic bag with something soft in it which is plump and vaguely heart-shaped and wobbles and flops under his proddings. Eventually he gets the bag partly open and something dark comes oozing out, a thick, dark liquid (cf. p. 149). Is it a bleeding heart, another reference to the Christ association throughout the text?

Why, of all books, should Vander be inspecting the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, mentioned quite conspicuously twice in the text (pp. 358 & 359)? The book, written by Francesco Colonia,[23] was originally published in 1499, and quite recently, in 1999, it was translated into English by Joscelyn Godwin.[24] Part fictional narrative and part scholarly treatise, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* is an extreme expression of erotic furore, aimed at virtually everything, especially architecture, that the protagonist, Poliphilo, encounters in his quest for his beloved Polia, whose name translated from the Greek means "many things". The book is also a political manifesto defending the right of women to express their own sexuality and the superiority of Eros, beauty and knowledge over aggression and war. It has been called the first stream-of-consciousness novel and is modelled on the idyllic, pastoral, bucolic *romanzo d'amore*, a tradition that had reached its peak over a century earlier with its universally acknowledged master Giovanni Boccaccio, whose works include *Filostrato* (1333), *Teseida* (1339-1340), *Ninfale Tiesolano* (1340s) and *Amorosa Visione* (1342). The book in question brings together

all the stereotypical characters traditionally associated with what was by then a highly stylised genre: the enamoured hero and the indifferent heroine, attended by scores of stock characters – nymphs, naiads, satyrs, gods, goddesses, and demi-gods – who, all too predictably, sing, dance, make merry, advise an in general eagerly officiate whenever the opportunity arises for the lovers to engage in one rite of union or another. Its settings bow to the invariable formula of verdant glades, babbling brooks and enclosed gardens. As for the plot, it too conforms to the genre's time-worn topoi – the lover's unrequited love, his quest to win the heart of the heroine, love's triumph, the illusion dashed.

The action of *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* takes place in a dream. The book opens on the hero, Poliphilo, who has spent a restless night because his beloved, Polia, has shunned him. At break of day, he finally falls into a deep slumber and his "Hypnerotomachia", or, as it can be roughly translated, "struggle for love in a dream", begins. The action is particularly absurd, however, even by the standards of the genre. Poliphilo is transported into a wild forest. He gets lost, escapes, and falls asleep once more. He then awakens in a second dream, dreamed inside the first. Within it, he is taken by some nymphs to meet their queen. There he is asked to declare his love for Polia, which he does. He is then directed by two nymphs to three gates. He chooses the third gate, and there he discovers his beloved. They are taken by some more nymphs to a temple to be engaged. Along the way they come across no less than five triumphal processions celebrating the union of the lovers. Then they are taken to the island of Cythera by barge, with Cupid as the boatswain. There they see another triumphal procession celebrating their union. The narrative is uninterrupted, and a second voice takes over, as Polia describes the erotomachia from her own point of view. This takes up one fifth of the book, after which the hero resumes his narrative. They are blissfully wed, but Polia vanishes into thin air, as Poliphilo is about to take her into his arms.

There are easily detectable parallels between *Hyperotomachia Poliphili* and *Shroud*, but they are parallels that mostly point in the opposite, negative direction: the arcadia setting, the enamoured hero and the indifferent heroine; in a way Cass is an indifferent heroine, entering into the affair because that is part of the pattern and making noises during their love-making not out of passion but because she has a seizure. The two different points-of-view adopted in *Shroud* could be indebted to the two different voices in *Hyperotomachia Poliphili*. There are no verdant glades, babbling brooks and enclosed gardens in Vander's arcaded Turin, but a blind flower-seller, sinister Mephistophelian Carrot Head, a fallen girl, drunkenness, sickness and death. Vander, like Poliphilo, has a number of dreams and visions, but being of a rather nightmarish kind, they are completely devoid of bliss. Thus, waking up in his hotel room, he thinks it is still dawn and "that everything that had happened since [his] arrival [the flower seller, Carrot Head, the girl run over by a lorry] had been a dream" (p. 97). Or in the marquee, where they have come to see the Shroud, the light under the canvas is "like the light in a dream" (p. 310). Vander's love, so-called, remains basically unrequited. He

declares his love, but in the end his Polia, Cass, vanishes, not into thin air, but into the sea.[25] *Shroud* is a dark, negative *romanzo d'amore* – apart from everything else.

Finally, what thematic implications may the myriad contrastive references to shadows, darkness and light possess which permeate the text, but which, for lack of peace, we must forbear to consider here?[26] The world delineated in *Shroud* is a world divided between light and darkness. "I feel", says Vander, "I have been alive for aeons. When I look back I see what seems a primordial darkness, scattered with points of cold, hard light, immensely distant, each from each, and from me" (p. 4). There is no doubt on which side Vander sees himself – on that of darkness and chaos. Whereas Cass's worldview was grounded in the belief in preordained order and patterning, Vander is convinced of "the random nature of reality" (p. 261). For him, there is no possibility of redemption.

Notes

1 John Banville, *Shroud*. London: Picador, 2002, p. 260. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.
2 Andrew O'Hagan, "The Wonder of Irishness", *The New York Review of Books*, L, 12 (July 17, 2003), pp. 18-20.
3 *Ibid*., p. 18.
4 *Ibid*., p. 19.
5 *Ibid*., p. 19.
6 Louis Althusser, *The Future Lasts a Long Time*. London: Vintage, 1994, p. 15.
7 Cf. *Ibid*., p. 13
8 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
9 *Ibid.*, pp. 88f.
10 *Ibid.*, p. 141.
11 *Ibid.*, p. 162.
12 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
13 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 81.
15 Cf. O'Hagan, p. 19. See also Ortwin de Graef, *Serenity in Chaos: A Preface to Paul de Man, 1939-1960.* Lincoln 6 London: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1993, ch. 1, pp. 5-26.
16 New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1984, pp. 93-123.
17 Ed. Harold Bloom *et al.*, New York: Seabury Press, 1979, pp. 39-73.
18 Laura P.Z. Izarra, "Interviewing John Banville", in: Munira H. Mutran & Laura P.Z. Izarra (eds.). *Kaleidoscopic Views of Ireland*. São Paulo: Humanitas, 2003, p. 244.
19 *Ibid*., p. 244.
20 John Banville, *Eclipse*. London: Picador, 2000, p. 16.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
22 It may be pure coincidence, but Beckett's Krapp once lived in Kedar Street with a woman called Bianca. On his thirty-ninth birthday he listened to the tape he had recorded when twenty-seven or twenty-nine and heard himself then say: "Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business." This marks another case in his life where love came to an end. Cf. S. Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London, Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986, p. 218.

23 Liane Lefaivre, in her *Leon Battista Alberti's "Hypnerotomachia Poliphili"*, is the first to attribute this strange, dreamlike manifesto in defence of humanism to Leon Battista Alberti, cf. http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/.

24 Thames & Hudson.

25 Cf. http://www.bk.tudelft.nl/dks/hp/hyptext0.htm.

26 Examples may be found on the following pages: 28, 42, 48, 66, 67, 72, 105, 123, 155, 179, 186, 194, 228, 238f., 248f., 254, 276, 279, 284, 310, 337, 341, 350, 351, 353, 356, 359, 365, 366, 370, 387. An eclipse is mentioned on pp. 371, 385 and 388.

The postmodern folktales of Éilís Ní Dhuibhne

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Abstract: *Although the success of the Irish short story is traditionally put down to the influence of the strong story-telling tradition in Ireland, actual traces of this influence have largely disappeared in recent years. A notable exception to this trend, however, is Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, whose work is heavily indebted to the Irish folklore tradition. In this article I try to determine how ancient folktale and postmodern short story are successfully, yet critically, connected in her collection The Inland Ice and Other Stories (1997). The most explicit link between the modern and the myth is provided by Ní Dhuibhne's feminist re-writing of an Irish fairytale, "The Story of the Little White Goat". Yet, the use of repetition, the simple and straightforward style and intrusions of the narrator in the other short stories also bear witness to the influence of the oral tradition. In addition, the short stories take over the thematic concerns of love, loss and marriage from the original fairytale. At the same time, however, the short stories also warn against an all too close identification of fantasy and reality, of the folktale and real life.*

I

The remarkable success of the short story in Ireland is usually put down to the lasting influence and powerful heritage of the Irish story-telling tradition. In his early study of the short story, *The Lonely Voice* (1962), Frank O'Connor noticed thematic and formal links between the modern short story and the oral folktale, arguing that in the best short stories "we can hear the tone of a man's voice speaking".[1] Later critics further underscored this oral quality of the Irish short story. Terence Brown claims that in the Irish short story "a speaking voice is imitated which […] is a voice heard over and over again, one that assumes with its audience a shared ownership of the told tale and all that it implies"; Patrick Rafroidi states similarly: "the texture of the Irish story often if not always suggests the influence of fireside gatherings."[2] In the seventies and eighties especially, the oral origins of the Irish short stories were investigated in several books and articles, which focused either on the peculiar narrative features of the short story – the (I-)narrator as performer, the use of repetition, the linear progression of time – or on

the story's thematic indebtedness to Irish folklore in its use of mythical or fantastic elements and its familiar opposition of imagination and reality.[3] More detailed studies similarly traced the influence of folklore and storytelling in the works of writers as diverse as William Carleton, James Stephens, Frank O'Connor, and Mary Lavin.

In "Story-telling: The Gaelic Tradition", Declan Kiberd follows the lead of most of these studies when he claims that "the short story has flourished in those countries where a vibrant oral culture is suddenly challenged by the onset of a sophisticated literary tradition".[4] The short story is, therefore, "the natural result of a fusion between the ancient form of the folk-tale and the preoccupations of modern literature". In a period of cultural transition and revolutionary upheaval (for Ireland, the beginning of the twentieth century), the folktale was appealed to for knowledge and guidance and subsequently adapted to the genre of the short story. Yet, Kiberd argues, this period of cultural transition is now over. It is therefore high time for the Irish short story to reclaim that other strand of short story writing, the modernist tradition developed in Ireland by George Moore and James Joyce, "whose work bears no trace of the folklore of the rural Ireland in which they grew up".[5] He therefore advises future short story writers to embrace the narrative innovation and stylistic refinement of these modernist writers and to stay clear of all myth and folklore.

Most contemporary writers have heeded this advice, with the result that Irish folklore and myth have been relegated to superficial and sentimental stories, which cater for tourists who want to believe in an idyllic Ireland still populated by fairies, bards and banshees. One writer who forms an exception to this rule is Éilís Ní Dhuibhne. Her short-story collections – *Blood and Water* (1988), *Eating Women is not Recommended* (1991) and *The Inland Ice and Other Stories* (1997) – are strongly influenced by the Irish story-telling tradition. Yet they transmit that influence in a resolutely postmodern voice. In this article I will consider the short story collection *The Inland Ice and Other Stories* (1997) to determine both *how* Ní Dhuibhne links the ancient folktale to the modern short story and *whether* she is able to successfully blend the two traditions of the Irish short story into a new postmodern genre.

II

The most explicit and important connection between the modern and the myth in *The Inland Ice* is provided by the story "The Search for the Lost Husband", which is told in parts in between the other thirteen tales. It is an adaptation of the Irish fairytale "The Story of the Little White Goat", which was recorded from the female storyteller Máire Ruiséal in 1936, and which is itself a version of the international "Beauty-and-the beast" folktale. This fairytale is first made publicly available in the fourth volume of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, which contains a section on "International folktales" introduced by Ní Dhuibhne in her guise as scholar of mediaeval literature and folklore.[6] She classifies "The Story of the Little White Goat" as a feminine fairytale. A sub genre of the folktale, fairytales or *Märchen* are complex tales of international provenance

with a durable form which hardly differs from one country to the next. Or as Ní Dhuibhne puts it, "Fairytales are stories of quest and adventure, peopled by beautiful girls and handsome boys, who encounter hags, ogres, dragons and giants, fly on eagles" wings, climb grass mountains, eat from magical tablecloths, and finally marry beautiful rich partners and live happily ever after" (p. 1215). Máire Ruiséal's folktale is, furthermore, a feminine fairytale because it tells the story from the perspective of the heroine.

Briefly put, "The Story of the Little White Goat" tells the tale of a girl who is courted by a little white goat and falls in love with him. She leaves her parents and goes to live with the white goat who turns into a young man at night. The girl becomes pregnant and the goat warns her that her child will be taken away and that when she cries, he will leave her. After her third boy is thus taken away, the girl cannot restrain her feelings any longer and sheds a tear. Following his threat, the white goat reprimands her and leaves. Yet, the girl immediately sets out in pursuit of him: "She went after him and he himself went, and he went through every bit of undergrowth, and through every briar, to make her turn back". But the girl is not to be dissuaded, saying that it is stronger than herself, that she "can't help it" (p. 1217). On three successive nights, the girl stays in a cottage where she receives a magical object. The goat then disappears under the earth and the girl follows him into his country, where she learns that the goat and his family are under the spell of the old witch. With the help of an old couple and her three magical objects, the girl persuades the witch to lift the spell. The girl is reunited with her lover and their three children. They marry and live happily ever after.

On the whole Ní Dhuibhne's version of this fairytale, "The Search for the Lost Husband", adheres quite well to the original. She follows the pattern of the folktale, relies heavily on repetition and fashions her own versions of fillers – "That's how it was."[7] – and formulaic runs: "And the dew fell and night came down upon her, and the little white goat sought the shade of the dockleaf and the dockleaf eluded him and the red fox went into his own little den, small blame on the gentle fox" (p. 138). In short, while adapting language and dialogue to modern literary standards, Ní Dhuibhne carefully manages to retain the original flavour of the folktale. Still, three major changes stand out. To start with, Ní Dhuibhne's title "The Search for the Lost Husband" promises an even greater focus on the plight of the heroine. It is *her* quest which is central. The phrase "the lost husband" also gives the story a more modern ring: while they are not normally transformed into goats, husbands still tend to get lost at times. Secondly, Ní Dhuibhne changes the ending significantly so that the whole receives an unexpected twist. When the spell has been lifted, the handsome young man, who had been the little white goat says, "And now … we can get married, and live happily ever after" (261). But the meek girl suddenly turns into an assertive feminist and declares that she doesn't want to anymore: "I am weary of ardent ways. Passion is so time consuming, and it makes me so unhappy" (261). Although her husband defends himself arguing that *he* couldn't help it, that he was under a spell, she is not to be persuaded:

> Goodbye to you now. I'm going home to my father and my mother, and I'm bringing my dear little children with me. And we'll have a bit of fun, playing together and laughing and I'll love them more than I ever loved you or anybody else. And maybe I will find another husband, who will be kind to me and my children, and who will look after all of us and not lead us round in circles. Because it's time for me to try another kind of love. I'm tired of all that fairytale stuff. (p. 262)

She goes home, the narrator tells us, marries a nice farmer and "they lived happily together for many years" (p. 262).

Thus the girl abruptly ends all fairytale conventions. She rejects Prince Charming and the possibility of everlasting happiness and pragmatically chooses a decent and trustworthy husband who can offer her "many years" of happiness instead. Her choice also implies quite literally a move from the world under the earth – the magical world of the goat and his family – back to the real world of her parents. In this way, Ní Dhuibhne draws apart the two worlds which the original fairytale pretends to unite. Even though reality and fantasy go together for a while, in the end they clash and diverge again.

This subversive ending has a distinct postmodern ring, which is further underlined by the metafictional comments of the narrator at the end of story:

> That is my story. And if there is a lie in it, it was not I who made it up.[9]
> All I got for my story was butter boots and paper hats. And a white dog came and ate the boots and tore the hats. But what matter? What matters but the good of the story? (p. 262)

Although disclaimers such as these are often found in postmodern narratives which want to draw attention to the artificial nature of the narrative, Ní Dhuibhne seems to have borrowed them, at least in part, from other folktales. Intrusions of the storyteller's "I" are in fact quite common in folktales, especially towards the end of the story. In "The Story of the Little White Goat", for instance, Máire Ruiséal tells us that she heard the story from her father – which should vouchsafe for its truth– and blesses his soul. She also comments on the action, remarking on the death of the old witch: "Yes. That was good and I left her behind me" (p. 1232). The ending of "The Search for the Lost Husband", on the other hand, resembles in part that of an "Ex Corde" folktale which Ní Dhuibhne records in *Béaloideas: The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society*.[8] It reads: "He took the bailiff away with him if this story is true. But if there is a lie in it, it was not I who made it up." The curious lines about the dog and the butter boots refers perhaps to another folktale, the "Butter, Sir …" anecdote, recorded by Ó Catháin in the same journal. The anecdote tells of a girl who goes to the market to sell butter, but – due to linguistic confusion –dogs eat the butter instead: "The butter prints fell out of her basket. And the Bhermone terriers started into the butter. They got the smell of it in a couple of minutes and the terriers didn't leave a bit of it that they didn't eat."[10] Even if Ní Dhuibhne may not have actually borrowed

her ending from these particular folktales, it is clear that the closing lines of "The Search for the Lost Husband" are not only part of a postmodern meta-fictional practice, but also a remnant of the oral story-telling tradition. In short, already in the story which functions as the *leitmotiv* of *The Inland Ice*, Ní Dhuibhne tries to blend the ancient folktale tradition with postmodern themes and styles. This sets the tone for the whole collection. While the short stories are mostly set in contemporary Ireland and Europe, they are linked to the Irish folktale in both a formal and a thematic way.

III

In *The Field Day Anthology*, Ní Dhuibhne characterises folktales as "fictitious stories, formal in structure and making limited concession to realism" (p. 1215). Formal characteristics are the intrusion of the narrator's "I" and the use of repetitions and formulaic runs. Time and setting remain unspecified and the characters have generic rather than particular names. All this contributes to the folktales' curious mix of universality and artificiality. With the obvious exception of "The Search for the Lost Husband", the stories of *Inland Ice* lack all of these traits. These stories are well defined in space and time; they deal with individual characters and events and their narrative situation is the modern one of focalisation. Still, through several narrative and thematic tricks, Ní Dhuibhne succeeds in creating an impression of universality and formality, which approaches that of the folktale.

First, although the concrete situation is different in each of the stories, many events, characters, and experiences are repeated throughout the collection as a whole. The female characters experience highly similar feelings, hopes and disappointments, they are forced to make the same choices and face the same consequences. In all but two short stories, moreover, the female protagonists are educated, middle-class, more or less middle-aged, contemporary Irish women. In this way, a fairly specific singular image of "The Woman" in *The Inland Ice* emerges, which is further underscored by the similarities between their respective husbands and lovers. All this gives the collection a strong sense of unity and the characters a near-mythic air. Several intertextual references to other folktales, Irish mythology, and Scandinavian sagas strengthen this impression.

Secondly, what *The Inland Ice and Other Stories* shares with the oral tradition of folktales, is a straightforward style. Sentences are usually short and simple. They lack elaborate rhetoric or an ornate use of metaphor and simile. Moreover, the feelings and thoughts of the characters are usually stated rather than explained which creates an impression of distance and coldness. The narrator does not show any overt sympathy for her characters. In this way, the short stories echo the exceedingly formal and simple style of the folktale, which focuses on objects and events but gives no account of the inner life of the characters involved.

Finally, even though the short stories do not feature explicit intrusions of the narrator as in "The Search for the Lost Husband", the narrator does make her presence felt through the peculiar use of brackets. Nine out of the thirteen stories are told by a

third-person narrator who focalises through the main character. Within this decidedly modern narrative mode, the use of brackets is certainly odd. On a few occasions, the narrator's I appears quite explicitly, as in "Swiss Cheese" where it interrupts Cliona's thoughts: "Sitting in a minor jam on the Green, she stares at the numberplate of the car ahead of her. He simply didn't show up. (He sent a fax. I read it in the *New York Times.*)" (p. 147). However, most cases suggest the narrator's presence more obliquely, as in the following instance from "The Inland Ice": "Nobody ever helped. Frank didn't help her to make decisions. Never seemed to care about her in that deep way that mattered. (What she means is, he let her truckle along with her job as an executive in a public service office, a job which meant something to some people, but not to her.)" (p. 210). In all stories, however, these brackets interrupt the normal flow of the narrative and, just like the narrator's intrusions in the folktale, they draw the reader's attention to the story as story, as an artificial construct rather than an account of reality.

IV

If Ní Dhuibhne thus adapts style and structure of her collection to the formal characteristics of the folktale, the same holds true for the thematic dimension of *Inland Ice.* Again in *The Field Day Anthology*, Ní Dhuibhne writes: "The theme of all fairytales is the quest for love and marriage; they begin with the break-up of one family and end with the establishment of another. The greater part of the plot is concerned with how the protagonist successfully completes this transition from childhood to married adult life" (p. 1215). This is of course aptly illustrated by "The Search for the Lost Husband", but also the other short stories are dominated by the related themes of love, loss and marriage.

The first short story of the collection, "Gweedore Girl" follows the pattern of the original folktale most closely. One of the two stories set in the past, "Gweedore Girl" is the story of Bridget, a girl from Gweedore who becomes a maid in Derry. She is courted by the butcher boy, Elliot, and falls in love with him. He wants to get married and to that purpose she gives him her most precious possession: two pounds. Predictably, Elliot does not appear at the wedding and uses the money to marry another girl. Bridget sues him, changes jobs and is about to marry another, far more honest and dependable boy, Seamus. Just before the end of the story, Bridget records a dream which is a clear comment on her relationship with Elliot. Bridget is waiting for Elliot when a woman comes along and asks her to walk with her to the corner of the road. The woman, who is "not any woman I know but she was very tall and looked like someone I knew", is clearly Bridget's alter ego (p. 27). Bridget does not want to miss Elliot so she decides to "try to do both things" (p. 27). But in doing so she ultimately fails to do either. Elliot abandons her and the woman dissolves into paper: "She had turned into a piece of paper. She was a large cut-out doll, drawn in heavy black ink, with an old ugly face like a witch. She was folded in two on the ground and I opened her up and spread her out and read her" (p. 28). The image of woman dissolving into paper symbolises Bridget's loss of self in her relationship with Elliot.[11] She becomes the ugly witch he tells her she is, just as she becomes "Gweedore

Girl deceived and ruined" – the headline of a newspaper article about her "case". Like the girl in "The Search for the Lost Husband", however, Bridget takes life into her own hands again: she turns away from the self-destructive madness of her passion for Elliot and finds a more reliable husband. Yet, in "Gweedore Girl" this happy ending is somewhat qualified. Bridget continues to dream about Elliot and realises that her love for Seamus is of an altogether different kind: "It is amazing that I know that Seamus is good and kind and honest and will never mistreat me; also I will never love him" (p. 28).

The main theme of the original folktale – the passionate and self-sacrificing love of the girl for the goat – is also the main theme of *The Inland Ice.* "It is hard to resist men […] who overwhelm you initially with the intensity of their need for you", knows the narrator of "Love, Hate and Friendship", "It is hard to resist them even if you know from experience that such men will, and must, cool off just as abruptly, and almost as emphatically, and there will be nothing you can do about it." (p. 37). And this describes the experience of most female protagonists in *The Inland Ice*. Like Elliot in "Gweedore Girl", the lovers are usually attractive, charming and gossipy, but also exacting and extremely selfish. They fancy themselves as god's gift to women and loudly defend the feminist cause. The women are flattered and charmed by their lover's ardent attention and fall hopelessly in love. Almost as soon as that happens however, the men back off and, just like in the original folktale, the women go on arduous quests and are prepared to extreme sacrifices in order to win them back. In "Swiss Cheese", this passion is described as a kind of madness and compared to a "startling volcanic landscape, full of deep treacherous pits and gleaming glass mountains", quite the opposite of "the calm, peaceful, loving, civilised life" which the protagonist lived before (p. 162).

As in Ni Dhuibhne's rewriting of the folktale, indeed, most short stories stage an opposition between this self-destructive, passion and a more pragmatic, friendly kind of love. Thus they revisit the age-old conflict between the husband and the lover. Yet, unlike "The Search for the Lost Husband" and "Gweedore Girl" most of the short stories start from marriage, as if they want to determine what happens *after* the girl marries her "young farmer", or *after* Bridget marries decent Seamus. Just like Seamus indeed, "The Husband" in *The Inland Ice* is typically masculine, stern, and reticent, but also kind, loving and dependable. Married love offers the female protagonists security, respect and friendship, which is valuable but boring, something they quite readily sacrifice when the white goat comes along. If in "The Search for the Lost Husband" and a few other stories, the moral of the story seemed to urge the protagonists to abandon self-annihilating passion and (re)turn to a more equal and balanced kind of relationship, this is contradicted by other stories. For also married love requires sacrifices – such as the choice between family and career – and most married protagonists feel in some ways disappointed with life. In "Estonia", Emily used to feel that "if she were married, all the other problems of her life would fade into insignificance. Being married to Lars would compensate for its shortcomings. It would liberate her. Roads, green and juicy with promise, rainbow ended, would open before her." But the truth is that "after they married it seemed that whatever choices she had had earlier began to vanish altogether" (186).

V

Since this sense of disappointment infuses all the stories of *The Inland Ice* – Giovanna Tallone calls it a "sense of loss" and notices how "characters are always in restless search of something"[12] – it may be worthwhile to further investigate its source. Whether they are married, adulterous, single or divorced, the protagonists all feel that life has not fulfilled its promises. Their bright ideals of passionate love and perfect happiness have somehow failed to materialise. To a greater or lesser extent, they all feel like Polly in "The Inland Ice", when she complains: "I thought my life would be so different. I thought it would be, you know, wonderful! I always worked so hard and now it's this. It's just so hard for me to believe that this is my life" (p. 211). Very often these ideals are defined in terms of fairytales, folktales or romances, and predictably, real life never fully lives up to that ideal. In "Lili Marlene", the protagonist marries a rich husband who makes her feel "like Cinderella", but in the end she does not want to accept the role of "princess in the garden" he offers her (p. 98). In "How Lovely the Slopes Are", the relationship of Bronwyn and her husband, Erik, is compared to that of Gunnar and Hallgerdur in the Icelandic "Njal's Saga". Yet, once again, real life turns out to be different from the folktale as friendship prevails over passion and vengeance. In "Lili Marlene", to give a final example, the first-person narrator is disappointed that her lover does not bide by her, like Doctor Zhivago and ponders, "What I think is that life is like *Doctor Zhivago* up to a point – more like it than some would admit. People can have a great, passionate love. I have. Probably you have. But it doesn't seem to survive. One way or another it gets done in, either because you stay together or you don't" (p. 102).

In short, the feelings of loss and discontent pervading *The Inland Ice* are largely due to the fairytale illusions which the protagonists – even against their own better judgment – believe in. Their lives and dreams are shaped by romantic literature and fairytales, which has them wait for a prince who will rescue them and bring everlasting happiness. In all stories, however, reality fails to live up to this dream. As in "The Search for the Lost Husband", reality and fantasy coincide "up to a point", but ultimately they clash and diverge again. If there is a message to the book at all, it is that women should stop letting their life be determined by dreams and illusions, that they should stop waiting for Prince Charming and take life in their own hands.

A more general way of putting this – and one which is particularly apt in the context of *The Inland Ice* – is that women should stop letting their life be determined by other stories, or other people's stories, and start writing their stories themselves. For the women in this collection are not only burdened by their own fictitious dreams of fairytale happiness, they are also oppressed by the stories other people fashion for them. In "Gweedore Girl", we saw how Bridget's *alter ego* dissolved into a papery witch: a clear image of the way her life was determined by how other people saw her. In "Swiss Cheese", Paddy expects Cliona to fully live up to the image of the Virgin, which he stereotypically fastens on her. In many other stories, women's lives are shaped by traditional expectations about the role of wife and mother, which has them choose between

career and family. The story "Bill's New Wife", for instance, makes these expectations painfully explicit when traditional gender roles are reversed but not abolished.

If the stories do point at a way out of this double predestination, it is in the ability of telling your own story, of writing your own life. In an interview with Giovanna Tallone, Ní Dhuibhne admits to a growing self-conscious concern with writing, storytelling, and literature in her work.[13] In *Inland Ice*, self-expression helps people find mastery and satisfaction in their lives. Especially the stories told in the first-person foreground this empowering effect of storytelling quite literally. The story of "Gweedore Girl" for instance, can clearly be seen as Bridget's alternative to both the newspaper article, which defines her as "deceived and ruined" and Elliot's vision of her as an ugly witch. "Lili Marlene" is the narrator's answer to the romantic love of romances and fairy tales. It presents her story as evidence of her conviction that "the end of love can make me happy" (p. 79). In "Estonia", to give a final example, writing itself is proposed as a personal way-out of a life shaped by the demands and expectations of other people:

> Whatever qualities she repressed as she worked during the day found an outlet in the words she writes at home, late at night. "Found an outlet" is not the right phrase. The poems erupted, like volcanic dreams, full of strange, exotic images, narratives whose relation to her days was as tenuous and slender as the link between the black and silver world of fairytales and the grey world of farm labourers, as the link between the haunting notes of southern spirituals and the bleak monotony of days on the plantation. (p. 187)

This quotation is interesting not just as evidence of Emily's life-saving creativity, but also as testimony to the theme of the collection: the link between fairytales and the real world, which will briefly be revisited in the conclusion.

VI

We have seen how *The Inland Ice and Other Stories* establishes both a thematic and a stylistic connection between the fantastic folktale tradition and the more realistic genre of the short story. The effect of this parallel seems twofold. On the one hand, Ní Dhuibhne's feminist rewriting of the traditional folktale and her retranslation of it in several other stories set in contemporary Ireland, has the effect of investing an otherwise ancient story with new life. The original fairytale gains new relevance as an interpretation of choices and problems women are still faced with. In *The Field Day Anthology*, Ní Dhuibhne argues that "the meaning of tales depends upon their immediate sociological context" and that once a tale looses all relevance to society, it will cease to exist (p. 1216). In this collection, Ní Dhuibhne tries to truly revive the folktale, not – as is mostly the case nowadays– by presenting it as a quaint account of long bygone ways, but by making it reflect and interpret the social values and attitudes of a postmodern society. On the other hand, Ní Dhuibhne's use of the folktale in *The Inland Ice* also

throws new light on the short stories themselves. The connection to a folklore tradition in general and "The Search for the Lost Husband" in particular, makes the stories into more than just portraits of contemporary Irish women. Their stories gain a wider appeal, because they are linked not just to an Irish past, but to a far more universal human heritage.

Yet, if several formal and thematic elements of *The Inland Ice* thus draw attention to the fundamental similarity between the kinds of mythic experiences related in fairytales and contemporary experience, in the stories themselves this similarity is severely criticised and undermined. In many different ways indeed, Ní Dhuibhne stories draws attention to the differences between fantasy and reality, between folklore and modern life.[14] If life is like a fairytale, it is so only "up to a point". Moreover, in showing how the life of her protagonists is restricted by fairytale expectations, Ní Dhuibhne also argues that if life *cannot* be really lived like a fairytale, it *should* not be lived like one either. After all, folktales also contain certain preconceptions about life and love, which are felt to be restrictive in contemporary society. In short, *The Inland Ice and Other Stories* both installs a connection between contemporary reality and the ancient world of fantasy and fairytale and criticises or undermines this connection again. The result is not a merger of folktale and modern short story into a new genre, but rather a critical reflection on the link between "the black and silver world of fairytales" and the "grey world of the farm labourer", a link which is "slender and tenuous" but which exists all the same (p. 187).

Notes

1 Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*, London: MacMillan, 1965, p. 18.

2 Patrick Rafroidi, "The Irish Short Story in English: The Birth of a New Tradition", in *The Irish Short Story,* eds. Patrick Rafroidi and Terence Brown, Lille, 1979, p. 27; Terence Brown, "The Counter Revival", in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. III, ed. Seamus Deane, Derry: Faber, 1991, p. 92.

3 Particularly interesting in this respect is Walter T. Rix's article, "Irish Oral Tradition and the Narrative Structure of the Anglo-Irish Short Story". The article enumerates and describes specific thematic and narrative features which the Irish short story inherited from the oral story-telling tradition. Among the features Rix mentions are: "The narrator as performer", "Identification of perspective and fictional main character", "Frequent exploitation of ancient Irish mythology", "System of oppositions", "Consequent treatment of the clash between idea and reality", "Pronounced tendency towards linear progression of time". Other articles and studies which explore the relations between story-telling and short story in Ireland are: Benedict Kiely's introduction to *The Penguin Book of Irish Short Stories*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983; James F. Killroy (Ed.). *The Irish Short Story: A Critical History*, Boston: Twayne, 1984.

4 Declan Kiberd, "Story-Telling: The Gaelic Tradition", in *The Irish Short Story*, eds. Patrick Rafroidi and Terence Brown, eds, Lille, 1979, p. 14.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 20. Patrick Rafroidi, like Kiberd, perceives two distinct strands in the Irish short story: the tradition initiated by Daniel Corkery, which relies heavily on folklore and traditions of rural Ireland, and the more urban, "more accomplished and less prolific" tradition originated by Moore and perfected by Joyce (Rafroidi, p. 36).

6 Éilís Ní Dhuibhne (ed.), "International Folktales", *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*: *Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*, Vol. IV, ed. Angela Bourke e.a., Cork: Cork UP, 2002. Henceforth references to this volume will be placed between brackets in the text.

7 Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, *The Inland Ice and Other Stories*, Belfast, Blackstaff, 1997, p. 139. Henceforth references to this collection will be placed between brackets in the text.

8 Ní Dhuibhne reproduces the whole story of the devil and the bailiff in the very first short story of *The Inland Ice*: "Gweedore Girl".

9 Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, "Ex Corde AT 1186 in Irish Tradition", *Béaloideas*, 48 (1980), p. 131

10 "The butter prints fell out of her basket. And the Bhermone terriers started into the butter. They got the smell of it in a couple of minutes and the terriers didn't leave a bit of it that they didn't eat". Séamás Ó Catháin, "Butter Sir…." AT 1698 and 1699 – a typological sandwich", *Béaloideas*, 45 (1977), p. 91.

11 This image of woman dissolving into paper also appears in another of Ní Dhuibhne's short stories, "The Wife of Bath". In that story, the narrator – a woman weighed down by domestic and motherly duties – tells of her meeting with Chaucer's Alisoun, the wife of Bath. They talk of feminism and feminine duties and go for a swim in the baths. Alisoun dissolves in the water, since she is "just one man's invention", but the narrator herself is dissolving too, which suggests that her life has also largely been shaped and determined by other people's expectations and representations. See Éilís Ní Dhuibhne", "The Wife of Bath" in *Testi, intertesti, contesti: Seminario su "The Wife of Bath" di Éilís Ní Dhuibhne*, eds. Gianfranca Balestra and Leslie-Anne Crowley, Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2000.

