ISSN1518-0581

ABEI Journal

The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies

Number 13 November 2011

Universidade de São Paulo
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ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies is indexed by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA), Maryland, USA and Modern Language Association (MLA). It is published once a year, in November, by Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses. This issue is co-edited with the support of the Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo. Subscriptions, submitted articles, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Editors.

Submitted articles should normally not exceed 6,000 words and should conform to the method of documentation of the MLA Style Sheet. They should be sent electronically and in one hard copy with an abstract at the beginning and biodata at its end in Word for Windows 6.0, until May of each year.

Subscription rates: single issue: US$ 20 inc. postage
Yearly subscriptions: personal: US$ 20 inc. postage
Institutional: US$ 35 inc postage (2 copies)

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Foi feito o depósito legal na Biblioteca Nacional (Lei n. 1.825, de 20.12.1907)
Impresso no Brasil / *Printed in Brazil*
Novembro 2011

ISSN1518-0581

ABEI Journal

The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies

EMBASSY OF IRELAND IN BRAZIL

FFLCH USP

ABEI Journal, Number 13, November 2011. São Paulo, Brazil.

ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies
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Serviço de Biblioteca e Documentação da FFLCH/USP

ABEI Journal: The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies / Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses. – n. 1 (1999) São Paulo: FFLCH/USP, 1999-
Anual

ISSN 1518-0581

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CDD 820

Cover: *Revoada I* by Rogério Dias

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For
Rosa Erlichmann

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Introduction

A significant trend in contemporary Irish Literature is the practice of appropriating and rewriting traditional sources. This issue of the *ABEI Journal* focuses on this tendency and examines a number of examples which reveal how Irish myth continues to be very much alive in contemporary prose and drama. It is an honour to be able to showcase a chapter from Philip Casey's children's book *The Tins and the Pale Lady* prior to publication, accompanied by a note in which Casey contextualises his allusions to Irish legends. We are also pleased to publish Lia Mills' story, "Flight", with an afterword from the author explaining how it "revisits, revises and plays with the Tóraíocht Dhiarmuid agus Gráinne or the Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne".

These original texts are followed by three articles dealing with the rewritings and restagings of the story of Deirdre. Giovanna Tallone, Beatriz Kopschitz X. Bastos and Domingos Nunez respectively consider the origins and developments of the Deirdre myth in traditional poetry and its reappearance in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century prose; the dramatisations of the myth in the twentieth and early twenty-first century; and finally the translation into Portuguese and the ongoing process of producing Vincent Woods' *A Cry from Heaven* (2005) on the Brazilian stage by the Cia Ludens.

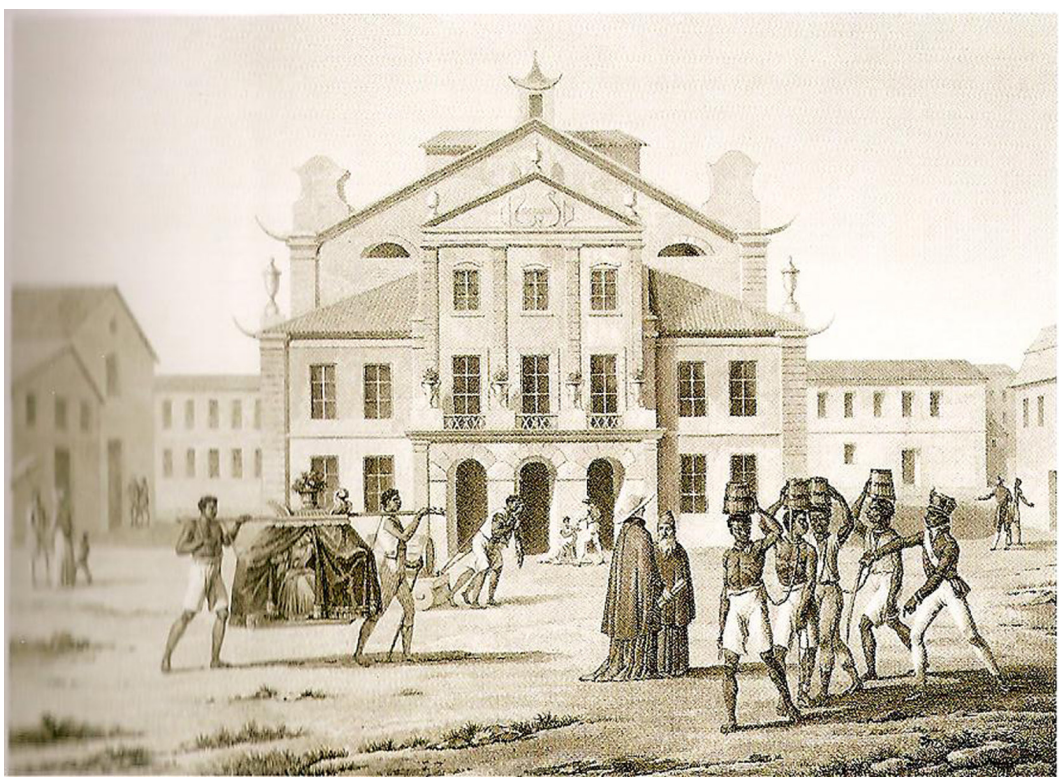
Leaving the traditional aside, our drama and fiction sections include three articles on Beckett. Fernando Poiana analyses the nonsense and violence embedded in the language of *Endgame,* while José F. Fernández explores Beckett's first novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, pointing out the problems raised by his poetics, and Lívia Gonçalves focuses on the various narrators in his first book of short stories, *More Pricks than Kicks*. In addition, Eoghan Smith explores the relationship between idealist philosophy and the politics of writing in the work of W. B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett and John Banville. Finally, Stephanie Schwerter compares the representation of a changing Irish identity in contemporary Irish writing on both sides of the border.

In the poetry section, Rubén Jarazo Álvarez studies the translations of Irish poetry published in the Galician newspaper *Faro de Vigo* and Sigrid Renaux analyses Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's "Horses of meaning". We also have an article from James McElroy tracing some interesting links between American and Irish literature.

In our regular feature, "Voices from Brazil", Maria Helena P. T. Machado's article, "The Traveller and his Diary: Couto de Magalhães and Roger Casement", establishes a connection between diaries and travel literature in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Brazil, suggesting "a correlation between the geographic journey, the narrative journey and the journey as a confessional and intimate experience". Her analysis is illustrated by extracts from diaries written by General Couto de Magalhães and Roger Casement, where the issue of sexuality is addressed as an intimate territory which also reveals factors defining the construction of the travel narrative genre.

Finally we have book reviews by Paul O'Brien, Viviane C. Anunciação, Noélia B. Araújo, Manuela Palacios and Shane Walsh. Our cover recalls the Fifth Symposium of Irish Studies in South America, during which there was an exhibition of the art of Rogério Dias, an outstanding Brazilian painter who has generously authorised the use of this image.

The Editors



Lerouge et Benard (lith). Theatre at Largo do Rocio, Rio de Janeiro; Paris 1822(?). National Library of Australia; engraving 23,8x32cm. In: Pedro Cunha e Menezes. O *Rio de Janeiro na Rota dos Mares do Sul*. Rio de Janeiro: Petrobrás/Estudio Editorial Ltda, 2007.

New Fiction

"The Isle of Enchantment" from The Tins and the Pale Lady*

Philip Casey

Chapter Eight: The Isle of Enchantment

When they opened their eyes they found themselves in a glass house, and were seated at a long table laden with food and juice. A man and a woman sat at the ends of the table, and introduced themselves as Niamh and Aengus. They were dressed in golden robes, and had blue paint in a circle around their eyes. Niamh's golden hair hung in tresses, and at the end of each plait hung an emerald bead.

'You must be hungry,' Niamh said.

'Starving,' Danny said, his mouth watering.

'Yes, thank you,' Kate said, poking Danny in the ribs.

'Oh, sorry,' Danny said.

'Eat up,' Aengus said.

The food was so delicious and the Tins were so hungry that they ate far too much and too quickly and burped several times. It was embarrassing, but their two hosts laughed, delighted.

But then, Niamh and Aengus disappeared and slowly the table and remaining food disappeared, and when their seats disappeared, the Tins fell on their bums.

The glass house transformed itself into a glass bridge over the sea. They got to their feet but before they quite realised what was happening, the bridge disappeared too, and they were floating above the sea. They telepied each other furiously, trying to understand what was happening.

* **Note by the writer:**
The Tins and the Pale Lady is what might nowadays be called a mashup of characters and plot from the author's imagination and from the legends of Tír na nÓg, or Hy Brasil. Kate and Danny are twins, who live on the Western shore with their father, Cormac, a fisherman, and their mother Estrella. When they were small children, they pronounced 'Twins' as 'Tins,' so they became known as The Tins and are so close that they communicate by telepathy, or what they call 'telpy' – hence the invented verb, 'telpied'. Their mother 'walked into the sea,' leaving them sad and puzzled, but slowly they suspect that she is really Niamh, a 5,000 year old Sióg or fairy who was once the lover of the ancient hero Oisín. The great whale Miolmór guides them to the Land Beneath the Sea, where the raven Fiach conducts them on numerous quests to discover their true identity.

Something dark was appearing from the direction of the sun. At first they thought it was a cloud, then as it drew closer, they were certain it was a flock of birds, but then as it was almost upon them they shook their heads in disbelief.

It was a large shoal of salmon, swimming high above them through the air. A very beautiful woman floated up to greet the shoal. When she kissed the leading salmon, she disintegrated into thousands of pieces of dazzling colour which sparkled over the sky.

The colours formed into the woman again, and she floated towards the Tins.

'Hello, Tins,' she said. 'I am Nuala.'

The Tins stared at her, their mouths open.

'Did you…?' Danny began.

'Did you kiss a salmon?' Kate asked.

'And explode?'

'Into thousands of pieces?'

'In all those colours?'

Nuala smiled.

'I kissed the Salmon of Knowledge,' she said. 'One day you too will recognise and kiss this power.'

The Tins looked up. The salmon were gone.

'And will we explode like you?' Kate asked, her eyes wide.

'Yes,' Nuala said. 'Yes, you will.'

'No way!' Danny said. 'I'm staying in one piece.'

Kate held the same opinion, but decided to be polite, especially as Danny had said it already.

Nuala smiled, and reached out to embrace them. They were bathed in the colours they had seen when Nuala had disintegrated, and it was a beautiful, warm feeling. They closed their eyes, hoping it would never end, but when they opened them again, Nuala was gone.

'Where'd she go?' Danny demanded. He thought for a moment. 'It doesn't matter, does it? That was cool.'

'Yes,' Kate agreed, smiling happily. 'Cool.'

They were floating aimlessly above the sea, with not an island in sight.

'I can't believe it that I don't mind being here, just like this, not knowing what's going to happen next,' Danny said, baffled but happy.

'Me neither,' Kate laughed. 'We could be floating here for eternity. And I certainly never thought that I wouldn't mind being alone with you for eternity!'

Danny frowned.

'That's very surprising.'

So instead of wondering what was going to happen next, they breathed in deeply, closed their eyes and thought about all the wonderful colours Nuala had shown them.

'I could look at these forever,' Kate said quietly.

They forgot about time but when Danny opened his eyes again he thought he saw a green island floating in the turquoise ocean.

‘Look, Kate,’ he said, pulling at her sleeve. ‘Do you see what I see?’

‘Yes, that’s it,’ Kate said.

‘What do you mean, that’s it?’

‘I saw it with my eyes closed.

‘Kate, are we moving towards the island or is it moving towards us?’

‘It’s moving towards us, I think.’

‘That’s what I thought.’

They watched as it grew larger and larger to them.

‘How can an island move?’ Danny wondered to himself.

The shore of the island moved beneath them and they floated down to the beach which stretched as far as the eye could see, and they were dazzled by its golden sand. Apart from sand, the only thing on the beach was a rock, some distance away, so they walked towards it and were only a little surprised to see Fiach on it, grooming as usual.

‘The thing to remember,’ he said without bothering to look at them, ‘I say, the thing to remember is that the Isle of Enchantment, which is where you are now, in case you hadn’t noticed – I say, the Isle of Enchantment is more than one isle. Hmm. Let me see. For you it is perhaps several isles, but in reality it is a number beyond your understanding. However, several will do nicely for now, thank you.’

‘What are they called?’ Kate asked.

‘Oh, I forget. You did well out there, floating in the middle of the ocean with nowhere to go. I didn’t think you’d be able to just be, and not be afraid of what was going to happen next.’

‘No?’ Danny asked, frowning. He was more than a little tired of Fiach speaking to them like that.

‘No. I find it rather difficult myself, to tell you the truth. No, I didn’t think you had it in you, and that’s a fact. And neither did you.’

They had to admit he was right.

‘So, you don’t know what these isles are called?’ Kate asked now that she could see that Fiach was pleased he had made a point.

‘The isles? Oh yes. Let me see. I’m not saying you’ll come in contact with all of these, these particular ones, mind. As I said, there are isles without number and the ones you see depends on how you approach them. If you are afraid, then they’ll be a bit scary; if you are happy, then they will be bliss. Which ones do I like? Hmm, let me see,’ he said to himself, and they could have sworn he was smiling, although how you could tell with a raven was hard to say.

‘There’s the Isle of the Shouting Birds. Yes, I like that one. Great fun. The Isle of the Hermit – you go there when you want some peace and quiet. The Isle of the Miraculous Fountain – you’d like that. And so on and so on and so on. But there’s really no point in me telling you – you have to discover them for yourselves.’

‘We’ll never get through them all,’ Kate said.

‘No, but you’re not supposed to. Only the Higher Síoga know them all. But to get back to the point. The point is, they will get through you. Hmm. You will have your

favourites – but only for a while, because then you will go to the Isle of Forgetfulness, and that's a barrel of laughs. So, goodbye, for now, and good luck.'

Fiach was wishing them good luck? They recovered in time to thank him before he flew away.

'What do we do now?' Kate asked.

'I think we stay very still and think of nothing.'

'That's right, brother of mine. You're improving, I must say.'

'What? A compliment?'

'Shh,' she telepied. 'You've to think of nothing, remember.'

Nothing happened for a long time, and they were about to give up when they noticed they were in a different place altogether.

'How'd that happen?' Danny whispered.

'By not thinking, I suppose,' Kate whispered back.

It was a large isle, with woods of oak and yew on one side, and on the other a plain with a small lake which had some rocks around it.

They walked to the lake, and there was an Ogham stick among the reeds.

'Can you make it out?' Danny asked.

'The… Isle … of … the … Eagle.'

They looked up into the dazzling blue sky. In the distance they saw what appeared to be an aeroplane but as it came closer they saw that it was a giant eagle carrying something in its beak. This was no ordinary eagle though. It had no feathers. The Tins scurried for cover in the woods and the eagle landed at the edge of the lake. The Tins were scared of it at first, then they realised that it was very old, like the eagle they had seen on the Isle of Many Fears.

'Isn't that…?' Danny pointed.

'The Naked Eagle?'

'But this one's huge.'

'I know. But I think it's the same one.'

When the eagle had finished eating, two young eagles came out of the sun, and landed beside the Naked Eagle, a sapling laden with berries in each of their beaks. The eagles began their feast of berries, holding the sapling in one talon, and the juice from the berries dropped into the lake and turned it red.

The young ones picked at the insects which tormented the Naked Eagle, and when they had finished, the old bird bathed in the red water of the lake. Then the three of them ate more berries. After a while they hopped into the lake and the old bird was washed again.

This happened three times until at the end, the Naked Eagle's feathers had grown back and they were shiny and full and he looked as young and as strong as the other two. Then they took off, and flying three times around the isle, they flew into the sun and disappeared.

'The Naked Eagle got his clothes back,' Danny said.

‘And he looked as young as the other two. How did they do that, I wonder?’

‘Will we have a swim?’ Danny asked lightly.

‘Where those birds have just cleaned themselves? No thanks.’

But some force made them run and jump head first into the red water. They couldn’t help but dive to the bottom, though it got darker and colder the deeper they went, and without noticing how, they were on another isle.

This one was small and round, but it had very tall, steep cliffs, over which hung the branches of apple trees in blossom.

‘I’d love an apple,’ Kate said, as she leaned down to pick up a fallen blossom.

‘I wouldn’t mind one, either,’ Danny said as he leaned down to pick up another.

They smelled the blossoms, and it was such a lovely scent that they closed their eyes to enjoy it. When they looked again, a large red apple had grown out of the blossom.

‘Go on, eat it,’ Fiach said from the branch of a tree. ‘They’re delicious.’

‘Hello, Fiach,’ they said.

‘Eh… Hello. Now look,’ he said, training his eyes on a tree opposite him. An Ogham sign was etched into it. ‘What does it say?’

‘The Isle of Apples,’ Danny said.

‘Oh,’ Fiach said, surprised. ‘Very good.’

They crunched their teeth into the apples and the juice splattered all over their faces and into their eyes, but they were so refreshing and delicious that they didn’t mind.

They had hardly swallowed their last bite when they found themselves floating above the sea again, and what seemed like a tall tower of chalk was drifting towards them. As they landed on it, they realised that they were among the clouds, and in the courtyard of a fort, the walls of which surrounded the island, and on the walls were large houses painted a dazzling white.

‘Well, if they are there and we are here, I suppose we ought to have a look,’ Kate said, meaning the houses.

‘Let’s start with the biggest one,’ Danny said.

The whiteness of the largest house was so strong in the sunshine that they had to shield their eyes as they approached.

‘Anyone at home?’ Danny called in the large hall, his voice echoing around the walls.

There was no reply, and the Tins looked at one another and tried another room, and then another, and then still another, and there was no reply. When they had tried twenty rooms, they were convinced no one lived here and were about to leave when Danny walked into a room in the middle of the house.

‘Kate, come quickly,’ he telepied.

‘What’s that smell?’ she asked as she caught up with him.

The room was enormous, like you would expect in a palace, with three stone pillars in the centre, but they didn’t support the roof and only went half way to the ceiling.

‘Look,’ Kate whispered, clutching Danny’s arm.

A small white cat was playing on the pillars, jumping from one to the other and back again. It looked at the Tins for a moment before continuing its game, which puzzled the Tins.

'This room has only three walls,' Danny whispered.

One wall was decorated with brooches of gold and silver, decorated with crouching cats and flying eagles.

The second was decorated with three necklaces of gold and silver, decorated with horses dancing in opposite directions.

On the third hung three magnificent swords.

'Do you think they're for us?' Danny asked.

'Something tells me they're not,' Kate said.

They stared at them until they were distracted by a delicious smell. At the long end of the room was a table laden with meat and bacon, six strange vegetables and a delicious red drink.

'It's time to eat,' Danny said, sitting at the table.

'I'm starving,' Kate said.

They ate and drank until they were drowsy.

'Look,' Kate said, pointing to the floor.

The shining quilts and pillows were too much to resist, and soon the Tins were cuddled up and fast asleep.

The sun was rising when they woke.

Kate stretched, but Danny stopped her in mid-yawn.

'There's someone here,' he telepied.

Kate strained to see behind the table, and sure enough, a large black cat standing on his hind legs and dressed in knee boots, a hat with a feather in it, a booty bag around his waist, and a sword in his right paw, was in the room, looking around him, his eyes glowing with greed. He went to one wall, his left paw outstretched, but at the last moment he was distracted by the gold and silver objects on another wall.

The Tins huddled into their quilts so that only their eyes weren't covered and even then they hardly dared to watch.

In the end the black cat decided on the horse necklaces, but no sooner had he lifted the first one off the wall, than the Little White Cat leapt from one of the pillars and struck the black cat in a ball of flame. The black cat didn't even feel what happened to him, but fell to the ground in a heap of smoking ashes.

When the Tins recovered from the shock, they looked up to see the cat playing happily on the pillars again, as if nothing had happened. They tried to sneak out of the house, Kate leading the way, but Fiach was waiting for them, perched on a beam over the great hall, grooming as usual.

'Not so fast,' he said.

'Fiach!' Kate shouted in surprise. 'You gave me a fright.'

'It's you,' Danny said for want of something better to say.

‘Yes, it’s me,’ Fiach snapped. ‘Now look’ He nodded towards an Ogham stick. ‘What does it say?’

‘The Isle of… something…’ Kate said.

‘The Little White Cat,’ Danny finished.

‘Right. You are on the Isle of the Little White Cat, who has shown you every hospitality, and what do you do? You sneak away like ungrateful beggars.’

‘We should have thanked her,’ Kate said.

‘Well, The Little White Cat wouldn’t understand your thank yous, thanks all the same. But she would appreciate you showing your gratitude.’

‘How?’ Danny asked.

‘There’s a big heap of ashes in there, and an empty jar on the table. Scoop up the ashes into the jar, and throw the jar into the sea. That will please her very much.’

The Tins didn’t like the idea of cleaning up the black cat’s ashes, but they had done so many things they would never have dreamt of doing that they just gave each other a weary glance and went back into the triangular room.

The Little White Cat was still happily jumping from one pillar to another, but they kept a close eye on her as Kate held the jar and Danny swept the ashes into it with a broom he had found. As they were leaving they turned to watch the Little White Cat one last time.

That she looked so innocent and yet was so dangerous if you broke her rules was a big lesson for them.

‘That’s what it’s supposed to be,’ Fiach said from the beam above the hall. ‘I didn’t think you could resist taking the necklace, especially.’

‘You mean…’ Kate asked, eyes wide, ‘you mean you thought we’d…’

‘And if we had we’d… You expected us to go up in a ball of flame!’ Danny shouted.

‘Well, yes… Now throw that jar as far as you can out to sea.’

‘You do it,’ Kate said, handing Danny the jar.

He liked throwing things and he was good at it.

He threw it in a big arc but the sea was so far down that he couldn’t see the splash.

‘I suppose it sank,’ Danny said, turning back to Kate. ‘Here, what’s that necklace doing on you? Oh Kate, don’t tell me you stole it!’

‘What?’ Kate was astonished to find a necklace around her neck. She hastily took it off and stared at it. ‘I never touched it, I swear,’ she said, very scared.

‘Are you sure?’ Danny demanded.

‘Yes!’

‘I’m not shovelling your ashes into a jar,’ Danny said.

Kate’s hands shook, but the necklace was so beautiful that she couldn’t take her eyes off it. It was the three-layered necklace of dancing horses who seemed to be dancing in rows one above the other.

‘But-’ Kate said as she looked up at Danny. Her mouth fell open as she stared at his neck. ‘Danny…’

‘What?’

She pointed at his neck.

‘What?!?’

‘You have a necklace.’

Danny went pale and clutched at his neck. Sure enough, there was a metal necklace around it. He took it off. It was a triple necklace too, but with eagles instead of horses.

He was about to turn and throw it into the sea, but Fiach was sitting on the rampart.

‘Silly girl, silly boy, calm down, calm down!’ Fiach said quickly.

‘But… but …’ Danny stammered.

‘Your necklaces are rewards for service to The Little White Cat.’

‘Are you sure?’ Danny asked, still nervous. The fate of the black cat had made a big impression.

‘Of course I’m sure!’ At which Fiach flew away.

‘It suits you,’ Kate said, smiling. She was relieved, but she looked as if she had been up all night.

‘How do we get out of here?’ Danny asked. He wanted to be as far away from the Little White Cat as possible, as soon as possible.

‘She’s not so bad,’ Kate telepied before they closed their eyes and thought of nothing.

When they opened their eyes it seemed as if they had gone from the frying pan into the fire. They were on a small island, but it was surrounded by a wall and a ring of flame was making its way around the top of the wall. Fiach was perched on a stick, grooming, of course, but as soon as he saw the Tins, he flew away.

‘Some help he is,’ Danny grumbled, and he was about to pass the stick when he noticed it was an Ogham stick, which read “The Isle of Fiery Walls.” He looked at Kate but she shrugged her shoulders and clutched her necklace.

‘This has happened because we were scared,’ Kate said. ‘Remember what Fiach said?’

It was no surprise that it was very hot here, and there was no shelter so they were sweating badly. There was nothing for it but to keep walking to see if they could find a sign, but very soon they were out of breath and exhausted.

‘Three more steps and that’s all,’ they agreed by telepy. ‘Then we’ll lie down.’

The flame had almost made one circle of the wall and the Tins felt hotter and hotter as it came back.

They were gasping by now, but they spotted an opening in the earth at the centre of the island and set off on the winding path towards it. When they were almost there, the path turned away from the opening towards the wall, and they had no choice but to

follow it. As they reached the wall the flame stopped above them, and they were sweating so much that their eyes stung.

Kate had just about enough energy to look up.

'Look,' she telepied, touching Danny's elbow.

The fire was dying, and very suddenly it was dead. They set off again towards the opening and were welcomed into the earth by very beautiful men and women.

'Come in,' they said, 'join us.'

The Tins couldn't help but feel happy. They felt wonderful, in fact, and the music was the loveliest they had ever heard. Everyone wore beautiful golden garments, and drank from silver chalices.

'Come,' one of the women said. 'We want you to meet a very special person.'

They were brought to a table laden with delicious breads and vegetables and meat and fish, and the finest wines. At the head of the table was an old man with grey hair and glasses. He was small and feeble, but the light glowed on his skin. He was surrounded by his wife, and two daughters and a son.

'Ah, the Tins!' he said, delighted. 'Come here to me!'

He took their hands and smiled just for them, and they felt that they were filled with light.

'Will you have some wine?' he asked them.

'We're too young,' Kate said.

'Too young? Well, so you are. What will we do about that?'

'I don't know,' Danny said.

'Wife,' he said, 'mix some water with the wine for the Tins. It's a shame to water such a fine wine,' he said to the Tins, his eyes twinkling, 'but what can we do? You must have a drink with me, for something wonderful has happened to me today.'

'What's that?' Danny asked.

'Oh,' he said very gently, 'that is something that will take your whole life for you to know. Now drink up.'

Everyone drank, and even though it was mostly water, the Tins' drink was delicious, and they were so thirsty they drank it back.

They were still licking their lips when the old man became younger, and younger and younger until he was the same age as the Tins. He stopped, his eyes almost closed with laughter, and he was dressed in short trousers, an open necked shirt, and a jacket with a badge on it. 'Thank you,' the boy said. 'I enjoyed our drink together very much.'

Then he got smaller and smaller until he disappeared, and a beautiful tall being of light smiled at them instead.

Flight

Lia Mills

Call me Aisling.

You think you know the story, the one about the old woman turned to a radiant girl by the love of the rightful king, when, if you ask me, it's more like the girl becomes a hag through the antics of some old goat. Or the one about the girl who causes bad blood among the men, running off with one of them when she belongs to another...

Call me Grainne, Deirdre, Aideen, Eve. Call me anything you want, but give me a break, let me tell you how it was, for me.

My father, let's call him Mick, is a gambling man. He'd bet on anything. Horses, dogs, weather, an election – anything with a result. Once, when a neighbour's child went missing, he opened a book on where she'd be found and when. Alive or dead.

It's a sickness, my mother says. She stretches the wings of her white cockatiel.

Mick won the bird in a wager and gave it to her. When she's not around, it clings to the mirror in its cage, confides in its own reflection. Released, it swoops to her shoulder, murmurs secrets into her hair, nibbles the velvet lobe of her ear. It lets her tug on its feathers. She preens it with her ringed fingers, chases fleas with her blushing nails.

Our Mick plays fast, loose and dangerous. He'll beg, borrow, steal. When my mother's out he ransacks the house, looking for things to sell. If it's not nailed down, it'll go. He lost the house from under us once. My mother's brothers got it back, but he lost it again. That time, he went to the local shark for help. You could say that's where the trouble started, when your man, Feeney, entered the picture.

You'd be wrong.

We've had the electricity cut off, the furniture and cars, everything, repossessed. Wouldn't you know it, Feeney has a sideline in repossession. Gives with one hand, takes with the other.

My mother says, Mick can't help himself.

She builds a house out of my little brother's lego. She sits on the floor of my room and pieces together walls out of red plastic bricks on a green base, a blue roof. She adds a tiny window with hinged white shutters, a yellow door she puts lego daisies in front of. Posts her rings through the window and pulls it shut. Unless you pick it up and shake it, you'd never know it was a box. She hides it under my bed.

He comes in bulling. Tears my door from its hinges. Pulls out my drawers and tosses hem to the floor. *Smash!* Finds the plastic box. *Smash!* The rings tumble out. The bird flies to the pelmet, squawking. Downy feathers fall, like snow, to mix with the ones that rise from my split pillow.

The deceit! He roars, the treachery! Not a fucker to be trusted! Not even my own flesh and fucking blood.

The sour blast of his look.

The crazier things get, the more he thinks bluff and bluster will carry him through.

The big thing is to keep it out of the papers, not let them get a whiff of what really goes on behind the high walls, the hot tub, the cctv. It's a good show, but you wouldn't want to look too closely at the paperwork. Talk about smoke and mirrors. If word gets around, he'll be a goner, and all of us with him, how would we like that?

No more fancy clothes or foreign holidays, no more parties.

He's a bit of a party man, our Mick. Everyone's friend, a good host. Openhanded. Generous.

He wouldn't be completely unknown to the guards, mind, for all his good suits and business deals, his friends in high places. It's all smiles and Howya Mick to his face, but the neighbours look down their noses all the same. They think they know where trouble lives, on our side of the wall. They want to keep it that way. They'd rather not know too much.

Walking around the world with your eyes open isn't enough to make you see what's right in front of you. *Looking* means you have to take the shutters down as well.

My mother's naked fingers preen the bird. Things could be worse, she says. Look at the starving millions.

He says I'm spoiled. Rotten. I should be grateful for every stitch, every crumb, each slate and brick. The shoes on my feet. The hair on my head. The parties.

Christ, those parties.

Card games into the small hours. They pass the malt and the cigars, trade stories. They never tell about the one-that-got-away; always, it was *this* big, so fast, *that* hard, *that* furious, fists and steel, fire and fucking brimstone. Never the ash they leave behind.

What's mine is yours, Mick says to his friends.

He has debts to discharge, after all.

I'm sent to bed early.

All the things in the world that creak. Pine trees, cedars, an old man's bones. A door, floorboards, a bed.

Did you ever wake in the night, a tree boiling up through you like you were soil? It traps me in its branches, pins me down. My legs and the top of my head torn off. Birds fly away, screeching.

My mother says, you're dreaming.

He goes too far. In a late night crapshoot, here in our own house, he stakes – not the pile, this time – but my mother. And loses.

By the time he comes to his senses, she's gone. He's livid, as if she's to blame. When her brothers come around to find out why she's not returning messages, your man, Feeney, has to broker an agreement to get her back.

She has a stunned, a beaten look to her. She jumps every time a door opens and again when it closes. She'll only talk to the bird. She wears it on her shoulder, like jewellery.

One grey day, no warning, she opens the window and shoos the bird out into the drizzle. It sits in the dogwood tree and blinks its scaly eye, its comb up. She closes the window. The bird takes off in bedraggled curves, swoop, fall, swoop, fall. Not used to all that space. White feathers left behind on the carpet. My mother draws the curtains, her eyes blood-red.

My mind cracks, like an egg.

Mick forgot to mention that your man, Feeney, has his price. He wants a trophy to wear on his arm, to show them all what a man he is. What a hero, such a stud.

He wants me.

I'd like to say my mother fights for me, that she stands up in his face, *I won't let you harm a hair of that child's head*, but she looks away.

What's the difference, one old tyrant or another?

I look for clues in the mirror. My face blooms like a water-lily from the black.

We feel the ground shake before they get here, a caravan of sleek black cars.

They get out, one by one. Men in black.

Which one is he? I ask. No one knows for sure. Already, my own people are no use to me.

Mick is talking to one of them. Are you Feeney? I ask. He laughs. That's a good one. No. He's the old man.

Your father?

He scowls. What are you, thick? My grandfather.

He's flying in. Mick looks uneasy. He'll land in the bottom acre.

In a plane? My heart leaps to my throat. I clamp down on it with my teeth. Do I have to go away with him?

I can see it, now. Feeney will carry me off. When I'm broken and biddable, when he thinks he can trust me, he might let me come back.

I'll go on down and meet him, I say. May as well get it over.

Mick looks as if he'll come with.

Alone, I say.

Thinking, Let you choke on your own bone.

I set off down the path. The garden is lovely, wreathed in its early summer glories. Colours blaze. Laburnum, wisteria, a red-leafed acer. The lemony dogwood tree, the scent of jasmine and lavender. Small pink and white stars of clematis. Hawthorn.

Life is a series of thresholds we have to cross alone, but there are people on the other side. I just have to get there to be what they are, know what they know. Mothers, widows. The dead.

The plane is sleek, pearl-white. The old man has his back to me. I hide behind a willow and watch. He turns back from the rhododendrons, fastening his fly. Nice. I crouch where I am while he talks to the pilot, slaps him on the back, a big guffaw and he takes off in the direction of the house where there are lights on. Music. An oldfashioned band. Country waltzes.

The pilot is under the belly of the plane, peering into its snowy throat, fiddling with a wrench. A pair of jeans sit low on his narrow hips. A white shirt hugs the curve of his ribs. A moon shaped gap on his flank shows skin as taut as a sheet in a newmade bed I'd like to lie in. I take him in through my eyes. He stops, wipes his hands on his arse. Brushes a hank of brown hair away from his face. There is a scar, a mark, on his brow that my thumb wants to soothe. Light in his deep grey eyes.

I step out of the shrubbery, brush thorns from my clothes.

He starts, looks around. Are you alone?

Not any more.

His eyes flick over my shoulder to check.

I want to touch his mouth where it lifts, fit my lips to that scar of his. I move closer. Too close. He stands his ground. The heat between us rises.

Did you see the Boss, going down the path?

His breath fills me, as sweet as the first ever taste of air in the history of the world.

I did not. I saw a goaty old yoke, playing with his beard.

I give him a bold look. Give us a ride?

I'd be kilt.

Go on.

A quick one, just.

The world is full of chances, but you have to know them when they come for you. Up with me, and into the co-pilot's seat before your man, Mark, can change his mind.

He sits in the seat beside me and flips a few knobs. We're rushing then, low and fast, picking up speed, bumping along the bottom acre to the edge of the world.

The horizon dips, tilts, falls. We're flying. They'll all see us. This hasn't dawned on your man yet. He's maybe not the brightest, but a lovely hollow at the base of his throat pulses when he turns to ask, Do you want to?

No-one has ever asked me this before. Not once. The sweetest question ever. Do. You. Want.

In a trance, I take the controls. He shows me what to do, but I'm in charge.

It's the biggest thrill of my life. I'm looking, looking, gathering the whole of the sky's blue cloak in through my eyes, the white heaped pillows of clouds, all the flying things, their feathers, their hollow bones and little beating hearts. Soaring.

We should go back, he says. They'll be wondering.

I push the joystick and we dive. He fights it, overrides, pulls us level.

Are you insane? This thing is Feeney's pride and joy. He'd kill me if ...

He might kill you anyway.

It's easy to swing the plane around and buzz the lawn, where the guests are gathered, gawking. Feeney mimes a slash to the throat.

Oh, man, Mark groans. This is bad.

I wave them all goodbye. You're stuck with me now. In the beginning he keeps his distance. He won't lay a finger on any part of me, though he lets me hold on to him, on the pillion of a motorbike, say. The wind in my face. He tells anyone who'll listen that it's all a misunderstanding, he's a man of honour. He'll come in, so long as they swear to let me go.

Which is something, but not enough. The more he holds himself clear of me, the more I want him.

You wouldn't be the first, I say.

I slide my tongue into the whorl of his ear, blow in it, fit my hand to his breastbone, wingbone, collar.

No joy.

Feeney's men chase us up and down the length of the country. Being Mark's friends, their hearts aren't in it. Sometimes they send warnings. One retires, another moves to Spain. A third goes into politics. Things get tricky. Feeney is surrounded by younger men, and the new generation don't know Mark. They have their own codes, their own way of doing things.

We spend months with the tree people in Wicklow, playing chess, of all things. A tournament. Turns out Mark is a grand master. He can't let on who he is but he keeps winning. People take notice. At night I twine myself around him like creeper, afraid he'll fall. When he cries out, it's not words of love, but chess moves:

Knight to queen three!

Kingside castle!

A journalist comes to write about him. We move on. We sleep in high places, swaddled in cloud. Dolmens, thrones of rock, the forked branches of great elms. Take cover in the towns. In Limerick a white van pulls up beside us and I nearly lose my reason when I see your man who was talking to Mick the night of the party, but he rolls down his window and tells Mark where Feeney is looking, where to avoid.

Tell him I haven't touched her, is Mark's reply.

Are you gay, is that it? I ask. We're washing in a burbling brook, birds trilling all around. If it was a film set, we'd be making out like bandits. He won't even look at me.

He's aggrieved. No, that's not it.

I can't help taunting him. It'd make sense, though. When you think about it.

Just because I don't fall on you? You've a big opinion of yourself.

So it's not that. But he does miss his mates, the adventure, all the man-talk.

In an African club off Parnell Street there's crazy music playing. A drum beats its way up through my feet, starts a pump going in my heart. Mark goes to the bar. I'm bopping around on my own when a beautiful black man comes and sets me spinning on the floor. We dance like I've never danced before. I follow his steps, he follows mine, then he swings me right off my feet, over his head and down, my skirt around my ears, all my blood in my face.

Breathless, on fire, my heart still dancing, I go to our table for my drink. Mark is livid. You're making a show of yourself.

So?

Like a tart.

And?

My blood is well and truly up. I scoop the ice from my drink and run it along my neck. It catches in that little notch where the collar bones meet. Something in his eyes. I run it down my breast bone, it breaks into little threads of water that slip under my shirt. I meet his eyes. That ice has more balls than you do, I say. He stares. Beads of sweat break out on that high forehead of his. I can tell he wants to lap the water from my salty skin.

At last.

Outside, clouds flee the scene. Everything rushes east, like they've heard the sun is coming up, and want to be there when it happens. We hunker down, turn inward. My mind empties into him.

This is what we've come to: he is my in, my out; my sky, my golden dawn, my morning; the place where I begin.

We swap day for night, keep running. The moon gathers the days in her bright net, rolls them in a ball, for safe keeping. Night comes and swallows her whole. She returns,

wishbone thin and gleaming, taut as the inside of a thigh, a wrist, a hollowed flank. I want it all to stop, here. Now.

A black dog follows us from the river, skulks at our heels. Starved, angular, all hide and bone and begging eyes, scabs on the leathered pads of his feet. He whines when we speak to him. You think this means something else. In stories, when a black dog appears on the horizon, you're screwed. It's a messenger, or a spy.

Listen. Sometimes a dog is just a dog. They need love and food and water. They need light. They need the saving dark.

My mind as clear as the sky, I'm consumed by a longing for the berries from my mother's quicken tree. No sense to it, that's what I want.

His hand on my mouth, Don't say it.

My lips shape endings on his skin

We creep home on a moonless night, bring the dog for luck. I beg for a bath. My mother perfumes the water with oils, sets candles on the ledge. I slip into the steam of comfort. The knots of our long flight loosen. It's over. There's a child coming, she can see it. This changes everything, she says. I'll have a word with my brothers, see what they can do.

I stand up out of the water, scummy now and grey. Its residue coats the enamel when the water drains. Disgust in her eyes.

The world is a grubby place, Mother. It rubs off.

Sometimes you have to steal your luck. Other times you get to make it.

It's May again. The gorse is out, wild and prickly as cactus, so much hidden sweetness in its yellow flowers, the smell of freedom and dreams in a riot of thorns and tangled wood.

We're back where we started, but not for long. The peace is uneasy, but it holds. Our child is born. Another few days and we can leave. Our dog is loyal, on guard. I was wrong about him. He's not just a dog, he's a sign. He wandered into the story by chance, but he had to come from somewhere.

Feeney will make his move, but he hasn't done it yet.

Not if, when.

I can see it, clear as day. Blade, bullet, screwdriver. Traffic light, car park, a heist gone wrong. Our bed, our son asleep between us.

The courts?

Don't make me laugh.

They'll all blame me. Let them.

Who tells the story wins, but there's any number of endings and I've a few of my own up my sleeve. This time I can plan it, think it through. Let the official version

have its day, it buys us time. The more versions there are, the more chance we have of slipping through the net. Listen out for the hunting horn, the alarm, church bells, an engine running in the night. Watch for the ribbon of news as it breaks on your screens.

Bodies found in ditch.
Don't believe everything you hear.
An empty boat. A stolen, burned-out car.

All I ever wanted was a choice. When your story is all you know, you think it's all there is. When you're in so deep that you're lost, you can't see what's coming. Enter it anywhere, the same things happen. But you can read it backwards. You can slip between the lines and leave.

The best-kept secret is that there are other stories. That you can tell your own.

Flight was first published in The Stinging Fly issue 17/volume two Winter 2010-2011

Afterword

This story revisits, revises and plays with the Tóraíocht Dhiarmuid agus Gráinne or the Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. The Tóraíocht is part of the Fenian cycle of Irish legends, which tell the exploits of the great hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his warriors (the Fianna). In the original story, Grainne, the daughter of Cormac Mac Art, has been promised as a wife to Fionn. Grainne is a young woman, but by this stage in his life, Fionn is getting on in years and has already buried a wife or two. At the wedding, Grainne persuades Diarmuid, one of Fionn's younger warriors, to run away with her. Fionn's furious pursuit, and the adventures that follow, are part of our mythology.

A key feature of that mythology is that the woman is entirely to blame for everything that goes wrong. The hero has no choice because she puts him under a magical compulsion – in other words, 'he couldn't help himself'. Another, less well-known, feature is that the ancient kings and chieftains had a practice of lending their daughters to overnight guests as a mark of their esteem. The heroes are reluctant lovers, which can't have been much fun, and they're far more interested in hanging out with their mates than staying at home with the women, which sounds familiar.

But what leaks through the cracks in the stories, for me, is that the woman asserts her right to choose who she will, or will not, have sex with. I had fun writing this version, transposing the original emphasis of the chase, or 'pursuit' to 'flight', and shifting the point of view to the young woman, letting her tell her own story while incidentally setting the Fianna in a more contemporary context. I called the young woman Aisling (borrowing Herman Melville's iconic opening line) as a way of underlining the intentions of the story, both playful and serious. The Irish word aisling means a dream or

a vision, and is associated with a particular form of political poem where a spéirbhean, or dream woman, appears to the poet and inspires him to write the vision she reveals. She is a political variant of the poetic muse, and usually serves an agenda. In this story, she speaks for herself.

I wrote the story for a reading in aid of OneinFour, a charity that works with people who have experienced sexual abuse in Ireland – statistically, one in four people, hence the name of the organization.

Intertextualities

A Voice from Beyond. The Story of the Deirdre Story

Giovanna Tallone

Abstract: *The multiple life of the story of Deirdre and the Sons of Uisneach in the Literary Revival has its roots in the multiple life of its sources. Though mainly connected to the wide range of drama renditions in the background of the Irish Dramatic Movement, the Deirdre story is first of all a narrative concerning language. The Old Irish Version,* Longes mac N-Uisleann (The Exile of the Sons of Uisneach) *opens with a speech act below the level of articulation, unborn Deirdre's cry from her mother's womb. The prophecy of destruction that follows is thus a prescribed text. In medieval versions and folklore renditions, including the Middle Irish text,* Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach (The Violent Death of the Children of Uisneach) *the detail disappears or it is developed otherwise. However, in its various versions and remakes, words and language are relevant, as taboos, oaths and mutually exclusive words represent a structuring principle. The purpose of this essay is to examine the sources of the Deirdre story and its prose remakes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, with particular reference to Standish O'Grady, Lady Gregory and James Stephens, shedding light on the way the power of language that characterises the old legend is developed in different cultural contexts*.

In *A Cry from Heaven* (2005), playwright Vincent Woods meant to retell the story of Deirdre and the Sons of Uisneach in the twenty-first century, thus following the steps of the great dramatists of the Revival. His choice to write the play in blank verse "was partly a nod to the past" (Bastos 116), but he also saw the timelessness of a story that breaks the boundaries of time to be endlessly retold, rewritten and restaged. "For me" – he said in an interview to Beatriz Bastos – "it has everything, it has love, it has sex, it has great passion" (116). While the Deirdre plays of AE, Yeats and Synge mainly developed out of the fifteenth-century version Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach (The Violent Death of the Children of Uisneach) and its adaptations and rewritings, Vincent Woods went back to the earliest saga, eighth-century *Longes mac N-Uisleann* (*The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*) whose intrinsic theatricality he identified in Deirdre's cry from her mother's womb, a dramatic potential to be developed and staged. In *Longes*

mac N-Uislean unborn Deirdre enters the story as a disruptive force, as her cry breaks into "the convivial male environment of the feast" (Herbert, "The Universe of Male and Female" 56) creating disorder and disunity. Deirdre's cry is thus a catalyst for what remains unsaid and unexpressed. In the same interview, Woods also explained the reasons for his choice of the title:

> That title comes from what for me is one of the most extraordinary images . . . before she is born, Deirdre is heard to cry in her mother's womb . . . For me, the image of the unborn child calling out to life . . . is an extraordinary image . . . And, in the play, that cry becomes a cry down to the present, and in a sense it's a cry of grief for all life and all death. (116)

Thus, his knowledge of the sources made him also aware that the story of Deirdre in its various versions, translations, adaptations and folklore renditions is also a narrative concerning language; its plot is based on a series of speech acts that are functional to the narrative. Deirdre's non-human, pre-verbal, nearly animal-like sound is a speech act below the level of articulation (Dooley 156), and it is expanded in the prophecy of the druid Cathbad, traditionally a master of words. He interprets the scream, declaring the unborn baby a cause for destruction, exile and death for Ulster. The voice from nowhere thus turns into the absolute word of the prophecy, a "main structuring word" (155). When Deirdre meets Naoisi, she binds him through the words of *geis*, a personal taboo. She kills herself because she has given her word not to be possessed by two men (Dooley). The story is "as much a story of treachery and honour as of romance" (Gantz 256) as repeatedly given words and promises are made and broken. After the death of the Sons of Usnach, Deirdre gives vent to her sorrow in the traditional lament for the dead, the *caoineadh*, or keen, "a verbal art rather than formless expression of grief" (Hollo 83). Ann Dooley identifies the action of *Longes mac N-Uisleann* as a series of "mutually exclusive words": the accomplishment of the prophecy is precipitated by *geis*, disloyalty to given word causes the death of the Sons of Uisneach (Dooley 155). Word as formula has the mesmeric power of prophecy, *geis* and keening: Deirdre's half-spoken scream is cast into prophetic words, desire into the formula of *geis*, the sorrow of loss into the allowed behaviour of keening. The other characters have somehow a similar power of language: the language of authority of Conchobar decrees that Deirdre will become his wife, Deirdre's father is Fedlimid, the king's bard, harpist or storyteller; she is also the granddaughter of Daill, whose name associates his blindness to poetry and prophetic vision (Stelmach 146); and in a variety of versions the nurse Lavarcham is a satirist (Gantz 260, Hull 60), and she has, therefore, a power on words. Even Deirdre's name marks her in the verbal quality that is embedded in her nature. In fact, the druid Cathbad calls her "Deirdre" recalling the violent noise of her cry, derived from the verb *derdrithir*, "to resound" (Herbert, "The Universe of Male and Female" 57; Dooley 155-9).

The purpose is to examine the role language and words have as structuring principles in the sources of the Deirdre story and to consider the way in which some of its

prose remakes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century developed or neglected this feature in view of Vincent Woods' reworking. Indeed, in prose renditions the flexibility of narrative made it possible to exploit and elaborate Deirdre's cry from the womb and make it a catalyst for the story's concern with language.

What is generally known as the Deirdre story is a protean text with a multiple life. The Old Irish version, eighth-century *Longes mac N-Uisleann* (*The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*) belongs as a *remscela*, or prefatory tale, to the epic of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*). A Middle Irish version, *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* (*The Violent Death of the Children of Uisneach*) is remembered as the "romantic" version and it is actually a different story with the same characters rather than a different version (Mac Giolla Leith). Here, the circumstances of Deirdre's birth and the prophecy are omitted (Hull 2), while the rest of the story is expanded in the number of poems included, in the room left to combats (2) and the concern with magic and omens (McHugh 41). The story develops around the protagonists' exile in Scotland and focuses on Fergus's betrayal and the death of the heroes. Deirdre is a woman of vision, who casts her dreams into the formulaic words of revelation. Likewise, her verbal activity revolves around her *Lays*, often recorded as individual poems, like her "Farewell to Alba," or her lament over Naoise's body. Her death too is made more appealing. Rather than dashing her head against a boulder, as in *Longes mac N-Uisleann*, in *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* she dies beside her lover's body, or she stabs herself. Thus, her story ends with the loss of language (Dooley 157).

These variants exist alongside folklore renditions and, though there may be considerable differences in details, plot and structure remain basically unaltered. The story can be read as a social drama (Herbert, "Celtic Heroine" 13); by choosing Naoise Deirdre turns away from the established order of King Conchobar causing disruption in hierarchy and kingship. It is also a highly personal tragedy, where Deirdre is an agent of destruction for her lover and herself. However, the Deirdre story is basically a prescribed narrative: it is generated by and it develops according to fatal prophecy, whose authority pre-exists the language of its verbalization, and plot follows a process of "filling in" (Dillon 55). In the narrative pre-arranged by the prophetic words, word becomes deed.

The story was the object of considerable attention during the eighteenth and nineteenth century and it was the object of more than thirty adaptations between 1834 and 1937 (Stelmach 144). Poetic renditions – from MacPherson ("Darthula") to R.D. Joyce (*Deirdré*, 1876), Aubrey deVere (*The Sons of Usnach*, 1884) and Herbert Trench (*Deirdre Wedded*, 1901) – are preceded by English translations, popularizations and adaptations of its sources, for example by Geoffrey Keating (1634-40) and Theophilus O'Flanagan (1808). In turn, these derivative texts became sources for other texts of further rewritings and retellings in a diversity of artistic uses (Fackler ix). Therefore, the early-Irish story appears to be a palimpsest (Herbert, "The Universe of Male and Female" 53). Furthermore, the Deirdre story as such is an unstable text, or rather it exists as a multiplicity of fluid and unstable texts. The endless rewriting of the pretext of the story

is an echo of the prophetic words at the opening of *Longes mac N-Uisleann* – "Yours will be a story of wonder forever" (Gantz 259).