12 Giovanna Tallone, "Butter Boots and Paper Hats: The Fiction of Éilís Ní Dhuibhne", in *Testi, intertesti, contesti*, pp. 148-49.

13 Giovanna Tallone, "Q&A with Éilís Ní Dhuibhne", in *Testi, intertesti, contesti*, p. 157.

14 It is interesting to note in this respect that the opposition between fantasy and reality is itself a familiar topic in folktales and in the "traditional" Irish short story. One of the features the short story inherited from the folktale is precisely, according to Walter Rix, "*the clash between idea and reality* […] the most frequent antagonisms are 'myth/fact' and 'the pretentious/the ridiculous'" (154).

Swift's Gentle Yahoo and the Arts in Our Time

Marshall Walker

Abstract: *According to George Steiner "ours is today a civilization 'after the word'". Had Swift been alive today he would have been among the first to agree with Steiner that political propaganda and the languages of the market-place have devalued speech. The vacuum left by the death of God is occupied by science and economics. We live in a silicon world of bureaucracy, management and alienation.*

Is there a rôle for the arts in this régime? In Book IV of Gulliver's Travels *Swift guides us towards a defining point of balance which gives the basis for a revitalized argument that human nature needs the arts. Apotheosizing Science and Economics might delude us into thinking ourselves rational Houyhnhnms but we are Yahoos with a pittance of reason. The arts help us to maintain the gentleness which the Sorrel Nag, and Swift, can see in Gulliver as he leaves Houyhnhnmland to meet the grossness of his own kind.*

The wisdom of Swift is set in a broad context of other commentators and artists from Gustav Mahler to Béla Bartók, and from Henry Adams to Thomas Keneally.

> *Dr Trench*. A tragic life: Bolingbroke, Harley, Ormonde, all those great Ministers that were his friends, banished and broken.
>
> *John Corbet*. I do not think you can explain him in that way – his tragedy had deeper foundations. His ideal order was the Roman Senate, his ideal men Brutus and Cato. Such an order and such men had seemed possible once more, but the movement passed and he foresaw the ruin to come, Democracy, Rousseau, the French Revolution; that is why he hated the common run of men, – "I hate lawyers, I hate doctors", he said, "though I love Dr So-and-So and Judge So-and-So" – that is why he wrote *Gulliver*, that is why he wore out his brain, that is why he felt *saeva indignatio*, that is why he sleeps under the greatest epitaph in history. You remember how it goes? It is almost finer in English than in Latin: "He has gone where fierce indignation can lacerate his heart no more".
>
> (W.B. Yeats, *The Words Upon the Window-Pane*)[1]

The French composer, Gabriel Fauré, held a forthright view of the artist's role in society: "L'artist doit aimer la vie et nous montrer qu'elle est belle. Sans lui, nous en douterions". Doubts indeed, and plenty of scope for the lacerations of Swiftian indignation: Israel versus Palestine; the Butcher of Baghdad and the gunslingers of Washington and Westminster; Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe; the indomitable fragility of Irish peace agreements; al-Qaeda; nuclear waste, and the development of unemployment as a new norm in industrialized countries. Have we not passed finally beyond the era even of doubt, into one of self-interest, cynicism and misapplied science? Are we failed Houyhnhnms or just a bunch of Yahoos?

Béla Bartók's humanism is tougher, more aggressively secular than Faurés: "That man in his misery finds precious comfort in praying to an omnipresent Being is understandable – But how unspeakably feeble! We should rejoice in life and be interested in everything that goes on in the world around us – Were I to make the sign of the Cross I would say, 'In the name of Nature, of Art, and of Science'." If this recalls Matthew Arnold's prophecy of a mounting reliance on poetry inversely proportionate to the decline in religion, do not Arnold and Bartók – tough-minded moral and cultural avant-gardists in their time – stand today revealed as romantic dreamers? What does poetry do for us at Stormont, in Dublin, in the Middle East? We may allow Bartók his putative worship of art and nature, but his exaltation of science is a classic case of the ascetic naïf. It was surely the American, Henry Adams, who got it right for our time as well as his own. In *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* Henry Adams's search for historical causality takes him to twelfth-century France. The architecture of Chartres Cathedral and the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel seems to him an expression of ideological unity achieved in response to "the purity, the beauty, the grace, and the infinite loftiness of Mary's nature, among the things of Earth, and above the clamour of Kings". Adoration of the Virgin impelled medieval sensibility into a unifying ideal which held life and art in a lucid harmony of love, energy, and benevolence. Adams's Mariolatry is as suspect as his peevish assessment of Robert Louis Stevenson's Vailima community in Samoa. Clerical monopoly of power in the twelfth century did not promote the Utopia he chooses to imagine, but the symbol of the Virgin remains valid as an expression of his own ideal. By comparison with the shaped, purposeful lives of the century 1150-1250, modern people merely exist, prey to blind forces and chance events. The Virgin has been replaced by the dynamo, a symbol of mechanistic force which drives people into a worship fatal to their own well-being.

In 1900 Henry Adams visited the Paris Exhibition. Describing his reactions in the third person in *The Education of Henry Adams*, he records that to him:

> ...the dynamo became a symbol of infinity. As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross [...] one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force [...] he could see only an absolute fiat in electricity as in faith.[2]

For Adams, then, Bartók's hopeful trinity of Nature, Art, and Science, had been reduced to a single, malign term – Science – and the mass of life was black. The discoveries of Pierre and Marie Curie showed that physical matter contains its own potential for disintegration, and Radium "denied its God". By reducing all matter to molecules that collide with each other at intervals varying up to 17,750,000 times per second, the kinetic theory of gas established Adams's belief that nature is full of violence but without system:

> The kinetic theory of gas is an assertion of ultimate chaos. In plain words, Chaos was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man.[3]

In his attempt to impose order on the flux of his existence, man seems to Adams like a spider snaring the forces of nature that "dance like flies before the net" of its web. The image reappears in T.S. Eliot's "Gerontion", originally intended as a prelude to *The Waste Land*, the twentieth-century's modern period's most celebrated literary image of a world in disorder. Eliot considers the possibility that the spider might "suspend its operations", thus consigning the poem's shadowy characters to disintegration in space:

> De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs Cammel, whirled
> Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
> In fractured atoms.

In the last three or four decades science's commercial *alter ego*, technological pragmatism, has elevated the silicon chip to the bad eminence of Henry Adams's dynamo. We get chips with everything, indeed, and charm, with a little shove from James Joyce, has absconded to the domain of the quarks. We occupy a world of bureaucracy, management and alienation, which is no longer the hip thing it was even in the nineteen-eighties, but symptom of a time in which, to co-opt Tennyson, "the individual withers and the world is more and more". It is a world which slides by on grease, a savage servility like the giant finned automobiles in Robert Lowell's poem "For the Union Dead". In schools and universities career-orientation or contribution to the Gross National Product are the criteria of worthiness for a subject, a faculty, a course. This utilitarian brutality is not new. We know from *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated* that Cardinal Newman realized he was up against it in the lectures he gave in 1852 as Rector-Elect of the new Catholic University in Ireland; but, despite the best efforts of the Victorians, it was the twentieth century that made it the totem before which we now fall down. In Chapter 19 *of Schindler's Ark* Thomas Keneally describes German SS preparations for the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto at Cracow. Inhabitants of the section designated Ghetto B were issued with identification cards marked W for army employees, Z for employees of the civil authorities, or R for workers in essential industries. Graft apart, workers in essential industries tended to last longest. How Swift's indignation would have run with this.

The utilitarian apotheosizing of product is a crucial stage in the movement towards an amoral society in which a concern with truth or matters of value is at best aberrant, often contemptible, or, more insidiously, just another marketable trend. To fill the space where God once was with an economic fiat is an abrogation of humanity, a reckless attempt to climb out of the "destructive element" Joseph Conrad talks about in Chapter 20 of *Lord Jim* instead of learning to swim in it. The caprice of God may have been disconcerting, but the fickleness of economics is chaos come again into the life that would be led in terms of what Newman calls real values. We may be right to give economics the credit for getting Communism on the run across Eastern Europe, but how could we condone the insertion of commercials between each movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony when television networks across the world screened Leonard Bernstein's Christmas Day 1989 performance from East Berlin's Schauspielhaus to celebrate the dismantling of the Berlin Wall? The juxtaposition of breakfast cereal, washing powder, cat meat and Schiller's "Ode to Joy" – the joy of freedom in this case – was worthy of Alexander Pope at his most satirical. A culture so pachydermal that its most potent public medium accords equal value to *Freiheit* and cat food needs more of the arts, and the arts need to be militant.

Pressed by the utilitarian insistences of our time, and under the pall of barely conceivable nuclear possibilities, what point can there be in the triumph of a Fidelio, the musings of Proust, the jollities of Dutch genre painting, the anguish of Lear, the socialist effervescences of Jorge Amado, the symmetries of Bach, or T.S. Eliot's aspiration towards the point where the fire and the rose are one? Doomed, like John Irving's Garp in his effort to protect his family from the world, the artist must take on the image of Verdi's tormented Rigoletto, the archetypal misfit. "Solo, difforme, povero". The persistence of Rigolettos testifies to an unregenerate element of the Yahoo in our make-up, but give the printed circuit a few more years and it may have us all Houyhnhnms, forbiddingly rational creatures without need of the flab of art.

Swift, as Kipling reminds us, was "scourged through life between the dread of insanity and the wrath of his own soul warring with a brutal age".[4] Out of this agony, Kipling says – and beyond the academy it is true still – there remains one little book:

> …his dreadful testament against his fellow-kind, which today serves as a pleasant tale for the young under the title of *Gulliver's Travels*. That, and a faint recollection of some baby-talk in some love-letters, is as much as the world has chosen to retain of Jonathan Swift, Master of Irony. Think of it! It is like tuning–down the glare of a volcano to light a child to bed![5]

This is a puzzling feature of the book: it is, at once, bright with fantasy, a "merry work" as Arbuthnot called it, and a volcano. But how dreadful is the testament? Its appeal is easily distinguishable: pygmies and giants; flying islands and talking horses. The detailed inventiveness; the carefully worked-out scales in Brobdingnag and Lilliput; the comedy of the Lilliputians crawling and leaping under sticks, walking tightropes,

their theological debates over the end at which eggs should be cracked; Gulliver's heroism in Brobdingnag with flies and wasps and monkeys and bowls of cream; the Laputans with their Flappers and their meals of rhomboids, equilateral triangles, cycloids and parallelograms. There is some merriment in Book IV too, but not so much, for this last book casts a long shadow backwards over the whole work.

Much of the interest in the first two books resides quite simply in the descriptive narrative and in Swift's delight in exploring the differences in scale. Book I, of course, is a satire principally on England, where Gulliver tends to be the norm and the Lilliputians' stature turns all their concerns into affectations. (Deviation into the detail of English politics towards the end of the book rather disrupts the fabric of the fiction.) In Book II it is principally Gulliver himself and what, with minute arrogance, he stands for, which are being satirized. But a strain scarcely heard in Lilliput becomes in Brobdingnag a fascinated revulsion as the human body is seen though Gulliver's microscopic eye. The nurse's breast becomes a tumid horror; the naked Maids of Honour, who make him the toy of their concupiscence, fill him with nausea. And he is himself at best a *relplum scalcath*, at worst a *splacknuck*. Book III has some knockabout fun with the Royal Society in which Swift pays off some old scores against his Dublin tutor, Narcissus Marsh. Of the whole ragbag of satirical objects in Book III it is, however, Gulliver's encounter with the Struldbruggs which has the most telling effect on him and on us. In the prospect of immortality Gulliver sees extravagant opportunities for increase in wealth, knowledge and benevolence. But he forgets the work of time and he forgets the body of flesh. Now we remember the flayed woman of *A Tale of a Tub*. Here is the Swiftian carcase again, senseless and unsavoury, rank Yahoo flesh. Beckett country isn't far away.

In Swift's polarizing of human attributes in Book IV of Gulliver's Travels the Yahoos are usually taken to be the hirsute, nodal point of the excremental vision. The book has been attacked often enough, notably by F.R. Leavis who seemed to find in the Yahoos all the life-enhancing virtues of D.H. Lawrence's hot young men: "Swift did his best for the Houyhnhnms, but the Yahoos have all the life [...] the clean skin of the Houyhnhnms is stretched over a void". But Swift is employing a kind of allegory, not writing a novel. It is supererogatory to complain that because Spenser's Red Cross Knight does not suffer from gastronenteritis he is a skin stretched over a void. Is it in any useful sense valid to say that "the Yahoos have all the life", especially when this life amounts to fighting, getting drunk, suffering disease, killing cats, and throwing excrement? It is true that the Yahoos make the deepest emotional impact on us. They appall us as they appalled Gulliver. The Houyhnhnms do live an enviably even, uncomplicated life, perhaps a little forbiddingly like the life prescribed by Nature Cure enthusiasts as advertised in the lustier magazines. Primarily a satiric construct, the purity of their appeal heightens our revulsion to the Yahoos. Simple satiric inversion has taken place. Give even a horse reason and it can do better than humans.

The most important aspect of Swift's strategy is that the Houyhnhnms are deliberately distanced through the very fact that they are horses. We cannot identify

with these rational creatures. In Book I of *Gulliver's Travels* we can identify with Gulliver himself and laugh at the trivial malice of the Lilliputians. In Book II we can slip over to the side of the King of Brobdingnag and scorn Gulliver, provisionally, as a member of "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth". But here we are trapped. The Houyhnhnms' way of life may be all right if you happen to be a horse, but we are penned in the dirt and indecorum of the Yahoo sty with Gulliver himself. And where can we go from there? Swift's printed-circuit horses may rein us in but we cannot be of them, nor should we wish to be. "The company of horses", warns America's Hugh Henry Brackenridge, "is by no means favourable to good taste and genius…and as men naturally consimilate with their company, so it is observable that your jockeys are a class of people not greatly removed from the sagacity of a good horse".[6]

Everything in Swift's work is sunk in delusion – everything but love, and kindness. In Book I there is Gulliver's own genial nature, in II that of the giant-hearted girl Glumdalclitch, and in IV the cool solicitude of his Master and the love of his friend, the Sorrel Nag who bids him farewell as he leaves, expelled from Houyhnhnmland to meet again the grossness of his own human kind. It is this last farewell from these rational creatures that we need to keep with us: "Take care of thyself, gentle Yahoo". So behind Swift's *saeva indignatio* lies this gentleness, not madness; not misanthropy but love, and a triumph, after all, for that sweet unreason that lies at the human core like ambergris in a blasted whale. Swift did his best to make his vision of humankind as disgusting as possible – the human creature as a thing degenerate, without hope of grace – but he couldn't quite bring it off. There was evidence of something else, something residual that could not be refined out of existence.

For William Faulkner this residuum was still worth calling "a spirit", that element in our make-up which tempers the Yahoo in us and would keep us from doing ourselves in:

> I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last read and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.[7]

With the "end of the American century" and the Soviet Union's bloody post mortem Faulkner's rhetoric may seem too purple, too stoical, the ding-dong of doom all too plausible, and the words "soul" and "spirit" anachronisms of an Arcadian time when the arts justified themselves. Even today, it is hard to avoid using such vocabulary; but a safer word is consciousness – neutral, inoffensive, secular. Consciousness is something

we all possess and the last thing we relinquish at death. We cling to consciousness with a tenacity that gives it pride of place over kinship, money, or sex. In Auschwitz, Thomas Keneally tells us, Clara Sternberg, a woman in her early forties, her mind blown by the living nightmare, sought to kill herself by self-immolation on the electric fence that surrounded her camp. Finding an old acquaintance from Cracow, Clara asked her "Where's the electric fence?" Keneally comments:

> In her disarrayed mind, it was a reasonable question to ask, and Clara had no doubt that this friend, if she had any sisterly feeling, would point the exact way to the wires. The answer the woman gave Clara was just as crazed, but it was one that had a fixed point of view, a balance, a perversely sane core.
> "Don't kill yourself on the fence, Clara," the woman urged her. "If you do that, you'll never know what happened to you".

Clara returned to her barracks. As Keneally says, "It has always been the most powerful of answers to give to the intending suicide. Kill yourself and you'll never find out how the plot ends".

Human consciousness demands more than the mere facts of the plot. If we were Houyhnhnms we might settle for a Gradgrindian diet of numbers, measurements, food according to our metabolic needs, useful work. But Swift knows his species better than to dream of the order mourned by Henry Adams. We are Yahoos with a pittance of reason, glandular, intransigently messy creatures. "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact", and which of us has not loved? So by Shakespeare's way of it, we are all partly mad, partly poetic. We will retain, "They fell in love and married" against all clinical pressure to factory-finish the experience into the deep freeze of psychological jargon: "Their libidinal impulses being reciprocal, they activated their individual erotic drives and integrated them within the same frame of reference". (The parody is Lionel Trilling's). This might meet the case in the novels of Harold Robbins; it might do for *Dallas*'s JR and Sue-Ellen, not for Romeo and Juliet, or for Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy, or for David Copperfield and Agnes Wickfield. Knowing the chemistry of water does not prepare us for a sensory perception of the Cataratas do Iguaçu. We want the sounding cataracts of the romantic poet to help us express our feelings. A geological history from rocks of the Lower Precambrian to those of the Cenozoic era will only go part of the way towards accounting for our apprehension in the Grand Canyon of a spectacle so awe-inspiring that we want organ glissandi or the Prelude to *Parsifal* or amplified chunks of Strauss's *Alpensinfonie* to help us say what we think we have seen and felt. Consciousness, in such cases, calls for art.

The arts are news of life, not merely exercises in aesthetics, but we must understand the aesthetics if we are to receive the news. There is something crucial to be learned from the satisfaction obtained from the balanced patterns of art. This is best understood if we think of human beings as trying to resolve the split between Houyhnhnm and Yahoo, between stability and change, as striving towards wholeness or such

integration as Swift's friend, Pope, intends when he places humankind "on this isthmus of a middle state" at the end of *An Essay on Man*. The ultimate significance of great works may lie in the fact that they are paradigms of integration, examples provided by genius of that "wholeness, harmony and radiance" which James Joyce, after Aquinas, saw as the elements of true art. If so, we need not trouble ourselves with superficial questions about the relevance of art.

When Gustav Mahler came to compose *Das Lied von Der Erde* he found himself facing death. In the last movement of the work, "Der Abschied", Mahler added some words of his own to the text he took from Hans Bethge's *The Chinese Flute*:

> Die liebe Erde allüberall
> Blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!
> Allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen!
> Ewig [...] ewig [...]

Mahler's method of facing death required the certain consolation that when he took his farewell of the world, the dear earth would continue its endlessly renewing cycles. Had he written *The Song of the Earth* today he could not have found such consolation. Even without the apocalypse of 11 September 2001 it has not been available since Hiroshima. Yahoo excrement has turned lethal. This is the deadly distinction of our time, therefore an essential part of the context in which we must finally contemplate the function of the arts.

In his long poem *Mirabell: Books of Numbers* (1978) the American poet James Merrill holds seances with an Ouija board which bring him visitations and messages. His chief informant is agitated (Book 2) by "increasing human smog" in which is revealed only the "CONCERTED USE OF ATOMIC/WEAPONRY NOW FALLING INTO HANDS OF ANIMAL SOULS". Moving the cup among the letters of the Ouija board, the conjured spirits spell out their requirement: "FIND US BETTER PHRASES FOR THESE HISTORIES WE POUR FORTH/HOPING AGAINST HOPE THAT MAN WILL LOVE HIS MIND AND LANGUAGE". Bearing witness to the rewards as well as the perils of consciousness, the arts teach love of mind and language. Thus they offer their own potent motivations towards the maintenance of peace in a blood-stained world. "Take care of thyself, gentle Yahoo", was the Sorrel Nag's farewell to Gulliver. Yahoos all, we need the arts to nourish the gentleness Swift could find in us and to help us take care of ourselves in our time.

Notes

1 W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Plays of W.B. Yeats.* London, 1966, pp. 601-2.
2 Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams.* New York, 1931, pp. 380-1.
3 Ibid., p. 451.

4 Rudyard Kipling, “Fiction”, *A Book of Words.* London, 1928, p. 284.
5 Ibid.
6 Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry* (1792-1815). New Haven, 1965, p. 34.
7 William Faulkner, “Address upon Receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature”, *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters.* New York, 1965, p. 120.

History

The Other Irish Revolution: the Writing of History

David Harkness

Abstract: *This account of the revolution in the writing of history in Ireland outlines the development of a professional approach to the writing of Irish history, largely confined to the twentieth century, and then summarises, crudely and briefly, the debate generated in the latter decades of that century over what was felt by some to be an excessive revision of the traditional record of Ireland's past. In that latter section, the account below draws heavily on* Interpreting Irish History*, edited by Ciaran Brady (Irish Academic Press, 1994) and those who are interested in this part of the story are advised to consult that book, which reproduces many of the formative articles upon which this debate rests.*

It seems best to start by asking why it is that history is written at all. No doubt, to-day, we would answer that history is the memory of society and that it is important to seek out as true a record of the past as possible: to explain it to the reading public as objectively as possible so that the origins and evolution of the world, or the country or the local community can best be understood. But the writing of history has not always been so pure in spirit. The rise of history as an academic discipline is associated with the rise of nationalism and the wish to celebrate national achievement and underpin national aspiration. Pride in French military and cultural might or the need to unify the German-speaking peoples might illustrate the point. History has often had ulterior purposes, in other words, and this is no less true in Ireland than elsewhere. To-day, we might want to tell the story of Ireland's evolution as it really was: to establish as accurate an account as possible of the arrival of successive settlers, their development, their culture, language, and social and political institutions; the relationships of their petty kingdoms; the impact of their external neighbours: marauding Vikings, acquisitive Britons, ambitious continental powers, and so on. But, until recent times, historical accounts served more as a means to and end: hagiographies of ruling families to underpin privilege; propaganda tales put about by military conquerors to justify acquisition or overlordship; religious perspectives to glorify some and damn others. Myths, distortions and inventions were as frequent as real events and personalities.

If nation states glorified their achievements, then nations wishing to become states were equally inclined to manufacture ancient foundations and to stress the continuity of their claim to distinctiveness and to recognition. Where did truth fit in? Was the winner's account necessarily right? Could scholarship lay bare evidence so that a credible account of the past could be assembled? The settling of states, the creation of archival centres, the collecting of records and documents, and the growth of education helped both to ask these questions and to answer them in the developing and modernising world.

Ireland lagged behind somewhat in this process. After all, Ireland in modern times was beset by conflict, with competing religions and clashing settler groups, and further handicapped by a dominant ruling minority and foreign manipulation. In the nineteenth century, that manipulation was turned into direct control by the absorption of Ireland into a wider United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. But the nineteenth century also saw a rise in education and in democratic institutions, and it experienced also a greater interest in establishing facts, gathering knowledge and creating learned bodies. As the subject of this paper lies in the twentieth-century, it will not be possible here to do justice to the nineteenth century, but some landmarks must be listed.

Nineteenth-century Ireland was rich in historical memory. Sagas, genealogies, annals, chronicles, law tracts, the commentaries of foreigners and the histories of natives, both at home and in exile, abounded. Already, English and Irish, Protestant and Catholic accounts were at variance, with subtle differences between, as well as overlappings of, different interest groups. Attempts at reconciling these conflicting accounts had been attempted. For example, in the late eighteenth-century, the Reverend Thomas Leland's general history of Ireland from the twelfth-century to the 1770s set out to provide an acceptable synthesis. But no consensus ensued. In 1775 the Royal Irish Academy was founded and from early on sought to elucidate Ireland's celtic heritage. A State Paper Office, dating from 1702, had acted as a repository for official documents and in the nineteenth century the vogue for fact-finding created in 1825 an Ordnance Survey of Ireland which gathered great quantities of material – topographical, historical and cultural – until 1841. An Irish Record Commission lasted from 1810-30; then, by Act of Parliament in 1867, a Public Record Office of Ireland was established and Ireland also benefited, two years later, in 1869, by the founding of an Historic Manuscripts Commission of Great Britain and Ireland. Between 1848 and 1860, Richard Griffith carried out a land valuation of Ireland which recorded invaluable factual information. The Young Ireland movement of the eighteen forties placed a strong emphasis on education and history, admittedly with a particular enthusiasm for a romanticised version of the Irish past, and as Home Rule found increasing favour from the 1870s, so rival histories again burgeoned, some stressing Ireland's parliamentary tradition and national rights, others placing greater weight on British superiority, ruling strength and better judgement, and upon Ireland's future as part of the United Kingdom. The creation in 1845 of new university colleges to add to the lone Elizabethan university foundation in Dublin, laid the basis for further eventual centres of historical enquiry.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, new histories continued to reflect opposing standpoints. Some, like those of Alice Stopford Green, still followed a traditional, romantic view; others, for example G.H. Orpen's *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1333* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), endeavoured to assert more modern standards. Orpen aimed: "to set forth the facts [...] with as much exactness of statement and indifferency of judgement as is humanly possible".[1] Sources, however, were still limited, the number of trained scholars few, but the twentieth century was to experience a more professional and disciplined scholarship than hitherto. World war, guerilla conflict and political division took centre stage in Ireland between 1914 and 1921, but political division did at least spawn a separate Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in 1924, and in 1928 the new Irish Free State founded its own Irish Manuscripts Commission, with its own journal, *Analecta Hibernica*, following in 1930.

Nonetheless, even by the late 1930s, Ireland still lacked an agreed account of its past. There was no centre of historical research, no historical journal where such research could be promulgated, no set of agreed standards of scholarship. But it was at this time that the "revolution" occurred and it was by the hands of two individuals, soon augmented by other distinguished colleagues, that it was set in motion. The story of the contribution of Theodore William Moody, of Queen's University Belfast, and Robert (Robin) Dudley Edwards, of University College Dublin, has been told often, not least in the *festschriften* in their honour and in the obituary tributes paid to them. Their achievements will therefore be related only briefly here.

Moody and Edwards met in London in the early 1930s as graduate students at London University's Institute of Historical Research. They soon determined that on their return to Ireland they would encourage the latest standards of historical writing and provide a medium through which new research could be disseminated. Thus it came about that Moody helped found the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies in Belfast, early in 1936; and Edwards helped bring into being the Irish Historical Society, in Dublin, later that same year. And in 1938 they founded, as joint editors, the journal, *Irish Historical Studies*, to be the voice of new Irish research, backed equally by the two Societies, North and South.

Moody was to continue as joint editor, representing the USIHS for forty years, until 1978 when the present writer had the honour of replacing him. Moody did this despite his move to Dublin in 1939 to a Fellowship, then a Chair, at Trinity College. Edwards, partly through failing eyesight, retired from his editorship in 1957, but it was to be claimed later, with some justice, that from 1938 "History as the handmaiden of nationalism" (or imperialism) began to be "replaced by history as an independent discipline".[2] Later still, Professor J.J. Lee would add, of the founding generation of *IHS*, that it "insisted on scholarly standards [...] rose above partisan passions [...] (and) established the benchmark by which [...] later achievements in their own profession must be measured".[3]

One other creative achievement of these two in 1938 was the formation of the Irish Committee of Historical Sciences to represent Ireland on the *Commité International*

des Sciences Historiques and to provide a forum for historians throughout the island. In 1944, in association with D.B.Quinn, who moved to chair at University College Swansea in that year, the two inititated a monograph series, "Studies in Irish History", to enable new research to be published in book form. And new research, by an ever-expanding body of gifted scholars, began to flow, works by R.B.McDowell, J.C.Beckett and G.A. Hayes-McCoy serving as examples.

A comparable development should be noticed at this point at Oxford, where another Irishman, Nicholas Mansergh, had been setting new standards of political and historical publication. *The Government of Northern Ireland* (Allen and Unwin, 1934); *The Government of the Irish Free State* (Allen and Unwin, 1936) and most notably in this context, Ireland in the Age of Reform and Revolution (Allen and Unwin, 1940) comprised in effect a parallel, one-man revolution-in-exile.

Back in Ireland, the historiographical revolution expanded. Moody inaugurated broadcast history in 1953 with a multi-contributor series of lectures commemorating Thomas Davis, the Young Irelander, which has continued annually ever since, many subsequently published. BBC Northern Ireland followed in 1954 with two similar series entitled *Ulster since 1800: a political and economic survey* (1954) and *Ulster since 1800: a social survey* (1957) the latter broadcast late in 1956 and early 1957, both edited by T.W.Moody and J.C.Beckett. In 1955, the bienniel Irish Conference of Historians was inaugurated, its and subsequent papers being published as consecutive volumes of *Historical Studies*. This series also survives, as does the annual conference of the Irish History Students' Association, another Edwards initiative of the late 1940s, providing an island-wide forum bringing students of history together to deliver papers, to disseminate ideas and good fellowship and to consume considerable quantities of guinness. It was a high priority for both Moody and Edwards to nurture Ireland as a cultural unit, ignoring political division, to ensure that historians would be true first to their discipline, irrespective of their origin, political commitment or teaching location.

In 1965, Queen's University Belfast founded its Institute of Irish Studies, the only such centre in Ireland. In 1966, Moody and two UCD colleagues, Professors F.X.Martin and F.J. Byrne, created a television series of 21 programmes delivered by many scholars and published the following year as *The Course of Irish History* (Mercier, 1967): an invaluable textbook for students, embracing the latest research. Ten years later, in 1976, another of Moody's initiatives came into being when the first of eight planned volumes of a *New History of Ireland* was published. This was the start of a multi-contributor, multi-volume project designed to provide the first, agreed, scholarly, standard history of Ireland from earliest times to the present.

By 1976, already a number of significant books had appeared, reflecting the new historical professionalism, for example: J.C.Beckett's *Short History of Ireland* (Hutchinson, 1952) and his *Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923* (Faber and Faber, 1966); Oliver MacDonagh's *Ireland* (Prentice-Hall, 1968), an account of Ireland since 1800; then F.S.L.Lyons's *Ireland since the Famine* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971)

and in the following year both Robert Kee's *Green Flag* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson), a history of Irish nationalism, and Louis Cullen's *Economic History of Ireland since 1660*. (Batsford). The record of Ireland's past was being clarified, and in ever greater detail as new research in all periods was begun and increasingly completed. A glance at the two historiographical works published by the Irish Committee of Historical Sciences – *Irish Historiography 1936-70*, edited by Moody (1971), and *Irish Historiography 1970-9*, edited by J.J. Lee (1981), will reveal the astonishing breadth of this research.

Theo Moody retired from his chair in TCD in 1979 but carried on productive research and continued to be active in historical circles until his death in 1984. He had the great advantage of looking like a professor! In fact both he and Dudley (as everyone called Edwards) could have been drawn from Central Castings on appearance alone: both with large heads, dominant foreheads and lengthy manes of hair. Otherwise they were very unalike. Moody had a puritanical air. He was a Quaker and a family man, a lover of music, and an upholder of standards – especially standards of scholarly presentation (to Aidan Clarke, Moody had for forty years "policed the commas, the colons and the outlawed upper case letters' in articles submitted to *IHS*".[4] He sought peace and understanding, fought myth, prejudice and bias in historical writing, believing, above all, that to understand is to forgive.

Robert (Robin to his intimates) Dudley Edwards, Professor at UCD from 1944 –79, was a contrasting character: cautious in his written scholarship, he was daring, not to say outrageous, in his lectures, in his conversation, in his behaviour. An affectionate obituary by Professor Aidan Clarke, after his death aged 79 in 1988, contains the following adjectives applied to Dudley: "iconoclastic", "provocative", "mischievous", "demotic", "flamboyant", "arrogant", "perverse", "passionate", "erudite", "theatrical", "exuberant". His capacity for drink and women was "legendary".[5] Over a period of thirty-five years he built up his Department at UCD, was a great encourager of graduate research, an inspiring lecturer. It was he who created the Irish History Students Associations and it was its annual conferences that provided him with a stage for some of his most outrageous performances. He was dedicated to the island-wide community of Irish historians and it was perhaps for the reason that I held the chair in Belfast that he was always courteous and generous to me. From the mid 'fifties to the 'seventies he had eyesight problems which lifted latterly to pernitt a late burst of writing. He also specialised in this later period in archive management and collection, establishing a Department of Archives at UCD and putting his weight behind a demand for proper state archival provision, as government papers increasingly began to be opened up to public inspection. In 1986, two years before his death, a National Archives Act merged the PROI and the State Paper Office, laid down better standards of provision and made official the thirty-year rule for the opening of government papers to public inspection.

It could be asked, of course, whether or not these two creative giants had stayed too long at their task. Moody's hand had become a bit heavy and rather deadening at the helm of *IHS* by 1978. New specialisms had established themselves within history and

an Economic and Social History Society, founded in 1970, had begun its own journal in 1974. A *Journal of Labour History (Saothar)* had also appeared, in 1976, and voices had risen against a preoccupation with constitutional and political history that seemed to characterise the founding fathers. They were soon to have the opportunity to put their own case against their critics, but to explain the circumstances in which this arose, it is necessary to step back to the mid 'sixties in Northern Ireland, where a major challenge to the political status quo had begun.

In 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising provoked reappraisals of political progress, North and South. A new generation of Northern Nationalists in particular questioned their subservient position in Northern Ireland. By 1969, violent confrontation there had forced many back upon a simpler, more black and white version of the past. It seemed to them necessary to harness history once more to current political causes, to justify present stances. In North and South angry questions were asked and charges made. The subsequent debate became heated.

Beleagured Nationalists in the North, for example, asked what had become of the old traditional certainties. Now, above all times, they needed their heroes. They and their southern confreres began to condemn what they perceived to have been an assault on the myths and legends that had sustained their forefathers during centuries of British oppression. History had been revised too far. Irish suffering had been played down, British "progress" had been exaggerated. The *IHS* generation was accused of claiming to have pursued a "value-free", objective scholarship, while in reality its practitioners had simply swapped their own prejudices and biases for the older truths of traditional history: professional historians had become the servants of a new Irish and British Establishment, unconcerned with goals of unity and national fulfilment. "Revisionism" thus became a term of abuse and historians were forced to defend their work, to justify their reinterpretations.

In this context, in 1975, Nicholas Mansergh, now at Cambridge, having observed the impact of the fiftieth anniversaries of "the great landmarks of the revolutionary years in Anglo-Irish reltions" and the outbreak of violence in the North, and noted the sharpening of focus caused by the 1972 suspension of parliamentary institutions in Belfast and the introduction of Direct Rule there, identified three preoccupying revisionist themes:

> the need for more critical reassessment of the role of force in Anglo-Irish history and its effect on community relations [...] then the desirability of some further probing of the relevance of concepts of Irish nationhood to an understanding of the deeper causes of contemporary conflict, and finally some closer scrutiny of the origin of the Northern Ireland polity.[6]

The founding fathers of *Irish Historical Studies* now felt obliged to defend their achievements. Theo Moody, in valedictory interviews and articles as he prepared to retire from his Chair in 1977, observed:

> Irish people have a reputation for being steeped in their history, but it is more often mythology rather than history that possesses their imagination [...]. All continuing human societies have their myths and it is the business of historians to study myths as part of the past, but to study them without swallowing them. The history of Ireland has been, and still is, used as a quarry from which to hew material to support entrenched and dogmatic attitudes in the present.[7]

Later he would list and denounce some of the many myths hitherto accepted as history: the Catholic separatist myth; the Protestant (Anglican) myth; the 1641 massacre myths; the rich and many-sided Orange myths; the myths of Ulster loyalty; the Irish nationalist myths, the Famine myths; the land-purchase myths, the predestinate nation myth[8] He would also assert with pride that:

> Irish historians to-day are concerned to inform, to explain, to interpret, rather than to condemn, to justify or to condone. All historians have biases, being human persons, and some biases are more injurious to the pursuit of truth than others. Historians have to be aware of their biases and to be on their guard accordingly [...]. But there are worse dangers than bias. Prejudice, the forming of judgements in the light of preconceived opinions and without weighing the evidence is an unmitigated evil that historians strive to be, and can succeed in being, delivered from. To know and control their biases, to discipline themselves against prejudice, to base their findings on a rigorous examination of the available evidence, to illuminate in a spirit of understanding, tolerance and compassion, what men have really done and thought and to present the multifarious events and personalities of the past in their due perspective and proportion – these are the characteristics of historians at their best.

And, on a personal note, he added:

> The worst fault in a historian is prejudice. Bias is quite another thing. I confess to a bias against violence, but I try to understand the motives of those who have employed it. Prejudice does not try to understand. It condemns the labels it dislikes. Prejudice might be defined as bias over which no control has been attempted and established.[9]

His pupil, F.S.L.Lyons, and in his turn Lyons's protegé Roy Foster, Protestants both, would, like Moody, be attacked for their unacknowledged, anti-national, cultural standpoints, but, so far as revising history was concerned their defence was a solid one. "Revisionism", Lyons argued, "is proper revisionism if it is a response to new evidence which, after being duly tested, brings us nearer to a truth independent of the wishes and aspirations of those for whom truth consists solely of what happens to coincide with

those wishes and aspirations".[10] All good historians revise our understanding of the past – otherwise why would they write at all? But the fact of the matter is that Rivisionism had by now become a political term and the battle of how history should be written, which commenced in the 1970s, is still with us.

Lyons regretted the slowness of the historiographical revolution to impact upon the schools and the population in general. Hardly surprising, argued his critics, when what is being offered is so out of step with what people have traditionally accepted and still cherish. Foster regretted both the use of "past history [...] to serve a legitimising function for present commitment" and "the popularisation of invented tradition".[11] He rejoiced that old assumptions had been exploded and that Irish history could at last be seen as "a complex and ambivalent process rather than a morality tale".[12] He understood, of course, that "the simplified notions have their own resilience: they are buried deep in the core of popular consciousness".[13]

As argument was joined, it became clear that the popular consciousness embraced origin myths and medieval and early-modern oversimplifications as well as those of more recent times. A vigorous dispute developed between medievalist Steven Ellis, an Irish-speaking Englishman lecturing in Galway, and an English-speaking Irishman, Brendan Bradshaw, medieval lecturer at Cambridge. This was sparked by an *IHS* article, "Nationalist historiography and the English and Gaelic worlds in the late Middle Ages", in 1986, by Ellis. Bradshaw's rejoinder, "Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland", also in *IHS*, was published in 1989. By then, Bradshaw, the only Irish historian teaching in Cambridge and therefore accustomed to fielding brickbats in all periods, had become the champion of the anti-revisionists. He damned those of the *IHS* school of "'value-free' history", rejecting their dull and desiccated publications which had in his view two besetting sins. Firstly, they had marginalised the central dimension of Irish History, the trauma of its catastrophes: the violence of colonisation, for example, or the horror of the Great Famine. Secondly, they had adopted a cynical, corrosive approach to the past, sceptical of those valuable origin-myths which a nation needs.

He damned most post-1970 accounts for their denial of national continuity from earliest times (Ellis's sin in particular); their denial of the beneficent influence of a public perception of the continuity of the past. To Bradshaw, it seems, public perception of the past is too important and necessary to deny, even if it might be misguided in places.

He had earlier joined swords with Ruth Dudley Edwards, daughter of the infamous Dudley, over her biography of Patrick Pearse, *The Triumph of Failure* (Gollancz, 1977): a biography which showed Pearse's faults as well as his achievements, making him a human hero rather than a demigod. But Bradshaw wanted no slur cast against the originator of the 1916 Rising.

He summarised his general critique in the peroration of this *IHS* article. The Moody and Edwards School is basically flawed, he claimed. It is "inappropriate as a means of approaching the Irish historical experience in two respects". Its practitioners have displayed inhibitions "in face of the catastrophic dimension of Irish history [...] its

vulnerability to tacit bias has been highlighted by the negative revisionism practised in its name in exploring the Irish nationalist tradition". Furthermore it has opened up a "credibility gap [...] between the new professional history and the general public" His remedy, however, appears contradictory and unrealistic: "an imaginative and empathetic approach [...] [to achieve] [...] a professional Irish historiography which concedes nothing in the way of critical standards of scholarship, while at the same time responding sensitively to the totality of the Irish experience"[14]. His critique also over-generalises the concepts of "scientific" and "value-free" history, as though all historians of the second half of the twentieth century had sailed only under these flags. Like Desmond Fennell, another resentful of modern Irish historians, he seems to see a self-conscious school pursuing a set agenda. Both men underestimate the extraordinary opening up of urban history, women's history, business history and the sheer variety of practitioners even in the fields of political and constitutional history, spread over excellent departments of history throughout Ireland and also in several British and American Universities.

Desmond Fennell imagines a revisionist school dedicated to buttressing the establishment of the day. He argues that

> it has met that establishment's need for a history that would "buttress and legitimise" its major departure from the nationalist ideology on which the state was founded, and the attitudes and policies following from this; particularly its suspension of the demand that Britain withdraw from Ireland, its assumption that Britain's attitude towards Ireland is benevolent, and its collaboration with Britain against the nationalist armed rebellion in the North.[15]

Revisionism is regarded, then, as a conspiracy – immoral and damaging to the nation. People need their heroes, need their national history, which should serve the nation, not undermine it.

The revisionist debate spread to America, where recent historians have made major contributions to Irish history. Critics there condemned the Anglo-centric view of the *IHS* historians and their failure to come to grips with popular culture. The literary critic, Seamus Deane, next added his voice, attacking history as a "slippery discipline" and historians of the *IHS* school for undermining "the notion of a single narrative [of Irish evolution] and pretending to supplant it with a plurality of narratives".[16]

The debate, in the end, is a political and emotional one. Some Irish nationalists (including some who are historians) prefer their history straightforward and simple and believe the bulk of historians have gone too far in complicating Ireland's past. Many modern Irish historians (most of whom would call themselves nationalists also) feel that the professional pursuit of their discipline has to recognise that the past is not a black-and-white record, where a monopoly of good lies on one side and a monopoly of bad on the other, but is rather greyer and more complex. Skill and endeavour, they argue, can uncover a greater amount of truth: truth about motives and actions, about

Celts and Vikings, Normans and Anglo-Irish, Irish and British, Catholic and Protestant, Nationalist and Unionist. Comprehending truth about the past can assist tolerance in the present and help build co-operation in the future. They would argue that much understanding has been improved already: from St. Patrick to Patrick Pearse, via Brian Boru, Hugh Roe O'Neill, the Penal Laws, the Great Famine itself.

History, after all, should be a matter for rational debate, not dogma. Historical scholarship itself is an endless process and we can note in regard to this phase that the outcry against the revisionists has been even more determined by contemporary events and needs than the histories its critics condemn. And, as Ronan Fanning remarks, this particular dispute happens to have coincided with both the outbreak of violence in North East Ireland and the opening up of archival sources in London, Dublin and Belfast.[17]

The last observations should go to Geroid O'Tuathaigh, as they do in Ciaran Brady's, *Interpreting Irish History*, though justice cannot be done here to his scope and subtle perceptiveness. He reminds us that the condemnation of the revisionists is very narrow in its focus, very general in its critique. There has been no real complaint about revising the orthodox view of Irish Catholicism, launched by Emmet Larkin, or much of the revisionism of economic and social history – demography, land ownership, emigration, migration, urban and labour studies – on both sides of the Atlantic; or recent revisions of early Irish history: regnal succession, the laws, social and family structure etc. In fact, a substantial body of revisionist writing has caused no public or academic indignation. Real heat has been confined to a relatively limited corpus: the settled myths of Irish nationalism and Ulster Unionism. There the new generation of historians has confronted "the myths and legends which constituted an obsessively determinist nationalist historiography" and "it is the outcome of this interrogation [...] that is the matter of contention between the revisionists and their critics".[18] He decries the harnessing of history to a nationalist agenda; the putting of history to use ("purposeful unhistoricity"). He does see value in addressing issues in critical theory, however, if a better balance is to be struck in the future.

And so the debate continues. The revolution in scholarly standards was necessary and remains healthy. Like Moody, who did more than any man before or since to transform his subject, it is still possible for those striving amongst the archives in pursuit of a more perfect record to believe: "*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner"*

Notes

1 Vol. 3, p 9: see Sean Duffy. "Historical revisit: Goddard Henry Orpen". In: *IHS* vol XXXII, n· 126, Nov. 2000, p. 251.

2 The original observation was made by John A. Murphy in "Comment". In: WATT, D. (Ed.). *The Constitution of Northern Ireland* (London, 1981), p. 167, but this version is in J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-85* (CUP, 1989) p. 589.

3 Lee, *Ibid*.

4 Aidan Clarke. "Robert Dudley Edwardes (1909-88)". In: *IHS* vol XXVI, nº 102, p. 124.
5 *Ibid*., pp. 121-7.
6 Preface to the third edition, *The Irish Question: 1840-1921* (Allen and Unwin, 1975) p. 19.
7 *Irish Times* 9 Sept 1976.
8 Moody, T. W. "Irish History and Irish Mythology". In: *Hermathena*, 124 (1978) pp. 7-24. Published as chapter 5 in Ciaran Brady (Ed). *Interpreting Irish History* (hereafter *I.I.H*).
9 *Irish Times*, *op. cit.*
10 F.S.L.Lyons, *The Burden of our History*, (Queen's University Belfast, 1979) chp 6 in *I.I.H*., p. 91.
11 Foster, Roy. "History and the Irish Question' chp 8. In: *I.I.H.*, p. 123.
12 *Ibid*., p. 140.
13 *Ibid*., p. 143. The most obvious expressions of this phenomenon are the murals of paramilitary organisations in Belfast and Derry: the "gable-end" versions of history.
14 Bradshaw, Brendan. Op. cit., chp 12 in *I.I.H*., pp. 214-5.
15 Fennell, Desmond. "Against Revisionism", chp 11. In: *I.I.H.*, p. 183.
16 Deane, Seamus. "Wherever Green is Read", chp 15. In: *I.I.H.*, pp. 241-2.
17 His "'The Great Enchantment': uses and abuses of modern Irish history", chp 9. In: *I.I.H.*, is worth reading in full.
18 M.A.G.O'Tuathaigh, "Irish historical 'Revisionism'; state of the art or ideological project?", chp 20. In: *I.I.H.*, p. 312.

The Irish in South America

Linguistic and Cultural Aspects of the Irish Settlers in Buenos Aires as Seen in Tales of the Pampas, *by William Bulfin*

Juan José Delaney

Abstract: *This article is about Tales of the Pampas, a collection of short stories written and published by William Bulfin in 1900. The book refers to the Irish settlers within the "porteño" country, their days and works. My critical approach concerns language and cultural interrelations between the Irish, the natives, and the South American melting pot, exploring their behaviours, their attitudes and their words. I point out the curious fact that Bulfin's literary speech becomes a strange mixture of Irish-English, Gaelic and Spanish. It was a slow process in which bilingualism preceded biculturalism.*
In Tales of the Pampas *– we read – Bulfin reissues Sarmiento's antithesis proclaimed in* Civilización y Barbarie *(1845): Barbarism (represented by the countryside) vs. Civilization (city), Natives vs. Europeans.*

In a way the story of the language and literature of the Irish in Argentina is the story of the Irish in Argentina.

Within the context of the last period of Irish migration to Argentina – which, in fact, can be traced back to the Colonial epoch of our history, with its highest point during and immediately after the Great Famine (1845-1850) – a collection of short stories was serialized in *The Irish Argentine* and *The Southern Cross*, Irish migrants newspapers. Eventually, in 1900, the stories were published in book format under the title *Tales of the Pampas,* by William Bulfin.

Who was the man? *The Mercier Companion to Irish Literature* entry states:

> **Bulfin, William** (1864-1910), journalist, was born in Derrinlough near Birr in County Offaly, and educated in Birr, Banagher and Galway Grammar School. Emigrating to Argentina in 1884, he was a pampas cowboy for four years before becoming a contributor to and eventual editor of the *Southern Cross* (sic), a paper run for the Irish community in Buenos Aires. Returning to Ireland in 1902, be became a strong supporter of Arthur Griffith and traveled about Ireland

on his bicycle. The pieces written about his tours for the United Irishman and Sinn Fein were collected in the slightly misnamed *Rambles in Eirinn* (1907). The book is nationalist, showing a strong bias against northern Protestants and West Britons, and contains some of the unthinking anti-Semitism of the day. He died at his birthplace.

Curiously, not a word is said about *Tales of the Pampas,* his true contribution to literature.

Let us add that he concluded his formal education at the Royal Charter School in Banagher and at Queen's College in Galway and that in 1884 William and his brother Peter emigrated to Argentina when the future writer was about twenty years old, and that they stayed in Buenos Aires for twelve years. At the time the Bulfins stepped on the country, their uncle, Father Vincent Grogan CP, was the Argentine Provincial of the Passionist Fathers, a catholic congregation linked to the Irish Community. The Passionist Fathers had (and still have) a Monastery in Capitán Sarmiento (Carmen de Areco) next to San Antonio de Areco, one of the principal centers of Irish settlers. It was thanks to Father Grogan's connections with the Irish that the boys were able to start working in the "camp", in touch with their own people and the "gauchos". William Bulfin finally took a position as a "capataz" in an Estancia owned by Juan Dowling (from Longford) located in Ranchos (near Carmen de Areco). It was there that he fell in love with Anne O'Rourke (from Ballacurra) whom he married in 1891. At this time he moved to town, but it is clear that this experience in the country, close to the Irish, natives, and different kinds of migrants, gave him the material for what became *Tales of the Pampas.*

In Buenos Aires he taught English, worked as an employee for H. C. Thompson, a furniture maker, and started contributing articles and stories to *The Southern Cross*. Founded in 1875 by Fr. Patrick Joseph Dillon, *The Southern Cross* became the true thermometer of the relations of the Irish Argentineans and their descendants with the local society. Bulfin was soon sub-editing the paper and quickly became both proprietor and editor. It was in *The Southern Cross* that in 1902 he wrote: "And now I am off for a change, to look for the excitement of a sea-voyage [...]". The result of this was his best known and best-selling book, *Rambles in Eirinn,* where we can find references to his South American incursion.

Back in Ireland he got involved with the nationalist cause, mainly with the language question. And although he wasn't a regular Gaelic speaker, he shared the idea that language was intrinsic to identity and, in fact, he had financially helped the American Gaelic League through *The Southern Cross:*

> [...] what surprised and heartened them was the support that the League received from the Irish in South America, the Irish of Buenos Aires led by the editor of its Irish immigrant paper, the *Southern Cross* (1875–), William Bulfin. The Gaelic League would, in turn, shape and focus Bulfin's cultural nationalism."[1]

Bulfin's personal interest in language concerns our subject and since it is a leitmotiv in *Tales of the Pampas* we will go back to it further on.

In 1904 he returned to Argentine where he was conferred with the papal title of Knight of Saint Gregory for what he had achieved in favor of the Irish Catholic community. In 1909, he left definitely and that same year he sailed off to the United States tying to interest wealthy Irish Americans in founding a Sinn Féin newspaper. He failed.

After a few months in Ireland, he died in February 1910.

Tales of the Pampas was published in London, in 1910, by T. Fisher Unwin for the series which included other "exotic" books like *The Ipané,* by R. B. Cunninghame Graham; *In Guiana Wilds,* by James Rodway; *A Corner of Asia,* by Hugh Clifford; *Negro Nobodies,* by Noël de Montagnac and *Among the Man-Eaters,* by John Gaggin. These titles are enough to give an idea of the publisher's intention. (Some people believe that it was Robert Cunninghame Graham who introduced Bulfin to the publisher). Bulfin's collection belongs to the same literary tradition of Anglo-Argentine writers such as Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936) and William Henry Hudson (1841-1922) but that he differs from them in his concern for language and strong literary intention.

The book consists of eight narrations: "A Bad Character": the story of Sailor John, "a deserter from the crew of a British merchant vessel" who "was a knockabout, or camp atorrante", very unpopular among Irish, Gallegos and natives; "The Enchanted Toad", a funny story of the fantastic that Maureen Murphy links to Mark Twain's "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County";[2] "El High-Life": an effective tragedy rich in symbolic elements with the following melting-pot performers: Basques, Spanish, Irish and Criollos; "Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse": a wonderful short piece of *Bildungsroman*[3] and a song to the horse as symbol of freedom, with "The Defeat of Barragan" as a sequel which concludes with "Campeando", perhaps the weakest in spite of the significant and polemic last lines: "If you're always stuck with the natives behind the *galpon* (sic) instead of attendin" to your good name, you'll be sent with them, and you'll get into their ways, and the day'll come when the dickens a decent man in the country will have anything to say or do with you"; "The Fall of Don José": a very funny story in which we learn that "In the camp, any man who speaks English is an Inglés" and "The Course of True Love", the best story in the collection: an account of a humorous love story which concentrates Bulfin's best components of his writing: colorful descriptions, credible characters, strong verisimil dialogues, humor and an effective structure.

The stories were serialized neither with additional explanations, nor footnotes. When the book was released publishers did not consider a preface necessary. In relation to the local series, nothing of this was necessary since Bulfin was addressing the Irish-Argentine community whose language was the one the writer was conveying.

Who were these Irish? In her brief and clear Introduction to the second edition of the book, Susan Wilkinson gives the proper answer:

> The Irish who emigrated to Argentina in the mid 19th century, at the time of Bulfin's tales, were essentially from the midland counties of Westmeath, Offaly and Longford. Like Bulfin, most gravitated to the pampas where so many of their countrymen were establishing themselves in sheep and cattle farming and where wages were high and land prices low. The "seven parishes" alluded to in "The Course of True Love" were most likely the towns around Salto in the province of Buenos Aires – Carmen de Areco, San Antonio de Areco, Navarro, San Andrés de Giles, Chacabuco, Chivilcoy and, of course, Salto itself. Once inhabited by Indians and beyond the pale of European settlement, these towns attracted Irish immigrants – so much so that the Irish had their own schools and their own churches with priests sent out from Ireland.[4]

The other characters are members of the South American melting pot – mainly Italians and Spaniards, but also Basques and British – turning up on the pampa at the time the gauchos were vanishing. The wire fence – introduced by Richard Newton in 1845 and expanded by Francisco Halbach ten years later – is certainly a symbol of the limitations the gauchos were going through. The book is clearly written in the tradition of realism. However, the gaucho and his situation provide a somewhat romantic atmosphere.

Andrew Graham –Yooll wrote that the stories "were so well received that *The Review of the River Plate* declared them far better and more up-to-date than the writings of Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham". The editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald* also gives his own opinion:

> The fascination of *Tales of the Pampas* lies in that many a descendent of Irish stock will recognize their own forebears in these tales. Honest farmers, struggling to make a decent living and give their families a future, come face to face with congenital rogues, thieves, fantasists and a gallery of colourful vagrants. The clash and contrasts of cultures and customs is told always with underlying humour, and the recreation of the language of origin is constant brain-teaser.[5]

The historical context in which the stories by Bulfin are settled is that of the modernization of Argentina, the successful attempt to become part of the wealthy civilized world. Led by General Julio Argentino Roca – head of the extermination of the Indians in what was called the "Campaña del Desierto" (a genocide to others) – the visible face of this process was the so-called "Generación del ochenta": a prominent ruling class inspired by the European-inspired ideas of Juan Bautista Alberdi and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. It was in this process that the liberal credo, the development of political parties and the European immigration were promoted. In more than one way *Tales of the pampas* reissues Sarmiento's antithesis proclaimed in *Civilización y Barbarie* (1845): Barbarism (represented by the countryside) vs. Civilization (city), Natives vs. Europeans.

In this singular collection of short stories related to the Irish-Argentine people working in the Buenos Aires "campaña", country or "camp"[6] Bulfin reproduces Irish-Porteños' way of speaking, which results a mix of Irish-English, Spanish and certain Gaelic voices. *His stories show that the Irish were doing with language what they had already done with their lives, namely they were trying to adapt it to their new situation.* The aim of what comes next is to show in what way this happens and what social and cultural implications are revealed by the linguistic phenomenon conveyed by Bulfin.

"The Course of True Love", the last (and best) story of the collection, opens with a series of considerations on the Irish settlers; let us focus on the ones related to language:

> [...] Exile has, of course, modified some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others. The wilderness has taught them some of its mysteries, has sharpened some of their senses and faculties that would in other conditions of life have remained comparatively dull; has, to some extent, increased their natural sensitiveness and deprived them of some of their spirituality, as well as taken the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism. Spanish phrases and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use; but the brogue of Leinster and Munster has remained intact. Spanish and Creole customs have, in a greater or less degree, insensibly woven themselves into their life; but they are unwilling to admit this, and their struggle to preserve the traditions of the motherland is constant and earnest [...].[7]

The writer affirms that exile modified "some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others." Although he does not give further information on this, and since "idiosyncrasy" means a particular way of thinking and behaving, it is understandable that the moving to a different culture must have modified certain ideas on human relations and behavior. A gregarious attitude seems to have been the easy and regular attitude of those migrants: this is what we guess reading Bulfin's stories and what can be found in chronicles; it is ratified when the author assures that the Irish settlers were surpassed by the strong influence of the native "idiosyncrasy", a violent force able to deprive them "of some of their spirituality, as well as taken the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism". And because the writer believes that language and identity are linked, he points out that the process admits a linguistic correlation: "Spanish phrases and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use; but the brogue of Leinster and Munster has remained intact." As Susan Wilkinson writes:

> Bulfin delighted in the midlands brogue of his fellow countrymen's speech, and he strove to reproduce it by his pen as it fell upon his ears. "Wan" means "one", "wance" is "once", "tay" is "tea", "yez" means "you" (plural) "sez" is common for "says". The "t" in the middle of a word is frequently thickened as in "sthraight" for "straight", etc. while "d" at the end of a word is often pronounced as a "t",

such as “beyant” for “beyond”. “When”, “men”, “them”, etc. are written as they were pronounced (“whin”, “min”, “thim”). Some of his phrases are old English and are no longer or rarely used, such as “for the nonce”, meaning “at the moment”, “for the particular purpose” and “without”, meaning “outside”.[8]

In spite of the fact that Bulfin does not refer to the Irish language, the whole book is invaded by solitary Irish words threading through the English speech. It is curious that the Irish tried to preserve their identity by protecting themselves with the language which was actually not their own.

Let us see a few examples:

“*Musha* the dickens a doubt, Misther Tim Shannahan, yerself and your frog!”. (p. 41).

“What the dickens are you lookin’ at, you snakin’ undherhad *bocaugh?*”. (p. 43).

“I’m going over to Joe Hagan’s to give him a hand to coort that *garrahalya* he’s afther, and I won’t be back until late”. (p. 137).

“Don’t be goin’ gabblin’ an’ makin’ an *oncha* of yourself whin we go over to Dooley’s,” [...]. (p. 138).

“It’s Julia that will have somethin’ to say to it wan way or t’hother. Eh, Julia, *alannah,* what would you say to gettin’ an offer of a fine presintable rock of a husband?”. (p. 146).

Very few words of Irish (gaelic) origin can be found in the book. Not many compared to the Spanish ones that regulary sprinkle the stories. This is symptomatic of a deeper experience: that of the speakers who in a slow, but inevitable process, were possessed by the language of the new land; it also explains the weakening of the Gaelic, finally dropped.

Mainly referred to *camp* activities, gauchos, their sayings and habits, a range of about forty Spanish words (sometimes misspelled) contribute to enrich the linguistic melting pot:

“The dirty blackguard! to go away like that, and *quien sabe* (sic) if he hasn’t taken some of my things with him.” (p. 22)

“Francisco was behind the counter when I went into the *pulperia* (sic), and to see the grin on that crooked ould Gallego’s face when he bid me good morning, would make you sick.” (p. 23)

“You consider it strange, eh? Ah! but my *companero* (sic), (companion), “did I not say that the horse was an animal the most intelligent? And, all the same, this Tavalonghi’s *bayo* had never demonstrated any surpassing cleverness.” (p. 76).

“*Entre bueyes no hay cornadas,*” he corrected with a smile, quoting the time-honoured pampa *refran* (sic). (p. 81).

> Beardless boys in *alpargatas*, whose riding gear would not sell for a dollar, called "pago" (translated as done) for fifty cents; and they called each other "señor," and "compañero," and "amigo" with as much style and swagger as their elders showed in arranging for bets of $ 50 or more. (p. 84).

"Alpargatas" went through two processes: a) Originally a trade mark, it became a synonym of a local slipper; b) Bulfin incorporates the word to his Irish-English text.

Note in the two following lines the tipycal rhetoric Spanish questions stuck into the English sentence:

> That's it, *compañero;* but do it softly, *eh?* and do it soon. (p. 85).
> What an early start the old *bayo* wanted to make, *no?* (p. 93).

The speech is gradually invaded by the Spanish language:

> *Està bien, señores,* then! (p. 95).

Including the famous porteño vocative:

> Who was he, *che?* (p. 115).
> *La gran siete!* Don Tomás, what intelligence! (p. 124).

I wonder did Bulfin know the meaning of this last porteño expression; he probably didn't since it has a clear sexual connotation the conservative Irish community he was addressing would not take. (By the way, he drops the initial exclamation point).

These samples show what the whole book reveals: the slow but inevitable process of linguistic incorporation on behalf of the Irish settlers, an operation that implied a social and cultural interaction.

Due to conscious and unconscious reasons it will be a very slow course, and for years it was the English in its Westmeath version which prevailed. Bulfin himself explains this and his writing successfully shows its different inflections, accents and intonations:

> What's that? In the name of goodness can't you spake in plain language and thry to make it easy for yourself to get out what you want to say and make it easy for them that's listenin' to you to understand what you mean? (p. 21).
> "'Good mornin', gintlemin," sez he in Spanish, 'how goes it, Miguel? sez he to me.
> "Purty well," sez I. 'Have you any news? 'sez I.
> "No," sez he, "nothin" sthrange, Miguel, sez he. I asked him to have a tot, and while the Gallego was fillin' it out for him, what do you think he doesn't up and ask if the sailor was around the place. (p. 23).

None of them knew that he was stoppin' at my house, or that the pot was mine, and I kept my tooth on it, for I didn't see any use in cryin' over spilt milk and makin' a laughin' stock of myself. (p. 28).

"Give the dogs plenty of grub, Delaney, and lots of wather three times a day. This red pup's name is Blunderbuss, and that brindled fellah there is Watch. Th' other fellah's name is Sodger."

"All rigth! Never fear. I'll stuff them. Lave 'em to me wud all confidence, Tim'".

"Well, you'll be seein' a frog, too, hoppin' about the flure. Don't molest him. Lave him to himself. He's an owld friend. If you intherfare wud him or inconvanience him in any way, I'll shake the livers out of you whin I come back – d'ye hear?'." (p. 38).

[...] don't go about the house like a gandher afther a sick goslin' makin' up to the girl. Be as indepindent as if you were doin' thim a favour, an' carry on just the same as if you didn't care the bark of a dog whether they gave you the *garrahalya* or not [...] are you listenin' to me, Joe?". (p. 139).

"Yis, it's thrue. Tom and me came to ax yez for Julia. I have the house ready beyant, and I can go and see the priest any day – tomorrow mornin' if it comes to that. I'm ready to marry this minit, so I am, and I'll take the girl if she comes. If yez give her to me, well and good; ef not, thez as good fish in say as ever was – I mane – no, I don't mane that – I mane that I want the girl – as I was tellin' Tom – and as he sez to me – about it – 'If it comes to that,' sez he, and I say the same – I don't care the bark of a dog whether I get the girl or not!". (p. 146).

"Let me out, Joe – me mother'll kill me. Well then – I'll say yis, but don't tell nobody – oh! stop, will you; put me up and let me go home". (p. 156).

Even nowadays Irish visitors are surprised at the Irish-porteño's brogue, their strong accent and outdated locutions. The Irish community in this country became, then, a kind of a linguistic Noah's ark.

Words in *Tales of the Pampas* also show how the Irish migrants organized themselves and how they managed to survive in a far off country, within a remote culture, interacting with people who spoke a different language. It was not easy. They preserved their identity by preserving their Irish-English language. As I explained, sporadic linguistic fissures gradually set up Spanish voices in what constituted an analogy with what was going on in real life, namely the social integration with Argentine people.

The opposition between Barbarism and Civilization – perhaps the main or basic question in Argentine literature – is clearly disclosed in *Tales of the Pampas,* inhabited by the people who created the South American Melting Pot, natives and gauchos included. "Fatalist", "Scamp", "Barbarian", "Bucktoe" and other words of negative connotation are regularly endorsed to the gauchos. The confrontation between formal education and intuition is one more relevant component that defines migrants and natives' behaviors.

It is at the end of "Campeando" where one of the Irish characters goes to the medullar question and attitude towards the natives:

> You're gettin' too much of the country into you, me boy – racin', and bettin', and helpin' the natives to cut each other to pieces, and galavantin' round the seven parishes suckin' *mate* an' colloguerin' with the gauchos– that's all right while it lasts. But you'll get a bad name for yourself, take my words for it. [...]
> "That's all collywest. Of course they sent you. If you're always stuck with the natives behind the *galpon* (sic) instead of attendin" to your good name, you'll be sent with them, and you'll get into their ways, and the day'll come when the dickens a decent man in the country will have anything to say or do with you. (p. 110).

Notes of discord also crept into the Europeans relationship.

> This Tavalonghi he was an Italian hide-buyer in Lujan (sic) ten years ago and he made a fortune out of your countrymen, the sheep-farmers, buying their produce at half nothing and selling it in Buenos Aires at high prices. He was a man of ambition, and when he found himself wealthy he took the notion of going home to his country to be a personage, no? They say when Italians go home rich they become notabilities – counts and princes and folks of that style. I do not know if they become kins; but I have always heard it said that they buy pieces of parchment which make them noble. (p. 74).

In "The Defeat of Barragan", a story in which money and power are the main subjects, we read:

> Horsemen arrived at every momento from every direction – horsemen in picturesque finery, horsemen in picturesque raggedness – whitebeards and youngsters, stock-masters and workmen, Irish landowners and shepherds, criollo rough-riders – all assembled to have some sport, to kill time, and, if possible, to win one another's money to the last quarter of a cent. (p. 82).

Even the Irish and British antagonism is been transferred to the Pampa:

> What are you talkin' about, you H-H-Hirish hass? sez the sailor. (p. 32).

By reading Bulfin's stories we learn that ethical misbehavior mainly on politics and justice is a long story in this country.

> To him (to Castro, the gaucho) no more than to his fellows did a wire fence convey any idea of the right of property: it merely constituted an impediment. (p. 70).
> Why not? Does not all the world know that Don Barragan is the best man to ask for information about missing stock – being an alcalde?. (p. 88).

> This fellow sent my father to prison three years ago on false charge. (p. 97).
> It was not law. It was not morality. Psychologically it was the attitude of people who had never seen justice come but from themselves. (p. 98).

In this context where "ages of twisted theology and warped religious tradition" mislead people, to the Irish settlers the Catholic church appears to be the only true authority.

Tales of the Pampas, by William Bulfin should be considered an important literary document mainly because of its social and cultural implications. His rendition of the Irish in the Argentina countryside and their attitude towards society and reality through a linguistic point of view becomes an original contribution to the understanding of bilingualism. Presumably without knowing it, through his stories Bulfin was able to give an eloquent account of the Irish in Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century, a slow process in which bilingualism preceded biculturalism.

Notes

1 Maureen Murphy: "The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin" in *John Quinn. Selected Irish Writers from his Library.* Edited by Janis and Richard Londraville. West Cornwall, CT, Locust Hill Press, p. 47.
2 Op. Cit., p. 50.
3 A kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity. *(The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, 1991).*
4 Susan Wilkinson: "Introduction" to *Tales of the Pampas,* Buenos Aires, LOLA, 1997, (not paginated).
5 Cfr. "Buenos Aires Herald", December 3, 1997, p. 13.
6 In 1910 Alberto Gerchunoff, a Jewish immigrant from Oriental Europe, published *Los gauchos judíos,* an account of the Jewish Immigrants in Argentina. In conception and intention, both works are alike.
7 William Bulfin: *Tales of the Pampas/Cuentos de la Pampa.* Bilingual edition. Buenos Aires, LOLA, 1997, p. 136. All the quotations in this work are referred to this edition.
8 Cfr.: Susan Wilkinson op. cit., (Introduction, not paginated).

GLOSSARY
(Irish words)

Musha: interj. means ÒindeedÓ or ÒwellÓ. It can be used positively or negatively depending on the context.
Bocaugh: beggar.
Garrahalya: girl.

Oncha: fool.
Alannah: from leanbh: child; and expression of affection.