The ancient story has a binary quality. *Longes mac N-Uisleann* is an autonomous, self-contained type of narrative, epitomised in the birth-death process, as Deirdre's "life span is encompassed within the limits of the story" (Herbert, "The Universe of Male and Female" 56); yet, by being a *remscela* to *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, it works on the level of plot as explanatory unit functional to the epic as a whole to justify the presence of Ulster exiles on the side of the Connaught army later in the war. Unlike dramatic versions, narrative prose renditions tend to take the story into account as part of the whole it belongs to. As a precursor, Samuel Ferguson made his 1834 "Death of the Children of Usnach" the first of the seven stories in *Hibernian Nights Entertainments*, where a unifying device is provided by the voice of the bard Turlogh Buy O'Hagan; isolated from Irish saga, the Deirdre story is yet part of an even whole.

This is a pattern that most of the prose writers of the Revival follow when dealing with the story of Deirdre. Standish James O'Grady, Lady Gregory and James Stephens all conceive their retellings of the Irish sagas as a whole, in which the legend of Deirdre, rewritten and refashioned according to individual needs, is not isolated. Each of them also exploited the verbal quality of the story in different ways according to specific requirements and standards.

Like Ferguson, Standish O'Grady is an adaptor of the legend as he "manipulated the extant sources" (Pereira 69) to respond to his "good story approach" (Marcus 18). His two-volume *History of Ireland* (1878-1880) and the romance *The Coming of Cuculain* (1894) want to make the story acceptable to Victorian moral standards. Cuculain, the hero who is notably absent in the story of Deirdre, is the personification of heroism and Concobar an ideal of aristocracy and of authority.

In his adaptation of the story, O'Grady erases or manipulates the verbal quality it originally had. The traumatic entrance of Deirdre into the world and into her story and her likewise traumatic exit (Herbert, "Celtic Heroine" 17) are twisted into silence, so that Deirdre is given no voice. O'Grady opens his remake with sounds announcing "a year of prophecies and portents" (O'Grady, *History* 113). The atmosphere of festivity that corresponds to the feast in Fedlimd's house is characterized by "the sounds of revelry," "the sound of the harp and of singing voices" (114), time is marked by "the shrill cry of the cock," but instead of the disquieting cry of Deirdre "a shrill and agonizing scream" is heard (114). This unexplainable prodigy replaces Deirdre's scream and it is echoed by "low thunder-like mutterings," "sounds of battle," "crash of meeting hosts . . . and the war-cries of the Clans of Ulla" (114). Deirdre's voice disappears in this multiplicity of sounds and the mysterious shrill cry finds a verbal development in Cathfah's prophecy, which is notably the only part of the story in direct speech. While both *Longes mac N-Uisleann* and *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* contain extended parts in direct speech, from the prophecy to the laments for the Sons of Uisneach, O'Grady's *History* shifts to indirect speech. In a process of compression, Deirdre does not give voice to her desire and her sorrow, and significant elements in the original saga are reduced to a minimum. For

example, farewell and lament which play a relevant role in the original texts are simply referred to as alien texts: "Innumerable were the lamentations of Deirdré concerning the Children of Usna, and *they are preserved in the books of the poets*" (118, emphasis added).

Also Deirdre the seeress of *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* is not allowed the ritual speech of prophecy, which is mediated through indirect speech, she simply "related dreams and omens" (118). Thus, the authority of the prophecy holds control over the narrative, it is the only power capable to manipulate the text and prescribe its referent, which balances with Concobar's authority of "sentence of perpetual banishment and exile" (117). Deirdre's visions and forebodings "prove well-founded" as Concobar does not keep his promise to "reverse the sentence," which will lead to the death of the Sons of Usna (McAteer, 30). Word is formula. What in the old saga was ritual verbalizing – lay and keen – is diluted in the only existing voice of authority.

In *The Coming of Cuculain*, the first volume of a trilogy meant to be a novelistic rendering of his *History* (Hagan 132), O'Grady deals with the Deirdre story again, but now her cry is not neglected: "The birth of the child Deirdré, daughter of the chief poet of Ulla, was attended with a great portent, for the child shrieked from the mother's womb" (O'Grady, *Coming of Cuculain* 71).

However, the verbal potential of Deirdre's voice does not continue and in a process of compression also the death of the Sons of Usna is brief and concise : ". . . and they were slain by Concobar mac Nessa, according as he had promised by the words of his mouth" (96).

Likewise, Deirdre fades away from her story, no mention is made of her destiny or her death. In the conclusion of the episode, O'Grady reminds his readers that this is just a fragment within the wider spectrum of the epic: "So these chapters which relate to the abduction of Deirdré and the rebellion and expulsion of Fergus, are a vital portion of the whole story of Cuculain" (98).

A similar perspective also characterises Lady Gregory's account of the story of Deirdre, which she considers within the frame of the epic and represents a considerable part in her 1902 *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*.

"The Fate of the Sons of Usnach" is based on different texts including a Scottish folk version, which Lady Gregory exploited to compile a "readable version" (Golightly 117), thus editing the extant sources she used. The text mostly follows the Middle Irish version, *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach*, and opens with a one-sentence paragraph, whose compactness makes the story a single entity, drawing attention to story-telling itself: "Now it was one Fedlimid, son of Doll, was harper to King Conchbar, and he had but one child and this is the story of her birth" (Gregory 104).

The voice of oral storytelling ("Now it was one Fedlimid . . . .") emphasizes the story as story and anticipates acts of storytelling later on in the plot. Gelban, Conchobar's spy, relates what he has seen from the window and "told him (Conchobar) the story from beginning to end" (128). Likewise, after the sons of Uisneach have been slain, a distracted Deirdre meets Cuchulain "and she told him the story from first to last" (135). Deirdre thus turns deed into word, she uses the words of a text already told and predetermined,

where only the final line is missing. This is anticipated by the words in the second part of Cathbad's prophecy. In *Loinges mac N-Uislenn*, Cathvah's prophetic formula ends with the words "yours will be a famous tale, o Derdriu" (Gantz 259), thus drawing attention to the "narrative as artifact" (Dooley 158). Lady Gregory twists these words into: "*you* will be a tale of wonder for ever, Deirdre" (Gregory 106, emphasis added). Deprived of the skill of self-expression of her cry, Deirdre is now identified with her famous tale, she is narrative as artifact. She turns into a text and as such is multivalent and multifaced. Which text does she turn into? Does she become the text as preordained or preordaining? Does she become the text of her story as act or as word? Is SHE herself absolute word?

Repetition is a relevant strategy in the episode and it is also at the heart of the first meeting of the lovers, where Lady Gregory makes the cry from the womb in *Loinges mac N-Uislenn* overlap with the bond of *geis*. In fact, following the plot of *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach*, Deirdre calls after the Sons of Usnach three times: ". . . she cried out after them, "Naoise, son of Usnach, are you going to leave me?" (112).

The triple repetition of this formula belongs to a structural pattern of the text based on the number three (Fackler 85), but it also replaces the words of shame with which Deirdre binds Naoise in *Loinges mac N-Uislenn*, thus reproducing the arbitrary power of language: "Two years of shame and mockery these unless you take me with you!" (Gantz 261).

However, in her revision or adaptation of the story, Lady Gregory makes Deirdre a master of words when learning from Levarcham the names of plants and animals as a child. She also leaves considerable room to Deirdre's lament, which in its traditional mode of expression is a sort of story within the story. Deirdre's formal recitation recalls the formal recitation of the Druid's prophecy in the sources Lady Gregory used; both texts-within-a-text are self-contained units and draw attention to their performance. The keening woman dishevels her hair ("Deirdre . . . tore her fair hair", Gregory 134) before praising the accomplishments of the deceased, at the same time considering the composition itself. "I will make keening at their burial" (135), "I will be along with them in their grave, making lamentations and ochones" (136), thus recalling the conscious artifact of Cafbad's prophecy, "You will be a tale."

If Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* was a source for most of the writers of the Revival, James Stephens went "even further" in his novel *Deirdre* introducing "extraneous material" (Martin, "Deirdre" 28) from other sagas. This can be explained with his plan to rewrite the whole cycle of the Irish sagas and he turns to the epic of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* to create autonomous and interdependent narratives. Of the five volumes originally planned only three are published, *Irish Fairy Tales*, *In the Land of Youth* and *Deirdre*. However, by fragmenting the cycle into manageable parts, Stephens recognizes the autonomy of each and their being functional to the whole of his aim, "the great Tain." The closing lines of the novel are indicative of his original plan: "So far the fate of the Sons of Uisneac and the opening of the great Tain" (Stephens, *Deirdre* 286), a formula that is also used in the other Tain novel, *In the Land of Youth* (Stephens, *Land*

of Youth 304). He was well acquainted with the Irish sagas and "he knew the work of Kuno Meyer, Osborn Bergin, Douglas Hyde, and Standish Hayes O'Grady" (McFate 60). However, with its publication in 1923, *Deirdre* outlives the time of Irish saga as a source of personal response to ideal heroism, belonging in spirit to the first decade of the century (Martin, "Deirdre" 25). Stephens was also the first and only writer to adapt the Deirdre story to the novel form, that is to treat epic as fiction (Martin, *James Stephens* 140). Namely, Augustine Martin points out the narrative details following the birth of Deirdre and the Druid's prophecy:

> They carried the little morsel to him and she was laid across his knees. "So you are to destroy my kingdom and bring evil to mighty Ireland?" The babe reached with a tiny claw and gripped one finger of the king. "See," he laughed, "she places herself under my protection", and he moved his finger to and fro, but the child held fast to it. (Stephens, *Deirdre* 7)

Interestingly enough, Vincent Woods exploits the same detail and episode in Act One, Scene Two of *A Cry from Heaven*, where Cathach's prophecy is counterbalanced by Conor's reaction:

> This baby will destroy me? This thing?
> Look, she grips my finger and she smiles,
> Not an hour old.
> (Woods 16)

In a process of compression and expansion (McFate 79), Stephens reworks the verbal quality of the old legend because he structures his novel into two parts, formulated as an answer to the two major questions of the legend. Part 1, Patricia McFate points out, is the answer to the question in *Longes mac N-Uisleann* – "What caused the exile of the Sons of Usnac?" Part 2, the response to the *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* question – "What caused the death of the Sons of Usnac?" (McFate 74-5). The structure superimposed on the novel firmly establishes the novel itself as a speech act, a question-answer pattern, whose dynamic is a mirror to the word from nowhere, the absolute arbitrariness of the language that is both object and subject of narration.

However, Stephens also reworks the ominous cry from the womb of unborn Deirdre in a perspective more suitable to fiction. "As he (Cathbad) spoke *a thin wail* came from somewhere in the building, and the men present turned an ear to that *little sound* . . ." (Stephens, *Deirdre* 6, emphasis added).

The half natural cry is replaced by the more natural "thin wail" (6) of newborn Deirdre. Both are functional to the narrative, both belong to the same code, both are the first attempt of Deirdre at self expression, both are unaccomplished "words" breaking the established order and leading to the pattern of word *per se* of the prophecy. Unlike the cry in *Loinges mac N-Uisleann*, Stephens's is a "little sound" (6), from which the

absolute text of prophecy develops. The latter, though, is not the rhetorical formula of the original saga, but rather, a brief and even casual verbalizing, which matches with the natural dimension of birth. Thus the long ritual prophecy is reduced to a minimum: "You hear – says Cathfa – A child has just been born in this house. She will bring evil to Ireland, and she will work destruction in Ulster, as a ferret works destruction in a rabbit's burrow" (7).

Stephens's "thin wail" and "little sound" also recall the second part of Cathfa's prophecy in *Longes mac N-Uisleann*. When interpreting the cry, Cathfa puts his hand on the mother's womb and from the liminal world of pregnancy Deirdre reacts with a kind of echo of her cry, a "resound" (Hull 61) or "murmur" (Gantz 259), again inarticulate words that establish identity in terms of sound. Deirdre's "thin wail" is thus absolute text on the limits of articulation, voice-word from nowhere, like the prophecy in which it is expanded. It is also escape from the text that itself is on the making, because of its articulation it tries to outdo the boundaries established by the authoritative text of the prophecy. The story of absolute verbal power is also the story of word caught in its being, half way toward utterance.

The novel closes on a verbal element that balances the opening. For his novel Stephens prefers the romantic version *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach*, where Deirdre dies beside Naisi's corpse: "Deirdre knelt by the bodies, and she sang her keen, beginning: 'I send a blessing eastward to Scotland.' When she had finished the poem she bowed over her husband's body: she sipped his blood, and she died there upon his body" (Stephens, *Deirdre* 286).

James Stephens chooses to insert just one line of the keen omitting what in the original texts is a relevant part. His process of compression of formula is the same as he uses in the "thin wail" and the syncretism of Cathfa's prophecy. The twin arts of prophecy and keening are the power of language in terms of beginning and end, life and death. Intermediate verbal paths are scattered throughout the novel, interlinking the hesitant wail of babe Deirdre to Cathfa's prophecy, to the song of the sons of Usnac, to the various layers of verbal power of Lewarcham, "a conversation woman" in Stephens (Martin, "Deirdre" 26), and as such a master of words. She too is responsible for the story as artifact: the novel is structured around tales about Conchobar told to Deirdre, of her childhood told to the king, whispers and rumors about her beauty, fate and elopement.

The power of language and words is a catalyst in the sources of the Deirdre story as well as in its narrative remakes that provide a background for the dramatists of the Revival. In different ways, the "cry from Heaven" that Vincent Woods considers the focus of his twenty-first-century play reworks a pattern of speech acts that make language both subject and object of narration in the discourse of the various tales. In a "nod to the past," Woods stages the cry, according to the stage directions "a cry is heard, a scream, a note unearthly, human, terrible" (Woods 9), yet he also multiplies it into various cries, but in the long prophecy of Cathach "her name – Deirdre" will be "remembered when we are long forgot" (13). It is Deirdre herself who will make her story an artifact. In

a parallel sequence to Deirdre's keen, in Woods' play she asks Labharcham to tell her baby their story:

> Let him know our story
> Let him know of Naoise and Deirdre
> The story of the Sons of Usna (107)
> In the beginning was the word. And in the end too.

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Dramatizing Deirdre

Beatriz Kopschitz Xavier Bastos

Abstract: *The alarming cry that characterizes the myth of Deirdre breaks time, genre and geographical boundaries. Originally oral, then written narrative, the story was splendidly dramatized in the Irish Revival, in the well-known plays by William Butler Yeats,* Deirdre *(1907), and John Millington Synge,* Deirdre of the Sorrows *(1909). Less known Revival dramatizations of the myth include George Russell's* Deirdre *(1902) and Eva Gore Booth's* The Buried Life of Deirdre *(1908-12). Much later, the myth was revisited by Donagh MacDonagh in* Lady Spider – A Play about Deirdre *(1951), by Ulick O'Connor in* Deirdre *(1977), and by Mary Elizabeth Burke Kennedy, as part of the play* Women in Arms *(1984). The most recent dramatized version of the myth is Vincent Woods'* A Cry from Heaven *(2005). The aim of this article is to comment on the transformations that the story has suffered in dramatic form in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, somehow responding to historical and social changes in Ireland.*

The rewriting of tradition is definitely among the traits scholars, critics and practitioners struggle to identify in and make sense out of contemporary Irish theatre. The recreation of classical Greek as well as of European drama has been, perhaps, among the dominant trends in Irish theatre in the last decades. Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, Frank McGuinness, Brendan Kennelly, Marina Carr, just to mention a few, have contributed with their unique and invaluable adaptations of the classics and of the Russians, for instance, thus weaving a web of new and old knowledges.

Equally, or perhaps, more relevant, is the reinterpretation of the Irish tradition in the chain of textual borrowings and cultural exchange. The alarming cry from the myth of Deirdre has broken time, literary conventions and physical boundaries. Originally oral, then written narrative, the story was splendidly and successfully dramatized for the first time in the Irish Revival, and then revisited in later periods, up to contemporary times. The aim of this article is to present a brief survey, or map, of the extant versions of the Deirdre myth in Irish drama, considering the transformations that the story has suffered in dramatic form in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, somehow responding to historical and social changes in Ireland, rather than provide a full analysis of the texts, or focus on details of their approximation with the original written sagas.

The map was initially drawn as part of the research work developed together with the Brazilian theatre company, Cia Ludens, in preparation for the production of the latest version of the myth: Vincent Woods' *A Cry from Heaven* (2005).

In general terms, unlike the narrative variants of the tale, which maintain the plot and structure basically unaltered, the several versions in drama offer quite a range of variations in form and structure. Even more than in prose, the dramatic versions constitute "unstable texts," or "protean" texts, that have acquired and produced the fashions, purposes, agendas and particularities of each period and author. Also, the non-fixity of theatre in performance makes of the dramatic text a genre even more unstable and open to re-interpretation.

The best known versions of the story in drama are definitely those of the Revival period – in particular *Deirdre* (1907), by William Butler Yeats, and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1909), by John Millington Synge, although the *Deirdre* by George Russell was composed earlier (1902). All three place the character of Deirdre in the title role, unlike both the Old-Irish and the Middle-Irish versions, whose titles shed light on the role of the Sons of Uisneach. The Revival plays, instead, give the female character a central position that would remain as a model to be later challenged or continued. All three playwrights develop their plays out of a shorter version of the original sagas, and can all be viewed, considering differences and specific traits, as somehow involved in the Revival agenda of restoration of the Irish heritage to the Irish stage.

Yeats's is a one-act play, with just a few of the characters of the sagas – Conor, Deirdre, Noise and Fergus, who act in slow, symbolic movements, and speak in verse, in elegiac tone. The play also includes the use of masks, music and dance elements, and the Musicians function as chorus, introducing and commenting the story. There is no psychological motivation in his re-creation of the myth. "The poet has dramatised a mood, more than people of flesh and blood," as Declan Kiberd has put it (176). According to Masaru Sekine, "Yeats, then, had actually written what was the Irish equivalent of a Noh play in *Deirdre* [even] before he knew about the Noh" (165).

Interestingly, the Noh technique was later revisited by Ulick O'Connor in his *Deirdre,* in the 1970s, published in 1980, in the volume *Three Noh Plays*. Why revisit Yeats's chosen form so long after the Revival tide? For Ulick O'Connor, the Noh plays seemed to be the ideal form in which to present verse for a modern audience:

> A chorus could move a man across a continent in two lines. It could also take an audience backwards and forwards in time. Scenery is unnecessary. The actor tells you what is going on. It is back to the Elizabethan platform, an anticipation of what Gordon Craig and Yeats were to feel about the stage in the first decades of the century. In a television age, where realism can become ridiculous on a stage, the Noh seems extremely modern. (7)

Ulick O'Connor took, then, the Irish saga and re-wrote it in strictly classical Noh form. The Old Woman, the *Shite,* or principal character wearing a mask in the first

half of the play, is discovered by a pilgrim, the Scholar, the *Waiki,* or second character, who questions her. In the second half of the play, she is reincarnated as herself in her youth and changes masks, suggesting a wheel of reincarnation until the achievement of *Satori* or enlightment (O'Connor 7-9).

Back to the Revival modes, Synge's version – *Deirdre of the Sorrows (*1909), on the other hand, was coined in a realistic fashion, more dramatic, less symbolic. It expands the number of characters, including, for instance, Lavarcham, Ainnle and Ardan, among others, is written in prose dialogue and uses the framework of a traditional three-act structure. For Declan Kiberd "Synge's play is at once more dramatic and more faithful to real life than that of Yeats or Russell. . . . He saw the plot as a crisis in human relations. His play is at all times true to the way trapped and terrified people would act under intolerable strain" (177). Paradoxically, however, it is the realism and the contemporaneity of Synge`s play what perhaps approximates his text to the violence of the original stories, somehow erased by Yeats, for instance. Furthermore, Synge's knowledge of the Irish language and of the various sources helped him opt for the Hiberno-English dialect, thus giving the play a less romanticized quality than other Revival plays.

According to Kiberd, the brilliant innovation of Synge's text is that it makes Deirdre the motif force of the play, which leads us to the role of women in Irish drama, be it as characters or writers, and thus to one of the least known of the Revival versions, *The Buried Life of Deirdre* (1908-12)*,* by Eva Gore-Booth (1870-1926). The sister of Constance Markievicz, Gore-Booth "worked in the women's trade union movement, sharing a lifelong commitment to feminism, socialism, and pacifism with Esther Roper" (Welch 222). Until very recently neglected and forgotten, her plays were republished in 1991 by Frederik Lapisardi, who justified his enterprise by affirming that "it is neither fitting nor just that Eva Gore-Booth should be remembered simply as a support player to Constance's starring role. . . . [She] was so much more than that. She was an active pacifist in a militant age, she was a dedicated feminist, she was a sincere Christian mystic, and she was the author of at least nineteen published volumes of poetry, prose and drama" (iii).

Her Deirdre play, usually accepted as having been composed between 1908 and 1912, was supposedly first performed at the Gaiety in 1911, although there is some controversy over the actuality of this information, and published only in 1930, after her death in 1926. The play reunites most of the qualities of the author highlighted by Lapisardi. Written in verse, and organized in three acts, it includes some of the basic characters of the original stories – Conor, Deirdre, Lavracam, Naisi, Ardan, Ainlee and Fergus – and presents a plot that does not differ much from the plotline of her male contemporaries. Similarities, though, may end here. She seems to have found inspiration in the poems attributed to the heroine, rather than in the mainstream plot, conferring to and reinforcing in her protagonist the qualities of prophecy and keening, that is, her verbal skills and power of words. Eva Gore-Booth's is also a play based in the belief in re-incarnation, which she appoints as being part of druidic teaching, rather than an exclusive

Eastern doctrine. Moreover, it portrays as she herself explained "two contending forces . . . : the force of Angus, which is the possessive and exclusive passion of love, and the force of Mannannan, which is the freedom and universality of love" (qtd. in Lapisardi 152). And in the play, it is the women who accept the peaceful spirit of Mannannan, thus representing Gore-Booth's combination of feminism and pacifism. For Cathy Leeney, for instance, the title and the action of Gore-Booth's play

> presents a realm of existence which is, in a sense, already dead, is over and is now being repeated. Through the reincarnated Deirdre, [she] proposes the possibility of a present which is at once the past and the future, and the freeing, in that present moment, of human power from a cycle of violence, possessiveness and retribution. (59)

The feminist perspective in the re-creation of the myth was much later resumed by Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy, in her unusual *Women in Arms,* perhaps the only one to place the single story of Deirdre into the wider spectrum of other female heroines of the medieval stories, and their agent capacities, as the intriguingly heroic title suggests. Written in the 1980s, the title is also an ambivalent reference to the growing feminist movement and the shifting role of women in Irish society – in the professions, business, politics and education, among other areas, in that decade and afterwards. The play can then be seen as a feminine version of *The Táin*. It includes a short prologue and a short epilogue, and is divided into four parts: "Nessas's Story"; "Macha's Story"; "Deirdre's Story; and "Maeve's Story", thus rescuing some of the most powerful women of the Irish myths, imbued with a wide range of characteristics far from more traditional female prototypes of mother or submissive woman. Heroic courage, but also hatred and vengeance; proud suffering, but also sexual desire and audacity are some of the features that inhabit these characters. "Burke-Kennedy reclaims these powerful women without idealizing them" (McMullan 38).

The form is narrated dialogue or a series of short monologues – a story told by many characters, who alternate the narrative voice. As the author herself suggested, the play is written to be performed by seven actors with doubling roles in the different parts/stories of the play, and each becomes part of the others' stories. Still according to the dramatist – "as well as their named roles, the actors are the chorus in the stories in which they are not central. In this capacity, they play not only human characters . . . but animals, atmospheres, and landscapes" (qtd. in Leeney 4). She challenges, then, not only the roles traditionally ascribed to women but also the dramatic form. Her Deirdre has to be seen in the context of *Women in Arms* as a whole, and is perhaps the most unusual of the eight plays dealt with here.

The least known text is most probably *Lady Spider – A Play about Deirdre*, by Donagh MacDonagh, first produced in 1951 and published only in 1980 by Gordon M. Wickstrom, in *Journal of Irish Literature* 9 [(Sept. 1980): 3-82]. MacDonagh, the son of the poet Thomas MacDonagh, leader executed in the Easter Rising in 1916, wrote all his

plays in verse, and most of them are considered comedies. For Donagh MacDonagh`s son, "even the tragedy, *Lady Spider* (based on the story of Deirdre of the Sorrows) is as funny as it is tragic," and it is "[his] father's best writing, where he passes over from being a consummate craftsman to a true artist" (*irishbornman.tripod.com/DMacD.html*).

A Cry from Heaven, by Vincent Woods, however, first staged at the Abbey, in 2005, recreates the myth of Deirdre in verse, recalling some of its previous dramatizations in a poetic version, in a predominant tragic mode, hovering with great subtlety on comic aspects. Woods' choice, within a certain revivalist tide in Irish theatre, could easily be interpreted as an act of resistance against the homogenization of global Ireland, as a reassembling of a sense of identity out of the "Celtic Tiger." What I would like to stress, however, is the force of poetry in his play. Woods believes that poetry and theatre are closely linked: "sometimes my poetry runs into the theatre and vice-versa. I know what I am at in terms of poetry, and I have a notion of where it may lead me in terms of theatre, but I am not absolutely sure" (qtd. in Chambers 494), he commented earlier in his career. It seems that the answer may have come in the beautiful mythological recreation of the Deirdre story. For José Lanters, Woods' version of the myth contains a transnational approach "and its emphasis on a mythical theme (the inescapability of war) rather than allegories of Irishness, the Woods . . . version of the Deirdre story seems the antithesis . . . of the *Deirdres* of the Revival period" (39).

In the spirit committed to exploring, explicating and enjoying the emergence of new interpretations, articulations and understandings of Irish literature and culture and their relationship to older, established practices, Vincent Woods, apart from being immersed in his native land, its folklore and history, as source material for both his poetic and theatrical texts, has also developed substantial connections and relations within a more international spectrum. His work has been staged in the U.S., England, Canada and Australia, and has been translated from English into French, Spanish, Romanian and Irish. Cathy Leeney has stated that "a master-narrative of Irish theatre is no longer tenable. [One] has to move on from an idea of Ireland and Irish theatre that is requiredly . . . independent of connections with other countries, other cultures, other histories. This range of work invites us . . . to open Ireland out into the world at large" (viii). Vincent Woods lived in Australia for several years, and co-edited (with Colleen Z. Burke) a collection entitled – *The Turning Wave – Poems and Songs of Irish-Australia*. And as the waves turned, across the Atlantic, his *Cry from Heaven* has been translated into Portuguese by Domingos Nunez, and will be staged in Brazil soon. A departure to other shores. And, thus, I finish by quoting from one of Vincent Woods' poems, which, after all, reminds us of Deirdre's farewells and laments:

Departure

The blue bus stopped too late, we were already on our way.
We were already halfway across the mountain
……

Looking back, we should have known,
…….
But we were tired, displaced, tradition
Was the last thing on our minds.

(Qtd. in Guinness 329)

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Tragic Echoes and Cries Multiplied: Notes for a Production of Vincent Woods' Version of the Deirdre Story by Cia Ludens

Domingos Nunez

Abstract: *Since its foundation in 2003, the Brazilian theatre company, Cia Ludens, has produced four plays by outstanding Irish dramatists: Brian Friel, Marie Jones and Bernard Shaw. During this period, research into Irish drama and history was done as part of the process of staging these plays. Three cycles of staged readings and the publication of translated short plays by Shaw were conceived to illustrate part of the material investigated for the major productions. The result has been a stimulating dialogue between past and present, text and vocal/gestural possibilities and, above all, Irish and Brazilian cultures. The continuation of such a dialogue is the ongoing process of producing* A Cry from Heaven *by Vincent Woods. The aim of this article is therefore to give an account of the multiple aspects considered for the production of the play by Cia Ludens, from the translation of the script into Portuguese and a study of tragedy up to the non-realistic conceptions for the staging of the text.*

Since its foundation in 2003, Cia Ludens has produced only plays by remarkable Irish dramatists. Working intensely on both theoretical and practical aspects of the theatre, the company has been interested not only in producing shows for the stage, but also in promoting wider debates about contemporary Irish theatre and its possible connections with the Brazilian political and cultural contexts. Aiming at such purposes, in the last seven years, the company has accomplished four cycles of staged readings and had a book published, containing four of Bernard Shaw's short plays translated into Portuguese for the first time.

Stimulated from the outset by Huizinga's book *Homo Ludens*, Cia Ludens has been investigating the possibilities of putting into practice what Huizinga calls "the play element" in the "manipulation of certain images" (4), in the creation of an imagined reality which does not have recourse to virtual media**.** In the 2006 production of *Stones in his Pockets* by Marie Jones, two actors, without changing their costumes, embodied a dozen

characters on an almost bare stage, and told the story of a film inside a play by changing postures, modulating their voices and, above all, *play*ing with articulated language. In 2008, with the production of *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*, a fable written by Bernard Shaw in 1935, Cia Ludens had the chance of experiencing through the language of the absurd. One of the plays that Shaw called "extravagant," *The Simpleton* allowed us to investigate alternative forms of body movements and speech. Approaching the play as a forerunner of what was later known as "the theatre of the absurd," the company was able to interpret the term "contemporary" in a broader scope, as well as stage the play as a kind of perfect metaphor of present Brazilian issues concerning politics, religion, morality and social relationships.

Alongside the practical experiments and linguistic investigations carried out in these two productions, since the foundation of the company the development of three major theatrical projects has been under way. In a sense they have been undertaken in a more or less simultaneous way. One of them is the production of a tetralogy of Brian Friel's plays, and the publication of a set of his scripts for the theatre, translated for the first time into Brazilian Portuguese. The aim of this project is to discuss and highlight, in Brazil, the career of this playwright who is considered one, if not the most prominent Irish playwright living today, since the beginning of his activities as a full-time writer up to the present day. Without following a strict chronology, but rather working in accordance with the company's available funds, two of these plays have already been produced. The first, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, premiered in 2004; and *Faith Healer*, after its premiere last year, has now had three very successful runs and is currently on tour. The motivation for this project does not differ radically from the theoretical and practical matters that have driven the company's choices in the other theatrical enterprises. The only significant contrast might be that the reality imagined by Friel's narrative conventions is so solidly laid down in words, so entwined in the linguistic world, that, compared to the company's other productions, much less had to be demanded from the performers' physicality – to create what Tony Corbett calls Friel's "grammar of reality" (107). The language spoken both in *Lughnasa* and *Faith Healer* is a language that "explores the way in which individuals construct themselves, and thus respond to external reality" (108). In *Lughnasa*, we explored the way in which memory organizes the reality linguistically, and verbalizes it in a symbolic written order, which is frequently represented by the images created by the bodies in movement on the stage. In *Faith Healer,* the central conflict, transferred almost entirely to the level of language, was approached in a psychoanalytical manner, giving scope for the interpretation of the four monologues of the play as four sessions of psychoanalysis.

The seeds for the other two projects have almost entirely emerged from the research processes carried out for these previous productions. There is a common thread in all the projects, in that the peculiarity has been noted that some contemporary Irish dramatists still seem to be following a tradition in Irish drama that mingles the tragic and the comic, but almost never in a balanced fashion. These features, however, although present in all the plays produced, were not at the centre of the artistic conceptions, but

have been employed as the main guidelines of the creative process. For this purpose two major studies have been undertaken: one about the comic elements, and the other about the tragic components, in the contemporary Irish theatre. Cia Ludens seeks to conclude to what extent the two can "converse" inside a play, and what sort of practical images for the stage can result from such a "conversation." Until now two of Tom Murphy's plays have been considered as a good starting point for the study of comedy, even though tragic notes in his plays always hover around his characters, and even underlie almost every comic trait of the scripts. For a study about tragedy in contemporary Irish drama, since the third cycle of staged readings held in 2006, when Vincent Woods' script was translated and read for the first time, *A Cry from Heaven*, written in 2005, seems to be the most appropriate, most challenging and most intriguing material to deal with. In contrast to Murphy's plays, any idea of comicality or comical aspects seems to be totally absent from Woods' play. And it was precisely this notion that puzzled the company and propelled the first steps towards a conception for a future production.

At the present stage, very surprisingly, the ongoing studies have revealed that if comic aspects are hardly present in the linguistic tissue of Woods' play, when we understand "comedy" not simply as a term linked to light-hearted situations, but as a description relating to certain theoretical aspects, it is possible to detect a poetics of comic style operating on two different levels inside his play: in the dramatist's ultimate intentions with his script, in a general sense; and in the actions (described briefly in the stage directions) to be executed at the end of most of the scenes, in a more specific sense. The prospect of transforming this particular interpretation of comedy into scenic images mingled with the alternatives for the creation of a theatrical reality from the tragic aspects present in the subject-matter of the play, as well as in its linguistics and form, is what has stimulated us to produce it.

Vincent Woods' version for the tragic story of the *Exile of the Sons of Uisliu* was written, like that of Yeats, in blank verse. For many critics, for over two hundred years the notion of verse was almost inseparable from tragic drama. In his proposition about Greek tragedy, Albin Lesky states that Greek verse was designed to reveal the tragic in distinct concepts: as a "totally tragic world view . . . a total tragic conflict, and a tragic situation." While the world in the totally tragic view is "conceived as a place where forces and values...will inevitably be destroyed" without any explanation "by any transcendent purpose," in a tragic situation "we find the same constituent elements… but this anguished awareness of the inescapable . . . need not be the end" (13-14). In George Steiner's view, there are only a few plays within the *corpus* of the existing Greek tragedies which, in fact, "manifest tragedy" in an absolute form, which lend rigour and force to the word. For him, " 'tragedy' in the radical sense is the dramatic representation or, more precisely, the dramatic testing of a view of reality in which man is taken to be an unwelcome guest in the world" (1996, xi).

Thus, despite Kitto's argument that there is no such thing as "the form of Greek Tragedy," that it is an "unreal figment . . . something which evolves historically and takes the individual plays with it" (vi), we tend to think that, at least on the linguistic

level, drama in verse is one of the forms inherent not only to Greek tragedies but also to that kind of tragic drama that we could call "high" or "aristocratic," where "the stylization [of the language] imposes [itself] on the outward aspects of conduct [and] makes possible the moral, intellectual and emotional complications . . . ." (Steiner 246)[1]. This stylization of language and its moral, intellectual and emotional complications can be felt throughout *A Cry from Heaven*, in the magnificent verses that Woods puts in the mouth of his characters. However, it seems to Cia Ludens that this language does not conform with the very violent actions, wordless and subsequent to the characters' verbal utterances, which, we think, would be more effective either if they were only narrated, or were part of a play in prose. This kind of physical action may limit and neutralize the effectiveness of the language spoken in the play, or be limited and neutralized by it. Therefore caution, and a firm conception in the mind, are necessary to avoid these scenes becoming preposterous and laughable, because in a strict sense, they pertain to the comic sphere.

We cannot properly say that we have a tragicomedy here, as in most of the plays written in blank verse by Shakespeare − even if we bear in mind that the Bard used to change the linguistic register to stress the way in which members of the lower classes express themselves, usually in prose. What interests us here is that there is something undemocratic "in the vision of tragedy." As in the classic tragedies, Woods portrays the annihilation of kings and present and future queens and other members of the nobility, and because they are "royal and heroic characters [that] are set higher than we are in the chain of being . . . their style of utterance must reflect this elevation" (241). The spanking, rape and sex scenes so as they are positioned in the play are in accordance neither with the style the characters were themselves using for communication, minutes previously, nor with their collocation. The acts of lower men belong to comedy; it is comedy that "tends to dramatize those material circumstances and bodily functions which are banished from the tragic stage"; it is "the comic personage [that] does not transcend the flesh" (247), but is engrossed in it. It is in this sense that we can interpret and approach these moments in *A Cry from Heaven*, though very violent and, in any event, light-hearted, as comic. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Woods ascribes more dignity to the death scenes at the end of his play, when the sons of Uisnech are killed, and Deirdre, the heroine, commits suicide. These scenes are not expected to be enacted on the stage. They are simply narrated in the elevated tone of the verses by eyewitnesses who are on the battlements of the palace.

The radical change that Woods introduces at the end of his version, although externally as violent and unpleasant as the previous scenes briefly described in the stage directions, also flirts with comical codes. In almost all the play's main features, Woods very closely follows the tale he used as inspiration, part of the Ulster Cycle narrated as a prologue of a fragmentary "epic-like saga" known shortly as *The Táin*. Similarly to that tale, *A Cry from Heaven* starts with Deirdre screaming in her mother's womb, being accused of bringing destruction to Ulster and its king, who secretly fosters her until she is of marriageable age. Before that, though, she elopes with a nephew of the sovereign,

and two of his brothers, and they flee across Ireland and Scotland with the king's army at their back. When they return, the brothers are killed, and Deirdre commits suicide by smashing her head against a stone. The radical difference in the end of Woods' version is that before dying Deirdre has a baby, whose paternity is illegitimately reclaimed by the king. Intending to interrupt the vicious cycle of vengeances and bloodshed, Leabharcham, the companion to Deirdre, who has the custody of the baby, strangles it. Her act, although dreadful, touches a positive note that unveils the dramatist's optimistic view of the world. Even though Lesky admits in one of his conceptualizations that a Greek tragedy can finish more or less happily, for Steiner such an idea is unconceivable. For him "tragedy is irreparable. It cannot lead to just and material compensation for past suffering" (8). "The motion of tragedy is a constant descent . . . to suffering and chaos" (12), and if the ultimate intention is the ascension of the soul from shade to starry light, then we are in the domains of comedy. From this point of view *A Cry from Heaven* is a *commedia*, in the sense inferred by Dante in the title of his poem. Both the poem and play indicate that there is still hope; that amendments are feasible; and that a better life is about to rise on the horizon. After the baby's death, the king and his evil mother are arrested; and Leabharcham entices the people of Ulster to "give a single cry . . . to this passing", while the Bulls of Day and Night, the *leitmotiv* of *The Táin*, "face each other, embrace and kiss"; then the Bull of Night, who had been killed in the beginning of the play, "kills the Bull of the Day," who in his turn also resurrects, and "they lie down together" (Woods 114) .

This necessary balance between dark and bright, *yin* and *yang*, embodied by the fight of the bulls, supplies a perfect image of the dramatist's intentions with his play. It is as if he were saying that the harmony of the contemporary world depends on an attentive observation of positive and negative poles, of which one is operating at a given moment, and of how we should dispose our movements and actions to be in accordance with their implacable laws. Any attempt to move in the contrary direction might result in disaster. That is exactly what happens in the play. The Night should have been the victor since the beginning, because that particular moment was black; but the king imposed an opposite force, and balance is regained only when the dark forces assume their command beside the bright ones. By the same token, the Bulls of Day and Night also represent the tragic and comic aspects detectable in the script. The way they can be combined and transformed into a theatrical reality is what we intend to try out in our production.

Since Woods' verses create the necessary and elevated atmosphere of a classic tragedy, any attempt to exacerbate the movements of the leading parts on the stage may be extremely excessive and unnecessary. The text is replete with references to contemporary moral and physical matters, inserted in the speeches and profiles of the characters: we hear abominable political negotiations; we understand the economic favouritisms; we accept the sexual pluralism and the contorted and the sometimes violent "modern" psyche that goes with it – lacking demand for any corporal rapture. That is the reason why in the company's conception the performers should recite their lines as if they were in a neoclassical drama, perhaps of Racine, where "the violence is all in the poetry,"

where there cannot be either "looseness of form" or spectacular external movement. The language must be "a constant summation of energy and meaning" (Steiner 91). It is even advisable that the actors and actresses remain motionless most of time, some of them standing on "lofty wooden shoes" in order to emphasize their hierarchical position (and also perhaps bring to mind that it was, possibly, standing on such shoes that Greek tragic actors used to perform).

Clearly we do not intend to ignore what we called the "comic elements" of the script. On the contrary; they will play an important part in the creation of visual images, and at the same time will work as a kind of counterbalance to the static aspects of the show. Woods invents the presence of mute soldiers in certain scenes. We imagine that these Soldiers of the Red Branch could be transformed into a kind of chorus that does not speak, but dance, and occasionally might even sing and utter all sort of unarticulated sounds, helping in this way to establish specific climatic tensions. These dancers will have a double function. At one level they must, as a group, physically stylize all those violent and sexual scenes that were to be performed by the protagonists, conferring artificiality and poetry on these prosaic circumstances. At another level they have to appear as a "sumptuous 'lyric tapestry,'" according to Schiller's definition for a tragic chorus, as a "background [against which] the action can unfold with proper majesty" (Steiner 233). In this function the chorus of dancers will acquire different roles: they will be the soldiers of the palace, the young warriors training and wrestling in a gymnasium, the animals of the forest, and the army as it pursues the lovers. Additionally, their choreographic presence can be visually useful in providing interludes to link scenes and acts.

Inspiration for their choreographies may be sought in different literary and pictorial sources, modern and classic, so that the dialogue Woods which established between old and modern forms can reverberate in other aspects of the production. The same could be said about costumes. As for the setting, we have to consider the organization of the play. Similarly to Shakespeare, Woods wrote a five-act play with an enormous number of scenes in different locations and times (but certainly more than in any single play by the Bard) − since *A Cry from Heaven* covers the whole life of the heroine, from birth to death. Even so, the architecture of the Shakespearean theatre can be an allusion of incalculable value. Stylized on a conventional stage, it can supply us with acting areas placed on three different levels: an "orchestra" level, a "medium" level, and a "balcony" level. Several alternatives and combinations are likely to be explored on these platforms, so that changes of place and time can be suggested.

Aspects concerning music have been so far the most problematic. Cia Ludens is still debating whether to mix modern and classical music; whether live songs in Gaelic and in Portuguese can have a stronger appeal to a Brazilian audience, or even whether some of the characters' soliloquies should not perhaps be sung operatically. Work on the production is still under way and all these hypotheses are still to be dealt with. Until a final product comes true, these reflections will be re-considered, and tested over and over again, up to the moment when the show is ready to be shared with the audience.

Note

1 All quotations of George Steiner's *The Death of Tragedy* from now on were taken from the Faber and Faber edition of 1961.

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Drama

"Is it not time for my pain-killer?": *Endgame* and the Paradoxes of a Meaningless Existence

Fernando Aparecido Poiana

Abstract: *This article analyzes the nonsense and violence embedded in the very "logicality" of language in Endgame, and how this aesthetic mechanism creates an entropic universe in the play. It also focuses on Beckett's insistence on the vagueness of temporality, on habit and on human memory as products of constant repetition which transfigure the reified empirical world of History into the aesthetic realm of this play, whose central axis revolves around an absurdly repetitive stasis. This repetitive stasis triggers the characters' gloominess in face of their impotence to break free from their farcical and cyclical repetition of beginnings and endings.*

"The end is in the beginning and yet you go on."

Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* (1958) could be defined as a dramatic work that presents a post-nuclear holocaust landscape in which a repetitive cycle of beginnings and endings suggests a post-apocalyptic mood. This mood, in turn, drains away any possibility of heroism and grandeur, with the result that the characters' need to find meaning in a meaningless existence is both the source of and reason for their torture. Given that, I intend to focus on the way Beckett aesthetically exposes the nonsense and violence embedded in the "logicality" of language. I also intend to show how this strategy creates an entropic universe in the play, in which the failure of language to produce clear references and communication that is free from ambiguities and misunderstandings creates an impasse between the obligation to express and the absence of means or of will to do so. I shall reveal how this entropic universe and its insistence on temporality, on reminiscence, on habit and on human memory as products of constant repetition can aesthetically transfigure the reified empirical world of History into the fictional world of *Endgame*. In this world, the characters' gloominess in face of their impotence to break free from their farcical and cyclical repetition of beginnings and endings transfigures the poverty of communicable experiences of twentieth-century man, as well as the traumas he is subjected to, looking for a way out of a ruinous environment, knowing simultaneously that "(...) there is no cure for [being on earth]" (Beckett 125).

Endgame opens with Clov performing his daily ritual of drawing back the curtains – "he goes out, comes back immediately with a small step-ladder, carries it over and sets it down under window left, gets up on it, draws back curtain" (Beckett 92). He does the same with the window right and then proceeds to uncover two ashbins, removing "the sheet covering them, [folding] it over his arm" (Beckett 92-93). Briefly laughing, he lifts their lids, stoops and looks into them. Having done that, he goes on to remove the sheet covering Hamm, who is discovered "in a dressing gown, a stiff toque on his head, a large blood-stained handkerchief over his face, a whistle hanging from his neck, a rug over his knees, thick socks on his feet" (Beckett 93) and apparently asleep. In the interval between Hamm being uncovered and his subsequent waking up, Clov delivers his toneless opening soliloquy, in which he states that it is "finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" (Beckett 93), establishing the thematic tension between an eagerly sought-after ending to either the characters' lives or to their soul-deadening lifestyles, on the one hand, and, on the other, their powerlessness to activate the necessary means to that end. Clov realizes as he proceeds with his soliloquy that he "can't be punished any more" (Beckett 93), which hints at his longing to leave Hamm for good, a yearning that underpins his disgruntlement throughout the play.

Hamm, who is totally dependent on Clov, is dying in a world that is also apparently reaching its end. Confined to a wheelchair, and being unable to see, due to his eyes having "gone all white" (Beckett 94), he relishes the thought that existence might fade to nothing. He wonders whether there can be "misery loftier than [his]" (Beckett 93) and, amongst claims that it is "enough, it's time it ended, in the refuge too" (Beckett 93), declares that "it's time it ended, and yet [he] hesitate[s] … to end" (Beckett 93). Hamm reluctantly discards the continuing prospects of life such as food and his painkillers, which he repeatedly requests as the play goes on, by asking if it is "not time for [his] pain-killer" (Beckett 95). In addition, throughout the play, Hamm curses his own parents, Nagg and Nell, who have lived confined in two ashbins since they lost their legs in a bicycle accident:

> NAGG: Do you remember –
> NELL: No.
> NAGG: When we crashed on our tandem and lost our shanks.
> [*They laugh heartily*]
> NELL: It was in the Ardennes.
> [*They laugh less heartily*]
> NAGG: On the road to Sedan.
> [*They laugh still less heartily.*] (Beckett, 99-100)

Hamm's opening soliloquy is reminiscent of the king in a chess game who is attempting to evade checkmate as long and desperately as possible. The proud yet gloomy tone of his speech is echoed in his later soliloquies, in which his pride, gloominess and hesitancy are often mingled with his prophetic relish upon noticing that the end is near:

> HAMM: One day you`ll be blind, like me. You'll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, for ever, like me. [*Pause.*] One day you'll say to yourself, I'm tired, I'll sit down, and you'll go and sit down. Then you'll say, I'm hungry, I'll get up and get something to eat. But you won't get up and you won't get anything to eat. [*Pause.*] You'll look at the wall a while, then you'll say, I'll close my eyes, perhaps have a little sleep, after that I'll feel better, and you'll close them. And when you open them again there'll be no wall any more. [*Pause.*] Infinite emptiness will be all around you, all the resurrected dead of all the ages wouldn't fill it, and there you'd be like a little bit of grit in the middle of the steppe [*Pause.*] Yes, one day you'll know what it is, you'll be like me, except that you won't have anyone with you, because you won't have had pity on anyone and because there won't be anyone left to have pity on. (BECKETT, 109-110)

The conscience of being "nearly finished" (Beckett 116) exposes Hamm's struggle to outlive Nagg and face death alone – "there I'll be, in the old refuge, alone against the silence and… [he hesitates]…the stillness" (Beckett 126). "If I can hold my peace, and sit quiet, it will be all over with sound, and motion, all over and done with" (Beckett 126). Hamm foresees that the time when "there'll be no more speech" (Beckett 116) is coming, since he is aware that Clov is bound to leave him for good. Their being "(…) obliged to each other" (Beckett 132) triggers an "old endgame lost of old, [of] play[ing] and los[ing] and hav[ing] done with losing" (Beckett 132), which not only evinces their impotence to change their very condition, but also unveils the chess-like structure upon which the play is based.

Endgame takes the chess motif as its structural principle, out of which the play derives its metaphorical dimension. Its central conflict is a metaphorical chess game which revolves around the relationship between Hamm, supposedly the master, and Clov, his servant, who was taken in by Hamm as a child and therefore feels obliged to him in a certain way. Hence, the moral tie such a *noblesse oblige* often implies results in a tense atmosphere that pits Clov's will to go away – "I'll leave you" (Beckett 120) – against his obligation to stay with Hamm – "Then I shan't leave you" (Beckett 110). As a result, the characters get entrapped in a viciously dull routine which in the end constitutes and reinforces a life of farce, lived "day after day" (Beckett 107), "day[s] like any other day" (Beckett 114), fraught with "the same inanities" (Beckett 114). Through the movements of the two protagonists, who resemble the King and the Knight in the chess game, as well as through those of Nagg and Nell, the two pawns, Beckett creates a dramatic universe in which the characters' dragging lives have lost their appeal in face of the stalemate they fail to evade. The characters thus submit to the rules laid down by the metaphorical chess game in the same way as they seemingly yield to chance or destiny, as their failure to discontinue the deadening effects of their routine rather frequently suggests.