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How the Irish became "Gauchos Ingleses": Diasporic Models in Irish-Argentine Literature

Edmundo Murray[1]

Abstract: *Declan Kiberd argues that "postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws: rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance." Paradoxically, the Irish who emigrated to Argentina, a former Spanish colony, may be regarded (as they may have regarded themselves) as colonised in the country they left, and as colonisers of their new home. Their case is one of the better counterexamples to the typical pattern of identities in most of the English-speaking destinations of the Irish Diaspora. Using William Bulfin's Tales of the Pampas as primary document, in this article I search the identities represented in his characters. In Tales of the Pampas, Bulfin amalgamates the ambiguous acculturation of the Irish settlers with that of the "gaucho" (those cowboys of the South American pampas who almost literally lived in the saddle), as well as with the symbols of Gauchesca narrative. Evolving from colonised to colonisers during their initial settlement, the Irish in Argentina swiftly became ingleses. In the following decades, in order to join the local bourgeoisie they were required to be gauchos, and to show signs of their effective integration to the native culture, as seen by the Argentine elites. This explains why most of the successful Irish settlers gradually separated from the Anglo-Argentine mainstream culture and shaped their own community. A negotiation of identities among Irishness, Britishness, and Argentineness was always in place. I argue that these identities are not only unmoored in the emigrants' minds but also manoeuvred by community leaders, politicians and priests. After reviewing the major milestones of the nineteenth-century Irish emigration to Argentina, the article analyses selected passages from the text, offers a version of how the settlers became Irish-Argentines, and elucidates some of the processes which created the new Irish-Argentine hybrid.*

During the nineteenth century, 40-45,000 Irish-born persons emigrated to Argentina and Uruguay. Most of them settled in the lush and boundless land between

the City of Buenos Aires and Southern Santa Fe, and they worked primarily as shepherds and sheep-farmers. They were members of medium tenant families from the Irish midlands and Co. Wexford, though Dublin, Cork, and Clare were also well represented. They travelled from their homelands to Liverpool and from there to the River Plate as passengers on sailing ships up to the mid-nineteenth century, and on steamers thereafter. They were young and willing to work hard.

Once established, and for about a century, the Irish Argentines shaped a highly endogenous community, which on rare occasions encouraged its members to mix with the *natives* (though the English and affluent Argentines were fairly accepted). Led by the Irish Catholic priests and financed by the Anglo-Irish merchants in the City of Buenos Aires, it was a socially clustered and an economically self-sufficient community. Nearly one out of two Irish emigrants settled on a permanent basis in Argentina and Uruguay. Some of them managed to own their means of production, i.e., land and sheep, and they founded families which for three or even four generations kept the language, religious habits, and traditions brought from Ireland by their ancestors.

We know all this, and much more, about the Irish in Argentina. However, very little is known about the culture of these *gauchos ingleses*, the ideas that influenced their actions, and the principles they followed in their every day activities. What were their values? What models did they use to judge their own and others' behaviour? What ideology or ideologies appealed to them? What was their choice regarding certain identity oppositions like: Irish-English, Irish-Argentine, Catholic-Protestant, poor-wealthy, landowner-tenant, work-leisure, city-countryside, feminine-masculine? Besides their economic interests, how did they justify their participation (or the lack of it) in municipal, provincial, or national public life of their new country and in Ireland's political movements? In what form did their values evolve during the acculturation process in the larger society that received and accepted them? What *guiding fictions* (Shumway 1991) and *Oedipal paradigms* (Kiberd 1996) were conceived by the Irish in Argentina as the metaphoric symbols of their identity in a postcolonial topography?

According to Eric Wolf, "the world of human kind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like "nation," "society," and "culture" name bits and threaten to turn names into things." The objective of this paper is to analyse Irish-Argentine literature in order to identify the leading cultural models developed by the Irish in Argentina, and to relate them to other Irish, British, and Argentine literatures, within the *totality of interconnected processes* which linked the emigrants to other communities in the global geography of the Irish Diaspora. On his turn, Declan Kiberd argues that "postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws: rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance". Paradoxically, the Irish who emigrated to Argentina, a former Spanish colony, may be regarded (as they have been generally regarded themselves) as colonised in the country they left, and as colonisers of their

new home. *Colonised* and *coloniser* change over time through the contacts with other cultures and through social mutation. Hence, there are conflicting values in Irish-Argentine literature, which make it complex to apply traditional critical models and require the development of a *diasporic* pattern of oppression, compensation, and contribution discourses, like the one proposed by Patrick O'Sullivan in his introduction to the *Irish World Wide* series (1992).

Irish-Argentine Literature

Irish-Argentine literature may be placed in a web of bordering cultures. It has remote (albeit negative) links with the 1840s Young Ireland literary movement, as well as with the 1890s Irish Renaissance. Additionally, when considered within the *Southamericana* (or Anglo-South American literature), Irish-Argentine literature can be also regarded as a Minority Literature – or better, an (Irish) minority literature within another (British) minority culture. Is this minority literature representative of the typical Irish experience in Argentina? The answer could be in the affirmative, if Irish-Argentine literature is considered within this complex network of bordering cultures.

Irish-Argentine literature is the bilingual expression of a unique array of cultural values, including among others those related to gender, religion, land, home, and ethnicity. In order to establish their relative weight and their importance for the community, some of these values will be analysed in this article.

We wish to identify the new types of emigrant values created as a result of the Irish settlement in Argentina. These new values generate *new* human beings, not because of their physical, ethnic or psychological characteristics, but for the changing cultural models they formulate and follow. Taking disparate elements from their Irish heritage, and joining them with the Argentine post-colonial culture, immigrants and their families developed a unique set of shared values, which they would represent in Irish-Argentine literature.

But does such a literature exist? Certainly, as the editor of *The Buenos Aires Herald* notes, there is

> an Anglo-Argentine literature. Not very strong, not very well known (and in some cases does not deserve to be), but there are some individuals who fit the classification of "British-Argentine" or, better still "Southamericana", who are excellent and who have made their mark on the literature of a continent (Graham-Yooll, 1999, p. 205).

The same author maintains that "in Argentina, a country of immigrants, there is a sense of place, but millions of identities that lack definition" (Graham-Yooll, 1999, p. 205). This openness of definitions is what, on the one hand, calls for a more rigorous classification of diverse literary movements and authors, and on the other, allows a

constant change of motivations and aesthetics. From a cultural historical perspective (we have already mentioned the importance of Britishness among Irish settlers), it would not be inappropriate to classify Irish-Argentine literature within *Southamericana*. Additionally, since Irish-Argentine literature is not written only in the English language, we should be inclined to include bilingual works and others written in Spanish. Therefore, I would extend the concept of *Southamericana* to Spanish and Portuguese-written texts of authors from the British (English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh) isles.

There are two major cultural environments in which Irish-Argentine literature was born: the tumultuous history of the first half of the nineteenth century in Ireland, and the Argentine turmoil which led to the formation of stable republican institutions in the period 1820-1880. The political, social, and economic events in nineteenth-century Ireland, included among others the 1798 rebellion, a bloody uprising supported by radical Presbyterians, disgruntled Catholics and secular republicans, all of them inspired by recent developments in France" (Kiberd 1996, p. 20), the resultant Act of Union in 1800, Robert Emmet's uprising in 1803, Daniel O'Connell monster meetings in the early 1840s and his Union Repeal movement, the desperation in the years of famine, the Fenian movement, and finally the Irish Renaissance, which evolved in the "revolution of poets" and ultimately in the independence from England in the 1920s.

The involvement of the Irish-Argentines in these events in Ireland varied from high interest to complete indifference. In general, there is primary evidence that the attitude was conservative and traditionalist, with the goal to safeguard the social institutions in place. Among the Irish movements, in 1842 the Protestant leader of "The Young Ireland", Thomas Davis, founded *The Nation* newspaper with the help of Catholic friends, and gave the Irish people an idealist prospect of fighting for freedom "until Ireland is free, from the centre to the sea" (Kiberd 1996, p. 22). However in Argentina it is probable that at least a segment of the traditionalist Irish farmers who settled there did not share the vision of the Young Irelanders. For instance, Edward Robbins, from Clara, Co. Offaly (then King's County), included in his memoirs that in 1848 "the young Irelanders attempted a revolution. I do not understand them, not did I then; they were mad, or traitors to their Country. I believed them then, and now, mad" (Robbins 1860, p. 10).

Nevertheless, later in the 1880s, the Land League movement in Ireland was generally approved in Argentina. "The great issue of the decade was land, a debate initiated ten years earlier by Gladstone's first Land Act of 1870' (Kiberd 1996, p. 23). The Land League had a positive impression in Buenos Aires probably because the sheep-farmers were more sensitive to the landownership debate, than to the more ambitious (and dangerous for a bourgeoisie) subject of total independence from England.[2]

Late nineteenth-century political progress in Ireland, like the Gaelic Athletic Association and its counterpart in Argentina, prepared the way for a Catholic Nationalistic discourse. In 1875, *The Southern Cross* was founded as a split of the Irish in Argentina against the *shoneen*, supposedly pro-British segments of the *Standard Group*. Later at the close of the century, authors like Michael Dineen, William Bulfin and Thomas Murray

aroused the nationalistic feelings of the community with their newspaper articles and historiography. Both in Ireland and in Argentina, the way was open for "a literary movement to fill the political vacuum" (Kiberd 1996, p. 25).

Short Stories with a Political Agenda

William Bulfin (1863-1910) was born in Co. Offaly (at that time, King's County). He was educated at Cloghan, at the Royal Charter School in Banagher, and at Queen's College in Galway. In 1882, at nineteen, he emigrated with his elder brother Peter to Argentina. They worked in Irish-owned *estancias*, like John Dowling's holding in San Antonio de Areco. In his spare time Bulfin began writing articles for a small Irish-owned newspaper, *The Irish-Argentine*, published in Azcuénaga, San Andrés de Giles, an area with a high density of Irish sheep-farmers.

In 1889, Bulfin moved to the city of Buenos Aires with his young wife, Anne O'Rourke, "who had been employed as a governess at the Dowling estancia"[3]. He then worked with furniture importer H. C. Thompson, taught English, and at the same time contributed articles to the Irish weekly newspaper *The Southern Cross*, then owned by Michael Dineen from Cork. "He signed his first article "*Cui bono?*", meaning "To whose benefit?" The typesetter, for whatever reason, changed the name to "Che Buono". The name, with the distinctly Argentine prefix of *che*, denoting affection and comradeship with the person so addressed and the Italian buono, meaning "able", "fit", "good", delighted him and he used it all his life, always referring to himself as "Che Buono", rarely as "William Bulfin" (Wilkinson 1997).

By 1892 he was employed full-time by *The Southern Cross*, and six years later he was its editor and owner. By this time, he was also contributing articles and stories to other newspapers, especially in the United States, such as the New York *Daily News*. In 1900, Fisher & Unwin in London published a collection of his Argentine stories, *Tales of the Pampas*. In 1902, he made one of his visits to Ireland, during which he toured the country on a seven months bicycle ride. Sketches of his travels appeared in *The Southern Cross* and in the *Daily News*, and were eventually published in book form as *Rambles in Eirinn*. Rarely out of print, *Rambles in Eirinn* "has its place among the most renowned travel books ever written about Ireland" (Wilkinson 1997).

He was passionately Nationalistic, and was considered "a vigorous defender of the rights of Irish Catholic immigrants and a proponent of the Irish language movement in Ireland. In 1906, four years before his death, he was made a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Pius X for his work among the Irish community in Argentina" (Wilkinson 1997). He died in Co. Offaly in 1910, at forty-seven years old.

Tales of the Pampas is a collection of eight short stories about the Irish sheep farmers, mostly single, "living in isolation in the pampas, of ne'er-do-wells a little too addicted to drink and not enough to work, of matrimonial "matches" going hopelessly awry, of horseraces, gambling and near-fatal stabbings, of tragedy and death. Here too

were stories of gauchos and descriptions of the pampas written with an insight and a sensitivity that few *gringos* have equalled" (Wilkinson 1997).

Wilkinson suggests that Bulfin intended these stories to be read "not only by scholars, but by anyone and everyone who enjoys a good yarn." However, we will see later that Bulfin was thinking of *anyone and everyone*, provided that his audience was primarily Irish, Catholic-Nationalistic, with strong attitudes against the English and looking down at what he considered inferior races. In addition to this, Wilkinson argues that "the Irish men and women in Bulfin's tales of the pampas are between two cultures, having left one while not yet accepting – even resisting – the other." The Irish-Argentine characters in these stories have not yet given their Irish culture away. Even if the narrator makes them work more sympathetically with Argentine natives, the characters feel uniquely different, and somewhat superior to *criollos*.

Tales of the Pampas is a good expression of the linguistic evolution of both English and Spanish amongst the Irish-Argentines. As Wilkinson remarks, phonetic marks were typographically represented by Bulfin ("wan" for "one", "wance" for "once", "tay" for "tea", "yez" for plural "you", "sez" for "says". Wilkinson also observes that the "t" in the middle of a word is frequently thickened as in "sthraight" for "straight", etc. while "d" at the end of a word is often pronounced as a "t", such as "beyant" for "beyond". "When", "men", "them", etc. are written as they were pronounced ("whin", "min", "thim"). Some of the phrases are antiquated today, such as "for the nonce", meaning "for the moment", or "without", meaning "outside". In addition to the effect of Spanish phonetics on the original language spoken by the Irish settlers in Argentina, Wilkinson observes that "Bulfin delighted in the midlands brogue of his fellow countrymen's speech, and he strove to reproduce it by his pen as it fell upon his ears" (Wilkinson 1997).

Wilkinson does not mention (yet there is a glossary with "Words of Irish origin" at the end of the English version), that there is an hyperbolic use of Irish (Gaelic) terms artificially mixed with the language of Bulfin's characters: *begor(ra)*, *avick*, *bocaugh*, *oncha*, *pisherogue*, *sarra*, *arrah*, *garrahalya*, *bullabawns*, *thranee*, *smithereen*, and *alannah* are just a few examples of the supposed Gaelic language spoken by Irish settlers before arriving in Argentina. However, according to genealogist Eduardo Coghlan, except for some emigrants from Co. Clare, there were very few cases of his 4,348 emigrants from the Midlands and Co. Wexford who spoke Gaelic. Adding Gaelic to the English and Spanish linguistic mix depicted in *Tales of the Pampas*, was intentionally arranged by Bulfin to give the impression that the emigrants were genuine Celtic-Irish, not English.

Compared to Wilkinson's somewhat naive view of Bulfin's intentions, Laura Izarra argues that "Bulfin is more an observer than an agent in the process of "becoming" a "foreign native": he is a foreigner completely adapted to the indigenous culture yet still in some respects feeling like a foreigner. Instead of creating diasporic cultural forms with a "new nationalist" concern towards the adopted land, his narratives show how encounters of cultures encode practices of accommodation and resistance to host

countries" (Izarra 2002, p. 6). Bulfin's narrative "reaffirm the triumph of the Irish over the indigenous: exiles are 'Irish in thought, in sympathy, and in character' in a different society" (Izarra 2002, p. 6).

There is a double invention in Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*. On the one hand, the Irish are represented themselves as opposite to the English. The diasporic milieu is ideal for this fictional process, since it provides a supposedly neutral atmosphere and elements that help to identify the original *Celtic* (non-Anglo Saxon) values. On the other hand, Ireland is imagined as an ideal homeland. Bulfin "struggles to re-construct the locality of his motherland for the Irish diasporic subject" (Izarra 2002, p. 7).

Izarra also asks "what might be the cultural significance of a world wide dialectic of diasporas?" It is not the intention of this article to answer her question in its broader sense. However, it would be beneficial to remark that the *dialectic* implicit in Bulfin's stories rhetorically manipulates a certain effect in his readers, and that his narrative is connected with a Catholic-Nationalistic discourse in vogue in Ireland.

Bulfin is conscious of his own political mission, but particularly of his Irishness and of his ideological role within Irish Diaspora and at home. He wished to convince the Irish abroad to support the Nationalistic movement, and to raise the awareness of the Irish at home of their own identity.

Bulfin's narrators intelligently disguise themselves under diverse shapes. In *The Fall of Don José*, during the initial camp gathering of gauchos, the third-person narrator describes the landscape of cattle hands after a hard day, their yarn with the cook Domingo, and his preparation of *asado*. The cook proposes a story: "I am sorry for your sake that I cannot give it to you as it fell from him in his graceful Spanish […]. Who can aspire, above all, to catch even a gleam of it in any other language than Argentine Spanish? Let me therefore ask you to be indulgent with me while I try to give you the story of Don José as Domingo told it while we swallowed the roast. Here it is:" (Bulfin 1997, p. 116). The excuse for silencing the narrator is that the original language was not the one of the audience. Then Domingo begins telling his story in the first person (in English), since he is one of the characters of his narrative. At the end of the story, the initial narrator speaks again and comments briefly on Domingo's anecdote. Consequently, in *The Fall of Don José* there are two narrators: the first one, omniscient, unintrusive, and mostly impersonal (only twice does the narrator say *I* just before giving the floor to the second one), and the second, Domingo, who has a restricted point of view of the group of characters. In this case, the use of two narrators suggests the aim of the author to assign greater omniscience to the Irish one. He is a foreign person, well educated, who appreciates the customs of the gauchos but who does not belong to their class.

A similar structure is used in *A Bad Character*, in which the leading narrator depicts the place, the characters Sailor John and Mike Horan, and their dialogues. Afterwards there is a transition: "and as to the rest of the story, let it be told by Mike's words as we had it from his lips one day when a few of us were helping him to cure scab in his flock" (Bulfin 1997, p. 23). The omniscient third-person narrator appears only

once as the first person (*we*), with the purpose of giving the floor to the second narrator. Mike Horan is a naïve first-person narrator, with a restricted point of view of his story. In this case, the initial narrator does not interrupt at the end.

With these two exceptions, all of the other six stories in *Tales of the Pampas* are narrated in the first person, by an omniscient and intrusive character who has a precise, albeit not central, role in the plot. Further, at the end of *El High-Life* the narrator calls himself "the narrator" to emphasise his different status, certainly better educated than the other characters (Bulfin 1997, p. 66). Likewise, in *The Enchanted Toad* the narrator parodies the journalistic style in a way that makes the reader think that he is well acquainted with newspapers and the press (Bulfin 1997, p. 44).

Throughout the stories, characters are a collection of diverse cultural backgrounds and origins, with disparate educational levels and professions. Among them we may find Irish rogues, Spanish noblemen, Scottish book-keepers, Galician shop-keepers, estancia hands of gaucho origins, and of course, Irish sheep-farmers. The narrator presents *bad* and *good* characters (according to his perspective), and in this appreciation there is no distinction of nationality or culture, except for the Irish.

In fact, all Irish characters are *good*, and even if they are *bad*, they are likeable folks. They can be "very unpopular" "dishonest," or even a "liar" like Sailor John in *A Bad Character* (after whom the story is titled). The Sailor is "the biggest rogue in South America. He'd steal the milk out of St. Patrick's tay if he got the chance" (Bulfin 1997, p. 33). Still, he is comic, he makes us laugh, and in dealing with him the narrator never switches from irony to sarcasm or objective criticism.

Another Irish character, Paddy Delaney, who is named by the narrator the *hero* of *The Enchanted Toad* is "not on very good terms with anybody," a "lazy pig," a "polecat," "a pugnacious, reckless free lance, who had a born gift for getting into trouble and for getting other people to dislike him" (Bulfin 1997, p. 38). However serious are the sins committed by Sailor John and Paddy Delaney, for instance, malicious behaviour, deception, pillage, robbery, vagrancy, laziness, waste, and intemperance, both characters are freed at the end of the respective stories, and the only sentence they get is social isolation (a status to which they actually look forward).

In fact, characters portrayed as *bad* by the narrators never have Irish names, and they are treated in a completely different way from the Irish. For instance Barragan, a character in *The Defeat of Barragan*, is the typical *gaucho malo*, with whom the narrator cannot be sympathetic. Castro tells the narrator that Barragan, a corrupted town major in the countryside, has abused of his authority to send "my father in prison three years ago on a false charge. He struck a brother of mine last year. He insulted my *comadre's* daughter at the shearing. He stole my best horse, or had it stolen, and counter marked it – my lovely *tordillo* negro!" (Bulfin 1997, p. 97). There is a fight and Barragan "never got well enough to ride a [horse] race or draw a knife again" (Bulfin 1997, p. 99).

There is moral discrimination by place of origin. According to Benedict Kiely, Bulfin's construction of the pampas "was a curious world of foundations laid by imperial

Spain, and Ireland, and England, and everywhere, and meeting with the descendants of men who had roamed those plains before Cortez. Out on the pampas his preference was for the company of either the gauchos or the Irish, […] both his own fellow-countrymen and the hard-riding Spanish-Indian cowboys" (Kiely 1948).

Discrimination is extended to certain people from Spain. Francisco, the shop-keeper in *A Bad Character*, is a "crooked ould Gallego."[4] His hypocritical attitude is symbolised in his grinning to everybody, regardless of what he thinks about his clients. And at the end, it is the *Gallego* who frees the Sailor: "I suppose the Gallego let him [the Sailor] go" (Bulfin 1997, p. 33).

However, there is another Spanish character who is *good*, a young nobleman who escaped from scandal in his motherland and was sent to the pampas to change his life. In *El High-Life* there are positive attributes reserved for "the hero of this tale […], Arturo" (Bulfin 1997, p. 52), who according to Benedict Kiely would have been a representation of Bulfin's elder brother. El High "was so fond of running contrary to public opinion, so fully possessed by the spirit of contradiction, that he was always looking for points upon which to differ from you" (Bulfin 1997, p. 53). However, the narrator has a positive and sympathetic view of El High perhaps because of his noble origins. Nevertheless, he dies in a storm. *El High-Life* is the only tragic story on this book, and its resolution depicts the only loser, who is from Spain.

The other anti-hero is Don Jose, the cook in *The Fall of Don Jose*. He is not associated with a specific country of origin, but he is "a sweet villain, a very distinguished hypocrite" (Bulfin 1997, p. 120). In this case, there is a clear opposition between city and country, and the cook is from the city, from an urban culture. He "shrugged his shoulders in disdain if you spoke to him about a horse. He took no interest whatever in camp work. The Spanish he spoke was not camp Spanish; it had the twang of the town. He could neither ride like a Christian nor skin a sheep. All he was good for was cooking, when he felt in the humour, and dressing himself in clean socks and things regardless of expense" (Bulfin 1997, p. 117).

Don Jose is not respected because of his urban manners, as when he looks down upon the gauchos. Kiely quotes a 1902 passage, in which Bulfin reports that he "went to a certain railway station one afternoon to send a telegram to Buenos Aires, and while I was there the train came in. I do not know whether it was the engine, or a look at the passengers, or the roar and rattle of the wheels, or all of these things together, that set the wheels of memory revolving. The city life of student days came back, the city began to call. As I galloped home it struck me that the camp was not meant for me, after all" (Kiely 1948). However affectionate his regard for the camp, Bulfin's views of the pampas and their inhabitants are those of an outsider, i.e., someone with an urban look who respects the countryside and its wilderness, but who recognises that he belongs to the city. This attitude may be connected with Argentine guiding fictions of the time among the landed bourgeoisie, in particular those which viewed local reality from an urban perspective.[5]

The personalities of characters and their relations in the *Tales of the Pampas* may be schematised by grouping the stories in the following way: a) a pair of Irishmen, with contrasting moral marks (*A Bad Character*, *The Enchanted Toad*, and *The Course of True Love*); b) Irish and Gaucho working together with equivalent status (*Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse*, *The Defeat of Barragan*, and *Campeando*); c) everybody against the (*good* or *bad*) hero (*El High-Life* and *The Fall of Don Jose*).

As contextual information, we should complete this analysis of the characters by adding that there might be a connection between the *bad* characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* with certain people encountered by Bulfin in his *Rambles in Eirinn*. These people are bizarre, immoral, and cruel. He meets with them in Abbeyshrule, along the Inny's banks. They are tinkers, "puzzling people, […] nomads, vagabonds, heirs of generations of wandering and disrepute." And he asks himself: "are they some remnant of the Firbolgs or degenerated Tuatha de Danann?" (Bulfin 1907, pp. 294, 299). And then there is the Jewish pedlar of Murtagh's Ruins, who "smiled an oily, cross-eyed, subtle smile of self-apology," and "with the abject vileness of the renegade who is false to his blood, he tried to heap obloquy upon the Jews and upon the Jewish race, the stamp of which was indelibly set upon his every feature" (Bulfin 1907, p. 307). Tinkers and Jews in *Rambles in Eirinn*, like some of the Spanish and gaucho characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* are invariably evil. Yet, the Irish are never represented in this way.

A long quote included by Thomas Murray in his account of the Irish in Argentina (probably published by *The Southern Cross*), is typical of Bulfin's representations of Ireland as homeland:

> There! your day's work is done. Shake up the hay under your horse's head, give him a drink and go home to your hut; load that pipe of yours, sit down on the doorstep with your shoulder against the wall, and read up your curling wreaths of smoke and incense to the stars. If memory comes back upon you now, may it be pleasant! May it tell you of distant scenes where the cool breezes are whispering to the leaves of mighty elm or ash; where the woodbine peeps through the ivy around the gnarled hawthorn trunks; where the wild rose bedecks the hedges; where the larch spreads out its feathery branches, like a festoon of giant fern across the burnished glory of the sunset[6]; where the moss-grown old abbey ruin looks so solemn in the waning twilight; where the glad voices answer each other as the young folks scamper over the meadows; where the brook murmurs its eternal story to the overhanging willows and hedges, and where the gleam that steals through the hazels on the hillside and blinks at you across the valley comes from the fire, around which are seated those whose loving thoughts are going out to you in your exile.
>
> Baa! It is only the bleat of the hungriest sheep in the corral, but it brings you back to your surroundings. […] Heigho! It is terrible. But go to bed you sun-tanned exile; go to bed you unfortunate shepherd! (Murray 1919, p. 194).

For Bulfin, the notion of *home* is ideologically related to exile rather than to emigration. Irish settlers in Argentina are represented as those who were forced by English rule to leave their homeland, instead of people in search of better economic and social positions abroad. Yet, it is obvious that this manipulated view of emigration has problems. Many of the readers of Bulfin stories at the time, when they were published in *The Irish-Argentine* and *The Southern Cross*, would have reacted negatively to their own image as exiles, so the final reading would be ambiguous.

We should spell out two different types of emigration. In exile (*hegiran* model), the emigrant will consider the new country only as a temporary space and will make every effort to return home. In emigration (*diasporic* model), the emigrant will be open to adapting to the new country as his or her new home. In each case, memories of home will be construed in a different way. Of course this is not a bipolar scheme, but it helps to understand different migration models regarding the psychological relationship of the migrant with his or her homeland. This tension between the exile and his homeland is represented in the dialogue between Castro and the narrator of *Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse*, when they wander from place to place looking for fifty-five cows that are missing:

> Because of the *querencia*, my friend. You know what it is? The *querencia* is home – the home of the horse and the cow – just as one's native land is home – just the same. I think our cows have gone towards home. They were reared on the San Lorenzo and, very likely, they grew homesick here. You do not believe it? Well, you will know the country better one day, and then you will see how soft-hearted cattle and horses are about home – how the querencia attracts them. It is a thing most strange, no doubt, but you will have observed that this camp life of ours is full of strange things, eh?" (Bulfin 1997, p. 72).

The implicit message is that a homesick feeling is not enough for the narrator's ethos. Like the animals of the pampas, in addition to the feeling it is necessary to go back physically to the *querencia*, home. In the narrator's view of the world, this is the natural way of things. Instead of lamenting the loss of our origins (*diaspora*), Bulfin prompts us to think of returning. Exile (*hegira*) is temporal and its aim is to go back home. This discourse perfectly matches the author's ideology regarding the problem of Irish emigration.

The characters of *The Course of True Love* "all are Irish in thought, in sympathy, and in character.

> Exile has, of course, modified some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others. The wilderness [...] has taken the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism. Spanish phrases and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use; but the brogue of Leinster and Munster has remained intact.

> Spanish and Creole customs have, in a greater or less degree, insensibly woven themselves into their life; but they are unwilling to admit this, and their struggle to preserve the traditions of the motherland is constant and earnest. […] Old geniality is there, and […] the inextinguishable humour of their race abides with them undimmed" (Bulfin 1997, p. 136).

Returning home, whether physically or psychologically, is the reason why the Irish characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* make efforts to continue being *all Irish in thought*.

Bulfin uses the gaucho as a symbol of *Argentineness*. For the first time in our series of analysed texts, the gaucho has a positive reading. This is a key innovation regarding other Irish Argentine authors like John Brabazon or Kathleen Nevin, for whom the gaucho is the feared other, a symbol of otherness. Previous descriptions of the native in general and of the gaucho in particular were frequently derogatory, and recorded the feeling of superiority of the Irish immigrants in Argentina during the 1830-1870 period.

The *Gauchesca* literature, initiated by Bartolomé Hidalgo in Uruguay and other poets in both sides of the River Plate, was made widely known by José Hernandez's successful *Martín Fierro*. This text strongly contributed to replacing the wretched image of the gaucho with a symbol of courage, national values, and race (which will be later transferred by the same author to representations of gaucho submission to the landed bourgeoisie).

In Bulfin's logic, both the gauchos and the Irish shared similar circumstances. The spaces colonised by the English and the Spanish belonged to the Irish and the gauchos respectively. Courage was needed to recover those spaces from the colonisers. And it was precisely this courage that Bulfin chose to represent through characters, like the narrator of El High-Life, who says that "when a horse falls, a good rider should, in gaucho parlance, come off standing" (Bulfin 1999, p. 62). The main character of Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse, is described in glowing terms:

> A gaucho from head to heel and in every part of his body. He was still under thirty years of age, but had already made a name for himself in his own way. A good-looking fellow despite his swarthy skin, white toothed, slim, somewhat bow-legged while on the ground, but a living and superb picture when on horseback – such was Castro, the *capataz* or foreman of the cattle herding, my companion and immediate superior. What more about him? A good deal, but let his character grow upon you as it did on me. Mount, if you like, and come with us' (Bulfin 1999, p. 71).

This is indeed a strong contrast with the narrators' viewpoints in other authors, both in reference to natives and to the British. The shift – in accordance with Ireland's nationalistic movements of the turn of the century – is towards admiration of the gauchos

and dislike of the English. However, there are still present ethnic differences, like Castro's *swarthy skin*. Skin colour is still an important marker, as when the narrator in *Campeando* observes that "a man surrounded by dogs and brown-skinned children" is distinctly a gaucho.

Furthermore, Castro describes Tavalonghi as a "hide-buyer in Lujan ten years ago and he made a fortune out of your countrymen, the sheep-farmers" (Bulfin 1999, p. 74). For the narrator, Irish Argentines are not gauchos. They are respected, they are valued, but they are *ingleses*. A possible reason for this is suggested in *The Defeat of Barragan*: gauchos" "attitude belonged to no school of fence but their own. They had no rules to hinder them, no seconds to obey" (Bulfin 1999, p. 99), meanwhile there is a positive regard for British civilisation, even if it means subjection to the English.

Kiberd observes that "like Americans of the same period (1890s), the Irish were not so much born as *made*, gathered around a few simple symbols, a flag, an anthem, a handful of evocative phrases" (Kiberd 1996, p. 101). With the co-operation of the *gauchesca* imagery, the Irishness of the Irish settlers in Argentina is raised by Bulfin to its highest levels.

Irlandeses and gauchos are already able to work together and share basic things in life. In *Campeando*, the Irish/Gaucho pair discovers the whereabouts of stolen cows because "the brotherhood of gauchodom had asserted itself" (Bulfin 1999, p. 109). However, a fellow countryman warns the narrator that

> you're gettin too much of the country into you, me boy – racin', and bettin', and helpin' the natives to cut each other to pieces, and galvantin' round the seven parishes, suckin' mate an' colloguerin' with the gauchos – that's all right while it lasts. But you'll get a bad name for your self, take my words for it (Bulfin 1999, p. 110).

A *good name* is important within the Irish-Argentine community. It is connected with potential improvements in social and economic position. Nevertheless, the narrator is not convinced by the isolationist discourse of his fellow countryman. The story concludes: "he failed to convince me" (Bulfin 1999, p. 110).

This attitude is a challenge to the accepted values of the Irish in Argentina, who considered segregation of their community from the larger society as the best strategy to maintain their customs and traditions. Bulfin accepts and supports the native as his companion in the struggle of the colonised (Irish or Argentines) against the coloniser (British or Spanish).

Becoming Irish Argentine

The identity of the Irish in Argentina, together with their earnest beliefs, changed dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century, when they arrived massively in the River

Plate, to the present times. The negotiation of cultural values, both in Ireland and in Argentina had a strong influence on these changes.

Within the conceptual framework of *Southamericana*, Irish-Argentine literature emerged as a representation of the bilingual culture of the Irish immigrants and their descendants. In this culture, which includes Irish-Argentine journalism, a unique set of cultural values is represented. On the one hand, in most cases religion was not an inner force but an external resource for social networking. Its formal vehicle, the Irish Roman Catholic church, was a powerful institution which provided social coherence and recognition among settlers, as well as connections which helped immigrants to find a job, or even to meet a potential husband or wife. On the other hand, attitudes of ethnic cultural superiority were apparent among Irish Argentines, who by the 1870s were the largest constituent of the "British middle class, comfortable, insular and looked up to by the Criollo population, which Britons looked down on" (Graham-Yool 1999, p. 229).

William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*, one of the best texts of Irish-Argentine literature, is influenced by Irish Nationalism of the turn of the century. Depicting Irish sheep-farmers and labourers in Argentina, as well as native gauchos and other characters, Bulfin achieves his goal of uniting the Irish and the gauchos, both colonised people, against their colonisers. Bulfin uses several narrative strategies, which result in a natural coalition between gauchos and Irish. However, ethnical differences remain and subtle indications of the assumed superiority of the Irish are provided by the author as their "transubstantiation" from colonised to colonisers.

In *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, Patrick O'Sullivan introduces the major discourses of the Irish Diaspora: "some studies of Irish migration are "oppression history" in its purest form." He adds that we should be aware of "the limitations of that way of understanding the past – in particular that it conspires with the oppressor to let the oppressor shape our agenda." "Then O'Sullivan suggests that in "compensation history" the studies focus on the "achievements of the Irish outside and inside Ireland in a glorified past," and that this "provides compensation – or perhaps, I could better say, evidence. Evidence that "failure", lack of achievement, or success, within Ireland, had not to do with some intrinsic inability within the group or the individual – as oppressors assert.' Finally, as a result of a *continuum* by which "an oppressed people produce compensation history as one way of countering oppression […], part of that compensation history will be contribution history," i.e., how the Irish settlers in a territory contributed to the development and interest of that specific place. "That historiographic pattern (oppression, compensation and contribution) is, of course, particularly strong in studies of a migrant people, by a migrant people. They are often faced with prejudice and discrimination in their new communities, and need to prove that they can contribute, and have contributed, to the development of their new lands" (O'Sullivan 1992, p. xix).