Neither a screen through which the psychic movements of the characters can be seen nor an "instrument for direct communication" (Worton 68), the language of *Endgame* is particularly fascinating. Its syntactic and intertextual range makes "the spectator [and/or reader] aware of how we depend on language and of how much we need to be wary

of the codifications that language imposes upon us" (Worton 68). Hamm repeatedly attempts to draw Clov into conversation, demonstrating his dread of being left alone. He asks Clov to forgive him for having made him "suffer too much" (Beckett 95), a request that acquires the nuance of an order as Hamm addresses Clov in a louder tone: "[*Pause. Louder*] I said, forgive me" (Beckett 95). Clov's reply – "I heard you. [Pause] Have you bled?" (Beckett 95) – suggests that there is to be no forgiveness for Hamm.

Much of the relationship between Hamm and Clov and, specifically, much of the latter's manipulation of the former, reversing the master-servant dynamics, is made possible by the gapped language upon which the plot is structured, as can be seen in passages such as:

> HAMM: Where are you?
> CLOV: Here.
> HAMM: Come back!
> [*Clov returns to his place beside the chair*] Where are you?
> CLOV: Here. (Beckett 95)

The deictic nature of the adverb "here" is precisely the element through which the vagueness of Clov's directions can manifest itself more overtly. Adverbs like "here" have their referent defined according to the context, which, in the above dialogue, is missing. If Hamm were not blind, that would not be an issue, since the problem of the failure of language could easily be resolved by other means, such as seeing. However, Hamm's blindness provides a tragi-comic scenario in which Clov fools Hamm by giving him vague directions that the latter will not be capable of following, since "here" could mean both "anywhere" and "everywhere". As Hamm cannot see, the only thing he is left to do is to believe Clov, which exposes the former's fragility in a bitterly ironic manner, reversing their master-servant relationship. The central paradox underlying this irony lies in Hamm being submitted to Clov's word games. Despite being the most powerful character as well as apparently being in control, Hamm can never be sure when he is being tricked by Clov. The consequent uncertainty embedded in Hamm's consciousness generates a symbiotic relationship in which "the concatenation of words and phrases and the concurrent erasure of reference constitute a dual movement in Beckett's [*Endgame*], a "twofold vibration" that is at the same time incessant cancellation and endless generation" (Berensmeyer 491). Given that, Beckett's language can work "against its limits in the desire to transcend them and to [cause the reader to achieve] a higher level of perception" (Berensmeyer 473) of the absurd of his own reality and his own condition as human, which is presented in an aesthetically absurd fashion.

We could argue, then, that Beckett, rather than structuring his play in terms of "narrative sequence, character development, and psychology in the conventional sense" (Haney 40), prefers using poetic images to portray the process by which "awareness moves from ... a historically mediated experience to a state beyond linguistic and cultural

boundaries" (Haney 40). Therefore, passages like "I see ... a multitude ... in transports ... of joy. [*Pause.*] That's what I call a magnifier" (106), stand out as examples of this rhetorical device, as the multitude in transports of joy described by Clov becomes the visual image which metaphorically refers to the possibility of finding life outside that "bare interior" (Beckett 92) of their deadening routine. Through his use of poetic imagery combined with the Brechtean "alienation effect", "Beckett shows what it is like to be aware in a single moment, rather than drifting in the slipstream of culturally mediated discursive patterns of thought" (Haney 40). The use of "poetic images, which substitutes for conventional plot, results for the audience in a series of epiphanies on the nature of conscious experience" (Haney 40), having the characters realize that there might be a living world outside that shelter, and that they might find a way out there.

Not following the tradition that demands that a play have an exposition, a climax and a denouement, *Endgame* presents a "cyclical structure which might indeed be better described as a diminishing spiral" (Worton 69), given its nihilistic tone. The play stages images of entropy "in which the world and people in it are slowly but inexorably running down" (Worton 69), descending towards a final closure which gives them the feeling that "something is taking its course" (Beckett 98) in a post-holocaust world in which "there is no more nature ... in the vicinity" (Beckett 97), and there is "no more pain killer" (Beckett 127) to ease the pain of being alive. Hence, in this spiral descent towards a final closure (which, in the universe of *Endgame*, is never reached), the characters "take refuge in repetition, repeating their own actions and words and often those of others, in order to pass the time" (Worton 69), and look for consolation in a lifelong struggle fraught with "the same questions, the same answers" (Beckett 94).

The cyclical, repetitive nature of beginnings and endings presented in *Endgame* is primarily constructed through fragmented language which, most of the time, is itself repetitive, as we can see in the very first lines of the play, when Clov tonelessly says: "finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" (Beckett 93). After a pause, he resumes, still toneless, saying that "grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap" (Beckett 93). These lines represent, at the syntactic level of the text itself, the circularity implied both in the structure and on the thematic levels of *Endgame*. Thus, the repetition of the word "finished" – mentioned four times – as well as of "heap", which starts out as a little heap and eventually grows into an impossible one, shows how the motif of repetition is deftly rewritten in the realm of form, i.e., how it is changed into an icon through aesthetic devices in the course of the play. In addition, the opening words of *Endgame* foreshadow the ending of the "story", showing that "the end is in the beginning" (Beckett 126), providing evidence of the existence of a cyclical structure continuously working itself out. Thus, lines like "it's the end of the day like another day, isn't it, Clov?" (Beckett 98), "Why the farce, day after day?" (Beckett 99), "the same as usual" (Beckett 105), and "It's the same" (Beckett 106), confirm the entrapment of the characters in their own futility, tortured by the emptiness of their dull routine. As a result, they realize that "the

bigger a man is the fuller he is" (Beckett 93), a statement ironically completed by "and the emptier" (Beckett 93), evoking a paradox that points to the contradictions of human experience. Ultimately, these lines work as aesthetic instruments whose function is to maintain the circular structure of the play, rewriting the motif of repetition in different instances and levels of signification.

Those considerations lead to another important aspect of *Endgame*, namely, the relationship between temporality and language, where the latter determines or gives hints about the former. In other words, it is only through the characters' dialogues, as well as through their constant word-play, that we perceive the passage of time, as clear-cut references to conventional ways of measuring it are lacking. Therefore, passages like:

> HAMM: Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!
> CLOV [violently]: That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before, this bloody awful day. (Beckett 113)

are illustrative of the close relationship between language and time mentioned above. The logic underlying the play on the referentiality of the word "yesterday" opens up the discussion about the limits as well as the relation between past and present in terms of both linguistic and, most importantly, aesthetic categories. The tension between past and present points to the breakdown of communication and the consequent destruction of individualism as catalysts that lead to the deterioration of the characters' human condition. Through the interplay between past and present, pulled together by Hamm's stories, *Endgame* "deranges a single consciousness into several counteracting, self-negating voices, thereby making it impossible for any coherent voice to exist" (Seelig 378) either in time or space. As a result, time comes to a halt in a monadic fashion, so as to render it impossible that the characters look back on the Benjaminian pile of ruins that their past experiences seem to be. The past is neutralized by the present, in such a way that references to it are nothing but vague, which results in a series of compulsive repetitions which in turn become the evidence of a homogeneous present time of mechanical reproduction of attitudes and feelings, devoid of any content beyond frustration and gloom. If we assume, as Walter Benjamin does, that "language represents the highest stage of disenchantment, insofar as it has exorcised all earlier deficient *mythical* images of nature and cosmos, while at the same time it has mimetic relation to the environing world" (Wolin 244), then we can argue that the disenchantment of the characters, initially encountered at the thematic level, moves onto the structural level of a sort of language that gradually frees itself from any ties with referentiality. Consequently, we are faced with a discourse that is incessantly in crisis, which in turn takes us back to the psychological turmoil of the characters themselves, whose life and world views "remain ensnared in the web of unfulfilled life, the sphere of eternal repetition or the always-the-same" (Wolin 244). The character's inability to find a way out of that entropy, along with their emptiness and futility, constitute "the prototypical experience of modern man who has

been "cheated out of his experience"; (…) the model of experience in hell where one is never allowed to complete what one has begun" (Wolin 234).

The entropic universe of *Endgame*, with its omnipresent word-play, goes far beyond mere aesthetic or stylistic categories, and ultimately rewrites into fiction the empirical world of History. The repetitive stasis the play propounds is the axis that enables such a process. 'The work of art "reflects" society and is historical to the degree that it refuses the social, and represents the last refuge of individual subjectivity from the historical forces that threaten to crush it "(Jameson 34-35). Thus, "*Endgame* insinuates that the individual's claim of autonomy and of being has become incredible. But while the prison of individuation is revealed as a prison and simultaneously as mere semblance – the stage scenery is the image of such self-reflection –, art is unable to release the spell of fragmented subjectivity; it can only depict solipsism" (Adorno 127). History is then excluded, as it has "dehydrated the power of consciousness to think history, the power of remembrance" (Adorno 125). Therefore, drama becomes gesture and consequently falls silent, in a kind of desperate silence stressed in *Endgame* either by the constant use of "pauses" determined in the stage directions or by the hesitating and somewhat reticent tone often suggested in passages like "this ... this ... thing" (Beckett 114), "I'll have called my father and I'll have called my … [he hesitates] … my son (Beckett, 126), and "A few words … to ponder … in my heart" (Beckett 131). Thus, decline – the result of history – appears in the text, disclosing the "implacable advance of the forces of production in the modern age, which rapidly renders all remnants of tradition obsolete (Wolin 217) – what does yesterday mean after all? Those forces, in turn, end up penetrating "all aspects of existence, so that ultimately even the human faculty of perception itself is diminished" (Wolin 217) and the hesitation of the characters, as well as their powerlessness to find a way out of their shelter, becomes the aesthetic manifestation of their diminished perception. Bearing that in mind, we can argue that not only "has the quality of experience deteriorated in modern life to an unprecedented degree, but the subjective capacity to detect this development, and thus possibly redress it, has likewise been seriously eroded" (Wolin 217).

Endgame's absurdity is thus achieved as the result of its immanent dialectic between form and content, given that this process presents the antithesis in which the image of self it embodies is an imitation of something non-existent. In other words, it is in the absurdity of the situation posited by the play itself that "not meaning anything becomes the only meaning" (Adorno 138), and that the "mortal fear of the dramatic figure, if not the parodied drama itself, is the distortedly comical fear that they could mean something or other" (Adorno 138), as suggested by:

> HAMM: We're not beginning to ... to ... mean something?
> CLOV: Mean something! You and I, mean something! [Brief laugh] Ah that's a good one! (Beckett 108)

The characters laugh at the idea or possibility of their meaning something, this very possibility sounding like nothing but a joke to them. Hence, *Endgame* insinuates that "the individual's claim of autonomy and of being has become incredible" (Adorno 127), since art can only depict solipsism. The image of "the individual as a historical category, as the result of the capitalist process of alienation and as a defiant protest against it, has itself become openly transitory. The individualist position belonged, as polar opposite, to the ontological tendency of every existentialism" (Adorno 126), and *Endgame* aesthetically captures this paradox in its absurd kenotic "reality". Thus, Beckett's "dramaturgy in its narrowness and contingency, its emphasis on repetition and language games, as well as in its one-of-a-kind use of individual experience as literary motif, could nowhere locate the authority to interpret itself as a cipher of being, unless it pronounced itself the fundamental characteristic of being" (Adorno 126-127).

Ultimately, we can argue that Beckett's play is an entropic universe built around a discourse that insistently challenges the logicality of everyday language; temporality, mechanical rituals, and soul-crushing routines are depicted by the emphasis on repetition and the circular nature of facts. *Endgame* contains an immanent dialectic between form and content which is sufficiently intricate to capture and unveil the paradox between an individual position and an existentialist ontology, offering as synthesis an aesthetic of the absurd. Beckett's play is a linguistic and aesthetic chess game in which the very questioning of the nature of meaning, and the consequent challenge to the nature of interpretation, places the theatregoer in a structural stalemate.

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Fiction

Yeats, Beckett, Banville: Philosophical Idealism and Political Ideology in Modern Irish Writing

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Abstract: *The philosophical nature of elements of Irish writing has been often remarked upon; the peculiarity of this phenomenon less so. In this article, the relation between idealist philosophy and the politics of writing in the work of W.B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett and John Banville is explored. Obliquely discernible only within certain strands of modern Irish literature, a philosophical obsessiveness has nonetheless developed in a culture devoid of significant philosophical achievement. Thomas Duddy's* A History of Irish Thought *is remarkable for making apparent the poverty of Irish philosophical traditions; the invisibility of philosophy in contemporary Irish cultural discourse is also notable by its absence in the recent* Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, for example. Nevertheless, there exists a strong philosophically idealist tradition within Irish literature. This article traces that tradition within twentieth-century Irish writing, and examines how its ideological character may be considered as complicating the reception of Ireland in the work of these writers.*

To speak of an Irish philosophical tradition, as Thomas Duddy suggests in the preface to his 2006 *A History of Irish Thought* (xi-xii), is to immediately challenge conventional paradigms of modern European intellectual history. That there exists no such identifiable thing as a distinctively Irish tradition of systematic philosophical thought – as distinct from French, British or German philosophy – seems clear, because Ireland, given the economic, social and political vagaries of her history, was unable to support a developed intellectual culture over a sustained period of time. Yet, Duddy maintains, the idea should not be completely disbarred. There is a history of Irish thought, however historically disjointed, politically influenced and ethnically complex; features which themselves reflect the historicality of all thought, and the materiality of culture. The haphazard picture of Irish thought, Duddy says, is unique and peculiar, and must be analysed in terms of "the contingencies of history" (xiv). There is then, an accidental history of Irish thought: but efforts to find intellectual continuity are perilous, and tracing

the influence of what might be considered a "national" philosophy is prey not only to the fortunes of historical interpretation, but also to the more pressing problematics of the politics of cultural authenticity. Such difficulties are themselves an expression of the trauma of naming manifest modernity in Ireland; Duddy's account accords with an embedded assumption of Irish history as one of fragmentation, discord and even backwardness in relation to an apparently more stable and progressive conception of European culture. This familiar dichotomy has been a marked feature of accounts of Irish culture, where it has found champions across many diverse fields and disciplines.

Yet in the twentieth century there emerged to various degrees in Irish literary modernism a recognizably philosophical character, one that is coloured by shades of idealist philosophies. With the oncoming decrepitude of his body it is predominantly Plato and Berkeley who feature in the work of the late WB Yeats; in James Joyce's radiant streams of consciousness we find parallels with the setting forth of mental processes in Husserl's phenomenological investigations. Samuel Beckett's texts grapple with Descartes, Guelincx, and Schopenhauer, while in John Banville's works, it is Kant, romantic idealism and various shades of existentialist thought which dominate. These influences have long been recognized, mostly as discreet phenomena, even as they have shaped the perception of these writers as sometime literary academicians. But such philosophical inflections, drawn from what is considered to be a wide European intellectual history, have also helped complicate the place of this strand of Irish literary production within a broader description of modernism.

Much of the first sustained criticism of Banville, for example, was concerned with distancing the writer from the Irish context altogether, because his work was sensitive to what Rüdiger Imhof (7) called "incontestably non-Irish subject matter." Symptomatic of the politico-literary ideology of 1970s and 80s, many of the earlier debates about Banville's "contexts" expended considerable amounts of energy during a degrading war between what was to be properly called Irish "national" literature or European modernism. Focusing primarily on superficial markers such as content and style, Irish writers found themselves caught in the crossfire between a number of corrosive theoretically binarist models based on stages of development, such as modern/traditional, experimentalist/naturalist, and most poisonous of all, Irish/European; Irish writing could be one or the other, but not both.

From our slightly later perspective, it is apparent that much of those debates were fuelled by both a suspicion of supposedly nationalist ideology and by underdeveloped critiques of modernism both inside and outside of Ireland. Considering the distressing birth of the Irish state, the conservative forces that kept it in check throughout much of the twentieth century, the outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and a routinely ailing economy, much of the ambivalence towards Ireland and "Irish identity" expressed by both critics and writers is comprehensible.[1] Yet there persisted among theorists of modernism, for longer than was helpful, a repudiation that Irish writers such as Joyce and Beckett were not properly Irish writers by virtue of their commitment to European cosmopolitan

and modernist plurality and hence their escape from historical determinism and political motivation.[2] These well-worn arguments are themselves historically instructive; they have taken their place in the history of criticism and become a genealogical branch of Irish cultural disputation. Considering the disrepute that the stadial explanations of modernity upon which they so depended have now fallen into, the more immediate concern here is to provide instead a more nuanced understanding of the ideological, cultural and aesthetic significance of Irish philosophical literature.

Trying to locate Irish philosophical precursors to writers like Yeats, Joyce, Beckett and Banville is not immediately useful or necessary in any holistic sense, but tracing the ideological character of idealist philosophy in Irish writing reveals forms of aesthetic consciousness that may be constructive for critiques of modernity and Ireland. This is not to suggest that we are dealing with a robust tradition, but, instead, one with a faint pulse. What cannot be initially disputed is that philosophy in Ireland is a much undervalued discipline that has been treated with a considerable amount of indifference in Irish intellectual life. Beyond the various economic, political and social calamities that befell Ireland throughout much of her modern history, there are, naturally, other significant historical reasons related to the provision of education as to why philosophy remains an underdeveloped field in Ireland. The lack of a University in the Middle Ages when many other European countries had established important centres of learning is significant, and when Trinity College was later founded it catered only for a minority and remained largely inaccessible to much of the population. There has admittedly been a scholastic tradition in Catholic teaching through the seminaries that exists to this day, but only since the 1960s has the scope of philosophy in Irish universities been opened up to take in critical forms of thought that had already changed the landscape of Continental philosophy many decades before.[3] Despite many well known academic philosophers, such as Richard Kearney, who are widely published and internationally respected, Ireland's contribution to real philosophical innovation has been minimal. However, because we are talking in principle about an absence of specific modes of thought here, the effect this dearth of philosophy has had on the history of Irish intellectual life is entirely unquantifiable and in the realm of hypothesis. Consequently, it is vital not to relapse into a model of relative development in accounting for the presence or absence of Irish philosophy in modernity: what is called for is a more complex understanding of Irish philosophical literature situated within the disparate realm of European modernity. However, the ignoring of repeated calls for the inclusion of philosophy as part of the secondary school curriculum, most recently by Professor Michael Cronin of DCU in *The Irish Times*, bears further testament to the fact that there exists no appreciative culture of the value of philosophy in Irish public life (15). That successive Irish governments have disregarded these calls illustrates that the future for philosophy as an intellectual discipline in Ireland is bleak, even as further European integration gathers speed.

For all that, Ireland has by no means hitherto remained untouched by the collective philosophical achievements of its neighbours. Instead, whatever philosophical tradition in Ireland that has evolved has found expression, not in what would be commonly

understood as philosophical discourse, but in literature instead. During the Revival, for example, we see a variety of philosophically-inflected literature emerging. Considering that Irish modernism played its part in the much wider continental affair, this is perhaps not such an unusual occurrence, however limited and disorderly these philosophical engagements were. To take two obvious examples: Yeats was as widely read in the contemporary British analytical philosophy of G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell as he was in Nietzsche. Joyce, as Timothy Mooney argues on the other hand, for all his classical references and knowledge of medieval aesthetics, demonstrates little actual understanding of modern an contemporary philosophy. In this sense, Joyce is discernibly less deliberately philosophically engaged than a writer such as J. M. Synge, for example, in whose work can be found a prefiguring of the Beckettian crisis of existence. Nevertheless, we can find performance in his work of Husserlian phenomenology in the stream of consciousness technique, and a "proximity" to Nieztschean historicism (Mooney 185).[4] These observations bring their own cultural politics where a view might be bolstered that philosophical sophistication elevates Irish modernists beyond their immediate locality. But to prove mathematically that the communion of abstract ideas within a shared historical era constitutes a supranational movement is hazardous; for the influence of philosophy in Irish writing is still primarily a matter of cultural production, and whatever philosophical tradition exists in Irish literature, it is primarily of the idealist/neo-platonic variety.

The first most striking adherent of idealism in modern Irish literature was Yeats. While developing his extraordinary work, *A Vision*, the poet corresponded throughout 1926 with G. E. Moore's brother, Sturge, about G. E.'s influential refutation of Yeats' fellow Irishman George Berkeley's idealism. Idealism had come under attack by the leading Cambridge analytical philosophers, Russell and Moore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both of whom were instrumental in developing a philosophy of logical analysis of language and reality based on mathematical precision. Yeats, whose early romanticism never quite burned out, regarded such positivism not only with an aesthete's distaste of brute fact, but also with an intellectual scepticism. He had become increasingly interested in philosophy in his later career, and devoted much of his study to Berkeley, whose immaterialist doctrines increasingly appealed to him. During the course of the letters to Sturge Moore, Yeats complains that realist philosophers vulgarize the world, turning the mind into the "quicksilver at the back of a mirror" (Yeats & Moore 67) where perception, which occurs as a mental process, is rendered a pointless duplication of phenomena.

Yeats states that G. E. Moore's attack on Berkeley was "extraordinarily obscure" (*Ibid.* 83), and the correspondence itself is not entirely philosophically rigorous. There appears, according to Grosvenor E. Powell (279-280), something of a misunderstanding on Yeats's behalf of the precise nature of G. E. Moore's argument, while, Sturge also seems to misinterpret Yeats's own meaning of existence. Nonetheless, Yeats's correspondence with Sturge was primarily of a philosophical character, and one in which he was compelled to make explicit his agreement with Berkeley's most famous axiom –

esse est percepi (to be is to be perceived) – that the material world does not exist without perception. Although Yeats's poetry underwent a significant stylistic and structural evolution over the course of his life, immaterialism can be found right throughout his work and is in part derived from his romantic and theosophical leanings.

Philosophically, Yeats found affinity with Berkeley, and found in his work an idea of the supreme intellect that gave form to the perceptible world. Berkeley's targets, Newton and Locke, had conceived of matter as part of a mechanistic system that rendered it inert and senseless. This was problematic for Berkeley because the material universe would be lifeless and without agency, a potential cause, as he saw it, of atheism. While there are undoubted religious motivations in play in Berkeley's thinking, it was at the same time philosophically important for Yeats that he prioritized mental activity over material substance. Chief among his ideas, common to all idealist thought, is a greater Absolute reality than is ordinarily perceptible, a more "authentic" existence. Berkeley's universe is one in which being and consciousness are one and the same thing – a profound Unity of existence which is vital and innate rather than mechanistic as Locke, Newton and the followers of Descartes would have seen it. Yeats, too, was unwilling to conceive of an ultimate form of reality that did not have consciousness as its ground zero, claiming that "in so far as Time and Space are deduced from our sense-data we are the creators of Time and Space" (Yeats & Moore 82).

This Berkelian idealism finds its way into much of Yeats's later poetry and into the arcane, geometric universe of *A Vision.* But, as we know, Yeats's interest in Berkeley was not confined to the abstract. There is an important cultural element to his attraction to Berkeley. When he was younger, he had considered Berkeley, along with Jonathan Swift, not sufficiently Irish to be included on a list of great Irish figures; but later in his life he heroized them, along with Goldsmith and Burke, most famously in his poem "Blood and the Moon":

> I declare this tower is my symbol; I declare
> This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair is my
> ancestral stair;
> That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke have
> travelled there. (Yeats 287)

His idealisation of these figures as the founders and epitome of the values of the eighteenth century Anglo-Irish meant that his interest could not be purely philosophical. Yeats would identify these four figures as central to an Irish Augustan tradition – a tradition that he placed himself firmly within – and the ideal image of Ireland that might emerge after the foundation of the State in 1922.

Of these four Augustan Irishmen, Berkeley represented a great intellectual ideal. While the pure metaphysics of immaterialism seems to be an antidote to the earthy materialism of nationalism, Yeats considered otherwise. For Yeats, Berkeley's idealism

was not merely philosophical; it was also an inherently Irish consciousness. In 1930, Yeats contributed an introduction to Joseph Hone's and Mario Rossi's biography of Berkeley, where he wrote that those four idealised Augustan Irishmen "found in England the opposite that made their thought lucid or stung it into expression" (vi). Yeats refers enthusiastically in his introduction to Berkeley's retort that "we Irish" cannot think like the English empiricist John Locke, a repetition of a speech given in 1925 to the Irish Literary Society in which Yeats praised Berkeley in particular for his antagonism to British empiricism and the emphasis he laid on the primacy of the constitutive mind. He claimed:

> The modern Irish intellect was born more than two hundred years ago when Berkeley defined in three or four sentences the mechanical philosophy of Newton, Locke and Hobbes, the philosophy of England in his day, and I think of England up to our day, and wrote after each: "We Irish do not hold with this", or some such sentence. (Pearce 172)

Consequently, Yeats's correspondence has the subtext of cultural and national protectiveness, and more importantly, the establishment of a culturally-specific kind of Irish identity revealed through opposition to the British mind. Berkeley was, as Yeats said, a figure "of the utmost importance" to Protestant Ireland in the new Irish Free State, an embodiment of the highest values of the eighteenth century Anglo Irish, an era which grew in Yeats's mind, as Roy Foster says, as a society which valued "style, intellect and aristocratic authority, an attitude reflected in literature, philosophy and architecture" (409; 426).

There is a good deal of creative invention of tradition on Yeats' behalf here, not least in his own eccentric sense of aristocratic destiny. As with most idealist artists, history is a servant of the mind: Yeats' revision of the Anglo-Irish tradition asserts the domination of the imagination over life. But there is an influential political ideology at work here too. In his admiration of Berkeley, we see in Yeats the association of a high-born colonial class culture with a philosophy that emphasises the importance of the subjective world as characteristically (Anglo) Irish. This fundamentally romantic ideology has influenced much of the working subject matter in Irish cultural production, where such historical romanticization of tradition has been a familiar experience and a highly contentious one. In much of the Irish writing that followed Yeats in the twentieth century, those works with similar idealist impulses have enacted a volatile relationship with the ideologies of cultural authenticity and the myths of the revival; this is the case in the works of Samuel Beckett and John Banville, for example. And if it is true that the fragmentary nature of philosophy in Ireland betrays the machinations of its own historical formation, then the literary forms that philosophy has taken carry traces of the political residue of its manipulation.

Leaving aside for the present the difficult question of the relation between a philosophical system and its representation or expression in literary form, the connection between philosophical idealism and cultural identification within certain strands of Irish literature reveals a fundamental concern with what is cryptically called in metaphysics the "Unity of Being", or what might be alternatively termed "authentic" identity. In the work of Samuel Beckett, this ontological concern is pursued with carnivorous ruthlessness. In Beckett's classic trilogy of novels written between 1947 and 1950, Molloy, Malone Dies and the Unnamable, for instance, the narrative – if it can be called that – broadly takes the form of the gradual degeneration of the body, a movement which represents the withdrawal from the physical world into the prison of pure consciousness. From Molloy, who can walk but eventually must crawl, to Malone, who is bedridden and dying, then to the Unnamable, who is merely a torso and head in a jar, the decline of the body serves as an image of the eradication of the world, the withdrawal into idealism, the slow descent towards solipsism and the determination to carry on until a core identity is found. As the narrators' bodies disintegrate and the activities of the mind become the focus of the narrative, Beckett's trilogy dramatizes the relentless torture of pure mental imprisonment. It can be argued here that there is a kind of perverse idealist impulse at work here in which the reality of the mind hellishly supersedes that of the body: the narrator attempts to come ever closer to his "authentic" identity by stripping away the external, material world, and in the process becoming ever more solipsistic. For this reason, Beckett has been described as a Cartesian. Language too plays its part in this game: the ultimate goal for the Unnamable is to fall into silence, through which he will become pure identity. But of course, as the Unnamable famously asserts, he must "go on" – the indestructible core of "authentic" identity cannot be ultimately found: he is, as the Unnamable asserts, always "at the threshold" of the door (418).

What is at stake here is the idea of what John Banville's narrators frequently identify as "pure mind" or "pure form" – Beckett's narrators are ultimately unable to find this essentiality. Ironically, this failure saves Beckett's works from being the mouthpieces of doctrinal philosophy by preventing these heroic narrators from slipping completely into the realm of the abstract. Perhaps no philosophical text could live with such explicit failure, making modern literature the ideal medium for the expression of ignorance. For an idealist such as Kant, the transcendental ego existed prior to psychical phenomena; later, Husserl's attempt to make the social world the site of all conscious acts would veer dangerously close to a transcendental solipsism. Beckett's writing, emboldened through its literary form, ultimately disallows the fundamental ground of truth that idealist philosophy seeks. Least of all that is accepted in Beckett would appear to be Berkeley's immaterialist doctrine. Consonantly, arguments have been made for Beckett as a materialist. Terry Eagleton (2006), for example, has argued that suffering in Beckett is surely physical not mental; the body dictates the condition of the mind. Hence, when in *Waiting for Godot* Lucky states: "since the death of Bishop Berkeley…in a word for reasons unknown no matter what matter the facts are there" (43), David Berman takes

this insistence on fact to be a "dismissal of Berkeley's idealism" (43). But we might also add that this is Lucky's speech and not Beckett's; while it is the case that Berkeley's immaterialism is potentially refuted in Beckett, the philosophical force of much his work is driven by an idealist fascination with an undiscoverable, yet potentially tangible ego. Ultimately, while the narratives in these texts are too unstable for any decisive dogmatic assertion, there is sufficient anxiety in Beckett's texts to dismiss completely the possibility of an idealist core: his favourite word was, after all, perhaps.

Beckett's inconclusive skirmish with idealism is significant in another sense, for the question of the relation between aesthetic representation of a philosophical idea and philosophy itself persists. Despite being steeped in philosophical reading, Beckett himself protested against the discipline's language of ratiocination and rejected readings of his work presented in philosophical terms. This seems a curious paradox; for of all Irish writers, Beckett appears the most overtly philosophical, and superficially at least, a natural inheritor of the concerns behind Berkeley's immaterialism. What makes these considerations of idealism in Beckett seem purely philosophical is the lack of specificity of place: the empty landscapes in his texts appear to remove cultural nuance from philosophical speculation. Unlike Yeats, Beckett's treatment of the Irish philosopher seems unrelated to national politics. Yet this is not to state that there is no political dimension to Beckett's treatment of philosophy. In postcolonial treatments of Beckett, for example, both David Lloyd (1993. 41-58) and Anna McMullan (89-109) have argued that the repudiation of definitive narrative in Beckett's work is a disentitlement of the structures of political power that legitimized colonialism, for example. Beckett's work is neither an overtly political or philosophical literature, but through the rejection of narrative to legitimize itself, the structures of knowledge which bolstered cultural and political authenticity are disentitled. If Yeats had thought Berkeley's philosophical idealism a unique example of the Irish mind, the authenticity of that claim comes under pressure in Beckett because the positive identity of that mind remains elusive. So it is that David Lloyd (2010. 38) has recently suggested that Beckett's "relentless deconstruction of the very terms of representation … presents an absolute difficulty for cultural studies of any kind"; Beckett's work is a powerful riposte to the ideology of Irish cultural authenticity in philosophical impulses inherent in Yeats.

It was suggested at the outset of this article that whatever philosophical tradition in Ireland exists has found expression, not in philosophical discourse, but instead in literature. The obvious objection to this statement is that a philosophical literature can be considered a distinct phenomenon in itself rather than the superimposition onto, or engagement of one mode of expression with another. On the other hand, as Duddy would imply, philosophy in Ireland has developed in typically unrecognizable forms. Beckett sought to distinguish his art from the discipline of philosophy, but in the work of John Banville they are not necessarily separate forms of thought; Banville's early work in particular is itself an idealist philosophy of art that at its most intense is revealed through its form. For example, in the Big House novel, *Birchwood*, which repeatedly likens itself

to the Kantian "thing in itself", and again in novels such as *Kepler* and *Mefisto*, and to a more obscure extent, *Ghosts*, it is the form, and not the content, which strives to manifest itself as a purely literary entity. Taking as their starting point the Beckettian assertion that to be an artist is to fail, these novels attempt to show that any effort by the mind to order reality merely ends in failure. A succession of narrators, from scientists to art critics, and ultimately to the Gods themselves, discover that their "ordering systems" – Banville's shorthand for the artistic project – are fraudulent or incomplete, an obvious critique, it would seem, of the Yeatsian claims of idealism to order time and space as the supreme reality, and one that aligns Banville close to Beckett. What we see in Banville is the supreme paradox of the assertion that all art ends in failure, but that the best art depends on a form which successfully demonstrates that failure. This works to greater or lesser degrees in his work, but this explicit tension, which must remain unresolved in his work, obscures the fact that Banville's early formalism most certainly posited art as a supreme reality at the same time as those narratives superficially suggested otherwise.

Ostensibly, Banville's work seems to be philosophically aware in so far as his narrators all share an introverted world-view that owes much to the idealist frameworks they draw from and which Banville himself is well versed in. At the same time, Beckett's anti-rationalist ghost is ever present in Banville's writing. Banville has also been attentive to Yeats, most significantly in his Big House novella, *The Newton Letter*. In that novella, Banville's most political piece of all, the ideology of authenticity is lent a distinctly contemporary Irish air by linking the origin of a community with a romanticized history. The parallels with Yeats's idealisation of Berkeley and Yeats veneration of the Augustan tradition are striking. The narrator, a failed historian, regards whom he mistakenly believes to be an aristocratic Anglo-Irish family as a "spectacle of pure refinement" (Banville 516). But when the family turns out to be Catholics, whose friends are sympathizers of the IRA, the narrator is shocked into rethinking his preconceptions. In the late 1970s and early 1980s when the book was written and published, romanticized history was seen as contributing to political violence on either side of the sectarian divide. Seamus Deane links the romanticization of history with two distinct historical figures, each revered as embodiments of their traditions, by claiming that

> Yeats was indeed our last romantic as was Pearse in politics. They were men who asserted a coincidence between the destiny of the community and their own and believed that this coincidence had historical repercussion. (Deane 2003. 20)

Deane's analysis of Yeats and Pearse as figures who aspired to both restore the origins and shape the destiny of their community is very close to the Heideggerian sense of the authentic, who, according to one critic, believed that "the resolute people discloses and acts on its destiny just as the resolute individual discloses and acts on his fate" (Zimmerman 173). The fate of the cultural politics of a nation lies in the hands of

individuals who resolutely embrace their history and transform it into an ideal. Pearse's violent nationalism is treated with grave suspicion in *The Newton Letter*; and what Banville sees in the Yeatsian ideal is the dangerous connections between authenticity and nationalism. In art, philosophy and politics, Yeats remains a figure indelibly associated with the pursuit of authenticity, attempting to seemingly embody and generate the origin and destiny of his tradition. With its references to Yeatsian landscapes and Big House grandeur, *The Newton Letter* plays on the romanticization of the Big House by depicting the integration of Anglo-Irish culture and aesthetics as an idealised form.

But here we are only thinking about the ironic potential in the *content* of Banville's work. What is perhaps of greater importance is the extent to which Banville's insistence that art should remain separate from politics is itself a political stance linked to an idealisation of art as a pure form. He has repeatedly asserted that politics and art are unwelcome bedfellows, and should avoid each other. "All one wants to do", he told Belinda McKeon (14), "is to make a small, finished, polished, burnished, beautiful object." While a work such as *The Newton Letter* demonstrates that there is no art that does not contain traces of the historical moment that produces it – "real life seeps in" as Banville says – the overwhelming feeling is of nostalgia and longing for a more perfect world, an Eden where the artist-God who controlled time and space had the ultimate power of individual creation; like a diminished version of Berkeley's God, Banville's ideal author brings his creatures into existence, moved by the agency of imagination alone. In this sense, Banville's skeptical treatment of the politics of Yeats' romanticizing of his Anglo-Irish forbears is a self-criticism, for he too is aware of his guilt in making the historical world a vassal of the absolute reality of the mind.

Berkeley could not accept a world of passive inanimate material; Banville's aesthetics entail the forlorn resurrection of that philosophy in literary form, particularly in novels such *Birchwood*, The Science Tetralogy, *Mefisto*, *Ghosts* and the duology of *Eclipse* and *Shroud*. These novels come closest to the exhibition of Banville's ideal of a totalized, unified, unspoiled "pure" form. While Banville's novels suggest themselves to be a progressive variation of Beckett, ultimately his work restores art as an ideal of itself, a discrete entity where the aestheticization of reality entails the domination of a pure art over the uncontrollability of life. In formal terms, Banville's is perhaps the clearest expression of an Irish philosophy in that regard; in Irish historico-cultural terms the yearning for some form of unity has in Banville's work, what has been termed "psychiatric accuracy" (Deane 1975. 337). The political character of Banville's writing has a distinct lineage to the Yeatsian synthesis of art and the man: in Banville both political ideology and art have the potential to see themselves as the incarnation of pure, authentic identity, which is why works such as *The Untouchable* and *Shroud*, for example, take political figures and events as their subject material. In this, Banville's aesthetics fall under the same pathos of authenticity that is at the heart of all idealist thought, and is a contemporary re-enactment of the extraordinary anxiety about ontological status that lay at the dynamic heart of Irish modernism. Yet Banville's work is curious in that for

all its innovation in the purest formal dramatization of philosophy in Irish writing, it is at the same time ideologically conservative in its persistent idealist nostalgia, while also, despite his claims, politically attuned, attentive to the denigrated status of art in contemporary culture.

Notes

1 In his earlier years Banville routinely dissociated himself from the category of "Irish" writing. He has described Ireland as "a demilitarised and totalitarian state in which the lives of the citizens were to be controlled not by a system of coercive force and secret policing, but by a kind of applied spiritual paralysis maintained by an unofficial federation between the Catholic clergy, the Judiciary and the civil service." John Banville, "Memory and Forgetting: The Ireland of de Valera and O'Faoláin", in Dermot Keogh, Carmel Quinlan and Finbarr O'Shea, eds, *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004. 26).

2 Aided in no small part by those writers themselves, who all repeatedly rejected the nationalisation of their work.

3 The scholastic tradition is still healthy in many Irish colleges. To take an example: scholastic philosophy, a major part of the curriculum of Ireland's main seminary, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, also dominates the curriculum of its sister institution, NUI Maynooth, where more scholastic than continental or analytic philosophy continues to be taught to its humanities students.

4 It is ironic in this regard that Yeats could be seen as more "modern" than Joyce. Indeed, Yeats himself recorded after an early discussion with the younger man that Joyce naively believed that "everything has been settled by Thomas Aquinas", a view that Yeats was dismissive of and which betrays something of the relative slightness of Joyce's Jesuit education. "I have met so many like him", Yeats said about Joyce's youthful attraction to Aquinas. Quoted by Richard Ellman, "Joyce and Yeats", *The Kenyon Review* 12. 4 (Autumn, 1950): 625.

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Problems of Beckett's Early Poetics

José Francisco Fernández

Abstract: *Samuel Beckett's first novel,* Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, has been generally defined since its publication in 1992 as Beckett's conscious departure from the narrative tradition in the West. Critics have pointed out the novel's disregard for unity, the absence of a central plan, the range of unstable characters or the undermining authorial interventions. The object of this essay is to extend the argument further by examining* Dream *in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on the novel, as they were exposed in* Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. I will try to argue that* Dream *corresponds to the dismantling of an ideal in narrative art, defined by Bakhtin as the polyphonic novel. I will also highlight the features that make of* Dream *an anti-text in which the Irish writer explored the limits of the relationships he could have with his readers.*

This paper will be dealing with the principles that governed Samuel Beckett's first novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, written in 1932 but published six decades later, three years after its author's death. The title is of course borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's famous study Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics to be used as a starting point, since in the work of the Russian novelist Bakhtin saw an ideal in narrative art, a harmonic world governed by the fluency of relationships between author and characters, a realm of freedom where no one is granted the last word and Beckett's Dream might well represent the dismantling of this most perfect emblem of the novelistic environment envisaged by Bakhtin.[1] This paper does not aim to look for similarities in the work of authors with such radically different interests,[2] but rather to simply make use of a pivotal concept in the work of Bakhtin, the polyphonic novel, in order to analyse in greater depth this particular work by Beckett. According to James Knowlson this is an "extraordinary" novel,[3] which, it should be remembered, is one of the texts that draws most from the author's biography. In five very irregular parts, its tells the story of Belacqua, a character inspired by his namesake in Dante's Divina Comedia, and his complicated and fruitless relationships with three women, the fair to middling women of the title: the Smeraldina, the Syra-Cusa and the Alba. It takes place in Vienna, Paris and Dublin.

From the outset the narrator wants to exert an omniscient command of the story and sets himself the task of imposing some kind of discipline on his characters, but they will not obey. This means that from that moment on things will go awry, and the narrator

will not make a great effort to control a chaotic text in which, at times, he seems to turn his whimsical demands on the reader. In fact it will be my contention that, apart from the anarchic nature of this novel, one of the problems of *Dream* lies in what the narrator expects from the reader.

In the model that I have chosen to emphasize the subversive characteristics of Samuel Beckett's first novel, what Bakhtin values most in Dostoevsky's oeuvre is the independence of his characters. They are, above all, free people:

> A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. (6)

In the polyphonic novel that Dostoevsky created, the author was able to separate the characters' voices from his own intentions, to respect their individualities. This is why Bakhtin was able to speak of "the astonishing internal independence of Dostoevsky's characters" (13). At the other end of the literary spectrum we could place any monologically authorial stance in which the characters' words and actions would be directed to express eventually only one worldview, the author's. In *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, however, what is taking place is the break-up of this narrative structure. It is not that in *Dream* the characters do not have independence. In fact, they act on their own and rebel against the authorial voice. The problem is that the narrator resents their freedom, mocks them and takes every opportunity to reveal their worst aspects.

In truth, it has to be said that the narrator knows, from the very beginning, that the characters will not behave as he says tongue-in-cheek that he would like them to act. Beckett's plan was to critique the novel as a genre by introducing, according to David D. Green (67), a disregard for orderly transition, self-conscious interjections of theory and an ironic treatment of the form. Beckett makes use of an unreliable narrator who in the first pages predisposes the readers for the uncertainty of the whole fiction. In the first long metafictional aside of the novel, after the revealing confession that "we [meaning the narrator] do not know where we are in this story" (9), the authorial voice tells a short parable in which he assigns to each character a part in a Chinese musical composition, a liu-liu, hoping to create a perfect combination of sounds:

> If all our characters were like that – liu-liu-minded – we could write a little book that would be purely melodic, think how nice that would be, linear, a lovely Pythagorean chain-chant solo of cause and effect, a one-figured teleophony that would be a pleasure to hear. (10)

The narrator hopes that some characters will act according to plan although he expresses doubts about the capacity of the main character, Belacqua, to obey his orders. One

hundred and fourteen pages later the narrator will finally admit: "We picked Belacqua for the job, and now we find that he is not able for it" (125).

According to John Pilling young Beckett was very much influenced by his history of failure in personal relationships, "he not unnaturally felt mixed emotions along the spectrum from anger to self-pity", and he intended to "inflict terrible damage" on Belacqua, the character who is closest to the author's own persona, as a way of "purging . . . a recent past" (61-62): when Belacqua wants to keep his relationship with the Smeraldina on platonic terms, she rapes him; when he seeks peace and solitude, he is disturbed by his friend Liebert; the only woman he might have a sexual interest in, the Alba, does not consider him an appropriate partner. He is thrown out of places, drenched under the rain on repeated occasions and subjected to the physical ailments of diarrhoea, stomach-ache and sore feet.

The women who surround Belacqua are not favoured by the narrator either. Although their descriptions ambiguously combine positive and negative features, the latter are stated with special poignancy. The Smeraldina's body "was all wrong, the peacock claws . . . definitely all wrong" (15). The Syra-Cusa had a perfect body, but "[H]er neck was scraggy and her head was null" (33). A general negative feeling, rooted perhaps in complex personal reasons, seems to infuse Beckett's narrative at this time and makes him deposit his anger in his fictional creatures. As a result, the narrator undermines the characters' freedom, treating them with utter disrespect. Well advanced into the action the narrator actually pauses to ponder whether the characters will fulfil their role, wondering whether maybe he should have been stricter: "so little have they been plucked and blown and bowed, so little struck with the little hammer", later to confess: "But they will let us down, they will insist on being themselves, as soon as they are called on for a little strenuous collaboration" (112). Alternately lenient and strict, the narrator embarks on a double game of false appearances which distracts our attention from the characters' fate and, eventually, disconcerts the reader.

Another essential feature that Bakhtin points out in Dostoevsky's novels is their dialogic quality. Dialogue is something more than a useful term to characterize a liberating literary genre, but "an obvious master key to the assumptions that guided Bakhtin's work throughout his whole career" (Holquist 15). In this context, the novels written by Dostoevsky are put forward as the maximum exponents of dialogic constructions. Bakhtin writes that the polyphonic novel does not portray a unique vision which incorporates other points of view into its own; rather it is formed "by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other" (Bakhtin 18). Following this scheme of things, dialogue is such a powerful force that, Bakhtin writes, nothing escapes its influence, everyone in the novel is involved in a dialogic relationship and there is simply no possibility of a "nonparticipating third person".

In Beckett's *Dream* dialogic relationships do exist, but they are under great pressure. The authorial voice will attempt to impose his will over that of the characters, trying to absorb them, even despising them as useless when they do not act or think

according to his wishes. When Belacqua compares two of the women, his thoughts do not run free, but are directed by the narrator. So a sequence of the protagonist's thinking is preceded and followed by the narrator's comments: "The burden of his argument was:", and "But, poor Belacqua, do you not realise that the essence of beauty is predicateless, trascending categories?", until finally the narrator chides the main character, "Unfortunate Belacqua, you miss our point, *the* point" (35), adding a contemptible "Put that into your pipe, dear fellow, and smoke it slowly" (35). Rather than a dialogue, this is more of a reprimand in which the narrator acts moved by anger and impotence, as when he remarks about the Smeraldina: "From now on she can hold her bake altogether or damn well get off the platform, for good and all. She can please herself. We won't have her" (115). The novel incorporates other languages from the social heteroglossia (see for instance the Smeraldina's letter or the Alba's comments on an admirer of hers: "Trincapollas!" (154)). At this early stage Beckett's prose was far from being the "monologic discourse . . . weirdly independent of any other source of speech, that proceeds by self-cancellation rather than interaction" (Lodge 98) that it would become. *Dream*, I insist, is not the opposite of the model envisaged by Bakhtin, it is not a monologic text, but an anarchic text, with the pull of forces in disarray, with a "weak enunciative voice" who "embodies a scrivener with no plans" (Bouchard 140), and a group of characters who appear at random.

In such an unconventional novel, even non-characters or fictional beings who do not engage in any interaction with the rest are given an unexpected relevance. Nemo is one such character. He is introduced in negative terms by the narrator in the initial assignation of roles in the aforementioned liu-liu:

> But what can you do with a person like Nemo who will not for any consideration be condensed into a liu, who is not a note at all but the most regrettable simultaneity of notes . . . Our line bulges every time he appears. (10-11)

After this presentation the reader expects Nemo to be a highly independent character who will disrupt the narrative whenever he turns up. But this is far from being the case. He is mentioned very few times, a solitary man leaning on the parapet of a bridge over the river Liffey in Dublin, joined on one occasion by Belacqua (157), and who drowns towards the end of the novel (182), without having had any impact on the narrative whatsoever.[4] The readers' expectations are defeated once more.

The polyphonic novel described by Bakhtin in Dostoevsky's work as a continuous dialogue of consciousnesses extends this quality to its very composition. "The polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through". Bakhtin writes. "Dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure; that is, they are juxtaposed contrapuntally" (40). This brings us back to the structure of *Dream* where the different parts do not act in unison. As the narrator flaunts: "The only unity in this story is, please God, an involuntary unity" (132). John Pilling admits that

> by cunningly planting motifs that echo one another (for those who can hear the echo), Beckett 'exonerates' himself from the charge that he has written a completely chaotic book. (367)

Although of course there are connections between the parts, the irregularity of the book is remarkable, and not only in terms of length (with the first and last parts covering one and three pages respectively, and the other three intermediate sections of varying proportions), but in terms of content. The story of Belacqua does not follow a linear pattern, but is interspersed with digressions, disquisitions by the narrator, letters, poems, breaks in the narrative and texts of enormous difficulty. John Pilling, again: "Some passages are so impenetrable that is difficult to believe Beckett had any reader but himself in mind . . ." (2). As is well known, the author crammed into his novel all his knowledge of languages, so that there is hardly a page without an expression taken from German, French, Italian, Spanish or Latin. Beckett also coined his own expressions in purely Joycean fashion, producing as a result some abrupt and strenuous paragraphs: "*Dream*'s literary atonality and stylistic cacophony may grate on our eyes and ears" (Gontarski 20).

What hampers a fluent reading of the novel and what makes it, on the other hand, "a paradise for the literary jigsaw puzzle cognoscenti" (65) is the massive presence of other authors' work in the form of unacknowledged quotations that are inserted within the text. Beckett made extensive use of the entries he had made in a notebook in previous years, in which he had copied from his readings every sentence that had taken his fancy. The notebook, which was published in 1999, shows that the authors Beckett had read (from St. Augustine to Homer, from Robert Burton to Thomas À Kempis) were an amalgam of classics and eccentrics, from all of whom he took expressions which appear almost verbatim in the novel.[5] What concerns the topic of this paper, is that the quotations are another factor preventing the text from being a concordant unit, they are not fully integrated in the whole, as critics like Yohiki Tajiri (72) or David Pattie have pointed out:

> In Joyce, references are incorporated into the prose; in early Beckett, one sometimes gets the sense that references (and the more obscure the reference the better) are nailed into phrases and sentences that are already fully formed. page

What we have observed so far in *Dream*, compared with a model which approaches a kind of novelistic icon of cohesion and proportion, is a radical disruption of the principles that conform that model; it is not just the mixture of languages and quotations, or the interludes in the story that make the narrative appear as an artefact on display for its own sake, "a statement of itself" (Pilling 1997, 70), but "the irresponsible stance" of the narrator (Tajiri 79) as well, in a fictional structure that he has contributed to disjoint while complaining about it. All these factors work together to estrange the novel from the reading public.