Since the only recurrent complaint of the early Irish settlers in Argentina (1830-1860) against their English *oppressors* was the landlords' lack of attention to the demands

of their tenants, the historiography and the literature of the Irish in Argentina lack the fundamental phase of *oppression history*.[7] Consequently, there is no major need for a *compensation history*, and therefore there should not be any *contribution history*. However, as a result of the analysis of Bulfin texts, we could classify his works as compensation discourse, because they frequently have the intention to narrate success stories of the Irish emigrants outside of Ireland. In addition to this, within the context of almost all later Irish-Argentine literature and history, we may conclude that it belongs clearly to the domain of contribution discourse.[8]

In the case of Irish-Argentine cultural values, the *continuum* mentioned by O'Sullivan works the other way around: departing from a strong contribution ideology, authors needed to create success stories and then to invent an oppression history. They would justify in this way their Irish identity as distinct from the native culture. The *invention* of history is a process intimately related with the construction of popular narratives, by which the resulting fictions guide the attitudes of significant portions of the society.

The example of the Irish in Argentina is peculiar. They were colonised at home, and they were colonisers in Argentina. They were Irish at home, and they were English in Argentina. Kiberd distinguishes between Imperialism, "the seizure of land from its owners," and Colonialism, "the planting of settlers in the land thus seized." Britain did not need to seize Argentine land since the Argentine governing elite was vassal to her imperialist rule, and Argentine represented a primary strategic investment for British capital until World War I. Therefore, the *planting* of Irish settlers in Argentina was a natural process, sought by the Argentine bourgeoisie and supported by the British in Ireland.

Amongst the texts written by several Irish Argentines, most make no distinction between the Irish and the English. Furthermore, their view is that all English-speakers are English, and that *we* means English whereas *they* represents the natives of Argentina. When confronted with Argentine gauchos and natives, other narrators adopt a rectilinear English position, and *Irishness* is referred to as a geographic origin only, not a cultural perspective. In these texts, whether Irish or English, the narrator is always coloniser and the Argentines are always colonised. However, there is an apparent change in Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*. Its characters are either Irish or Argentine, but never English, and the narrators speak from a position against the English. The coloniser viewpoint has been displaced to the English, and now both Irish and Argentines share a common ground of colonised against the English and the native bourgeoisie. Complex class issues are interwoven with these changes.

Bulfin reacts against the Anglophile and Anglo-centred discourse that was popular amongst Irish settlers in Argentina and the native governing elites. For instance, in *Rambles of Eirinn*, when visiting the places where poets Oliver Goldsmith and Leo Casey lived in the Irish Midlands, he recalls that he "met several people along the roads who looked upon Goldsmith as a finer type of Irishman than 'Leo'" (Bulfin 1907, p. 314). However, he argues:

> Casey loved Ireland better than Goldsmith did, and wrote about Irish things. That is why I say he is higher, as an Irish poet, that Goldsmith. Of course, he was not a great genius like Goldsmith, but he was an Irish singer, and Goldsmith was not. Goldsmith wrote for the people in England, mostly about English things, and Casey wrote for the people in Ireland, mostly about Irish things. True, Goldsmith's great poem is about an eviction campaign, and it is some of the most beautiful poetry that ever was written, but there is nothing in it to specially mark it as Irish. And, although there are many people who would tell you that Casey's poetry is not Irish either, because it is not written in the Irish language, still it is far more Irish than Goldsmith's – for "Leo" sang of Shaun O'Farrell and the Inny, and Derry, and Tang, and about Donal Kenny, and fifty other subjects that are Irish through and through, and that no one could mistake it for anything else, while "The Deserted Village" might be English or Scotch of Welsh" (Bulfin 1907, p. 316).

In his turn, Kiberds would agree with Bulfin in that "Oliver Goldsmith in *The Deserted Village* could, in a somewhat ironic manner, bring the consequences of rural clearances to the attention of his more sensitive metropolitan [English] readers" (Kiberd 1996, p. 16). There is some circumstantial evidence that Goldsmith's poem, published in 1770, was a favourite amongst Irish sheep-farmers in Argentina, particularly those from southern Longford and Westmeath[9]. A teacher and Republican patriot, John Keegan *Leo* Casey was born in the same area 76 years later, but was noted as a poet only in association with later Nationalism.

"Cultural colonies are much more susceptible to the literature of the parent country than are the inhabitants of that country itself" (Kiberd 1996, p. 115). The Irish who emigrated to Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century were taught (at diverse levels) in English and Anglo-Irish literature. The toponymy of some of their holdings in Buenos Aires reflects their readings, like John Murray's *Auburn* estancia in Lincoln department, Buenos Aires. Furthermore, when considering Argentina as a cultural (and, during the largest part of the nineteenth century, financial) colony of the British Empire, we may verify that the Argentines were highly receptive and very sympathetic to English literature, culture, and values in general. In this environment, the Irish in Argentina produced a culture that would have been originally British in form and content, but was gradually de-anglicised by the turn of the century to reflect ideological changes in their Irish identity.

The Argentine governing bourgeoisie was the chief factor on bringing Irish, *ingleses*, settlers to Argentina. Alberdi, one of the key thinkers and creators of Argentine guiding fictions wrote that

> Every European arriving in our country brings to us more civilisation in his customs [[...]] than lots of books of philosophy. Qualities that are not seen and

> touched are not correctly understood. A good worker is the best catechism. If we wish to plant [in America] English freedom, French culture, the working habits of the peoples of Europe and of the United States, we need to bring living bits of them and settle here (in: Shumway 1993, p. 166)[10].

Alberdi adds that "the English language, the language of freedom, industry and order, should replace Latin" in the education of Argentine students. "How we can receive the example and civilising action of Anglo-Saxon race without speaking their language?" (Shumway 1993, p. 167).

This admiration for European culture in general, and for the British in particular, is a result of an unresolved fear of the native culture. Not only the British visitors and representatives had a negative vision of the gaucho, but the local educated elites were also fearful of the gaucho's way of living and eager to promote immigration from England as the best solution to make Argentina a British cultural colony. Traveller William MacCann in the late 1840s observed that "on the southern frontier in Tandil and Azul, Irish ditchdiggers commanded high wages because 'few of their class come so far south, and the natives will never take a spade in their hands'" (In: Slatta 1983, p. 166). Slatta adds that "[Irish] immigrants and gauchos seldom competed directly for employment because the former did foot work and the latter mounted labor" (Slatta 1983, p. 167).

The negative myths about gauchos are key to understand the warm welcome that the Irish received in Argentina. Domingo Sarmiento was one of the most important authors who created guiding fictions for the consumption of the Argentine (and immigrant Irish) audiences. Journalist, educator, historian, political philosopher and practitioner (President of the Republic 1868-1874), Sarmiento "molded the thoughts and policies of the nation's Europeanizing elite. […] His most extreme and revealing commentary on the gaucho came in instructions to General Mitre in 1861: 'Do not try to save the blood of gauchos. It is a contribution that the country needs. Blood is the only thing they have in common with human beings" (Slatta 1983, p. 181).

Referring to Sarmiento's *Facundo*, Nicholas Shumway remarks the irony of "a text so innovative as literary discourse [that] denigrates native Argentina and supports an imitative submission to foreign cultural modelsz" (Shumway 1991, p. 180). The pattern followed by the Argentine governing elites since the 1860s, and particularly during the prosperity period of 1880-1915, was to secure the regime of

> an educated and Europeanizing elite based in Buenos Aires. The purpose was to build an European-modelled society in Argentina, [...] to promote an economy of *laissez faire*, primarily restricted to the affluent segment that owned the means of production, to create spectacular material progress promoted by foreign investment, to incur in external debt and the consequent loss of national sovereignty, and to show continuous contempt towards the urban and rural poorest classes, which resulted in the intention of "improving" the ethnic melting

pot through the introduction of immigrants from Northern Europe (Shumway 1991, p. 181).

Shumway describes the *guiding fictions* created in nineteenth-century Europe, which "encouraged the French to feel like French, the English to feel English, and the German to be German. [At that time] the idea of nationality was essential in Europe. With the end of the *Illuminati* and the arrival of Romanticism, the ideas of universal brotherhood were replaced by an emergence of nationalistic attitudes, with which individual countries asserted their particular ethnic, linguistic, and mythic marks" (Shumway 1991, p. 19).

In South America, before the individual independence processes of each country commenced, there were no national identity myths that linked their inhabitants with a shared ideology. In Argentina, the name of the country itself is a "a paradox: the country was named after the silver mineral, which was not available, meanwhile the element that was abundant (a potentially spectacular agricultural production) was neglected during almost three centuries" (Shumway 1991, p. 25).

The *gauchesca* literature, from its pioneer Bartolomé Hidalgo (1788-1822) to his best disciple José Hernandez (1834-1886), provided a literary and symbolic mythology that was appropriate as Argentine guiding fictions from the last decades of the nineteenth century to date. "Seldom appreciated in life, the gaucho became the embodiment of Argentine character as the nation's thinkers and leaders reconstructed the past to suit twentieth-century political needs" (Slatta 1983, p. 180).

By joining *gauchesca*, Irish-Argentine literature contributed to create the myth of the gaucho as a symbol of Argentineness. At the same time, it evolved from the sphere of Britishness to a newly created Irishness. This creation of Irish-Argentine *guiding fictions* can be perceived as an invention of Irish Argentina, a cultural *no space* that was necessary to fill with convenient imagery in order to avoid losing control over the growing Irish-Argentine community. The Irish priests of the Roman Catholic church were primarily responsible for this invention of Irish Argentina.

Kiberd quotes Deleuze and Guattari to define a minor literature, "a literature written in a major language by a minority group in revolt against its oppressors:

> … A major or established (i.e., imperial) literature follows a vector that goes from content to expression. Since content is presented in a given form of content, one must find, or discover, or see the form of expression that goes with it. If something conceptualizes, it will express itself. But a minor, or revolutionary literature begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterwards" (in: Kiberd 1996, p. 117).

Deleuze and Guattari in *Milles Plateaux* developed a theory of becoming, which I consider relevant to the study of the changing mind of Irish immigrants in Argentina, and perhaps for every migratory process. For the Irish settlers in Argentina, it was not

enough to be Irish. During their settlement and acculturation to the larger society, they had to become Irish, *devenir-Irish*, i.e., undergo and command a process by which they departed from a status and arrived at a different one. This *devenir* not only changed the Irish, but also the English and the Argentines in connection with them.

Within this process of becoming Irish, it would be misleading to consider Irish-Argentine literature without its relations to the literary, cultural, and social frameworks in England, Ireland and Argentina. At the same time, those frameworks operate within the more general cultural patterns in place in Europe and in the Americas, which have a great degree of *contagion* themselves. Becoming Irish-Argentine involved for the emigrants undergoing several cultural, social, and economic transformations, which of course have not ended. In their *devenir*-Irish Argentines, they began negotiating values associated with Britishness, they acquired higher levels of Argentineness, and they ultimately experienced (and are still experiencing) a process of becoming Irish.

Nowadays, some scholars estimate that four to five hundred thousand Argentines claim Irish ancestry. The way this ancestry is claimed is significant for the study of Irish-Argentine culture. The activity of Irish-Argentine social institutions, schools, media, family history groups, heritage centres, and researchers both in Ireland and in Argentina will be beneficial to their members and other communities only if they manage to avoid the ideological manipulation of some of their own institutions. The elucidation of cultural values and representations will pre-empt this manipulation, and will also stimulate the study of neglected aspects of Irish-Argentine culture.

Notes

1 University of Geneva, Switzerland, and Irish Argentine Historical Society (edmundo.murray@irishargentine.org).

2 By the end of the nineteenth century, in addition to their new properties in Argentina, a good number of the Irish settlers and their families still had tenant rights in Wexford and the Midlands.

3 Bulfin's biographical data are taken mainly from Susan Wilkinson's introduction to *The Tales of the Pampas*, 1997. At the end of the introduction, Wilkinson mentions that she is "indebted to information given to me by the Bulfin family in Ireland, especially Anna McBride White and Jeanne Winder."

4 During the nineteenth-century shop-keepers in rural areas of Buenos Aires were frequently immigrants from Catalonia. However, in Argentina all Spaniards were, and still are, labelled *Gallego* (often with a derogatory implication).

5 cf. among others, Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Civilización y Barbarie* (1845).

6 None of these trees are native species in Argentina, but they are abundant in the Irish Midlands.

7 *Murphy to Murphy*, 20 June 1865: "I am thinking the longer people stays in that country [Ireland] the worse for themselves, as things is getting still worse every day, and I am quite satisfied that there is no change of laws or nothing else likely to be made that can be of any benefit to the tenant farmer, as there will be always some gap left open by which the Landlords will be able to keep the tenants nose to the grinding stone" (Private Letters from John James Murphy in Argentina to his brother Martin in Kilrane, Co. Wexford).

8 For instance, Eduardo Coghlan's title of his genealogical catalogue is "El Aporte de los Irlandeses a la Formación de la Nación Argentina" (1982), in clear reference to the contribution of the Irish immigrants to their receiving country.

9 Verses of the poem are quoted freely in emigrant memoirs.

10 My translation.

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Interview

Interview with John Banville

Luiz Marcello Bittencourt

LMB: John Banville, which were the authors and books that were important in the period of your intellectual formation?

J.B.: Well, when I was young, of course I read Joyce, Yeats and Beckett as we all did; not as much as I understood of them, I don't know. But also, perhaps curiously, I read a lot of the English … what I might call of minor novelists of twenties, thirties forties like P. G. Wodehouse, for instance. I read him for the fun of it when I was a child, I mean, because I read many of these children's books; but I also read Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Henry Green, people like that. I'm not quite sure why I read so many of those books but I loved them and I think I learned a lot about English prose style from them, so they were... those books, they were quite formative for me.

LMB: Besides being a writer you are the literary editor of *The Irish Times*. In which way does this intellectual activity feed your fiction?

J.B.: I'm a divided man, I'm a divided self. I've always tried to separate journalism from fiction writing. I think that one must. They are two disciplines entirely different and, I suppose, being a journalist has helped me to form my style, to make my style clearer. And I do believe that it is the writer's duty to be as clear as possible, in the actual sentence. I don't mean that the meaning of the sentence has to be absolutely clear because otherwise it would be rather simplistic, but I'd like to think that a six year old child could read my sentences and understand them, at least automatically, maybe not get the full import of the book or understanding of it. That's important; and I think journalism indeed helped that. But I must emphasize that I never reread written journalism, my written literary book reviews and so forth. But as a journalist I was always a backroom person, I was always an editor. I had an editor once wants me to find what we call sub-editors, we people who edited people's, edited journalist's material. I remember one editor wants me to find the sub-editors, somebody who changes other people's words, and, [...]. somewhat in the dark [...] so that I was a night walker.

LMB: In your novel *Mefisto*, you set up a dialogue with the Faustus' tradition of which Goethe is its main exponent. What relationships would you establish between Gabriel Swan and other protagonists of the Faustus narratives?

J.B.: Somebody once asked Joyce why he used the Homeric parallels in Ulysses and he looked at this person as if this person were simple minded and said, well, it was his way of working, it was a method of working. And I think that the uses that one makes of mythology and of other literature like the Faust legend and the Faust legend as used by Goethe, a reader shouldn't put too much importance on that because, really, as Joyce said, it was a way of working. When I was young in the seventies I wrote two three books about scientists about Copernicus and about Kepler. Everybody thought that I had deep knowledge and deep interest in astronomy and cosmology. I didn't. It was simply a way of not writing hackneyed Irish books, you know, as a way of engaging in the European tradition. Then I wrote a series of books, which were loosely based on the art of painting. People then assumed, you know, here is this polymath; he knows all about painting, he cares deeply about painting. Again, I have no specialised knowledge of these things. These were simply ways of working, of getting the work done. So that the Faustus legend in *Mefisto*, is perhaps not as important as it might seem, it was again, a way of working.

LMB: Your novella *Newton Letter* was transformed into a film for Channel Four. How do you assess that work and what relationships would you point out between literature and cinema?

J.B.: Well, amazing! I'll tell the story I've had before I came to be made because I have written this little novella of 80 pages long at the time it didn't seem it would ever be published; because it was so short; because publishers simply didn't; so I put it away. And then, Channel 4 people in Britain came and said "would you like to write a movie for us". I said well, I've got this novella I can turn it into a script. It has taken me two years to write a book, I was paid under 500 pounds for eventually from the publisher. It took me three days to write the script from it and I was paid for that 12.000 pounds. So, I'm afraid from the monetary point of view, which is what writers think about a great deal, a great deal more than readers imagined that they do, it was very, very interesting. The film didn't really work because I thought the script was quite good. But I regarded film scripts, and I still regard film scripts, as merely a framework on which to build. But, for some reason, the people making the movie kept absolutely faithful to the script, so it's terribly woodened and it doesn't really move quickly enough, you know. If I wrote in, "this character turns and smiles and somebody should know that character should not turn and smile", this is as if it were a mathematical proposition that is being worked out, and it didn't work for that reason. But to give a more general answer, I absolutly love the movies. I think it's the great popular poetry of our time, I think it is the great popular art form. I'm not sure that intellectuals such as I am, I mean, would be intellectuals such as I am, should be let them anyway near the movies. I mean, if... My dream of working..., I'd loved to have worked in the 1940s in the studio system in Hollywood; that seems to me the absolute ideal way for writers to write for movies. The

way we are just commanded, you know, "you've got three days, write the script and it'd better be funny." That's the way I would love to have worked, and I'm still doing film work. I'm trying to work in the popular end. I don't want to write an art movie. Every time I produce, people say: ah, yes, this can be an arthouse movie. Then, I say no, it won't be; this can be a popular movie! And it may seem odd for a hermetic an artist as I am, to want to work in the movies. But I keep remembering T.S. Eliot always wanted to write to Marie Lloyd, who was a musical artist. I think that inside every feet of an intellectual artist there is a vaudevillian, somebody who wants to write carnival.

LMB: In many of your novels you establish a dialogue between literature and science, and other Arts, particularly Painting. Which relations would you establish between literature and music?

J.B.: I would much prefer to have been a composer than a novelist. I mean, that would have been my ambition except that I can't do it. I think that music is very, very important. I think that you have to have a musical ear to write musical prose, but the one peculiar exception to that is Nabokov, Vladimir Nabokov: had an absolute tin ear, he had no ear at all for music as he confessed. He couldn't hear a tune and when you look at the book of prose, you see the evidence of that because his prose is all pictorial. There is no music, the sentences did not move in a melodic way than would in a pictorial, evidential way. But I think he is the exception. I think that most great prose writers and great poets do have a musical ear, and I do think that there is a crossover between the two. I mean, frequently I will, I catch myself, you know, as I'm writing, I catch myself as if chanting the line as I'm writing it, or the sentence, I suppose as I can say, in a musical way, and that's very, very important, and sometimes even find that I've written down a sentence which doesn't mean anything, it's just sound and I have to go back and give it meaning, give it sense while keeping the melody in the background. So yes, music is very, very important to Literature.

LMB: Dialogues have a considerable importance in your stories. Would you say that orality plays an important function in your narrative?

J.B.: If you write a novel you have to use at some point dialogues, of course. But I think that I'm much more given to the monologue. And yes, the oral tradition of course, is very strong in Irish literature all going way back to the bardic tradition; and I'm still enough of the Irish novelists to have something of that oral tradition in my literary blunt. I do find it for me as I said a moment ago when we were talking about musical influences in literature I do find that I have to have the melody almost before I have the sense of the sentence. And it's very important, I mean, rhythm is one of the most important

things in prose and, for instance, if you look at the way in which Joyce uses the paragraph, Joyce is a master of the paragraph but I think he got that from his very deep knowledge in music because what he's doing is this, there's prose paragraphs and there's a sort of melodies, and themes and cadences that he is using. So for me, and as for practically all writers, yes, the oral element is very, very important. I have to hear the thing in my head before I can write it down.

LMB: How do you conceive humour in your narrative?

J.B.: Well I find my books very funny, nobody else seems to find them funny but I consider them to be quite, quite humorous. Of course, a lot of the humour is black and bleak but it's still humour. But I think people are inclined to approach my work as if it's going to be very, very solemn, and this is great pity because I would hate to think that my books were solemn; serious, yes, but not solemn. Celebrity, I think, is the death of art.

Interview with Christina Reid

Mária Kurdi

MK: In the interview you gave to Imelda Foley, who recently published a book under the title *The Girls in the Big Picture:Gender in Contemporary Ulster Theatre*, you speak about the conspicuously gendered environment in which you grew up in Belfast, as member of a Protestant family. Could you now recollect your early experiences of sectarianism, the Protestant-Catholic divide ?

CR: I was born in The Ardoyne in North Belfast in 1942. My maternal grandparents lived on the other side of the city and their house was the focal point of family gatherings and parties, so I spent a lot of my childhood there too. Both areas were mixed but there were Catholic streets and Protestant streets. Everybody was working-class, but I was brought up to believe that there were two types of poverty – Protestant, which was respectable, and Catholic, which was not. As a child, I didn't know the word "sectarianism," the Protestant/Catholic divide was referred to as "them" and "us." My family were staunch Unionists, "more British than the British," yet they were also "proud to be Irish." All the men were members of the Orange Order and the annual parade on the Twelfth of July was a big family day out. The men marched and the women took the children to watch and cheer the parade. I remember what a show-off I was when my father was the Grand Master of his Orange Lodge and the Orangemen came to our house accompanied by a flute band, before going to the parade. I didn't question what the divisions were really about then. Children don't. The questions came gradually and more insistent the more I grew up. Later I began to write about it. I'm from that background and I love my family and I'm proud to be Irish. But I have never voted Unionist. I remember casting my first vote and wandering if anyone else in my family had secretly voted for a candidate who wasn't "one of us." My family were very gregarious. At family gatherings the women were great storytellers. I think my early experiences of listening to and watching them brought out the writer in me.

MK: This female talent for storytelling and preserving the traditions through that is well reflected in your plays. However, the plays have received some criticism for creating rather one-dimensional male characters who are less interesting than the women.

CR: On the other hand, nobody criticizes plays because they are more about men than about women. This criticism of my plays is not even true. *Joyriders* (1986) has got two

strong male characters in it. In *The Belle of the Belfast City* (1989) Jack is one of the most powerful roles in the play, actors liked to do it. Yet so many Irish plays are about men, and women are there only because they are somebody's mother, wife, sister, daughter or girlfriend, in other words, their part in the play is only to do with what is happening to the men that they are connected to. I have been criticized for my plays, being labelled feminist by some people, and I have been criticized by feminists who found that my plays are too gentle. My reply to that is always that I hope I write about women as they are, not as feminism would want them to be, which would not be truthful. I find women easier to write about because the women in my background were entertaining, very funny, and very strong. While the men made the big decisions about the country, the world and whatever, women were the ones who made families work, made life work.

MK: How did you become acquainted with the world of drama and theatre, and Irish drama in particular? Which authors and plays did you take an interest in, and which were most inspiring for you?

CR: When my granny had parties in my childhood all the family were there, and everybody did a turn, sang a song, or told a story. The parties were very theatrical. The storytellers in the family didn't just sit down to tell stories, they dressed up to tell them, they enacted them. They were a wonderful mixture of local gossip, Irish folklore, and the Holywood movies because they all went to the cinema. Also, we went to see shows in the Group Theatre in Belfast, and we went to the Opera House to see shows. My mother loved ballet – I do not know where that came from since we were a working class family. She took me to the ballet and I loved it, so that was an influence as well. It did not occur to me when I was very young that I would write, my earliest memory of writing is when I was about eleven, I think. I was given one of those five-year diaries with a little lock and key, and I kept the diary for about a week and it was really boring, so I made up exciting stories about myself to put into the diary. That is my earliest memory of writing. But I did not start writing plays until I was nearly forty, and a lot of that was to do with my mother dying – when she was only fifty-eight. One of the things she told me at that time was: "Don't forget the old stories, tell them to your children." And I began to write the play which became *Tea in a China Cup* (1983). The first draft was awful, filled with my feeling very sorry for myself, angry that my mother had died. Then I just sat down and wrote it all over again. It is very much based on my family history, but cannot be called a straight autobiographical play. On the other hand, I wrote *Joyriders* because I was saddened and angry about the lives of some young teenagers on a training scheme in Belfast.

MK: In two of your major plays, *Tea in a China Cup* and *The Belle of the Belfast City*, the action involves generations. Why did you find it important to extend the scope of the conventions of the "family play" in this way?

CR: Because generations, certainly in Ireland, affect and influence the next generation. Again I go back to the tradition of storytelling. There are stories in my family, for example, that I can see and hear as if I was there, though some of them happened when I was too young to remember and some of them before I was even born. Stories passed on by word of mouth, change and shift. Basically they tell the same tale, but every storyteller adds a little bit and takes out a little bit. Sometimes I think this is very much what a lot of problems in Ireland are about. In the North, generations pass on stories, for example stories about Catholics and stories about Protestants, stories about both sides, so children grow up with thoughts in their head which are those of the generations behind them, or of even two or three generations behind them. And it perpetuates this situation in the North, expressed by notions like "never trust a Protestant" or "never trust a Catholic." So many people, instead of really looking at things and making their own mind up, just take on board what generations behind them have told them.

MK: There is an intertextual framing in *Joyriders*; it deploys a scene from Sean O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923) at the beginning, which has its echo at the end with Maureen dying as a victim similar to O'Casey's young female character, Minnie. For me this device highlights that Irish history is repeating itself, the Troubles of the early 1920s having their parallel in the Toubles of the 1980s.

CR: Yes, it is how innocent people die, and Maureen is really innocent. The borrowing from O'Casey is actually based on fact. When I was writer-in-residence at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast a group of young teenagers on a training scheme were brought in to see *The Shadow of a Gunman*, which Patrick Sanford directed there. There was an electric atmosphere in the theatre because most of the teenagers had never been to the theatre in their life. They reacted wonderfully, they cheered and laughed and booed, it was great. I talked to them after the play and I asked a boy why he laughed when Minnie gets shot. It didn't shock him because it happened offstage. He lived in West Belfast and had seen people being shot. He looked very fearsome, but he was a trainee cook, which is very unusual for a man. And he became the basis for Arthur, a character in *Joyriders* which, again, is not an autobiographical play, but there were people I met that night and later when I visited a number of youth training schemes who were the basis for all the characters in *Joyriders*.

MK: Not a few critics define a type of drama in Northern Ireland that they call the "Troubles play," which your work may fit in with. How do you respond to the usefulness of this as a category?

CR: I think a good play must be about people and not just about a situation. But I am not one of those writers who say "Oh, I never write about the Troubles," as if it were a badge of honour because, I think, how can you write about Belfast as if the Troubles

don't exist? I am a storyteller and all my plays tell a story. "The Troubles" may be a part of that story or affect the story of the people in the play, but I have never written a play that is just about "The Troubles", and I wouldn't want my writing to be categorized like that.

MK: Do you consider it to be important to write plays about teenagers, like the ones in *Joyriders*?

CR: I think it is terribly important to write about this age-group as they are. Too often they are written about as if they are all foul-mouthed, drug-addicted, gun-toting teenagers. I hope in *Joyriders* I portrayed the teenagers with more accuracy and compassion than that. In my experience, teenagers are much more complex and (most importantly) very funny about the world they live in.

MK: Some years after *Joyriders* you wrote a sequel to it, entitled *Clowns* (1996). Why did you feel challenged to write about those characters again?

CR: A lot of teenage groups had done the play *Joyriders* because they liked it and also because it is difficult to find plays where teenagers can play their own age-group. A number of them asked me, what happened to the characters, what happened afterwards, what happened to Arthur, did he get his restaurant? Then a terrible thing happened. The actor Fabian Cartwright, who played Tommy in the first production, was drowned while on holiday. The actors and I had kept in touch since the first production, and after Fabian's death we got together and talked about him and the play. I was thinking of writing a sequel to it, but it was bizarre that the actor who played Tommy was dead whereas Maureen (the character Clare Cathcart, very much living, had played) was dead. Clare actually said to me that she would like to be a ghost in the sequel. It was quite some time after that before I actually wrote the play, but the idea stayed in my head. The idea of someone who is forever sixteen, as her peer group grew older. The idea of the ghost telling jokes just happened after I started to write. The play has a very chequered history and it has only had one production. I hope someone will do it again.

MK: Did you consciously set *Clowns* in the year of the 1994 ceasefire initiated by the IRA?

CR: Yes, I think so. The play is very much about the difficulty of coming to terms with peace, rather than war, and how hard the peace process is. And Sandra, who left Belfast after Maureen's death, filled with rage and despair, can't make her own personal peace process until she stops looking back and seeking revenge.

MK: Interestingly, Sandra plays the comedian's part in the play, using Maureen as a mask since she is performing under the other's name in England.

CR: Because she has never come to terms with Maureen's death, she brings her back to life by becoming two people: herself and the friend whose death she has never accepted. She turns the tragedy into just another Belfast joke. Belfast abounds with jokes about the Troubles.

MK: She seems to combine the memory of violent death with the comic attitude transcending grief. Comedians, humour and jokes are present in other works of yours as well, especially in *Did You Hear the One about the Irishman?* (1987), despite the grimness of the subject matter the plays address.

CR: When an Irish person tells Irish jokes it's funny. If someone else does it, it is offensive. So in *Did You Hear the One about the Irishman [...]?* I juxtaposed what the English comedian is saying with what is actually happening to Irish people. A lot of jokes are very interesting because they are the same as say, Jewish or French-Canadian jokes. You just substitute the group. They are basically the same jokes worldwide. In *Clowns* it was slightly different because the jokes there are more in the form of storytelling. Sandra weaves a series of Irish jokes around the Maureen she has resurrected, in the same way that the old Irish storytellers weave fact and fiction. There is an old saying "It's a true story that doesn't interfere with the telling". So the stories of the past change and merge with the stories of the present.

MK: Which leads us back to the plays that feature generations. There is a lot of tension in some of them between certain family members, for instance between Janet and Jack in *The Belle of the Belfast City*. What can this bring into focus within the represented Protestant community itself?

CR: In that play in particular, in *The Belle of the Belfast City*, which is set at the time of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1986, there were a lot of Protestant families who were split apart by that day, the demonstration against the Agreement. Some were eager to take to the streets and close their shops and refuse to work as a protest. Some considered that sort of behaviour as not how the Protestants behave. It was rebel behaviour, Catholic behaviour, IRA behaviour – "We don't behave like that." In *The Belle of the Belfast City*, I highlighted these tensions and others within one family.

MK: Their intrafamiliar conflict figures the larger one within the Protestant community in *The Belle of the Belfast City* very effectively. By contrast, Dolly, the oldest of the women characters and Belle, the youngest of them are very similar to each other in the same play. Are they variations on how female autonomy can be achieved in spite of all the tension in the background?

CR: I think sometimes people have characteristics that they inherit from generations before them. The granddaughter has the self-confidence that the grandmother has too.

Dolly and her granddaughter Belle, are both strong, sure of who they are. Even though they have led very different lives, they share a belief that life should be enjoyed not endured. They both have a wilful, stubborn and occasionally selfish streak, but all that is tempered by their wit and love of life.

MK: Matrilinear heritage is passed on as at the end it is Belle who sings when Dolly is not able to sing any more, appropriating the grandmother's one-time strength. In general, your plays abound in songs, especially this one, *The Belle of the Belfast City*. Are the songs supposed to offer some commentary on the action?

CR: It varies. While I am writing often a song will come into my head, connected with what someone has just said, or a scene will come from someone singing a song. When I was writing *The Belle of the Belfast City* and created Peter, the policeman husband of Janet, I wrote some scenes between him and Janet, but they didn't work. Then I was playing some music, and I heard the song "Green gravel," and I gave it to Peter instead of dialogue and it did work. The song said everything I was trying to say about this couple and their relationship. Peter needs a romantic notion. Janet wants the real thing.

MK: Introducing a dimension, I think, which functions to redefine the structure of emotions between Janet and the two men without the intervention of explicit dialogues. *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name?* (1986), ends with the two protagonists' voices resounding parallel with each other and, finally, a vastly different kind of song, a military tune is heard. Do you take particular care about how you structure and conclude your plays?

CR: As regards *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name?* – I just sat down and wrote it, it just flowed, the structure with the two voices just happened to come out like that. I wrote it for radio, which makes a difference because you are writing for voice, you are writing something that is going to be heard and not staged. I was really pleased when the play subsequently also worked on stage.

MK: Do you prefer writing for the much older, and perhaps more conservative medium of the theatre?

CR: Writing for the theatre is special. It evolves in a way that no other writing does, because it travels, it can be done again and again, which doesn't often happen in radio and screen. They tend to stay fixed in a time and / or a place. Stage plays can be and are more often transposed to other times and locations.

MK: Racial mixing is a trope which several of your characters demonstrate or are involved with, from *The Belle of the Belfast City* to *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name?* In what ways do you think it contributes to the exploration of sectarian limitations in your work?

CR: I believe that bigotry is bigotry is bigotry, regardless of whether it's about colour, religion, class, the clothes you wear, the food you eat – whatever. I believe it's that simple. That sectarianism of any sort limits and damages us all, worldwide.

MK: This way racial mixture and the mixed reactions to it put greater emphasis on the die-hard nature of prejudices and preconceptions underlying and nurturing the sectarian conflict which still exists in your home country, not that it is the only such place in the world.

CR: Yes, I think it is the same kind of conflict everywhere. It has just different labels in different parts of the world.

MK: Another motif, that of the single mother, is used in some of your plays, embodied by Teresa in *Tea in a China Cup* and Rose in *The Belle of the Belfast City* most importantly. Does the state of single parenthood signify victimization or growing independence in their case, or maybe both at the same time?

CR: It depends on who they are in the play. In Maureen's case in *Joyriders* it is the tragedy of the innocent victim. She falls in love with a romantic foreign student. To impress him she steals nice clothes from a shop, and when she is accidentally shot, her unborn baby dies as well. Nobody knows about the baby except Sandra. In *The Belle of the Belfast City* Rose is a different character. She gets pregnant and chooses to be a single parent. She becomes an independent woman and she teaches her daughter to be independent too (but not to the extent that she thinks she can look after herself in Belfast). Teresa as a single parent is again different, her mother does not want anybody to know about the child, and her existence is hidden whereas Belle is known about but has never been brought to Belfast. It is one thing for a child to exist but it is quite another thing to show the neighbours that this is the child. So, the single mothers' situation is linked with a range of moral attitudes in their society and family.

MK: At the end of *Tea in a China Cup* Beth decides to sell the house she lived in as a well-to-do man's wife, and is ready to find another home. Is this the way she can sever herself from the restricting power of her family and past?

CR: Yes, she sells the house she was married into, and her mother's house, after her death, goes back to the owner it was rented from. Beth has brought the family pictures and other stuff with her into her husband's house, but eventually she takes only one china cup with her, which she values. Although the china cup did not belong to her, but to her husband's family, it reminds her of her mother's love of beautiful china which she could never afford. I have been criticized about the end of the play because Beth was not strong enough to resist keeping that one cup. I remember saying "what did you want her to do?" to a feminist critic. Beth is who she is. I cannot make her who she is not. In

fact one amateur production in Belfast, which I went to see, changed the end and it was all wrong. The director thought that taking one cup with her when she left was a weakness. But in the play she smiles and sings and that is her strength.