Readers of this novel must indeed equip themselves with a flexible mind as, more than in any Modernist text, *Dream* requires a continuous adaptation to changing strategies and situations that are imposed upon them.[6] If in this novel Beckett turned upside down the foundations of the novel as a genre, he also twisted and deformed the contract that is implicitly established between authors and their readership every time a book of fiction is opened. "It is" writes James Knowlson "as if he were playing a game with the reader, talking to him, teasing him, even taunting him" (146-7).

Firstly, the demands on the reader are in some cases disproportionate. In the course of one of his extrapolations the narrator asks his readers to abdicate their right to be entertained, asking them to "suspend hostilities" (39), sensing theirs is going to be a problematic relationship. Later on the authorial voice will refer to his own writing as "a literature of saving clauses" (46), with the implication that it is not a naive kind of writing. On the contrary, it does not give itself easily to the reader, it is protected against intrusion, alert to any attempt towards deciphering, anticipating in fact what would become the most treasured quality of this author's whole literary production.[7]

Secondly, the narrator interferes in the readers' assumptions, trying to influence them in one sense or another. When he imagines the reader disapproving a digression on literary criticism, he writes "don't be too hard on him, he was studying to be a professor" (48), subverting his own pretensions at seriousness (and complicating things further by introducing the author in the narrative). The narrator's allusions to the readers may also be of an ironic nature, as when he remarks: "We would not wish our young hero to be misjudged, or hastily judged, by the reader, for the want of a few facts" (74). The narrator obviously knows that there is a dearth of facts among so much abstraction in the novel.

Finally, the narrator makes deprecating comments on his own work, inviting the reader to question the worth of the whole enterprise of reading the book. When the narrator imagines that the characters will let him down, he writes, for instance: "We call the whole performance off, we call the book off, it tails off in a horrid manner" (112-113).

In the third part of the novel ("UND"), the authorial voice is afraid "that the book is degenerating into a kind of Commedia dell'Arte, a form of literary statement to which we object particularly" (117). Later on he will admit that he is tired of the frills he has added to the narrative (162).

All these facts make of *Dream* a highly erudite, intertextual and learned book which does not seek to share its knowledge with its readers. Contradictory, indeterminate and limbo-like, it exacts an unconditional audience, while at the same time reacting against the knowledge that it may be understood. Here, as well, it represents another rupture with a model described by Bakhtin, this time an ideal of reading found in his essay "Discourse in the Novel." The concept of "active understanding" which he develops here stems from the dialogic orientation of his idea of language. The word in any dialogue is oriented toward the listener, although this figure is normally considered a passive recipient.[8] What Bakhtin (1981) modifies in this pattern is that every kind of discourse is oriented towards a responsive understanding, which he defines as

> a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse, and it is moreover an *active* understanding, one that discourse senses as resistance or support enriching the discourse. (280-1)

Active understanding, according to his view, approaches the word, adopts it and adds new layers of meaning.

Breaking again a Bakhtinian model of perfection, in *Dream* active understanding is not possible simply because the novel, in many cases, does not allow the reader an approach to the word in the first place. In any case, supposing the reader were willing and able to follow the author's meandering course of thinking, what we would have is not active understanding but exhaustive understanding, and in that case the reader would always be left far behind. Beckett tried, in his dealings with the readers too, to go a step further toward an anti-text.[9]

Wolfgang Iser wrote that Beckett's novels have an absurd effect, "for inherent in the process of presentation is the awareness that what is to be presented lies far beyond the capabilities of fiction" (264). As I have tried to show, this effect is already present in Beckett's first novel, and just as he tried to explore a new space for fiction, he also attempted to forge in this text a new relationship with the reader. He imagined a kind of relationship that was hardly feasible: it presupposes the existence of an ideal reader who would understand all the author's references, who would renounce (albeit temporarily) his/her rights and who would be prepared to stand an intrusive narrator and his comments on the uncertainty of the narrative itself. The connections that Beckett tried to establish with readers in *Dream* did not seem to achieve a final resolution, but the very attempt (radical, experimental) constitutes an integral part of the project that he initiated with the writing of this complex novel.

Notes

1 Naturally critics have introduced some distinctions into Bakhtin's somewhat idealized vision of the novelistic genre. Simon Dentith speaks of contradictions in his account of the polyphonic novel: "But in fact it is impossible to imagine a novelist who does not sort the words of his or her characters into some sort of hierarchy of significance" (Simon Dentith. *Bakhtinian Thought. An Introductory Reader.* London: Routledge, 1995. 45). David Lodge addresses the same topic from a different perspective, reaching similar conclusions: "Can there, in fact, be such a thing as an *absolutely* monologic literary text? Bakhtin himself came to doubt it" (David Lodge. *After Bakhtin. Essays on Fiction and Criticism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990. 97).

2 Although in some striking sense Bakhtin, "a man who gave chief importance to being 'unfinalized' and 'becoming'" and whose account "cannot be conclusive" (Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1984. 2), touches a chord with Beckett's idea of the existential experience as "a succession of attempts to give shape to the void" (Martin Esslin, Introduction, *Samuel Beckett*. Ed. Martin Esslin. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965. 9).

3 Knowlson writes about *Dream*: "It has been labelled 'picaresque' or episodic' but neither term does justice to the book's deliberate lack of coherence, let alone its verbal extravagance and

stylistic bravura" (James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame. The Life of Samuel Beckett*. 1996. London: Bloomsbury, 1997. 146).

4 John Pilling calls Nemo and Grock the demiurges of the story. Theirs are non-roles, sometimes watching the action from the distance but never interfering. (John Pilling. *A Companion to Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. Tallahassee: Journal of Beckett Studies Books, 2004. 33).

5 John Pilling emphasizes the importance of the quotations in the structure of the novel: "If the *Dream* notebook got in the way of the novel, it also enabled the novel to emerge. There were other conditioning factors, naturally enough; being out of Dublin was undoubtedly one of them. But without the notebook, it seems, there would in all probability have been no *Dream*" (John Pilling, ed. *Beckett's Dream Notebook*, Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999. xix-xx).

6 Because of his radical departure from established conventions in writing Norma Bouchard assigns Beckett not a Modernist but an avant-gardist affiliation: ". . . since the Beckettian literary space is kept in a constant state of overdetermination and regress, it clearly marks a departure from the stability of sedentary symbolization informing the epiphanic moment of Modernist narratives." (Norma Bouchard 137).

7 Ronan McDonald, for instance, writes: "His [Beckett's] drama and prose are so opaque and indeterminate that it seems somehow misconceived to ascribe to them a 'vision' or 'worldview' – 'tragic' or otherwise" (Ronan McDonald. *Tragedy and Irish Literature. Synge, O'Casey, Beckett*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002. 131).

8 The terms used by Bakhtin to refer to the other participant in the dialogic exchange, reader, listener or understander are, according to David Shepherd, "essentially interchangeable" (David Shepherd. "Bakhtin and the Reader," *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*. 1989. Ed. Ken Hirsckop and David Shepherd. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001. 136-154, 137).

9 Curiously enough, in his *Dictionary of Narratology* Gerald Prince mentions one of Beckett's novels, *Molloy*, as an example of antinarrative: "A (verbal or non verbal) text adopting the trappings of narrative but systematically calling narrative logic and narrative conventions into question" (Gerald Prince. *A Dictionary of Narratology.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. 6).

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Belacqua and the "I" in the Novellas – the Narration of Two Worlds in the Prose of Samuel Beckett

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Abstract: *Based on the analysis of excerpts from Samuel Beckett´s first book of short stories,* More Pricks than Kicks *(1934), this article investigates to what extent the narrator in this book demonstrates certain characteristics that appear in subsequent prose by Beckett, mainly as regards to interventions in the stories that are told.*
To discuss this subject, excerpts will also be used from "Premier Amour" (1970), which, together with "L'Expulsé", "Le Calmant" and "La Fin" (1955), make up the first fictional texts written by Beckett in French.
The importance of comparing such stories to those from More Pricks than Kicks *comes from the fact that they present the typical Beckettian first-person narrator, well-known for his peculiar story-telling style, replete with impasses and questions about the narrated story. Comparison between the narrative styles in these texts also allows us to investigate the characteristics of two distinct and unique moments in Samuel Beckett´s prose.*

Belacqua, the first Beckettian protagonist

More Pricks than Kicks, the first book of short stories written by Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), was published in 1934. It contains ten stories about a young artist, Belacqua Shuah, and its central line concerns the strolls of the main character Belacqua through the streets of Dublin and his relationships with different women.

The name Belacqua is an allusion to the character by the same name from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In Dante´s work, Belacqua is punished for his indolence, and he appears in *Canto IV* of the "Purgatory", condemned to wait the same period he had lived in sloth before starting to complete his penance. Yet, in *More Pricks than Kicks,* the protagonist fights off his sloth by exercising the option to keep in constant motion, as the narrator explains in the third story of the book, "Ding-dong":

> My sometime friend Belacqua enlivened the last phase of his solipsism, before he toed the line and began to relish the world, with the belief that the best thing he had to do was to move constantly from place to place. […] Being by nature however sinfully indolent, bogged in indolence, asking nothing better than to stay put at the good pleasure of what he called The Furies, he was at times tempted to wonder whether the remedy were not rather more disagreeable than the complaint. (Beckett 1972, 36-7)

Beckett was himself a young artist at the time he wrote this book, and it has been noted that Belacqua Shuah´s initials are the same as the author´s, but backwards, which suggests he made a joke when creating his first protagonist.[2] It is also important to emphasise that Belacqua first appeared in a previous novel by Beckett – *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1992), one he had rejected and which was only posthumously published. The stories in *More Pricks than Kicks* were extracted from this novel. The main intention of both the novel and the book of short stories might be to parody conventional fiction and the conventional hero, while at the same time painting a picture of a young artist, and a bourgeois intellectual such as himself (Kroll 14).

The first story in the book, "Dante and the Lobster", shows Belacqua trying to understand an excerpt from the *Divine Comedy*. After facing many difficulties, he decides to abandon Dante and concentrate on three tasks: preparing his lunch, buying a lobster for his aunt and going to his Italian lesson.

A sacred lunch

> Lunch, to come off at all, was a very nice affair. If his lunch was to be enjoyable, and it could be very enjoyable indeed, he must be left in absolute tranquility to prepare it. But if he were disturbed now, if some brisk tattler were to come bouncing in now big with a big idea or a petition, he might just as well not eat at all, for the food would turn to bitterness on his palate, or, worse again, taste of nothing. He must be left strictly alone; he must have complete quiet and privacy to prepare the food for his lunch.
>
> The first thing to do was to lock the door. Now nobody could come at him. […] Then he lit the gas-ring and unhooked the square flat toaster, asbestos grill, from its nail and set it precisely on the flame. He found he had to lower the flame. Toast must not on any account be done too rapidly. For bread to be toasted as it ought, through and through, it must be done on a mild steady flame. Otherwise you only charred the outside and left the pith as sodden as before. If there was one thing he abominated more than another it was to feel his teeth meet in a bathos of pith and dough. And it was so easy to do the things properly. So, he thought, having regulated the flow and adjusted the grill, by the time I have the bread cut that will be just right (Beckett 1972, 10-1).

In this quotation, we have the narrator's comments on Belacqua's preparation of his lunch; it is the start of a long description of this event. Most of this short story is composed of narrative showing the reader in detail how the meal was prepared.

The first things that call our attention, considering the directions that Beckett´s subsequent prose will take, are the richness of detail and the specificity of the descriptions, characteristics that will tend to disappear as soon he starts to adopt French as his literary language, between 1945 and 1950. The stories "Premier Amour", "L'Expulsé", "Le Calmant" and "La Fin" (Beckett´s first fictional texts written in this language) mark a rupture in his prose.[3] Here we should mention that the typical Beckettian first-person narrator, characterized by his unstable discourse, driven by questions and dead-end arguments, appears in these stories for the very first time; and this emergence is closely associated with the adoption of the French language. After writing these stories, Beckett stopped using the English language, with the explanation that he needed to "impoverish himself, to write without style", a task he considered impossible in his mother tongue.[4] In this respect, it is important to quote from a letter written in 1937, the so-called "German letter" that Beckett wrote to his friend Axel Kaun. In it, he described the English language as a hurdle, "a veil that one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it" (Fehgenseld 518). It is important to emphasize that, at the time, Beckett was trying to distance himself from the weight of the English literary tradition and, more specifically, from the influence of his countryman James Joyce, a writer he was very close to.

The choice of the French language, however, was not irreversible. Beckett became a bilingual writer. Books like *More Pricks than Kicks* and *Murphy* (1938), his first novel, present a linguistic virtuosity that Beckett tried to fight against from the moment he started to write in French, seeking to become more objective and simple in his texts.[5]

In "Dante and the Lobster" Beckett is still distant from this idea of impoverishment that he would later seek, as we can observe in the excerpt above. In addition to the precision of the details, the obsessive importance the protagonist attaches to a simple day-to-day task end up conferring a comic effect on the narrative, so a potential failure in this meal would have consequences similar to those of a major disaster.

Carla Locatelli dedicates a whole chapter of her book, *Unwording the World. Samuel Beckett's prose works after the Nobel Prize,* to an analysis of the comic strategies of Beckett's prose, and she situates *More Pricks than Kicks* in what she calls this writer's parody phase.[6] In this period of his writings, the comic element is revealed through the parodies of the literary canon. According to Locatelli, the comic effect of Belacqua´s adventures is related to the identification of parodies, for example, the *Divine Comedy* and the *Bildungsroman*. Analyzing another excerpt of "Dante and the Lobster", also related to the protagonist´s lunch, she emphasizes the narrator´s unjustified insistence on narrating the minute details of the preparation of the lunch, considering the insignificance of such actions. However, the implicit criticism in the excess of description that is part of many works connected to the tradition of formal realism, makes the passage comical.[7]

We could add here that the protagonist´s effort to perform his task, as well as his decision to postpone the resolution of the Dante-esque conundrum, reinforce the comic aspect of the story. The title itself bears this characteristic, provoking a certain shock by approximating two different universes: the high universe of Dante and the universe of the lobster, which represents Belacqua´s day-to-day life. The purchase of the shellfish is his second task of the day. As Robert Cochran (6) well observes, unlike the character's attempt to understand Dante, he is extremely successful at preparing lunch.

Another interesting aspect of this excerpt is the narrator´s position towards the protagonist. In a passage already mentioned in the third story of the book – "Ding-Dong" – the narrator describes himself as an old friend of Belacqua. This is exactly the impression that we get from the comments, often ironical, that he makes throughout the book.[8] In a narrative style that is very distant from that employed in Beckett's stories in French, the narrator here accompanies Belacqua while gradually revealing his own personality in each story of the book. This omniscient narrator observes and comments on the protagonist's attitudes.[9] The narration of *More Pricks than Kicks* is not subject to the uncertainties and gaps that start to appear in the French writings. The interruptions in the narrative are more to ironise Belacqua and make brief comments on the story, as we shall see below.

At this point in "Dante and the Lobster", the narrator emphasises the protagonist's need to isolate himself and not be disturbed while preparing his meal – "But if he were disturbed now... He must be left strictly alone, he must have complete quiet and privacy to prepare the food for this lunch". This predilection for isolation and disconnection from the world is already present here and will remain as a typical trait of the Beckettian protagonist from this point on.

In this and other short stories in *More Pricks than Kicks*, the narrator still behaves as the "master" of the stories he intends to tell; he knows everything about his protagonist and keeps his distance from the impotence and the ignorance of the anonymous first-person narrator who appears in the novellas. The use of the omniscient narration allows the narrator to describe the scenes and penetrate Belacqua's thoughts.

The clarity and richness of detail present here start to fade with the appearance of the first-person narrator, who demonstrates he is no longer in full command of his own narrative. The change in the author's style is very significant from the novellas on. Thus, the precise description of preparing toast in the quoted text gives way to passages such as this one in "First Love", in which the narrator becomes irritated when trying to describe the sky:

> But some weeks later, even more dead than alive than usual, I returned to the bench, for the fourth or fifth time since I had abandoned it, at roughly the same hour, I mean roughly the same sky, no, I don't mean that either, for it's always the same sky and never the same sky, what words are there for that, none I know, period. (Beckett 1995. 37-8)

It is important to mention that the ability to describe certain settings precisely does not abruptly disappear in the subsequent stories, but becomes subject to this narrative instability which, by questioning the very story being told, leaves the reader on uncertain ground.

In *More Pricks than Kicks*, the situation is quite different. The narrator is still capable of creating a very real and precise atmosphere in the settings he describes, as we can observe in the second story in his book entitled "Fingal".

Strolling around Dublin

In "Fingal", we are introduced to the protagonist's first girlfriend, Winnie. Both take a walk around North Dublin, and each part of the landscape is minutely described, as we can observe at the beginning of the story:

> They turned east off the road from Dublin to Malahide short of the Castle woods and soon it came into view, not much more than a burrow, the ruin of a mill on the top, choked lairs of furze and brambles passim on its gentle slopes. It was a landmark for miles around on account of the high ruin. The Hill of the Wolves […] They considered Fingal for a time together in silence. Its coast eaten away with creeks and marshes, tesserae of small fields, patches of woods springing up like a weed, the line of hills too low to close the view. (Beckett 1995. 23-4)

In this story, the couple decides to take a walk to an asylum, the "Portrane Lunatic Asylum", and all of the details of their journey are described by the narrator. If we compare the type of description used here and the type of description used in the novellas, we will have a good sample of the changes that the first-person narrative underwent in Beckett's prose.

In "First Love", for example, the description of the bench where the protagonist first met Lulu and the scene of numerous meetings between the two starts with numerous doubts about its location:

> I met her on a bench, on the bank of the canal, one of the canals, for our town boasts two, though I never knew which one was which. It was a well situated bench, backed by a mound of solid earth and garbage, so that my rear was covered. My flanks too, partially, thanks to a pair of venerable trees, more than venerable, dead, at either end of the bench. It was no doubt these trees one fine day, aripple with all their foliage, that had sown the idea of a bench, in someone's fancy. To the fore, a few yards away, flowed the canal, if canals flow, don't ask me, so that from that quarter too the risk of surprise was small. And yet she surprised me. (Beckett 1995. 30)

Although we can visualize the bench between the two big trees, the narrator is not as certain as he is in "Fingal" when it comes to describing the location. He admits he cannot tell the difference between the two canals that flow through the city and once more emphasizes the fact he knows nothing – "don't ask me". This expression of impotence is one of the great distinctions between the two narratives which, through their descriptions, are good examples of the changes that occurred in Beckett's prose – the first narrative, which provides a very detailed picture of the landscapes visited by Belacqua and Winnie; and the second narrative, which implies the impossibility of a precise description, due to the narrator's uncertainties.

It is important to stress, however, that the third-person narrative used in More Pricks than Kicks, though close to the classical moulds that the author will fight against later on, already has embedded in it Becket's criticism of this kind of literature, as Locatelli observes. Beckett uses elements of this literary tradition to parody it, and for this very reason he uses an omniscient third-person narrator that is closer to the impassibility that characterizes the narrators in a great number of nineteenth-century novels. In the same way that we observe the particularities of Belacqua's lunch, we can see the descriptions of landscapes in "Fingal" as examples of this criticism. When the author adopts first-person narrative, he starts to expose, through this new narrative structure, a more fragile world, since the main characteristic of the protagonist he chooses is to fill his narrative with doubt and uncertainty. Beckett's choice of this narrative style is crucial in exposing the uncertain world he intends to depict from this moment on.

During the couple's walk, another feature of the protagonist can be identified as an indication of his preference for isolation. In the final part of the story, he leaves Winnie with a friend, steals a bicycle and rides away, with total disregard for the date he had made with both of them.[10] Belacqua ends up alone, drinking in a bar.

The relationships that the protagonist of these stories establishes with other people are characterized by a sort of irritation and repulsion of human contact. His "friendship" with the coachman in "The expelled" and with the man who offers him shelter in "The end" cause him more disdain for the two characters than gratitude for their offer of help. In the case of "First Love", he prefers to go back to living on the street than living with Lulu.

In More Pricks than Kicks, his longing for isolation is not as radical as it is in subsequent texts, although the tendency is there. Belacqua still relates to his friends, goes to parties, and gets married three times, merely to mention a few examples.

The protagonist's attempt to adapt to the world exists at the same time that the narrative used is still suitable to a more traditional, organic, representational and mimetic mould, even if only to parody it.[11] As this narrative form starts to be put in question more radically (and this is due to the adoption of the first-person narrator), the protagonist's attitude also becomes more radical. From the novellas on, he appears completely enclosed in his world and has all sorts of difficulties communicating with others. He feels he is no longer capable of expressing himself or communicating. His escape on a bicycle, besides

evoking a typically Beckettian image, is Belacqua's escape from social commitments, represented by his girlfriend and his friend.

First narrative interventions

"Dante and the Lobster" has a very well-defined beginning, development and closing. The other stories in the book are no different in this regard. Nevertheless, it is interesting to observe some of the narrator's comments and interventions that arise outside the context of the story and that send us back to the very way these stories are told – a ploy he will use frequently from the *nouvelles* on.

At the moment Belacqua arrives at his aunt's house with the lobster, for example, the narrator suddenly decides to say that it is wintertime, yet introduces doubts about this very fact: "Belacqua drew near to the house of his aunt. Let us call it Winter, that dusk may fall now and a moon rise" (Beckett 1972. 20). This observation strikes our attention because, as we could see in the excerpt from "First Love" above, one of the characteristics of the novellas' narrator is exactly to demonstrate this frailty of narration, to emphasise that whoever is narrating does not have absolute command over the material narrated. We might say that the narrator of *More Pricks than Kicks,* however shyly, is already revealing a strategy that was to be characteristic of later Beckettian prose. The story – intermingled with interruptions – can already be seen, although this intrusiveness is very different in subsequent texts.

A second example can be seen right at the beginning of the fifth story, "Love and Lethe", when Ruby Tough is waiting for Belacqua while she talks and drinks coffee with her mother. We have numerous narrative interventions made to "help" us read the story:

> 'And the rosiner' said Mrs Tough, 'will you have that in the lav too?'
> Reader, a rosiner is a drop of the hard.
> Ruby rose and took a gulp of the coffee to make room.
> 'I'll have a gloria' she said.
> Reader, a gloria is coffee laced with brandy. (Beckett 1972. 89).

Such comments, which work here as a form of complicity with the reader, are very frequent in the book. The interventions, in addition to the irony with which the narrator tells Belacqua's stories, also make it clear that we are in the presence of fiction. This is a lighter and more graceful form of interruption, very distinct from the interventions made by the first person-narrator in the novellas. The latter questions the story he is telling to a much greater extent, often holding it in contempt, and is much more anguished about his narrative.

More Pricks than Kicks belongs to a very different phase from that inaugurated by the novellas. The moments when the narrator of the stories positions himself on the "outside" in order to speak ironically about Belacqua or to make comments about what

he is narrating are still far away from the rupture of the narrator of the French texts. These are interventions of another kind – although, in these 1934 stories, we already have a glimpse of a characteristic that is closer to the novellas that were to be written more than ten years afterwards.

In the segmentation proposed by Locatelli, the novellas are part of the second phase of Beckett's comic development – marking a transition between the parodic game ascribed to the books *More Pricks than Kicks* and *Murphy* and the beginning of the comical production centred on the metanarrative language. Locatelli (88) points out the erosion of the essential aspects of traditional narratives in this phase, such as narrative authority, authorship and textual coherence. The utilisation of the first-person narrator is exactly what allows this change, since he is responsible for the questions that arise around "telling a story", revealing to the reader the "presence of literature" through all the metalinguistic interruptions.

Thinking not only of "Dante and the Lobster", but also of the other stories in the book, we might say that *More Pricks than Kicks* is part of a period in Beckettian prose that is still attached to more traditional narration – something that Beckett started to fight in his later fiction – the adoption of the French language being the trigger of this change. The collected stories work as Belacqua's biography and could even be read as a novel, since we follow a large period of the protagonist's life, from the moment he is a student of the Italian language ("Dante and the Lobster") through the episode of his death and burial ("Draff"), passing through his three marriages.

Concerning "Draff", the last narrative in the book, it is interesting to note that it is a post-death narrative, as is "The calmative". The narrator reveals the arrangements for Belacqua's burial, following his death in the previous story, "Yellow". This penultimate narrative also has similarities with the universe of "The calmative", since the whole story happens while the protagonist is meditating on his bed, as he waits for the operation that will end up being the cause of his death.

In spite of the similarities that pressage the future protagonist, like the taste for wandering and the predilection for isolation, Belacqua is a character who even tries to adapt to the world and its social rules, as we can see in his successive marriages.[12] His image is still distant from the absolutely marginal man that we will see from the novellas on, but some of his characteristics will be always maintained. In "Dante and the Lobster", the narrator cites Belacqua's walking and the persistent pains in his feet, which foretell of the illnesses and the decrepitude which, little by little, will take hold of his body: "Belacqua had a spavined gait, his feet were in ruins, he suffered with them almost continuously" (Beckett 1972. 15). In this same story, he is described by the owner of a grocery shop as a grotesque sight, another approximation to the future protagonist, a constant victim of ridicule and repulsed by others: "Being a warm-hearted human man he felt sympathy and pity for this queer customer who always looked ill and dejected" (15).

Final considerations

The universe of *More Pricks than Kicks* is closer to *Murphy*, funnier and less sombre, than to Beckett's later prose. The language used in the composition of these stories is quite the opposite of the "impoverished language" that the author was to advocate later on. In *Watt* (1953), his last novel written in English, he is closer to the universe of the novellas, mainly on account of the discussions related to the meaning of language.

It is crucial to emphasise that the novellas were written immediately after the Second World War. The atmosphere we find in these narratives is related to this period. Choosing a narrator who reinforces his ignorance and his own difficulty in narrating, instead of dominating whatever he narrates, mirrors this historical moment. The change from omniscient narration to "impotent" narration depicts a world that has been profoundly shaken by the recent ghost of war. Therefore, the adoption of the first-person narrator is not merely a change in style, but also a form that embodies the spirit of an era. Beckett was to exploit this form of narration still further in his famous trilogy, written soon after the novellas, comprised of *Molloy*, *Malone Meurt* (1951) and *L'innommable* (1953). The most pronounced characteristics of Belacqua continue to be part of the later protagonists, but the way the narrator tells the story undergoes a huge transformation. This change made Beckett well-known as one of the writers responsible for the rupture with the moulds of formal realism in the twentieth-century narrative.

Notes

* This article is a slightly modified version of one of the chapters of the author's MA dissertation entitled "A narrator in the edge: the pathway of the Beckettian first person from the *nouvelles* to the *Textes pour rien*" (2009). It was revised by Peter James Harris.

2 Marie-Claire Pasquier makes this observation in the essay "La rose et le homard: vie et mort de Belacqua Shuah". She also adds that the surname Shuah appears in the Bible (Genesis 38) and has a kinship relation with Onan. (Marie-Claire Pasquier. "La rose et le homard: vie et mort de Belacqua Shuah". *In*: Rabaté, Jean-Michel (ed.) *Beckett avant Beckett*. *Essais sur les premières oeuvres*. Paris: Accents/ P.E.N.S., 1984, p.29-30)

3 The novellas "L'expulsé", "Le Calmant" and "La Fin" were originally published in French, together with the work *Textes Pour Rien* in *Nouvelles et Textes Pour Rien* (Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1955). The English edition only appeared in 1967 published by Grove Press with the title *Stories and Texts for nothing*. Although written at the same time, the novella "Premier Amour" would only be published in 1970 by Minuit. The English version entitled "First love" was issued in 1973 by Calder and Boyars in a volume that also comprised the other three novellas translated into English. From this moment on, we will use the English version of the novellas. "The expelled" and "The end" were translated from French by Richard Seaver in collaboration with Beckett himself, while "The calmative" and "First Love" were translated by Beckett himself.

4 To explain why he adopted the French language, Beckett said in an interview in 1956: "To write without style", and in 1968: "To impoverish myself more. This was the real reason". (*Apud* Birkenhauer, Klaus. *Samuel Beckett*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1976, p. 110)

5 James Knowlson (357), one of Beckett's biographers, comments on the writer's need to establish a distance from Joyce's influence.

6 Locatelli points out three phases in the evolution of comicality in Beckett's prose. The first one is characterized by the utilisation of elements from the literary tradition with the function of criticising and transposing this structure. This would be an intertextual phase. *More Pricks than Kicks* and *Murphy* would be two examples from this period. The writer refers to this canon to parody it. It is the case of the utilization of Dante in the first story in this collection. The second phase, so-called "metanarrative", was concentrated on the parody of the literary genders used. This phase, now intratextual, made it clear that we are now in the presence of literature due to the narrative interruptions of a metalinguistic character. Locatelli (1990) quotes, as examples, the works of the 40s and 50s. The last phase, defined as "essentially discursive" was the most problematic, and the humour occurred at the discourse level. This phase characterised Beckett's final prose, in which the language system itself is kept in check.

7 I refer to formal realism in the moulds described by Ian Watt and defined as "a full and authentic report of human experience" [...] " under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their action, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms" (Watt 32).

8 At the beginning of "Ding Dong", for example, the narrator says that he gave up on Belacqua because he was not a serious person: "He was an impossible person in the end. I gave him up in the end because he was not serious" (Beckett 1972, 38)

9 This is based on Norman Friedman's narrator typology. One of his categories is "editorial omniscience", characterized by the author's comments and direct interferences in his text. The prefaces of *Tom Jones*, by Henry Fielding, would be examples of this category. We shall see, further on, that the narrator of *More Pricks than Kicks* makes some ironical comments and little intrusions in the story as he is telling it. We can relate him to this category because, although what happens here is not a direct interference by the author, as in the examples quoted by Friedman, the brief interruptions and the characteristics of the ironical narration style of this book are closer to "editorial omniscience" than to "neutral omniscience", the second type described in the text.

10 During their journey, they meet Dr. Sholto, a friend of Winnie's and a doctor at the Portrane Lunatic Asylum. The three of them agree to meet in an hour at the asylum door, but Belacqua wants to take a different route and, for this reason, he leaves alone. When he sees a bicycle and does not see its owner around, he steals it and leaves at full speed.

11 The "organic" category is being used in the sense defended by Peter Bürger in *Teoria da Vanguarda*. Bürger distinguishes the organic and the non-organic works, the latter being typical of the vanguard. Whereas the former are characterised by unity and their presumption of reproducing reality through a closer approach to Nature, the latter present a contradictory unity, in which there is no longer a possibility of apprehending sense from the study of the relationship between the whole and its parts, since the elements used have become autonomous. Thus, the main feature of these works would be fragmentation. (Bürger, Peter. *Teoria da vanguarda*. Trad. José Pedro Antunes. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2008.)

12 When we think about Belacqua's attempts to adapt, it is possible to relate his trajectory to that of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914) by James Joyce. In this book, the protagonist raises intense questions about the directions he can take in his life. Religion, love, artistic endowment and education are themes that torment Dedalus in his search for an authentic pathway consistent with his desire to be a writer. The two books show the protagonists dealing with the conflict between following a completely individual and free pathway and adapting to the already established Irish lifestyle. Despite the thematic similarity and the continuously emphasised relationship between Joyce and Beckett, it is important to note that, in *More Pricks than Kicks*, Belacqua's trajectory is treated comically and, as we have

already observed, in a parody of classical narratives, including the *Bildungsroman*, the genre to which *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* belongs.

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Shifting Identities and Social Change in Contemporary Ireland: The Effect of Displacement and Migration

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Abstract: *In present-day Ireland – North and South – identity has become a subject of much debate. The influx of migrants has led to a radical change in the island's demography. This article sets out to explore how the notion of a changing Irish identity is represented in contemporary Irish writing on both sides of the border. In relation to the demographic evolution in the Republic, I shall engage with Chris Binchy's novel* Open-handed *as well as Roddy Doyle's collection of short stories* The Deportees*. The quest for a new identity in post-Troubles Northern Ireland will be explored in the light of Rosemary Jenkinson's collection of short stories. In* Contemporary Problems Nos. 53&54*, the author demonstrates how a new cosmopolitan outlook on the Northern Irish conflict may encourage cultural hybridization, making sectarian boundaries appear irrelevant. With the comparison of the three different pieces of writing, I shall illustrate how both parts of the island are confronted with the necessity of recreating and rewriting their conception of national identity against the background of a different socio-political history.*

In present-day Ireland – North and South – identity has become a subject of much debate. The influx of immigrants has led to a radical change in the island's demography and has shed a new light on established notions of Irishness. In the 1970s and 1980s Ireland was the country with the highest emigration rate in the European Union (Clinch 24-42). However, between 1996 and 2002, after the outbreak of the Celtic Tiger, over a quarter million people came to live in Ireland.. By the end of 2002, it had become the country with the highest immigration in Europe (Ward 27), so that in 2005 immigrant workers represented around six percent of the population of the Republic (Lally 11). The arrival of citizens from different countries and the increasing mobility of the island's population have encouraged new reflections on identities in a local and global context. Against the background of the current social transformations, themes such as multiculturalism and pluralism have become of topical interest. This study sets out to explore how social change and its role in the creation of identity are represented

in contemporary writing on both sides of the border. In relation to the demographic evolution in the Republic, I shall engage with Chris Binchy's latest novel *Open-handed* (2008) as well as Roddy Doyle's short story "Guess Who's Coming for Dinner" (2004). Both pieces of writing explore how economic progress and the presence of migrant workers have given rise to new forms of self-awareness among the Irish population. The construction of identity in post-Troubles Northern Ireland will be analysed in the light of Rosemary Jenkinson's *Contemporary Problems Nos. 53&54* (2004). In her collection of short stories, the author explores how displacement and migration generate alternative perspectives that render sectarian boundaries irrelevant. With the comparison of the three different narratives, I will attempt to illustrate how both parts of the island are confronted with the necessity of recreating and rewriting their conception of ethnic, religious or national identity in the context of social change.

In modern sociology, the notion of identity is seen as depending on the "combination of sameness and difference" (Lawler 2). According to this school of thought, difference plays an essential role in the construction of identity as individuals define themselves in relation to what they are not. The sociologist Harriet Bradley further argues that identities are "complex hybrids reflecting personal history and cross-cutting demands of social categorization" (Bradley 1996: 212). Thus, a person's biography and the perception of his or her social status generate a specific form of self-awareness. Traditional societies are assumed to give rise to a firm sense of self as interpersonal relationships are "reliable, continuous and face-to-face" (Adams 44). In this form of society, identities are supported through close knit community and family networks, which generate a feeling of "social inclusion" and promote a communal agreement on patterns of "right" and "wrong" (Boyne 121). In "traditional" Ireland, national and class identification as well as religion have provided a reliable basis on which identities could be created. Through the island's recent demographic changes, however, conceived notions of identity have become questioned. Since the early 1990s, economic progress and the boom of media technology have not only given rise to migration to Ireland but have also exercised a decisive influence on the loosening of family and community ties. A growing part of society has become increasingly mobile, shifting jobs and homes on a regular basis. According to Matthew Adams, this mobility is a decisive feature of a "post-traditional society". The consequence of this new form of society is a lack of communal bonds. For that reason, individuals become forced to scrutinize and reinvent themselves without the reassuring support of a social network (Adams 1). Through the dissolution of tradition and the "fragmentation of social bonds", they are less able to perceive themselves as "integrated subjects" (Hall 275), which leads to an "atomisation" of society (Adams 16). "Atomisation" in this context means the dissolution of interpersonal relations, which following Adams, turns society into "a landscape of distinct and isolate individuals" (16). At the same time, the authority and legitimacy of tradition begins to fade and stops providing a basis for "meaningful identities". Thus, the sense of self in a post-traditional society is created on the basis of a modern life style disassociated from

established moral and value systems (*Ibid.* 16). In the presence of migrant workers, the concept of nationalism becomes questioned and frequently confused with racism. Therefore, belonging to a certain nation provides a less convincing basis for the creation of identity. In Northern Ireland, the influence of migration on the creation of a particular sense of self has been considerably weaker than in the Republic. People in the North define themselves less in relation to the newly arrived immigrants than in opposition to the other ethno-religious community. The respective members of the Catholic and Protestant community display contrasting national and cultural identities that are deeply rooted in history. Due to their different ethno-religious background, they develop conflicting political and social aspirations. However, the progressing Peace process has questioned the traditional framework of Irish Nationalism and British Unionism. The reinvention of identities in contemporary Northern Ireland is a much debated issue in an attempt to create a multinational society.

In Roddy Doyle's short story "Guess Who's Coming for Dinner", the quest for a post-national identity is the central theme. Told in a humorous tone, the narrative is set in contemporary Dublin. The action unfolds around Larry Lianne, the committed father of four daughters and a son. Despite being surrounded by a network of strong family ties, the protagonist is forced to reconsider his Irish identity. Due to his daughters' cosmopolitan attitude, his "ethnocentric definition of identity" (Cronin 9), based on nationalism and Irishness, is no longer supported. In the course of the action, the protagonist has to realise that his strong identification with his native country has become debatable in a multinational society. At the beginning of the story, Larry defines himself through the successful upbringing of his daughters and the modernity of Ireland:

> Their voices reminded Larry of the Artane roundabout – mad, roaring traffic coming at him from all directions. And he loved it, just like he loved the Artane roundabout. Every time Larry drove onto and off that roundabout he felt modern, successful and Irish. And that was exactly how he felt when he listened to his daughters. (Doyle 3)

The protagonist associates the lively presence of his daughters with the buzz of the city. He feels deeply rooted in his national identity as he is convinced of having contributed to the island's progress through his children. However, when his daughter Stephanie proposes to bring a black friend for dinner, his world view becomes destabilised. Whereas the girls are full of praise for Ben from Nigeria, Larry cannot cope with the idea of having a black man in his house. His daughters' description of their friend as "gorgeous", "dead serious looking" and "a ride" (5) irritates him and makes him react in an irrational way. Shouting: "He's not gorgeous or anything else! Not in this house!" (5), he gives voice to his fear of otherness. In order to prevent Ben's invitation for dinner, he makes use of common stereotypes about Africa and evokes criminality as well as religious fanaticism and AIDS. To his surprise, his arguments are curtly dismissed by the other members of his family. Through his daughters' tolerant attitude, Larry loses

his points of reference, which previously provided a basis for the construction of his identity. The unexpected openness of his family pushes Larry to scrutinize his sense of self:

> He wasn't a racist. . . .When he watched a footballer, for example, he didn't see skin; he saw skill.
> Paul McGrath, black and brilliant. Gary Breen, white and shite. And it was the same with music. Phil
> Lynott, absolutely brilliant. Neil Diamond, absolutely shite. And politicis. Mandela, a hero. Ahern, a chancer. And women too. Naomi Campbell – Jaysis. There wasn't a racist bone or muscle in his body. Nothing tugging him to change his mind about Stevie Wonder or Thierry Henry because they were black. And it worked the other way too. Gary Breen, black, still shite but no worse. Naomi Campbell, white, probably still gorgeous but better off black. Bertie Ahern, black – Larry laughed for the first time in a week. (8)

Despite Larry's good intentions, his attempt to reflect on his attitude towards black people remains biased and simplistic. Whereas he does not object to stars in the media, he is unwilling to accept Stephanie's black friend at the dinner table. Unlike his daughters, who have adopted the idea of cultural pluralism, Larry is not yet able to identify with social transformations in contemporary Irish society. The changed demographic situation decentres his concept of Irishness. Confused about his self-awareness, he is forced to renegotiate his position in society.

Larry's lack of self-confidence manifests itself in the great trouble he takes over choosing the right kind of clothes for the encounter with the black invitee. Insecure about how to dress, he opts for a clean shirt and a good pair of trousers in order to demonstrate his authority as "the older man", "the citizen" and "the firm but fair father" (Doyle 2008: 10). As he assumes the young man will turn up in a track suite, he is convinced that he will establish himself in a superior position through his outfit. Seeing Ben, however, dressed in an elegant way, he becomes destabilised: ". . . there he was: in a fuckin' suit. The best, most elegant suit Larry had ever been close to. A small lad – very, very black – and completely at home in the suit. The wall looked filthy behind him" (11). Through the discrepancy in their choice of clothes, the power relation between the two characters becomes inverted. In contrast to Ben, who seems to be confident and at ease in his role, Larry is confused about how to behave. As an Irish host, he would traditionally be in a superior position to a foreign guest and entitled to display nationalism and pride in his country. However, he has to notice that patriotism has become less acceptable in the discourse of a multinational society. Speaking in Adams's terms, "the traditions, rituals and rules of culture which once shaped the contours of subjectivity have lost their salience irretrievably" (49). In this sense, Larry's self becomes "disembedded" from society, so

that he is separated from the "meaningful" and "unquestioned" traditional social context (Adams 49), in which he had been immersed previously.

In the course of the dinner, the protagonist's behaviour increasingly turns into a farce. To overcome his insecurity, he exhibits his Irish identity by praising the new Irish potatoes. When the subject of Irish xenophobia is brought up, Larry tries to defend the Irish people by claiming that they are not only "warm" and "friendly" but also gave more money than any other country to Live Aid in 1985 (Doyle 15). Larry's argument, however, is dismissed by Stephanie as "just stupid" (15). Through his daughter's harsh reaction, he gradually becomes aware of the fact that his frame of mind is out of touch with the way of thinking expected in a modern Ireland by a younger generation.

When Larry learns about the fate of Ben's family, he begins to feel sorry for his guest. Confused about his daughter's and Ben's relationship, he mistakes the young man for Stephanie's boyfriend. Consequently, he makes a point of declaring his approval. When he is told by his daughter that Ben is just a good friend, he takes great pride in his own tolerance. To him, his spontaneous reaction is the proof of his open-mindedness and unlimited generosity:

> He was happy enough. He wasn't a racist. There was a black man sitting across from him and he wanted to be his father-in-law. He wasn't sure why, but that didn't matter. Larry was happy with himself. (25)

Larry's self-reflexivity shows his eagerness to reinsert his voice into the changing discourse of a society in the course of social transformation. He feels unprejudiced against ethnic minorities, he thus conceptualises himself as a tolerant man. Dwelling on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, Hermans argues that identities are constructed out of a polyphony of voices, which are in constant dialogue. Discrepancies and contradictions between theses voices are "intrinsic to a healthy functioning self" and contribute to its innovation (Hermans 113). Thus, it could be argued that in the course of the short story, Larry's sense of self gradually moves from being a "monologic one" to a "dialogic self-awarness". Whereas at the beginning he does not question his sense of self, through the confrontation with the members of his family, he realises that his previously accepted categories of thinking have become problematic. Entering into a discourse with different world views, he begins to develop a heteroglot form of identity in a bakhtinian sense (Bakhtin 43).

At the end of the short story, Larry takes a further step towards a more cosmopolitan attitude. He is intrigued by the smell of Ben's cologne and asks him where he could purchase it. Whereas initially he resented the idea of men wearing perfume, he is happy to revise his attitude after having met Ben. Asking for the name of Ben's African scent, Larry shows his acceptance of the culture, which he previously had judged to be an inferior one. His willingness to enter an African shop to buy the perfume shows that he is prepared to cross those ethnic boundaries that made him object to Ben's invitation

for dinner. Gradually disassociating himself from a traditional "ethnocentric" (Cronin 9) way of thinking, Larry gets the chance to reinvent himself as a post-nationalist individual. His self-awareness becomes less conditioned by perceived world views and established nationalist value systems but is increasingly constructed through his own reflexivity and conscious selection of viewpoints. Through the adoption of a more open and tolerant attitude, he attempts to "re-embed" himself (Adams 48) into his changed social environment.

In contrast to Doyle's short story, which is set in the home of an Irish family, the action of Chris Binchy's *Open-handed* takes place in the milieu of Dublin's migrant workers. In the novel, the life stories of a number of Irish, Albanian, Polish, Russian and Czech individuals become entangled with each other. In sociological terms, the characters from Eastern Europe depicted in the novel can be described as "post-industrial migrants" (Cronin 45), as they are available to work anywhere at low rates of pay. Binchy explores the ways in which the presence of migrants exercises an influence on the self-awareness of the local population. According to the sociologist Claire Mitchell, a certain "self-understanding relates to how we compare ourselves with other people and how we think we fit into wider society" (Mitchell 146). In the light of Mitchell's theory it could be argued that in *Open-handed*, the Irish characters construct their identity by distancing themselves from the Eastern European workers. On the basis of their nationality and their material wealth, they stand out against the migrants and therefore claim a superior position in society. Speaking in sociological terms, they relay their identity on "the expulsion of what they are not" (Lawler 3). Through the characters' pretentious attitude, Binchy alludes to Ireland's transformation from an emigrant to an immigrant country. Thus, he suggests a reversal of history: whereas before the economic boom in the 1990s many Irish were forced to work under difficult circumstances abroad, they now inflict the same discriminatory working conditions on their own immigrants.

The central action of the novel is set in one of Dublin's luxury hotels, where the lower jobs are mostly carried out by Eastern Europeans. Having come to Ireland in the hope of making easy money, the migrants are confronted with the reality of life and become involved in violence, prostitution and criminality. One of the main characters is Marcin, a geology student from Poland. Through a conversation between Marcin and his colleague Tommy, Binchy draws attention to discriminatory attitudes found in contemporary Irish society. When Marcin explains to Tommy that his Polish name is pronounced in the same way as the Irish "Mártín", he replies in a condescending way:

> 'I don't know what you heard. The Irish for Martin is Martin". "No, I mean the Gaelic. The Irish language.' 'Oh, that,' Tommy said. 'I don't care about that. I'll call you Bob. I can't spend my life arsing around trying to work out what your fucking name is.' . . .'I'm only messing with you,' Tommy said, turning back to him. 'Oh, right,' Marcin said. 'I'll call you Marty. How's that?' 'Fine,' Marcin said. (72)

In his conversation with Marcin, Tommy displays a strong sense of superiority, refusing to memorise the Polish name. He considers Marcin and his culture as inferior and thus feels authorised to deride his colleague's name. At the same time, however, Tommy rejects Irishness as a marker of his own identity. Telling Marcin that he cannot be bothered with his Irish language, he articulates his disinterest in the culture of his own country. In Adams' words it could be said that Tommy stands "outside of tradition" (Adams 48). This means that he does not construct his identity on the basis of Irish cultural heritage but through the identification with a way of life, characteristic of a modern capitalist society. In Tommy's case, his lifestyle is founded on a striving for money and success. Cronin claims that the ways in which people represent themselves to each other and themselves is not only the result of their personal history, but is also bound up with the different manners in which their cultural environment obliges them to participate in economy and society (2). In this sense, it could be argued that Tommy's attitude and behaviour are conditioned by the social changes taking place in contemporary Irish society.

A further phenomenon explored in the novel is the role that power takes in the reconfiguration of human relations in a changing social order. Engaging with the power imbalance between the migrant workers and their employers, Binchy draws attention to sexism and discrimination. In the second chapter of the book, he exposes the questionable employment strategies used in order to hire Eastern Europeans. Agnieszka, a beautiful young girl from Poland, is interviewed for a job as a waitress by the bar owner Gavin. However, she is not employed for her experience but for her physical attraction. Having to turn around and show her body during the interview, she wonders whether the methods that have been used are permissible:

> Could it be legal? She thought not, not here in the West, with its EU directives and honesty and cultures of excellence that must surely prevent employers making girls bend over in interviews, inspecting their haunches and teeth as if they were horses. But for the Eastern Europeans who came in droves through the door in response to Gavin's *Herald* ads, none of that mattered. They would take their minimum wage and occasional tips and be happy (11).

Through Agnieszka's reflections, Binchy attracts attention to the economic gap between east and west. East Europeans are described as financially dependant on their western counterparts and thus occupy a weaker position in present-day Europe. The liberties employers take in their choice of workers mirror their conviction of belonging to a superior form of society. The clear cut power relations between migrant workers and their employers situate the Irish at the top and the Eastern Europeans at the bottom of the social ladder. For that reason, the owners of bars and restaurants feel entitled to look down on their workers, treating them as second-class.

The identity of the Irish characters mentioned in *Open-handed* is constructed on the possession of money and the access to power. When Agnieszka is asked by her boss

Gavin to go out with him and his friends, she does not dare decline the invitation for fear of professional consequences. The fact that Gavin insists on paying for everything during the evening out embarrasses Agnieszka. When she wants to return his favour by buying him a drink, her offer is rejected. Gavin's money highlights his elevated status in society and gives him power over Agnieszka. A girl in the group of Gavin's friends explains to her: "They like to spend their money. It's a lot of fun. They'll pay for everything. They get everything." (83). The description of Galvin and his friends as "fun loving" and "money spending", resumes their identity as modern successful business men.

In Binchy's novel, the so-called "atomisation" of society is one of the central topics. In contemporary sociology "atomisation" is explained as the "turning away from organic, communal ties" towards a "landscape of distinct and isolate individuals" (Adams 16). Whereas in Doyle's short story the protagonist is deeply rooted in his family and community, in *Open-handed*, the different characters are disassociated from each other. Lacking strong interpersonal relations based on emotion and affection, they turn into isolated individuals, who struggle to find their place in society. Whereas the migrant workers are loosely linked to each other through their common misery, the Irish characters are merely in contact for the sake of business and money. In this way, "social disintegration" (Adams 27) becomes the decisive characteristic of modern Ireland presented in *Open-handed*. Taking the businessman Sylvester as an example, Binchy illustrates the atomised state of society. Sylvester regularly visits prostitutes to fill his lack of human contact as he is devoid of family and community ties. Estranged and emotionally disconnected from his wife and children, he lives separated from the members of his family. Only out of obligation he financially provides a certain standard of living for them. In the reunions with his family he perceives as "stiff and quiet", with "every one of them wishing to be somewhere else" (198). Helen, his wife, merely attempts to stay on good terms with her former husband out of financial interest. Having high hopes for his business projects, she is merely interested in her own share of the business. Sylvester is eager to invest in property in Eastern Europe and intends to trick his customers by selling low quality houses at a high price. Devoid of ethic and moral values, the character of Sylvester stands for greed and ruthlessness. Through his money-orientated behaviour, Binchy brings up the topic of capitalist imperialism. Once again, he points at a reversal of history. Whereas in the past, the island was colonised by the British, nowadays Irish business men set out to "invade" Eastern Europe by implanting their businesses in the different countries. In this way, it could be argued that the traditional Irish sense of victimhood has given way to a "capitalist settler mentality".

In a Northern Irish context, the topic of migration is less prominent than in the Republic. The issue of cultural imperialism also takes on a different form. It could be argued that in the case of Northern Ireland, the Catholic and Protestant communities try to impose a certain form of cultural imperialism on their ethno-religious counterpart. According to Mitchell, the society in the North is shaped by a strong "ethnonationalism" (145). This means that two separate nations want a certain territory to be governed by their

respective state. In this political framework, the two antagonistic communities develop an opposing sense of self, based on contrasting historical and cultural backgrounds. Due to Northern Ireland's different socio-political situation, Jenkinson does not explore the influence of migration on the local population in her short story "The City Loved". She concentrates on the changing relation between the two communities and engages with the influence of displacement and political changes on the deconstruction of established ethno-religious identities. "The City Loved" is the seventh story in the collection *Contemporary Problems Nos. 53&54*. The different texts deal with "everyday problems" experienced by characters living on the edge of society in Northern Ireland, England or Eastern Europe. Integrating different cultures and locations into her book, Jenkinson strives to set the Northern Irish conflict in an international framework. The action of "The City Loved" takes place in post-Ceasefire Belfast and develops around the Catholic protagonist Mark, who spent several years in different European countries. When he comes back to his native city, he begins to see Belfast in a new light. By choosing a protagonist, who had left Northern Ireland to experience life abroad, Jenkinson alludes to a new mobility among the local population after the Ceasefire. Thanks to the progressing Peace process and a developing transport system, more and more people are willing to shift their focus of attention from the local tension to continental Europe. When the protagonist returns from his five-year stay in Poland and England, his friends in Belfast seem to him "narrow" and "racist" (67). Through the changed perspective of the protagonist, Jenkinson explores the impact of displacement on the creation of a certain sense of self. Due to his years abroad, Mark reconsiders and reinvents his past experience of living in Belfast. Speaking in sociological terms, the protagonist turns into a "translated being" (Cronin 70), an individual able to be "translated" from one cultural context into another. His experience abroad does not only modify his perception of his friends but also makes him recognise his own sectarian attitudes. Telling his Afro-Caribbean friends in England about his native city, Mark becomes conscious of the extent to which the language he habitually uses is biased: "When they'd ask him about Belfast, he'd started on about it being a black hole, then saw their eyes out on stalks. 'No offence, but black means Protestant', he'd tried to explain, pink with shame" (Jenkinson 2004: 68). Mark only becomes aware of his discriminatory views through the reaction of his friends from an entirely different cultural background. As they do not belong to either of the antagonistic communities in Northern Ireland, they function as a lens through which the protagonist becomes able to scrutinize his sense of self.

Brought up in an Irish speaking family in Republican West Belfast, Mark develops a strong Irish identity at an early stage of his life. As a young boy, he was convinced of his community's superior position in society. He used to contemplate the divided city from his window taking for granted that the positive things of life are only to be found on the Catholic side:

> He used to stand there as a child and think how lucky "They" were. Because on their side, they had the moon, the stars, one very bright star in particular. It was Venus but it had looked as bright as the star of Bethlehem. Yes, they even had Jesus on their side. He shivered suddenly in his light shirt, feeling the congealed pall of damp cold that the spring night carried in. (69)

Through the eyes of the young protagonist, Jenkinson draws on the "concept of a chosen people" central to the thinking of both communities in Northern Ireland (Nic Craith 66). The novelist alludes to the fact that religious beliefs and historical facts are frequently taken out of their historical context and become instrumentalised by the respective community. As the different denominations are associated with specific cultural traditions, members of each community have taken on particular political perspectives that play an important part in the creation of a personal ethno-religious identity.

In her story, Jenkinsons engages with Belfast's sectarian geography and the fact that belonging to a specific territory functions as an important marker of identity. His Protestant friends call the protagonist "Mark from Springfield". By associating him with West Belfast's Republican territory, his nickname gives information about his Catholic background. Mark's territorial consciousness is illustrated through his movements across the urban space. Navigating the city, he has constantly to remind himself of where he is. In contrast to West Belfast, where he is able to move freely, in the east of the city he feels observed by the local population and threatened by dogs barking at him, whom he imagines to be "smelling his Catholic blood" (69). Thus, his freedom of movement becomes restricted because he belongs to the antagonistic community. The ethno-religious division of Belfast's society is further illustrated through the depiction of the city's physical shape. The cityscape is described as marked by the presence of peace lines, murals, flags and sectarian slogans. In this way, Jenkinson underlines the divided nature of the urban population.

After his stay abroad, Mark begins to cross ethno-religious boundaries by choosing friends from Protestant East Belfast. Whereas he spent his youth in West Belfast's Republican milieu, he now socialises with members of the opposite community. Only after having been away from Belfast for several years, Mark is able to perceive the sectarian animosities from a detached point of view and he begins to disassociate himself from the strong Irish identity received in his youth. However, he is not yet able to show his new tolerance officially. When he meets up with his Protestant friends in East Belfast, he tells his father that he is only having a drink in the local IRA pub. He also does not dare admit to his family that he chose a British passport over an Irish one as it was thirty pounds cheaper. The fact that he renounces an Irish passport for the sake of money shows that Irish citizenship is no longer important to him. Rejecting an identity clearly defined in ethno-religious terms, he moves towards a cosmopolitan self-definition. According to Cronin, the stress of cosmopolitanism lies on multiple affiliations and

"the possibility of individual choice rather than the unwavering cultural determinism or communities of descent" (10). In this sense, it could be said that Mark frees himself from the expectations of his community, constructing his own "hybrid identity" (Nic Craith 114) through his personal choices.

Whereas Mark is able to reinvent his sense of self thanks to the time he spent abroad, certain parts of Belfast's population seem to become able to question their identity due to the slowly changing discourse of the Troubles. Walking through Catholic Belfast, the protagonist notices the shaved heads of the local young men. He interprets their hairstyle as a rebellion against the "idealised image of the wiry-haired Irish youth who stared down at them out of the walls" (Jenkinson 71). Subversively hinting at the long-haired Bobby Sands, the Republican hero omnipresent on West Belfast's wall murals, the author suggests that the cult of personality maintained by the Catholic community has become less important than in previous years. In so doing, Jenkinson suggests a changing attitude among West Belfast's youth.

Mark's new friendship with a group of Protestants demonstrates his desire to come to terms with his own and the region's past. As a former IRA activist, he is now able to share a drink with the Protestant Wesley, who was once involved in loyalist crime. Like Mark, Wesley takes on a more tolerant outlook on Northern Irish society. Rejecting the traditional categorisation of people along ethno-religious lines, he explains: " . . . I don't care any more what anyone is" he opened up to Mark. "I'm a humanitarian: I like people's company" (Jenkinson 73). Through his remark he shows a strong sense of "cultural cosmopolitanism" (Held 58). In sociological terms this means that he has acquired the ability to "stand outside a singular location (the location of one's birth, land, upbringing, conversion) and to mediate tradition" that lies at its core (*Ibid.* 58). When Mark accidentally lapses into Irish in the Protestant pub, the people around him fall silent. However, he is saved through Wesley's intervention:

> 'Aye, it's Gaelic', Wesley answered sharply. 'Didn't that champion of Ulster Cúchulain, speak Gaelic? Tiocfaidh ar lar!' he shouted. 'Our day will come. Whatever we are.' '. . . Tiocfaidh ar la!' returned some men at the bar, raising their glasses. 'Thank you', Mark said to Wesley. He was almost crying with relief. 'No problem', grinned Wesley. 'You see, Irish belongs to us all.' Mark felt a weight fly up from his shoulder. The final roadblock had been lifted. (Jenkinson 73)

With his reply, Wesley articulates a cosmopolitan point of view. Claiming that "Irish belongs to us all", he shows his willingness to accept the cultural heritage of the opposed community as a new dimension of his own self-awareness. In this way, he indirectly declares his allegiance to both communities and the adoption of a dual identity, based on Britishness and Irishness to the same extent. In the context of the story, the Republican slogan "Tiocfaidh ar lar" (Our day will come), traditionally predicting the victory of

the Catholic community over their British counterpart, takes on a different connotation. Used by a former Loyalist paramilitary, the diction loses its sectarian connotations and points at a future day of mutual understanding. Able to accept otherness, Wesley turns into a symbol of tolerance and reconciliation. Through the two main characters of her story, Jenkinson depicts a Northern Ireland in which different national and cultural identities do not exclude each other any more, but are able to enter into a dialogue. In this sense, she advocates a utopian region, where both traditions will be able to express themselves freely.

In "Guess who is coming for dinner", *Open-handed* and *Contemporary Problems Nos 53&54*, the three authors engage with the different ways in which identities become created in a changing social environment. Focusing on diverse forms of self-awareness, they give weight to contrasting aspects of social change in their respective narratives. In his short story, Roddy Doyle explores how the presence of migrants challenges traditional forms of nationalism. Living in a modern Dublin marked by multiculturalism, the protagonist has to reconsider his strong sense of Irishness in order to be socially accepted. Through his gradually acquired self-reflexivity, he is able to reinsert his voice into a post-nationalist discourse. In this way, the protagonist's changed social environment pushes him to disassociate himself from a traditional "ethnocentric" way of thinking. In *Open-handed*, Binchy engages with the "atomisation" of society and the influence of power and money on the construction of identity. Portraying a society based on wealth and success, he demonstrates the loosening of social ties and the fading of Irish nationalism. The fact of being Irish only seems important to the characters when they define themselves against the migrant workers, who are perceived as being second-class citizens. Exploring the topic of "capitalist imperialism", Binchy evokes the creation of an Irish identity based on the concept of economic and cultural superiority. Jenkinson engages with the issue of displacement in a different sense. Letting her Northern Irish protagonist come home after a stay abroad, she hints at a new mobility of the local population and underlines the importance of deterritorialisation in order to achieve a widening of perspectives. Only by leaving Belfast for a certain time, Mark is able to achieve a clearer vision of himself and the part of society he previously identified with. His monolithic ethno-religious identity becomes deconstructed through the prism of a different culture. In this sense, Jenkinson promotes the concept of hybrid identities as an adequate sense of self in contemporary Northern Ireland.

With their different approaches to depicting the island's population on both sides of the border, the three authors attempt to attract attention to shortcomings in their respective society. They plead for an extension of identity references, through which any national or ethno-religious self-sufficiency would be prevented. The three authors suggest that the creation of identities has to take place in a more amplified European perspective. In this sense, they advocate an Ireland, which in Declan Kiberd's words would take the shape of a "patchwork quilt of cultures" (92). Through their respective works, Doyle,

Binchy and Jenkinson plead for a cultural pluralism, leading to the affirmation and acceptance of difference in an evolving framework of a post-national Europe of regions.

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Literary History

American & Irish Literature: From Whitman to Montague

James Mc Elroy

Abstract: *This article traces some immediate interactions between American and Irish literature. Beginning in the nineteenth century, it also explores the importance of Walt Whitman to W.B. Yeats in his attempts to fashion a poetic – a democratic and un-English poetics – that would meet the requirements of what he deemed to be the new Ireland. The piece also explores, after Yeats, the ongoing desire to enter into various forms of poetic emancipation and accelerate the process of decolonization in Ireland as per the works of Patrick Kavanagh, Denis Devlin, Brian Coffey, Thomas MacGreevy and John Montague who all tapped into the unique possibilities that the American poetic experience put on offer. In so doing, the aforementioned writers – and so many more – helped to enlarge what it means to talk about "Irish" Literature in the twentieth century.*

On December 2, 1892, Douglas Hyde delivered his landmark speech, "The De-Anglicising of Ireland," to the Irish Literary Society. Some two weeks later, on December 17, 1892, W.B. Yeats (1970) sent a letter to the editor of *United Ireland* in which he questioned Hyde's belief that a resuscitated Gaelic language would provide *the* means of turning Ireland around. Yeats goes on to ask, in the same letter, "Can we not build up a national tradition, a national literature, which shall be none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language?" (I. 255). In response to his own question, Yeats turns to American literature as a national literature which "differs almost as much from English literature as does the literature of France" (I. 255-6).[1]

Among the American authors Yeats cites in this regard are Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, Bret Harte and George W. Cable who, as he reminds his readers, are in a real sense American even though America had once been an English colony. And so, Yeats asserts, "It should be more easy for us, who have in us that Wild Celtic blood, the most un-English of all things under heaven, to make such a literature" (I. 256). He further asserts, and in this there is almost a prescient sense of decolonisation as uneven process, that if Ireland fails to establish a unique national literature it will not be because there is a shortage of materials but because the Irish "lack the power to use them" (I. 256).

The same America which Yeats praised in 1892 turned out to be, when he made his first visit to the United States in 1903-1904, something of a disappointment. In

"America and the Arts," he wrote: "Everything, I said, had been a delight to me except American poetry, which had followed the way of Lowell, who mistook the imaginative reason for poetry, not the ancient way Whitman, Thoreau and Poe had lit upon" (339). Mary Colum (249) also thinks, as she puts it in *Life and the Dream*, that between the time of Whitman, Emerson, Poe, and the first decades of the twentieth century, most American verse had diminished in value.[2] To make her point, Colum describes one visit to the Poetry Society of America where, as she listened to Edward Wheeler read Robert Frost's poems (Wheeler was then President of the Poetry Society of America), she realized how much English "approval" was still a prerequisite for critical acceptance in America (249).

Colum is just as quick to point out, as she does in *From These Roots*, that while American and Irish literature might lack the "abundance of the great English periods" both literatures – in particular, what she calls the new Irish literature – make up for such inabundance with narrative "intensity" (268). As for the United States, she has this insight (and here she is thinking of Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, Vachel Lindsay) to offer: "The American direction was towards an internationalism in literature, towards a universal stream in which theirs would be a current – even, in time, the dominating current" (290).[3]

Stephen Spender takes much the same position with respect to English approval as Colum (though for quite different reasons) in *Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities* where he records the marked decline in British cultural wealth after World War II, or, as he likens it, an England "no longer the center of power and wealth and language and tradition but peripheral to the great self-involvement of America" (xxvii). Spender goes on to characterize England as a land of "bright small efforts and reduced economies"; bemoans the fact that what Emerson once deemed to be England's "immense advantage" over America had, in such a short space of time, come full circle. He proceeds to equate the decline of English literature with the premise that it is "in danger of becoming a culture of 'great hatred, little room.' " And then there comes (considering that last Yeatsian line) what, from the standpoint of this article, is a real dig – "In relation to America, England has become as Ireland was to England" (1967. 939).

Whatever about Spender's concern over imperial decline, Yeats, for his part, savors America's "immense advantage" because Whitmanite nationalism represents a guiding principle for that nascent literature which would be "none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language." And Yeats was not alone in his Whitmanite values. After all, Whitman's influence was widespread during the entire Revival period. A circumstance Herbert Howarth makes clear in his article, "Whitman and the Irish Writers," where he points out that an intimate awareness of Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau appears at numerous textual sites throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Howarth also makes it clear that the American influence on Irish writers involved not only a young Yeats who wandered around with an earmarked copy of Whitman stuffed in his pocket

but included an even younger Joyce who "steeped himself" in "The Song of Myself" as well as the mystic-collectivist, George Russell (AE), who read Whitman's work with great admiration (479-480).[4] In fact, it is AE who argues that all modern writers must first break new ground, much as Whitman did, in order to realize their own creative urgencies and fashion significant literature narratives in the new century (as footnote to this, AE writes, "I think Europe is tired out and one cannot expect more from England") (165).

T.W. Rolleston, in keeping with the general enthusiasm surrounding Whitman's work, writes in "Walt Whitman Abroad" (this article first appeared in the *Camden Post* of February 13, 1884), that "As politician, Walt Whitman's is in fact the first appearance in poetic literature of a real Democratic mind, because nobody has before seen and represented in writing, what infinite significance in all departments is embodied in this word 'Democracy'" (Frenz 115). Some years later, Rolleston provides the following comment in another article entitled "Walt Whitman" (the piece first appeared in *Academy* of April 2, 1892) which related to Whitman's masterful sense of poetic use: "Of the peculiar form in which Walt Whitman has chosen to express himself it is not possible to say much that is profitable. To defend it is impossible – to attack it looks like a sort of *ignoratio elenchi*" (Frenz 123).

If nothing else, then, Whitman provided a form of poetic and political emancipation which set a course for Yeats and his epigones to write "un-English" verse (Grennan 95).[5] That said, the kind of discourse Yeats is after when he repudiates Englishness (of a type), embraces Americanness (of a type) and creates Irishness (of a type) codifies, as Gerry Smyth argues in a different context – *Decolonisation and Criticism: The Construction of Irish Literature* – a reverse discourse which is "implicated in the reproduction and survival of that which it disdains" (15). In the case of Ireland, such reverse discourses, and there are at least two, contain what Smyth refers to as liberal and radical modes of resistance. And in broad terms, at least, Yeats and AE both fit Smyth's "liberal" mode of reference to the extent that their texts, in keeping with their specific ideological location as members of a Protestant Anglo-Irish elite, help them maintain a particular hegemonic position while attempting to reduce dependence on English poetic rule and embracing American emancipation as a model for Irish – to be more precise, Anglo-Irish – independence narratives (15-16).

It is also important to recognize that even though "liberal" Anglo-Ireland was big on American freedom, Anglo-Irish writers found it difficult, at times impossible, to break the overdeterminate hold England had on their reverse narratives. As Herbert Howarth puts it, no matter how much Yeats and his contemporaries might honor Whitman "his free verse was not for them" (480).[6] Howarth makes the related point that Yeats, over the course of his career, continued to maintain an almost paradoxical relationship with reference to Whitman's complex political and poetic line: "Having rejected Whitman's metrics, Yeats proceeded through half-a-century of writing to progressive rejections. . . . This is so devastating a series of rejections that it might seem to leave nothing; and yet at the end, when he seems furthest from Whitman, he is most using Whitman as his poetic monitor" (480).

As much as Yeats might have "rejected" Whitman's metrics, Terence Diggory is convinced that there are a number of ways (*Yeats & American Poetry: The Tradition of the Self*) in which Whitman helped to draw Yeats's combinative use of poetic form into much sharper focus. Diggory further insists, and there is nothing new or radical in this, that Ezra Pound had a decisive and direct bearing on Yeats's poetic as evidenced in the emergence of modern free verse forms such as "The Dawn" and "Lines Written in Dejection" (*The Wild Swans of Coole*) (57). Diggory is just as quick to remind his readers that Pound and his associates – in turn – valued Yeats most whenever he used "natural speech" as an effective public medium in collections like *The Green Helmet* (1910) and *Responsibilities* (1914) (59).[7]

By providing American poets with such modes of natural speech, Yeats thus gave a certain credence to their own nationalist and regionalist potentialities and helped to "reaffirm the independence from England that Whitman had earlier declared" (Diggory 59). It is hardly surprising, then, that Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren found, at least when it came to matters of "independence," an ally in Yeats because – as they saw it – he legitimized their position as Agrarians from the Deep South. To reinforce this point Diggory cites a personal communication Robert Penn Warren sent him (dated May 2, 1974) wherein Warren states, on the record, that he and his companions "'used to talk about Yeats and Ireland vis-à-vis England as having a sort of parallel to the writer in the South, in a retarded and depressed society facing a big, booming, dominating society' " (135).[8]

While Yeats provides a resonant parallel for some American writers, he provides, for others, an initial textual attraction followed by a measure of poetic disavowal; the kind of disavowal which Steven Matthews describes like this: "For male American poets, writing after Yeats and haunted or possessed by him, the transplanted, emptied-out formality of his work seems to have become ultimately disappointing" (181). "Emptied-out formality," apart, the influence Yeats had on poets like Robinson Jeffers is undeniable ("Shane O'Neill's Cairn" [5] and "Ossian's Grave" [6-9] as two obvious citations).[9] There is no doubt, either, about the close ties between Yeats and John Berryman in poems like "The Animal Trainer."

Such ties are confirmed by John Montague who reminds us that Berryman was more than just a little "intrigued" by the later and last poems of Yeats (Montague thinks it is noteworthy that Berryman finished *The Dream Songs* while ensconced in Ireland) (203). Theodore Roethke also penned some fine pieces, "Song," "The Shy Man," "Her Wrath," while living on Inishbofin (Seager 267; Heyen 33-34). More, Roethke's poems, like some of those belonging to Jeffers and Berryman, turn under the spell, if only at an acute or oblique angle, of Yeats's extensive poetic repertoire. Immediate evidence of such an abiding relationship between Yeats and Roethke is best seen in such poems as "The Dying Man" ("I am the clumsy man / The instant ages on") (153-156), "In a Dark Time" ("In a dark time, the eye begins to see") (239), and "In Evening Air" ("I'll make a broken music, or I'll die") (240).

Inasmuch as Yeats provided a starting point for some American poets – Jeffers, Berryman, Roethke are just the tip of the iceberg – it is clear that America's writers are the ones who have had and continue to have the predominant influence ("immense advantage") over Ireland's evolving poetic.[10] Writers like Denis Devlin, a product of European and American modernism in the 1920s and 1930s, certainly found recourse in the works of T.S. Eliot, Hart Crane and Wallace Stevens. Tate and Warren write, in their Preface to Devlin's *Selected Poems*, that he produced three outstanding modern poems: "The Passion of Christ," "From Government Buildings" and "Lough Derg" (13). The most important of these, "Lough Derg," is, according to Tate and Warren, a poem that ranks right alongside Stevens' "Sunday Morning," Eliot's "Gerontion" and Crane's "The Broken Tower" (13). Tate and Warren also believe, which brings us back to the distinction between liberal and radical modes of narrative exchange, that Devlin bears almost no trace of Yeatsianism while at least one of his poems, "Ank'hor Vat," bears a striking resemblance to Charles Olson's "The Kingfishers."[11] Given such cosmopolitan tastes in verse, it is no surprise that Tate and Warren end up calling Devlin "one of the pioneers of the international poetic English which now prevails on both sides of the Atlantic" (14).

The "international" English which Tate and Warren have in mind here is, as Alex Davis (1999) likes to remind us, a convenient prescription for New Criticism. Davis also points out that Samuel Beckett's short article, "Recent Irish Poetry" (written in 1934), draws a clear line between Ireland's "younger antiquarians" and those writers he identifies with the more speculative features of American and European modernism. In particular, he hails the newest works of Denis Devlin and Brian Coffey while denigrating the works of "twilighters" like Austin Clarke, Padraic Colum, Monk Gibbon and F.R. Higgins (Davis and Jenkins 137). True to form, the same Brian Coffey who Beckett praises for his innovative verse ended up producing *Missouri Sequence* under the influence, if not guidance, of Eliot. As direct evidence of Coffey's eclectic approach here is a brief passage from *Missouri Sequence* (1983) ("Missouri Sequence I") where he draws some familiar, and familial, links between Ireland and the United States as he thinks, out loud, about how his young charges "grow American":

> Our children have ended play,
> have gone to bed,
> left me to face
> what I had rather not.
>
> They know nothing of Ireland,
> they grow American.
> They have chased snakes through the couch-grass
> in summer, caught butterflies and beetles
> we did not know existed,
> fished for catfish,
> slept on an open porch
> when whip-poor-will and tree-frog

work all night,
observed the pupa of the shrill cicada
surface on dry clay,
disrobe for the short ruinous day.
The older ones have helped a neighbour, a farmer,
raise his field of ripe corn
in heat that hurts us to the bone,
paid homage to dead men
with fire-crackers in July,
eaten the turkey in November.
Here now they make their friendships,
learn to love God.

Yet we must leave America,
bitter necessity no monopoly
of Irish soil.
It was pain once to come,
It is pain now to go (*Selected Poems* 30-31)

It should be noted that Coffey dedicated the first section of *Missouri Sequence* to another innovative Irish writer, Thomas MacGreevy, who published what was perhaps the first book-length study of Eliot at the beginning of the 1930s (MacGreevy published his own *Poems*, a few years later, in 1934) and maintained a longstanding correspondence with Wallace Stevens.[12] Indeed, throughout the course of his many letters to MacGreevy (the following letter is dated May 12, 1948), Stevens makes it clear that American verse no longer requires, or desires, English "acceptance" for its continued well-being and growth: "The truth is that American poetry is at its worst in England . . . or in any other land where English is spoken and whose inhabitants feel that somehow our English is a vulgar imitation" (597). Even more unambiguous, another Stevens letter to MacGreevy dated September 9, 1949, makes it ultra-clear where he stands on "the British" question and all that:

> But most of the insults we get from the British are the sort of thing that we have been getting regardless of when or why and having nothing to do with economics and politics as they exist between the British and the Americans …. How natural that sort of thing seems to be to them in their 'ancient civilization.' In what sense is it any more ancient than ours? There are older ghosts and perhaps there is Ropmanm money in the ground. The truth is that the British flatter themselves at the expense of the world, always have and always will. (646-7)

While MacGreevy, Coffey and Devlin have all been recognized for their interest in, and engagement with, American modernism, Patrick Kavanagh has often been portrayed as someone who wrote about Ireland's native culture as if *ex nihilo*; as if he was an Irish poet who wrote outside Ireland's standard modes of discourse

because he managed to free himself from the imposing presence of Yeats (Grennan 97). Citing Seamus Heaney as someone who at one time thought that Kavanagh had all but invented his own "idiom," Eamon Grennan provides a short, sharp, corrective: Kavanagh "saturated himself in the Americans" (97). And, yet, as much as Kavanagh might have "saturated" himself in American poetics, it is clear that he never took to Whitman. His dislike of Whitman apart, Kavanagh was certainly open to whatever American influence might afford him in terms of narrative emancipation – poetic experimentation. Among the influences Kavanagh does acknowledge, he says that Gertrude Stein "was like whisky" to his work ("her strange rhythms broke up the cliché formation of my thought") (*The Green Fool* 244). He also acknowledges, with characteristic bluster, the influence of the Beats who provided him with, example, Alan Ginsberg's *Howl*, some unconventional – "un-English" – modes of poetic expression. In this way a lot of America's "strange rhythms" helped Kavanagh to find a comfort level, a measure of linear roominess, which exceeded that of his closest contemporaries and competitors. It is thus no exaggeration to suggest that Kavanagh could never have written pieces like "Literary Adventures" without the interposing influence of American literature and the calculated sense of insouciance ("Other exclusive / News stories that cannot be ignored") which such styles of poetic praxis represented for him at the time:

> I am here in a garage in Monaghan.
> It is June and the weather is warm,
> Just a little bit cloudy. There's the sun again
> Lifting to importance my sixteen acre farm.
> There are three swallows' nests in the rafters above me
> And the first clutches are already flying.
> Spread this news, tell all if you love me,
> You who knew that when sick I was never dying
> (Nae gane, nae gane, nae frae us torn
> But taking a rest like John Jordan).
> Other exclusive
> News stories that cannot be ignored:
> I climbed Woods' Hill and the elusive
> Underworld of the grasses could be heard,
> John Lennon shouted across the valley,
> Then I saw a new June moon, quite as stunning
> As when young we blessed the sight as something holy . . . (*Col lected Poems* 187)

As much as Heaney might favor the idea that Kavanagh invented his own "idiom," he is keenly aware of the enduring influence America has had on Irish literature as a whole. When he was asked, in an interview with the *Paris Review*, "Are you aware of a great deal of cross-fertilization between Irish and American poetry?" Heaney responded that such "cross-fertilisation" was nothing new (127). It was, as he put it, an undeniable fact that Irish writers had been "involved in absorbing and coming to terms with" American literature for a long time (127-8). More to the point, Heaney offered the

following conclusion with reference to England's determinate power vis-à-vis Ireland's poetic traditions: "the forms of Irish poetry and of Irish society are still in some uneasy, self-questioning relation to the determining power and example of England and English and the whole Anglo tradition" (128).

Perhaps some of the most striking examples of this "self-questioning relation to the determining power and example of England and English" are found in the texts of John Montague who, from the beginning of his career, embraced the work of Gary Snyder, Robert Creeley and William Carlos Williams in a conscious effort to develop a "new ecology" in Irish poetry (Heaney 128). In the course of developing such a new ecology Montague introduced a more Olsonian line (Heaney's term of reference) into Irish discourse (Heaney 128). Montague (50), himself, insists that while he was reared on canonical English it was William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound and E.E. Cummings – not to mention Robert Duncan, Alan Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, Robert Bly, Robert Penn Warren, W.D. Snodgrass, Carolyn Kizer – who introduced him to "the fascination of the unusual, the bizarre, the blatantly contemporary" ("Fellow Travelling with America" 177).[13]

In "American Pegasus," Montague is just as clear that while he is indebted to Warren for his "pursuit of the colloquial line" and Rexroth for his "casual California toughness" (196), he is also indebted to several other American traditions for his ongoing development as a poet (198). Among these, Montague (circa 1959) has the intellectual and political wherewithal to celebrate Williams's *In The American Grain* because it features a more inclusive sense of "America" than Eliot and his colleagues ever could, or did: "The tradition it posits in its investigation of the American past is, paradoxically, wider than Eliot's, because it acknowledges more than American Protestant experience: there is also, after all, pre-Columbian America, Indian America, Spanish America, even for a brief moment Russian America (their trading posts came as far south as Monterey)" (198-9).[14] Given such a broad-based appreciation of American poetics it is not at all surprising that America figures in so much of Montague's work. It is also no surprise that Michael O'Neill has found it possible to make a compelling case with reference to how Montague's "The Silver Flask" (*The Dead Kingdom*) could never have been written without Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*. The same O'Neill (1999) makes an equally persuasive case that it was Williams who provided Montague with the incentive he needed to mix together prose passages and verse narratives in *The Rough Field*.[15] The same thing, give or take, can be said about Montague's inner-city poems, for example, "A Flowering Absence," which serves as active reminder of just how much the American experience fed into his verse. Beginning, as he makes so clear, somewhere on the mean streets of "darkest Brooklyn" …

> I took the subway to the hospital
> in darkest Broolyn, to call

on the old nun who nursed you
through the travail of my birth
to come on another cold trail.

'Sister Virgilius, how strange!
She died, just before you came.
She was delirious, rambling of all
her old patients; she could well
have remembered your mother's name.'

Around the bulk of St Catherine's
another wild, raunchier Brooklyn:
as tough a territory as I've known,
strutting young Puerto Rican hoods,
flash of blade, of bicycle chain.

Mother, my birth was the death
of your love life, the last man
to flutter near your tender womb:
a neonlit bar sign winks off & on,
motherfucka, *thass your name.* (*Collected Poems* 180-1)

Since Montague's return to the Brooklyn of his birth, a host of other Irish poets – among them, Eavan Boland, Paul Muldoon, Ciaran Carson, Medbh McGuckian – have all benefited from a close reading of the poetic experiments and political urgencies that have defined the United States in recent times. While there is not enough space, here, to explore these recent poetic exchanges, it is crucial to recognize that without Boland's reading of Muriel Rukeyser and Anne Sexton, Muldoon's reading of Raymond Chandler, Carson's reading of C.K. Williams, and Medbh McGuckian's reading of Marianne Moore, Irish Literature in the year 2012 would lack a certain vibrance: an *international* vibe that would never have come into play without the creative exchanges that took place between Whitman/Yeats and so ensured, for future generations, that Ireland's premier writers would be "none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language."

Notes

1 It is interesting that Theodore Roosevelt makes much the same point with reference to Irish Theatre. See: Theodore Roosevelt. *A Note on the Irish Theatre and An "Interview" on the Irish Players in America by George Bernard Shaw* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912. 10).

> The Irish plays are of such importance because they
> spring from the soil and deal with Irish things, the
> familiar home things which the writers really knew.
> They are not English or French; they are Irish. In
> exactly the same way, any work of the kind done here,
> which is really worth doing, will be done by Americans
> who deal with the American life with which they are
> familiar; and the American who works abroad as a

make-believe Englishman or Frenchman or German –
or Irishman – will never add to the sum of first-class achievement.

2 It is worth noting here that Lawrence Buell talks about much the same kind of "post-colonial anxiety" in terms of America's "classic" writers.

3 Also see Padraic Colum's discussion of Hawaii: Padraic Colum, Legends of Hawaii (New Haven: Yale UP, 1937).

4 Wilde, too, was a devotee of Whitman. For more on this see Harold Blodgett, *Walt Whitman in England* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1973). Also check out Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1988) where Wilde explains that his mother had purchased a copy of *Leaves of Grass* when it was first published and that Lady Wilde read the poems to her son often (168). Also see Lewis Lloyd and Henry Justin Smith, *Oscar Wilde Discovers America 1882* (New York: Benjamin Blom 1936).

5 For more on the Yeats/Whitman connection also see James A. Quinn, "Yeats and Whitman, 1887-1925." *Walt Whitman Review* 20 (September 1974): 106-109.

6 In immediate, marked contrast to Yeats & Co., Joseph Campbell, who fits into the "radical" brand of nationalist politics, was also a devotee of Whitman – for the record, he did attempt some free verse. In fact, Austin Clarke claims that Campbell was "the first poet to write free verse in Ireland" (Nora Saunders and A.A. Kelly. *Joseph Campbell: Poet & Nationalist 1879-1944*. Dublin: Wolfhound, 1988. 48). Campbell was also, it might be said, a member of the Imagist Group in Soho which included Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle and T.E. Hulme – Pound called Campbell the "'dark man from the north.'" (Nora Saunders A.A. Kelly. *Joseph Campbell: Poet & Nationalist 1879-1944*. Dublin, 49). As well as his attempts at Whitmanesque free verse and an associated effort to assimilate the techniques of Imagism, Campbell's achievements in New York include his founding of a School of Irish Studies at Fordham University in 1928. Here is a shortlist of Cambell's work: *The Garden of the Bees* (Belfast: W. Erskine Mayne & Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1905); *The Rushlight* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1907); *The Gilly of Christ* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1907); *The Mountainy Singer* (Dublin: Maunsel, 19090; *Irishry* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1913); *Earth of Cualann* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1917); *The Poems of Joseph Campbell*. Ed. Austin Clarke (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1963).

7 For more on the Pound/Yeats connection, see Thomas Parkinson, "Yeats and Pound: The Illusion of Influence," *Comparative Literature* 6 (Summer 1954) 256-264; Richard Fallis, *The Irish Renaissance* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1977); Peter Faulkner, "Yeats, Ireland and Ezra Pound," *Threshold* 18 (1963) 58-68; K.L. Goodwin, *The Influence of Ezra Pound*. (London: Oxford UP, 1966) 75-105; George T. Wright, *The Poet in the Poem: The Personae of Eliot, Yeats, and Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pounds, Yeats, and Modernism* (New York: Oxford, 1988); W.B. Yeats, *A Packet For Ezra* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1924). It might also be noted, here, that while Pound might have admired some things in Yeats's poetic, he was a lot less flattering when it came to Northern Ireland. Here he is, in one contribution to *The New Age* (1917), criticizing those in Northern Ireland as, at best, provincial . . .

> Neither from South Ireland nor from Ulster has anyone spoken on behalf of civilization, Or spoken with any concern for humanity as a whole. And because of this the 'outer world' not only has no sympathy, but is bored, definitely bored sick with the whole Irish business, and in particular with the Ulster dog-in-the-manger. No man for any care of civilisation as a whole can care a damn who taxes a few hucksters in Belfast, or what rhetorical cry about local rights they lift up as a defence against taxes. As for religion, that is a hoax, and a circulation of education would end it. But a nation which defends its bigotry by the propagation of ignorance must pay the cost in one way or another.
>
> Provincialism is the enemy.
>
> As references for above, see: "Provincialism is the Enemy," *The New Age* 26 July 1917. Reprinted in *Selected Prose 1909-1965*. Ed. William Cookson (London: Faber, 1973).

For discussion of same, check out the following: Hans-Werner Ludwig, "Province and Metropolis, Centre and Periphery: Some Critical Terms Re-Examined." *Poetry in the British Isles: Non-Metropolitan Perspectives.* Ed. Hans-Werner Ludwig and Lothar Fietz. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995. 47- 69).

8 For impact of *The Tower* see Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967). In terms of Yeats and Faulkner see Cleanth Brooks, 'Faulkner and W.B. Yeats' in Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond*. New (Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

9 Also check out Una Jeffers, *Visits toIreland: Travel-Diaries of Una Jeffers* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1954).

10 Fintan O'Toole, for one, likes to trace the American influence on a backwater Ireland from the time of Yeats and AE through the emergence (as it were) of a more "radical" poetic period: just as Yeats had taken some political solace in Whitman's brand of cultural nationalism, or thereabouts, Ireland's more "radical" brands of nationalism – i.e., Irish Catholic poets – also tended to work in concert with American influence at the same time. Thus, as O'Toole puts it, the relationship between Ireland and the United States is one where "ironies abound" (13). And perhaps first among the "ironies" that O'Toole is anxious to explore is the fact that once the Irish government introduced the Censorship of Publications Act in 1929 the chances of Ireland ever creating a "native" literature with "mass readership" was cut off (13). But this is just the first ironic turn. Because the banning of books under the guise of the Irish Censorship Board created a sociological vacuum. And what, O'Toole asks, stepped into to fill such a vacuum? As he sees it, the "shelves emptied of banned Irish books were filled largely with American cowboy novels and their healthy, rural, asexual camaraderie" (13). As fate would have it, of course, the "asexual camaraderie" of American novels was, give or take a few asexuals, exactly what DeValera's Ireland was into. That said, a handful of writers – in the main, "radical" Catholic poets – managed (both before and after the Censorship of Publication Act) to make their peace with some things besides asexual reading materials. For example, while this article takes as it main focus poetics rather than prose narrative, it might help – albeit in footnotish terms – to at least recognize, in here, Joyce's influence – not asexual – on several major American writers. To that end, here are a few critical references which talk about Joyce in an "American" context: Forrest Read, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce* (New York: New Directions, 1997); Jeffrey Segall, *Joyce in America: Cultural Politics and the Trials of Ulysses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Craig Hansen Werner, *Paradoxical Resolutions: American Fiction since James Joyce* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Robert McAlmon, *Being Geniuses Together 1920-1930* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968); Robert McAlmon, *McAlmon and the Lost Generation: A Self-Portrait*, Ed., Robert E. Knoll (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962); Karen Lawrence, ed., *Transcultural Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mary Colum and Padraic Colum, *Our Friend James Joyce* (New York: Doubleday, 1958); William Carlos Williams, "A Point for American Criticism," in Samuel Beckett et al. *An Exagmination of James Joyce* (New York: Haskell house, 1974) 173-185; Robert Martin Adams, *After Joyce: Studies in Fiction After Ulysess* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Daniel J. Singal, *William Faulkner: The Making of a Modernist* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Richard Pearce, *The Politics of Narration: James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991); Robert E. Gajdusek, *Hemingway and Joyce: A Study in debt and Payment* (Corte Madera, CA: Square Circle Press, 1984); Robert N. List, *Dedalus in Harlem: The Joyce-Ellison Connection* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982).

11 Alex Davis. "Devlin and the New Criticism." *A Broken Line: Denis Devlin and Irish Poetic Modernism* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000. 60). In this regard check out: Denis Devlin. *Collected Poems of Denis Devlin*. Ed. J.C.C. Mays (Dublin: Dedalus, 1989. 159):

The antlered forests

Move down to the sea.
Here the dung-filled jungle pauses

Buddha has covered the walls of the great temple
With the vegetative speed of his imagery
Let us wait, hand in hand.

12 Thomas MacGreevy. *Thomas Stearns Eliot, a Study* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1931). Thomas MacGreevy. *Collected Poems.* Forward by Samuel Beckett. Ed. Thomas Dillon Redshaw (Dublin: New Writers' Press, 1971); *Collected Poems of Thomas MacGreevy.* Ed. Susan Schreibman (Dublin/Washington D.C.: Anna Livia Press/Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

13 Also see: Sean V. Golden. "Duncan's Celtic Mode." *Robert Duncan: Scales of the Marvelous*. Ed. Robert J. Bertholf and Ian W. Reid. (New York: New Directions, 1979. 208-224).

14 Also see Montague's memoir, *Company: A Chosen Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001).

15 Also read: Elizabeth Grubgeld, "John Montague's *The Dead Kingdom* and the Postwar Elegy," *new Hibernia* Review 1.1 (1997): 71-82.

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Poetry

Irish Poetry in Faro de Vigo *(1961-1981): Francisco Fernández del Riego and Álvaro Cunqueiro in the Galician Newspaper*[1]

Rubén Jarazo Álvarez

Abstract: *Contemporary poetry, as we will try to demonstrate in this case study, has been essential for scholars and critics in favour of free speech and against cultural repression during Spanish Dictatorship. In this sense, professionals from peripheral regions such as Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia were in favour of foreign texts and their reception in Spanish culture as an infallible method to reveal twentieth century Spanish culture from obscurantism. In this article we will focus on the reception of literary texts produced by significant Irish poets translated in the Spanish literary panorama, paying special attention to those translations and reviews produced by Álvaro Cunqueiro and Francisco del Riego.*

Although for years the journalistic work of Álvaro Cunqueiro has been ignored by critics and his capacity as a journalist, editor and director of various periodicals doubted, his biography could not be explained without taking into account his contributions to journals such as *Galiza,* or his sudden step into the Falangist ranks after the outbreak of the Civil War in *Era Azul* or *Vértice* as well as his disqualification as a journalist, the personal and professional crisis in the coming years, or the last few years as Director of the *Faro de Vigo.* Therefore, his biography is unintelligible without taking into account all his years as a journalist. Likewise, his poetic, theatrical and narrative work becomes equally incoherent if we do not analyse his contributions in the Spanish periodical press in the Post-Civil war period. Therein it lays the importance of the wide corpus of articles he wrote for decades, an importance that few scholars have wisely addressed.

In addition, by highlighting the importance of his participation in media throughout the twentieth century, and some of the main features of his work, we are able to address the situation of many Galician and Spanish writers, who were during and after the Spanish Civil War, in a precarious economic position. In the end, collaborations in the media were the only way out for some of them, showing the tensions between literary

creations that managed to survive during the postwar years, and vocational and creative writing. Perhaps, when Cunqueiro mentioned he was forced to be a journalist in his last stage at the *Faro de Vigo,* he was not aware of the fact that he was responsible for a change in the Spanish daily press of the twentieth century towards literary creation in its pages.

The most remarkable Cunqueirian work, not because of its quality, but because of the features we have outlined so far, is his collaborations and publications in *Faro de Vigo* were he enacted as editor, deputy director, director, and finally, in his last phase, as a weekly contributor. So, in the end, the scope of this article is focused on Cunqueiro's publications in *Faro de Vigo*, specially focused on the Sunday Cultural Supplement of "Arts/Humanities" which was coedited with one of Cunqueiro's best friends, Francisco Fernández del Riego. Our case study, therefore, should be considered as a milestone in the Irish poetry reception in Galician daily press of the twentieth century. In short, we will try to clarify the literary influence, specially the Irish influence at the *Faro de Vigo* during the second half of the twentieth century, answering to the influence of the English-speaking countries in the periodic work of Alvaro Cunqueiro, as well as reflecting its involvement in the Galician literature of the post-civil war period.

To start with, the background of this publication should be clarified. That is, the origins and characteristics of the Cultural supplement of *Faro de Vigo*. Since the influence of Irish literature takes place in that Supplement, mostly through translations into Galician, we will also analyse Cunqueiro's translations both in Press and in other literary genres. The Sunday Cultural Supplement of "Arts/Humanities", also known as the Supplement to "Arts" of *Faro de Vigo,* is one of the first modern cultural supplements in the market that emerges in Galician newspapers and written in Galician language. It has constituted a milestone in the history of Spanish journalism in a peripheral context such as Galicia. It is also one of the oldest literary supplements, with great frequency and variety in the cultural context, together with Catalonian *Vanguardia*'s supplement.

In the early sixties, the shift to a more favourable economic situation in Spain led to several improvements in the quality of the periodical press. The most relevant will be paper quota. Despite the fact that paper quota continued to be an element of control by Franco's regime, since not everyone was entitled to the same amount of paper for publication, the improvement in Spanish economy motivated by new diplomatic relations with the United States, leads to an increase in the circulation of newspapers, as well as the number of pages dedicated to each copy. Europe is keen on looking to the future with a more optimistic approach and buries the ghosts of World War II. Similarly, Media ceases to be a constant report of Warfare allusions. Therefore, the nature of news started to diversify in recent years, leading many newspapers to re-orientate their editorial lines. In turn, the ostensible openness in Franco's censorship will allow, to a certain extent, a degree of cultural information, provided the good health of the established regime. As a direct result of these factors, as well as the new drive provided by the publishing industry in Catalonia, or in Galicia – Galaxia first, or Xerais, in later years -, Cultural supplements will become a reality.

The Cultural Supplement of "Arts" of *Faro de Vigo* is the resulting work of the tireless efforts of two Galician scholars: Francisco Fernández del Riego and Álvaro Cunqueiro. Since Cunqueiro joins the staff of the *Faro* in 1961, there is no Supplement of "Arts" as such before that date. However, as it is clear, this section does not become in a day a reference section in the Galician newspaper. There are therefore several predecessors of the cultural supplement under study in this work. For instance, the section "Arts and Literature" is perhaps in 1961, (15 October 1961, 14) one of the clearest precursors of the cultural supplement. With contributions by Francisco Fernández del Riego, Plácido Ramón Castro, Vicente Risco or Otero Pedrayo, this brief supplement has a structure built around several sections of recurring nature, including "Writing notes" or weekly poetic translations where Plácido Castro publishes some of the most interesting universal poets, and where Fernández del Riego analyses the reception of contemporary universal authors in Spain. As it will be discussed in the following lines, this scheme relies in small notes and reviews of World literature, together with poetic translations, which will be the basis of the Cultural Supplement in upcoming years. However, there will be other supplements' precursors, which revisit the same pattern created by "Art and Literature" with minor variations. One of the most notorious is "Arts", released on 10th December 1961 (11) at the *Faro de Vigo*. It's notoriety is based on the fact that this Supplement will provide the foundation for the Cultural supplement of "Arts" in 1963 and 1964, when the Suplement of this case study was founded.

Regarding the structure of the cultural supplement, there is not doubt that the existence of several eminently critical sections will become pivotal at the Supplement of "Arts". Thus, brief writing notes of his precursor "Art and Literature" will become "Taboa revolta das letras", an anonymous section, although it is likely, through discourse analysis, the authoring of Fernández del Riego and Cunqueiro at random. Another cross section is constituted by the publication of one or more international poems translated into Galician. We shall not forget the transgression that, somehow, during Franco's regime, was to translate canonical, and even marginal, literary pieces into Galician. Other sections of steady nature in the supplement are "Galician Books" on local literary criticism, "Books Reviews", based on short notes analysing various Galician publications, or "Galician culture" focused on other subject matters. Finally, another section to be considered of great interest throughout the cultural supplement is the section developed by Francisco Fernández del Riego on a weekly basis as a literature critic, which has no section title. However, this section represents an indispensable part of the supplement, and it possibly constitutes a central pillar on which the supplement is built. This untitled section is mostly written by Salvador Lorenzana, one of the best known pseudonyms of Francisco Fernández del Riego, and it is focused on monitoring and analysing the reception of world literature in the Hispanic context. If we take a close look among the cultural supplements at random published between 1961-1981, we will find this section written by Fernández del Riego as the backbone of the Supplement's structure. In other words, if Salvador Lorenzana publishes an article on American poetry such as the *Beat*

movement, a couple of collaborations around this issue will appear on that same issue of the Supplement, as well as translations of Beat poem into Galician, an overview of some new work translated into Castilian, among other possibilities. Obviously, this relationship or dynamics established between various sections of the cultural supplement highlights the great influence of Francisco Fernandez del Riego, and thus his readings, poets, and writers in Alvaro Cunqueiro every Sunday.

BEATS NORTEAMERICANOS

Por Salvador LORENZANA

Aló polo ano 1960, compilada por Donald M. Allen, apareceu nos Estados Unidos unha antoloxía que, baixo o nome de «The New American Poetry - 1945-1960», propoñíase reunir a todolos poetas dalgún valor pertenecentes á xeneración xurdida despóis da Segunda Guerra Mundial. Poetas, por outra banda, cuias caracteristicas os diferenciaran tanto dos Eliot, Pound ou Crane como dos poetas máis recentes, de fins da década do 1930 e de comezos da de 1940, Shapiro, Roethke, Elisabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, etc. Unha especie de terceira xeneración que, según Donald M. Allen, representa a auténtica vanguarda da actual poesía norteamericana e cuio denomiador común sería... a total «rejection of all those qualities typical of academic verse».

Co así chamado «verso académico» alúdese a un dos campos de loita no que a poesía está afastada: Os Académicos e os Beats. E inda que os límites de tais rótulos son abondo imprecisos, reactualizan unha pugna tan vella como a literatura norteamericana e case nos mesmos termos en todalas épocas. O Este contra do Oeste, a sofisticación, contra da rudeza, o salón contra da fronteira. Henry James frente a Mark Twain, T.E. Eliot frente a William Carlos Williams.