MK: Of course she does, she is going to have her life now, which is different from that of the former generation, though she takes something from her older life with her. The fragile and beautiful china cup may be the symbol of traditions and the past, that of continuity. In 1987 you also started a new life when you moved to London. Do you consider yourself a writer in exile like your favourite author, Sean O'Casey's situation was some decades ago?

CR: No, I do not feel an exile. I go to Belfast a lot, two of my children chose to go back there and my grandchildren live there. Actually, I am torn between the two places. Another writer said to me once "When I am in London I want to be in Belfast, and when I am in Belfast I want to be in London. Maybe the only time I am ever really content is when I am on the plane." If I had the money I would live in both places. In my head at least, I do live in both places. I am 61 now and still torn between the two. The older I get, the pull of Belfast and my grandchildren there, gets stronger than the reasons for being based in London.

MK: What is your connection with the theatre in London? Have you written plays which were commissioned by London theatres?

CR: I have written a play for the National Theatre Education Department called *The King of the Castle* (1999), which is published in an anthology of plays entitled *New Connections*. Though I set it in Belfast it was written so that it could be set anywhere in the country and hopefully in the world, because the play is about children playing on a derelict piece of land, bombed during a war. The play has been done by schoolchildren in other places here and abroad. They have swapped my street names and songs for those in their locality. Just recently I wrote another short play which was specifically for younger children. The National Theatre commissioned me to write a twenty minute play for 8-9 year-old inner London schoolchildren to perform at a school assembly. The school is multi-racial, multi-ethnic, forty-two languages are spoken in it. First I thought, "Can I do this?" But I did write it, and the children were fantastic. It is a play about saying "Hello!" in different languages, and is called *The Gift of the Gab*. *Joyriders* and *The Belle of the Belfast City* were commissioned for London.

MK: What about your connections with the contemporary Irish theatre?

CR: I have never had a major production of any of my plays in the South, though university students and fringe companies have produced them there in small venues.

Some of them have been staged in the Lyric Theatre Belfast. But so far, not in the Abbey or Gate Theatres in Dublin.

MK: What are you currently working on?

CR: I have been writing a novel. The Arts Council in Northern Ireland very generously gave me an award to do it. For the time being it is still in bits and pieces; it is not like writing a play, I have got to write some of it again and I have a responsibility to at least try to complete it. Writing a novel is very much like storytelling. A lot of it is coming out of the plays where there are stories which generate other stories. For the novel these need to be furnished with much more detail about who else was there, and what else was happening. I go backwards from the small, marginal stories in, for instance, *Tea in a China Cup*, which have much bigger stories behind them. In *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name...?* the story of the painting which my grandfather took me to the city hall to see has a much bigger story behind it too. So I find that my real family history and the history of the characters in my plays are merging and extending into a bigger story.

MK: What you said about the material for your novel as it emerges has thrown some more light on the plays. Yes, there are many episodic figures and scenes in virtually all of them, which triggers the imagination of the audience.

CR: This is all very much tied up with storytelling and memory. I went to a Protestant school so I did not learn Irish but learnt some of it when I was older, and one of the first words I learnt was *seanchaí*, the word for the storyteller. Once I was sitting spellbound listening to a real Irish *seanchaí*, and I thought this was what my grandmother and her sisters were also doing. They were *seanchaí* but they did not know it because they did not know that Irish word.

MK: Your plays make it clear that the Catholic and Protestant traditions are not so different from each other in Ulster after all.

CR: They are not. My friends the playwrights Martin Lynch and Anne Devlin come from Catholic families who are just like my Protestant family. Despite the political/religious divisions, we have more in common than not. Our families are alike, despite being brought up in opposing religious and political aspirations about the country we live in. We're all working class and the families and people we write about have more in common with each other than the divisions that continue to be exploited by the politicians in our society.

MK: Do you think that there will ever be an end to the conflict in Northern Ireland?

CR: The majority of the people there are fed up with it, they just want it to stop. I think the biggest problem has always been with the hardline Protestants and Unionists who

cannot agree to power sharing. Because as soon as they do, they do away with the very reason for the existence of the state of Northern Ireland. Even if they say they want it, the so called moderate unionists are also afraid of it.

MK: But there are three hundred years behind the conflict, people have to turn their watches back when they visit there as it is noted in one of your plays. At the end of *The Belle of the Belfast City*, the mute Davy is beaten up not by Catholic paramilitaries but by his own, and he still remains a devoted unionist.

CR: At the time of writing it was in my head that Davy and the English character Tom Bailey should be played by the same actor, because they represent the extremes: the simple child-like boy who copies what he doesn't really understand and the grown-up man who knows exactly what he is doing.

MK: So new meanings can be created or added by manipulating the casting of characters. Did they finally produce *The Belle of the Belfast City* with that pairing?

CR: Yes, my husband played both roles, to respective audiences in Belfast and Manchester.

Book Reviews

Colm Tóibín

Rüdiger Imhof

Colm Tóibín. *The Master*. London: Picador, 2004, 470pp., £ 16.99, ISBN 0 330 48565 2.

People who revered him, like Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad, called him "*cher maître*" or "the master". The person in question is none other than Henry James. He was "the master" because he elevated novel writing to a respectable art form. Before he arrived on the scene, novels tended to be large, loose, baggy monsters; at least many of them did. To be true, a good few of James's own novels are not exactly short either, but they are supreme houses of fiction. Dislocate one brick, and the entire edifice will collapse. You can take a whole wall out of Dickens, Thackeray or Trollope, let alone Fielding and Smollett, and nothing will budge. But not only did James practise novel writing with an unprecedented mastery, he also lent it a solid theoretical foundation through the many essays and the prefaces to his books. The only obligation to which we may hold a novel, he argues in "The Art of Fiction", is "that it be interesting". Furthermore, he notes: "A novel is in the broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life [...]". In this sense, *The Master* is Tóibín's personal fictional impression of James's life, or rather a sizeable part of it. To quote "the master" once more: "The execution belongs to the author alone; it is what is most personal to him, and we measure him by that".

The novel covers events in James's life from the ignominious failure of his play *Guy Domville* in January 1895 to some months prior to the day he shaved his beard off in the spring of 1900. That is to say, these events constitute the immediate narrative present, as it were, the chronological story-line, if that is the term. Embedded into these is a wide-ranging variety of occurrences, impressions and experiences spanning James's past from his adolescence onwards. What precisely is it that Tóibín has singled out for treatment? We open with Henry waking from a troubled sleep. He has dreamed about hurrying in a dark, or darkening, city, an old place in Italy like Orvieto or Sienna. He cannot now remember whether he was alone there or whether he had a companion. If so, it must have been a "ghostly companion" (p. 2). He also dreamt of dead members of his family: his Aunt Kate, his sister Alice and his mother:

> in that square he had locked eyes with his mother, and her gaze was full of panic, her mouth ready to cry. She fiercely wanted something beyond her reach, which she could not obtain, and he could not help her. (p. 3)

I confess to being at a loss as to the meaning and significance of that ominous scene; but what seems clear is that from the first a note is introduced which James himself framed in a letter to Morton Fullerton of 10 February 1900 in these terms: "the *essential loneliness of my life*". The three woman are in the dream because they were among the most important people in his life. There were two other women, but more of them later.

It is, of course, tempting to check what Tóibín presents of James's life against the facts gathered in biographies by, say, Leon Edel or Fred Kaplan. But such an effort might easily turn into a fruitless task, because Tóibín could always plead poetic licence. Suffice it to say, though, that he has not played havoc with the known facts and introduced strange matter. Indeed, he has at times been so scrupulous in observing the facts that there are stretches in the text which read as if they had been lifted straight out of Edel or Kaplan. All this is not to say that Tóibín has not let his creative imagination do some work towards embellishing and interpreting James's life and character. However, do we get another, a fuller, richer picture of "the master" than we would get by perusing a straight biography? That, of course, is the crucial question when measuring Tóibín's efforts.

James fell in love with younger men several times. One of them was Paul Joukowsky. He is evoked in the first chapter with poignancy. James remembers a scene in Paris in which he stood in front of the house Paul lived in at the time, trying to attract Paul's attention. He attempted to write a story about this experience, but never finished it, could not finish it. For the "rest of the story", describing the actual encounter, "was imaginary, and it was something he could never allow himself to put into words" (p. 13). The thing which he most needed to write, his innermost feelings and desires, would never be seen or published, would never be known or understood by anyone. This is part of the essential loneliness of his life: that he could never express, always had to conceal what moved him most. In the mid-1890s, Henry fell in love a number of times, for instance with Jonathan Sturges and Morton Fullerton; each time, he placed the emphasis on friendship, not on physical consummation, which remained as dangerous, as threatening, as morally and culturally difficult for him as it had always been. Recalling Tóibín's *The Story of the Night*, one could have suspected that the author would happily seize opportunities for capitalising on James's latent or overt homo-erotic leanings by incorporating some gay scenes. Yet, fortunately (in my inconsequential estimate), when he does so, it is all done in the best of taste. In May 1899 Henry fell for the Norwegian sculptor Henry Andersen. The chapter devoted to this relationship is one of the most impressive in the book. Tóibín empathetically plays off Andersen's egomaniacal interests against James's experiencing a "strange glow of happiness" (p. 387). Visiting Henry at Lamb House in Rye, the sculptor is brimming over with his ambitions to make a mark on the world, and Henry, obviously uneasy about the nature of his feelings, at one point turns away from him, "facing towards the window with no idea why his eyes had filled with tears" (p. 404). That is excellent rendition, indeed. Tóibín is well-advised not to

make more of James's infatuation, because as Leon Edel notes in this respect: "The question that may be asked is whether the use of the term 'lover' and the verbal passion of the letters, was 'acted out'. The question, if relevant, cannot be answered. We simply do not know".[1]

The additional two women mentioned above were Henry's cousin Minny Temple and Constance Fenimore Woolson. He was deeply devoted to both of them. A impressive chapter is given to each woman, and what comes brilliantly across is James's ambivalent relationship with the female sex. He could only love women from a distance, being attracted to them and fearing them at the same time. Minny may well have been the one woman love of his life. She certainly formed the model for many of his heroines (cf. for example *The Portrait of a Lady*), having belonged to the part of him he guarded most fiercely, his hidden self. Woolson was a person he knew he could trust completely, someone he could remain close to while becoming distant, if he needed. She committed suicide, and James afterwards first tormented himself with feelings of having failed her, before convincing himself that he had owed her nothing, and had made her no promises that were binding. Nonetheless, a sense of guilt remained and kept lacerating him.

There are, no doubt, richly commendable things in the novel; but there are also, one feels sorry to say, matters to the contrary. At present, it would seem from the way commas are used that people are trying to get rid of the distinction between a restrictive and a non-restrictive relative clause. Newspapers are full of this moronic practice. But to find the same, nay, what is worse, quite a desultory handling of commas in a book by a serious-minded writer, such as Tóibín, is quite annoying. "[...] waving at Henry who stood fully clothed, enjoying the sun" (p. 401) There should, at least for my money, be a comma after "Henry'. This is just one of myriad such examples, and one would not mind if Tóibín were consistent in leaving out the commas altogether. But, strangely, some times they are there, and at other times they are not. Tóibín is a very busy man, he is almost ubiquitous. You meet him at conferences, and he is to be found everywhere in print and publishing. Perhaps he simply does not have the time to put in all the necessary commas. And what's in a comma, anyway?

James is frequently described as having supper or treating his guests to supper. Now, Henry James would never have had supper, at any rate not when entertaining. He would most decidedly have had dinner. Chapter 4 deals with events leading up to Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895. It includes scenes, involving Sturges, Gosse and James, in which the three men discuss the case. James detested what he saw as Wilde's combination of elegant vulgarity and theatrical cleverness, and all that these scenes manage to bring out is James's ambivalent attitude towards homosexuality. This apart, they add up to pretty small beer, or are even rather inane. It is no surprise why Tóibín should have chosen them and left out more significant aspects of James's life, such as those which could have shown why and how James elected to become a writer. Chapter 7 moves back to the time of the American Civil War and concerns itself with relationships in the James family, among other things throwing into relief the guilt of the brothers William and

Henry at not having volunteered to join up as well as showing Henry grappling with Hawthorne and reading Saint-Beuve instead of studying law at Harvard. Moreover, the first story Henry published is mentioned, but all this does next to nothing towards making intelligible James's choice of his vocation. The text suggests that certain incidents and experiences during that period in his life brought it home to him fiercely "how deeply real and apart [his] self was" (p. 231), an apartness that was to characterise his subsequent existence, but why and how this should have been remains curiously vague. We have only Tóibín's word for it, and this is just one example among quite a few where there is too much telling and not enough showing.

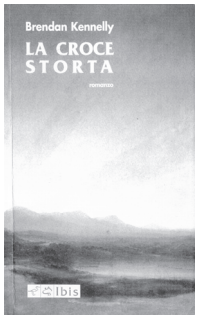
After his traumatic experiences with *Guy Domville* James developed, out of his work for the stage, a new narrative style. This, his mature narrative method may be termed dramatic, because he henceforth proceeded much in scenic fashion and worked on the basis of extensive quasi-theatrical scenarios. I, for one, would have liked Tóibín to have made the evolution of that descriptive method an integral part of his fictional life. What he seems to have attempted instead is to use narrative style that mimics James's: those involuted, seemingly never-ending sentences. Thomas Hardy spoke of "a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences", and H.G. Wells characterised James's prose style thus: "it is a magnificent but painful hippopotamus resolved at any cost [...] upon picking up a pea which has got into a corner of its den". Some parts of *The Master* are like that and it makes for prolix reading. But as Sterne's Tristram Shandy has it: "Let people tell their story their own way". I raise my glass to him.

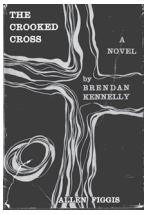
Finally, what portrait of Henry James emerges? It is the portrait of a man inconsolably pained by the past, by the loss he repeatedly had to suffer, pain and loss which only work could keep at bay; the portrait of a man harbouring a concealed self, a person adept at the art of self-effacement and addicted to refinements, of someone plagued by sexual hang-ups. Yet, do we get a richer, a profounder portrait of Henry James by reading *The Master* than we would get from straight biographies? I think not. But, then, why should Tóibín have gone to all the trouble which the writing of the novel must have involved? Your guess is as good as mine.

Note

1 Leon Edel, *The Life of Henry James*, vol. 2. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, p. 333.

The Crooked Cross *by Brendan Kennelly – Allen Figgis, Dublin, l963*





Aurora F. Bernardini

Allen Figgis, Dublin, l963. La Croce Storta – *Italian Translation by Giuliana Bendelli. Ibis, Como,* 2001.

Remanescent in a certain way of Solgenytsin's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*, this *quasi* – parabola, *quasi*-allegory is the first novel by Brendan Kennelly (the other is *The Florentines* of l967).

Born in Ballylongford in 1936 and presently professor of English Literature at Dublin's Trinity College, with twenty published books, Kennelly is recognized today as Ireland's most popular litterateur. Particularly important, according to the appreciation of John B. Keane – another famous Irish man of letters who knows him personally – are his collections of verses, easy to keep for the rhymes and rhythm that make them lasting, for example as in A *Time for Voices* and *The Book of Judas*..

The novel allows one to understand the reason for Kennelly's popularity: the direct, simple style, close to the orality of the anecdotes and the songs in the pubs (the author himself worked in the family's pub during his youth) making his public identify immediately not only with his way of telling them, with the protagonists" attitudes that go from triviality to epic, but also with the distresses of the little Irish town "forgotten by God ", whose problems, alas, are always so actual and universal.

The small town, situated on the southwestern coast of Catholic Ireland (Ballylongford – probably – the village where the author was born, which in the book is called Deevna, a typographical error of the pronunciation "Do the Heerna "from the Gaelic "Do Thighearna – "To the Lord")[1] faces a severe drought. It could be, refers the author, the drought of 1955, when the life of the town was maimed by desperation, illness and, mainly, by the exodus of young people. The book was written in only one week, under the impact of the vision of nine youths that were leaving Ballylongford to emigrate.

"If I speak *about exile*, paralysis, – explains the author to the Italian translator Giuliana Bendelli who interviewed him in 1994, 40 years after the first publication of the novel – [2] I do it because these terms are concepts in my mind, and not notions apprehended from Joyce or anyone else". Concepts are also the sentences that strategically sew the text here and there, aiming at the essence of the questions. He says, for example:

“One of the greatest scourges to humanity is indifference. The slime of the human pit is not the immoralist, the thief, the murderer or the liar.

It is the indifferent man or woman, the creature who has given himself up to a corroding futility of the heart and whom you want to fling “from your presence as you would excrete or vomit foul matter out of your guts”.[3]

Or in the end of the book, when the author is thinking about the innumerable young people that abandon the place: “In a very real sense, the little village was dying. Youth gives significance to childhood and to old age. It is the pinnacle of power and beauty; if it is taken away or destroyed, childhood and old age become meaningless and absurd.”[4]

The episodes that constitute the novel, tied by the evanescent vision of the young seductive “deviner” Sheila Dark that appears at the beginning and at the end of the book, go from the pub of Goddy, heart of a rat in the body of a god, pass by the shame of Naked Cully, meet the familiar tragedy All-Or-Nothin”, describe the fury of Mosheen against his father One-eye Palestine, accompany the poems and daring songs of Paddyo, the poetical walk of Anne Dillon, the fire in the house of Sailor and his cat Cleopatra, the feats of Pope, another kind of deviner, and, finally, the discovery of a spring of water that brings back hope to the population.

“Kennelly has this mysterious ability to help the people, to help them to retake the route of their existence and to follow it, in a safe way”, says his friend John B. Keane[5], without sentimentalism and with a grain of salt, when he adds that with him the advice of the friend didn’t work because of his nature of a mule and when comparing Kennelly’s ability both as a poet and as the excellent football player he was.

It is the same grain of salt that gives flavour to the book, intermixing a certain crude violence of fact and of expression with the naive trivialities of the speeches of the protagonists (real personages, obviously). “But his presence and his allure were such that gave the trivialities an unexpected intensity which made the familiar unexpected again.” Wise words of the critic Declan Kiberd who praises in his essay “Brendan Kennelly, a teacher” [6] the capacity that he had to keep alive the interest of his pupils.

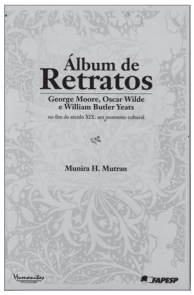
Does the Italian translation succeed in keeping the interest of the reader? Yes, in what concerns the epic, the primitive, the picturesque, the violent sense. Yes, for the caring and affectionate way how are brought to the reader the supplementary information gathered in the preface and in the critical essays. A little less, in what touches the so vivid and authentic oral speech (some songs, some poems...) of the characters of the book. There the Italian version seems... translated and not re-created.

But this is a characteristic of almost all literary translations into current Italian, which only a translator with the panache and style of a Gadda or a Pasolini could possibly shake off.

Notes

1 The explanation can be found in the preface to the Italian translation by Giuliana Benelli, p. 16.
2 See preface to the Italian translation, p. 15
3 The Crooked Cross, *p. 126*
4 *Idem*, p. 143.
5 John B. Keane in the essay “The Bard of Ballylonford”, pp. 169-175 of the Italian translation.
6 See the essay with this name at p. 183 of the Italian translation.

Álbum de Retratos



Carlos Daghlian

Munira H. Mutran. ***Álbum de Retratos. George Moore, Oscar Wilde e William Butler Yeats no fim do século XIX: um momento cultural.*** **São Paulo (Brazil): Humanitas / FAPESP, 2002.**

Dr. Mutran, the author of this book written in Portuguese and published in Brazil, is recognized as an authoritative Irish Studies Scholar. Both her doctoral and post-doctoral studies have dealt with Irish Literature and Culture. Besides publishing intensively in this area, she has, for many years, presided over the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies and, at the University of São Paulo, has taught courses and supervised many of Master's theses and Doctor's dissertations in this field. As expected, this book, a result of her post-doctoral activities, has made an outstanding contribution to Irish Studies, especially for Brazilians and other Portuguese language readers.

Album of Portraits, which deals with a cultural moment at the end of the nineteenth century, consists of an Introduction, a very informative chapter devoted to the study of those literary genres identified as "Literature of the Self", three central chapters dedicated to the three authors, namely, "The Portrait of the Artist in Paris" (Moore), "The Portrait of the Artist in London" (Wilde) and "The Portrait of the Artist in Dublin" (Yeats), and a concluding chapter entitled "The Picture of a Cultural Moment: 1880-1900," contextualizing and interrelating the three authors and their works. After a judiciously selected bibliography, useful for the beginner as well as for the experienced scholar, an appendix closes the book with a series of portraits, pictures, and paintings, which illustrate the "spirit" of the period under study. Its principal thread is Decadence, Symbolism, Realism and Naturalism as seen by Moore, Wilde and Yeats. As the author puts it at the very end of the "Introduction", "in the course of this book, I wanted to enhance the autobiographical genre as the mirror of a cultural moment and show how Moore, Yeats, and Wilde's autobiographical texts present great documentary and, above all, literary value. The threads which strongly connect them to the plot of that moment define them as heralds of modernity in the first decades of the twentieth century." (p. 33) The author also justifies her approach stating that it is in syntony with new historicism, which is concerned with the small things that make up the backdrop to great historical events.

Dr. Mutran considers the dissemination of Moore's ideas regarding nineteenth-century Literature as important for her purposes, since this period is characterized by great richness and complexity. Besides, Moore was lucky enough to meet and know some of the most significant authors of the period: Mallarmé, Zola, the Goncourts, Huysmans, and Victor Hugo. In Paris, he witnessed the struggle between the aesthetic forces of the Romantics, Symbolists and Realists, having sided with the latter.

After contrasting Wilde's emphasis on imagination with Moore's realism, Wilde's view of life, nature and art, and of the critic as an artist, are also discussed. According to the author, "The Decay of Lying" could be considered as a dialogue between Moore and Wilde about the relationship between life and art, a topic both were interested in. Wilde also observed a battle similar to that Moore had seen, but sided with those "who preached the veil instead of the mirror" (p. 164) and favored the symbol within an aestheticist and decadent attitude, one of modernity's features. It is also known that Wilde's poetry, fiction and some of his plays have a close relationship with music and painting.

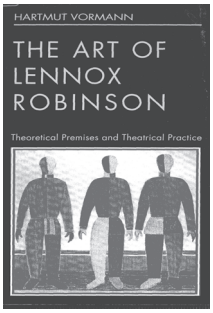
The chapter on Yeats shows both his course from painting to literature and the formative role of his four-year London sojourn. The importance of his talks with Wilde is also emphasized. The poet's preference for symbol and symbolism, also inspired in Blake, is explained by his hatred of science, rejection of realism as an imitation of life, and his interest in that which lies beyond reality. His interest in magic and occultism has to do mainly with the context of the end of the nineteenth century, the eve of a new century marked by the idea of an apocalypse, which, to some extent, may explain the link between poetry and belief.

As the author shows, the keywords for "the literature of the self" of the period under consideration are: portrait or mirror, young, artist, copy or imitation, imagination and symbol. This would suffice to give an idea of the complexity of this kind of literature. But the book is aimed at "the process of social and cultural transformations and their relationship with the creative activity when considering the autobiographical texts written by each one, what they thought of each other and of their times, the understanding of the tableau comes mainly from the differences and recurrences." (p. 221)

As a rich and useful source, this book will be of great help to all those interested not only in Irish Literature, but also in autobiography and other genres concerned with the literature of the self, as well as in literary criticism and comparative literature.

The Art of Lennox Robinson

Peter James Harris



Hartmut Vormann. *The Art of Lennox Robinson: Theoretical Premises and Theatrical Practice*. (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001). ISBN 3-88476-446-2. 300p. EUR 27.00 (paperback).

The name of Lennox Robinson was, for half a century, almost synonymous with that of the Abbey Theatre. From the success of his first play, *The Clancy Name*, in 1908, which opened just four days after his twenty-second birthday, and his appointment as manager early in 1910, following Synge's premature death the previous year, Robinson's involvement with the Abbey was that of a dedicated all-rounder. Aware of the limitations of the Abbey it was he who, with Yeats as midwife, conceived the brainchild of the Dublin Drama League in 1918. In 1925, two years after being appointed to the Board of Directors, he was responsible for the establishment of the Peacock, the Abbey's experimental studio. The following year he set up the Abbey School of Acting, adding responsibility for the training of young actors to the other hats he wore. Following Robinson's death on 14 October 1958, Gerard Fay, son of Abbey actor Frank Fay and London editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, opened his obituary in the paper with the words, "Apart from Sean O'Casey the last of the Abbey Theatre giants has now departed." Fay ascribed Robinson's gigantic status primarily to his innate talents as a theatre manager, but the *Times* obituary the previous day had highlighted his talents as a playwright, specifically mentioning fifteen of the twenty-four plays Robinson had written in the period from 1908 to 1937. Appropriately enough, the Abbey will pay homage to Robinson in its centennial celebrations by staging one of the last of those plays, *Drama at Inish*, at the Peacock Theatre in Autumn 2004.

In the light of Lennox Robinson's extensive and eclectic contribution to the history of the Irish theatre the critical attention he has received is striking by its paucity. Two years after Robinson's death Charles B. Smith completed his, unpublished, doctoral dissertation on Robinson's drama at Trinity College, Dublin, and four years later Michael J. O'Neill published a critical biography, inaptly inserted into the Twayne's English Authors Series. In 1982, Christopher Murray published *Selected Plays of Lennox*

Robinson, prefaced with a scholarly introduction. But almost two further decades were to elapse before Lennox Robinson's dramatic and non-dramatic writing was finally to be the focus of a full-length critical study. Although there was a time lag of two years between the publication of this book and its receipt by the present reviewer, it is not too late to welcome Dr Hartmut Vormann's long-overdue academic scrutiny of this most deserving subject.

Published in the *Schriftenreihe Literaturwissenschaft* series (List of Writings on the Science of Literature), edited by Heinz Kosok and Heinz Rölleke at the University of Wuppertal, *The Art of Lennox Robinson* is to be found in the company of more than 60 volumes published over almost three decades. Readers of the *ABEI Journal* will be familiar with the companion volumes, edited or written by Heinz Kosok himself, *Studies in Anglo-Irish Literature* (1982) and *Plays and Playwrights from Ireland in International Perspective* (1995), the latter reviewed by the present writer in the *ABEI Newsletter* in 1996. In his Preface Dr Vormann explains that his book is, with minor corrections, the text of his doctoral thesis, supervised by Professor Kosok and approved in 2000. This fact, however, should in no way deter prospective readers, for the book is written in a delightfully lucid, fluent style, mercifully free of the labyrinthine theorising that so many doctoral students of literature feel obliged to use.

It is, indeed, one of the proposals of the book to allow Lennox Robinson speak for himself. Divided into two main sections, *The Art of Lennox Robinson* sets out to provide a synthesis of the playwright's aesthetic concept of the theatre, culled from the wide spectrum of his non-dramatic writings and other contemporary sources, and then to demonstrate how these ideas were put into practice in each of nineteen plays. The exclusion of five of the plays is justified by the fact that one of them is actually an adaptation of Sheridan's *The Critic*, while the other four are the least successful of his comedies which were extensively covered in Lloyd Douglas Worley's unpublished dissertation in 1979 (omitted, by a minor oversight, from Vormann's extensive bibliography of secondary sources).

Although Robinson himself eschewed the very idea of a theory of drama, his intensive involvement in the theatre as actor, director, writer and reader, to name but a few of his roles, obliged him to formulate principles which would otherwise be known as theory. Under the heading "Robinson's Concept of the Art of the Theatre", Vormann therefore musters Robinson's comments pertaining to the three fields in which he was most active: Acting, Production and Playwriting. The portrait that emerges is of an aesthetic view composed of some deeply held convictions assailed by contradictions and inconsistencies. It is, for example, somewhat contradictory that a man who insisted that "the playwright's craft is only a craft, and that it is only in combination with producer and player that his play becomes a work of art", and who argued that the producer should have the right to alter the script of a play as necessary and that actors should be empowered to gag or interpolate dialogue of their own, should at the same time see himself first and foremost as an accomplished playwright. Robinson's concept of the

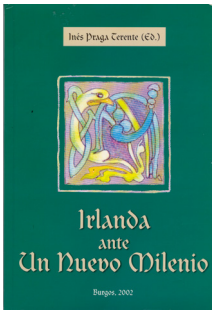
theatre is likewise presented as vacillating between the poles of the traditional and the innovatory. Notwithstanding the value he attached to the Aristotelian unities and the solid structure of the well-made play he nonetheless advocated experimentation in the theatre, expressing sympathy for Symbolist aesthetics and Expressionist techniques. Dr Vormann demonstrates that, above all, Lennox Robinson was a pragmatist, a practical man of the theatre seeking solutions for problems relating to audience appreciation of the play. As the most practical of the Abbey directors he could never forget that he was responsible for guaranteeing what theatre slang describes as bums on seats.

Having teased out an aesthetics of the theatre from Lennox Robinson's non-dramatic writings, in the following section, "Robinson's Practice as a Playwright", Dr Vormann goes on to submit the major part of Robinson's plays to the yardstick of his own criteria. This approach frees the author from the judgmental stance which characterised O'Neill's critical biography in 1964, since his avowed aim is "to reopen Robinson's case and to shed light on the many different and at times contradictory aspects of his *oeuvre*". Nineteen plays are discussed under six main headings: Peasant Plays, Political Plays, The Decline of the Big House, Social Comedies, Psychological Plays and Autobiographical Plays. The discussion of the plays in each group is prefaced by a section summarising the common characteristics which justify the inclusion of the plays under one heading. Since the objective is to guarantee a fair hearing for Robinson contemporary criticism is quoted in order to reveal that the case for the prosecution was frequently flawed by irrational attacks. Each play is then considered individually with a view to assessing how far it measures up to Robinson's own aesthetic imperatives. The section is rounded off with a number of preliminary conclusions. In this way the writer succeeds in presenting an impressive quantity of information in a clear and comprehensible form. Much credit is due to Dr Vormann for his impartiality. Despite his belief that Lennox Robinson's conviction as a second-rate playwright was unjust he is still prepared to paint the portrait of his dramatic works "warts and all". Thus, the plays are seen to reflect the antagonism between tradition and innovation which was demonstrated as characterising Robinson's non-dramatic writing. Dr Vormann concludes that Robinson attempted to "square the circle, contriving at once to highlight issues which were fundamentally alien to the Aristotelian drama and to maintain the conventions which lay at the heart of that tradition".

If any publication is capable of obtaining for Lennox Robinson the retrial merited by his major contribution to the development of Irish drama in the first half of the twentieth century, *The Art of Lennox Robinson* is certainly that book. It is meticulously researched, rich in relevant detail, and lucidly and impartially argued. Indeed, so convinced is the writer of the necessity of this debate being reopened, that he goes so far as to offer to facilitate the work of interested academics by providing them with copies of those of Robinson's plays that are now out of print. In the light of such open-hearted generosity it is hoped that it will not be thought mere carping if it is pointed out that, although Dr. Vormann makes extensive reference to Charles B. Smith's unpublished

dissertation, there is another that slipped through his net. It was a master's dissertation of 151 pages, approved at the University of São Paulo in 1996, produced by Gisela Borges Garnier Manfio under the supervision of Professor Munira Hamud Mutran, entitled *Tradição e inovação: elementos da poética do teatro em Lennox Robinson* (Tradition and innovation: elements of the poetics of the theatre in Lennox Robinson). Although written in Portuguese it most certainly warrants inclusion in the bibliography of Dr Vormann's excellent book.

"Who are you?" "I am Ireland" – Mise Eire" – (in the 21st century)



Cielo G. Festino

Inés Praga Terente, ed. *Irlanda ante Un Nuevo Milenio,* (Burgos: Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses, 2002)

In the "Foreword" to the publication of the essays presented at the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI) held in Burgos in 2002, Inés Praga tells that in Gaelic Ireland there was a literary genre called "aisling" (a vision), in which a wandering poet would meet a beautiful woman whom he would address and ask "Who are you?" to which request the woman would answer "I am Ireland" – "Miss Eire" and would go along to narrate her misfortunes. We understand that this literary genre, that brings together poet and nation, has been re-enacted and metamorphosed through the centuries to the present moment, no less in the papers presented at the conference of Irish Studies that took place in Burgos in which the authors have tried to address different aspects of "Miss Eire. Hence, these writings cover a wide range of subjects: cultural, linguistic, educational, cinematographic and literary that affect Ireland as it enters the new millennium.

In "The Cultural Greening of Britain" Rosa González Casademont deals with the shifting but still conflictive relationship between Ireland and England. If González Casademont quotes Terry Eagleton (2000)saying that "[it is] cool rather than corny to be Irish" (p. 17) showing the growing English interest in "things Irish', on the other hand, she cannot help remarking that "all that glitters is not gold" since two recent reports on human rights and race equality in Britain(Parekh 2000; Myles 2000) have shown that in spite of the notorious success of a some Irish artists, businessmen and "well educated young emigrants", a great portion of the Irish migrants in England suffer from a demeaning stereotyping. González Casademont addresses this topic through her critical reading of the TV comedy *Father Ted*, the theater play *Stones in his Pockets* and the musical *The Beautiful Game,* all recently staged in Great Britain.

As for Ireland's long-term cultural relationship with Spain, it is presented in the article by Eduardo de Gregorio Godeo "A Challenge for the New Millennium: New Directions in Research on the Early Cultural Relation between Ireland and Spain" and Marie Byrne's "The Irish College in Seville (seventeenth century). While the first article brings a reading of Spanish influences in early medieval Ireland through a detailed

study of Isidore de Seville, and the remarkable infuence of his Latin works on the Irish literary production of the seventh century, Marie Byrne's article traces the history of the Irish College in Seville, founded in 1612.

The question of literary relationship between Ireland and Spain is discussed in "The Spanish Cid: A Hero Prototype in Anglo-Irish Literature: 1810:1850" by Asier Altuna García de Salazar who discusses how "Spain, Spanish history and literture, especially with the figure of the Cid [Rodriguez Diaz de Bivar] acted as important points of interest for the Anglo-Irish writer, not only as sources of a past of glory and splendour, but also as present instances in the discursively historical conflicts and culture of the time" (p. 52).