Xa que logo, existen en ambos campos poetas de considerable nivel, e tamén mediocres versificadores ou sendo experimentalistas. Pero a división está baseada, principalmente, no suposto de que o grupo académico tende a un cosmopolitismo cultural, apóirase nunha tradición máis achegada á poesía inglesa dos séculos XVI e XVII que á do país norteamericano, e os seus produtos son, en suma, puramente librescos, e, en troque, o grupo Beat pon o énfasis na negación de todo cosmopolitismo e conservadurismo, aténdose, verbo da linguaxe, ao manexo dun vocabulario coloquial, actual, despoxado de artificios, de elegancia estetizante. En rigor, máis que crítica e poética, a súa actitude é a da pura agresividade. Desdeñan a formación cultural dos Académicos, entre os cales inxiren a poetas como Lowell, Nemerov ou Wilbur, que non son, propiamente, conformistas.

Pero os Beats máis notorios saíron de tradicionáis e prestixiosos centros culturáis de Columbia, Harvard ou Berkeley. Critican nos Académicos o influxo da poesía isabelina, solo porque escolleron outras influencias, acobillándose en imitanzas de Rimbaud. Ao cabo, predicaron en poesía o credo do experimentalismo, mais nin na libertade expresiva, nin na forma, aradaron dar un paso alén dos límites impostos por Walt Whitman ou W.C. Williams, as súas figuras máis admiradas.

Noustante, e á luz do panorama que presentaba a poesía norteamericana ate os primeiros anos da decada de 1950, debe reconocérselles a lexitimidade ou necesidade última desta reacción, inda que os resultados non señan memorables. Ate daquela, durante trinta anos, o criteiro co que se escribía poesía e co que se xuzgaba, virara darredor dos cánones impostos pola dictadura literaria de Eliot. O resultado foi unha morea de libros e revistas plagados de poemas estereotipados e previsibles, sin o menor rasto de orixinalidade e o talento do autor de «Four Quartets». Poemas compostos «à la manière de», con ingredentes que son sempre os mesmos, cheos de escuras alusións, condensados e elípticos, de ritmos quebrados e asonancias, cun tono normalmente satírico.

DISCULPA

Unha verba párase na gorxa do vento,
unha barca de vento vai nas ondas do centeeira.
Por veces, no ancho silencio
as mazáns destilan o seu escuro aroma.
Ti, que vestida de verde e co cabelo castaño
chegas agora polo atallo, chamando,
e cuio nome digo en voz baixa,
perdóname amor si tamén te chamo,
palabra de vento, corazón de mazán, refuxio de herba.

RICHAR WILBUR

— Naceu en Nova York en 1921. O seu primeiro libro, onde figura o poema traducido, foi publicado en 1947, «The Beautiful Changes». A este poema refírese Salvador Lorenzana no artigo que sobre «os académicos e os poetas da beat xeneración» pode lerse nesta páxina.

EL WOLFRAM, "GÉNERO LITERARIO"

Suplemento cultural de "Letras". *Faro de Vigo* 20 nov 1977.

The writers of the cultural supplement are to greater extent, its head and heart: Cunqueiro and Fernández del Riego. However, given the nature of the supplement, divided into several sections, both Galician writers make use of heteronomy and pseudonyms to build the weekly section. The most commonly used pseudonyms by Fernández del Riego was the aforementioned Salvador Lorenzana, SL, M., or Salvador Poyo, whereas in Cunqueiro, the most common ones were AC, Alvaro Labrada, AL,

Manuel Maria Seoane, MMS, SS, Cristobal Xordan, CX, C, among others. As critics have obviously pointed out, heteronomy and pseudonimity have made the cataloguing and analysis of translations and reviews published in *Faro de Vigo* at that time a very difficult task to pursue.

Translation and Álvaro Cunqueiro in the Cultural Supplement of "Arts"

From 1964 onwards, Cunqueiro finds out the importance of translating universal poetry into Galician language. But why does Cunqueiro translate poetry? Cunqueiro's longing interest in avangarde poetry, the possibility of eluding censorship easily, a matter of space and economy in the Supplement or a strategy to weekly bring foreign cultures and their literatures to Galician local readers are among the possibilities pointed by scholars so far. However, it should be asked to what extent is Cunqueiro's role as a translator in the Literary Supplement relevant in the sixties and seventies? Perhaps the key answer could be found in the fact that the Literary Supplement, edited by Cunqueiro and del Riego, tried to balance issues such as cultural universality and locality every week for decades. In fact, by quoting the dozens of poets translated by Cunqueiro during twenty years might give us an example of the universality of the Supplement: Stephen Crane, A. Ginsberg, E. Pound, TS Eliot, C. Sandburg, W. Stevens, A. Tate, R. Jeffers, W. Whitman, E. Dickinson, ee cumings, Ferlinghetti, E. Lee Masters, R. Lowell, R. McKuen, WC Williams, H. Dolittle, L. Ridge, L. Cohen, R. Frost, K. Patchen, or A. MacLeish. We can thus easily point out the influence of universal poetry and its translation in the overall of Cunqueiro's work.

In addition, his first career milestone was gained by his foray into the avant-garde movements such as *Neotrovadorismo*, as well as due to the quality of his poetry until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Then he will abandon systematically poetic productions both in Spanish and Castilian until his return to *Faro de Vigo* in 1961. Indeed, after the Civil War, Cunqueiro belongs to both Galician and Spanish literary system. This matter arises from the fact that Cunqueiro publishes some of his works both in Castilian and Galician, a phenomenon that, despite being successful in contemporary Galician writers such as Manuel Rivas or Suso de Toro, it was still peculiar in the Spain of the Post-Civil War period and democratic transition. These two factors, Cunqueiro's familiarity with the world of translation, as well as his poetic creativity, will converge in the cultural supplement of "Arts" on a weekly basis. With this strategy Cunqueiro earned the nickname "translator of a thousand poets".

Translation of Anglophone Poetry in Cunqueiro

If we understand literary translation as a conscious strategy to (re-)create or strengthen the Galician literary system during the postwar period, following the theories

of the School of Tel Aviv, the first issue to highlight in Cunqueirian translation studies is what language and culture has been translated into Galician in the greatest deal. The first place is occupied by poetic compositions written in English. Thus, Cunqueiro translates essentially Anglophone poetry. We use in this case the term Anglophone so as not to exclude literature from other communities such as Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales or Australia. While critics have strongly agreed that English is the language dominant in Cunqueiro's source texts, no particular agreement has been reached when analysing Cunqueiro's linguistic expertise in English in order to carry out his translations. Several critics such as Ricardo Palmás have mentioned Cunqueiro's inability with English, and some critics still struggle to find out if Cunqueiro translated from the originals, from Castillian editions, French editions, or simply paraphrased.

In fact, Cunqueiro sometimes cover versions and, sometimes, translates from the original poems. If Cunqueiro's ability in English language was limited without relying on a third translation, it is not essential to this debate, since the aim of this article is not a translation analysis, but an approach to the sociology of translation and its impact in the second half of the twentieth century Galician periodical press. In other words, our aim is to prove the role of these translations in the opening of Galician culture to the world and to strengthen the Galician literary system by recreating new literary repertoires. However, few critics have approached translation in Cunqueiro or in Galician periodical press so far. Only Xesús Gonzalez Gómez in *Alvaro Cunqueiro, traductor* (1990) constitutes a compulsory reading for any specialist interested in Cunqueiro as a translator.

Irish Poets in the Cultural Supplement of "Arts" (1961-1981).

Irish culture and literature in the field of literary reception studies have enjoyed an excellent health throughout the twentieth century. This rising trend is determined by the particular circumstances surrounding Ireland, its culture and literatures after the creation of the Irish state on the early last century, reaching a good position at the head of the European avant-garde in very few years. The success of the Irish social and political model will also contribute to the success of their culture, a success that remote and peripheral communities will try to follow or imitate. As for the reception of Irish literature in the literary Spanish and Galician landscape, one of the most relevant research published so far are *Irish Literature in Spain* (2007) by Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos, and *British and Irish Writers in the Spanish press 1900-1965* (2007) by Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos and David Clark. Both publications comprise a great deal of the literary reception of Irish literature in Spain and Galicia during the XX century. They have become books of reference for those scholars who would like to investigate further into this matter. As it has been evidenced by Toro in *Irish literature in Spain,* there is a clear difference between the Irish literary reception in the Hispanic context and other outlying communities of the Spanish state: Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia. While in

this case study, Galician intelligentsia have tried to look for Irish literature as a means of reflecting their own aspirations, Castilian writers have played with Irish literature in terms of aestheticism and cultural trendiness. As for the Galician case, we must though distinguish two different periods in the reception of Irish literature with the Civil War as the most representative event. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 is the starting point for a second phase in which Ireland will disappear from the literary public sphere as Franco's censorship will strengthen the limits of what should and should not be published. If the Celtic community revival in Galicia, through the work of Generation *Nós* in the first stage, was intended as a first step to claim and to strengthen the Celtic connections and Atlantic communication between Galicia and Ireland, at this second stage after the Civil War, Irish literature in Spain will tend to pursue a mere aesthetic objective. This has been evidenced by the disappointment that intellectual such as Vicente Risco and Álvaro Cunqueiro felt towards Celticism.

However, in this second period, Irish literature will become stronger due to the work of Plácido Ramón Castro, first from the exile with the publication in Buenos Aires of *Poesia inglesa e francesa vertida ao galego* (1949), and later in *Faro de Vigo* with poetic translations in the supplement during the fifties and sixties. But Castro is not only a precursor of Irish poetic reception in Galicia, quite possibly along with Ramón Cabanillas, he is also the fundamental milestone where Irish poetic reception lies in connection with Álvaro Cunqueiro. This influence is notorious in Cunqueiro's continuous references to Castro through the publication of several poems that Cunqueiro translated for the Cultural Supplement in 1974, poems that were previously translated by Plácido Castro some years earlier:

"Laios gaélicos"

PODEMONOS voltar, secar as bágoas,
esquecernos do medo e máis dás mágoas,
todo se foi, toda boa coalidade,
a xentileza e hospitalidade,
cortesía e ledicia xa morreron.
Foise a música, ou arte de cantar.
Calémonos, pra que chorar?, se ren
nos fica enteiro que puido crebar;
se nada fica xa do noso ben.

Egan O'Rahilly

SON RAFTERY, ou Poeta,
cheo de amor é de esperanza,
con ollos que non teñen luz,
e con tenrura sen pena.
Vou cara ao Ponte en pelerinaxe

pola luz do corazón
débil e canso
deica ou fin do camiño.
Olládeme agora
cara á parede
vos petos baleiros.
Raftery o Cego

NON SEI DE COUSA ALGUNHA baixo ou ceo
que axude ao Gael, ou que lle aceno amigo,
se non é ou mar, onde temos de ir,
ou ou vento que vai leando a porto
ou barco que de Irlanda nos arredra.
I é con razón que son nosos amigos
este mar que medrou coas nosas bágoas,
ou vento errante cheo de sospiros.
Seamus Cartan

[Plácido R. Castro traduxo ao galego estes poemas dous cantores gaélicos do XVIII, dás versións inglesas de James Stephen, de Douglas Hyde e de lady Augusta Gregory, respectivamente. "Este tres poetas, deixounos dito Castro, son os máis destacados da derradeira e doorosa etapa da poesía gaélica irlandesa". (*Faro de Vigo* 10 mar 1974: 24).]

In other words, Plácido Castro and his work constitute the first step for Cunqueiro to translate hundreds of compositions in the *Faro de Vigo* for several decades, translations that can be classified into two main clusters: translations of those poets who belong to the *Abbey Theatre,* and translations of those poets and writers who do not belong to this generation. However, if the Civil War interrupted the constant Irish literary and cultural reception in Galicia, as well as in other peripheral communities of the Spanish state, this tendency will consciously re-emerge in coming years. This is reflected in the Cultural Supplement by Álvaro Cunqueiro in an article entitled "Escritores irlandeses de hoxe" (Current Irish Writers), which covers topics such as contemporary Irish poetry as well as the work of James Joyce, making the following statement: "Nunha proisima páxina de "Letras" de *Faro de Vigo* daremos algunhas versións de poemas que figuran [?] na escolma do *TLS*" (*Faro de Vigo* 26 mar 1972: 20), (In the upcoming pages of the Supplement of "Arts" at FARO DE VIGO, we will publish some versions of the poems that are published [. . .] in the Anthology at the *TLS*). This brief note certainly manifests Cunqueiro and del Riego's interest in Irish culture, partly reflecting an interest that Galician society demanded. Following this statement, Cunqueiro translated works from Thomas Moore (1779-1852), William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), Lord Dunsany (1878-1957), Edmund John Millington Synge (1871-1909), Padraic Colum (1881-1972), or Seán O'Casey (1880-1964). (See Appendix)

Conclusion

As García Tortosa has pointed out, it has often been said, both orally and in writing, that Spain is a country of bad translators, where all kind of reasons have been provided to prove so: cultural, social and even geographical explanations (García Tortosa 19). While we agree with Tortosa, we only partially convey his views. Geography is a relevant factor, as communities such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, have always had a distinct idiosyncrasy that after the war is reflected in the need for a new pattern in the literary field, a pattern that favours the import of new repertoires (and translated works) in detriment of the quality of those translations.

In short, it is clear that Cunqueiro became a practitioner of this model in works such as *Merlin and Company* as well as in *O Incerto Sr Don Hamlet Principe de Dinamarca,* where repertoires are not the only important issue, but also the import of the mythical figures, characters, plots and symbols that accompany these repertoires. So far, studying his poetic, dramatic and narrative works, through his journalistic corpus also shows the importance of recovering and importing new literary repertoires to safeguard the integrity of Galician literature under Franco. A work carried out by Álvaro Cunqueiro and Francisco Fernández del Riego that should be praised for their commitment and professionalism to Galicia in the dark ages of the postcivil war period.

The cultural supplement of "Arts" at *Faro de Vigo* (1961-1981), becomes a regenerative element in the Galician literary system week after week, where foreign poems, most notably those belonging to Irish culture, are constantly translated by Cunqueiro and del Riego. An anthological work that constitutes the bridge between the first generation, such as Nós, who claimed Celticism as the only way out for Galicia, and a modern self-conscious Galicia settled in the Atlantic ocean represented by the works of contemporary Galician writers such as Manuel Rivas, Suso de Toro, Luz Pozo Garza or Xose Luís Méndez Ferrín.

Appendix

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852)

"O mozo trovador"

Pra a guerra fóise o mozo trovador,
que nas fías da morte xa se atopa,
cinguiu do pai a espada e pendurou
a sua arpa indómita nas costas.
E dixo "Ouh ti, terra do cantar!,
si todos atraicióan,
hai unha espada para te gardar, e
unha fidel arpa que te louva."

Caéu o mozo, mais hostil grillón
Non vencéu a alma sua orgullosa,
a arpa amada nunca máis falou,
pois rachou as suas cordas todas.
E "¡Os ferros", dixo 'non te han fixar,
de heróis e amantes alma!
nacéu pra os puros, ceibes, teu cantar,
nunca, nunca has soar escrava…

[Moore, Thomas. "O mozo trobador." *Faro de Vigo* 5 dic 1965: 8].

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

"Cando sexas vella"
Cando sexas vella, e gris, e chea de sono
Dormites xunto ao lume, colle este libro, léndo
de vagar, soña un pouco co aquel ollar tan tenro
e aquelas fondas somas que tiñeron téus ollos;
como moitos amaron a tua gracia leda,
i-esa belexa tua, de amor falso ou sentido;
mais un amou en ti o peregrino esprito,
e tódalas tristuras da tua cara inqueda.

E sobre as barras roxas da lareira inclinada
Murmura, un pouco triste, como o amor fuxira,
pra irse a camiñar nos montes, alá enriba,
en un mundo de estrelas esconder a su cara.

[Yeats, W.B. "Cando sexas vella." *Faro de Vigo* 13 sep 1964]

"Cando xa señas vella"
Cando xa señas vella, e gris e chea de sono
dormites onde ao lume, colle este libro,
e lento lé, e soña con aquel tenre ollar
que os teus ollos tiveron, e as súas fondas sombras.

Moitos amaron o intres da tus gracia leda,
e a túa beleza tamén, con verdadeiro ou falso amor;
pro un amou en ti o peregrine esprito
e amou as doores da tua face cambiante.

E incrinada sober das roxas barras
murmura, un pouco triste, como amor se foi,
e canso camiño nas montañas, acolá enriba,
e o rostro esconde entre a moitedume das estrelas.

[Yeats, W.B. "Cando xa señas vella." Trad. Manuel María Seoane. (a.k.a. Álvaro Cunqueiro). *Faro de Vigo* 2 abr 1972: 24.]

"O poeta desexa os panos do ceo"
Si eu tivese eses panos bordados do ceo
traballados con luces de ouro e e prata,
eses panos azules, e foscos i escuros,
os da noite, e o día, e a media craridade,
eu tendería os panos debaixo dos teus pés:

mais como son tan probe soio teño os meus soños;
tendín estes meus soños debaixo dos teus pés;
camiña docemente, que andas sobre os meus soños.

[Yeats, W.B. "O poeta desexa os panos do ceo." Trad. Plácido R. Castro. *Faro de Vigo* 2 abr 1972: 24.] [1]

– "Actualidade de W.B. Yeats"
Nos dous derradeiros anos, fóronse publicando nos idiomas cultos de Europa traduccións de poesía de Yeats, o grande poeta irlandés de lingua inglesa. En italián, en alemán, e ruso, en grego, en francés, en portgués. Entre *Nós*, traduxen algúns poemas de Yeats o charado Plácido Castro, e Cunqueiro. As traduccións casteláns son poucas, e agora ven a encher un baleiro un novo tomo de "Selecciones de poesía Universal" (1) texto bilingüe, traducción de Ferrán, de quen é tamén o breve prólogo. […] Nalgún que noutro poema, a intención derradeira de Yeats fica un pouco escura, coma en "in Tara's halls", o home que en troques do seu nin a Deus nin muller amor pide, que morrera entón. Pro son menudencias, Yeats é unha música antiga e humán, que ven dos verdes outeiros, dos rostros dos heróis, dos dooridos amores, da xente da lúa, e do mar.

[W.B. YEATS: "Antología". Selecciones de Poesía Universal. Texto bilingüe. Versión de Jaime Ferrán. Plaza y Janés, Barcelona, 1973].

“In Tara’s Halls”
UN HOME LOBO que unha vez nos halls de Tara
díxolle a unha muller, axoenllándose: Déitate tranquia.
Os meus cen anos cúmprense. E penso
que algo pode pasar, e penso
que a aventura da vellice comenza.
A moitas mulleres téñolles dito: déitate tranquia,
e dinlles todo canto unha muller percisa,
un teito, bons panos, pasión, quizaves amor,
pro nunca pedín o seu en troques: si o pedira
envellecera axiña.

O home, despois, foise á Casa Sagra, e de pe entre
o adro dourado e o rastriño, falou
aos que alí estaban, casual moitedume escoitouno:
Amei a Deus, pro si en troques pedira o seu amor
a Deus ou á muller, o tempo de morrer me chegara.
Rogou, cumpridos os centro e un anos,
que cavadores e carpinteiros campa e féretro lle fixesen.
Viu que a campa era fonda, o féretro sólido,
axuntou a todas as xeneracións do seu sangue,
deitouse no féretro, deixou de alentar, e finouse.

[Yeats, W.B. “In Tara’s Halls.” Trad. Álvaro Labrada (a.k.a. Álvaro Cunqueiro). *Faro de Vigo* 10 jun 1973: 27].

“Dous poemas de Yeats”
“A illa do lago, Innisfree”
Eu fuxir quixera, e irme, irme, deica Innisfree
e facerme acolá unha cabana de barro e de vimbio
tería nove sucos de fabas, e un trobo
e viviría soio na sonora cañada.
E toparía alí paz, porque a paz vérquese
dende que abre a alba ata o cantar do grilo;
a noite brilla, e o mediodía é de púrpura
e a serán está chea de azas de xílgaros.
Quixera fuxir e irme, para sempre noite e día,
e escoitar a auga de lago lamber a ribeira:

cando vou de camiño, ou piso o asfalto gris,
vouna escoitando dentro do meu peito.

[Yeats, W.B. "A illa do lago, Innisfree." Trad. A.L. (a.k.a. Álvaro Cunqueiro). *Faro de Vigo* 15 oct 1978: II].

"O poeta a súa amada"
Tráigoche nas miñas reverentes mans
os libros dos meus soños innumerables,
branca muller que a paixón gastou
igual que a marea gasta as areas grises,
e co corazón aínda máis vello que o corpo,
cheo a reverquer do pálido, lume do tempo.
Branca muller, con innumerables soños
tráigoche aquí o meu canto apaixoado.

[Yeats, W. B. "O poeta a súa amada." Trad. A.L. a.k.a. (Álvaro Cunqueiro). *Faro de Vigo* 15 oct 1978: II].

EDMUND MILLINGTON SYNGE (1871-1909)

"Raiñas"
SETE DIAS de verán gastamos
nomeando raíñas en Glenmacnass.
Tódolos raros e reás onomásticos reteño,
aínda que os vernes xa xantaron os seis traxes de [veludo.
Etain, Helena, Maeve, e Fand,
Deirdre amosando a sua man de ouro, Berta
do gran pe, cantada por Villon, Casandra,
mirada por Rousard en Liyon, Raíñas de
Saba, de Meath, e de Connaugth, unhas con
coroas, deloutras con prumas. Raiñas cuios
dedos unha vez rizaron barbas, raíñas pólas
que se pasearon pulgas e piollos,
raíñas que atrougueron co sorrir como Mona Lisa,
-ou mataron con velenos de Roma e de Pisa.
Berramos o nome de Lucrezia Crivelli,
unha dona do Tiziano, que se adubiaba com ambar;
raíñas coñecidas polos exquisitos en pecados,

Xohana de Xudea, que tiña as pernas fracas.
Raíñas que degolaron, Gianna a ben xorobada.
Judith das Escrituras, e Gloriana.
Raíñas que derrocharon todo o Oriente,
ou foron, nun carro tirado por un burro,
á nova feliz dun caldeireiro.
Non embargantes, por moito que berremos, podres están.
Pídolles perdón por decilo. Podres.
O mesmo as raíñas que foron soñadas, i-as que houbo.

[Synge, E.J.M. "Raíñas." Trad. anónima. *Faro de Vigo* 24 oct 1965: 10].

LORD DUNSANY (1878-1957)

"Un epitafio para Lord Dunsany"
Este home que aquí xaz decía:
¡Bos días, miñas señoras as fadas,
as que pasades as noites no mar
e as que vades de camiño deica o sul
onde frolecen as viñas, Carcasona,
e a alegría moxa e fuxitiva nos beizos das mulleres!
Nos curros do ceo, reconocía como súas
as nubens que semellaban poltros e naves.
Nas trevas abría as portas pra que entrasen
os fantasmas cheirando a sangue e desesperación.
E sorría, como si nada,
diante de todo o que morre e non resucita.

[Trans. Álvaro Cunqueiro. *Faro de Vigo* 23 jul 1978: III.]

PADRAIC COLUM (1881-1972)

"No child"
Escoitei na noite os pombos
no seu niño remexendo,
pombos salvaxes pro doces
coma a man dun neno ó peito.

E berrei: Estade quedosí,
Nopeito as bagoas sentindo.

-Calade, que unha muller
sen fillos vos está ouvindo.

[*Faro de Vigo* 13 dic 1964: 18]

No Child

Escoitéi na noite as pombas
no seu niño remexendo,
pombas salvaxes, pro doces
como a man dun neon no peito.
E berrei: Estado quedos!
no peito as bágoas sentindo.
– Calade, que unha muller sin fillos
os está ouvindo!

A Day's End

Pés que hoxe non chegaron a ningures.
-Dias valeiros, ora qué viviréi?
O repouso pra mans que ren fixeron.
-Mañán sera outro día! Loitarei!
Alma que nunca precious do prego.
– Días valeiros, pra qué vivirei?
Aquí, a final chegaches ao reposo.
– Mañán sera outro día! Loitarei!
Sono que estás tan lonxe como o prego.
– Dias valeiros pra que vivirei?
ten piedade, libértame da noite.
-Mañán sera outro día! Loitaéi!

[Trans. Plácido Castro. *Faro de Vigo* 30 ene 1972: 32]

"Séculos pasaron..."

Fai muitos que xa non chove no teu rostro
naquel paseo deica o alto de Cuimh.
Quizaves xa pasaron séculos. Levabas
unha bufanda roxa. Deixáchete mollar
e despois sorriche e secáchete.

– Hoxe, dixeches, a choiva cheira a rula e amor.
A min cheirábame a alegría moza,
que viña a ser igual. Bicámonos e choramos
e as bágoas eran outra choiva
que viña do bosque de violíns do corazón,
so noso corazón posto á luz, ao vento
e máila choiva, no alto de Cuimh.
Ti estás lonxe, e eu vou a morrer,
pro endexamais puiden esquecer as túas meixelas,
molladas pola choiva de abril.

[Trans. M.M.ª S. *Faro de Vigo* 25 nov 1979: 28].

SEAN O'CASEY (1880-1964)

"Dous poemas de Sean O'Casey"
HOXE ABRIU a rosa
que mañán murchará.
Así toda canción dunha mañá
leva nela o xaramolo dunha pena.
Vaite, tristura, vaite!
Ninguén endexamáis te acollerá.
Ningún amigo nin de noite nin de día
a darcha a benvida correrá!

NOUTRORA eu traballaba ledo nos campos,
os paxaros acompañábanme, revoando, pousándose a peletrar.
As galiñas cacarexaban, as brancas ocas glougueaban,
e pro a feira iba o burro enguirnaldado.
Era primavera. Afiábamos as fouces,
o centeo douraba e a herba dos prados enchíase de froles.
Hoxe vou vello, canso, encorvado,
pro o meu corazón de labrego segue cheo
de anceios, pulos e ledicia.

Con Yeats, Synge, George Russell, O'Flaherty, James Joyce… é un dos grandes nomes da literatura irlandesa en inglés deste século. Como dramaturgo, moitos compárano a Bertol Brecht. Hai quen dice que eles dous comparten a soberanía do teatro contemporáneo. O'Casey, asegún un crítico, "creou a obra máis esencialmente

barroca do noso tempo". Cando fai uns anos se estrenóu en Madrid a súa peza "Juno e o pavo real" a crítica dixo que O'Casey soio tiña color local, e a peza somentes duróu na carteleira algúns días. Pódese decir que en España o seu teatro é descoñecido. O noso Plácido R. Castro decía que lle gostaría traducir "O arado e as estrelas" ao galego. Os dous poemas perteñecen á peza "Agardando ao señor bispo".

[Trans. Manuel María Seoane. *Faro de Vigo* 10 sep 1972: 23.]

Traditional poem

"Poesía Irlandesa. A navegación de Bran. Fillo de Febal"
Bran atopóu que era unha grande cousa
Ir en barca pola crara mar
Pro eu, dende lonxe, nun carro ben o vexo
Coma si cabalguese por unha chaira frolida.
O que a crara mar é pra a barca con proa de Bran,
É unha chaira de ouro frolido pra min
Sob un carro de dúas rodas.
Os ollos de Bran
Miran ondas da mar,
Pro eu, coma no campo dos Xogos, vexo
Froles de cabezas roxas.
Os cabalos do mar brilan no verán
Tan lonxe como acada a ollada de Bran,
E hai rios que verquen olas de mel
Nas terras de Manannán, fillo de Ler.
Ista coor da mar que ti navegas
Iste tinte branco de mar que fenden os remos
É do marelo e do azul misturados
É coma una terra branda.
Salmós pintados xurden do fondo
Da mar branca que ti ollas,
Son coma xatiños e años de coor
Que van e veñen xogando.

Soio un guiador de carro
Vese na chaira de ouro frolida
Non embargantes haxa moitos corredores
Ainda que ti non poidas sabélo.
Por derriba dun bosque que flota

Vai a túa barca sober das ponlas,
Hai un bosque cheo de fermosos froitos
Sob a proa da túa nao.
Un bosque de froles e de froitos,
Percébese o cheiro do viño,
Bosque sin chata nin outono
Aínda que as follas teñan a coor do douro (1).

(1) "The Voyage of Bran", publicado por Alfred Nutt e Kuno Meyer.
De "The Voyage of bran", pubricado e comentado por Alfred Nutt e Kuno Meyer. Jean Markale couda que quizaves San Brendan seña unha cristianización de Bran, o Corvo Bran, e Maëlduin, I o mesmo San Brendan, figuran entre os famosos navegantes "Discipros dos Argonautras" que foron ao mar en precura dun paraiso, seña crstián, seña pagan. Traducíu, do texto dado por Nutt e Meyer, Manuel María Seoane. O grabado representa unha nao, cos seus remos, o leme e un pao pra izar a vela. Trátase dunha peza de ouro do achádego de Broighter, en Limavady, condado de Derry. Consérvase no Museo Nacional de Irlanda, en Dublín.
["Poesía Irlandesa. A navegación de Bran. Fillo de Febal." Trad. Manuel María Seoane (a.k.a. Álvaro Cunqueiro). *Faro de Vigo* 2 mayo 1971: 22].

Notes

1 This article has been possible thanks to the research network "Rede de lingua e literatura e identidade English" (2007/000145-0) funded by the Galician Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the research project "Music and Irish literature and their equivalent in Galician culture. "(PGIDIT07PXIB159223PR) and the Program Ángeles Alvariño 2009 (Human Resources Program) funded by the Galician Government (Xunta de Galicia). These grants are hereby gratefully acknowledged.
O primeiro poema foi traducido ao galego por Plácido R. Castro, e o segundo por Manuel María Seoane. O grabado que acompaña aos poemas, foi dibuxado en 1876 polo pai do poeta, John Butler Yeats, e foi pubricado por primeira vez por William M. Murphy en "The Yeats Family and the Pollexfend of Sligo" (1969). *Faro de Vigo* 2 abr 1972: 24.

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Metaphor as Metalanguage in Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's "The Horses of Meaning"

Sigrid Renaux

Abstract: *Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's innate concern with poetic language per se, as a poet, translator, and scholar, is evident in many of her poems, such as "Early Recollections", "Studying the Language", "Translation", "The Horses of Meaning", and "Gloss/Clós/Glas", among others. For this reason, this article investigates, from the perspective of Jakobson's theoretical considerations in "Linguistics and Poetics", Chuilleanáin's handling of poetic language specifically in "The Horses of Meaning"* (Selected Poems, *2009*), *in order to evaluate not only how the interaction among the different functions of language becomes concretized in the verbal structure of the poem, but also how the use of metaphor and metalanguage – conveyed by the title and developed throughout the poem – will further emphasize the predominance of the poetic upon the metalingual, referential, emotive, and conative functions. In this way, "The Horses of Meaning", besides being a "visual and auditory experience", becomes paradigmatic of Jakobson's statement that "the poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function".*

When asked in an interview (2009) about her translations of poetry and the roles they have played in her own compositions, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin stated: "I very much want to preserve the original author's attitude. I've written a number of poems about translation, especially 'Gloss/Clós/Glas', and about language". Considering that Ní Chuilleanáin has published six collections of poetry, besides her translations of Irish, Italian and Romanian poets, and that, as Seamus Heaney has stressed,

> while her numerous images of mythical figures, travelers, pilgrims, and women – especially of the veiled subject of the nun – remind us of our deepest inner sanctum, with its litany of spiritual truths, human fears and needs, these images also catalogue the importance of the ordinary and the domestic as new metaphors for human experiences and emotions (Chuilleanain, back cover)

it is at least challenging to examine this other facet of her poetry, which she herself has pointed out: her concern with language. This awareness is evident in poems such as "Early Recollections", "Studying the Language", "In Her Other House", "Translation", "The Horses of Meaning", and "Gloss/ Clós/ Glas" (Chuilleanáin 2009), among others.

For this reason, this article examines this concern, as it appears specifically in "The Horses of Meaning" (2001), in order to better evaluate how far her use of metaphor as metalanguage expresses the challenge presented by Jakobson's rhetorical question in his well-known essay "Linguistics and Poetics": "What is the indispensable feature inherent in any piece of poetry?" (358) As Jakobson claims, having presented the six basic **factors** of verbal communication[1] and the corresponding scheme of the six functions of language[2],

> the . . . focus on the message for its own sake, is the POETIC function of language. . . . any attempt to reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification. Poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant, determining function . . . .(356)

Bearing also in mind that "the analysis of verse is entirely within the competence of poetics and the latter may be defined as that part of linguistics, which treats the poetic function in its relationship to the other functions of language"(Jakobson 359), let us now examine one possible reading of "The Horses of Meaning" in which these theoretical considerations will be used to enhance Ní Chuilleanáin's manipulation of verbal art, to bring about the predominance of the poetic function of language over the others.

The semantic challenge presented in the title already points to a contrast between the concreteness of 'Horses' as "object language" and the abstractness of "Meaning" as metalanguage (Jakobson 356) It is the contrast between these two levels of language that will be developed in the poem, as the different symbolic connotations of "horses" will gradually release "meaning" from its stable, from the "prison-house of language", allowing it to express and develop unexpected connections beyond the referential function of language.

The very definition of horse – (from AS *horse*) as "a large, strong animal, *Equus caballus*, with four legs, solid hoofs, and flowing mane and tail" – already anticipates some of the characteristics which will become visualized in the poem – hooves, mane, tails – and, equally important, the fact that the horse was domesticated long ago for drawing or carrying loads and riders. Keeping these two aspects in mind, the background information further provided by the symbolic associations attributed to the horse becomes more easily grasped, thereby allowing a broader understanding of the metaphorical meanings the horses will acquire in the poem. Moreover, taking into consideration the fact that one cannot separate Ní Chuilleanáin's cultural frame from her poetry, and thus that Irishness – mythology, stories, tales, history – imbues the poem, there is still this larger sphere of symbolic reference that can be brought into play in order to discuss the function of the horses in the internal context of the poem.

Thus, on the one hand, animals symbolize the essence of fertility and vitality in Celtic and Welsh mythology, because they are living, moving, and growing, providing continued life for the tribes through their meat, skins, and bones; in addition, they are a connection with the realm of spirits and the gods through their use in the hunt, and the search for secrets and wisdom, while divination of future events and past wisdom can also be gained through the proper use of animals as Noodén wrote. Horses were also sacred to many Indo-European goddesses, as they were linked to mystery and magic.

On the other hand, even considering de Vries`s definition that "significant indefiniteness is the mark of symbols," additional symbolic associations of the horse, relevant in the context of this poem, confirm and complement the meanings above. As Juan-Eduardo Cirlot points out, the horse is an ancient symbol of the cyclic movement of the world of phenomena; horses thus symbolize the cosmic forces that arise out of primigenial chaos. The horse also stands for intense desires and instincts, in accordance with the general symbolism of the steed. It also plays an important part in a great number of ancient rites and, considering that the horse pertains to the natural, unconscious, instinctive zone, in antiquity it was often endowed with certain powers of divination. In fable and legend, horses, being clairvoyant, are often assigned the task of giving a timely warning to their masters. For Jung, the horse expresses the magic side of Man, that is, intuitive understanding. On account of his fleetness, the horse can also signify the wind and sea-foam, as well as fire and light (Cirlot 152).

Moreover, two further symbolic relationships are of immediate interest to us, for they lead us directly to the title of Ní Chuilleanáin's poem: the horse as a mount for the gods and for the body, with the spirit as the rider, and the horse as a source of poetic inspiration (from Hippocrene >"horse-well"): a spring on Mount Helicon of the Muses; so, to drink Hippocrene means to get inspiration (de Vries 259-262).[3] Both associations allow us to identify the horses as "carriers" of meaning with the very meaning of metaphor (> Greek "transference") – "a trope, or figurative expression, in which a word or phrase is shifted from its normal uses to a context where it evokes new meanings" (Preminger & Brogan 760) – as they become the embodiment of "transference of meaning"; and, simultaneously, the embodiment of poetic inspiration as a source for the creation of new metaphors.

In relation to the abstract noun "meaning," Geoffrey Leech distinguishes the word used "in the narrow sense of 'cognitive', or 'denotative meaning' . . . that is the concern of the dictionary-maker" from "a very broad use of the term encountered in literary studies, where the 'meaning' of a poem, line, word, may include everything that is communicated by it" which Leech prefers to call the "TOTAL SIGNIFICANCE of a piece of language" (40). Thus, as "meaning" is defined as "that which is conveyed, denoted, signified, or understood by acts or language; the sense, signification, or import of words; significance; force" (Webster. 1979.1115), it becomes clear that, as we follow the horses' trajectory in the poem, we are not only following their acts literally, but also trying to understand through the horses, as carriers of meaning, the metaphorical significance of their flight as metalanguage.

With these references and concepts in mind, one can follow more easily the implications and developments of the title along the lines of the poem:

Let their hooves print the next bit of the story:
Release them, roughmaned
From the dark stable where
They rolled their dark eyes, shifted and stamped –

Let them out, and follow the sound, a regular clattering
On the cobbles of the yard, a pouring round the corner
Into the big field, a booming canter."

Now see where they rampage,
And whether they are suddenly halted
At the check of the line westward
Where the train passes at dawn –

If they stare at land that looks white in patches
As if it were frayed to bone (the growing light
Will detail as a thickening of small white flowers),
Can this be the end of their flight?
The wind combs their long tails, their stalls are empty.

As the graphological level reveals, "The Horses of Meaning" is composed of four free-verse strophes, with four, three, four and five lines respectively. This apparent formal freedom from regular meter, rhyme and line length – thus reproducing the flight of the released horses along the field – is nevertheless compensated for by phonological, syntactic and semantic parallelisms, binding the strophes in sound, syntax and meaning, as will be seen.

The first strophe starts with an exhortation: "Let their hooves print the next bit of the story:". This orientation toward the addressee, by bringing out the connotative function of language, simultaneously stresses the fact that, as imperative sentences are not liable to a truth test (Jakobson.1960.355), the exhortation has its referential function almost obliterated, as it urges us to allow metaphorical meanings or the poetic function of language – conveyed by the symbolism of the horses as sources of poetic inspiration – to become dominant in the message. It thus corroborates the paradox contained in the title between the literal and the metaphorical uses of "horses" and "meaning".

The hooves, being moon-shaped, are sacred to the Triple Great Mother goddess, thus further confirming the symbolism of the horse as a sacred animal. Moreover, as their rounded shape is iconic of printing types, the horses, by stamping their hooves on the ground – and making marks on it by pressure, will literally be printing "the next bit of the story" on it – be it "on the cobbles of the yard" or on the "big field", as the second strophe will reveal. This act also recalls the legend of the source of poetic inspiration as springing up at the stamping of the hoof of Pegasus, a release of energy – physical and mental – that is again symbolic of the horse. The very word "story" corroborates the

predominance of the poetic over the metalingual function, as the "story" is subordinated to the metaphorical energy of the horses' hooves.

The colon that follows introduces another exhortation, as the addresser now urges the addressee to free the horses from their stalls: "Release them, roughmaned/ From the dark stable where /They rolled their dark eyes, shifted and stamped –". The repetition of the connotative function thus establishes a syntactic parallelism between lines one and lines two to four, thereby foregrounding an implicit semantic parallelism, for lines two to four are an amplification of the meaning of line one.

Considering that roughmaned, which brings to mind the 'flowing mane" of the dictionary definition as well as the symbolism of hair – associated with magical and spiritual power; with fire and sun-rays; and with fertility – it becomes clear that this foregrounded characteristic further enhances the energy, the primitive forces, and the fertility that are latent in these animals, and that will now be released.

The darkness of the stable – a guarded place – further confirms the symbolism of darkness as primeval chaos and mystery, suggesting that, in the dark, enclosed space of the stable, the power of the horses as carriers of meaning remains as a potentiality: it cannot be exerted yet, but will emerge from that darkness. This darkness is reiterated in their "dark eyes", thus adding to the symbolism of the eyes as knowledge, understanding, guardian of the spiritual, expressive of mood, the soul and the mystic centre, this dark and mysterious "quality". The combination "rolled their dark eyes", recalling the proverb "a rolling eye, a roving heart", anticipates the horses' actions of glancing and turning in different directions, while it also confirms the state of expectancy the horses are in before they leave the stable, as they impatiently "shifted" from one place to another, "and stamped."

"Stamped" not only foregrounds the symbolism of stamping the earth with bare feet as a fertility-rite, and as a re-entry into the womb of the earth, resulting in a state of ecstatic unconsciousness. When applied to the horses, the act of stamping corroborates the association of the horse with fertility and sacredness in Celtic mythology, as well as the symbolism of hair (through roughmaned), thus increasing the potential energy in the horses, still hidden in the darkness of the stables, and of their eyes, as guardians of the spiritual. "Stamped" concomitantly recalls "print", for both actions are performed by the horses' hooves, as we have seen, thus reinforcing again the multiple significance of the images and actions in the poem, as the literal meaning of "stamped" cannot be detached from the association of the horses with sacredness, fertility and poetic inspiration. Thus, if the referential function remains visible, it is simultaneously contaminated by the polysemy of the title, further corroborated by the expansion of the exhortation and the symbolic implications of nouns and verbs.

Besides the syntactic parallelism concretized by the connotative function of the exhortation, several sound parallelisms, plus "free repetition" (Leech 94) in "dark" – such as alliteration in horses/hoofs; story/stamped/stable/; release/roughmaned/rolled; meaning/maned; and assonance in horses/story; meaning/ release; maned/ stable – by bringing out the latent associations among these words, further bind these lines

phonologically, as well as semantically, thereby confirming Jakobson's assertion that "words similar in sound are drawn together in meaning" (371).

The second strophe continues the connotative function of language and the parallelistic syntactic structure, as the addresser now urges us readers to " Let them out, and follow the sound, a regular clattering / On the cobbles of the yard, a pouring round the corner / Into the big field, a booming canter."

While "let out" reiterates the same basic exhortation as the first strophe, suggesting that we are in charge of releasing the horses, the next two imperatives – "follow their sound", as well as "see where they rampage" – imply that we have already lost our power over the horses, for they have left us behind. In a passive attitude, we can only follow their sound, which suggests – through its symbolism as the magical cause of the birth of the world, the first of all things to be created, and through the horses as sources of poetic inspiration – that the clattering of their hooves on the cobbles marks the beginning of poetic creation. One just needs to follow, from now on, this "regular clattering on the cobbles of the yard".

The cobble-stones, by retrieving the symbolism of the stone – associated with hardness, strength, and the bones of the earth – remind us again that clattering is also a fertility rite, and that the horses need to go on stamping on the ground in order to release the mysteries and energy contained in the cobbles. The yard – this enclosed or partly enclosed space near or round the stable – in its turn prepares us visually for the larger space of the big field in line seven, thus providing a transition from the enclosed space of the stable to the openness and freedom of the field, an amplification that is again suggestive of the horses' metaphorical trajectory from the narrow sense of "meaning" to its total significance in a text.

This visual amplification is further enhanced by an increased foregrounding of sound, as the "regular clattering on the cobbles" is now followed by "(…) a pouring round the corner / Into the big field, a booming canter." In this way, from "a regular clattering" – conveying a long, dull, confused sound, with the horses still in the yard – to "pouring" – this steady flow of sound, already coming out freely "round the corner – to "a booming canter" – the deep, hollow sound of an easy, gentle gallop – this amplification of the sound produced by the hooves confirms that the horses are now in total liberty. The spatial freedom provided by the field is further reinforced by its symbolic connections with fertility, freedom from restraint, unlimited possibilities of action, thus again making the horses emblematic of these connections.

The parallelistic syntactic structure in "let…/release" in strophe I, and "let…/ follow" in the second strophe, projecting the connotative function of language, is now reinforced by a series of nouns related to sound, such as "sound/clattering/pouring/ booming canter", all of them conveying the reverberation of the horses' galloping in the yard and through the fields, while several phonological parallelisms further corroborate the close connection between sound and meaning, in this strophe: the alliteration in clattering/ cobbles/ corner/ canter – the plosive 'k' adding a particular abruptness of

sound to the nouns, thus enhancing the noise of "clattering"; big/booming; regular/round; assonance in out/sound/round/; canter/stamped; follow/ cobbles/ pouring/corner; field/ release/ meaning; canter/stamped; plus the feminine rhyme in corner/ canter. All of them remind us again that this poem is not only a visual, but also an auditory experience.

The third strophe presents the addresser's last exhortation to the addressee: "Now see where they rampage,/ And whether they are suddenly halted/ At the check of the line westward/ Where the train passes at dawn – ". "See" reminds us again, like "follow", that we are no longer in control of the animals. We can only watch them running riot, boisterously and uncontrolled, thus implying that, released from their stalls, as carriers of meaning and as a source of poetic inspiration, they are ready to create new, unpredictable metaphors. Nevertheless, the alternative introduced by "whether" exhorts us to continue watching to see if the horses' rampaging might be suddenly brought to a stop when they reach the railway line.

Beyond the visual impact of the images and in spite of the referential function of "At the check of the line westward /Where the train passes at dawn –", the metaphoric level of the poem – plus the symbolic associations of "train" with progress, and of "westward" with completion and darkness – allows us to read the "check of the line westwards" as obstacles of civilization at which the horses are brought to a halt. Contrasting with "westward", "dawn", in its turn, enhances the appearance of light in this imaginary scene, in which landscape, animals and the railway line are immersed in the colors of day-break: symbolic of creation, the unconscious broadening into consciousness,[4] "dawn" consequently also transforms the familiar landscape into a metaphorical scene, in which the horses as poetic inspiration gallop freely in the open spaces, until they are halted by the barriers of civilization – rules, norms, compartments. Phonological parallelisms reinforce the tightness of the free verse and of the parallelistic syntactic structures, such as alliteration in where/whether/where; west/ward; see/suddenly; assonance in rampage/ passes; halted/dawn; where/whether/check/where; and consonance in train/dawn.

The fourth strophe, in apposition to the conjunctional phrase presented in the third strophe, introduces another supposition as to the horses' behavior, a possibility that is turned into a rhetorical question, which, at a first reading, is left unanswered: "If they stare at land that looks white in patches/ As if it were frayed to bone (the growing light/ Will detail as a thickening of small white flowers),/ Can this be the end of their flight?/ The wind combs their long tails, their stalls are empty."

This land at which the horses stare, as if seeking for something or examining the landscape, presents another amplification of the space in which the horses were kept – from the enclosed space of the stable, to the yard, to the big field and to the land – thus necessarily incorporating the symbolic associations of the field with fertility, space, freedom and unlimited possibilities for action. The implications of "land"**,** in this way, confirm that the space which the horses look at, as carriers of meaning, has extended its metaphorical meanings in the same way that the actions of the horses, impatiently stamping on the ground, clattering on the cobbles, cantering into the big field to then

rampage at their will, form a *crescendo* of movement and sound that parallels the larger spaces available to them.

Nevertheless, if this land "that looks white in patches/ as if it were frayed to bone", implying that its whiteness is due to the earth having been exhausted – by overuse – and thus has lost its positive associations with fertility, one could venture another reading, related to the metaphorical implications of the horses: as carriers of poetic inspiration, are they looking at the death of old meanings, and thus – as the rhetorical question "can this be the end of their flight?" confirms – are they hesitating to continue their trajectory of bringing new meanings to worn-out metaphors?

The parenthetical sentence that follows –"(the growing light/ Will detail as a thickening of small white flowers,)" – giving a positive explanation of the white patches, again enhances the symbolism of light transmitting its cosmic energy and creative force to these small plots of ground, from which small white flowers will emerge, thereby revitalizing the worn-out land through their associations with beauty, purity and regeneration.

The subsequent question **"**Can this be the end of their flight?" corroborates the metaphorical meaning of the horses as poetic inspiration, for flight – with its multiple meanings of a journey made by flying through the air; hurrying or running away; and rising above the ordinary – already anticipates its symbolic associations with space and light, power or strength, 'transcendence of growth', thought and imagination. In this way, the poetic function of language once more predominates over the referential function, as the visual experience of the horses' literal flight is further enhanced by the figurative meaning of flight, while the foregrounding of the only instance of end-rhyme in the poem in "/light/ flight", with "white in patches" and "white flowers " acting as internal rhyme, further enhances "the semantic relationship" between these "rhyming units"(Jakobson 367).

Moreover, if a rhetorical question "is a question asked, not to evoke an actual reply, but to achieve an emphasis stronger than a direct statement", and if "the most common rhetorical question is one that won't take 'yes' for an answer"(Abrams 149), it becomes evident that the horses will not be stopped by "the check of the line westward". They will resume their flight in order to continue the transmission of the hidden meanings of poetry kept in the "stables" of language.

The last line of the fourth strophe – "The wind combs their long tails, their stalls are empty." – brings the metaphorical associations of the horses to a close, as their long tails – symbolic of animal power, and expression of an animal's mood – are combed by the wind. Keeping in mind that the comb is symbolic of fertility, related to sunrays and to 'loose hair' – as a release of the magic power concentrated in the hair – while the wind – this active form of air – symbolizes the creative spirit, fertility, regeneration, freedom, and is thus the inducer of ecstasy, poetic inspiration, and life-force,[5] it becomes clear how the overlapping of all these symbolic connotations related to the horses, as "concretive" (Leech 158) metaphors of poetic inspiration, foregrounds the pregnancy and simultaneous lightness of this line. As the phonological parallelisms of this line

confirm, the consonance in land/ end/ wind, plus the combined density of nasals (in wind/ combs/ long/) and liquids (their/ long/ tails/ their/ stalls/ are) add a "*potential* suggestibility" (Leech 97) of lightness and softness to the line, while the repetition of the plosive /t/ in "stalls/empty", drawing both words together in sound, reminds us of the horses' enclosure, which is now empty.

The irreversibility of their flight is thus corroborated by the stalls remaining empty: the "dark stable" from which the addresser exhorts us to release them, recalled here in the image of the empty stalls, rounds off the message, implying that, once released from the prison-house of language, the metaphorical meanings of words will never become imprisoned again and the horses will continue their flight over the fertile fields of language, for the wind of poetic inspiration continues to comb their tails.

In this way, although the expressive and the connotative functions of language become apparent in the addresser's exhortation to release the horses, while the referential function allows us to visually follow the horses' trajectory from the stables to the open fields, it is the poetic function which predominates, even over the metalingual function, as the horses, as metaphors, gallop with their meanings through the lines of the poem.

Notes

1 The addresser sends a message to the addressee; to be operative the message requires a context referred to, graspable by the addressee; a code common to the addresser and addressee; and a contact, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication.
2 Referential (orientation toward the context), emotive (orientation toward the addresser), conative (orientation toward the addressee), phatic (orientation toward contact), metalingual (orientation toward the code) and poetic (orientation toward the message).
3 All further symbolic references will be taken from this source.
4 Day-break was Yeats's favorite moment of perception (de Vries 130).
5 And, for Dylan Thomas, the divine breath of poetry (Vries. 502)

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Voices from Brazil

The Traveler and His Diary: Couto de Magalhães and Roger Casement[1]

Maria Helena Toledo Pereira Machado

Abstract: *The aim of this article is to reflect upon the process of construction of the travel narrative as a counterpoint to the traveler's experience. It focuses the travels of two public figures, General Couto de Magalhães and the Irish nationalist Roger Casement. Their intimate diaries written during their travels are analysed from a critical perspective that considers the tensions between the actual travel experience and its subsequent published account. The issues addressed along this text are genre, sexuality, narrative construction and travel literature.*

The aim of this article is to reflect upon the process of construction of the travel narrative from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Travel literature, as a literary genre that encodes social and ideological processes of discursive appropriation and conquest of non-white and/or colonial populations, became extremely popular both in Europe and the United States in the course of imperial expansion, and in peripheral areas such as Latin America, where this type of literature took a different, but not less important direction. In nineteenth-century Brazil, for instance, travel literature was not only esteemed, but it came to play a key role as a mirror for the national soul through which the elites of the newly founded nation, who sought to establish political and ideological hegemony, could search for traces of an identity that was still uncharted. Travel literature, as a narrative genre with roots in scientism and naturalism linked to geographical, ethnological or economic exploration journeys, sought primarily to establish a distance between the narrator and the narrative, which was built upon the foundations of rationalist and classificatory observation (Pratt 1992). Nevertheless, travel literature derived directly from the traveler's experience, an experience which is systematically expunged from the narrative of the journey. The traveler's experience appears cyphered in purportedly impartial and rational descriptions of the observed landscapes and peoples. The experience can be recovered when the published travel account is confronted with the travel journal, where more spontaneous notes on daily life in wild, foreign lands later would provide the author-traveler, once free from the vicissitudes of the journey, a base from which to filter his or her experience and establish

an account acceptable to the readers of this genre. The confrontation between these two genres provides a complex perspective for analyzing the tensions between the actual travel experience and its subsequent published account. Johannes Fabian (2000), in examining travel literature written by European explorers and ethnologists in Central Africa during the late nineteenth century, observed that the travel accounts of the period are usually considered products of rational observation, based upon scientific criteria. But behind this apparent rationality one finds a traveler of Victorian morality, vulnerable to hunger, fatigue, fevers, and opiates, while also exposed to sexual contacts and relationships with men and women who acted according to completely unfamiliar standards. To include this perspective to the analysis of travel literature produces new ways for understanding the topic, which is the purpose of this article.

With this in mind, we first address the private and intimate diary as a literary genre closely tied to the historical experience of the European and American bourgeoisies in the Victorian age, establishing links between the emergence of the bourgeois notion of individuality and the established genre of confessional diaries. Second, we introduce the genre of travel literature characteristic of this time in order to point out its connections with the literary project of appropriating colonial areas of the globe, accomplished through a specific kind of narrative; hence, this genre is understood as a translator of the historical process of colonial conquest, which took place between the second half of the nineteenth century and the First World War. While establishing the connection between these two narrative styles, this essay suggests a correlation between the geographic journey, the narrative journey and the journey as a confessional and intimate experience, pointing to the presence of deep interrelations between these two literary genres. In order to illustrate this analysis, we discuss two diaries, one written by Roger Casement and the other by General Couto de Magalhães, highlighting an aspect, which although barely visible from the analysis of the public work of the author-traveler, is characterized as a deeply significant experience of the traveler. It is in addressing the issue of sexuality as an intimate territory that the travel experience encodes another experience that is also about the domination and depersonalization of the savage or colonial other. By tracking the tensions present in the intimate notes from these travelers' journals, we are allowed to peer into territories of the travel account that, although invisible, were defining factors in the construction of the genre of travel literature itself. In trying to point out the articulation between these two aspects, the article suggests new possibilities for analyzing the travel literature of the era of imperialism and the way the author-traveler develops its motifs.

The Journal and its Writing

During the nineteenth century, keeping a personal and intimate diary had become a practice both widespread and valued by the bourgeois historical experience. This practice involved characters as diverse and socially irreconcilable as the colonial explorers of distant lands – the Casements and Burtons – whose diary entries stood in

contrast to those produced in the bourgeois home, which reflected the intricacies of a newly created privacy and which included as authors young women and even children. What these people did share was the habit of spending a few precious minutes each day to record, in more or less unhindered tones, their daily experiences, impressions, and feelings. Peter Gay, a historian of the Victorian sensibility and, to some extent, its greatest enthusiast states that in studies of psychoanalytic and social history about the nineteenth-century European and American middle class, the emphasis on the division between the public and private spheres by the bourgeois culture of the Victorian century created the ideal conditions for the flourishing of the diaries (446).

Keeping a journal, as a private activity par excellence, on one hand functioned as an escape valve that allowed for the confession of feelings suppressed by the standards of the society of the time, which valued self-control and prudence. It would be in this context that the intimate and personal diary played the role of friend, confidant or companion by proxy, easing the tensions built up within the strict and repressive social order.[2] On the other hand, there is no doubt that journal writing entailed a huge investment in social terms, which the literate and more or less illustrated person would deposit in his or her own individuality, which became a precious entity to be scrutinized, listened to, diagnosed, in distinction to a more expansive sociability that became relegated to the lower classes as a result of social cleavages.[3] Once a specific space for the exercise of privacy was demarcated, the bourgeoisie began to invest a great amount of energy in pursuing the expression of an individualized sensitivity, embedded in the space that began to separate the private from the public sphere. Issues as diverse as the architecture of houses, the novel, psychoanalysis, and journal writing reveal, each in its own way, the advent of bourgeois modernity and its investment in the self, establishing its place as distinctive from the outside world.

Finally, with its demand for truth, diary writing was part of a confessional tradition, as Michel Foucault noted, which in the nineteenth century, as today, imprisoned sexuality, or the complex bundle of knowledge called sexuality, in webs of discourse. Such knowledge can reflect the innermost personal experiences, conceptualizing them, defining them, tracing their fields of action, suggesting normality, institutionalizing morality, concomitantly singling out deviations and perversions (9-18). Confiding everything to the diary without being superficial, thinking of it as "a friend who offers truth, who demands truth", it became an extension of recommendations proferred by doctors, educators, priests and police authorities.[4] This was how many people viewed their nineteenth-century journals, producing, thus, a valuable historical source.

This is how we could consider, for example, the eleven volumes of *My Secret Life*, written in the late nineteenth century by an anonymous Englishman, in one edition of only a few copies. Composed in a clearly confessional tone, in the format of a diary, it describes, with the minutiae and details that verge on obsession, the author's unsettled sex life[5]. The authenticity of all its volumes remains a controversial issue. Gay sees it as a product of the development of the author's fantasies that stem from a limited number

of real experiences. Alternatively, in the less likely case of proving its authenticity, Gay believes that the author of *My Secret Life* must have been a deeply neurotic individual, as well as an unparalleled sexual athlete. In either case, the work would not be representative of sexuality in the Victorian era, but only "of the sexual imagination of one Victorian Englishman" (Gay 468). Many other Victorian journal writers, such as Couto de Magalhães and Roger Casement, may have taken the same imaginative path, as we shall see. While recording sexual fantasies in an ambiguous tone on the border between reverie and reality, these authors sought to relieve the tensions generated by the repression of these intimate matters.

Steven Marcus adopts a different approach in his detailed analysis of pornography and "deviant" sexuality predominant in the Victorian era, with its brothels of children and homosexuals, with the flourishing of pornographic literature, and with the sanitary and legal control of prohibited sexual practices. Marcus considers this to be an example of bourgeois malaise with regard to marriage, affectionate relationships and to respectable sex, measured by the standard of the monogamous, reproductive couple, always established between equals. From this standpoint, pornography and deviant sexuality could only take place outside the circle of respectable bourgeois society, as protagonists would draw their not always willing partners from the lower classes. The role of the maids, nurses, guards, and sailors, in other words young men and women hailing from the working class, appears very clearly in the realization of this so called "deviant" sexuality in the abundant literature on the social life and sexuality of the times. Thus, the laboring classes emerged as a sort of amusement park for a non-conformist bourgeois sexuality, within the strict limits of the reassertion of class domination.[6] In this sense, experiences in colonial areas could function in a similar fashion, offering to those nineteenth-century male travelers the opportunity to engage in sexual practices considered deviant or depraved with non-white partners.

Back to *My Secret Life*, according to Foucault, the most bizarre aspect of the work in question would not be the manner in which the author dedicated his life entirely to sexual activities. Rather, in fact it was how this deep commitment to sex originated another activity, with an even more unusual fidelity, which was his unflagging dedication to confessional writing, resulting in a meticulous narrative of each and every episode he actually experienced or merely imagined. Foucault concludes that among all the practices experienced by the author, the strangest was to record them every day and in minute detail, revealing himself as an individual totally immersed in modernity (25). Hence, modernity, intimate diaries, and unconventional sexual practices appear to go hand in hand over the course of the nineteenth century, producing confessional journals replete with sexual tension.

We know, however, that not all diaries were written in such a confessional tone, nor did they approach such intimate matters. In fact, many of the known diaries of the period emerged under the specter of censorship, as they were to be read by a very specific circle of readers. A spouse, children, the circle of family and friends, or even

posterity, especially in the case of writers who belonged to a literary circle, established circumstances that transformed the journal into a complementary literary form, other than just a space for personal introspection. Potential readers – real or imagined – provide an index from which to judge the degree of openness with which the journal was written (Resende 1991).

As a complementary literary style, the journal went hand in hand with the production of numerous writers, and in some cases become their main work. This was, for example, the case of the famous diaries in which Anaïs Nin (1934-1939) systematically recorded her love affairs and reflected upon her own being, completing around 150 manuscript notebooks with her confessional writings, which, once published, became her major literary work. Expressing the intimate sensitivity of the most dedicated journal writers, for whom the division between the sphere of intimacy and that of the social world is emphatically established, Anaïs declared: "I have built a private world, but I fear that I cannot help build the world outside" (Vol.2: ix). Along with their more elaborate work, many other writers maintained diaries that were made public by friends or family who kept and published them even when it put them at odds with the authors' wishes. In many cases the diaries became important sources for the study of the author and his or her work, since journal writing frequently offers a more intimate and varied counterpoint to the public work of the individual.

We must, therefore, tackle the issue of the potential reader, even in the cases of the most intimate and personal diaries. For, in the end, every piece of writing assumes there is a reader. Either imaginary or real, the target reader of the journal writer is often the author himself, placed somewhere in the future and under a more critical stance. Recovering the whole, retracing a life path, catching up on its sense and entirety; such are the goals of the diary. The restricted nature with which many journal writers have treated their diaries and the fear that they would be probed by unauthorized eyes is a recurrent feature in this type of writing. While working with diaries, letters, and other personal accounts, Peter Gay (445-460) points out the frequency with which the authors expressed their wish of preserving their intimacy and of destroying indiscreet material. Another symptom of the ambivalence between recording everything and confronting the possibility that chance – often "chance" that is not so fortuitous– would provide the opportunity for others to invade the author's intimacy, raises the issue of self-censorship, turning the diaries either into confidants, or into heavy evidence of the author's vicissitudes. For instance, this was how Virginia Woolf expressed herself at the time she reread her diary from the previous year. She made comments on the pitfalls of writing at a fast gallop: "Still if it were not written rather faster than the fastest type-writing, if I stopped and took thought, it would never be written at all … If Virginia Woolf at the age of 50, when she sits down to build her memoirs out of these books, is unable to make a phrase as it should be made, I can only condole with her and remind her of the existence of the fireplace, where she has my leave to burn these pages to so many black films with red eyes in them" (Woolf 7).

In this sense, the case of Mabel Todd's uninhibited diary, widely used in Gay's aforementioned *Bourgeois Experience*, presents itself as both an exception, and as the fullest realization of the confessional trend found in any journal writer. This tendency appears as even more remarkable than a full confession, when what he confesses escapes the very possibility of the author analyzing and understanding it. This appears very clearly in the previously mentioned *My Secret Life*, in which, faced by the most embarrassing episodes, the author states: "...but I cannot attempt to analyse motives or sensations; I simply narrate facts" (qtd. Marcus 166).

However, despite the ambivalence faced by its authors, many of these intimate diaries have escaped destruction and were preserved, published and read by a much wider audience than the author had consciously wished. Maybe that is why an aura of "voyeurism", combined with a "mixture of prudence and the inability to absorb the recommended distance" (Resende 2) might hover over reading the diary. This occurs especially when there is a notably close association between the diary and the emotional, affective, and sexual life of the author.

Travel Literature and the Diary

Although the journal remained in the literary panorama as a complementary form, placed on the periphery of the real work of the author and which was to serve as an opportunity for study and deepening of knowledge[7], in terms of style it flourished in all its splendor as a kind of highly respected literature throughout the nineteenth century. Travel literature successfully expressed the nineteenth-century sensibility, and at the same time travel narratives found their most accomplished form in the diary style. Travelers always have a story to tell to their peers, through the development of a narrative. Walter Benjamin considered the merchant seaman to be one of the most emblematic figures in the art of narrating, going back to its most ancient origins[8]. In settled peasant societies, the traveler has a special significance, for it is assumed that he has acquired wisdom after having accumulated many experiences and is able to establish with his own words a full recollection of a timeless and human purpose. However, the wisdom acquired by the traveler in foreign lands is not gratuitous, rather it is his recompense for incorporating the existence of the other into his own life experience. Within this context, what one expects from the wandering figure of the wayfarer in strange lands is the epic of truth, produced not only by the recollection of his experience and the creation of an individual truth, but one that will also be the source to which he incorporates the experience of many lives and the knowledge of many experiences. Narrative construction in a traditional society is itself the fullest form of the artisanal production of communication as it involves a dialogical instance, a sense of sharing that would enrich both the narrator and his listener – both become identified with the story, which becomes part of their own life. Once told, this wonderful narrative became part of the lives of those who shared it, thus fashioned by many hands and many voices. "In fact, one might go on and ask oneself whether the

relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftman's relationship – whether it is not his very task to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way" (Benjamin 162).

A taste for wonder and mystery became ingrained in travel literature during the Age of Discoveries. It coloured the European imagination with visions of anthropomorphic monsters of the Ocean Sea, and later added brushstrokes with geographical narratives indicating the location of the Garden of Eden and through the meeting of fabulous people and places. The Republic of the Amazons, the mines of Vupabussu, the geography of the fantastic, and the prelapsarian visions of Indians all brought life to the stages of conquest and colonization and at the same time found a place in travel narratives, where the taste for adventure in faraway lands appears justified by the enrichment of states and the Church (Buarque de Holanda 3-18).

By the seventeenth century, narratives about indigenous peoples and colonial lands accompanied the birth of the scientific field of ethnology, based on notions of separation and estrangement. The principles upon which the field of ethnology would be built, according to Michel de Certeau (211), were those that of *orality*, communication typical of savage or traditional societies, *spatiality*, characteristic of a system devoid of history, *otherness*, whose scope was the cultural division defined by difference, and finally the *unconscious*, where knowledge is organized beyond the cognition of he who speaks (Certeau 211-142).[9]

Historically, the oral narrative recording the traditional traveler's itinerary came to be replaced by written accounts displacement of what was traditionally held by the oral narrative of the traveler's itinerary to the field of writing occurred through the establishment of scientific activities. In other words, this change takes place through the emergence of an instance that cuts off oral speech in its extension, revealing differences. From there, "in order to be spoken, oral language waits for writing to approach it and recognize what it says" (Certeau 212). Thus, between "they" who speak and "we" who gather and reveal a meaning for that speech, emerges a relationship of power that is characteristic of modernity (212-213).

The modern traveler, especially one in tune with the scientism of racial theories and colonial policy in the nineteenth century, protagonized a deep schism between experience and narrative. One cannot expect this naturalist traveler, whether an expert on plants, animals, language, or geography, to embody an expanded experience of the other, identified as a life story. Instead, it is within the scientist-traveler himself, where, since the beginning, one may find the awareness and appreciation of distance as an essential part of his activity; it is he who sees, hears, analyzes, understands and conveys the facts and landscapes of distant lands by writing a travel narrative – a travel diary. While writing, the traveler avoids as much as possible including himself as participant and character, for he becomes lost in time, the time when he was exchanging experiences. The modern traveler merely observes them objectively, that is, he displaces his own self and the space of his personal travel experiences to the shadows, as if the journey could be contaminated by the disastrous appearance of the traveler himself (Sussekind 11-35).

Here and there, one finds a short note about a singularly remarkable experience, an extremely beautiful and inspiring landscape, an embarrassing human scene that will inspire philosophical and personal reflections. Otherwise, this modernized traveler breaks into the narrative only with the somewhat tedious account of the material difficulties faced on the journey, of the physical discomforts, of the dangers overcome in the name of progress of science and knowledge. On the whole, it appears that a certain whiff of strangeness and misunderstanding is felt on the narrator's side. This is what we find, for example, in works as diverse as Bates' (1864) in the Amazon, and Serpa Pinto's (s/d.) in his crossing of Africa[10]. Later, the ethnographer-traveler, for instance, in the form of Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*, while seeking to demystify both the journey as exotic and the traveler as an objective scientist, reflected upon the impossibility of experience, stating, among other observations, his disappointment with regard to the decayed landscape of the tropics, his hatred of explorers and of traveling, as well as his invincible boredom in the face of that impoverished reality[11].

The nineteenth-century naturalist traveler reveals nuances between the roles of wanderer, explorer, and adventurer, whose romantic figures and rollicking adventures, always surrounded by the exotic and the remarkable, gave form to the heroic, civilizing character. Sometimes, reality surpassed fiction – at least this was the case of Richard Burton. This Victorian Englishman had a far more adventurous life than any novelist could ever conceive of, after covering almost every part of the globe, penetrating the esoteric doctrines of Sufism, making a pilgrimage to Mecca, translating the Kama Sutra and other texts that were considered unorthodox in his day, learning 29 languages, writing dozens of books, and avowedly having served as agent in Her Majesty's secret service[12].

Alongside the complexity of Burton's character, what we would like to emphasize here is the fact that his life could be taken as representative of the most romantic expectations of his time. And indeed, Burton's adventurous amblings were followed, with greater or less brilliance, by a whole sequence of travelers, scientists, and adventurers during the nineteenth century.

It was at the intersection of two genres, the intimate private diary and the travel literature of the age of imperialism, that the travel journal flourished, witnessing tensions and ambivalences experienced by the traveler while exposed to the ways of life of primitive and/or colonial populations, thus recording situations and feelings that can only be glimpsed at between the lines of his travel writing. The travel journal is a document of extreme interest, as it enables new approaches to travel literature, allowing one to track the relations that are established between the European narrator and the colonial world from a perspective in which the traveler presents himself as being much more vulnerable, witnessing the ambivalence that characterizes the "modern" travel experience. Among the many "invisible" aspects that to come to light from this kind of approach, I would like to highlight the connection between travel and sexuality, a theme that is central to this analysis and to the understanding of the travel experience as an enterprise of theoretical and abstract achievement, in which the conquered other always emerges from projective processes and from descriptions that are based on absence (Pratt 1992).

In this sense, among the many degrading and exoticizing descriptions that are found in the travel literature about populations in colonial areas, the absence of sexual repression is one of the most frequently recorded, elaborated on and fantasized by the traveler. Witnessing the tensions and ambivalences of the traveler-narrator against the travel experience in colonial areas, the travel journal enables one to follow, from a different point of view, the experience of the journey and the narrative undertaking that resulted from it.

The Intrepid Explorer and his Diary

Against this background, I would like to introduce two characters whose writings provide a context and a standpoint from which the history and sensitivity of the modern traveler can be recovered. To both, the journey appears as a geographic as well as an intimate enterprise. The first is Roger Casement, who was an Irishman at the service of the British government between the 1870s and the early twentieth century, in the Belgian Congo and in the Putumayo region, at the confluence of the Peruvian and Colombian Amazon, undertaking risky journeys and writing reports denouncing the extreme exploitation and decimation of native workers that was taking place in rubber extraction areas[13].

Having spent almost a third of his life in Africa – especially in the Belgian Congo – and taking part in the huge investment of physical and imaginary energy that went into the imperialist conquest of the African regions, when the humanist and Christian precepts that prevailed in Europe were conveniently left aside – Casement fought against the greed and hypocrisy lurking behind the civilizing discourse. He denounced the exploitation, slavery, and torture suffered by native peoples, as well as the irrationality of the system and the incomprehensible decimation of the sources of wealth by its explorers. In the Putumayo region, in the early twentieth century, he wrote detailed reports on the unacceptable treatment of Indians, who were the rubber gatherers on Julio Cesar Arana's properties.

Although an Irishman, Casement's activities in colonial lands, always in favor of the indigenous populations, made him a popular figure in England, wrapped in a romantic aura as he gained the respect of the high British bureaucracy and the title of "Sir".

Reasserting the image of eccentricity, combined with humanism and physical endurance, Casement appears in one of the letters Joseph Conrad sent from Africa on December 26th, 1903, in which he is described as a pious Irish Protestant, capable of venturing into the most dangerous jungles, in lands of unspeakable loneliness, carrying only a stick as a weapon, with two dogs and a boy, carrying his bundle. And – Conrad continues – "A few months afterwards it so happened that I saw him come out again, leaner, a little browner, with his stick, dogs and Loanda boy, and quietly serene as though he had been for a stroll in the park" (qtd. Singleton-Gates and Girodias 93).

However, the most controversial aspect of Casement's trajectory was his involvement with the Irish Nationalist movement and his imprisonment during the First

World War, which culminated in the seizure and disclosure of his diaries by Scotland Yard. Containing decidedly embarrassing material concerning a troubled sex life, marked by homosexuality and promiscuity, the diaries became his death sentence. In fact, convicted of high treason by an emergency law and a biased court, Casement was executed without the opposition of any consistent solidarity movement. The disclosure of his private life had him irretrievably compromised[14].

The second character to be introduced is the General, who later, in 1889, became Marshall José Vieira Couto de Magalhães. Although he had developed his political activities as a statesman in the Brazilian Empire, serving successively as President of the Province of Goiás (1862-1863), Pará (1864-1865), and Mato Grosso (1865-1867), Couto de Magalhães became known for his connection with the world of traveling. It was from his knowledge of the hinterlands and river navigation that he developed intellectual, political and economic activities. Along with his important publications, including *Viagem ao Araguaia* (*Journey to the Araguaia River*) and *O Selvagem* (*The Savage*), which constituted important contributions to the travel literature penned by Brazilian intellectuals in the nineteenth century, Couto de Magalhaes also was a much disciplined diary writer throughout his life[15]. Although most of his intimate writings have been lost, two of his diaries have been identified and published. These are *Diário do General Couto de Magalhães*, covering 1887 to 1890, and *Diário Íntimo de Couto de Magalhães*, which spans the years of 1880 and 1881. The diaries covering the years from 1887 to 1890 clearly had been purged, with potentially damaging passages eliminated. Meanwhile, in my research, I located the diaries for 1880 and 1881 separately at the State Archives of São Paulo, and later transcribed and published them along with an introductory essay[16]. The variety of notebooks that Couto de Magalhães used for the same periods of time, with date sequences interspersed with annotations and entries from different and non-sequential years, suggests the use of notebooks as different types of diaries, each with a specific purpose. One of the notebooks consisted of a *Diary of Dreams*, with very intimate notes, from both memories of dreams and from his recording of daydreams and fantasies, most of them of a sexual nature. Another notebook seemed to be dedicated almost exclusively to entries recording the author's state of health, with systematic notes on bodily functions. This may suggest that journal authors like Couto de Magalhães, for whom diary writing had become a deeply ingrained habit, could have owned different notebooks, each dedicated to a different type of entry, ranging from daily activities, impressions on various issues, annotations for future publications, to an outlet for private tensions. This situation could, perhaps, explain the existence of the different diaries attributed to Roger Casement.

The identification of Couto de Magalhães with the unknown and inhospitable hinterlands, which in the nineteenth century still accounted for much of the Brazilian territory, and his familiarity with the Tupi-nhengatú stand in contrast to his resolutely modern profile. He was a shrewd businessman of river and railway transportation, a sector that commanded the country's main economic interests along with its richest

symbolism, during a century that progressed at the speed of trains, seeking to bolster a global market under the auspices of imperialism. In his writings, Couto de Magalhães revealed himself aware of the mechanisms of accumulation that were present in the context of imperial Brazil, especially when it came to the links between this nascent country seeking to modernize and the developed capitalist nations. Indeed, in his diary entry dated October 20, 1880, written during his residence in London, commenting on his success in the Rio Verde Railroad enterprise, Couto de Magalhães recollects his career as a businessman:

> My honorable and good father has given me an excellent education, and through it provided me with the main instrument of my fortune, I, however, have built it myself: I saved from my wages, I formed a small capital of thirty thousand, which was what I had in 1869 when my father died; I put myself to work, I projected trips to the River Plate, and from there to the Amazon in three hours; I worked with my body as if it were a steel machine; I have done business with New York, Paris, and London, and facing danger, hunger, anxiety and huge jobs, I have built an annual income of one hundred contos, which, with the latest operations, is likely to rise to 136 contos de réis. (*Diário Íntimo* 151)

This passage is so suggestive that it hardly requires any comments. The speed that decisions were made, the body as a machine made of steel, the character of the traveler-adventurer who faces financial risks, the allusion to personal efforts totally independent from traditional family and patrimonial institutions that were still in force, and, ultimately, success as a reward – help the reader to construe the image of the self-made man through the accumulation of capital, active nineteenth-century expansion towards the integration of territories and markets.

As a writer since his student days at the São Paulo Law Academy in the 1850s, Couto de Magalhães rose to prominence as a member of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, as well as an interlocutor of the Emperor, through publications about the hinterland and the Indians[17]. His two most memorable books – Viagem ao Araguaia, 1863, and O Selvagem, which came out in 1876 –both were written from his experience in the backlands. His studies about the integration of the Indians into the national population are full of passionate allusions about the freer world of desert lands[18]. In one passage, seeking to describe the splendor of nature, Couto contrasts the freedom of the interior to the bustle that is common to the cities:

> After my soul regained concentration, I asked myself if happiness could not exist there, among those grand scenes of nature, the imposing peace, so unlike the restless and turbulent noise of big cities. . . There, man shall never set foot, but our strength is manifested even there, although these forests are inaccessible, a bird may see its flight suddenly interrupted by the accurate shot of a hunter from the backlands. (Magalhães, *Viagem ao Araguaia*, 93)

The freedom of the backlands, however, did not remain restricted to the open spaces and broader landscapes distant from the cities. In effect it also was connected to a masculine world that was located in schools, barracks, wars, and travel, a world looked upon with suspicion in the context of nineteenth-century morality, which remained based on the monogamous and nuclear family. This masculine world of single or solitary men remained on the periphery of a society organized around the established family, the procreation of legitimate children, and the gradual accumulation of assets based on systematic work. Opposed to all this was the adventurous space of travel. Michelle Perrot described the celibate world of bachelors, associating it with the enclosure and segregation characterized by disciplinary institutions[19]. However, these spaces of social exclusion became diluted in colonial territories, in zones of expansion, in jungles and hinterlands.

> The scene of our lodging was fantastic: fires burning here and there outlined the giant shapes of the buriti palms and gave a wild look to the shadow of the soldiers who passed before them; the beds were hammocks tied to tree branches, and in curious groups. Only I enjoyed the privilege of a cot. Our roof has been the blue of the sky, which is beautiful and full of this melancholy enchantment that is usually provided by the moon, especially in the midst of vast and bare plains, as were those where we stood. (*Viagem ao Araguaia* 85)

In the Brazilian case, large segments of the population clearly remained on the margins of bourgeois morality, in relation to European and American middle classes. Likewise, in Brazilian society still bearing the marks of traditionalism, bachelors and celibates could still find a place in families that continued to accept and maintain solitary persons among their kin. However, the acceptance of bachelors in elite families ascribed them to quite restricted spaces: women were assigned the role of the spinster or confined in convents; men had to play the role of the rich uncle to nephews who cast them covetous eyes. And yet, the world of bachelors, whether in Brazil or in European societies, was indeed a space of restriction. Travel dissipated the imposed social constraints, creating a new space for excluded individuality.

If travel allows the breaking of barriers and restricted social roles, it is because it refers to an imaginary space that enables the existence of different standards, contrary to those prevailing in traveler's place of origin. Wild and explored nature constitutes a desert, an empty space that the explorer fills with the meanings of his desires. And the population he encounters there, which is linked symbiotically to nature, is also savage, mysterious, free, but above all, empty. In analyzing Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Michel de Certeau (226-236) shows how travel literature construed the savage as the body of pleasure. In opposition to western works, the Tupi world, with its own time and reasoning, emerged for Jean de Léry as that of pure pleasure and enjoyment. The eroticization of the body and of the universe of the other appears here as an almost natural development. It would be, in this sense, "the return to the aesthetic

and erotic form that the economy of production had to suppress in order constitute itself," standing thus "*at the junction between pleasure and interdiction*" Certeau 228).

Casement's writing illustrates de Certeau's analysis. Amidst his predominantly concise and descriptive notes, Casement's diary presents some gaps where the physical beauty of Indians and *Cholos* can be appreciated like a feast for the eyes. On September 8, 1910, on the shore of the Putumayo River during his stay in the region, Casement recorded:

> Lovely day at 7 a.m. River risen fully 1 foot or more. Sandbank getting covered. 'Huayna's' passengers all came up yesterday. Met some of them, out [undeciph] to Forest pool – Morona Cocha – fine types, one with shotgun, lovely and strong Indian Cholo in Brito works. Stayed at Brito's house (£1,500 pounds) and I saw nice children, and then back at 11, a fearful hot day. Did little or nothing – it was too hot. At 5 out to shooting range but did not find it with Fox and Bell and then stupid dinner, and out again to Commission and played bridge till 11:30, winning two rubbers. Home at 12 and young Cholo policeman on Malecon – splendid young Indian . . . (Singleton-Gates and Girodias 235)

A feast for the eyes and other senses, sexuality emerges from these passages to break constraints and to become incribed, realistically or imaginarily, in the body of the savage. While the virgin landscape is there to be conquered, dominated, and integrated into the march of civilization, the body of the savage, as an avatar of this nature while symbiotically linked to it, is part of a sexuality freed from the locks of repression. Sexuality, however, is itself one more metaphor of the conquest.

In Couto de Magalhães' diaries for the years 1880 and 1881, written during his residence in London, one finds a movement of pure remembrance of the travel experience and its overwhelming sensuality.

The pleasures of his present life, at the moment when the diary was written, consist mostly of evoking distant landscapes and recalling past pleasures. The landscape of the present only awakens the senses insofar as it evokes others that remain very distant, irrevocably lost:

> *Saturday, September25th, 1880*
> Today I had a very pleasant day – the sun was shining, the temperature was warm, João arrived at half past ten, and at eleven we went to the zoological gardens; the trees are already yellow and the leaves are starting to fall, it is like that melancholy autumn quatrain described by Millevoye. After walking in the gardens, I exited through the North Gate and I proceeded down that canal that I love so much, because it brings to mind scenes of wild rivers where I spent the most passionate years of my life. (*Diário Íntimo* 115- 116)

In the section entitled "Dream Diary", one finds traces of sensuality evoked by the memory of pleasures of the flesh. Sensuality, when repressed, returns during the

night, with the freedom of landscapes, rivers, wild nature, collaborating characters, and a sweeping sensibility:

> *Tuesday, February 14th to the 15th, 1881. Nighttime of February 14th to the 15th ... (After falling asleep again)*
> Afterwards, one of my negro slaves in the company of a simple mulatto in shirtsleeves, and both fifteen years of age, in my company, passed by a bar with bowls filled with sugar, and came upon a very large lake, very much covered with green scum, and the three of us bathed in that lake. (*Diário Íntimo* 199)

At this point, the narrative of the dream is written in Nhengatú, a version of Tupi, as if the change of languages would provide the necessary distance for him to write what he wished. In his biography of Sigmund Freud, Peter Gay explains the use of a foreign language as an artifice to establish greater distance between the writer and his narrative. By focusing on an episode of Freud's self-analysis in which he remembers the desire that he felt for his mother at age four, after seeing her naked during a train journey, Gay points out that even Freud had made use of Latin (*matrem nudam*) in order to place himself at a safe distance (Gay 1988, 11). This is how we interpret Couto's use of Tupi-Nhengatú, as provided an expedient for releasing repressed memories and inadmissible desires, which becomes clear in the translation of what follows in the dream sequence:

> I want to have sex with a mestizo, with a black; I say that the black man's erect member was taken out from the inside.[20]

And in its sequence, the dream leaves no doubt of the scene that is idealized by the dreamer, and the kind of desire that is being fulfilled[21]:

> On one side of the lake there was a little stream of very clear and transparent water and full of fish and between these two lambaris that wanted to eat the other fish that moaned and made noises with the lambaris thrashing their tails amidst them, and the part of the streamlet where the lambaris were was covered with grape leaves . . . (*Diário Íntimo* 200)

Obviously, an analysis of the dream sequence in all its complexity requires a number of other prerequisites to which we do not have access, and, futhermore, it is not our aim here to draw a psychological profile of the dreamer. Indeed, for a dream to be interpreted in psychoanalytical terms, the dreamer must be present and available to elaborate free associations that might clarify the distorted content resulting from the dreamer's censorship in his effort to recover the repressed content expressed during sleep[22]. This is a condition that, in our case, remains impossible to meet.

And yet, we would not necessarily have to stick to the analytical field of psychoanalysis. In his book *O Espelho Índio* (*The Amerindian Mirror*), Roberto Gambini uses the Jungian concept of projection to perform an interesting analysis of a dream told

by a Terena Indian living on the Araribá reservation in São Paulo[23]. Nonetheless, at this point, our interest merely endeavors to shed light on a sensuality that is present not only in the traveler's dreams but also while he is awake. The images evoked in the following passage, somewhere between the Garças and Mortes rivers, that Couto de Magalhães reproduced in *O Selvagem*, are strikingly similar to those of his dream. However, the time span between the real life experience and its dream representation is of at least ten years:

> . . . The stream of hot water descends hanging over a ridge of gentle terrain, and continues for more than a league, in a sequence of cascades: the traveler, arriving after a fatiguing march over a grassland lacking shade, exposed to extenuating sun and exhaustion, feels an ineffable delight in looking at those light blue waters, as transparent as a diamond, rushing over urns of green rocks, populated by numerous shoals of white fish that free themselves in the rapids, seeming to enjoy, in those pure waters, the pleasure of living happily. (*O Selvagem* 100).

In the landscape of pure pleasure, the savage, the mestizo, the Curiboca and the Tapanhuno play their roles. They are all presented as sensual beings, establishing an empathetic relation with the indigenous way of life, and with non-white populations in general. It is the feeling of sympathy, as well as of understanding, that relativizes (yet does not supersede) the rigid explanatory charts of scientism, expressing, in a remarkable way, a more optimistic view of the local inhabitant. Commenting on the freedom of the savage and his descendants, marked by independence, self-reliance and courage, as opposed to the sedentary lifestyle of the whites, who always depend upon their peers, Couto writes:

> This wandering life, spent on horseback, running through fields, close to nature, feeling its impressions; the privations that are proper to this kind of life that would be unbearable for the white man, the frequent need to sleep outdoors; feeding exclusively on honey, palm, and game, which, for those not used to it, is equivalent to a diet of deprivation, are for the caipira, the gaucho and the Caboré, among others, great sources of pleasure, elements of happiness and joy, that make their existence one of abundance and delight that would be unbearable for the white man. (*O Selvagem* 68)

It is the feeling of empathy that leads Couto to a certain relativism and personal reevaluation, mollifying the evolutionary paradigm:

> No matter how rude and barbaric an institution might appear at a first glance, it must be studied with respect. The fundamental institutions of different peoples, whatever their degree of civilization or barbarism, are the result of eternal laws of morality and justice that God created in human consciousness, laws that, at heart, are the same to both savage and civilized man . . . (*O Selvagem* 84)

A similar process might be detected in Casement's trajectory. Having devoted his life to travel and to the accusations that pervade his report about the conditions to which the Indians and Blacks were subjected, Casement expressed his latent conflict with British imperialism. The empathy with which he lived his experiences in Africa and South America doubtlessly relate to his disguised homosexuality, his intimate secret. Hidden conflicts and a repressed sensuality are expressed in an attempt of identification with the other: the Black, the Indian, and the subjected Irish, who was actually himself.[24]

And yet, neither Couto de Magalhães, nor Casement, could arrive there completely. After all, the destination of the traveler is to remain in transit.

Notes

1 The development of this essay began during my postdoctoral training in the years of 1993-4, supported by FAPESP, and it was completed in 2002, under the auspices of CNPq. Different parts of this text were presented at the Annual Meeting of ANPOCS (1993), the Regional Meeting of History ANPUH (1996), the National Symposium of History of ANPUH (1999), and in 1997 it was presented as a talk entitled "The Private Life of a Public Statesman in the Brazilian Empire" at the Center for Latin American Studies at Michigan State University in Lansing, USA. A version of this article was published under the title "Para uma História da Sensualidade. Notas sobre diários e viagens". *Revista da USP,* vol. 58, 2003. 134-148.
This article was translated by Mariana Bolfarine and revised by John M. Monteiro.

2 On the excessive bashfulness and the suppression of reference to parts of the body, even in non-sexualized contexts, see Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class. The Bourgeoisie of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, which, on page 83, comments on the habit of ladies covering piano legs in order to protect them from prying eyes.

3 In E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* New York: Vintage, 1963, the chapter "Community" (401-47) shows both the persistence of a traditional community sociability among the nineteenth-century working classes and also the efforts by certain sectors to discipline their moments of leisure.

4 According to the excerpt taken from Frieda von Kronoff's *Töchteralbum* of 1902, quoted in Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience*. 448.

5 *My Secret Life*, considered a classic of Victorian pornographic literature, was extensively analyzed by Steven Marcus in *The Other Victorians*, chapters 3 and 4. 77-196.

6 On England, see Marcus, *The Other Victorians*, as well as Jeffrey Weeks, "Inverts, Perverts and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and Regulation of Homosexuality in England in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century", in J. Weeks, ed., *Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality and Identity*, London: Rivers Oram Press, 1991. 46-67. With reference to Brazil in this period, see Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988 and Luiz Carlos Soares, *Rameiras, Ilhoas e Polacas. A Prostituição no Rio de Janeiro do Século XIX*, São Paulo: Ática, 1992.

7 In *Diamantes*, Resende promotes an interesting discussion about the relation between literary works and the diary, providing examples of important authors of both Brazilian and foreign literature.

8 These ideas were inspired by reading Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov", in *Selected Writings, Volume 3, 1935-1938*. 143-166.

9 I recognize that in "Histoire et Anthropologie Chez Lafitau" in: Claude Blankaert, *Naissance de léthnologie.* Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985. 63-89, Michel de Certeau establishes the eighteenth century, more precisely, as of the publication of *Moeurs des sauvages américains*

comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps, by the Jesuit J.-F. Lafitau em 1724, a landmark for the origins of modern ethnology.

10 In Sussekind, *O Brasil não é Longe Daqui*, there is a chapter that grapples with the theme of travel and its impact on the origins of Brazilian literature, called "A Literatura como Cartografia" (35-154).

11 The points that are made here can be found in an essay by Fernanda Peixoto Massi, "O Nativo e o Narrativo. Os Trópicos de Lévi-Strauss e a África de Michel de Leiris", *Novos Estudos Cebrap*, n. 33, July, 1992. 187-198.

12 Cf. the biographical work of Edward Rice, *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton: A Biography*, New York: Scribner, 1990, and Alexsander Lemos de Almeida Gebara, *A África de Richard Francis Burton*. São Paulo: Alameda, 2010.

13 The controversial biography of Roger Casement came out along with an edition of his diaries in Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias, *The Black Diaries of Roger Casement*, 1959.

14 The controversy surrounding the diaries and the discussions about its authenticity are present in Singleton-Gates and Girodias, *The Black Diaries*. 15-35.

15 Originally published as *Viagem ao Rio Araguaya.* Goiás: Tipografia Provincial, 1863 and *O Selvagem*, Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia da Reforma, 1876.

16 The first diary was edited by Brasil Bandecchi and published as a special number in the journal *Revista de História* (History Department of the University of São Paulo, 1974) and the second was edited by me (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998).

17 Couto de Magalhães was an active and precocious student, having contributed with his essays to many academic and student journals, such as: "O Estudante e os Monges", a romantic short story, published in *Revista da Academia de São Paulo*, no. 1, April, 1859; "Destino das Letras no Brasil", no. 1 and 2 of the same journal and under the same date; and other writings reprinted in José Aderaldo Castello, *Textos que Interessam à História do Romantismo*, São Paulo: Conselho Estadual de Cultura, n/d, entitled: "Fundação da Academia. Trabalhos da Mocidade", pp. 16-27 and "O que é a Imitação em Literatura (A meu amigo Alvarenga Pinto)", pp. 216-219, among others. In addition, Couto de Magalhães at a more mature age showed interest in writing pornographic literature. His diary includes entries on the process of writing his pornographic novel, "a licentious fantasy entitled Dr. Calmiru" (Couto de Magalhães, *Diário Íntimo,* 140).

18 Here I use the term "desert lands" in its nineteenth-century meaning referring to the absence of civilization and population. Desert and *sertão* (wilderness) are almost synonymous, yet "desert" here refers to territories that were more isolated and distant than the *sertão*.

19 Michelle Perrot, "À Margem: Solteiros e Solitários", in *História da Vida Privada. Da Revolução Francesa à Primeira Guerra*, Michelle Perrot (ed.). Translated by Denise Bottmann and Bernardo Joffily. São Paulo: Cia das Letras, 1991. 287-304.

20 In the original version, written in Tupi-nhengatu: *Irxe oyuputar om. curiboca, tapayuna; anahen aiko tapayuna sak., opirariuana i pupé.* Couto de Magalhães, *Diário Íntimo* (200). About the translation and its difficulties, check pages 42- 44 of the same publication.

21 Here we are guided by Freud's classic interpretation of the dream as fulfilment of the dreamer's desires. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, edited and translated by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, corrected edition, London: The Hogarth Press, 1958 (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 4).

22 Freud, *Interpretation*, above all, chaps. II, "The Method of Interpreting Dreams: an analysis of a specimen dream", pp.96-121, III, "A Dream is the Fulfilment of a Wish", pp.122-133, IV, "Distortion in Dreams", pp.134-162. See also Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, edited and translated by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, corrected edition, London: The Hogarth Press, 1960 (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 6).

23 The dream narrative: "I went to the old Guarani cemetary on the reservation and there I saw a large cross. Some white men arrived and nailed me to the cross, upside down. They left me there and I became desperate. I was very frightened when I awoke". Roberto Gambini, *O Espelho Indio. Os Jesuitas e a Destruição da Alma Indígena*. Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo, 1988.

24 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, chapter 2, Taussig tackles this issue.

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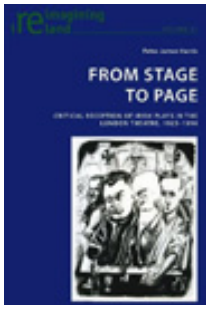
Book Reviews



Harris, Peter James. ***From Stage to Page: Critical Reception of Irish Plays in London Theatre*****, 1925-1996.** Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011.

Irish theatre has always been a global phenomenon, especially in the English-speaking world; Sheridan, Goldsmith, Boucicault and Shaw established the reputation of Irish-born playwrights. The tours by the Abbey Theatre to England and America carried an image of Ireland abroad, and provided a platform for Irish playwrights dealing with Irish topics to speak to a worldwide audience. The Irish Theatrical Diaspora studies project has encouraged an assessment of what happens when Irish plays are 'cut loose from their familiar moorings'. And it is in this broad context that Peter James Harris in From Stage to Page examines the critical reception of Irish plays on the London stage. Harris has taken eight plays, one from each decade from the 1920s through to the 1990s, to explore the critical reception of Irish plays on the London stage. The production and critical reception of each play is set against the backdrop of Anglo-Irish relations, developments in the theatre and with a listing of the most popular productions on the London stage for each decade. In addition, Harris frames his analysis of the first-night criticism of each production in the light of its political and artistic context against the background of the editorial policy of each publication and the social and political views of the relevant critic.

The book was researched and written in the period after the Good-Friday Agreement in 1998, and Harris argues that this not only shaped the development of recent history in Northern Ireland, and the wider sphere of Anglo-Irish relations, but also provides a framework 'to view the whole post-Independence period'. Harris sets out his stall very clearly both in his choice of plays and the way he handles the complex relationship between context and criticism. He weaves together the separate strands of the Irish play on the London stage, the main political events of the last eighty years in Anglo-Irish relations, and the critical reception of the selected plays, into a coherent narrative. The criteria for selection, the way he privileges the political context over the artistic, and the distinction he makes between Irish plays in London and Irish theatre in London, may be open to debate. But, like all good scholars, Harris asks questions that have not been asked before, and even if he has not answered all the questions posed, he has opened up the territory for future scholars.

Harris takes Brian Friel's definition of an Irish Play as 'plays written in Irish or English on Irish subjects' in its broadest sense. On that basis he excludes the likes of Steele, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Wilde, and Shaw from consideration. But this approach also excludes some of the modernist and impressionist drama of Sean O'Casey, Denis Johnston and Samuel Beckett, because they do not deal with an Irish subject.

The assumption that the eight plays have something distinctive to say about Anglo- Irish politics is open to question. To take an earlier example; London audiences, despite the topic, did not read any political intent into Boucicault's Arrah-na-Pogue. The different reception, politically and culturally, that Irish plays receive in Ireland and in London could have been expanded, though Harris deals at some length with this issue in his treatment of Brian Friel's Freedom of the City. Global appropriation takes the edge off national issues. A national culture, in this case drama, is defined not just by how we see ourselves, but also by how others see us. This is particularly true of Sean O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, and Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa, where foreign productions generally privilege the comedy at the expense of the tragedy, and the social relation over the politics underlying the play. Non-Irish productions tend to be constrained, or repackaged, with the dark edges removed. Another factor which could have been examined in more detail is the difference between a commercial production and one by The Abbey or Gate Theatre, which comes with its own cultural and political baggage.

By limiting the choice to eight plays, one in each decade from the 1920s on, Harris has allowed himself enough space to deal with each play in the context of its time and reception. One of the advantages of this approach is that the commentary on each play almost stands on its own, and can be read in its own right, which allows Irish audiences and critics to see the play from a different perspective. His choice of three plays by Brian Friel, two by Sean O'Casey, and one each by Lennox Robinson, Brendan Behan, and Marina Carr is certainly open to debate. Harris acknowledges the problem of choosing a representative play from each decade. Few would quibble with the choice of O'Casey and Friel – they are without doubt the most renowned Irish playwrights of the twentieth century. But the choice of the plays by Robinson, Behan and Carr is more problematic. Harris has to work far harder to shoehorn these plays into the critical and political framework of the book.

Having spent ten pages recounting the political background to Anglo-Irish relations from 1920 to 1933 and outlining the state of European politics in the early 1930s, Harris in the chapter on Lennox Robinson's The Big House (1934) has to accept that 'few critics referred directly to current Anglo-Irish relations in their reviews of The Big House'. One critic admitted his almost 'total inability to understand the Irish character, Irish politics' and stated that he had 'no inclination to remedy the deficiency'. Robinson himself hoped the play would be seen in a wider European context rather than as a specifically 'Irish play'. Like O'Casey, he recognised the limits of the Irish play, and that the time had come for Irish playwrights to move beyond the village and address the world.

The intellectual framework of the book, its emphasis on the political background and critical response, leaves little space to provide an extended analysis of the plays selected. Brendan Behan's The Hostage (1958) is an Irish play by Brian Friel's definition. But the production at the Theatre Royal Stratford East by Joan Littlewood was substantially different to the Irish language version, An Giall, which had premiered

at An Damer in Dublin a few months earlier. The London production was an all-pervading attempt to make the play both interesting and amusing for English audiences. Seven new characters were added and two removed from the Dublin production. The countless cups of tea in the original Irish version are replaced with a drunken interlude that conformed to an old-fashioned and caricatured version of Ireland. In addition, in the London production, the Irish Republican Army is portrayed as more brutal and fanatical than in the original version. Despite Brendan Behan's statement that The Hostage 'is my comment on Anglo-Irish relations' – in reality, this was a new play developed by Brendan Behan, Joan Littlewood and the workshop methods of the East Stratford Theatre Company. The German critic Heinz Kosok has suggested that The Hostage should be seen as a play the holds an intermediate position between the Irish and British tradition.

Harris is on far safer ground with the O'Casey and Friel plays. His analysis of both Juno and the Paycock (1925) and Red Roses for Me (1946) sets the template for what he is trying to achieve with this book. O'Casey was both an interpreter and participant in the history of his time. He tried to find a way to express the dissonance of the twentieth century.