The theme of nationalism and the revival of Gaelic is raised in the very interesting piece by Antonio R. Celada "The Necessity of De-Anglicising Ireland de Douglas Hyde: Todavía un Reto para el Nuevo Milenio?" which offers an acute and detailed reading of the speech delivered by Douglas Hyde (1860-1949), when he was apointed President of the National Literary Society in 1892. In his famous speech, "The Necessity of De-Anglicizing Ireland", he urges the Irish to introduce a deep change in their country, through a revaluing of the Gaelic language, "…not as a protest against imitating what is *best* in English, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish, and hastening to adopt, pell-mell, and indiscriminately, everything that is English, simply because it is English". Celada explains that for Hyde, Ireland's big mistake had been its imitation of foreign values at the risk of demeaning their own. In this way, they had "ceased to be Irish without becoming English".

From a linguistic perspective, Mary O'Sullivan tackles the differences between English and Hiberno-English in her careful study "Hiberno-English and the Present Perfect". Along the same lines, Patricia Trainor deals with the same topic in "English as it is spoken in Ireland". As for education in Ireland in the age of information techonology, María Yolanda Fernández Suárez offers a detailed study of the subject in "Ireland on Call-Recent Developments in Education".

Irish cinematographic productions, focusing on the Irish question, also find their place in the present volume in two articles. In the first one, "Irish Cinema and the New Millennium", Maite Padrós Fabregó discusses Irish movies from the 1990s and suggests that, surprisingly, the films that have had the highest level of acceptance among foreign audiences are those that perpetuate "stereotyped representations of Ireland" while those production of higher artistic value that have had great acceptance by both Irish critics and audiences, have been ignored abroad. On the other hand, in her article, "El conflicto norirlandés y el uso de la violencia en *In the Name of the Father* (1993) and *The Boxer"*(1997) Tamara Benito de la Iglesia analyzes how both movies reconstruct historical events and also how the violence brought about by those events, namely "The Troubles" that started in Northern Ireland with the division of the island in the late 60s, produced tension between the individual and the community.

Last but not least, Irish literature has been given ample space in the present anthology bringing several essays that cover, among other issues, topics related to the

woman's question as is the case of "Albert Nobbs: El travestismo femenino como fórmula para ocupar espacios laborales vetados a las mujeres" de María Elena Jaime de Pablos, in which the author discusses how in this short story George Moore ironically tranvestites its feminine character to get a man's position in the labour market.

Narrated in a very enticing manner "'The Birth of Our Lives Has Come': Somerville and Ross as Ascendancy Women Writers" by Silvia Díez Fabre, intertwines the biography of the two empoverished cousins Edith Somerville (1858-1949) and Violet Florence Martin (1862-1915), members of the Ascendancy, who instead of getting married, according to convention, set up a writing partnership, and the plot of their almost autobiographical novel *An Irish Cousin* that narrates the plight of a woman faced with the decline of her own social class, her personal choices, as regards marriage, and family responsibility.

In "Irish Women's Discourses in Mary Lavin and Edna O'Brien's Short Stories" María Amor Barros del Río shows how, in their short stories, these two prominent writers of the Irish tradition discuss the controversial concept of "Irishness" from a feminine perspective through the narrative of the apparently insignificant daily life of ordinary women that, when looked closely, acquire the status of representations of Irish history.

One of the most enlightening articles in the present collection, in the sense that it reconsiders an apparently innocent genre like the fairy tale is "Espacios Invisibles, Espacios de Silencio: Emma Donoghue y su Re-visión de los Cuentos de Hadas" by Marisol Morales Ladrón in which the author intelligently shows how this genre, through the didactic value that has been traditionally assigned to it has, for generations, masked the hegemonic values of patriarchal society implicit in it. In this context she considers the feminist re-writing of popular tales by Emma Donoghue in her collection *Kissing the Witch* (1997). Women related topics are also raised in "La iglesia Católica y la Mujer en la Poesía de Austin Clarke" by Leonardo Pérez García and "Revising Women's Inclusions in Irish Anthologies of Poetry" by Ana Rosa García García.

In his revealing article "From Furrow to Jet Stream, From Worry to Wonder: Heaney and the Space of Writing" the Portuguese writer Rui Carvalho Homem focuses on the relationship between "space" and "place', a central issue in those countries that like Ireland, have undergone the colonial experience. He quotes Carter *et al* (1993, p. xii) who pose the question "How [...] does space become place?" To which they answer "By being named [...] Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed". Carvalho Homem gives another turn to these reflections by adding that "If discourse is acknowledged as that which defines places within space, then literature and geography cannot but approach and mirror each other". In this context he goes on to consider the represetantion of space in places in the poetry of Seamus Heaney.

Though from a different perspective, the question of "place" is also raised in the article "John Hewitt: singular representante de una estirpe de colonizadores" by Maria Celsa Dapia Ferreiro where she interestingly assumes the perspective of this poet

from the Ulster, descendant of a long line of English colonizers who, after several centuries on the island, claim the soil as their own in spite of their lineage.

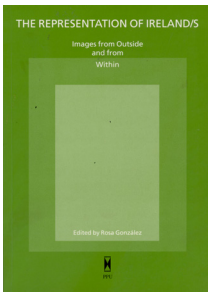
The issue of "Ireland" as place is also implicitely suggested by Antonia Rodriguez Gago in her article "Irish Beckett" in which, as she herself puts it, her aim is to show "how deeply Beckett was influenced by the Ireland of his childhood and youth, especially by the landscape, the mountains and the seaside of the South of Dublin and also by the marginalized people living in this area – tramps, beggars and common people". Also, in his outstanding article "Sean O'Faolain: Still Here and Now", Alfred Markey returns to this author's texts to show how, already in the 60s, the Irish landscape was not a smooth "space" but "a place" criss-crossed by a hybridity that ran against the grain of the homogenizing discourse of nationalism and, hence, forecast the present conflicts with Nigerian and Romanian imigrants.

In his article "Martin McDonagh's Demythologisation of the West of Ireland" Víctor Muñoz i Calafell analyzes the centrality of the West of Ireland in Irish literature to then show how this playwright "laughs at and finally destroys the myth resulting from this setting". Along the same lines "the myth of rural Ireland, as a repository of the nation's soul" is reconsidered in "Archetypes exposed: Murdering the Irish Matrix in Patrick McNabe's novels" by Ana Esther Rubio Amigo, while Eva Herreros in "Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds*: A Brief Incursion into Irish Mythology?" shows how for O'Brien myth is "a device to carry out an extended enquiry about the concepts of selfhood, community and the value of literature through the exploration of the *author-figure* and his stature in the community".

Language, as a literary strategy, is a central concern for several of the authors who contributed to the present volume. Hence, Carlos Villar Flor in his article "Comedy Versus Tragedy in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*" centers his discussion on "the double nature" of O'Brien's humor as shown in *The Third Policeman.* In this light, he constrasts O'Brien's "peculiar blending of humorous techniques and language – his unusual combination of comedy, parody and Irish crack –with the intimidating undertones of fear, darkness and threat". Also, in "Language as a Means of Incommunication in Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*" José Francisco Fernández Sánchez considers what he sees as Beckett's failed attempt "to transcend language and turn it into a system like music".

Finally, language as trope is also one of the central issues of Rosana Herrero Martín's reading of "The Encraochement of Realities over Dreams in Brian O'Friel's *Give Me Your Answer, Do!*" in which she argues that Friel pays constant attention in his craft to three main devices, one of them being, "the fictive powers of language" and its immense creative, transcendental potential".

The Representation of Ireland/s



Luci Collin Lavalle

The Representation Of Ireland/s – Images From Outside And From Within. **Edited by R. González. Barcelona: PPU, 2003, pp. 380. ISBN 84-477-0841-1.**

Based on the contributions made to the II International Conference of the Spanish Association for Irish Studies, hosted by the University of Barcelona in 2002, this collection of 32 essays approaches issues which range from law, history, sociology and cultural theory to film, media and literary studies. Grounded on the notion that every society, as a response to conflicts it is subject to, tends to create particular modes of representation, the volume provides insights into attempts at defining Irish culture at home and abroad; in this context, the word *representation* acquires a very broad sense, involving the construction and the reproduction of images and ideas. The essays were grouped into eight sections, commented below.

The opening section of the book, entitled "Modes of Representation", starts with Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's essay, which evaluates the critical role of the Irish oral tradition in historical narrative and reveals the forms of representation in which the "story of Ireland" has been written in the shifting circumstances of Ireland through the centuries. By viewing popular memory as an "alternative history", the next two essays focus on the importance of images in the representation of disputed events in contemporary history. The phenomenon of wall murals, and their connections to political transformation in Northern Ireland, is discussed by Bill Rolston. The other essay, by Lance Pettit, takes the Bloody Sunday, made into a film by Paul Greengrass in 2002, and examines how drama-documentary TV films challenge society by dramatising popular versions of the past. The notion of "national culture" is questioned in the following two contributions: in Jean Mercereau's essay on Irishness in *The Irish Times,* and in Inês Praga-Terente's, which analyses the representation of Irish identity by the national-international band U2.

"Images of Colonial Ireland" is the folloving section, and Timothy Keane opens it up with an essay which suggests a re-evaluation of the role that Ireland played in the agitation for political reform in England during the 19th century, in efforts which culminate in the publication of William Cobbet's *A History of the Protestant "Reformation" in England and Ireland*, a book that deconstructed the perception "Ireland" and "the Irish"

held in English popular culture. Next, Silvia Diez-Fabre investigates Somerville & Ross' *The Real Charlotte* (1894) and Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), by arguing that both books present a "transcendental approach" to the physical universe of Anglo-Ireland, leading to a view of the land as "a powerful spiritual element that passes judgement on the Ascendancy and brings in a verdict of guilty" (p. 107).

Misrepresented or under-presented aspects of Northern Ireland are investigated in the third section, called "Images of the North". Based on interviews carried out in 1999 on Nottingham residents, Lesley Lelourec reveals the link that exists between the average English person's knowledge on Ireland/Northern Ireland and their perception of The Troubles. Christian Mailhes discusses the Good Friday Agreement (1998) and its reform of the Criminal Justice system. At last, looking at the narrative of the Battle of the Diamond in (1795), Wesley Hutchinson examines the way Orange historians represent the beginnings of the Order, markedly in their "tales of wonder".

The importance of orality in the Irish language is the main topic of the section entitled "Language". Ríóna Ní Fhrighil addresses the question of the country's linguistic heritage in the work of the contemporary Irish poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. Ruth Lysaght examines films made by the Irish language television TG4, especially the short films of the Oscailt scheme, which pose a new version of the Irish through fictional narratives set in contemporary Ireland, evincing an interest in the Irish language as a cultural entity. Rosana Herrero discusses the verbomotor society depicted in Synge's play *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), analysing the dynamic language of the country people of Mayo, inventively recreated in their lavish domestic rhetorical imagery.

The next section, "Gender", is engaged in the analysis of recent plays that challenge the traditional identification of gender and nationhood. Luz Mar González Arias shows how the romantic Cathleen Ní Houlihan is transformed into an Irish Medea in Marina Carr's play *By the Bog of Cats…* Marisol Morales-Ladrón looks into gender relations in the controversial play *Translations* (1980), by Brian Friel, which exposes the historical clash between Britain and Ireland. The plays *Ourselves Alone* (1986) and *After Easter* (1994), by the Northern Irish playwright Anne Devlin, are studied by Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides, who argues that both plays challenge the traditional process that naturalises women's passive role within the nationalist and religious construction of Irishness.

A wide variety of literary genres are covered in the section "Literary Imagining". Two Irish autobiographies, *The Islandman* (1929), by Thomas O'Crohan, and *Paddy the Cope* (1942), by Patrick Gallagher, are analysed by Munira Mutran, who punctuates the value of the autobiographical mode in the historical texture as both document and intimist literature. Revisiting the play *On Baile's Strand*, Keith Gregor discusses Yeat's vision of Irish nationhood and his interest in the prolific Irish lore, opening the debate over whether a "national" drama should just resurrect legends or look for a more contemporaneous Irish voice. Two plays written by Beckett, *Rough for Theater I* (1956) and *The Old Tune* (1963), are analysed by Katherine Weiss, who deals with the problematization of Irishness in Beckett's texts.

Still concerning "Literary Imagining", Carlos Villar-Flor explores traces of Irish Catholicism in two of Flann O'Brien's early novels, *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) and *The Third Policeman* (1940), and argues that O'Brien's Catholic upbringing pervades these novels in such a deep way that the characteristic relativity and scepticism associated with postmodernism are absent from both, a fact that calls for a further evaluation of O'Brien's position as forerunner of postmodernity. Anne Goarzin discusses texts that involve photographic devices: the "reversed image" produced by a *camera obscura* in Joyce's short stories, the traceable photographs framed in Neil Jordan's visual text, and those that Paul Durcan's poems create before the reader's eyes. Finally, Juan Elices-Agudo discerns the mock-heroic background that pervades McLiam Wilson's novel *Ripley Bogle,* tracing the way Wilson subverts the epic ideals by applying its satire not to the formulas of classic epics, but to the corruption of ongoing political, economic, religious and social debates.

Six essays form the section titled "Contesting Received Images", which focus on writers, artists and practices that undermined the prevailing normative social discourse and, thus, accelerated shifts in "official" representation of national culture in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. Two of them share a feminist posture: first, the tendency the poet Eavan Boland has to reject the nationalist images of Ireland (as the vulnerable virgin or the mourning mother) is discussed in Maria Pillar Villar Argáiz's essay; next, by analysing short stories written by contemporary Irish women who discussed crucial issues of women's condition in the 1970's and 80's, Angela Ryan argues that these writings assisted social change by replacing, in the Irish *imaginaire*, a series of new attitudes to various social questions.

Images of Ireland from a Spanish speaking context are addressed in the last section, called "Intercultural Links". Patricia Trainor evinces the similarities between "Hibernia" (Iberland, Iverland, Ireland) and "Iberia" (Hispania, Spain); supported by a series of historical episodes, Trainor's essay concludes with the idea that the Irish were in fact a Latin tribe lost in the North. The image of Ireland and the Irish in Galicia during the 20th century is discussed in Margarita Estévez Saá and José Estévez Saá's paper, that reinforces the historical concomitants between Galicia and Ireland. Asier García de Salazar studies the play *The Guerrilla: Sketches of Spanish Character* (1837), by James Sheridan Knowles, and reveals how Knowles, by representing the Spanish character, throws light into the Irish discourse of the period, marked by a biased approach that depicted "the other" as picturesque and debased. At last, a study of the "gauchos ingleses", originated by the Irish settlement in Argentina in the 19th century, is presented by Edmundo Murray, who relates the elements of the Anglo-Irish heritage as joined with the local post-colonial culture forming a unique set of shared values, as they come to be represented in the form of an Irish-Argentine literature.

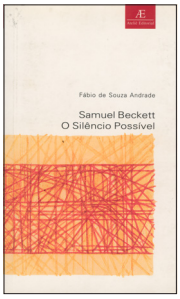
To understand the Irish and its representation, one cannot disregard that Ireland self-image was conditioned by its protracted colonial status, years of economic stagnation and mass emigration, facts that curtailed the opportunities Irish people had to represent

themselves, and generated images of Irishness often mixed and competing – not only from outside but also from within the island. Besides, one cannot forget that, in parallel, Ireland has also been viewed, in the diasporic imagination, as a mythic place. All these elements make a thorough understanding of the Irish difficult. This is why *The Representation of Ireland/s* is an elucidating book, for it successfully reveals the multiplicity of Irelands that emerge from different historical, geographical, and mental locations. This collection of essays enlightens the way Irish thought evolves, from that previous notion of Irish identity established by values such as the Catholic religion, the Gaelic language and the commitment to an Irish Republic, to a more flexible identity that represents Irish culture and national heritage.

Also worth mentioning are the discussions the book raises on the history of the Irish people, and the long-term consequences of their colonial past. Many essays approach the psychic price the colonized paid when they succumbed to the devaluation of their native culture by the colonizer, in a process of rejecting their heritage; in this context, it is relevant to consider that for the Irish who stayed in their country during the years of massive emigration, the use of the English language, and a life conducted through the medium of English, became also a sort of exile.

Evincing how sensitivity to different forms of representation is essential in the "excavation of *mentalités*", *The Representation of Ireland/s* contributes to put the study of Irish culture on a solid footing, based on open-minded critical investigations. The book illustrates that the study of Ireland/s has an ample spectrum, encompassing multiple aspects which happen to form the reality of a place constantly discovering and rediscovering, formulating and reformulating its own identity, to be subsequently expressed through diverse modes of representation.

Going after the Wish for Silence: Understanding Some of Beckett's Voices



Ana Helena Souza

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

If the number of critical essays and studies is a good indicator of the importance of a writer, Samuel Beckett's work can be placed without a doubt among the most important of the last century. And it actually is, but in its own right as an ouevre that has caused impact, brought forth innovation, questioned standards, and radically changed the canon of works to which it belongs.

Dealing with it, therefore, implies from the start a double challenge to the critic that is faced with Beckett's varied, never easily-grasped texts and plays, and with the immense, ever-growing critical literature about them. In *O Silêncio Possível*, Fábio de Souza Andrade responds successfully to this difficult task, introducing the reader to the beckettian world through the author's most famous novels, the post-war trilogy *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*. Andrade's book addresses some of the essential issues raised by Beckett's work, which include the relationship between subjectivity and consciousness, the modern crisis of the subject, and the representation of the world in literature. Underlying these themes is the concern about the place occupied – or rather, created – by the three novels in the development of this art form.

Before carrying out his readings, Andrade proceeds with a revision of the critical bibliography in a very profitable manner for he not only gives the reader a thorough account of beckettian studies, but also stresses the main points he is about to discuss. Thus, the reader is given a consistent view of the questions raised by Beckett's works at the same time that he gains insight into the critic's chosen path to approach them.

The first leading topic tackles the way the trilogy moves further and further away from a realistic representation of the world. Crucial to this dismantlement of the novel form as it had been inherited from the 18th and 19th centuries is the treatment given to the first-person narrators. There is a progressive loss of objectivity presented as an impossibility of assurance; any traces of reliability still found in the modern narrator are definitely wiped out. As Andrade indicates, the most common figure of speech is

epanorthosis, defined as the process of resuming something said previously only to reinterpret it in a totally opposite light, or at least in a way that is significantly different from the first interpretation given. A famous instance of this procedure is the end of *Molloy*: "Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining."[1]

The two parts of the first book of the trilogy are analysed in detail: the narrators, temporality, allusions – mythic, blibical, literary, philosophical –, and the difficulty of finishing. Although Andrade does not state it, we can see these elements grouped as follows: the first two, comprising the narrator's importance and the handling of temporality, which no doubt constitute essential aspects of any novel, are shown to have been consciously subverted by Beckett in his search for a new form "to accommodate the chaos", as the novelist himself put it. The last two are studied in the peculiarity that stems from the same source: Beckett's only too personal way of quoting without ever fulfilling the reader's wish for a completely clear reference and the author's/narrator's uneasiness with ending due to a rejection of completion.

Instead of focusing straight on *Malone Dies*, Andrade skilfully introduces one chapter on the play *Fin de Partie*.[2] Begun in 1954 after the publication of *L'Innommable*, *Fin de Partie* was written in French and concluded in 1956. Fábio de Souza Andrade researched the Beckett archives and gives an account of the genesis of this play, illuminating Beckett's methods of composition, not only by discussing the early drafts, but also by commenting on the modifications introduced by Beckett after the play had been first staged. The importance of this strategy is twofold: it takes us closer to the beckettian writing process and it brings together the prose work and the theater.

In the critical bibliography of Beckett's work, there is a certain cleavage between the in-depth studies dedicated to the theater – and other media – and those dedicated to the prose. When the critic chooses to include among his readings of the three post-war novels a reading of *Fin de Partie*, he demonstrates that Beckett's prose and his theater should not be regarded as separate works in different genres bearing only occasional resemblances to one another. In fact, Andrade presents clear relationships between this play and the trilogy. The similarities go beyond a likeness in themes; they reveal an artistic effort which went in the direction of expressing the subtraction, the poverty, and the failure conspicuous in the world. Consequently, the reading of *Fin de Partie*, because of the abundance of material related both to its genesis and to the later changes therein introduced, helps us understand the radical descent into destitution carried out by the two other novels of the trilogy.

So, when Andrade comes to discuss *Malone Dies*, the reader is much more aware of Beckett's artistic procedures. He argues that the narrator feels the urge to keep author and character, fact and fiction, life and art, apart, only to stress more and more his inability to do so. Malone, like all the other narrating characters of the trilogy, faces enormous difficulties to conclude what he set about to do. This is seen pervasively in the failure of his project to create stories that should have nothing to do with himself, along with the ever-ineffective record of his decaying condition and the inventory of his possessions. Malone is, thus, a completely unreliable narrator; not even his death can be regarded as an assured end,

for, as Andrade pinpoints, the title of the novel – *Malone Dies* – expresses it in the present tense, revealing its continuity or inconclusiveness.

And indeed, the reader will meet Malone again in the opening pages of *The Unnamable* when its narrator sees a procession of previous beckettian narrators and protagonists orbiting around him. *The Unnamable* is regarded as the summit of Beckett's project to create "a literature of the unword", as the writer described it in a letter he wrote almost two decades before. The chapter dedicated to this most demanding work, however, does not have the same strength or length of the others. Even so, Andrade explains Beckett's refusal to grant the voice in the book any identity by discarding the narrator's attempts at forging one.

Andrade's book guides the reader through the tough trail that Beckett's first French novels opened up for the prose of the 50's, disclosing an unknown path for the genre. It is worth it to reinforce that the author aptly reviews the essential beckettian criticism. On the one hand, he incorporates classic readings of Beckett's ouevre, as the one on humour by Ruby Cohn or some of Hugh Kenner's insights on the peculiar nature of the novelist's use of Cartesian philosophy. Also, relevance is given to the essay on *Fin de Partie* written by Theodor Adorno. The German philosopher's approach of Beckett's play draws attention to specific connections Andrade's own book is intent on making; namely, the role the three post-war novels play when it comes to reconsidering the "mimetic categories in western fiction". On the other hand, the critic discusses points of view with which he disagrees, avoiding evasion of controversial topics such as the appropriateness of the configuration of the subject only *a posteriori* as supported by Thomas Trezise.

O Silêncio Possível ends with some notes on the fiction written after the trilogy, leaving the reader with a comprehensive view of Samuel Beckett's work, as well as with a promise of further critical writings on the writer's later prose. Moreover, there are four extremely useful appendices. They include two of the most important writings in which Beckett himself gives hints about his views on literature and art: the German letter of 1937 and the three dialogues with Georges Duthuit of 1949. In addition, there are some short interviews with the author and a chronology of the main books cited, with the respective references to their translations into Portuguese when they exist.

Fábio de Souza Andrade's book reveals a serious academic scholar and essayist. It makes its way into the vast canon of Beckett studies with a great advantage to the Brazilian reader: he will be able to find a much clearer passageway into this ouevre in which the wish for silence produces a plethora of voices not easy to make out.

Notes

1 Samuel Beckett. *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York: Grove Weindenfeld, 1991, p. 176.

2 This play has also been translated into Portuguese by the author of *O Silêncio Possível* (Samuel Beckett, *Fim de Partida*. Trad. Fábio de Souza Andrade. São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, 2002).

Crédito das fotografías: Juliana Resende/BR Press/R2Digital

EU enlargement and Ireland's experience in the EU, focusing on the implications for political culture and sense of national identity

Remarks by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese on the occasion of her visit to the University of São Paulo, Brazil, Friday, 26th March, 2004

Excelentíssimo Senhor Vice-Reitor Hélio Nogueira da Cruz, Excelentíssimo Senhor Professor Celso Lafer, senhoras e senhores, bom dia a todos.

It is a great honour for me to be here at the University of São Paulo (USP) today as part of my first visit to your wonderful country and this vibrant city. It is particularly good to be here as you celebrate the seventieth birthday of this illustrious university which has impressive cultural and educational links with Ireland dating back over many years, long preceding the establishment of our Irish Embassy in Brasilia in November 2001.

We are very grateful in Ireland to know that there has been an Irish Studies Programme here at the university going back more than two decades, to 1980.

I am following in the footsteps of our Taoiseach (Prime Minister) who visited this campus in the summer of 2001 so you can see how highly we respect this institution! For my own part, I am especially glad to be in São Paulo this year, on the 450th anniversary of the city, widely renowned as the "capital of South America". USP is a byword for academic excellence in many fields and I am delighted to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering.

It has become fashionable in Irish academic circles in recent times to organize conferences, and to publish books and articles, on the theme of "re-imagining" or "re-thinking" Ireland and it is not difficult to see why. Within a relatively short space of time – roughly co-terminous with our now thirty-year membership of the EU – Ireland has changed out of all recognition. Mono-causal explanations are never satisfactory or adequate but there is little doubt that the day our then poor and peripheral nation joined the then ECC was the day things started to change for the better. Today Ireland is the success story par excellence of the European Union, the country whose stellar economic makeover is a source of inspiration to the ten new countries lined up for admission to the Union on May 1st.

As that historic day looms I welcome this chance to address the issues of EU enlargement and the Irish experience of EU membership.

The planned enlargement constitutes one of the most exciting and positive developments since the Union's foundation in 1957. It is a resounding affirmation of the great and noble concept of the Union's founding fathers, formed when Europe lay in ruins after the two World Wars of the twentieth century: a concept dedicated to progress and partnership between free democratic nations, each exercising, but also pooling, its own sovereignty to create a consensus, with a view to guaranteeing stability, peace and shared prosperity.

ln the words of historian John Gillingham "the spectre of war between the former European great powers has been banished" and while "the integration process has not always been smooth, neat, or pretty, or economically and politically costless, yet it has helped bring Europe to the cusp of a new era".

On May 1st, a little over a month from now, it will be Ireland's privilege, as Presidency of the European Union, to welcome the ten acceding States, not just as old friends, but as new partners. Each one of those States made enormous and testing strides in order to qualify for membership, and in doing so earned the respect and admiration of their European kin. They will bring a new dynamic to the Union for each has its own historic perspective, its distinctive identity and rich heritage, and its own particular way of looking at the world. One of the major challenges for the Irish Presidency, now, will be to manage the initial stages of the post-enlargement transition phase, while maintaining the momentum of the ongoing EU agenda which includes the finalisation of a new EU Constitution and progressing what we call the Lisbon Strategy, designed to make the EU the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy in the world.

In 1973, when, along with Britain and Denmark, Ireland joined the Union, (EEC) we saw membership as a stimulus for economic growth and development of our society. Equally importantly, we saw it, politically and psychologically, as a means of underpinning our independence generally, specifically, and lessening our economic dependence on Britain. By pooling elements of our hard-won national sovereignty, we believed that we would gain more effective control over our destiny than we would by standing alone and on the margins, and we have not been disappointed. A simple statistic can convey the extent of change on joining the European Economic Community, our GDP per capita was 60 percent of the Union average. Growth, mostly gained in the last decade has brought that figure closer to 130 percent. Predictably this rapid catch-up has attracted much international attention and provoked the coining of the phrase the "Celtic Tiger economy."

The evidence is in that the EU has been a powerful engine for economic and social progress in Ireland. Foreign direct investment has been a particular sucess story, unemployment has dropped from 20 percent to 4 per cent and a century and a half of outward migration by our people has been reversed.

Our membership of the European Union has not solely brought economic progress but has also helped accelerate the pace of positive social progress. Equal pay and opportunity for women, together with better conditions of employment generally, owe much to our membership of the European Union and the huge increase in the

participation of women in every sector of the economy has vastly increased our human equity resource base, releasing much previously wasted talent and creativity into every level of Irish life. As I like to put it, we are much closer to being a society that flies on two wings rather than floundering on one.

With the passage of time, it is easy to forget that the improvement in Ireland's fortunes was not an overnight phenomenon, nor was it accomplished without sacrifice. Membership, while providing the necessary foundation, structure, support and resources, did not in itself guarantee sucess. Rather, it provided opportunities – after that it was up to us, just as it is up to each Member State to use those opportunities wisely and well.

Among the opportunities presented to us by membership of this college of European nations has been the chance to make a significant contribution to Europe's development, to extend our global influence as a nation and to have a much more powerful voice at the international negotiating table than we would have outside the Union.

We are a nation with a rich ancient heritage, a cultural distinctiveness and a national identity forged over many difficult centuries when we were an oppressed and an unhappily colonised people. We fought hard for our freedom and for our sovereignty. Some people worried that our small nation would be culturally overwhelmed inside Europe. Thirty years later we know those worries were unfounded for there is today a surging cultural confidence and exuberance in Ireland and in our global Irish family. Many of our colleagues in Europe also have strong, proud cultures, France, Germany, Italy, the Iberian countries and now the incoming new members from Slovenia to Estonia. Working with them on a daily basis has been a very positive experience for us culturally, sharpening their curiosity about what it is to be Irish and our curiosity about the cultures of our brother and sister Europeans.

Working with our British counterparts has also created a much healthier relationship of trust and friendship between our two neighbouring but often not so neighbourly islands. Out of that improved relationship has evolved a Peace Process in Northern Ireland and an end to the violent conflict which political enmity between Ireland and Britain has caused for generations. So far from causing us to alter our sense of national identity, membership of an expanding Europe has helped us towards reclaiming our true identity, which for many years had been stifled, first by colonialism, then by a depressed post-colonial mentality.

Membership of the European Union has allowed us to remember anew our shared European history, the Irish monks who brought Christianity from an enlightened learned and scholarly Ireland to mainland Europe of the Dark Ages, the French and the Spaniards who tried to help us in our many fights against the might of the British Empire, the European neighbours who gave our people shelter and education through the atrocious Penal times, the Irish writers who travelled throughout Europe and who put the name of Ireland on the world's literature map – names like Joyce, Beckett, Yeats, Shaw and Oscar Wilde.

Joyce exemplifies the European aspect of Irish identity. International in his vision and impact, but always intellectually rooted in his native city of Dublin, Joyce could be said to represent the spirit of modern Ireland, confidently Irish, comfortably European, fearlessly global in outlook. lt is fitting that the centenary of *Ulysses* will be celebrated around the world throughout the year – including here at USP in June.

Concluding Remarks

The Ireland Joyce left was considerably more mono-cultural and homogeneous than the Ireland of 2004. Nowadays our nation is seen as a land of opportunity and so Ireland is rapidly becoming a multicultural society, open to a panorama of cultural influences. Visiting a Dublin primary school a couple of weeks ago over one hundred of the four hundred children were non-nationals and between them they came from over twenty countries around the world. Just as the Irish who emigrated to America, Canada, Australia and Britain brought with them the gift of their food and drink, music, dance, poetry, stories and history, so too the newcomers to Ireland will enrich and deepen our culture with theirs.

On May 1st in Dublin we will host the Day of Welcomes when ten new nations become members of the European Union. Many of their names evoke memories of World War, of Communist domination, of desperate struggles for freedom – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia. The Czech Republic. The grim hand of history kept them under dark clouds for many years. Now they return to their natural family, their common European Homeland reminding a too comfortable generation, in case they forget, that this Union is a miracle. Out of the blood-soaked landscape of twentieth century Europe when neighbouring nations reduced each other to ashes, came the voice of sanity of the founding fathers of the Union – continue to fight each other and you will waste every childhood, consign every generation to misery. But if you work together, they said, you will reveal Europe's true strength and best destiny. They were right. There has never been a more prosperous, more confident, more educated Ireland nor a more peaceful Europe. The Union is our best gift ever to Europe's children. It is also of course an influential participant in international trade. We look forward to a brighter future as Europe and Mercosur (Mercosul) work for increased development and towards a fairer more humanly decent world for all.

Muito obrigada

Voices from Brazil

"Datiloscrito do GR: registro de uma narrativa oral aproveitada em Uma Estória de Amor, *Corpo de Baile"*. (Pasta E28, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros - USP)

Vaqueiro Manoelzão, in May 1952.

Guimarães Rosa's poetics and the sertão

Sandra Guardini T. Vasconcelos

Abstract: *Guimarães Rosa and James Joyce are very frequently compared due to the experimental nature of their work. This paper argues, however, that there are significant differences in their experimentalism and that Rosa engages in a long-standing tradition in Brazilian literature that explores and at the same time challenges the potentialities of regional culture. His work configures a dialectical interplay between erudite and popular sources, oral and written language, modern and traditional forms. The sertão – the backlands – as envisaged by him is shaped as a landscape which is both imaginary and real, concrete and symbolic, geographical and cultural.*

Writers are not commonly their own best critics, but it may not be amiss to lend an ear to Guimarães Rosa's comment when he refuses comparison with James Joyce. "People are not correct when they compare me with Joyce", he once said, "he was a cerebral man, not an alchemist". The opposition between intellect and miraculous transmutation implied in this statement can be quickly counterbalanced by what is really thought to put the two writers on a similar standing. Joyce's elaborate and revolutionary work on words, as we all know, was an essential element in his creative process and one could immediately refute Rosa and insist on the comparison resorting to the counter-argument of both writers' experimentalism, which would have no other effect than take us all back to where we started. The difficulty of Joyce's writing, the unreadability of his texts and the challenges they pose to literary criticism are in fact common features he shares with his Brazilian counterpart. Both Joyce and Rosa prevent any passive consumption of their work and place considerable demands on the act of reading and interpretation. But my argument is that Rosa's experiments with language might indeed eventually prove to be completely different from those generally associated with the work of the author of *Ulysses*. Let me clarify, however, that this article is intended as a discussion of the pratices of writing Rosa engaged with and of his poetics rather than of Joyce, his work or a comparison between the two. It is, therefore, the nature of Rosa's experiments with language and form that is my main focus here.

If it is true, according to Colin MacCabe, that Joyce declared war on the English language and that he was "concerned not with representing experience through language

but with experiencing language through a destruction of representation"[1], Rosa, on the other hand, declared that his intention was to go back to the origins of language. In an interview given to Gunther Lorenz in January 1965, one of the rare occasions on which Rosa spoke at length about his work, he claimed to be a reactionary of the language ("um reacionário da língua"), that is, somebody who tried to restore the original meaning of words, by cleansing them of the impurities of daily use ("impurezas da linguagem quotidiana") and by using each one of them as if it had just been born[2].