History and politics are woven into the fabric of his life and work. He was in many ways 'a politician who could not help being a writer'. Juno and the Paycock is set in 1922 during the Civil War. The subtlety of Civil War politics was little understood by the English critics, and Juno was generally seen as an extension of the War of Independence and a commentary on the ongoing political differences between the two countries. Red Roses for Me, while located in the period of the 1913 lock-out, is about a vision of a new world that says as much about the expectations of the masses in Britain in the post-World War Two period as it does about Ireland in 1913. In both these chapters Harris draws out the ambivalence of many English critics in their attitude to O'Casey's work. He was praised as much for his poetic language as he was abused for his commentary on Anglo-Irish affairs. But Harris manages to capture the growing realisation by an important section of the English critics that O'Casey was one of the great dramatists of his time.

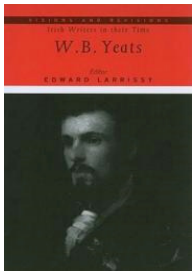
The choice of Marina Carr's Portia Coughlin (1996) is interesting. Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme by Frank McGuinness would appear to be a better choice for the 1990s in terms of its commentary on political and cultural relations between the two islands. Marina Carr is part of a new generation of Irish playwrights such as Conor McPherson, Enda Walsh and Martin McDonagh, who are as much international writers as they are Irish, having finally broken free of the village to speak to the world. Even where their work is set in Ireland it does not conform to received images of Irishness. Portia Coughlin challenged British audiences. It unsettled their conception or vision of modern Ireland. Both in Britain and America there was an element of disbelief at the image of Ireland being portrayed. This is a harsh and brutal play that refuses to romanticise contemporary Irish social reality. The play is located in the midlands of Ireland, but for all of that it is not an Irish play; it has a universality that allowed the London critics to draw a line under the 'Irish Problem'. They could not ignore the play's Irish origins,

but the critics' expansive tapestry of comparisons included Henrik Ibsen, Harold Pinter, Eugene O'Neill, Edward Albee and Henry James. The play was produced during the long cease-fire leading up to the Good-Friday agreement of 1998 that ended the recent phase of 'the troubles'. The reception of Carr's play also revealed a positive inclination by the London critics in the post-conflict period to evaluate an 'Irish play' on its merits without attempting to locate it in the context of Anglo-Irish relations.

The three Brian Friel plays, Philadelphia Here I Come (1967), The Freedom of the City (1973) and Translations (1981), dominate the book. Harris quotes Dominick Shellard in his chapter on The Freedom of the City, 'context is everything for theatre', to situate the political background of the play. Friel's play is set against the background of 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry in 1972. The British Army on that day killed fourteen civil rights demonstrators. Friel responded with his angriest and most directly political play, The Freedom of the City. A substantial portion of this chapter is given over to a political analysis of the situation in Northern Ireland and the emergence of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s. The play is contextualised within this framework, and Harris recounts in great detail how the reactions of the London critics were largely determined by their attitude and understanding of the explosive events unfolding in Northern Ireland. Perhaps, Harris could have used this situation to expand on the reactions of the London-Irish section of the audience to the play in so far as it could be determined.

Peter James Harris handles the complex relationship between context and criticism very well. In general, he lets the material speak for itself. The book is mercifully free of jargon and can be read with profit by the general theatregoer as well the academic. The statistical information and the notes are contained in stand-alone sections outside the general narrative for the specialist to follow up. Perhaps a longer introduction and afterword to set the parameters and pull his conclusions together might have been useful. However, these are small quibbles about a book that is a pleasure to read and adds to our knowledge of the Irish play on the London stage.

Paul O'Brien



Larrissy, Edward. ***W.B. Yeats – Irish Writers in Their Time.*** Dublin & Oregon: Irish Academic Press, 2010.

Come build in the empty house of the stare.
(W. B. Yeats)

Seamus Heaney, when commenting on the Yeats' poem "Meditations in time of Civil War" asserted that "it satisfies the contradictory needs which consciousness experiences at times of extreme crisis". More than emotionally lauding Yeats, Heaney meant that his oeuvre's importance lies in the transfiguration of reality through its poetic interpretation. From this perspective, it is highly likely that, like a kaleidoscope, Yeats' new readings constantly offer opportunities for cultural critics to carefully revise their opinions and concerns regarding his plays, essays and poems.

This is precisely what the collection of essays edited by Edward Larissy W.B. Yeats specialist and poetry lecturer at Queen's University Belfast, professor Edward Larrisssy has to propose: a fresh and original glance at the work of such an acclaimed poet, whose importance for literary Modernism, equals and surpasses T.S. Eliot's. In addition to covering a wide breadth of the poet's work, the essays by scholars like Terrence Brown, Steven Matthews and David Dwan, challenge and debate ideological approaches to his artistic and political production.

The first chapter of the book provides the readers with a wide overview on what has already been published about Yeats.Larrissy, Professor of English at Queen's University, Belfast and a W.B. Yeats specialist, objectively weighs and examines the most interesting and relevant developments in Yeats studies. The second chapter, written by the renowned historian Terrence Brown, analyses Yeats' involvement with Theosophy and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who is also portrayed in poems by T.S. Eliot and Louis McNeice.[1] From his studies of Theosophy's philosophy and his intense and personal relationship with its mystical rituals, Yeats developed his own personal treatise about philosophy and history in the book *A Vision*. His research on occultism and his avid search for an Irish identity led him to elaborate on the concept of Celticism, which was also a response to the growing materialism of the nineteenth century. Brown also mentions Yeats affiliation with the Irish Republican Brotherhood as one of the elements that defined the poet's personality and artistic choices. All in all, the historian's intention is to convey that Yeats was not simply a genius whose ideas were unique, but a man whose idealistic choices prefigured the Modernist *Weltanschauung.*

Michael O'Neill's third chapter interprets Yeats' early poetry against his admiration for the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake. O'Neill's view

is that his "expressive post-romantic territory" is a symbolic response to "the only half created consciousness of a nation in wanting" (46). Furthering the profile of Yeats as a poet, the next chapter, written by Vicki Mahaffey and Joseph Valente, focuses on Yeats development as a poet less interested in the mystical and magical Celtic Twilight, and more engaged with history and its contradictory nature. Their viewpoint is bolstered by an allegorical reading of the play *The green helmet: An heroic farce*, in which the author depicts England's affair towards Ireland as "a kind of sport" (51). In the same questioning mode, Yeats volume *Responsibilities* (1914) exhorts the importance of a more fulfilled life without fear and violence. Its pleas go beyond political propagandacalling for a cultural revitalization of the world and its imaginative representation.

Examining the volumes *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919) and *Michael Robert and the Dancer* (1921) in chapter five, Edward Larrissy, exposes the progression in Yeats' work. For Larrissy, Yeats' poetry "wishes constantly to move forward, discovering new topics and new ways of addressing and framing old ones" (66). In this sense, when the volumes are read beside each other, it is possible to comprehend how the initial features of Yeats' poetry are solidified in a volume published more than twenty years later.

Completing the section on Yeats' poetry, Stephen Regan in chapter six examines the later poetry and the current critical movement characterising Yeats as a major modernist poet, in the same position as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. With comments on poems such as "Coole and Ballylee", "The Gyre", "The Second Coming", and "Lapis Lazuli", the critic suggests the poet has elaborated on an aesthetic which draws its emotional appeal from the concept of tragic joy. His longing for a broader historical change reflected a personal desire for a national rebirth, in contrast to the modern urban ethos.

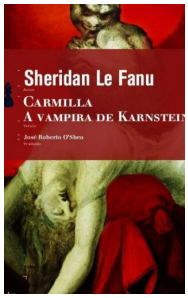
The last four chapters of the book turn slightly from the theme of poetry and focus on Yeats' dramatic and intellectual production, his treatment of the theme of women and his influence on more recent poets. Michael McAteer refutes the general credo that the poet's dramas were solely based on his idealistic view of Ireland. Instead, he establishes lines of connections with German Expressionism and French Surrealism. David Dwan, on the chapter dedicated to Yeats' thought, traces the philosophical theories which inspired him to elaborate the concept of a "Unit of Being". Affirming that the poet was essentially elaborating on Platonic ideals, Dwan justifies philosophically Yeats abhorred preference for Fascism. Giving aeminist tone to the collection, Anne Margaret Daniel analyses how his wife and female friends encouraged him to write characters that depicted traces of their personalities. The last chapter, conceived by the poetry specialist David Matthews, shows how different poets – Seamus Heaney, Louis McNeice, Thomas Kinsella and Paul Muldoon – absorb Yeats' aesthetic experiments and filter them through their own style and poetic credo.

Essentially, the strength of *this collection* lies in its potential to provide new possibilities for students, specialists and even non-specialists to understand Yeats through different prisms which are not burdened by fraught prejudices against his mysticism, Celticism or even Fascism, but which take into consideration the historical moment in which he lived and the biographical and intellectual events that shaped his character.

Viviane Carvalho da Annunciação

Note

1 For more see: Madame Sostostris in *The Waste Land* by T.S.Eliot and "Bagpipe Music" by Louis McNeice.



Le Fanu, Sheridan. *Carmilla: A Vampira de Karnstein*. Trans. José Roberto O'Shea. São Paulo: Hedra, 2010.

> It is impossible to say a thing exactly the way it was, because what you say can never be exact, you always have to leave something out, there are too many parts, sides, crosscurrents, nuances; too many gestures, which could mean this or that, too many shapes which can never be fully described, too many flavours, in the air or on the tongue, half-colors, too many.
> Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*

There are no rules to guarantee the success of a literary translation, but there are a few widely-accepted influencing factors. One general assumption is that if a book is a success in England and America, like *Harry Porter*, a series of seven fantasy novels *written by* the British author J. K. Rowling, it inevitably attracts the attention in other countries. The influence of media coverage and positive reviews helps the book's international success. Another fact considered to be influential is the cinema effect, through a film adaptation, which often can result in a considerable growth in any given book's sales. Besides these three main influential factors, the story, or more precisely, the content of the book is the most determining factor to help the sales of a competently translated book.

If we first consider Bran Stoker's *Dracula*, we can see that this novel still remains an iconic element of vampire fiction not only for bringing about many of the concerns of Victorian England (decline of traditional culture in the face of modern technology, together with the decline of morality), but also for dealing with appealing horror and supernatural themes. The wide availability of and free access to translations of Stoker's *Dracula* in different languages as well as its various adaptations through other media like films and television, plays and series as well as games have inspired a variety of similar works along the decades of the centuries. Among the most contemporary examples of fictional works based on vampire stories are Stephen Edwin King's *Salem's Lot* (1975), Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian* (2005), Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005), to cite just a few. Their translations or film adaptations suggest the profound significance of ongoing exchange among languages, literatures and cultures in a civilized world with uncensored freedom of communication.

However, not many people know that despite the huge influence of *Dracula,* the masterpiece of the gothic genre, previous influential works covered the spectrum of the subject of vampires. Sheridan le Fanu's erotic novella of a lesbian vampire, *Carmilla* (1872), is said to have directly inspired Stoker's *Dracula.* It is true that Stoker improved the treatment Le Fanu gave to the vampire myth. Although Le Fanu's work fell out of interest in the early twentieth century, later on, towards the end of the previous century, his ghost story became increasingly appealing and still remains comparatively strong. This example of Victorian gothic which prevailed in literature and architecture during

the reign of Queen Victoria in Britain (1837-1901) thematises the repression of female sexuality at the time, while it marks the writer's political-philosophical schism in terms of the inner turmoil lived by his characters. The suggestive and detailed descriptions of realistic settings, the inventive and convincing use of supernatural elements, the insightful characterizations coupled with the skilled narrative techniques (unexplained incidents to heighten suspense), and the examination of the psychological life of his characters are elements that have much influenced many contemporary stories in the genre.

As an Irish writer, Le Fanu draws on Irish folklore to construct his story. Carmilla then embodies traits of the Irish *banshee*. As an Irish spirit, the banshee haunts a family and foretells the death of its members. Carmilla acts as a banshee by attracting Laura's family as her distant ancestress and, in a strange way, managing to infiltrate into the family's life. In this way, she can make Laura her prey.The lesbian overtones in the story, which were so shockingly perverse and violently opposed to the moral of nineteenth-century society, do not cause the same effect in contemporary times, but rather seem to attract sympathisers among the general public as well as within scholarly circles. Signs of popular resurgence of a genre with such subversive traits are evident whether delivered in print, on the stage, on television or other genres.

In fact, attention to sensation fiction which emphasizes transgressive approaches on issues such as class, race, gender and imperialism began to grow within the academy in the 1970s and 1980s. The expansion of the canon resulted from the cultural upheaval of 1960s and reached an important recovery with the increasing number of scholars that began to focus their work on cultural and gender-based interpretation of sensation novels. Authors located in the margin of the genre, such as Sheridan le Fanu, Charles Dickens and others, were invited to an inclusive analysis, considering the fluidity of genre boundaries. Today, Le Fanu stands at the conjunction of Irish Studies, Gothic Studies, and the Study of Victorian Sensation Novel. There can be no doubt that a return to the overtly politicized readings of Gothic novels and the contextualization of Le Fanu's work in relation to Irish Studies have been necessary. Concerning Le Fanu's work, particularly, we see that he crafts his text by using elements of scientific information, psychological theories (Freud's theory) and other modern approaches, such as modern notions of gender/power relations as well as vampire politics.

Still, it is fair to say that there is a living energy around us and in all things in the universe. Under certain circumstances in life we may fully express ourselves as vampires. As vampires, we are in one degree or another adept at tapping into one's living energy for self-benefit. This is why vampirism is considered to be the interaction with life energy for the benefit of "practitioners". As we live in a capitalist society, our success depends on our financial freedom or economic power. As an oppressive system, modern capitalism involves obsessive individual competition. Individuals tend to develop impetus and tendencies to achieve the economic nirvana in a very manipulative way. Profit is the goal in all senses. Thus, it is not surprising to see individuals overpower, exploit, buy and sell one another for their own sake. This is what one can call "vampire"

in capitalism, for it encompasses not only particular economic sectors but goes beyond and reaches individuals' intelligence, time, thoughts, religion, faith and anything that can fuel energy. Capitalism then needs blood to suck.

Having said this, it seems that the atmosphere of the present century has favoured the translation of a classic of the vampire genre from the Victorian era when reanimations of the vampire figure are mixed with "embodied decadence, cynical neo-Romanticism, HIV, savvy camp, and [...] a post-punk aesthetic", according to Trevor Holme[1]. Moreover, what we see is that the late nineteenth-century monstrous other is being presently transformed into a largely sympathetic figure. Interest in supernatural entities has permeated present day pop culture as well as the universe of children's stories. In short, instead of going out of style, vampires grew stronger in mystique and intrigue, becoming timeless creatures.

But, how could such a literary genre cross so many frontiers in place and time without the work of a translator? How could individuals enrich their cultural background and develop interest in other cultures without the activity of the specialists in literary translation? It is true that Hollywood cinema has played its relevant role by contributing to stimulate audiences' interest in literary works through film adaptations. The boost in film adaptations of many classical novels, plays and other genres has grown tremendously and has reached great popularity in all media forms. Quite often, if an audience have not read the source texts, they are eager to read them in order to see how the transition from text to screen has taken place.

The other questions to reflect here pertain to how readers from different countries can be touched by an author's work without the presence of translated foreign literary material? So, translations play a crucial part in the expansion of literary horizons through the process of literary cross-fertilization. We would be deprived of the unimaginable and the recurrent variance and dissimilarities that prevail in human affairs without experiencing any literature written in other languages. We would never have the chance to read classical or contemporary books. The availability of the universe of Homer or Sophocles, Dante or Petrarch, Tolstoy or Chekhov, Shakespeare, James Joyce or Virginia Woolf and many others made us leave the confinement of national literary production to cope with the expanding sea of foreign literature (I am not examining here film subtitles and the access to other cultures they provide).

However, do readers in a given target language ponder the opportunity translators give to worldwide societies? There is no question that behind the "humble", "anonymous handmaids-and-men of literature", the "ever-obsequious servants of the publishing industry", lies a writer. What we readers of translations perceive, when we react emotionally and aesthetically to the text, is not dissimilar to the way first readers experienced it.Although translators (re)write someone's else work, there is no doubt that the aesthetic delight readers of translated works experience comes from the creative decisions, vocabulary and phrase, structural rhythms and stylistic devices used by translators in the production of their final text. By working through the process of

analogy, that is, by finding similar, not identical characteristics, vagaries and stylistic peculiarities in the target language, the translator also does the work of an author. This is why many translations are considered to be better than their original.

By examining the translation of *Carmilla* into Brazilian Portuguese by Jose Roberto O'Shea, we realize the role of the translator as a mediator that helps the cross-cultural communication necessary to convert one cultural artefact into another in today's society. We see that this specialist goes beyond the simple task of translating words. He develops concepts and ideas between the languages. As a widely respected first-class translator – a position he conquered through life experience and path trailed along formal academic training compounded with sheer ability – O'Shea demonstrates how sensitive he is to the culture of the target language. The decisions he takes on the levels of lexicon and syntax, allied to his meticulous research and deep involvement in the ancestral text (in order to accurately provide information from one language to the other), evinces not only his engagement in the task of transforming and defamiliarizing the source language but also his craft in keeping the author's role, that is, to entertain, to express the author's art in the translator's language. By liberating the translation from the servitude of the target language, O'Shea makes his work a kind of "a meeting point where cultures are mutually enriched", as Niranjan Mohantty says in *Translation:* A Symbiosis of Cultures[2].

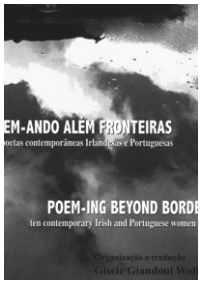
As a translator of classical literary texts, such as Shakespeare's, James Joyce's, Joseph Conrad's, among others, the translator of *Carmilla* once more contributes to further enhancing literary-canon formation while helping to increase the visibility and sales of the product. I can think of no better way to conclude this essay than to recognize the significant challenge both introduction and translation present in the Brazilian edition. By bringing about a brief glimpse of the content of the book, bibliographical information and updated references, the first part of the main body of the volume comes to be an appealing invitation for the reader to explore the universe of the author while enlarging his/her literary experience. By keeping the aesthetic and synergistic reality of its source, the intricacies of the author's language, internal states and acts of imagination within the contemporary experience of the translator, the question of temporal distance, the chasm of almost two centuries separating the translator and Le Fanu did not interfere with the ability and measure to bring the English language and culture of the nineteenth century over into Brazilian Portuguese of the twenty-first century. In short, a consciousness of something enduring, independent of the shifting of time, entails the assumption that the cultural production of the past can be in a sense contemporaneous with the present. Translation then sustains this scheme of recurrence and rebirth – and d that is why I have considered this work as something which is "found in translation".

Noélia Borges de Araújo

Notes

1 Joan Gordon, Veronica Hollinger, eds. Blood Read: *The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. 174.

2 Dollerup, Cay and Lindegaard, Annette. *Teaching Translation and Interpreting:* insights, aims, visions... Volume 2. Philadelphia: Johns Benjamins Publishing Co., 1994.



Poem-ando Além Fronteiras: dez poetas contemporâneas irlandesas e portuguesas. Poem-ing Beyond Borders: ten contemporary Irish and Portuguese women poets. Ed. & Trans. Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff. Coimbra: Terra Ocre-Palimage, 2011.

Reinforcing intercultural dialogue is one of the stated objectives of this bilingual anthology, which has resulted from both a literary research project on contemporary Irish and Portuguese women poets and the collaboration with the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. Portuguese and Brazilian universities have a long-standing tradition of Irish Studies and Gisele G. Wolkoff's commendable contribution consists in exploring the cultural and social ties between contemporary women poets in Ireland and Portugal. Her research has necessarily been informed by current debates in comparative literature, feminist critical theory and present-day poetics of resistance. Wolkoff's collection *Poem-ando Além Fronteiras / Poem-ing Beyond Borders* is not merely an inquiry into intercultural dialogue but a performance of this dialogue. The bonds between today's Irish and Portuguese women writers may not be initially evident to the common reader, but Wolkoff's anthology is a manifestation of how these bonds can actually be substantiated.

In her introduction, Wolkoff avoids essentialist standpoints by referring to "women's universe as a social practice" (12) and consequently acknowledges the foreseeable differences among the writers of each community and between both literary traditions. That said, she is interested in women writers' poetic strategies as they engage in the "various social problematizations of belonging and fragmentation" (12), in their belonging to a nation, a literary tradition, a common sexual identity, but also in their disaffection regarding normative identities and patriarchal institutions that consign them to the margins. These are writers who suspect the patriarchal bias of language and often elaborate on experiences of loss and silence. Nevertheless, writing also entails empowerment and language may be a propitious tool to apprehend the world, even if these poets are conscious of the gulf between "what is said and that which one aims at saying" (12) and take up the challenge posed by the limitations of language.

To the marginalisation of gender one could add that of genre because, although poetry enjoys considerable symbolic capital, it remains marginal in numbers of readers and in the literary market. For this reason, Wolkoff's initiative and its favourable reception by the publishing house Terra Ocre-Palimage are doubly praiseworthy as a courageous act of cultural resistance; even more so if we bear in mind that there is translation work involved which, rather than rendered invisible – as is often unfortunately the case –, is made manifest here through the bilingual layout on facing pages. The attractive front cover illustration by Alemterra already suggests a mirror strategy of reflections and distortions which is paralleled by the facing disposition of source and target texts. The

Portuguese-language version of both Portuguese and Irish poems goes on the right-hand page, which implies that the intended audience is a Portuguese-language one. However, the book provides English originals and translations from cover to cover and thereby becomes easily accessible to English-language audiences worldwide. A note must be included regarding the admirable effort made by Gisele G. Wolkoff who, apart from organising the collection, selecting the poets and their poems, writing the introduction and the poets' singular biographical sketches, provides the translation, not just of the Irish poems into her mother tongue, but also the other way around, from Portuguese into English.

Poem-ando Além Fronteiras / Poem-ing Beyond Borders collects poems by five Portuguese and five Irish women poets. In her introduction, Wolkoff summarily explains what she means by "contemporary" poetry, which, on the Portuguese side, is framed by the early work of Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, followed by a highlight in the seventies with the publication of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, and reaching until the present day. On the Irish side, Wolkoff pays homage to the inspiring role of Eavan Boland since the early 1980s. However, neither Boland nor other acclaimed Irish poets such as Medbh McGuckian and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill are included in this anthology, which wisely makes room for other widely-awarded and prolific writers who are less ubiquitous in academic and literary criticism.

The collection begins with four poems by Ana Hatherly "one of the iconic figures of Portuguese Experimentalism" (18). As in the rest of the anthology the poems here selected were first published around the late 1990s and early twenty-first century. Hatherly's writing is highly metapoetical and delves into the workings of the imagination and the creative process, as well as into the potential and limitations of language. Her poem "As palavras de papel" [Sheet Words][2] (20-21) is dedicated to the linguist Eugénio Coseriu and alludes to his conception of literature as the plenitude of language: "A literatura / (disse um célebre filólogo) / é a plenitude da lingua". The reader remains haunted by Hatherly's oxymoron in her reference to literary writing as the "real imaginado" [imagined real thing]. The dialogue between source and target versions is especially apt in the poem "As palavras aproximan" [Words Approach] (24-25), where the English version captures the conceits and rhythm of the original: "[as palavras] Soltam freios / abrem clareiras no medo / fazem pausa na aflição" [They release brakes / open clearings in fear / make pause in affliction].

The following poet – the arrangement seems to follow the alphabetical order of the poets' first name – is Ana Luísa Amaral, "the poet of metalanguage" (28), who is represented with seven poems, four of which have Irish settings. Curiously enough, her first poem bears the same title as one by the Irish poet Celia de Fréine, also in this anthology – a Contents page with page numbers and titles of individual poems would have facilitated this recognition: "Terra de ninguém", "No Man's Land". Amaral stands out for the variety of subject matter in the poems here selected, which range from a desire to transcend the self, "Digo espaço / ou receita qualquer / em vez de mim" [I say space / or any such recipe / instead of me] (30-31), to the materialisation of time in verse "[…]

ampulhetas feitas de sol / e versos" [hourglasses made by the sun / and verses] (32-33), or the lyric persona's obsessive passion in "Imagens" (35). The poems on Ireland pursue the various inscriptions of myth and history in Irish landscape in ways that would yield a productive dialogue with Susan Connolly's poetry, in particular with her collection *Forest Music*.[3] Amaral's verse playfully overflows the constrictions of poetic conventions very much like that Irish river which "engrossou e ameaça transbordar" [thickened and threatens overflowing] (46-47).

Conceição Riachos is introduced with a poetic appreciation by Gisele G. Wolkoff: "quando as palavras não chegam, os quadros o fazem" [when words are never enough, paintings will do] (48-49), as Riachos cultivates both literature and painting. The poems here selected are an exercise in concise and terse language which inquires, among other topics, into a loveless, routine existence: "Há uma corrente / de pequenos nadas / a encadear os días" [There is a current / of small nothingnesses / chaining days] (52-53). Riachos shares with her fellow Portuguese poets an insatiable curiosity for the workings of language, as her poem "Password" masterfully attests: "Primeiro / tirei a pontuação / depois / a preposição // Tudo o que pudesse / fazer ligação" [First / I took out punctuation / then / preposition // All that could / make connection" (54-55).

Helga Moreira is represented with eleven short poems – the largest number of texts by a single poet in this anthology, as Wolkoff shuns excessively symmetrical arrangements in her very personal collection. The poet is introduced with an alluring phrase: "a senhora das situações, quando o véu pára de existir…" [the lady of situations, when the veil has ceased to exist…] (62-63), which inevitably connects her with T.S. Eliot's poetry, an association that I find particularly fruitful in Moreira's poetry of negation: "não pertenço a lado nenhum, / não tenho / país ou terra, nenhuma raíz, / nem escolhas ou nome, / nada a dizer, nada a calar" [I belong nowhere, / I don't have / a country, land, or root / either choices or name, / nothing to say, nothing to shut] (84-85). Moreira explores the challenges of undecidability and indeterminacy: "[…] Apenas frases / e frases / que impedem / do que não sei" [Only sentences / and sentences / that keep me / from what I don't know] (82-83).

Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen is introduced with Wolkoff's fitting trope of hybridisation and multiple perspective: "a poeta-sereia, mar abaixo, acima do mundo…" [the mermaid-poet, under the sea, above the world…] (86-87). Her poems in this anthology close the Portuguese section with fulfilling self-affirmation: the power of memory to conjure up past passions, the capacity of writing to convey experience, a woman's determined quest, and the celebration of those moments of being which are rendered eternal. Her last poem is a sonnet with a musical rhyme pattern which is inevitably lost in translation, although Wolkoff succeeds in producing assonant and consonant sound patterns that make this forfeiture less objectionable. Andresen's "Em todos os jardins" [In all gardens] contemplates the dissolution of the self and its total fusion with the natural world: "Em todos os jardins hei-de florir, / Em todos beberei a lua cheia, / Quando enfim no meu fim eu possuir / Todas as praias onde o mar ondeia"

[In all gardens I shall flower, / In all, I shall drink the full moon, / When at last, in my final moment, I possess / All beaches where the sea waves] (96-97).

The Irish section begins with six poems by **Anne Le Marquand Hartigan**, a poet, playwright and painter. I have had the opportunity to translate some of her work into Galician – a language which shares a common stock with Portuguese – and into Spanish,[4] so I am pleased to find, in this anthology, Wolkoff's updated choice from Hartigan's more recent collections *Nourishment* (2005) and *To Keep the Light Burning: Reflections in Times of Loss* (2008) both published by Salmon Poetry. As Wolkoff rightly claims, "[t]he voice that dares speaking of desire in a very Catholic country, influenced by all the Protestant Puritanism is that of Hartigan's, highlighting women's strength and weakness, women's humanity" (100). Hartigan's poetry valiantly brims with carnal desire and scrutinises a woman writer's predicament in this respect: "She too can stain white sheets, / With hot blood. / With black ink." [Ela também pode manchar lençóis brancos, / Com sangue quente. / Com tinta preta] (104-105). Hartigan is the poet of the present moment, of *carpe diem*, as her poem "Eternity is Now" [A eternidade é agora] illustrates (108-109). "The Hawser" [A amarra] is a study in the metaphorics of affection where the beloved's stretched arm is rendered as "a rope from boat to shore" [uma corda que vai do barco à costa] (106-107).

Celia de Fréine is a poet, playwright, screenwriter and librettist who writes in Irish and English. I would like to commend Wolkoff's achievement in the translation of de Fréine's poem "Dear Friend" [Querida amiga], since the translator manages to convey the elegant poise and stately pace of the English lines: "[…] As soon as the storm // passes we can unpack the future and watch / the sun rise on our calendar of expectation" [… Tão logo esta tempestade // termine poderemos desempacotar o futuro e observar / o nascer do sol no nosso calendário de esperança] (124-125). De Fréine's life and poetry is seasoned in the experience of crossing borders, very much like the pebbles, grass blades, winds and birds of her poem "No Man's Land" [Terra de ninguém] (120-121). Her poetic persona defies all dangers and engages in her particular life odyssey, full of hope and curiosity about the world: "At last I discover a small boat to store hope in […] / its glass bottom a screen through which I glimpse / the fish and the crustaceans and the people who live / on the ocean bed […]" [Por fim descubro um pequeno barco onde posso guardar a esperanza …/ o seu fundo de vidro, uma tela a través da qual vejo / os peixes e os crustáceos e as pessoas que habitam / o leito oceánico…] (118-119).

Kerry Hardie, a poet and novelist, is represented in this anthology with nine poems of varied subject matter. Like Celia de Fréine, Hardie suspects the neat contours of countries on maps: "The new names, lettered firmly, lie quite still / within the boundaries that the wars spill over" [Os novos nomes, solidamente escritos, permanecem perfeitamente intactos / dentro das fronteiras que as guerras destruíram] (128-129). The poet opts for the partial view, the close-up picture with indirect light: "The mole's view. Paths and small roads and the next bend. / Arched trees tunnelling to a coin of light. / No overview, no sense of what lies where" [A visão estreita. Caminhos e estradinhas e a próxima virada. / Árvores arqueadas em tunnel a procurar um feixe de luz. / Sem visão

ampla, sem o sentido do quê está onde] (128-129). Hardie's lyrical personae struggle with contradictory notions of resignation and dissatisfaction, old age conformity and the irreverence of youth, physical ruins and the bustle of life.

Mary O'Donnell is a poet, novelist and short story writer. I have had the privilege of co-editing with her an anthology of contemporary Galician women poets translated by Irish writers, which constituted another fascinating exercise of intercultural dialogue.[5] Her poems in this collection revolve around the tensions between private and public life and elaborate, among others, on the following topics: society's problematic relationship with women's ageing, the transience of life as opposed to the obstinate permanence of our personal belongings, the communion of soul and landscape, the inscription of the world's ages in the land, the moments that bring together mother and child in unsatisfactory intimacy, the complicity of lovers' bodies and, finally, the clash between our social life and the yearnings of our imagination. O'Donnell's verse is crisp and terse at will, as in "Ageing Girls" [Garotas crescidas]: "Prolapses repaired / faces tightly injected, / they dress to kill / so they can live" [Prolapsos refeitos, / rostos bem injetados, / vestem-se para matar / e assim poderem viver] (148-149). On occasions, however, O'Donnell delights in contrasting a longer and more dense stanza with the revealing final couplet, as is the case in "Snow 3" [Neve 3]: "Minute by minute, we meet as strangers, / and I, the absent one, must explain" [Minuto a minuto, econtramo-nos como estranhos, / e eu, a estrangeira, devo explicar] (160-161).

For Vona Groarke, "Poetry is an everyday commitment, a kind of quotidian search for word, much beyond inspiration" (166). She is represented with five poems which inquire into our private and public selves, the close and distant perspective, the paradox of eloquent silence, and the growing estrangement in today's compulsive use of communication technologies. Groarke's poetic persona tries to negotiate the pull of her curiosity about other people's intimate lives and her reluctance to intrude, her respect for their otherness: "windows flecked with Christmas trees / and flicking bulbs that are telling us / to notice this… Don't notice this. Drive on" [janelas salpicadas de árvores natalinas / e lâmpadas tremelicantes que estão nos dizendo / para não notarmos nisso … Não notes. Arranca] (168-169).

All in all, *Poem-ando Além Fronteiras / Poem-ing Beyond Borders* is an invitation to bridge gulfs between cultures, trace common concerns and learn from diverging strategies. The range of poets included in this collection gives an accurate idea of the plurality of explorations in contemporary poetry written by women. No attempt is made at imposing similarities between Portuguese and Irish writers, but readers will no doubt feel interpellated to map convergence and heterogeneity.

Manuela Palacios

Notes

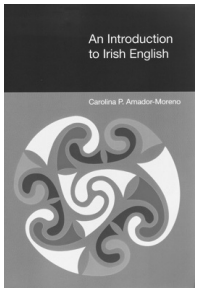
1 This review has been written in the context of the research project, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (FFI2009-08475/FILO) and by the Galician government (INCITE09-204127PR), for the study of contemporary Irish and Galician women writers.

2 All the translations in square brackets are by Gisele G. Wolkoff.

3 Susan Connolly, *Forest Music*. Exeter: Shearsman Books, 2009.

4 Manuela Palacios González (ed.). *Pluriversos: Seis poetas irlandesas de hoxe*. Trans. Manuela Palacios and Arturo Casas. Santiago de Compostela: Follas Novas, 2003. Anne Le Marquand Hartigan, "Librando espacio: Un porqué de la escritura." Trans. Manuela Palacios. *Palabras extremas: Escritoras gallegas e irlandesas de hoy*. Eds. Manuela Palacios González and Helena González Fernández. A Coruña: Netbiblo, 2008. 109-125.

5 Mary O'Donnell and Manuela Palacios (eds.) *To the Winds Our Sails. Irish Writers Translate Galician Poetry*. Cliffs of Moher: Salmon Poetry, 2010.



Amador Moreno, Carolina P. *An Introduction to Irish English*. London: Equinox, 2010. pp. 191.

Carolina P. Amador Moreno's *An Introduction to Irish English* is the latest addition to the Equinox Textbooks and Surveys in Linguistics series, and a fine addition it is too, proving to be very accessible to both linguists and non-linguists alike. Drawing on her research and teaching experience at both the University of Extremadura and University College Dublin, Amador Moreno has compiled an indispensible handbook, filled with insightful examples and amusing anecdotes which keep the reader engaged throughout. While there have been overviews of Irish English before, most recently Raymond Hickey's *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (2007), this is the first book of its kind which was expressly written to be used as a textbook and thus it comes complete with exercises and is perfectly pitched for the uninitiated reader.

The book is clearly structured into nine relatively short, but by no means superficial chapters, each of which introduces a different aspect of Irish English. In addition to the theoretical background provided in the main body, each chapter includes a selection of activities to be completed in class or at home. Such tasks require the reader, for example, to search texts for Irish English features, to look up the etymology or meaning of lexical items, or to listen to and comment on online speech samples from a variety of internet sources. Answers to the activities are offered at the end of each chapter, together with an extensive list of suggested further reading on each of the topics addressed.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the scene by introducing key notions and terms and outlining the history of the English language in Ireland. As in the entire book, Amador Moreno writes clearly and concisely, confidently guiding the reader through the arrival of English on the island, its gradual spread during various plantations and, finally, its replacing Irish (Gaelic) as the majority language. The author also addresses the spread of Irish English to foreign shores, highlighting areas that have received relatively sparse attention in the past, such as Argentina, an area she herself has examined in previous research.

These introductory sections are followed by three chapters which focus on the core aspects of Irish English, namely its grammar, lexicon and phonology. In each case, the author draws attention to the salient features that set the variety apart from others spoken around the world, illustrating them with pertinent examples. Special praise should be given to Amador Moreno's judicious use of space in these chapters. Although the nature of survey textbooks invariably dictates that space is limited and

some omissions are unavoidable, it is to the author's credit that linguistic features that could not be addressed directly or in detail in the main body of these chapters still make an appearance elsewhere, either in exercises or examples, thus exposing students to a larger number of features than may seem evident at first sight. What is more, the author's frequent use of cross references is pedagogically sound as it serves to remind readers of the features that they have encountered previously.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are the highlights of the book, as they offer students the chance to apply the knowledge which they have gained from the previous chapters, by having them search for features in linguistic corpora or literary texts. Chapter 6, for example, examines fictional representations of Irish English and includes a variety of activities related to portrayals of Irish speech in literature, ranging from Shakespeare's early portrayal of an Irishman in *Henry V* (c.1599) to the representation of contemporary Dublin speech in Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* (1990) and Ross O'Carroll-Kelly's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nightdress* (2005). The interdisciplinary nature of such tasks will be particularly appealing to students and will create a greater awareness not just of the linguistic features at hand but also of the motivations behind a writer's use of such features, be it for realism, humor, etc.

Chapter 7 provides some very interesting insights and addresses a field which until recently had not received much attention, namely the pragmatics of Irish English. Since Amador Moreno has already conducted research in this field and is a frequent collaborator with linguists in Ireland and abroad, she is able to provide numerous exciting new examples from recent or previously unpublished research. Although such examples will, of course, all be new to students unfamiliar with the variety, they are even more welcome and refreshing for those already working in the field.

Chapter 8 focuses on corpora of Irish English, another recent development in the field. Using examples from the one-million-word Irish component of the International Corpus of English (ICE) and from the similarly large Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), Amador Moreno illustrates the possibilities that these wonderful resources offer to students. More importantly, though, rather than just encouraging students to use these existing sources of Irish English, the author motivates them to compile their own corpora, as she herself has done (using literature and correspondence) and to test out their own theories.

Chapter 9 brings the book to a close, focusing on the implications of Irish English for teachers and learners of English as a foreign language. It addresses potential misunderstandings which may arise for students when faced with unknown structures or pronunciations and provides exercises "designed to raise awareness among non-native learners of English with an interest in IrE" (156).

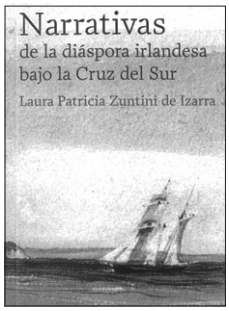
In terms of layout and presentation, this book is very user-friendly, with sections logically divided and clearly numbered, and with the numerous activities presented inside boxes to make them stand out from the rest of the text. Indeed, the only weakness is with the occasionally poor quality reproductions of images and tables from other sources.

For example, the reproduction of the screen grab indicating the concordance output from O'Keefe (2007) is very small and faint, as is the image of the most frequently used words in the LCIE. The poor legibility of these examples is all the more unfortunate, as O'Keefe's paper has not been published and the LCIE is not yet widely available for use by scholars and thus the average reader is unlikely to be have another opportunity to access them.

On the whole, however, these are very minor complaints about what is otherwise an excellent publication; one in which the scholarship is first-rate, the prose clear and engaging, and the coverage of the field very broad. *An Introduction to Irish English* is essential reading for anyone with even a passing interest in Irish English or Irish culture.

Shane Walshe

Books Received



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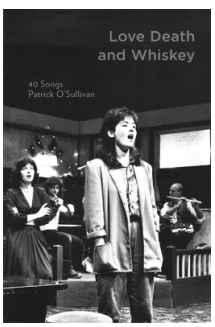

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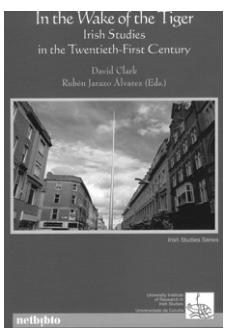

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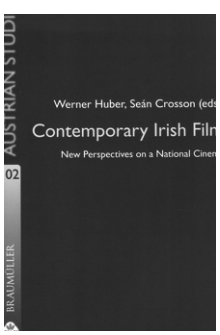

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Contributors

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Beatriz Kopschitz Xavier BASTOS has an M.A. in English from Northwestern University, a PhD in Irish Studies from the University of São Paulo, and developed her post-doctoral research on contemporary Irish theatre at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. She taught at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora and lectured in the *lato sensu* Post Graduate Programme in Literatures in English and at the W.B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo. She is co-editor of *A New Ireland in Brazil* (Humanitas, 2008), *Ilha do Desterro* 58 (UFSC, 2010) and *A Garland of Words* (Humanitas, 2010), and the author of several articles on Irish literature and drama. She serves as Director of ABEI, Regional Representative of IASIL and Chair of the IASIL Bibliography Committee.

Noélia BORGES DE ARAÚJO, has an M.A. in English Literature from the Federal University of Santa Catarina and a PhD in Irish Literature from the University of São Paulo. She has recently developed her Post-Doctoral research on the Adaptation of Irish plays to the cinema at Leeds Metropolitan University (England, United Kingdom). She is an Assistant Professor in the Institute of Letters, Department of Germanic Letters, at Federal University of Bahia. She is member of IASIL and ABEI. She has been publishing on Irish novels and films. She is also the editor of *ABEI BAHIA Newsletter* (now ARIS – Association for Research of Irish Studies).

Heather BRETT, poet and artist, was born in Canada, and raised in N. Ireland. She has lived in the south of Ireland for 25 years. Editor and founder of *Windows Publications* for the past 20 years, she is dedicated to the promotion of emerging writers – especially teenagers. To date she has published three collections of poetry, the most recent being 'Green Monkey, *travelling'* (Bluechrome 2005).

Philip CASEY was born to Irish parents in London in 1950 and grew up in Co Wexford. His verse collections are *Those Distant Summers* (Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1980); *After Thunder* (Raven Arts Press, 1985); *The Year of the Knife*. *Poems 1980-1990*, (Raven Arts Press Dublin, 1991); and *Dialogue in Fading Light*/New and Selected Poems (Dublin, New Island Books, 2005). His play, *Cardinal*, was performed in Hamburg in 1990. His novels are *The Fabulists* (Dublin, The Lilliput Press, 1994/ London, Serif

Books, 1995); *The Water Star* (London, Picador, 1999); and *The Fisher Child* (Picador, 2001), which completes *The Bann River Trilogy*. He has been a recipient of an Arts Council/An Chomairle Éalaíon Bursary for Literature, and was awarded the inaugural Kerry Ingredients/ Listowel Writers' Week Novel of the Year Award (1995) for *The Fabulists*. He is a member of *Aosdána* and lives in Dublin.

Rogério DIAS is a well-known Brazilian contemporary painter, sculptor, lythographer, cartoonist and illustrator. In the 1980s he painted still nature, always associated with birds which have become a recurrent central theme in his work. He created big panels to promote art in the streets (Museum of Contemporary Art in São Paulo) and in 1993 he created the panel *300 gralhas* to commemorate 300 years of Curitiba city. In 1994 he painted *Painel Rio Iguaçu*, a 50-metre panel of tiles. He has received many prizes for his work.

José Francisco FERNANDEZ is senior lecturer in English Literature at the University of Almería, Spain, and is a member of the Executive Board of AEDEI, the Spanish Association for Irish Studies. His current research centres on the early fiction of Samuel Beckett. He has recently co-translated into Spanish Beckett's first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (*Sueño con mujeres que ni fu ni fa*, Tusquets 2011) and among his recent publications the following articles can be mentioned: "Samuel Beckett and Aidan Higgins: No Intrusion Involved" *Global Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual Arts*. Eds. Marisol Morales Ladrón and Juan F. Felices Agudo. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. 127-138, and "Spanish Beckett." *Dreaming the Future: New Horizons/ Old Barriers in 21st Century Ireland. Irish Studies in Europe 3*. Eds. María Losada Friend et al. Trier: Wissenschaft Verlag Trier, 2011. 63-74.

Lívia Bueloni GONÇALVES is a PhD student of Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the University of São Paulo. She has got a CNPQ (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico) grant. She obtained her Master's Degree in 2009, also at USP, with a monograph entitled "A narrator in the edge: the pathway of the Beckettian first person from the *nouvelles* to the *Textes pour rien.*"

Rubén JARAZO ÁLVAREZ is Junior Research Fellow at the English Department (P. Ángeles Alvariño) and member of the University Institute of Research in Irish Studies 'Amergin' at the University of Coruña (Spain). After completing his Ph.D. on the presence of Anglophone literatures in twentieth century Galician Press in 2009, one of his main research interests, and lecturing at the National University of Ireland, Galway, Dr. Jarazo has been awarded with a post as Junior research fellow at the University of Coruña. He has published several articles and volumes on the reception of William Shakespeare in Galicia, the works of Álvaro Cunqueiro, and the established relationship between censorship and translation in Galicia during

the second half of the twentieth century. His latest publications include *'To Banish Ghost and Goblin' New Essays on Irish Culture* (2010) and *In the Wake of the Tiger. Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (2010), co-edited with David Clark.

James McELROY teaches Advanced Writing and Irish/British Literature at the University of California. Recent publications include articles and reviews in *The Los Angeles Times* and *Estudios Irlandeses: Journal of Irish Studies*.

Lia MILLS writes novels, short stories and literary non-fiction. She has also worked on several public art commissions and as an arts consultant. Her first novel, *Another Alice* (1996), was nominated for the *Irish Times* Irish Fiction prize. Her second novel, *Nothing Simple* (2005), was shortlisted for the Irish Novel of the Year at the inaugural *Irish Book Awards*. Her most recent book, *In Your Face* (2007), a memoir of her diagnosis of and treatment for oral cancer, was named as a favourite book of 2007 by several commentators.Born in Dublin, she has lived in London and America before returning to Ireland in 1990.

Domingos NUNEZ is graduated in *Letras* by Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, has an M.A. in Contemporary Portuguese Drama by Universidade de São Paulo and a PhD in Contemporary Irish Drama by Universidade de São Paulo and National University of Ireland. He is a translator, a playwright and the Artistic Director of Cia Ludens, which has produced, since 2003, four plays of Irish dramatists: Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (2004) and *Faith Healer* (2009); Marie Jones's *Stones in His Pockets* (2006) and Bernard Shaw's *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (2008). He has published articles and translations on Irish Literature and on Cia Ludens creative processes.

Paul O'BRIEN is a writer and critic. He lives in Dublin. He is the author of *Shelley and Revolutionary Ireland* and is currently writing a political biography of Sean O'Casey.

Manuela PALACIOS is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. She has directed two research projects on contemporary Irish and Galician women writers that have been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and has co-edited several books in relation to this topic: Pluriversos (2003), Palabras extremas (2008), Writing Bonds (2009), Creation, Publishing and Criticism (2010), and To the Winds Our Sails (2010). Her other publications include translations of European poetry and narrative, monographs on Virginia Woolf's pictorial imagery, Shakespeare's Richard III and articles on ecocriticism.

Fernando Aparecido POIANA graduated from IBILCE, UNESP (The State University of São Paulo), and took the 2007 Fall term at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA, where he focused his studies on Modern British and Irish Literature

and Interpretive Theory. He has conducted research on James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and is currently taking a Postgraduate Certificate course in Advanced English Language and Literature at IBILCE, UNESP.

Sigrid RENAUX (retired) is Full Professor of Literatures in English from the Department of Modern Foreign Languages, Federal University of Paraná, Brazil. She is currently teaching in the M.A.Course of Literary Theory, UNIANDRADE, Curitiba. Her M.A. in Anglo-American Studies and Ph.D. in English Language, English and American Literature are from the University of São Paulo. She was awarded a Fulbright/ CAPES Scholarship in 1984 to develop her post-doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. She also received two British Council scholarships (1981 and 1986) and a Faculty Enrichment Program Award (Canada, 1994). Publications include: *The Turn of the Screw: a semiotic reading* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); *A Volta do Parafuso: uma leitura semiótica do conto de Henry James* (Curitiba: Editora da UFPR, 1992); four books of poetry; translations; articles and essays in Literary Criticism in chapters of books, national and international literary magazines, and in proceedings of conferences in Brazil and abroad.

Stephanie SCHWERTER has been teaching Translation Studies and Comparative Literature at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris since 2008. Before moving to France, she worked for six years in Northern Ireland, at the University of Ulster and at Queen's University Belfast. She has published a book on Northern Irish Troubles Fiction as well as a number of articles on the intercultural connections between Irish, German, Russian and French poetry.

Eoghan SMITH lectures in Irish Studies and English literature at Calow College, Carlow. He also teaches English at NUI Maynooth. He is the author of a number of articles on modern Irish writing and is currently completing a book on John Banville, Samuel Beckett and Irish Studies.

Giovanna TALLONE, a graduate in Modern Languages from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, holds a PhD in English Studies from the University of Florence, and is currently cooperating with the Department of English at Università Cattolica, Milan. She has presented papers at several IASIL conferences and published articles and critical reviews on Brian Friel, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Mary Lavin, Lady Augusta Gregory, Clare Boylan, James Stephens and Seamus Heaney. Her main research interests include contemporary Irish drama, Irish women writers, and the remakes of Old Irish legends.

Shane WALSHE lectures at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He is a member of the editorial board of *Dialectologia et Geolinguistica (DiG)*. He studied English and German at the National University of Ireland, Galway and was awarded a PhD in

English Linguistics from the University of Bamberg, Germany. His thesis *Irish English as Represented in Film* was published in 2009 and examines the way in which Irish English is portrayed in 50 films set in Ireland, ranging from John Ford's "The Informer" (1935) to Lenny Abrahamson's "Garage" (2007). This work and similar studies, such as *Dialect Handbooks and the Acquisition of Stage Accents – A Critical Study* (2009) and "'Ah, laddie, did ye really think I'd let a foine broth of a boy such as yerself get splattered ...?' – Representations of Irish English speech in the *Marvel* universe" (2012), strongly reflect the author's interest in the representation of varieties of English in popular culture, and in the notion of linguistic stereotyping.

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Ficha Técnica

Mancha	14 x 24 cm
Formato	21 x 28 cm
Tipologia	Times New Roman 11,5/15
Papel	miolo: off-set 75g/m2
	capa: supremo 250 g/m2
I*mpressão do miolo e acabamento*	Gráfica FFLCH
Número de páginas	220
Tiragem	200 exemplares