When he died, in November 1967, João Guimarães Rosa had long been acknowledged as one of Brazil's most prominent literary figures. His reputation had been built throughout twenty years of activity, during which he had published four collections of stories and one novel. Two other collections of short stories would be published posthumously[3]. A doctor who gave up medicine to become a diplomat, Rosa actually started his career as a writer in 1946 with *Sagarana*, immediately acclaimed as one of the most important works of fiction to appear in Brazil in years. Antonio Cândido was one of the first to point out the density and vigour of his linguistic achievements, on which, according to the Brazilian critic, Rosa constructed a very personal mode of regionalism. The amalgam of local and universal elements, concrete landscape and magical space would become one of the writer's most striking characteristics, which made the same Antonio Cândido say a few years later about *Grande Sertão: Veredas*:

> A experiência documentária de Guimarães Rosa, a observação da vida sertaneja, a paixão pela coisa e o nome da coisa, a capacidade de entrar na psicologia do rústico, – tudo se transformou em significado universal graças à invenção, que subtrai o livro à matriz regional, para fazê-lo exprimir os grandes lugares comuns, sem os quais a arte não sobrevive: dor, júbilo, amor, morte, – para cuja órbita nos arrasta a cada instante, mostrando que o pitoresco é acessório e na verdade o Sertão é o Mundo.[4]

This documentary aspect of Rosa's work, his observation of life in the interior of Brazil, the interest in language and in naming that Cândido refers to can be witnessed in Rosa's Archive, kept at present at the Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros (USP), with the materials the writer collected throughout his life: his library, with around 3.500 volumes, much of his correspondence, personal documents, originals, etc. Of special importance to those concerned with Rosa's creative process are the thirty-odd folders and the twenty-odd notebooks in which he carefully made notes about the enormous range of subjects that caught his attention. Also important are the seemingly endless lists of words, expressions, names and toponyms that he gathered over the years. They cover a wide variety of topics and show the writer at work, patiently finding his way through language, expanding his vocabulary, changing standard forms, inventing new ones, as if language were some plastic substance that he could mould at his will.[5]

But it was not only words in isolation which Rosa was concerned about. His folders also contain countless registers of popular quatrains, songs, romances and stories that he had read or heard. In fact, a vast collection of oral literature, consisting of whole or fragmentary texts, which, like a *bricoleur*, Rosa integrated in the narrative fabric of his work. His special interest in the *romanceiro*[6] is demonstrated by the several versions of romances which we find in his Archives. His use of this material varied from the simple inclusion of a fragment, as he did with the traditional *Romance da Donzela Guerreira*[7] in one of the stories of *Corpo de Baile*, to the borrowing and full development of this same theme in *Grande Sertão: Veredas* [*The Devil to pay in the Backlands*]. Romances were also the source he drew from to produce his own versions of these traditional stories. *Histórias de bois* were among his favourite, not only because of his proverbial fondness of horses and cows but certainly because they provided him with the sort of material he could work on. He seemed to be particularly interested in the processes of composition used by folksingers and story-tellers. Drawing from some of the popular, oral romances he had collected, like *Vaca do Burel, Boi Pintadinho, Boi Liso, Rabicho da Geralda, Boi Espácio,* and the *Romanço do Boi Bonito,* he created his own version of the *Décima do Boi e do Cavalo*, included in *Corpo de Baile*. In the manner of the ancient rhapsodes, he fused existing materials, combining motifs and themes, rearranging and juxtaposing elements taken from tradition.

We know that in oral culture transmission depends on formal devices that are intended to help the singer's memory. Thus, he draws from a common repertoire of rhymes, poetic formulas, recurring motifs and rules of combination that can be permanently rearranged to produce a new song or a new story. The interplay between improvisation and repetition is central to this process and seems to define the way traditional oral culture operates. So, in a way, more than the texts themselves, Rosa used these principles of composition to create his own versions of "popular" poetry, like the *quadras* (quatrains usually rhyming ABAB) which are frequent in his texts. Other popular forms, like proverbs, can similarly go through different degrees of re-elaboration and intervention, in order to undo the reader's expectations or to make a critical comment on their content.

But perhaps the most handy example of Rosa's ability to draw from and combine different sources is embodied in the very word *Sagarana,* where a neologism is created by the juxtaposition of a word of Germanic origin (*saga*) to a Tupi suffix *rana* meaning in the manner of, similar to. By blending the oral and the written, local and foreign elements, erudite and popular sources, Rosa functions as "an agent of contact between two cultures", in the words of the Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama.

The popular element is never accessory in Rosa's text. It is never an embellishment. It is never included because it is picturesque, or helps lend a local touch to his narrative. Stories, songs, fragments of romances or quatrains play an essential role in so far as they can shed light on a character's predicament or make a comment on the action. Sometimes they function as enigmas that demand elucidation. Whichever be

the case, they always take on a symbolic significance. The same symbolic significance which Rosa attributes to the *sertão*[8], this concrete but also legendary space which he portrays in his fiction. The *sertão* was an integral part of Guimarães Rosa's early life. But it was most of all a vivid presence in his memory and imagination. Rosa's formative years as a writer began in his childhood. He grew up listening to stories of herdsmen and *jagunços*[9], told him by Juca Bananeira, a black worker employed by his father.

But it was much later, as a practising doctor in the interior of Minas Gerais, that Rosa came into even closer contact with the world he had heard of since he was a boy. As he rode his horse to visit his patients, he learned about the region he was going to depict in his works and went on listening to stories, told him by its inhabitants. It was to this world that he gave literary shape in *Sagarana*: its people, customs, its landscape, animals, vegetation. After becoming a diplomat, he returned to Minas Gerais once again in May 1952, this time to drive cattle with a group of herdsmen. The journey was recorded in two journals that, albeit fragmentary, enable us to retrace his itinerary, roughly the same paths his *jagunços* would tread in *Grande Sertão: Veredas.* Riding his horse with a notepad and a pencil in his hands, for ten days Rosa took notes. At this point, the ethnographer, the linguist, the anthropologist comes in full view. Moreover, the journals allow us to witness the process of creation of his stories. Words, phrases, songs, names of trees, different kinds of vegetation, different types of cattle, scraps of conversation – everything seemed to draw his attention. His unquenchable curiosity and his keen interest in the region and in the herdsmen and their way of living can be seen in his careful register of what he saw and heard. From these notes, images of the *sertão* start taking shape amidst comments, observations, songs and stories. The notes draw a landscape made of minutiae: the description of a cow, of a bird, a plant, the colour of the sky. In everything, an eye for details. Very often, apparently objective descriptions are permeated by the writer's own very personal touch and outlook.

From these details, Guimarães Rosa draws his cartography of the region. There are myriads of flashes showing the attentive observer but also revealing the poet who, in the very act of documenting, often transcends the objective note and offers his own particular way of mapping out the *sertão*. The notes evidence the writer's adherence to the world surrounding him, captured through his senses. Reality is perceived by eye and ear. This sensorial experience of reality is a common feature in the stories of *Corpo de Baile.* Olquiste, one of the characters of *Recado do Morro*, can be seen as a kind of alter ego of the writer, taking notes in his pad, asking questions and drawing. On horseback, crossing the *sertão*, Olquiste reminds us of Rosa. Throughout the journey, the traveller, carrying his camera and his binoculars, takes notes of the geographical and geological features of the region, with its lakes, caves and hills. The details of flora and fauna do not escape his foreign eyes either.

In *Buriti,* hearing is the sense through which one of the characters apprehends reality. The sleepless Chefe Zequiel looks into the night only to find out that "No silêncio nunca há silêncio" ("In silence there never is silence"). The voices and images of the

sertão, suggested in the journals, make themselves heard and seen in his works. Stifled by what Rosa calls "a megera cartesiana" (the Cartesian shrew), the voice of nature speaks to the poets and outcasts who people his stories. Some of the characters can listen to it; others have to learn, as is the case with the narrator and protagonist of *São Marcos*, one of the stories in *Sagarana*. Blinded by an old wizard's verbal spell, he is forced to listen to the voice of nature to be able to find his way out of the woods. In *Cara-de-Bronze*, the main character leaves on a journey in quest of the "quem das coisas", "cumprindo lei de ver, ouvir e sentir"[10]; in *Recado do Morro*, a message sent by nature travels through the *sertão*, carried by lunatics, children and outlaws until it becomes a song which contains within itself a revelation; in *Uma Estória de Amor*, the stories told by two old outcasts lend meaning to the main character's dry and lonely life.

Like in *Sagarana* and *Corpo de Baile*, Rosa's stories thematise the power of poetry to restore meaning in a world which has lost its transparence and has become a forest of unintelligible symbols. Words, in isolation or in songs and narratives, are seen as a poetic force which can overcome wear and trivialisation, drawing man and nature closer.

Rosa saw the writer as someone who should invest himself with the power to invent and to name. In his poetics, signifier and signified belong to each other ("o som e sentido de uma palavra pertencem um ao outro"). So, it was the writer's task to work towards the re-motivation of language, in an attempt to restore man's relation with nature. To re-motivate prose and re-work forms he would make lavish use of poetic techniques and devices: alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, syntatic reversals, ellipses, onomatopoeias, etc. "O Burrinho Pedrês", one of the stories in *Sagarana*, shows some of these devices in action: the sound of hooves and the slow rhythm of the cattle being driven in the *sertão* are produced by alliteration, internal rhyme and metrified prose. The use of a sequence of sixteen verses of five beats aims at reproducing the slow movement of the cattle, with their flanks swaying, their backs rising and falling, the noise of bellows, the clash of horns.

The *sertão* has been a theme in Brazilian literature practically since its beginnings. In fiction, it has been represented as a desert, cattle-raising hinterland region, which is a reserve of ancestral traditions and repository of ancient language and customs. For Guimarães Rosa, the *sertão* was certainly much more than a geographical or sociological concept. It was a cultural notion but, more than anything else, it was "sheer literature", as he himself used to say. Rosa contributed, with his works, to constituting the *sertão* as a literary landscape, much in the same way other Brazilian writers like José de Alencar, Euclides da Cunha and Graciliano Ramos had done before him. For him, the *sertão* was not the slow-changing face of the country but a matrix space, where the re-enchantment of the world was still possible. The *sertão* defies precise definition and Rosa's work stresses time and again its elusive but all-encompassing nature. His probing of this region, its habits and inhabitants takes on an epic dimension in what is considered to be his masterpiece.

Grande Sertão: Veredas is the self-searching narrative of the now retired Riobaldo, who looks back on his early life, his becoming a *jagunço* and his rise to the position of chief of his band. More importantly, it is his attempt to order and make sense out of his past experience, in his quest for the meaning of his existence. In almost 500 pages of dense and convoluted prose, he enquires about the nature of good and evil, about issues of life and death and tries to come to grips with two absolutely central questions which keep obsessively recurring throughout his account: the existence or nonexistence of the devil and the nature of his relationship with Diadorim, a mysterious *jagunço* who turns out to be a young woman fighting among cruel and fierce men.

Opening with a dash, his narrative is one uninterrupted flow of speech, punctuated with questions posed to an interlocutor whose presence is hinted at but whose voice is never heard. Riobaldo addresses him, questions him and echoes his comments but his listener never says a word. This long monologue, in fact a dialogue in which one of the parts is missing, is intended as an account of his past adventures and ramblings as a *jagunço*, given to this educated man who came from the city to hear him and take notes.

Naturally, one of the problems Riobaldo will have to face is how to order his narrative of events in a life that seems to have been lived under the sign of disorder. Trying to make sense of everything he has gone through and frequently referring to the difficulty of narrating, he ends up by producing a very entangled account, which moves backwards and forwards, reproducing at the level of discourse his ramblings through the *sertão*. The first fifty or sixty pages of the novel reflect this difficulty and are the most obvious example of the problems facing both narrator and reader. Riobaldo, seeming to grope for a beginning, disregards chronology and, in a process of association of ideas, brings up the issues which worry him. False starts, disrupted chronology, fragments of past events, a string of stories which seem to be trying to illustrate something, a maze of motifs, a profusion of names and places, the pervasive figure of the devil – these are some of the problems the reader is confronted with in this convoluted, confusing narrative which begins *in medias res*. Only later will he resume a fairly chronological order. But even when he does, he often goes back, corrects himself, explains, questions and, at the same time, keeps on drawing his interlocutor's – an obvious vicarious representation of the reader– attention to the difficulties involved in the process of narrating. Throughout, the difficulty of narrating is equated with the difficulty and danger of living. For Riobaldo, language fails to give a truthful account of these past events, of reality, of his experience. His awareness is voiced in these two complementary ideas, which echo each other and become a leitmotif and a refrain repeated insistently throughout the text: "Viver é muito perigoso" (living is very dangerous) resounds in "Contar é muito dificultoso" (telling is very difficult).

Riobaldo's concern and his speculations about the existence or nonexistence of the devil permeate the whole of these introductory pages. The account he gives of his life and deeds as a *jagunço* is triggered by one question, which he would like his learned listener to help him clarify: the possibility of making a pact with the devil.

The middle-aged Riobaldo is concerned with solving this enigma, which has disturbed him ever since he quit his life as a *jagunço*. He is particularly interested in finding out whether he did or did not really make a pact with the devil in order to defeat the assassin of one of the main leaders of the band. This doubt has persecuted him all along and he tells his life story in the hope that he will be able to come to a conclusion. As a matter of fact, he expects his listener, who is a man of learning, to help him pacify his tormented conscience, by stating the devil's nonexistence.

The story he has to tell is one of love and battle: of his love for the ambiguous Diadorim and of the war he had to fight to defeat the evil forces of the murderer and to restore order in the *sertão*. It is the story of the hero of unknown origins who joined the band and became in turn Riobaldo Tatarana (fire caterpillar) and Urutu Branco (white rattle-snake); it is the story of his gradual transformation into the leader of the band and into the man who succeeded in crossing the ominous desert – the Liso do Sussuarão –, and in bringing about the fight in which Diadorim kills the treacherous Hermógenes and avenges Joca Ramiro's death.

It was to fight this deadly war and beat the murderous traitor that Riobaldo had resorted to a pact with the devil. The crossing of the infernal Liso had been tried before and had failed. In order to attack the rival band, it had to be tried again. Uncertain about his courage and strength to succeed in defeating the devilish Hermógenes, Riobaldo felt he needed an alliance with dark and evil forces.

His narrative is an investigation into the nature of evil. Searching his conscience, he now tries to understand fear, courage and the drive that makes people act. And this Faustian *jagunço* muses, suffers and repents. By going over all he has been through, he is able to come to the conclusion that the devil, like the *sertão*, is everywhere. It is inside man, objects, and plants. For Riobaldo, the cosmos is ruled by a positive force, represented by God, but it is equally prone to the intervention of a negative, evil force which he identifies as the devil. Because of the perennial struggle between these two principles, living is very dangerous and difficult. It is certainly this same idea that underlies Riobaldo's conception of the *sertão* as both paradisiacal and infernal. It is the luminous, idyllic region of waterfalls, birds, trees and flowers, but is also the threatening, nightmarish stage of violence and conflict, where the war rages between rival bands and between the *jagunços* and the governmental forces.

In *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, "Tudo é e não é." (Everything is and is not). Ambivalence or what Antonio Cândido has called "reversibility" seems to be its underlying principle. It is in Diadorim, the *Donzela Guerreira*, who is both man and woman, both the *jagunço* Reinaldo and Maria Deodorina, the only daughter of Joca Ramiro. It is also in the *jagunços*, sometimes represented as heroes, sometimes as outlaws. It is in the *sertão*, which, according to one character, "não é malino nem caridoso; ele tira ou dá, agrada ou amarga, conforme o senhor mesmo." ([the sertão] is neither evil nor good; it gives or takes, pleases or embitters, depending on each person);

Presiding over the characters and the landscape is the São Francisco River. As it did with Riobaldo's life, the São Francisco is a line which divides this territory into two parts ("O Rio São Francisco partiu minha vida em duas partes"). The concrete reality and relative order and normality of the right bank, with its identifiable topography, contrasts with the other side of the river. The left bank, with its clearly ominous connotation, is a legendary space, shrouded in mystery; it is a misty place of unclear geographical boundaries, unstable names, peopled by men who seem to have emerged from the depths of time.[11]

The river, a very physical presence in the novel, takes on a very clear symbolic meaning, as an image of change and fluidity. It embodies what seems to be the meaning Riobaldo has been looking for, in so far as it contains the idea of crossing and of life in flux. On trying to order the facts of his existence, on searching for the hidden significance of his past experience, Riobaldo realises something essential about himself. His revision of the past, therefore, enables him to come to terms with his own life and with himself. Despite the difficulties involved in, and the problematic nature of the account, telling ultimately helps give meaning to lived experience. Through narrative, Riobaldo is reconciled with his past and the man he used to be. His confrontation with himself is what brings about his realisation that life implies risk and change and that accepting this is a means of living to the full. In his reconciliation with the past, he closes his narrative with the one significant word which seems to explain it all: travessia (crossing).

This protean text defies the reader and offers a multiplicity of readings. In its very complex structure, *Grande Sertão: Veredas* blends lyric, epic and dramatic elements. Simultaneously narrative of adventures and metaphysical investigation, the novel also retells a turbulent and bloody chapter of Brazilian history, when bands of gunmen infested some regions of the country spreading violence and disorder. *Grande Sertão: Veredas* is an extraordinary example of how Rosa's works transcend regionalism, no matter how imbued they are with regional flavour and atmosphere. It is also an example of what he could do with language. By choosing to let Riobaldo speak in his own voice, he resolved the dichotomy between the language of the erudite narrator and the language of the "sertanejo" (the inhabitant of the *sertão*), a formal problem which had been typical of the work of most of his predecessors. His disruptive syntax, his use of onomatopoeia and alliterative prose were some of the instruments he employed to re-motivate language. Pauses, interjections, ellipses, punctuation were some of the devices he used to create the effect of orality, so characteristic of his work.

If these stylistic devices are used to a large extent in *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, Rosa's experiment with language offers an even more daring instance in *Meu Tio, o Iauaretê*, a short story in *Estas Estórias* which is a reinterpretation of another central myth in Brazilian literature – that of the Indian. Here, besides his usual practice of deforming or creating words, Rosa produces a hybrid language, resulting from a blend of Portuguese and Tupi. The short story thematises the tragedy of the loss of cultural identity of a half-Indian, half-white jaguar hunter. Not knowing exactly who he is, the

narrator and protagonist of this story ends up by identifying himself with the jaguars he used to hunt. The narrative of his metamorphosis into what he believes to be his ancestral totem is dramatised in a one-sided dialogue, punctuated by words and expressions in Tupi – the *nhenhengatu*[12]. As the hunter narrates jaguar stories, he speaks jaguar language, which he calls "jaguanhenhén". His speech is full of onomatopoeias, interjections and Tupi monosyllables and words, as, for example, in "Eh, catu, bom, bonito, porã-poranga!"[13], where the words in Tupi and their "translation" in Portuguese come side by side to make understanding possible. Throughout, as he speaks and drinks "cachaça"[14], his evil intention of killing his listener transpires. In the end, his listener, who had foreseen danger, shoots him. As he dies, the metamorphosis shapes itself as an inarticulate language and becomes a sequence of monosyllables and animal-like sounds:

> Ui, ui, mecê é bom, faz isso comigo não, me mata não ... Eu – Macuncozo ... Faz isso não, faz não ... Nhenhenhém ... Heéé! ...
> Hé... Aar-rrâ ... Aaâh... Cê me arrhoôu... Remuaci... Rêiucàanacê... Araaã... Uhm... Ui... Ui... Uh... uh... êeêê... êê...ê...ê....[15]

Just as Tupi is used in the text to refer to the jaguar language, the jaguar theme is resolved in the metamorphosis of the hunter into his ancestral totem. Thus, form and meaning mirror and belong to each other. More importantly, language is re-worked not simply for the sake of experiment but rather to voice a cultural loss.

Reading Guimarães Rosa is not an easy task and I have just pointed out some of the aspects of his achievement and mapped out some of the problems involved in reading his works. As for Joyce, I am sure the problems posed by his own use of language and by his daring experiments also demand from the critic strategies of interpretation. If it is true that his works investigate the process of the production of meaning and defy the usual relations between reader and text, then perhaps critics need to try to function as mediators and help these writers be read. As for the opposition that Rosa saw between himself and Joyce, the differences lie in their outlook and relation to their own cultures and literatures rather than on one being a "cerebral man" and the other being "an alchemist". Rosa used to the full his intellectual capacities as a reader interested in philosophy, religion, and literature; as an ethnographer, keen on foreign and domestic cultures; as a linguist, completely aware of the possibilities inherent in his own native language and in the several others he knew very well. If he was an alchemist, as he implies in the contrast with Joyce, the power of transmutation of language and form is not a prerogative that belongs to him only, no matter what different effects his work may have produced and ends it may have served.

Notes

1 Colin MacCabe. *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word.* Macmillan, 1981, p. 4.

2 Gunther W. Lorenz and João Guimarães Rosa. Literatura deve ser vida: um diálogo de GWL e JGR, in *Exposição do Novo Livro Alemão no Brasil*, 1971 (Genoa: January 1956), pp. 341 and 338 respectively.

3 *Sagarana*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro: Universal, 1946; *Corpo de Baile*, 1st ed., 3 vols. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1956; *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1956; *Primeiras Estórias*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1962; *Tutaméia*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1967; *Estas Estórias*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1969; *Ave Palavra*. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1970. Only three of his works are available in English: *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, trans. James L. Taylor and Harriet de Onis. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1963; *Sagarana. A cycle of stories*, trans. Harriet de Onis. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966; *The Third Bank of the River and other stories*, trans. Barbara Shelby. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968.

4 Antonio Cândido. O Homem dos Avessos, in *Tese e Antítese*, 2nd ed. São Paulo: Nacional, 1971, pp. 121-39 (p. 121).

5 His creations and re-creations are identified with a mark – *m%* – to indicate that he had modified something.

6 Collection of romances and popular songs and poems.

7 This is a traditional story, which centres round a young woman who dresses as a soldier and goes to war to fight and defend her country.

8 Sertão: word of unknown origin; a geographical but also cultural concept, it does not translate well as backland.

9 Jagunço: a gunman belonging to a band.

10 The character involved in the quest of the "who of things" must obey his master's order that he should see, hear and feel.

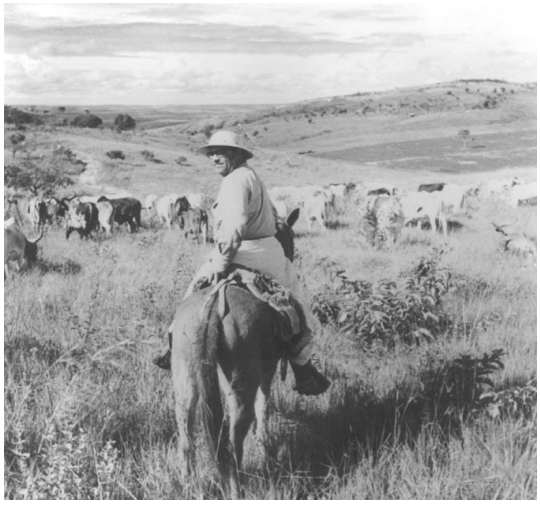
11 Antonio Cândido. O Homem dos Avessos, in *Tese e Antítese*, 2nd ed. São Paulo: Nacional, 1971, pp. 121-39.

12 Nhenhem: Tupi word meaning to speak; nhenhengatu: living language.

13 Catu: bom (good); poranga; bonito (pretty, beautiful).

14 Cachaça: strong alcoholic drink made from sugar cane.

15 João Guimarães Rosa. Meu Tio o Iauaretê, in *Estas Estórias*, op cit., pp. 126-59 (p. 159). Macuncozo: African word used here to refer to blacks killed by jaguars; re muaci: Tupi words meaning friend, half-brother; rê iucà anacê: Tupi words meaning frind, to kill, almost relative.



Guimarães Rosa on horseback in the "Sertão" of Minas Gerais, in Mai 1952

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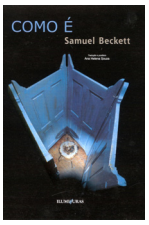

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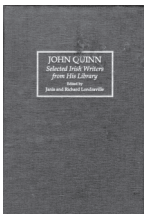


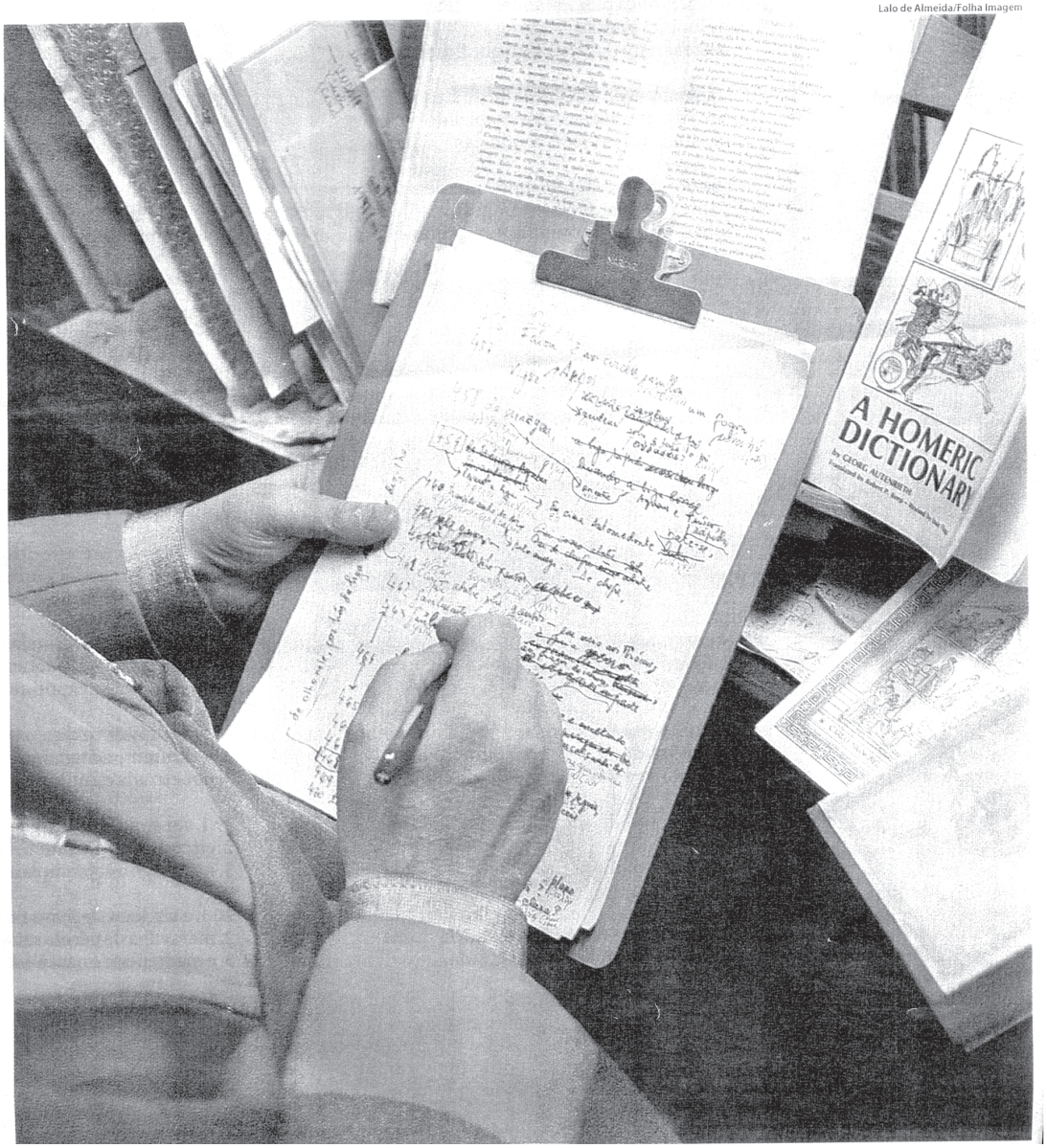
Remembering

POEM
I loved my friend.
He went away from me.
There's nothing more to say.
The poem ends,
Soft as it began–
I loved my friend.

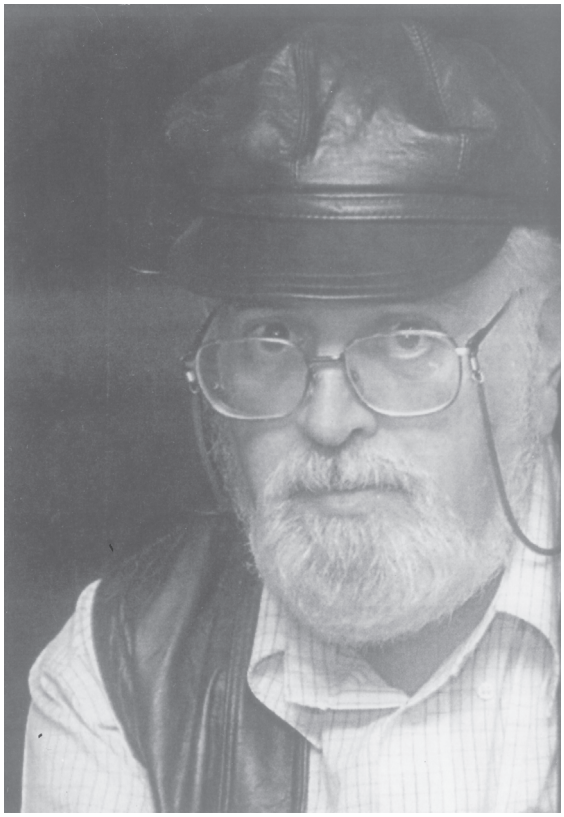
LANGSTON HUGHES

Haroldo de Campos vai ao centro da Terra

Lalo de Almeida/Folha Imagem



Haroldo de Campos during his "homertherapy", translating the *Illiad* by Homer
(he translated 17 from 24 cantos)



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Haroldo Eurico Browne de Campos (1929-2003)

Poet, educator; born in São Paulo, Brazil; LLB, University of São Paulo, 1952 and PhD, 1972; Dlitt (hon.), University of Montreal, Canada, 1996. Visiting Lectr. Tech. Hochschule, Stuttgart, Germany, 1964; advanced scholar NAS, United States, 1968; allocation DGRC, Paris, 1969; visiting Professor, University of Texas, Austin, 1971 and E.L. Tinker visiting Professor, 1981; visiting Professor Pontifical Catholic University, São Paulo, 1971-1972, Assistant Professor, 1973-1978, Associate Professor, 1979-1981, Professor, 1982-1989, Professoor Emeritus, 1990-2003. Visiting Professor Yale University, New Haven, 1978; founder, promoter Concrete Poetry Movement, São Paulo, 1953-56; com.member Cultural dell Inst. Italiano di Culture, Brazil, 2000; board director World Poetry Academy. **Author: Poetry:** *Auto do Possesso*, 1950; *Servidão de Passagem*, 1962; *Xadrês de Estrela*s, 1976; *Signantia:Quase Coelum*, 1979; *Galáxias*, 1984 (Roger Caillois award 1999), *A Educação dos Cinco Sentidos*, 1985; *Finismundo*: A Última Viagem, 1990; *Os melhores Poemas*, 1992 (Jabuti prize, 1993); *Yugen, Caderno Japonês*, 1993, *Gatimanhase Felinuras*, 1994; *Koncrét Versek*, 1997; *Crisantempo*, 1998 (Jabuti prize 1999); *A Máquina do Mundo Repensada*, 2000; **essays:** *O Arco-íris Branco*, 1997; **anthology:**

Oswald de Andrade, 1967; **co-author:** (with Augusto de Campos) *Revisão de Sousândrade*, 1964; *Sousândrade-Poesia*, 1967; *Os Sertões dos Campos*, 1997; *Guimarães Rosa em Três Dimensõe*s, 1970; (with Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari) *Teoria da Poesia Concreta*, 1965; **translator:** *Dante: Seis Cantos do Paraíso*, 1976; *Qohélet* (Eclesiastes), 1990 (Jabuti prize, 1991), *Bere'Shith*, 1993; *Mênis: A Ira* de Aquiles, 1994; *Hagoromo de Zeami*, 1994 (Jabuti prize 1994); *Escrito sobre Jade*, 1996; *Pedra e Luz na Poesia de Dante*, 1998; Os Nomes e os Navios, 1999; (with Otavio Paz) *Transblanco*, 1994; contbr. *Essays to books*. Recipient Jabuti prize Câmara Brasileira do Livro, São Paulo, 1992; *Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Palmes Academiques*, Republique Francese, 1995, *Octavio Paz* prize Octavio Paz Foundation, 1999; fellow John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, 1972; Fulbright Hays Foundation, 1978.

Contributors

BANVILLE, John was born in Wexford, Ireland, in 1945. His first book, *Long Lankin*, was published in 1970. His other books include *Doctor Copernicus*, which won the 1976 Tait Black Memorial Prize, *Kepler*, which won the 1981 *Guardian* Prize for Fiction, and *The Bookf of Evidence*, which was shortlisted for the 1989 Booker Prize and won the 1989 Guinness Peat Aviation Award. He has also received a literary award from the Lannan Foundation. His most recent novel is *Shroud*. He lives in Dublin.

BARRY, Sebastian was born in Dublin in 1955. His plays are *The Pentagonal Dream* (Damer Theatre 1986); *Boss Grady's Boys* (Abbey Theatre, Peacock stage, Dublin 1988), which won the first BBC/Stewart Parker Award; *Prayers of Sherkin* (Abbey Theatre, Peacock stage, Dublin 1990, where he was Ansbacher Writer-in-Residence); *White Woman Street* (Bush Theatre, London 1992); *The Steward of Christendom* (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London, 1995) Writers' Guild Award (Best Fringe Play) - Nominated for Olivier Awards (BBC Best Play) - Best Play of 1995 in The Guardian, Daily Telegraph and Time Out - Best Drama Award, Brighton Festival; and *The Only True History of Lizzie Finn* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin 1995). His latest play is *Our Lady of Sligo,* (The National Theatre, London, Summer 1998 and The Gate Theatre Dublin September 1998). His plays are published as *Boss Gradys Boys* and *Prayers of Sherkin* (Methuen, 1992); *The Only True History of Lizzie Finn*, *The Steward of Christendom* (Metheun, 1995); *White Woman Street* (London, Methuen, 1995); *Our Lady of Sligo* (London, Methuen, 1998); and *Hinterland* (Abbey Theatre, 2002). His translation of Lorca's The House of Bernada Alba was staged by the Abbey Theatre in 2003. His novels are *Macker's Garden* (Dublin, Writer's Co-Op 1982); *Time Out of Mind/ Strappado Square* (Dublin, Wolfhound, 1983); and *The Engine of Owl-Light* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1987); and *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (London, Picador, & New York, Viking 1998).

His poetry collections are *The Water Colourist* (Dublin, Dolmen 1983); *The Rhetorical Town*(Dolmen 1985); and *Fanny Hawke Goes to the Mainland Forever* (Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1987). For children he has written *Elsewhere* (Dolmen 1985). He has been Writer Fellow, Trinity College Dublin, during 1995-1996, and has won numerous awards. He lives in Wicklow and is a member of Aosdána.

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